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Boys' 2D

EVERY SATURDAY

Magazine



EVERYBODY'S PLAYING — OUR FREE GREAT GAME ZAT

WHEN WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY?

Were You ELEVEN on March 14th Last?

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

This week's special presents will be sent to all readers who claim that they were

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In addition, every reader whose age last birthday appears in the list given below, under the correct birthday date, will qualify for a delightful present from a splendid range of birthday gifts.

Birth-day Dates	Jan.	Mar.	May	June	Aug.	Oct.	Nov.
24 .. 14 .. 12 .. 20 .. 28 .. 31 .. 18							
Years 8 .. 9 .. 10 .. 11 .. 12 .. 13 .. 14							
Last of age 13 .. 12 .. 14 .. 15 .. 13 .. 16 .. 15							
Birth-day 18 .. 16 .. 17 .. 18 .. 14 .. 18 .. 18							

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 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. 12,

Boys' Magazine,

Pump Yard, Manchester 4 (Comp.),

to arrive not later than first post on Thursday, February 23rd.

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OUR MIGHTY NEW
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THE TIN-CAN TRO-
JANS, THE TERRORS
OF THE TIES, MAKE
THEIR BOW.

THE FOOTBALL
FAMILY AND THEIR
ARENA OF FIENDS
AND HORRORS.



THE SINISTER DR. ZORRO. The Crater, the Tin-Can Trojans' Ground, is a Place of Weird Happenings After Dark. Does Dr. Zorro Know its Secrets? You'll Be Amazed by this Startling New Soccer Series.

.....
Lord Welham's "Folly."

"SHOOT, boy—shoot!"
Was it a boy, or a creature of dreams, this lithe figure in orange and black which flashed across the green turf? Spectators watched, spell-bound. The figure, with the joyous leather at his

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feet, outpaced a racing defender, swerved adroitly across the track of another, dodged the attentions of a third with magician's skill, and the goal, with only the custodian left, was at his mercy.

Slam! The ball, perfectly controlled, gloriously timed, sped on its triumphant mission.

It was a winner all the way—a sizzling, red-hot shot which the unfortunate 'keeper scarcely saw. He dived frantically, but the ball beat him by feet, and rattled against the back of the net.

"Goal!"

"Oh, well done, the Trojans!"

The Miracle Boys had been at it again. No other footballers were capable of producing that heart-clutching tension. It was something new—something breath-taking.

Yet this was no famous stadium, with covered grand-stands and elaborate terracing; but a natural arena on a Derbyshire hillside, just outside the town of Welham. It was the home of the most astounding young football club in history—Welham Wanderers. And the match now in progress, on this sunny Monday afternoon, was nearing its close. The all-conquering Dayle Pit Lads' Club had come to humble The Trojans—and had themselves been humbled. For the sturdy pit workers, who had been sweeping all before them in the Pantheon League, were three goals down and never once had they looked remotely like replying.

For the team of boys they were up against—well, they were the Tin-Can Trojans, the football wizards, the conquerors of all comers.

"Keep it up, boys!"

The spectators on the rugged slopes cheered enthusiastically. The teams lined up again, and soon they were off. Like a relentless machine, every part working on oiled ball bearings, the homesters moved again to the attack. There was something impressive, something almost incredible, in the perfect understanding, glorious timing—that were the secrets of the Trojans's success.

"Ajax! Ajax has got the ball!"

The tall, muscular centre-half, towering high above his fellows, was running through. At least, so it seemed—so the Pit Lads believed. For they swarmed upon him—only to find, too late, that he had tricked them. Out went the ball in a glorious pass to the right winger. Back it came to the centre—and slam it went into the net.

To the Trojans, this game was child's play. The unfortunate Pit Lads scarcely realised that they were being let down lightly; for such was the superior skill of their opponents that they could have been trounced to the tune of two or three dozen goals.

So the game ended. The Pit Lads climbed into their waiting coach and went sorrowfully away. The spectators drifted off into the gathering dusk. The arena was left in the sole possession of the victors.

The Football Wizards.

"T O-DAY'S Monday," said Argus. "That means we've got just four clear days for the work."

"In four days we can do marvels," declared Ajax, extending his brawny arms and watching the muscles ripple. "Boys, it's up to us! We can mix

work with pleasure, and by Saturday morning this old place will be unrecognisable."

There were twelve of the sturdy, athletic youngsters standing in the middle of the pitch, looking across the turf to the rough, rocky sides of the "enclosure."

Officially, they were Welham Wanderers. Unofficially, Welham townspeople knew them as "The Tin-Can Trojans." For months past they had figured largely in all the sports columns of every big daily newspaper. For Ajax and his mighty players were the wonder team of the century.

Until people got to know them, they were looked upon as a joke. Their very names struck a queer chord, for they bore such names as Ajax; Nike and Dike; Themis and Eos; Boreas, Eurus, Zephyrus and Notus. In a word, they were all named after the mythological gods of Ancient Greece. They had no other names.

Ajax was well called, for he was the mightiest of them all: a broad, tall youth of sixteen. He looked a great deal older, and he towered almost a head above his companions. He was the captain and centre-half of the team, the secretary, the manager—in fact, he "ran" the show.

Their very headquarters were a joke—a deep, rocky depression, shaped very much like a miniature crater, on the borderland of the Welham Priors estate, and a full mile from the town itself. The "dressing rooms" were built of rough, unbewn logs, which the boys themselves had felled from the Welham woods and had fashioned with their own hands. They had laid every inch of turf, after levelling the playing pitch.

When the arena had first opened—over a year ago—the town of Welham had laughed. Another of the eccentric Lord Welham's crazy stunts!

To-day, Derbyshire watched with wondering eyes. The whole of England read with avid interest the latest news concerning the "miracle boys."

A figure suddenly appeared on the lip of the crater against the setting sun. It stood motionless for a moment, and then raised a hand in salute, Roman fashion. Instantly, the twelve boys drew themselves smartly to attention, and returned the salute.

"Wonder what the Chief is doing here?" asked Perseus, his keen blue eyes alight with eagerness.

"I say, perhaps he'll let us get some contractors to work on the job, and make some real terracing, so that we can accommodate the crowds on Saturday."

"We can ask him—but I don't think it'll be any good," replied Ajax, shaking his head. "He's funny like that."

The figure had picked its way down the rough, rocky side of the crater, and had now reached the excellent turf at the bottom, and walked across towards the boys. For years, this old hollow had been used by camping tramps and similar gentry who had left the place littered with old tin cans. It was this fact which had given the novel boys' club its nickname.

"Getting ready to come home, my twelve sons?" asked Lord Welham smiling.

He was a tall, spare, intellectual-looking man. His lean, clean-shaven face was that of a dreamer, but the athletic spring of his footstep told that he was a man of action, too.

EXCHANGE

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"We're thinking that there's an awful lot of work to do, Chief," said Ajax diffidently. "We're playing a hot team on Saturday, and there'll be big crowds here. We shall have to have some fences fixed up, and there ought to be a proper entrance, with turnstiles, so that there won't be any confusion. And if only we could shift a lot of these big rocks, there'd be room for two or three hundred more people on the big terracing."

Lord Welham nodded. "It is only Monday," he said. "Get to work."

"We thought perhaps you'd give the job to a big contracting firm, Chief," said Perseus innocently. "We're getting on now. We don't want to go and exhaust ourselves before Saturday—"

"In other words, your success is getting into your heads, eh?" asked Lord Welham dryly. "Oh, no! When you formed this club my condition was that you should 'work it up entirely on your own brawn. So far, you have done well. Don't allow this success to spoil you."

"You're dead right, Chief," said Ajax, in his hearty way. "We'll handle this job ourselves—and do it thoroughly, too."

Lord Welham's eyes glowed with quiet satisfaction. "That's what I like to hear," he said. "You're showing the world what you can do, my sons!"

Abruptly, he left them. It was one of his charac-

teristics to appear unexpectedly, and to leave in just the same way. He had taken one from an orphanage in London, one from an orphanage in Coventry, one from an orphanage in Birmingham, and so on. Not in one single instance had he known the parentage of the babies he had adopted. He had conceived the idea of bringing the twelve orphans up as a unit. They had been given the names of Greek gods, and had gone to school together, where they had all displayed an aptitude for football. When, at last, their sixteenth birthday came—birthday morning was always a great occasion at Welham Priors—they were informed that they were not to return to school, but each should go out into the world and seek his own living.

He had given his "sons" three months to think things over, and to decide. Always inseparable, ever since childhood, Ajax and his fellows had conceived the idea of forming a football club. They could keep together, and they could earn a decent living. But it would mean hard work—grinding, gruelling work to begin with.

Lord Welham had entered into the plan heartily. He had paved the way for the Welham Wanderers to become an officially recognised local club; but the boys had had to prove, by their own prowess, that they were worthy of being included in one of the numerous local leagues. Lord Welham had hinted that they could use the old tin can crater as an arena;

dismayed, at first, the boys had buckled to and had made it ship-shape.

Ajax became the unofficial manager, and under his marvellous



teristics to appear unexpectedly, and to leave in just the same way.

"I thought that was what the Chief would do," said Ajax briskly. "We've got to pull through on our own, my lads. And I suggest that we buzz straight home, change our togs, and then fix up a kind of 'construction camp' here, on the spot. Then, between now and Saturday, we can put in all our time at working, practising, and sleeping."

The others were ready enough to fall into line—with the possible exception of Themis, who was the reserve player of the team. But Themis had always been a little "odd." He seemed to be the only hint of failure in Lord Welham's extraordinary plan.

For his lordship, roughly, sixteen years ago, after living in black seclusion for five years, had adopted

THE FLYING FIEND.—The enormous, transparent creature swooped down. At sight of its hideous, bat-like head and great bulging eyes the two boys turned and fled.

hand the young club won every match and passed out of the lowly minor league, into one of the bigger ones. The real staggerer had come when they entered for the preliminary rounds of the English Cup fight.

But again the miracle happened—and kept happening.

Not only did the once-jeered-at Tin-Can Trojans emerge valiantly through the opening stages of the tussle, but they entered the competition proper, to the amazement of the whole football world. In the first round they visited a famous south of England town, and were the joke of that town right until the start of the match. And then Ajax led his men on to a slashing, bewildering victory which made it clear that there was no fluke about the success of Lord Welham's orphans.

Now the country was sitting back, aghast. Even the celebrated Corinthians had been knocked out. There were no other amateurs left in the competition—except these nameless orphans of Lord Welham's. From being a sensation in "small" football, the Tin-Can Trojans were now a sensation in big football.

Small wonder that this week the Trojans were keen upon making preparations for a big day on Saturday! For they were drawn to play at home—against the mighty First Division club, Brown United. All Welham would want to come to the Crater to see that match, for Brown were favourites for the Cup. It was almost a certainty, in any case, that they would get into the Final. They would visit this joke of a team and put it in its place.

The Ghosts Of The Crater.

LORD WELHAM offered no objections when he heard what the lads had proposed. His ambition was to see his "boys" forging their way steadily from success to success—by their own efforts. Although he knew well enough that their success was solely due to the fact that they worked as one machine.

By mid-day on Tuesday the footballers were hard at work. They were cutting young trees from the neighbouring woods, fashioning them into stakes and cross-sections; fences were being erected as

In some places there were natural terraces of rock, making excellent vantage points for spectators. But in other places the rocks were so huge, so cumbersome, that it would be necessary to fence them off. Hitherto, the public had never attempted to use these dangerous rocks; but on Saturday there was likely to be a record crowd, and the boys would have to be careful.

"With dynamite we could do a little bit of blasting," said Perseus thoughtfully. "But what's going to happen if we start on that game? Might do a lot more harm than good."

"Leave the rocks alone," said Nike shortly.

"Hear, hear!" agreed Dike.

They were the comedians of the team, being the smallest members and very attached to one another. They were fair-haired, ruddy-featured youngsters who were always grinning. They played outside-left and outside-right respectively for the team, and to see them streak down either wing was a revelation.

"I think Nike and Dike are right," remarked Ajax, as he and some of the others strolled across to the foot of the frowning rocks. "If we upset any of these, there might be a miniature avalanche—and then the whole playing pitch would be ruined."

"That big jutting rock looks loose already," remarked Eos, pointing.

They climbed up to it—Ajax, Eos, and Argus. These three were always inseparable chums. They were generally to be found together—just as the other boys, in their off moments, formed themselves into little groups. Themis was the only one who held aloof.

"You mean this one?" shouted Ajax, heaving against an enormous moss-covered stone which stood out like a mighty beacon from the other rocks. "It's as solid as—Hallo! What the— Look out, J! fellow!"

Admittedly, his strength was great. He was even mightier than he himself believed; but as he heaved on the rock he imparted to it a sideways strain owing

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though by magic. The young footballers were more like Greek gods than ever as they laboured, arms bare, necks open, wielding axes and saws and hammers. To-day was set apart for work. They had brought blankets and provisions, and they were going to sleep in the log hut which, at present, was the club's dressing-room. There was no such thing as a stand, or a pavilion.

"To-morrow, my sons, we'll put in a couple of hours at hard practice—just to keep our muscles in trim," Ajax said. "We'll do an hour before breakfast, and an hour in the afternoon. Why, by the way things are going now, Welham won't recognise this place by Saturday."

"Think we could shift some of those rocks?" asked Boreas, pointing across the arena.

The others looked dubious, and even Ajax was doubtful.

"That's one of our big troubles," he replied. "But if only we could get those rocks shifted, and the ground smoothed out, we should have accommodation for hundreds more people."

The Crater was well named. There were many hills and rocky valleys in this part of Derbyshire; it was famous for its rugged scenery. But this remarkable depression, on the edge of Lord Welham's property, was like a deep cup in the hillside.

to the nature of his leverage. The great rock heaved over, sagged slowly and ominously. Fortunately, those below were in time to take advantage of Ajax's shout.

Crash! The rock, weighing tons, struck two other rocks ten feet below, and it splintered into a hundred fragments with a noise like the explosion of dynamite.

"Great Scott! Look there!" yelled Eos.

He wasn't gazing at the fallen rock; but at the place from whence it had come. There was a cavity, deep, black, and it seemed to penetrate far, far down into the ground. It was certainly a great deal bigger than the rock itself had occupied.

"It's nothing—only a sort of cave," said Ajax. "Well, I hope this'll satisfy you chaps. We can't do anything to improve this part of the ground. Too dangerous."

When the day ended they were tired but happy. Hard work of that sort had not impaired their footer skill; and a night's sleep would put them in fit condition again for another day's work. It was pleasant sitting round the crackling camp fire in the darkness. Everybody agreed that it was a great weeze to camp here until Saturday. Supper cooked in the open frying-pan, and flavoured by the pungent wood smoke, tasted far more appetising than more ordinary foods. They had a little sing-song, too, and

in the midst of it Lord Welham himself came along and joined in for half-an-hour.

After that they turned in and were struck by the absolute silence of this rocky depression. A fairly stiff wind was blowing across the countryside; but down at the bottom of the crater scarcely an eddy stirred; the night itself was pitchy.

Many of the boys went sound asleep at once. Others, including Ajax, thought of the morrow's work and planned what should be done. And they

realised how extraordinarily lonely the place was.

At last, however, they all slept. The hours ticked away. Midnight came. The last embers of the camp fire had long since died away.

Suddenly, a strange, unearthly cry sounded mournfully and weirdly on the atmosphere. It seemed to be confined to the crater itself, coming from somewhere near at hand—over amongst the rugged rocks, opposite the hut. Some night creature, perhaps. An owl, or—

It came again—and again. Now there were two or three notes, hinting that there were several intruders stealing down into the Crater.

"Ajax!" whispered a voice in the darkness.

"All right—I've heard 'em," came a murmur from Ajax. "Rummy, isn't it? Think we'd better go out and have a look round."

It was Eos who had awakened, but before they had flung a few clothes on they were joined by Argus and Perseus. They crept out into the darkness to investigate, staring straight across the arena at first—until Argus grasped at the arms of his companions and pointed upwards.

"Look!" he whispered, in mingled horror and disbelief.

Fluttering across the starry dome, were some shapeless, monstrous-looking objects. They might have been bats, but they were a thousand times bigger than any bats that ever lived. Each one seemed to cover an area of several square yards, and its great, lazy wings were flapping silently.

"What—what are they?" gurgled Eos.

But his companions were too thunderstruck to make any reply. They had just noticed that the stars could be seen through the monstrous bat-like creatures. They were silent and transparent—and as mysteriously as they had come, so they vanished.

And on the far lip of the Crater stood a gaunt, silent figure.

Professor Zorro's Warning.

THE moon was just rising, and it came up behind the silent figure, creating an effect most ghastly.

"Who is it?" shouted Ajax, his voice firm and steady.

"Someone is awake, then?" came the reply, in English so perfect that the speaker was obviously a foreigner. "Wait! I will join you."

"Old Zorro!" muttered Ajax, with a sniff.



FELLED BY THE FLASH. As Lord Welham moved towards Zorro a sizzling electric flash played about the scientist. It flung his assailant to the ground, senseless.

They had encountered Professor Mortimer Zorro on other occasions. He was a very great archaeologist, and he had been doing a great amount of research work in England, particularly in Derbyshire, seeking the bones of prehistoric man. He had met with considerable success, too, for this district was rich in such relics.

"Foolish boys!" said Professor Zorro, as he approached silently across the springy turf, like some dread creature of the night himself. "What are you doing here at this hour—without a fire—without lights? Do you not realise the great risk you run?"

"Risk of what?" asked Ajax, with contempt in his voice. "We're not afraid of the dark, Professor."

"You make yourself sound so bold, huh?" retorted Professor Zorro. "It is good for you to be afraid of the dark—in such a spot as this. Here—" He broke off, looking round him strangely. "Why is there no light?" he went on sharply. "Let this fire be replenished, so that it burns brightly."

As he spoke he flung a lean, claw-like hand towards the nearly dead fire. Instantly, tongues of bright green flame licked hungrily upwards, reaching to a height of thirty feet. The boys, startled, backed away.

"That sort of trick may interest the rustics, Professor Zorro, but you needn't play them on us," said Ajax angrily. "We know just what our guardian thinks of you and your operations—"

"You talk of Lord Welham?" broke in Zorro, with a grating laugh of contempt. "An eccentric—"

a crazy old fool who adopts nameless boys and brings them up to become impertinent upstarts!"

"Stop!" said Ajax dangerously, taking a step forward. "You can insult us, but don't dare to insult Lord Welham! We didn't ask you to come here, and—"

"Young fool!" broke in the Professor. "I tell you that Lord Welham did not know what mad folly he committed when he permitted you boys to use this crater! I say he is a fool, and—"

Crash! Ajax, leaping forward, sent his mighty fist smashing into Zorro's face. The Professor fell headlong into the fire and sprawled through it to the other side. He picked himself up, greatly calmed.

"I was wrong," he said, between his teeth. "My only desire was to warn you boys that you should not be in the crater at night. I, who have delved so deeply into the graves of prehistoric man, and neolithic creatures of all kinds, can tell you that any disturbance of ancient bones is fraught with black evil."

"Disturbance of bones!" whispered Eos. "I wonder if that falling stone, this afternoon, could have disturbed an old grave, or something?"

"What is this you speak of?" asked Professor Zorro sharply. "A falling stone? Show it to me! Don't you realise that a prehistoric grave, disturbed after thousands of years, might release monsters so horrible, so vile, that you would recoil at the very mention of them? Call it superstition—call it what you like—but I know! And I am warning you!"

"You've warned us before, Professor," said Ajax calmly. "And I remember, some weeks ago, that the Chief told you not to attempt to scare us with your ghost talk."

"Pah! That was nothing! That was in the daytime," said Zorro harshly. "But now it is night—with the moon at the full. Did you see anything?" he asked suddenly. "Anything in the sky? Answer! Don't try to fool me!"

"Nobody's trying to fool you, Professor Zorro," said Ajax sharply. "Yes, we saw some gigantic bats, and they appeared to be transparent—"

A great cry escaped the professor—a sound which was a mingled groan and expression of fear.

"Imagination—imagination!" he exclaimed, with sudden fury. "You saw no such things. I am warning you of ghosts—of spirits of dead men. You saw no bats. None of you saw them."

He looked round from one to another. He found himself staring into the eyes of Themis, and there was something in Zorro's hypnotic gaze which compelled Themis to move nearer.

"I believe you, Professor Zorro," whispered Themis.

"Better come back, Themis," said Ajax gruffly. "Eos, lend a hand with him. You, too, Perseus. He's gone funny."

Professor Zorro, without another word, had leapt backwards across the turf, and before Themis could be stopped, he had gone, too. Both figures had vanished into the intense gloom.

"Themis!" shouted Ajax.

But for once his great shout went unheeded. Themis had gone racing after Professor Zorro, and they were now crouching against some rocks in a corner of the arena—half hidden from the boys, yet comparatively close.

"Why did you follow me?" whispered Professor Zorro.

"I came—because you wanted me!" breathed Themis.

A low chuckle escaped the other. He seized Themis by the shoulders, and looked straight into his eyes. There was an expression of absolute triumph on his face.

"Yes, yes, I was right," he muttered. "I knew I was right. Boy, you are my son! When Welham adopted you, he thought you were an orphan like the others. But you weren't. I was supposedly killed and you were put into an orphanage by a kindly relieving officer who should have known better. You're my son. You're a Zorro. Keep this to yourself. Do not breathe a word. We will talk on a more suitable occasion. Go!"

Themis staggered away like one in a dream. He was found within a minute by Nike and Dike and Hesperus.

"Why did you run off?" demanded Nike indignantly.

Themis, however, gave no word of explanation. He walked straight ahead to his blankets, rolled himself in them, and fell into a sound sleep. By this time Ajax and Argus and Perseus and Eos had gathered round.

"He was hypnotised in some way," said Ajax grimly. "If that old bone-hunter comes croaking round here again, with his idiotic tales of disturbed graves, I'll tell him where to get off!"

"Strikes me there's something more in that than that!" said Argus shrewdly. "Isn't it queer that Zorro should appear just after we saw those flying things? And isn't it rummy that he should warn us of ghosts, and then tell us that the bat-things were imagination? I suggest we get dressed, and make a quiet search."

"Come on, then," agreed Ajax. "We four will be enough."

As soon as the camp fire was burning well, Ajax and his faithful three ventured out.

The southern end of the great gully was shallower than any other part, and here there was a great wide roadway which ran down to the arena itself. At the earlier matches, this was the only part of the "enclosure" which had accommodated any spectators. It was a natural terracing, but Ajax and his boys were now erecting strong fences, dividing this section off into two halves, so that a clear private road was left between them.

The boys walked this way now. Having reached the edge, they stood looking about them. The countryside, as far as the eye could see, was rugged, bathed in moonlight, and peaceful. In the other direction, close at hand, was the drab smudge of Welham Town, with blast furnaces making the sky lurid here and there, and with factory chimneys belching forth their volumes of smoke.

"We'll meet at the other side," said Ajax briefly.

He and Eos went in one direction, and Argus and Perseus took the other. They did not anticipate any trouble—but, curiously enough, each party of two found some. Argus and Perseus skirting some tall trees which grew on the top of a knoll, came within sight of a road which wound round near by. A car was standing there and no lights were showing.

There were two men talking in low tones—and the boys saw, to their startled surprise, that the men were wearing skin-tight costumes of a curious aluminium-grey colour. Their faces were completely enclosed within the costumes, and where their noses and mouths should have been, projected enormous beaks, grotesque and hideous. Great false eyes, greenish luminous, glowed above.

"Duck!" hissed Argus.

They only dropped in the nick of time. Another moment, and they would have blundered unconsciously into full view. Through the coarse grass and weeds they saw an occasional movement and then the car glided away. Being on the top of a hill, it was able to speed off, for a mile or two, with engine silent.

"What do you make of that?" breathed Perseus, aghast.

"If we had spotted those ghouls without the car, we might easily have mistaken them for monstrosities of Professor Zorro's ilk," replied Argus. "But they were men—men got up like creatures from a different world. We've surprised a nest of crooks, by the look of it."

It seemed incredible. Yet, when they thought of Professor Zorro's warning and the extraordinary events which had followed, they were ready for almost any surprise.

Hurrying round, they set off to meet Ajax and Eos, according to plan, on the opposite lip of the crater. Scarcely had they moved a dozen yards before they heard a wild, despairing cry, muffled and apparently buried. It came from the steep, rocky crater side where the stones were steepest and most treacherous.

"What—that was that?" asked Perseus sharply. "Our chaps—one of them, at least," said the other. "Quick! They're in trouble!"

They went stumbling on, hastening down the craggy side, pausing, every now and again, to listen for some further cry.

"Ajax!" called Argus urgently.

And from his very feet, through a crevice in the rock no wider than a rat hole, came a heartfelt cry.

heard the cry from afar. He knew the urgency of it; and with the grace and speed of the trained athlete, he went running towards the Crater.

Suddenly, when he had covered half the distance, a black figure rose up, apparently from the ground itself, and barred his progress. It was the figure of Professor Mortimer Zorro.

"Better not, Lord Welham," he said harshly.

They faced one another, and the scientist-peer's eyes blazed.

"What evil have you been working now, Zorro?" he asked angrily. "I've already warned you not to trespass on my property. Stand aside! My boys are in peril, and I am satisfied that you are responsible."

Professor Zorro made no move, and Lord Welham leapt at him. Even as they came into contact, the mystery crook's figure became enveloped in bluish-white points of fire, which sizzled and quivered like lightning. A gasping cry escaped from Lord Welham, and he fell back, unconscious.

Back in the crater, the activities were increasing. Argus and Perseus had discovered that the "rat hole" was only a minor outlet; tracing the crevice along, they found that it led straight to the yawning cavity which had been laid bare by the falling rock of the afternoon.

Great News!



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BEGINS NEXT WEEK.

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that will Set You Alight with its
Amazing New Happenings and

THREE 'ZAT PORTRAITS OF
OUR TEST CRICKETERS FREE.

Have You Got Your 'Zat Game Yet?

See page 11 for full details of this grand offer.



"Here!" it sounded. "Fetch the others—quick! Eos and I are done . . ."
"Ajax!" yelled Perseus. "What can we do? Hi!"

He put his cupped hands to his mouth, and sent forth a penetrating and pleasant cry—rather like that of a seagull on the wing. It was the cry of the Twelve Orphans, by means of which they frequently signalled to one another. The result was instantaneous, for the other orphans came running out of the hut, bearing staves of wood which would serve them as weapons.

There were other ears which heard that penetrating signal call—the cry of the Twelve Orphans. Lord Welham, walking in the grounds of Welham Priors,

AJAX and Eos, on their own walk of inspection had encountered the trouble so suddenly, so dramatically, that it hit them unawares.

It seemed that the darkness suddenly became curiously intensified. Ajax looked up abruptly, and he saw the moon through a faint, transparent black cloud which was far closer to the earth's surface than any cloud Ajax has ever seen.

"Look, Eos!" he said sharply. "What do you make of—"

It was at that moment that Eos uttered a loud shout of alarm. For the "cloud" was settling down over the two boys; its outer fringes resolved themselves into transparent wings, and the whole monstrous horror was pressing down, smothering the

shouts of the pair, and pushing the boys' faces downwards on to the rocks.

This was no earth creature! It must have measured twenty or thirty yards across, and it pressed down on the boys like a load of cold, slippery jelly. It seemed to have no recognisable body nor limbs nor wings of any description.

Then came an unexpected relief. In being pressed down upon the rocks they fell precipitately into the hole which had been laid bare by the fallen boulder.

Crash—crash! They dropped to the bottom of the rock cavity, side by side, bruised, half-stiffed, but otherwise safe.

"Look!" screamed Eos, pointing.

Above them was the funnel-like opening of the rocks, and *slowly descending into it was the Transparent Bat!* It was compressing itself and moulding itself to the shape of the rocks as it dropped lower and lower to finish off its diabolical work.

"Ajax!" came a sudden cry.

And Ajax found that the formation of the rocks allowed the voice of one of the searchers to penetrate a crevice. He managed to gasp out a few words. But those were sufficient.

The other orphans were running. Dashing up the rocky side, they reached Argus and Perseus. Grabbing one of the flaming firebrands, Argus bent over the lip. He saw what appeared to be a slowly moving mass of black transparency, billowing and heaving.

With an expression of disgust, Argus flung the brand down. The effect was instantaneous. The mysterious mass heaved, rising right to the surface, while other boys flung their burning torches.

The Transparency rose into the air like a black cloud, without making a sound and with scarcely a ripple of air. Fifty feet up, it heaved over, and the torches fell to the ground. The nameless Thing fluttered across the face of the moon, swooped behind the neighbouring trees, and was gone.

Ajax and Eos, hauled out by their comrades, were little the worse for their startling adventure. Two hours later, as they all sat round the camp-fire—for they decided not to sleep again until dawn came—Argus called to the others. His eyes were the keenest, and he was pointing.

Up in the sky were three of the Transparent Horrors, and it seemed to the boys that perched on the "shoulders," or front, of each one, was a Grey Man, apparently acting as pilot!

The Non-Stop Trojans.

THE next day was sunny and springlike, and the young footballers put in some excellent practice, and made further progress with the ground. When Lord Welham asked them if everything was going smoothly, they spoke no word of the night's adventures, fearing that they might be forbidden to spend another night in the arena.

Later that day Ajax got hold of a newspaper. He took Eos and Argus and Perseus aside and his expression was grim.

"I'm not saying anything—but what do you make of this?" he asked. "According to this newspaper, another bank was robbed last night—this time on the outskirts of Sheffield. The crooks openly dynamited the bank and were seen to make a run through the artificial fog they created—and one eye-witness declares that they looked like 'men with beaks.'"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Eos. "You mean the Grey Men?"

"Well, what else?" retorted Ajax grimly. "Two of us saw that car moving off with the Grey Men. Later those floating things came back, carrying the Grey Men!"

"Looks as if the crater is the haunt of a gang of bank robbers and crooks—and that Professor Zorro,

instead of being a respectable archaeologist, is really the leader of the gang," said Perseus excitedly.

"What are we going to do? Shall we tell the police?"

"They'd laugh at us. We haven't got an atom of proof," replied Ajax slowly. "We shall have to look out for ourselves, for war has been declared. But there's no time for that before the match. We've got to think footer, eat it, drink it, and sleep it."

The Tin-Can Trojans went serenely on their way until Saturday. They did not allow themselves to be hustled or excited. When the Great Day came they were trained to the very last inch. At training the mighty Ajax was as successful as he was at managing.

While the Trojans themselves remained calm, the mighty football public of England waxed very excited. Every newspaper predicted that in this tie, at least, the "Miracle Boys" would inevitably go under.

Thousands of people turned up from Welham, and thousands more journeyed from Brownton. Not only was the Crater packed to suffocation, but the countryside all round was thick with people who never had an earthly chance of witnessing the play.

Brownton United, proud, superior, were a somewhat resentful team. They resented the doggedness of these upstart schoolboys which had created the whole unfortunate situation. They, the mighty Brownton United, drawn to play against a team of mushroom-growth youngsters! Well, there was only one thing to do—and that was to lick the boys in a manner which could leave the football public in no two minds as to the better team. Such were the feelings of the great First Division club before the match, shared by its mighty army of supporters.

Welham Town had a Second Division club of its own, but quite a number of its supporters deserted their favourites on this memorable afternoon to go out to the Crater to see the "freaks." The spirit which prevailed was one of intense enthusiasm for the boys, and it is safe to say that the great majority of the spectators were hoping for another miracle.

Brownton, as usual, looked businesslike in their red-and-blue striped jerseys and blue shorts. The famous footballers, many of them internationals, seemed absurdly out of place in this humble arena.

But if Brownton looked businesslike, so did Welham Wanderers. A sturdier set of youngsters never trod the field, with the brawny Ajax towering above them all, a mountain of strength—in brawn and brain. Their colours were orange and black—whole-coloured orange jerseys and black shorts.

"Keep it up, the Trojans!"

"Show us what you can do again, boys!"

The whistle was sounded and the game started, the most amazing Cup Tie in the round.

If the Brownton people had expected to see their champions slice through the boys' defence, and score in the first minute, they were sadly disappointed. The Brownton centre-forward was stopped after four seconds, robbed of the ball by Perseus so neatly, so skillfully, that he scarcely knew what had happened—until, spinning round, he saw the leather passed out to Nike on the left wing. In vain the Brownton back tried to intercept. Nike, with lightning speed, was there first, and as he moved up the field, so the rest of the Trojans moved with him, like the integral parts of a mass of machinery.

Nike centred, and Argus, the brilliant Trojans' centre-forward, was exactly on the spot when the ball fell. But it was too late for him to shoot, for the other Brownton back was practically on him. Coolly, Argus side-kicked, and Ajax, who had anticipated the move a split second earlier, was

(Continued on page 12.)

YOUR EDITOR'S GRAND NEWS

Next Week's Big
Thrill Feature:

THE MASTER
OF MASKS

By
JOHN
HUNTER



THREE MORE MINIATURE 'ZAT
CARDS FREE NEXT SATURDAY.
THEY'LL HELP YOU TO COMPLETE
YOUR TEAM AND QUALIFY FOR A
GREAT FREE 'ZAT GAME.

cards all ready to post off to my readers. So hurry up and send in your set to secure one of these unique gifts.

Now for next week's mighty star story attraction. Something startlingly new, amazingly original—something cyclonic! Nothing less than a great new yarn by John Hunter, the famous author of boys' stories. Next week you are to meet

The Master of Masks.

This amazing new fiction character has been created specially for *Boys' Mag.* readers. To his myrmidons—the dreaded Society of Seven—he is known as One over Seven, and by secret, sinister ways of diabolical cleverness he is pulling the strings of international affairs in the melting pot—that turbulent, war-racked region of Central Europe where the Great War had its genesis. The Master of Masks knows a fearful secret—something that will be a terrible weapon in his unscrupulous hands. But so does Brame Sentence of the Secret Service. You'll like Sentence. With his drawing voice and dandified ways people think he couldn't damage the skin of a rice pudding—but you'll know different. You'll follow him and Billy Trent, ex-page boy at a London Theatre to realms of fascination, awe and thrills never before revealed to the readers of a boys' paper. Look out for Billy, for Brame Sentence, and last but not least, One over Seven, with his strange rôles and wonderful disguises next week.

As you all know Tuesday week is Pancake Day, and Johnny Gee and his merry men celebrate the occasion in their usual lively manner. In

The Shrovetide Shemozzle at St. Giddy's, Timothy Catchpole, the inventive genius of the Remove, brings out his Patent Pancake Mixer, Fryer and Tossler. Although a weird and wonderful invention, the machine produces some delectable pancakes—until it goes mad. Then the fun starts in real earnest. This is only one of the many amusing

(Continued on next page.)

MY DEAR CHUMS,

I have been almost snowed under this week with the thousands of letters I have received from those readers who have already collected their Test Team of Miniature 'ZAT cards. To do this, of course, these readers have joined forces with two or three of their friends. In this way any other of you chaps can get your first completely different set of cards. With the three Miniature cards in this week's number of the *Mag.*, every reader will have had twelve cards, more than enough for a team. Don't forget the hint I gave you last week to get them all different. You should

Swap Duplicates With Your Chums.

Then all you have to do is send them in to me with your name and full address. By return I will post to you

An Enlarged Set of 44 'ZAT Cards!

As I have said before in my chats, this is the finest gift scheme ever devised for boys, and grown-ups too, and I want every one of my readers to take advantage of it by sending in their completed teams as soon as they can.

Every super 'Zat card is a splendid portrait of one of the famous Test Cricketers now fighting so successfully for the Ashes in Australia. For the eleven cards you send in you get 44 larger and better-finished portrait cards, with a set of rules to enable you to play the fascinating new game of 'ZAT.

Three More Miniature 'ZAT Cards

will be inserted in every copy of next week's number, and I have thousands of sets of enlarged portrait

THE STADIUM OF SPECTRES—*(Continued from page 10.)*

ready. He took the leather, passed it to Dike on the right wing, and again the Trojans were off.

The crowd was breathless. All this had happened within a second or two—perfect, machine-like passing. Dike swerved in towards the goal. He steadied himself and kicked.

Slam! It was a moderate shot—at first sight. But before it reached the goalie it seemed to have gathered terrific speed, only by a desperate lunge did the Brownston custodian save. He fisted out, and the ball came soaring into midfield.

Ajax rose like a rocket, soaring high. He got his head to the leather as it swung over; there was a flick, then a mighty gasp from the crowd. For the ball, with deadly accuracy, had gone straight back into the net, flashing over the goalie's shoulder.

"Goal! Come on, the Orphans!"

The record crowd rose to this lightning evidence of the Miracle Boys' brilliance. Hundreds of people waved their caps wildly into the air in their excitement; and in one place on the rugged natural "terrace," the masses of people swayed like a sudden tidal wave. Many of them were perched precariously on the rocks, having climbed there unbidden.

Cra-a-a-a-a-ckle! Crash! The sudden pressure, brought on by the cheering and the movement, proved too much for one of the big rocks, and it moved ominously, then suddenly crashed majestically forward amid wild shouts of alarm. Mercifully, the people below had time to get clear, and there was a wild stampede, and general alarm.

"Look!" went up a mighty roar from hundreds of throats.

Something had gone floating upwards from the suddenly revealed cavity—something blackish, but transparent, like a great mass of floating jelly, shapeless, monstrous, yet suggestive of life.

"Great Scott!" muttered Argus, grabbing at Ajax's arm. "It's one of the Transparent Bats. There'll be a panic—"

Zurrrrrrh! Like a suddenly erupting volcano, an incredible column of intensely black smoke shot skywards from the cavity, enveloping the released Thing and hiding it—so quickly that not one spectator could have said what he had actually seen. The smoke flattened out in a great cloud overhead, drifting ominously away.

"Zorro!" breathed Ajax grimly. "That smoke was let off deliberately—to screen the Horrid Thing which escaped."

"Hope it won't mess up the game!" murmured Perseus.

Fortunately, police were already restoring order, and when the first-aid men forced their way through, they found that there were only one or two minor casualties. The crowd once more turned to the thrills of the game. And in the closing stages of the tussle the Miracle Boys gave the people an exhibition of the most dazzling, wizard-like football they had ever witnessed. At the end the Tin-Can Trojans trooped off the field triumphant by four goals to nil.

How do you like the Miracle Boys? A splendid bunch of thrill chaps, eh? Look out for another ripping Footer yarn of the Tin-Can Trojans next week.

YOUR EDITOR'S GRAND NEWS—*(Continued from page 11.)*

incidents in this ripping school story, into which is also woven a strong dramatic plot.

An old bunch of B.M. fun-makers also join in the glad rejoicings of Shrove Tuesday in appropriate fashion.

Pip, Pep, and Pancakes

tells of the latest doings of the crew of the *Happy Haddock*, and is one long succession of choricles from the first moment when Pip is turned out of the Haddock Pancake Society, instituted by Fat Burns.

And in striking contrast you'll feel your flesh creep when you meet

The Creature of the Crater,

which is the title of the yarn that tells of the startling developments in the great new footer series featuring

Are you a member of the **BOYS' MAGAZINE REDSKIN LEAGUE?** Every reader can belong to this wonderful organisation, and share its benefits. A handsome Badge and Book of Codes and Hints are sent to Every Member.

the Miracle Boys who made their bow this week in the Stadium of Spectres. What this unearthly creature is you must read for yourselves. But if you enjoy erie thrills, interspersed with sparkling footer you'll turn first to this hair-raising yarn.

The Trail of Troats

introduces Dick Ryan, a new Mountie thrill-maker, to *Boys' Mag.* Dick is on the trail of a dangerous killer, who is determined to stop the Mountie at all costs. But, following the creed of the Canadian Mounted Police, Constable Ryan is out to get his man. Unusual thrills here, chaps, in the snowy wastes of Northern Canada.

Another ripping surprise yarn and more Birthday Gifts complete next week's number. And remember, there are hundreds of thousands of sets of Sepia 'ZAT cards waiting to be sent for, so get down to it and collect your 'ZAT team.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



Hi! Boys—look at this!

Famous "ALGR" Stamp Outfit is unbeatable value. Look what it contains: Pair Tweezers, Watermark Detector, Pocket Wallet (Strip pockets), Perforation Gauge, Approval Book (120 spaces), 125 stamp hinges, 5 transparent envelopes, Price lists and a free gift set Pictorial Stamps (cat. 3d.). All for 5/6d. A British-made marvel. If any difficulty in obtaining write to THOMAS CLIFFE, Colwyn Bay.

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Fires 15 shots with force and accuracy. Repeating action. Nickel finish. With ammunition, 1/6.
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Postage 3d. each pistol. Colonial postage 9d. Extra supply of Ammunition, 6d. and 1/-.



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THE BLACK SHADOW! The Mag's Man of Mystery and Action! Here Again in a Grand New Complete Thriller, Chums.



Marsh Manor.

THE marshland was in the icy grip of winter, and every pool and creek was frozen hard. Dead yellow reeds rustled and rasped in the arctic wind, and the trees were piled high with snow.

About nine o'clock at night a high-powered saloon car raced through the village of Ebbfleet. Just beyond the village, it turned into a narrow lane and travelled for about another mile and a half till it came to a tall, lichen-covered wall.

"This is Marsh Manor, Prince," said one of the two men who sat in the saloon, nudging his companion.

The man he addressed was tall and handsome, with dark, glittering eyes, and a small, stiff moustache. He nodded, spoke through the speaking tube in some foreign tongue, and the big car slid to a standstill.

The two men alighted and, having given the chauffeur some further instructions in the same foreign language, the "Prince" frowned at the wall. It was a good fifteen feet high, solidly built and crowned with jagged pieces of glass.

"How do we scale this, Peters?" he asked in the too perfect English of the educated foreigner.

"I've fixed it," his companion answered. "I found a place where the mortar was soft, and I've

dug out a few bricks to make a way to the top of the wall. I'll show you."

He led the way along by the wall to several snow-laden bramble bushes which grew between the edge of the road and the wall. Thrusting his way behind these, the Englishman pointed to the wall. The "Prince" saw that several bricks had been removed, thus providing handgrips and footholds for any one to climb to the top.

"You go first my friend," he said suavely, and his companion swung himself rapidly to the summit of the wall. The "Prince" followed suit, and dropping to the ground on the other side, they made their way through a small copse of trees. Before they had gone far a faint, low wailing broke the silence, and rose slowly to a high-pitched shriek, something like the sound of a siren.

Peters caught his companion by the arm.

"That's the Tornado Maker at work," he said in an excited voice. "It made the same noise when I was watching it last night from the woods."

The "Prince" nodded, and strode on till the trees thinned, and they reached the edge of an open park-like stretch of turf. On the farther side the high, pointed gables of an old manor house were lined faintly against the purple sky.

"There it is," the Englishman whispered, and pointed to a queer-looking machine moving slowly across the open park. It looked rather like an armoured car, except that it was surmounted by a metal cone resembling a large loud-speaker. The car was moving towards a small summer-house built in the form of a miniature Greek temple. The shrill

THE TORNADO MACHINE OF MARSH MANOR—STOLEN! A Machine that would Blow down Walls, Destroy Banks and Batter the Battalions of Law and Order to Inanimate Pulp! THE LATEST MENACE TO THE LEAPING MAN.

wailing rose to a higher pitch. Suddenly the walls of the miniature temple began to shake and tremble as though a mighty gale had hit the building. At last, with a roar like thunder, the whole structure collapsed, and behind it the trees swayed, dislodging great masses of snow and broken boughs.

"Come," said the "Prince," as the gale and the wailing sound died away. His companion close on his heels, he stole through the trees, until the ruined temple was between them and the strange machine. As they did so two men emerged from it and commenced to walk towards the shattered walls.

The "Prince" drew an automatic pistol from his hip pocket and darted out of the woods. As he



A CHOPPING BLOCK.—The villain brought the moon-shaped blade of the axe down on the Black Shadow's head, beating him to his knees.

neared the ruins one of the men swung round and gave a startled cry.

"Hallo!" he shouted. "Who are you? What . . ."

He said no more for his companion, a shifty-eyed man dressed in overalls, suddenly whipped out a spanner and brought it down with stunning force on the back of his head. He fell forward in a crumpled motionless heap.

"Fool!" the "Prince" snarled as he ran up. "I wished to question him!"

"All right," the other grinned. "I know enough about his invention to work it myself. The plans are all in the safe in the house."

"In that case," said the "Prince," a sinister smile crossing his face, "we will first secure the blueprints of his invention, and then make away with him. Bring him into the house."

He strode across the park towards the old manor house, and his two companions followed him, carrying the unconscious man between them.

The Mystery Man.

"SO you have recovered, my friend," said the "Prince," urbanely.

His victim, tied hand and foot, was lying on the floor of the big hall of Marsh Manor. He had just opened his eyes and was staring stupidly around. At the "Prince's" words he commenced to struggle vainly to free himself.

"You scoundrel!" he cried in a husky voice. "I'll get even with you for this."

The "Prince's" white teeth flashed in a mirthless smile.

"No, my foolish one," he said in a mocking voice. "You will never do that, for to-night you die. You would not accept my so generous offer to buy your invention, so I was compelled to use more drastic methods. Now it is with regret, my friend, that I must kill you. But I have work to do with your Tornado Machine. With it I shall blow down the sea-wall near Ebbfleet to-night. At high tide the marshes and low-lying land will be flooded, thereby destroying the aerodrome and barracks which form part of your eastern air defences. Lest you should embarrass me by going to the police I mean to leave you here. I shall use your invention to wreck the house so that you will be buried beneath its ruins."

"You fiend!" cried the inventor, in a husky voice.

The "Prince's" suave manner suddenly dropped from him like a cloak, and black hatred blazed from his eyes.

"English dog," he snarled harshly. "I would kill not merely you but all your countrymen if I had my way."

Next moment he was smiling calmly again.

"Now, my friend, I leave you," he said.

"Stay!" A voice spoke thunderously from the balcony that ran round three sides of the big hall. Before the echoes had died away a strange figure leapt down into the hall, his heels giving forth a metallic clang as they touched the ground. It was a tall, lithe man, sheathed from head to toe in a tight-fitting suit of chain-mail.

"Black Shadow!" cried the "Prince," and there was a faint trace of terror in his voice.

The mystery man's eyes burned like living coals behind their metal mask.

"Yes, the Black Shadow," he repeated coldly. Suddenly the "Prince" whipped out his automatic and fired point blank at the Black Shadow. But though the stream of bullets hit him in the chest, and sent him reeling as though smitten by a giant's fist, his wonderful bullet-proof mail saved his life.

He recovered himself almost at once, and as Peters drew a gun he sprang at him, heaving him bodily into the air. For a moment he held him thus, at arm's length above his head; then he hurled him clean through one of the big, mullioned windows.

As he disappeared the "Prince" flung his empty gun away, and darting to the wall, seized a battle-

axe which hung there, together with some other antique weapons. Wielding the axe in both hands, he rushed at the Black Shadow and brought the great, moon-shaped blade down on his head with all his force. The metal hood saved the mystery man, but the force of the blow beat him to his hands and knees.

With a yell of fury the "Prince" heaved his weapon aloft for another blow; but before it could be delivered the inventor lashed out with his pinioned feet, catching him a terrific blow on the shins. The pain and shock made the villain stagger and drop the axe. Recovering, he saw that the Black Shadow was not seriously injured, and fled after the mechanic, who had already bolted through the hall door.

He reached the Tornado Machine, just as the Black Shadow, who quickly recovered from the stunning effects of the blow, started in pursuit.

The "Prince," slamming the door behind him, scrambled into the armoured body of the car, where the other crook was already busy with a complicated steering-board. Suddenly there sounded a high-pitched whining overhead, which quickly rose to a screech like a hurricane of wind. The big cone on the roof of the car swung round towards the Black Shadow, as he came shooting across the grounds in a low, thirty-foot leap.

From this cone there whistled and shrieked a current of air which moved at such a tremendous speed it was like a steel battering ram. It caught the Leaping Man in mid-air and hurled him backward, as a dead leaf is whirled away in a furious gale. He was flung right across the open park, to crash against the trunk of an ancient oak tree. He fell sprawling to the ground, and did not move again.

"Guess that has finished him," the mechanic chuckled.

His companion had been peering through a narrow slit in the side of the car. Now he turned to the mechanic.

"I hope you're right," he said. "For I can waste no more time on him. Turn the air blast upon the house and destroy it."

The mechanic nodded, and twisted a wheel, whereupon the cone swung round in the direction of the house. He pressed a lever again, and once more an uncanny shriek sounded above them, as a blast of air rushed from the cone with the force of a high explosive shell. It hit the west wing of the house, and, with a thunderous roar, the structure collapsed in ruins.

As the crook slowly revolved the funnel, the rest of "Marsh Manor" went crashing like a house of cards.

"Excellent," purred the "Prince, with a wolfish

grin. "Come, we will destroy the sea-wall before the tide turns."

Under the mechanic's control the Tornado Machine swung round and trundled slowly across the park, to disappear among the trees.

Retribution.

DESPITE the terrific force with which he had been hurled against the tree-trunk, the Black Shadow had not been killed. The rubber padding inside his suit of chain mail had broken the force of this impact, so that he was merely knocked temporarily senseless.

The Tornado Machine had barely vanished beyond the trees when, feeling sick and weak, he got to his feet. Nevertheless, he rose on his spring heels in a bound that carried him halfway towards the ruined manor house. A second magnificent leap took him beside the ruins, where he looked anxiously for some sign of the inventor.

It was with a sense of intense relief that he heard a faint, muffled voice shout for help, coming from beneath a great heap of bricks and masonry. Working furiously, the Black Shadow tore away some of this rubbish until he revealed the opening to a big, cave-



THE CROOK CHUCKER-OUT.—The Black Shadow heaved Peters bodily into the air and hurled him with all his might through the big, mullioned window.

like chamber, formed by the timbers of the hall, caving in and supporting the superstructure which had collapsed upon it.

The inventor lay beneath this natural archway, scarcely scratched, and the

Black Shadow speedily dragged him out into the open air. When he had been cut free of his bonds, the young man struggled into a sitting position, and panted out his thanks.

"It was lucky for me you happened to be here," he concluded.

The Black Shadow smiled grimly behind his metal mask.

"It was not chance that brought me here," he answered. "I have been watching the 'Prince' for some time past, knowing that he is a foreign spy, plotting against this country. I discovered that he

meant to rob you to-night of your invention,"

The inventor nodded.

"The 'Prince,' as you call him, tried to buy my invention, but I refused," he said. "You see, I think it will make a very deadly weapon in wartime, and I want, therefore, to keep the secret for our own government. So I came down here and lived alone, except for a mechanic, meaning to perfect my machine before I approached the War Office with it. But apparently the mechanic I employed was one of the 'Prince's' men."

"That is so," the Black Shadow answered sharply. "There is no time to lose if we are to defeat him. He has taken your machine and is going to destroy the sea-wall, as he threatened to do. I shall follow and try to prevent him from doing that. You must hurry to the Royal Air Force barracks, near Ebbfleet, to get help, and warn them. Hurry, friend."

With a brief nod to the inventor he leapt away in a gigantic bound, clearing the park and the woods, and

Suddenly the two spies must have seen him, for the cone on top of the armoured body of the car twisted in his direction, and he heard a piercing screech as a blast of air smashed across space towards him.

The Leaping Man twisted in mid-air, and shot sideways, so that the terrible air current missed him, and only tore a long shred from his flowing cloak.

He leapt again, landing nearer the Tornado Machine. The cone twisted once more, and again a deadly, invisible blast went howling across the marshlands. Again the Black Shadow leapt aside, just in time to avoid being hit.

For nearly five minutes this strange duel continued; the spies hurling blast after blast at the mystery man, any one of which would have plucked him up bodily and hurled him to destruction. But each time the Leaping Man adroitly avoided the smashing column of air, and all the while he moved nearer and nearer to the machine.



'ZAT Have you Collected a Team of Miniature 'Zat Portrait Cards given every week in the Mag.? If so, send them to: 'ZAT CARD DEPT., "Boys' Magazine," 196, Gray's Inn Rd., London, W.C.1. In Return you will Receive FREE a Set of 44 Super Sepia TEST PLAYERS' PORTRAIT CARDS with which you can

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making his way across the flat, marshy land towards the sea-wall.

Presently he came to some sheds, and a miniature railroad track, where stood a number of small, iron cars half-filled with sand and cement, for the construction of a newer and stronger sea-wall.

As the Black Shadow alighted behind the sheds he noticed two things. One was the Tornado Machine proceeding slowly over some marshy ground towards the sea, about a quarter of a mile away. The other was a glaring, white notice-painted on a galvanised-iron shed standing some distance from the rest of the buildings.

WARNING. EXPLOSIVES.

The sight of those words suggested a daring plan for frustrating the "Prince's" diabolical scheme, and he bounded towards the iron shed.

The Leaping Man took out the small kit of tools. In exactly sixty seconds the door swung open, and he flashed the light of an electric torch inside.

Within were several cases marked **DYNAMITE**, and seizing one of these, he moved rather gingerly with it into the open air. Gripping his deadly burden firmly in both hands, he rose in a low, gentle leap that carried him twenty yards.

He half-expected the dynamite to be detonated by the jolt when he landed. Fortunately, however, his powerful spring heels took the weight of his body, the case was barely jarred, and nothing untoward happened. Emboldened, the Black Shadow bounded more and more vigorously after the Tornado Machine, so that he speedily overhauled it.

Suddenly he rose into the air with all the power that his spring-heeled boots could generate, and shot right above the deadly current of air which came shrieking in his direction. Clean over his enemies this stride carried him, and as the Tornado Machine flashed by below him he dropped the case of dynamite.

There was a deafening roar, and a blinding flash of saffron-coloured flame, that spread out in all directions like a giant umbrella opening.

The force of this explosion caught the Black Shadow as he landed thirty yards away, and sent him reeling to his hands and knees. A flying scrap of jagged metal hit him, and tore a long rent in his mail. But otherwise he escaped unscathed.

Rising to his feet, he turned to look at the Tornado Machine. All that remained of it was a twisted, blackened heap of metal, about which a wisp of pungent, grey smoke coiled slowly. The "Prince" had paid for his crimes with his life.

THERE is little more to tell. The blue prints of the Tornado Machine, which the "Prince" had stolen, were destroyed when the machine was blown up. The inventor, after all he had suffered through the first machine, decided not to build another, and to confine his energies solely to peaceful inventions.

As ever, having achieved his mission, the Black Shadow vanished again, no one knew where.

Thriller! Mystery! Drama! in the "Master of Masks," John Hunter's grand new serial of the Secret Service, starting next week.

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London, W.C.1.

Chinese Steward : Gentleman to see you, sir !
Captain : What is he like ?
Steward : Him velly smart ; him velly fat ; him wear little waistcoats on his boots !

(Football to R. S. JEFFREY, 4, Copland Terrace, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex.)

A PLUM.

"Does anyone know the King's favourite fruit ?" asked the school teacher.

After a few moments, one little chap volunteered, "Plums, sir; because we are always singing 'Send him Victorias.'"

(Fountain pen to DONALD SAVAGE, 17, Cromwell Road, South Bank, Yorks.)

HARD.

"The thing for you to do," said the doctor to the man with weak nerves, "is to stop thinking about yourself to bury yourself in your work."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the patient, "I'm a concrete mixer!"

(Fountain pen to VICTOR EDWARDS, 27, Wellfield Avenue, Porthcawl, Glam.)

THE RAIL WAY.

GENT. : Why is the station so far from the town ?

PORTER : Dunno, sir, unless it's to have it near the railway lines !

(Fountain pen to B. SCOTT, Cross Keys, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough.)

TO KEEP 'EM IN.

NEW PRISONER (to jailer, pointing to window) : Why the bars, chum ? 'Fraid of burglars ?

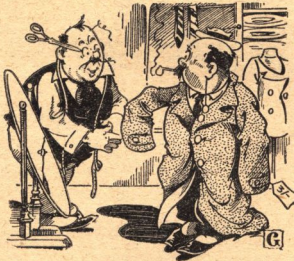
(Fountain pen to P. WEBB, 59, New Park Street, Devizes, Wilts.)

GREAT TRADE.

SALES MANAGER : Well, how many orders to-day ?

TRAVELLER : Two ! One to get out, the other to stay out !

(Fountain pen to KENNETH LAMBERT, 20, Buxton St., Morecambe, Lancs.)



Salesman : There you are, sir ; it fits you like a glove.

Customer : So I see ; the sleeves come over my hands !

(Football to SIDNEY QUIGLEY, 150, Lodge Street, Miles Platting, Manchester.)

NO MATTER.

OLD GENT. (on ship) : What's the matter, skipper ?
SKIPPER : The rudder has broken.

OLD GENT. : That won't matter ! It's always under water, so nobody will notice it !

(Fountain pen to HAROLD MARLEW, 207, Crompton Way, Bolton, Lancs.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

25/2/33.

A HOLD-UP.

TEACHER : Why are you leaning your head on your hand in that lazy fashion ?

TOMMY : You told me that all you said went in one ear and out the other, so I am trying to stop it.

(Fountain pen to J. WRIGHT, The Avon, Pinley Gardens, Coventry.)

DEAD OR ALIVE.

BANDIT (brandishing cudgel) : Put up your hands ! Move and you're dead !

PROFESSOR (mildly) : That's contrary to reason, my dear sir ! If I move, that's a sign I'm alive !

(Fountain pen to GEORGE FERRY, 12, Grand Ave., Hove, Sussex.)

THE FIDDLER.

JOHNNY : My pa plays the piano by ear.

GEORGE : That's nothing ; mine fiddles with his whiskers.

(Fountain pen to D. SUTHERLAND, Smallholm, Spylaubank Road, Colinton.)

KINGS OF THE FILM CAMERA! The Talkie Thrill Hunters in the Big Woods. A Rousing Complete Crash Tale Simply Crammed with Excitement. A Yarn that will Set You Afligh, Boys!

The Reacts of Lane Pine.

THE ring of axes soon went down to the men of the three men leading through the Canadian woods. Suddenly, above the noise of the forest, sounded the sharp, vibrant report of a rifle.

"Don't let me see that!" snapped Donnell Don Carrillo, the leader of the Talkie Thrill Hunters. "Come on, old way!"

Followed by young Jerry Brown, and Joe Brown, the stout Cockney member of Imperial Film Ltd., the big fellow thumped his feet in the distance, whence the report had come.

In a few moments he drew to a halt at the bank of the river. But he had already seen the spotted Indian come, sweeping rapidly downstream in the swirling current. Don anxiously scanned the water for some sign of the owner of the oar and at last he glimpsed a black object, which he knew to be a man's hat, a few yards behind the fisher boat. The fellow started off in making an attempt to reach himself and Don guessed he was innocuous, perhaps dead.

"Leave him to me!" he cried. Next moment he had slipped off his pack and had plunged into the so-called water. As he reached the river bank Jerry watched the big fellow's strong, swarthy stroke for a moment.

"Easy, Jerry, what you standing there for, peepin' like a cockeyed kid?" Joe Brown's exasperated tones roused the youngster. "Get the sound recorder working. There may be a thousand pictures in this!"

Joe was a cameraman to the finger tip and not even danger to himself would bother him if there was a chance of getting a good picture. Knowing this, Jerry dropped his pack and with the speed of long practice, took the camera and tripod to the bank and Joe began tanning the film through. By this time Don had reached the fellow in the water. With a powerful horse (careful turned the swimmers was far beyond him) their cameraman Joe and Jerry saw he was a redskin.

Then began a hilarious struggle. Don, backed by the immovable Indians, kicked out strongly against the swimmers, while Jerry, who was on the bank, both, held a down tension both ways, under and it seemed that the river would claim two more victims; but still this indistinguishable crash showed the swimmers' water was less abundant. Don reached the bank. Jerry landed the Indian safely while Don lay peeping at the water's edge. Joe was still too busy filming the whole scene to help in the rescue.

"He's not dead, is he?" Don asked, after a few moments, looking down a couple of days ago. He was in your line, too. He wanted to stay around and take pictures but I didn't like the look of him. Read his name was—"

"No—only named!" Jerry answered. "Seems as though the bullet grazed along the top of his skull and came in at the back."

The Indian spread his eyes, looked round at the three at this a moment in a dazed way, then got to his feet.

"Lame Pine grateful to paleface?" the Indian said by way of thanks, but didn't seem inclined to talk.

"Seems like there is some body out to get you, Lane Pine," said Don. "Who's who it is?"

"Lane Pine know!" he exclaimed.

"Lane Pine must him seen and then he pay." Without another word he turned and, in a moment, his tall figure, straight as a pine-tree trunk, was out among the trees.

"Some general report, I suppose," Don said shortly. "Come on, let's get on to the camp."

An hour later the Talkie Thrill Hunters arrived at the Hogback London Camp where Bill Brown, owner of the camp, as well as five, tin-water saw-mills, greeted them with obvious pleasure. He was a powerfully built man, nearly as big as Don, with a rough, honest face.

"Now, Bill," Don said, coming to the point right away. "When you sent me that note you hinted that you were up against it. Having trouble with you?"

Bill laughed shortly and waved his hand toward the camp where men were busy with axe and saw filing mighty forest giants. Every man was putting his hands into it.

"Does it look like that kind of trouble?" he asked. "No, Don, it's fine! Not ordinary fine, but the kind started by the streak who's out to beat me—Bunch Kelly. His camp is on the other side of the river. Ever since I beat him in the Silver Square contest he's been trying to stop me delivering on time. The way he's going at it, he'll succeed too. The men are getting fed-up!"

"What do we do anything to help?" Don asked, after a moment's pause.

"Well!" Brown stroked his chin thoughtfully. "You need to be no other than with an axe and a power saw. You'll have to be a little better than a good job of the men. That way we might stop some for we've got behind through them dinged days. We might just get them hup down in time then."

"That's all?" Don replied. "It'll be working our legs!"

Bill was turning away when he remembered something.

"Say, I've ideas for you!" he exclaimed. "There was a Venk here a couple days ago. He was in your line, too. He wanted to stay around and take pictures but I didn't like the look of him. Read his name was—"

"Joe Brown exclaimed, bounding. "Our lucky star, for a second!"

Bill Brown looked puzzled until Don explained that Kroyder, who worked for an American firm, was a friend of theirs. In fact, more than once he had tried to get the story on them, but it invariably gave them a more thrilling picture than they required.



"But he's a wily customer," Don added, and it he's about we'll have to keep our eyes skinned."

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THREE days that followed were a long round of hard work. As that Brown's lumber-works who had been put in Don's camp were inclined to be lazy and only with the Englishman as their boss.

But Don soon showed them that he was more than their boss with axe and saw. From being lazy they grew respectful and their laziness disappeared in their frantic efforts to keep up with him. Thus they did cheerfully, so that Brown began to lose his worried look.

"Looks like we're going to get it through," he said, the night before the Silver Square contest had to be in the river and on its way down to the saw mill.

Meanwhile, in Finnigan's camp just across the river, the Silver Square contest was also the subject of an intimate conversation. There were two men in Finnigan's office—himself, and the big, Irish, Tom, Kroyder.

"Told them Britishers how made all the difference," Finnigan was saying. "Before they come I had Brown on my back—now it don't look as good. Full a man at the Silver Square would hold him up longer. That 'ud give me time to get my legs down first. It only waxes one big big across that bottle neck and the track's done."

Kroyder nodded his understanding. The Silver Square was where the two banks of the river closed in to a narrow gorge. The right bank was Brown's property, the left belonged to Finnigan. It was the most dangerous part of Brown's big drive!

"The what about the Englishman, Chum?" Kroyder put in, quickly. "He's had some way out and beat you."

"That I'd get him out of the way first!" Finnigan snarled angrily. "New job or better!" Kroyder told him. "Perhaps I can help you there. Listen!"

Kroyder spoke eagerly, outlining a diabolical plan. When he finished, Finnigan grinning widely, clasped him on the back.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "You're coming in mighty useful. . . . Ouh—duh, that blasted Redskin gets!" he finished, springing up and peeping, white-faced, at the window behind Kroyder. The Yankee would like a shot, to glimpse an incredible, but face as the window, before it vanished.

Finnigan springing to the door, tapped it open and rushed out into the dark. A shadowy form was rushing into the gloom, and with a savage snarl the lumberman whipped out his gun.

Next moment he stood a host of surprise and alarm. For striking through the stack of his shaves was a hole, pointing his aim to the doorway. The Redskin had vanished.

"Gosh!" Finnigan breathed, white about the lips. "He—he could have got me through the chest just as easy. That Redskin's cunning!"

"What is he?" Kroyder asked, tapping the wall on. "He's given you a scare, I guess!"

"Yep, but I'd got him!" Finnigan was recovering rapidly from the shock. "But for that blasted Englishman I'd have got him the other day in the river. Kira told me you 'ud be here. Maybe Lane Pine didn't hear nothing."

KINGS OF THE FILM CAMERA! The Talkie Thrill Hunters in the Big Woods. A Rousing Complete Crash Tale Simply Crammed with Excitement. A Yarn that will Set You Alight, Boys!

The Rescue of Lone Pine.

THE ring of axes upon wood came to the ears of the three men trudging through the Canadian woods. Suddenly, above the noises of the forest, sounded the sharp, vicious report of a rifle.

"Sounds like excitement to me," rapped Daredevil Don Carroll, the leader of the Talkie Thrill Hunters. "Come on, this way!"

Followed by young Jerry Bevan, and Joe Grouse, the stout Cockney cameraman of Imperial Films Ltd., the big fellow plunged through the trees in the direction whence the report had come.

In a few moments he drew to a halt at the bank of the river. But he had already seen the upturned Indian canoe, sweeping rapidly downstream in the swirling current. Don anxiously scanned the water for some sign of the owner of the canoe and at last he glimpsed a black object, which he knew to be a man's head, a few yards behind the birch bark. The fellow seemed to be making no attempt to save himself and Don guessed he was unconscious, perhaps dead.

"Leave him to me!" he cried. Next moment he had slipped off his pack and had plunged into the ice-cold water. As he reached the river bank Jerry watched the big fellow's strong, overarm stroke for a moment.

"Blimey, Jerry, what yer standing there for, gaping like a cock-eyed fish?" Joe Grouse's exasperated tones roused the youngster. "Get the sound recorder working. There may be a bloomin' picture in this!"

Joe was a cameraman to the finger tips and not even danger to himself would bother him if there was a chance of getting a good picture. Knowing this, Jerry dumped his pack and with the speed of long practice they had the portable apparatus rigged on the bank and Joe began turning the film through.

By this time Don had reached the fellow in the water. With a powerful heave Carroll turned the unconscious man face uppermost. To their amazement Joe and Jerry saw he was a redskin.

Then began a titanic struggle. Don, burdened by the unconscious Indian, kicked out strongly against the racing current which threatened to engulf them both. Half-a-dozen times both went under and it seemed that the river would claim two more victims; but each time indomitable pluck cheated the surging waters and at last, almost exhausted, Don reached the bank. Jerry hauled the Indian ashore while Don lay gasping at the water's edge. Joe was still too busy filming the whole scene to help in the rescue.

"He's not dead, is he?" Don asked, after a few moments, looking at the blood which was flowing freely from a wound on the Redskin's scalp.

"No—only stunned!" Jerry answered. "Seems as though the bullet grazed along the top of his skull! He's coming to already!"

The Indian opened his eyes, looked round at the three of them a moment in a dazed way, then got to his feet.

"Huh! Lone Pine grateful to palefaces!" the Indian said by way of thanks, but didn't seem inclined to talk.

"Seems like there is somebody out to get you, Lone Pine," said Don. "Know who it is?"

"Lone Pine know!" the Indian replied.

"Lone Pine meet him soon and then he pay." Without another word he turned and, in a moment, his tall figure, straight as a pine-tree itself, was lost among the trees.

"Some personal quarrel, I suppose," Don said shrewdly. "Come on, let's get on to the Camp."

An hour later the Talkie Thrill Hunters arrived at the Hogback Lumber Camp where Bill Brennan, owner of the camp, as well as five, tide-water saw-mills, greeted them with obvious pleasure. He was a powerfully built man, nearly as big as Don, with a rough, honest face.

"Now, Bill," Don said, coming to the point right away. "When you sent me that note you hinted that you were up against it. Having trouble with your men?"

Bill laughed shortly and waved his hand round the camp where men were busy with axe and saw felling mighty forest giants. Every man was putting his best into it.

"Does it look like that kind of trouble?" he asked. "No, Don, it's fires! Not ordinary fires, but the kind started by the skunk who's out to bust me—Butch Finnigan! His camp is on the other side of the river. Ever since I beat him to the Silver Spruce contract he's been trying to stop me delivering on time. The way he's going at it, he'll succeed too. The men are getting fed-up!"

"Can we do anything to help?" Don asked, after a moment's pause.

"Well!" Brennan stroked his chin thoughtfully. "You used to be no chicken with an axe and a peevy yourself, and I thought maybe you'd take over a gang of the men. That way we might speed up some for we've got behind through them danged fires. We might just get them logs down in time then."

"Suits me!" Don replied. "It'll be earning our keep."

Big Bill was turning away when he remembered something.

"Say, I'd clean forgot!" he exclaimed. "There was a Yank here a couple days ago. He was in your line, too. He wanted to stay around and take pictures but I didn't like the look of him. Said his name was—"

"Krysler!" Joe Grouse exclaimed, beaming. "Our lucky charm, fer a pound!"

Bill Brennan looked puzzled until Don explained that Krysler, who worked for an American firm, was no friend of theirs. In fact, more than once he had tried to do the dirty on them, but it invariably gave them a more thrilling picture than they expected.



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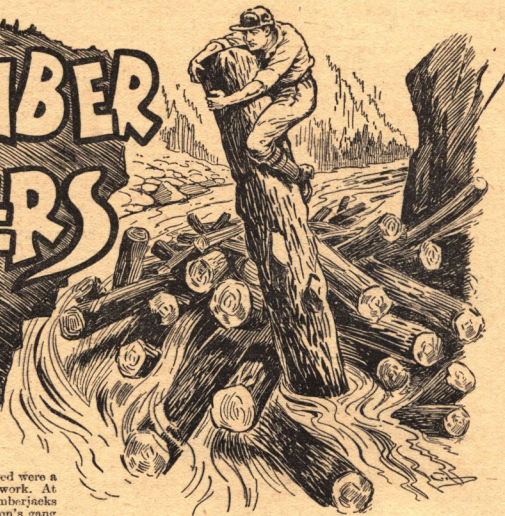
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THE TIMBER HOOTERS



"But he's a wily customer," Don added, and if he's about we'll have to keep our eyes skinned."

THE days that followed were a long round of hard work. At first Brennan's lumberjacks who had been put in Don's gang were inclined to be lazy and surly with the Englishman as their boss.

But Don soon showed them that he was more than their equal with axe or peevce. From being surly they grew respectful and their laziness disappeared in their frantic efforts to keep up with him. This they did cheerfully, so that Brennan began to lose his worried look.

"Looks like we're going to put it through," he said, the night before the Silver Spruce contract had to be in the river and on its way down to the saw mills.

Meanwhile, in Finnigan's camp just across the river, the Silver Spruce contract was also the subject of an intimate conversation. There were two men in Finnigan's office—Finnigan himself, and the big, beefy Yank, Kryslar.

"Yeh, them Britishers hev made all the difference," Finnigan was saying. "Before they come I had Brennan on his back—now it don't look so good. Still a jam at the Swan's Neck would hold him up hours. That 'ud give me time to get my logs down first. It only wants one big log across that bottle neck and the trick's done."

Kryslar nodded his understanding. The Swan's Neck was where the two banks of the river closed in to a narrow gorge. The right bank was Brennan's property, the left belonged to Finnigan. It was the most dangerous part of Brennan's log-drive!

"But what about the Englishman, Carroll?" Kryslar put in, quickly. "He'll find some way out and beat you!"

"Then I'll get him out of the way first!" Finnigan snarled savagely.

"Now yuh're talkin'!" Kryslar told him. "Perhaps I can help you there. Listen!"

Kryslar spoke eagerly, outlining a diabolical plan. When he finished, Finnigan grinning wolfishly, clapped him on the back.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "You're coming in mighty useful . . . Gosh—darn, that blamed Redskin agen!" he finished, springing up and gaping, white-faced, at the window behind Kryslar. The Yank wheeled like a shot, to glimpse an inscrutable, lean face at the window, before it vanished.

Finnigan sprang to the door, tugged it open and rushed out into the dark. A shadowy form was melting into the gloom, and with a savage snarl the lumberman whipped out his gun.

Next moment he uttered a howl of surprise and alarm. For sticking through the slack of his sleeve was a knife, pinning his arm to the doorpost. The Redskin had vanished.

"Gosh!" Finnigan breathed, white about the lips. "He—he could have got me through the chest just as easy. That Redskin's uncanny!"

"Who is he?" Kryslar asked, tugging the knife out. "He's given yuh a scare, I guess!"

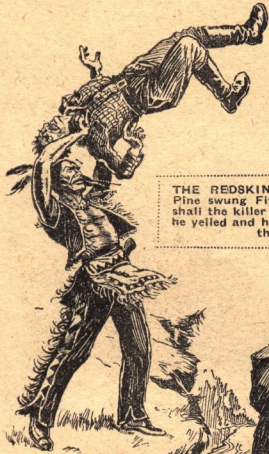
"Yep, but I'll get him!" Finnigan was recovering rapidly from the shock. "But for that blamed Englishman I'd have got him the other day in the river. Kim on, let's get busy! Maybe Lone Pine didn't hear nuthin'."

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The Fight In The Forest.

HOGSBACK Camp was early astir on the morning of the big log-drive. All was excitement and bustle; through it all ran a feeling of suppressed excitement, as if the men had a foreboding of portending evil. After breakfast, Big Bill Brennan addressed his men.

"The Swan's Neck is the danger," he said. "We've got to keep that clear when the logs go down. A real bad jam there would hold us up hours, maybe a day.



THE REDSKIN'S REVENGE.—Lone Pine swung Finnigan aloft. "Thus shall the killer of my brother die!" he yelled and hurled the logger over the gorge.

That would give Finnigan time to get his logs to the mills and steal the drive. Get busy, men!"

A rough cheer rang out as the men went to their tasks. Don Carroll tapped his friend on the shoulder.

"I'll look after the Swan's Neck for you, Bill," he said. "I'm not swanking when I say I'm as good a river-man as any you've got, and besides I'll maybe be able to manufacture a thrill or two for the picture. Joe's already gone off to rig up the apparatus there in readiness!"

"Sure, Don!" Bill Brennan exclaimed. "Best of luck! I'll start the drive at this end. Cheerio!"

Don called to Jerry and the two thrill-hunters set off along the narrow path through the trees. Jerry's freckled face wore a puzzled frown and they had not gone far when he suddenly burst out:

"I can't understand it, guv'nor!" he exclaimed. "It's not like Kryslar to keep quiet as long as this and I don't like it. What's he got up his sleeve?"

"Don't know, Jerry!" Don laughed. "Probably he had enough last time he tried his dirty tricks. Come on, let's have a trot to keep warm."

They had covered nearly a mile of the distance at a jog-trot when a faint cry caused both to pull up dead.

"Did you hear that, youngster?" Don asked.

"Yes, sounded like somebody in pain," was the reply. "There it is again!"

A distinct groan came from thick undergrowth to the right of the trail. Followed by Jerry, Don moved towards the sound. In a moment he saw a foot protruding from a bush. Another groan at that moment caused him to hasten forward. Before Don reached the man, a voice, harsh and menacing, barked out an order.

"Nail him, men!" It was Kryslar's voice!

Carroll swung round as the boot jerked away and one of Finnigan's leering lumberjack's sprang up. Other men appeared from the bushes, closing threateningly upon Don and Jerry.

"Back to back, youngster!" Don clipped. "Give it 'em hot."

Don's eyes were pin-points of steel. His fighting blood was up. Jerry, too, was eagerly excited. He snatched up a loose balk of timber determined to give as much as he got.

Next moment they were hitting out desperately. Right, left! right, left! Don's arms moved like pistons. Two men were sent reeling back. Only one of them came on again.

Jerry kept his foes at a distance. They were chary of getting too close to that balk of timber. Then a snarl from Kryslar—himself too careful of his own skin to join in—stung them to leap in together.

Jerry felled one man with a terrific blow before he was pulled down by two others. His weapon was wrenched from his hand. The balk rose . . . fell . . . stars danced before the youngster's eyes. The trees spun . . . and then darkness descended upon him and he lay still.

Don saw his young chum was down, and his anger made him fight the fiercer. Hopelessly outnumbered though he was, he kept his foes at a distance.

Suddenly a body hurtled out of the branches of a tree overhead, and crashed on Don's back. At the same time one of the others dived for the big dare-devil's legs. Still fighting like a wild-cat, he went down amid a heap of struggling forms. A stunning blow from the balk of timber, however, stretched him out senseless, beside Jerry.

"That's got 'em!" Kryslar grated, leering wolfishly. "Bring 'em along you guys!"

A Red Man's Gratitude.

WHEN Jerry came to, his head felt as if it was about to burst. But gradually the stabbing pains eased and with the clearing of his brain, memory flooded back. He tried to move but found that he was securely bound.

Looking down beyond his feet he saw that he was tied to a log, which was raised from the ground, and moving slowly towards an insistent grating hum, which he had at first thought to be the after-effects of the blow on his head.

Some terrible instinct made him move his head round, despite the pain, to see for what he was heading. Icy fingers of fear clutched at his heart, at the sight that met his gaze.

For the log was on the platform of a small log-cutting machine. This machine consisted of a plat-

form which slowly pressed the logs against a perpendicular, circular saw which cut them down the middle.

Two feet from the youngster's head the saw was revolving, biting savagely into the log, which was being pushed slowly, inexorably into it. Inch by inch Jerry's head drew nearer to those madly whirling teeth.

"Keep your pecker up, youngster!"

That voice was the only thing which prevented Jerry losing his head and screaming. It reassured him to think the big daredevil was on hand. He turned his head to the left and saw Don, securely bound to an upright of the hut, so that he was compelled to watch what was happening to Jerry.

"Where—where're the others?" Jerry asked, tremulously. "Those fellows who trapped us and—Kryslar?"

"The others went almost at once, and left us to the Yank!" Don answered grimly. "He went ten minutes ago and by now he'll be well on the way to the Swan's Neck, where Joe and the apparatus are. That Yankee skunk has tried a long time to 'out' us, Jerry, and it looks as if he's going to succeed at last. And here am I helpless!"

C-r-r-r-r-r! Inexorably those jagged, spinning teeth bit through the log. The very wood itself

teeth stopped whirring, the platform jerked to a halt. And in the lever there quivered the knife which, flung with marvellous precision, had sent the lever over to neutral.

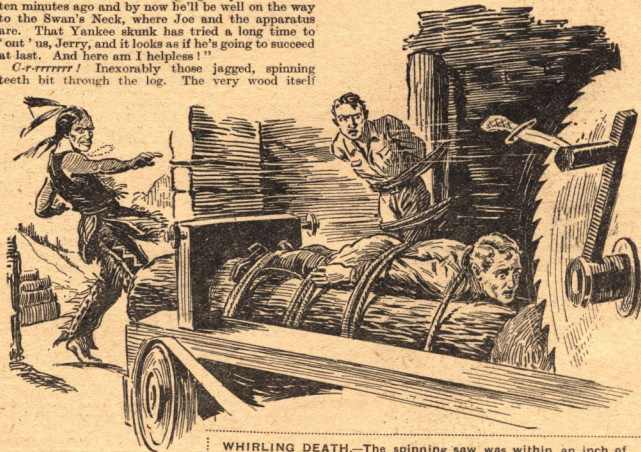
On its heels came the man who from the trees had thrown it—Lone Pine. He tugged out his knife and with a few deft slashes had freed Jerry.

"Thanks, Lone Pine!" the boy muttered, unable to express himself adequately.

"Huh, huh!" Lone Pine muttered, and then stooped to cut Don free. "Big Paleface save Lone Pine's life—Lone Pine save life of Paleface's little friend. Come!"

The Indian led the way through the trees, heading, as Don saw, for the Swan's Neck. In the fresh air the two film men rapidly recovered from their trying ordeal and looked forward to meeting Kryslar and his devilish hellions.

Jerry was the first to get near the clearing where



WHIRLING DEATH.—The spinning saw was within an inch of Jerry's head, when suddenly a knife flashed through the air. It stuck in the lever, knocking it back and bringing the machine to a halt.

seemed to vibrate with the insistent, throbbing hum. Nearer and nearer until Jerry could feel the wind of the whirling saw.

Don Carroll's face had turned grey with the suspense and strain. Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead from this superhuman efforts to break his bonds and save his young friend.

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above the narrow gorge they had chosen to erect the apparatus. And it was Jerry who first saw what was happening.

Joe was there sure enough, but was not fussing about the camera as was his custom. He was prone on the ground, where a heavy blow on the back of his head had stretched him. But what caused an exclamation to break from Jerry's lips was the sight of Kryslar, his lips parted in a wolfish grin of triumph, he raised above his head, ready to smash the Talkie thrill Hunter's camera.

Without hesitation Jerry dived at the Yank's ankles. His hands gripped, and he brought the

villain down sideways, ere the crushing blow could be delivered.

"Good man, Jerry!" Don breathed. "Look after Joe. There's something happening on the other side of the river! What's that you say, Lone Pine?"

The Indian spoke swiftly of the plot he had heard outside Finnigan's shack the night before. He was at the end of it when a shout from Bill Brennan's loggers lower down the slope caused them to look that way.

The drive was in full swing. Great timber giants were riding down through the Neck on the crest of the water. Behind them came other mighty logs.

Then down the opposite slope—from Finnigan's side—swept a log bigger than any. It glissaded down, bringing smaller logs after it, and with a mighty splash shot out over the steep bank, dropping crosswise into the Neck, where it wedged fast.

Log after log piled on to it, forming an impassable jam, a thrusting, heaving mass, growing higher and more menacing each second.

Leaving Jerry with Joe, Don rushed down the slope. Joe was beginning to come round and presently was able to stand up.

"Blimey, wot hit me, Jerry?" he questioned dazedly.

Jerry turned to point to Kryser whom he thought to be still unconscious. But the Yank had gone.

"Wot yer foolin' about for, Jerry?" Joe demanded and Jerry knew that the Cockney was his normal self again. "See here, look after that sound stuff. Blimey, wot a picture!"

The jam was indeed a sight never to be forgotten. Already the logs were piled feet high, solid as a rock. And every moment more logs crached in that mighty barrier.

One of Bill Brennan's loggers had dashed out on to its crest like a monkey, pevee in hand. On the bank below Don and the Indian and two more of Bill Brennan's men watched, ready to go to the man's aid if need be. They saw him sway on top

of the jam, leap down on to the key-log and work away.

Crack! A shot rang out from the bushes on the other bank, and the logger gave a cry, flinging up his arms and letting his pevee go as he clasped his hand to his shoulder. Then, white-faced, he came leaping back to the bank. Without his pevee and with a wounded shoulder he was helpless to do anything. "The skunk!" grated Don Carroll. "So that's his game. Give me a pevee, I'll move it!"

He snatched a pevee from one of the men, but Lone Pine started across the jam before him.

The Indian seemed to glide from log to log, swaying this way and that. The rifle across the river spoke repeatedly but Lone Pine bore a charmed life that day. He was half-way across when Don stepped on to the jam.

The big daredevil moved with confidence. The marksman's fire was reserved for the Indian and he could devote all his attention to releasing the jam. Just the same, it was with a sigh of relief that he saw Lone Pine leap on to the bank on the other side and dart into cover of the trees.

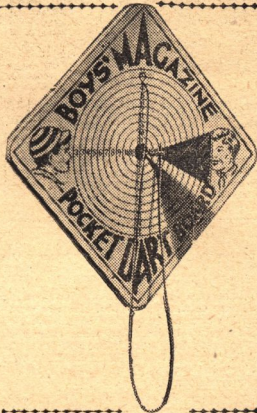
At last Don reached the key-log and commenced to work at it. The pressure behind had up-ended it so that it was caught head-down against a submerged rock. The watchers on the bank held their breath, for they knew that a mistake now and Don would be crushed as the jam broke.

There was a deep rumble and the mass of logs swayed as though some giant of the nether world was stretching himself beneath them. Don sprang and clutched at the up-ended key-log. He went up it like a monkey just as the mass of timber crashed forward.

The big log stood straight up in the air with Don clinging to the very top, hanging in mid-air a moment and then went crashing over.

At the last second the leader of the Talkie Thrill Hunters made a flying leap for another swirling log, balanced on its rolling surface a second, then leaped

(Continued on page 36.)



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A Hasheesh Hash.

"A STRANGE Oriental drug this," said Dr. Theophilus Hypo to his assistant, Tommy Pink. "It has been known to the Arabs since the days of Mahomet, and yet no modern scientist has ever been able to analyse it."

The Doctor popped a quantity of the stringy material into a chemical flask as he spoke. The stuff looked not unlike tobacco, except that it was a richer brown and had a peculiar, pungent smell. "It is a preparation made from the hemp plant," went on the learned old boy, pouring water into the flask, "and is known as *hasheesh* or *bang*. It occurred to me that such a reagent as Nitric Acid applied in small quantities at stated intervals will result in a precipitation of the vegetable matter in the drug, while the remaining essence will be left in solution in the water. We shall see. Hand me the acid, Mr. Green."

Tommy Pink stilled a yawn and passed the bottle. Dr. Hypo poured a few drops of the powerful acid into the flask. The contents began to setle and bubble, and a quantity of white smoke curled out of the mouth of the flask. Meanwhile the Doctor chattered on:—

"By the way, Mr. Green, it is a peculiar coincidence that we should be investigating the properties of an Oriental drug today. A friend of mine, lately returned from Mesopotamia, has presented me with a genuine Arabian carpet, said to have been manufactured in Bagdad in the days of the Caliphs. I expect it will arrive here this afternoon."

"Yes, guv'nor," answered Tommy sleepily. "If you're out when it comes I'll see to it."

"Very good," said Dr. Hypo, and then, as if suddenly reminded of something, he looked at the clock. "Dear me! I am glad you mentioned it, Mr. Green. I had entirely forgotten my appointment with Professor Schnozzle. Nuisance! I shall have to leave my experiment."

"Maybe I can carry on, sir?"

"I think you can. It is very simple. Add two drops of acid to the solution every fifteen minutes—but no more. Continue with this until the *hasheesh* has dissolved, and then leave it until I return. Dear me! I must hurry."

Dr. Hypo had hardly left the house when there came a knock. On opening the door Tommy saw a gentleman embellished in a green baize apron, a bowler hat, and whiskers like shredded-wheat. Behind him in the road stood a furniture van.

"Carpet for Mister Hypo," said the gent. "Ain't nuthin' to pay."

"This way," answered Tommy Pink.

The furniture gent returned to his van, shouldered a large rolled carpet, and followed Tommy to the laboratory with the familiar flat-footed gait of his breed. He dumped his load on the laboratory floor and took off his hat to pass a grubby paw across his brow.

"Phew! Pity some a' these 'ere carpets ain't them flying ones what y'ear tell of in them 'Ravin' Nights! That sort would just suit 'Erbert 'Oggins, meanin' me!"

"Funny you should say that," answered Tommy Pink. "This is an Arabian carpet, y'see."

"Well t'ain't no lighter'n if it weren't," answered 'Erbert. "Reckon them 'Ravin' Nights' was mysticalogical beans, if y'arst me. I ain't never seed a carpet what flewed!"

At Tommy's orders, the furniture remover cut the ropes which bound the carpet, and spread it on the laboratory floor. Tommy blinked at the vivid, intricate pattern.

"Goo!" said Mr. 'Oggins. "Smart! Ain't it?"

"The real cheese," said Tommy. "Genuine Arabian."

Suddenly Tommy Pink bethought himself of the Doctor's experiment. He looked at the clock and saw that much more than fifteen minutes had elapsed since Dr. Hypo had treated the *hasheesh* with Nitric Acid.

"Gosh!" murmured Tommy, grabbing the bottle hastily. "Hope I haven't jiggered it up! Better give it a double dose this time to make sure!"

Tommy tilted the bottle and slopped a goodly quantity of the acid into the flask containing the Eastern drug.

There was a seething roar as of a young volcano. Clouds of dense, white smoke shot up into Tommy's face. He staggered back with a wild

cry, choking for breath. His head seemed to swell and swell to enormous proportions, and as swiftly, it seemed to shrink to a mere pinhead. The laboratory floor shot upwards and became the ceiling—darted back and resumed its normal position. And out of thick, swirling, white mist a monster emerged—a monster with a head faintly reminiscent of a walrus, whereon a bowler hat was perched.



THAT'S THE SPIRIT—Out of the thick, swirling mist a monster emerged—a monster with a head like a walrus's, whereon was perched a bowler hat.

"'Old 'ard, matey," announced the monster. "Take it easy now—you 'urt?"

"'S'all right," answered Tommy faintly, realising it was only 'Erbert 'Oggins, the removal man. With 'Erbert's assistance he sat down and rubbed his eyes. The white mist seemed to clear. "Phew!" Tommy murmured dizzily. "Must have got a whiff of the drug!"

He looked towards the flask containing the drug. A long column of gleaming smoke was writing out of the neck of the flask. Suddenly it began to take shape. First a turban appeared, and then, below it, a face, smiling ironically and decorated with a thin, rat-tail of a beard. Great ear-rings hung on either side of the face.

Tommy Pink and 'Erbert 'Oggins watched spell-bound as the face sprouted a neck, then a body and arms, and finally legs. The unearthly figure floated to the floor, stood before Tommy and bowed low, touching its forehead with its two hands.

"Allah's blessing upon thee, master," rumbled a deep voice. "I am the Genie of the *hasheesh* plant, released after twice a thousand years! Henceforth shall I be thy slave! What commandment thou, in the name of Allah, so shall it be!"

"Well, sink me!" gurgled Tommy. "A strange wish, O master. But I am thy slave!"

Tommy Pink gave a wild yell as he felt himself beginning to sink through the floor. He clutched 'Erbert 'Oggins round the neck and hung on like grim death, and then 'Erbert himself began to sink.

"'Arf a mo'!" yelled 'Erb. "What a' you a doin' of?"

"Help! Help!" shrieked Tommy, as the floor-

boards reached his neck. "Stop! Save me! Help!"

The Eastern gent bowed low again. "So be it, O master!" he rumbled, and Tommy began to rise once more to floor level, pulling 'Erbert up with him.

"Here!" gasped Tommy. "Don't be so gosh-awful sudden, mister. You ain't one of those magical blokes what you read of in fairy tales, are you?"

"My powers of enchantment are at my master's command. I am Shandarmnessassim, the spirit of the *hasheesh* plant. The Great Caliph, Haroun Al Raschid, ordained that I should lie mute and powerless in my prison until the flying carpet of Bagdad, lost this thousand years, should again be found. The carpet is at thy feet, O gracious master, and Shandarmnessassim is thy everlasting slave. Furthermore, it was ordained that the saviour of Shandarmnessassim should become Caliph of Bagdad. I am here, master, to take thee to thy kingdom!"

"Gosh!" gasped Tommy. "And I never believed in magic until now, I didn't! What did you say your name was, mister?"

"Shandarmnessassim."

"Shan—will it be all right if I call you George?"

"I am my master's slave."

"That's all right, then," said Tommy. "Well, I've had some pretty queer times since I took this job, but I ain't never been asked to be the Caliph of Bagdad before, an' I reckon it's a chance I shan't get often. You come, too, 'Erb, an' keep me company!"

"Not me!" said 'Erb. "I ain't got no time to fool about with this Ally Barber bloke, I ain't. If the boss wuz—"

"Come!" roared the Genie in a voice of thunder. "The master commands!"

'Erbert willed. "O-o-orright, m-m-matey! K-keep yer 'air on!" And he stepped with Tommy Pink on to the Arabian carpet.

"Okay, George," said Tommy at last, drawing a deep breath. "Step on the gas!"

A Banquet in Bagdad.

THE Genie waved his arms and disappeared into thin air. The carpet lurched violently, and they unexpectedly sat down on it. It sailed into space. The window of the laboratory obligingly opened itself and out they shot.

"Oo-err!" gurgled 'Erb, clutching the fringe of the carpet wildly, to save himself from rolling off. "Ope the boss don't see me gallivantin' around on this 'ere!"

"That's all right," reassured Tommy, though he didn't feel too comfy himself. For they were already whizzing over Paris at a terrific speed.

"George!" he gasped, addressing empty space. "Can't you reduce speed a bit? This fair takes your breath away!"

"As you wish, O master." George appeared as a floating wraith ahead of them; the whizzing carpet slowed down considerably.

"That's better," said Tommy Pink, breathing easier. "Now, George, what about a spot of grub to while away the time? What do you fancy, 'Erbert?"

"I could do a nice Welsh rabbit!" answered the miserable furniture man. "I want summat to put 'cart in me!"

"Good idea," said Tommy. "George, Welsh rarebit for two, and a bottle of ginger pop or so." George salaamed and selected the requested Welsh rarebit out of the surrounding nothingness. "Eat not too heartily, master," advised the Genie, "for a great feast will be prepared for thee in Bagdad, and we approach fleetly." "Thanks for the tip, old timer," answered Tommy through a heavy barrage of Welsh rarebit.

Swiftly they passed over the blue Mediterranean. They were just masticating the last crumbs of their snack when they came in sight of the shining white domes and minarets of the city of fables, Bagdad.

The magic carpet floated gently to earth and landed in the centre of a huge square in the city, chock-full of Eastern gentlemen rubbing their foreheads on the ground.

"Allah be praised! The Great Caliph has returned to us after a thousand years!"

"Jolly pleased to hear it!" said Tommy Pink, stepping off the carpet.

A procession of splendidly robed men pushed their way to the fore of the crowd. At their head strode a gentleman in garments that sparkled with jewels in the sunlight. He had whiskers dyed green, and was attended by two slaves who fanned him with peacocks' tails. Behind him strode a giant negro carrying a scimitar as large

"That's only a nickname, I suppose," said Tommy. "Do you mind if I call you Charlie?"

"Thy word is law, O Great Caliph! May I guide thy glorious feet to the palace?"

The procession moved through the grovelling crowds with Tommy and 'Erb in their midst. Tommy glanced round uneasily to see the giant negro with the scimitar marching immediately behind them. He whispered to the recently christened Charlie:

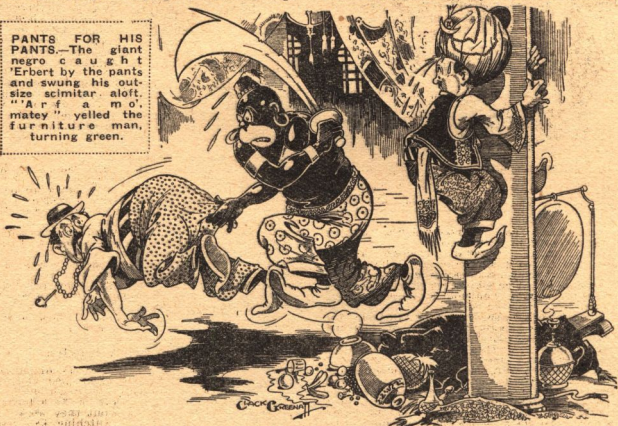
"Who's the coloured gent with the ukulele?" "That, O Mightiness—'tis thy executioner. He will beguile thee in the dull hours by lopping the heads off a few hundred slaves or so."

They arrived at the Caliph's Palace, and Tommy and 'Erb could hardly believe such splendours possible. Great marbled courtyards, trickling fountains, tapestries, elaborate mosaics, divans strewn with cushions of the finest silks, and in every hall and chamber a band of musicians.

In the Palace they were rigged out in jewelled robes that made the Vizier look as though he'd bought his outfit at *Woodworth's*. A splendid turban was placed on Tommy's head, but 'Erb wasn't having any—he stuck to his bowler.

In a great hall of the palace, they lolled on cushioned divans of swansdown before a circular table a bare foot high. A dozen slaves fanned them with gorgeously dyed ostrich plumes. Dancers whirled and capered on the tessellated

PANTS FOR HIS PANTS.—The giant negro caught 'Erbert by the pants and swung his outsize scimitar aloft. "A r f a m o' matey," yelled the furniture man, turning green.



as a ploughshare. The party stopped before Tommy Pink and all grovelled on the ground.

"O Light of the World," said the gent with the green whiskers to Tommy. "O Leader of the Faithful! O Magnificent and Merciful one! O Gracious Lord of the Universe! O All-Powerful Caliph!" Here he took a deep breath. "Accept the humble greetings of thy miserable Vizier! Also the paltry gift of the Seven largest diamonds in the world, or ten thousand camels and a hundred elephants; and if it should please thy mightiness, slay the miserable worm at thy feet that he hath no more to give thee?"

"All right, old cockalorum," said Tommy. "I ain't gonna hurt you. Who are you anyway?" "The name of your miserable slave is Mustapha Jewiser Thn ben Mousoulmosulmoussoullreddinatal!"

floor before them, while poets recited their exotic works at their feet. Conjurors, jugglers, philosophers, singers, and bards waited the Great Caliph's pleasure.

"Pooh!" commented 'Erbert. "Sooner 'ave a tanner's worth at the pitchers! Anyhow, where's these 'ere vittals?"

Tommy Pink clapped his hands. The Grand Vizier rushed forward and prostrated himself at his feet.

"Bring in the grub, Charlie!" "A slave came forward at Charlie's command, carrying a great dish. The Vizier swept off the cover proudly.

"Stewed canaries' tongues, O Gorgeous One!" "Gosh!" gurgled Tommy as the aroma struck him. "Can it quickly! What's next on the menu?"

"Essence of Elephants' trunks!"
 "That's worse. Next?"
 "Birds' nests in aspic!" said the Vizier. "To follow—Camel's hump en casserole, honeyed jellyfish, eggs preserved for a hundred years—"
 "That's enough!" gulped the Caliph. "Ain't you got a plain roast beef and two veg. with jam-roll or something on the me an' you?"
 "I know not these strange foods; O Mightiness. But immediately thrice ten thousand men shall scour the four corners of the earth for them—"
 "Oh, don't bother! George'll get us what we want. Ge-ooooor!"

George appeared immediately, floating in the middle distance. He salaamed. "Your will, Master?"

The Great Caliph consulted 'Erbert as to his taste, and requested George to deliver the goods. The food appeared before them instantly.

"Just one more thing before you go, George. Have you got a couple of knives and forks about you? Oh—an' just clear a few of these people out of sight!"

George bowed and made a sweeping gesture. Tommy and 'Erb found themselves alone, except for the slaves who wielded the ians.

"Peace at last!" said the Caliph, tucking in.

Ructions in the Realm.

FOR an hour, the Caliph of Bagdad and his pal 'Erbert 'Oggins feasted themselves, until at last they had to give over eating from sheer exhaustion.

"This 'ere bein' a Caliph is orlright," yawned 'Erb, "but it ain't lively enough for me!"

"'Tis a bit boring," agreed Tommy, "when you get used to it. Let's see if George can put us on a spot of No-stop Variety or somethin'. Ge-ooooor!"

Obediently, the *hashesh* piant manifested himself and bowed low.

"See here, George," said Tommy Pink. "This Caliph business is getting a bit monotonous. Can't you liven things up a bit? Make something happen!"

Your commands are strange, O Master. But 'tis not for me to advise thee. So be it!"

The Genie waved his arms in the air and vanished. Tommy immediately felt something wriggle under the cushion on which he was sitting. He sprang up, snatched aside the cushion and staggered back as a giant cobra, hissing venomously, erected its writhing head.

"Oo-er! That's the worst a' that George bloke—he exaggerates too much!"

"Look out!" shrieked Tommy, as a gleaming knife, hurled by an unseen hand, whizzed past his own ear and narrowly missed shaving off 'Erb's whiskers.

A blood-curdling shriek echoed through the palace, and in rushed a crowd of terrified courtiers. "Save us, O Caliph, the executioner has gone mad and is slaying everybody who stands in his way! Save us!"

The giant negro, with the six-nine in scimitars, rushed in, whirling his ghastly weapon and screaming for blood. He caught 'Erbert by the seat of his Arabian pants. The furniture man turned pale green.

"Arf a mo', matey! I ain't done nuthin'!"
 "Blood!" shrieked the negro. "I thirst for blood!"

Upwards swung the terrible scimitar. 'Erbert's career seemed about to conclude, when Tommy slid behind the crazed executioner, grabbed a heavy brass vase and brought it down with a crash on his head. The executioner tottered limply to the floor.

"Oo!" gasped 'Erb. "That George ain't arf blinkin' whoosale when he starts!"

Tommy Pink opened his mouth to summon the Genie from the void, but before the words could be uttered, the Vizier rushed into the great hall. He flung himself at Tommy's feet, beat his forehead against the marble floor and wept profusely.

"Woe! Woe! Woe!" bleated the Vizier.

"Whoa yourself!" said the Caliph indignantly. "Oh, woe is me! Woe! Woe! Ill-tidings, O

Great Caliph! The Tigris has overflowed its banks and is flooding the city! An Earthquake has destroyed the great Temple of the Prophet! Boabdil, Emperor of Persia, is at the City gates with an army, and purposes to slay thee and become Caliph of Bagdad himself! A plague of locusts destroy thy crops, thy—"

The rest of the Vizier's monologue was drowned by the shouts of thousands of voices outside the palace.

"Down with the tyrant! Slay him! Bagdad shall be free!"

Then came the sounds of savage conflict, the yelling of enraged men, screams of pain, and the clash of steel. A moment later an evil-looking Persian, with a hooked nose, marched into the Palace at the head of a procession of armoured warriors.

"I am Boabdil," he snarled, "Emperor of Persia! Prepare for death, O Caliph! Seize the dog!"

Tommy Pink was forced to his knees. Somebody grabbed him by the hair and dragged back his head so that his Adam's apple was exposed. Boabdil drew his scimitar and measured it against the late Caliph's tautly drawn throat.

"George!" shrieked Tommy with all the power of his lungs. "Save me, you rotten blighter! Get me back to Dr. Hypo's laboratory! I wish I'd never seen you an' your frowy old carpet! I wish you'd never existed an' there wasn't any magic in the world! I wish—"

"I hear, Master! Thy will shall be done! Nevermore shall Shandarmnessassim answer thy call, nor use his powers of enchantment! Nevermore shall the carpet fly! Magic shall henceforth be not of this world. Farewell, Master! So be it!"

Tommy felt the scimitar cleave off his head. He felt Boabdil pick his head up by the hair and glare at it.

"You big bully," Tommy heard his head say. "If I had the rest of me attached to my head I'd give you a sock in the jaw!"

"Thank heavens, Mr. Green!" said Boabdil, suddenly sprouting side-whiskers. "A good thing you're strong-headed! It might have been much more serious!"

Boabdil's sneering face had quite unaccountably become that of Dr. Hypo. Gradually the surrounding darkness cleared and Tommy realised he was lying on the laboratory floor, with the Doctor stooping over him. In the background hovered 'Erbert 'Oggins holding a glass of water.

"Lie still until your head clears," said Dr. Hypo. "You've accidentally given yourself a strong dose of *hashesh* drug—you must have inhaled the fumes. It might have had more serious results had not this good man who delivered the carpet rushed after me and brought me back."

"But—but—"
 "No doubt you've had some very vivid hallucinations," smiled Dr. Hypo. "*Hashesh* acts very much like opium, you know. Anyhow, don't worry about them now. Just rest for half an hour or so and you'll be all right again."

"Pip, Pep, and Pancakes" is next week's merry mirth tale of how the crew of the Happy Haddock celebrate Pancake Day. Don't miss this great fun-tale, chaps.

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THE TAXI TEC.

Triumphant Return of the BOY SLEUTH WITH A WATER PISTOL in a Gripping Complete Tale.



THE TERROR OF THE TANK! After Fourteen Years the Metal Monster Awoke to Destruction—to Reveal the Inner Story of a War-time Feud.

AND exactly how did you der tank capture single-handed, Captain O'Flynn?" The red-coated figures in the officers' mess-room started slightly at the pronounced German accent of the speaker. They had joined Captain Terence O'Flynn, V.C., in a farewell dinner before his departure for India, and none of them quite knew how Conrad Vogel had come to be invited. As a matter of fact, O'Flynn, understanding him to be a Berlin journalist interested in the development of the tank, had brought him along himself.

The little Irish hero shrugged his shoulders and laughed. "Faith 'twas aisy!" he replied lightly. "Your countrymen were not used to the tank, and the crew of this one had carelessly left the lid open! As it bore down on me I crawled along the ground, beneath the range of its guns, and then suddenly jumped up, climbed one of the tractor belts, gained the turret, dropped inside and—" he paused significantly.

"And what next?" insisted the German, his pale eyes gleaming eagerly through the thick lenses of his spectacles.

"Faith, when they saw Terence O'Flynn the spalpeens all shouted 'Kamarad' and surrendered!" declared the little V.C.

"It's a lie!" Vogel suddenly thundered, his whole body shaking with passion. There was a stir of surprise at the violence of his tone, and he continued angrily:—"I say it is an impossibility!"

A murmur of protest went up from the little group of officers, though O'Flynn merely shrugged his shoulders. But another voice took up the challenge. "By no means, Mr. Vogel," put in the only other civilian present, a mere boy about O'Flynn's height and build. "A feat such as Captain O'Flynn describes, though dangerous and daring, is not beyond the power of a gallant man."

There was a chorus of approval, and all eyes were turned on the speaker. None but Captain O'Flynn, however, knew that this quiet-looking boy was "Tiny" Tom Hinton, the Taxi Tec.

"I say it is not possible," repeated Konrad Vogel sullenly. "I understand der tank, and no man could approach it alive. I will show you vot I mean." He waved his big hands, and began to

marshal the puzzled officers into a group. "Pretend you are der tank; I am der captain." Suddenly he produced a large service revolver, and his eyes narrowed. "Now I creep along der ground—I climb der turret—I drop down and say:—'Hands up!'" He levelled the revolver at them, and for a moment they stared at him uncomprehending.

"Hands up!" repeated Vogel in a snarl. "And you—" he brandished the revolver in Tiny's face—"take your hand away from your pocket!" The Taxi Tec, the instant he had seen the gleaming barrel, had reached for his hip; now he slowly raised his hands.

"Holy smoke!" gasped Captain O'Flynn. "The war is over, Vogel!"

"Not yet," was the sinister reply. "I will one question ask you. Ven you der tank captured, did you shoot?"

"I had to kill the officer in charge," confessed the captain.

There was a long pause. Then Vogel growled: "He was my brother!"

"I'm sorry, Vogel," began O'Flynn, "but war is war, and—"

Crash! While the German's attention was on O'Flynn, Tiny had unobtrusively reached out for a chair with his foot. He kicked it forward with all his strength and the German let out an anguished howl as it thudded against his shins. Spasmodically his grip on the revolver tightened and a shot rang out deafeningly.

Simultaneously there was a tinkle of broken glass and the room was plunged in darkness. The German's bullet had shattered the single electric light bulb. In a moment there was nothing to be seen but a confused mass of shadowy, struggling figures.

There came the crackle of breaking glass and immediately Tiny made his way to the smashed window. Peering out he could faintly make out a dim form swarming down the ivy that covered the wall. "He's got away!" he yelled. "After him!"

A rush was made for the door, but by the time Tiny and the officers had reached the courtyard there was no sign of Konrad Vogel. Baffled, they returned to find the mess-room lit by candles, brought in by wondering orderlies.

"How did that man get in here?" demanded Tiny.

"Faith, it was meself invited him," replied O'Flynn. "But phwat are ye doing here yerself, Tiny?"

"I have been sent by Scotland Yard to protect you," answered the little sleuth. "It appears there is a plot of some sort against you. Probably engineered by that man, who is obviously thirsting for your life!"

O'Flynn stroked his moustache thoughtfully. "I'm not so sure," he murmured. "I'm after thinkin' there's another reason behind it." Suddenly a grin spread over his face. "Maybe Little Stoke to-morrow will prove hotter than France."

"Little Stoke? Where's that?" asked a fellow officer.

"This a village down in Sussex," replied the Irishman. "They've asked me to give away the prizes of the Territorials' Boxing Competition and make a speech at their banquet in the parish hall to-morrow afternoon. The German tank I captured is standing outside—a sight that wouldn't be after pleasing Mr. Konrad Vogel." "I know," put in Tiny quietly. "That's why I'm going to take you down in my taxi, in case another attempt is made on your life."

A Daylight Raid.

THE following day Tiny Tom Hinton was at the wheel of the ME2, his shabby old taxicab with the racing engine, driving rapidly along the Portsmouth Road. Charlie Bilks, known as Smutty, his faithful Cockney mechanic, was sitting inside by Captain O'Flynn, in case of emergencies. The soldier was dressed in all the regalia of his rank for the little function that he was to grace with his presence.

It was with a feeling of relief that Tiny drove through the narrow streets of Little Stoke, beneath fluttering flags—to the accompaniment of juvenile cheers, and drew up outside the parish hall. A few officers and some councillors came down the steps to greet them.

Terence O'Flynn sprang from the taxi. A grin lit up his face as his eyes fell on the huge, black German tank, marked with iron crosses. A single machine-gun peered starkly through its gay bunting and flags.

While O'Flynn chatted with the group on the steps Tiny turned to Smutty. "I'm going inside with the captain," he said. "I want you to stand on guard outside, and see that no one gets in without a ticket."

"Right, you are mate!" rejoined Smutty heartily. "But if you arrests my advice—" The door slammed behind the little group, for Tiny had not waited to hear the end of his invariable formula.

"Well, I've acted some rum parts since I bin wiv Tiny," reflected the mechanic, as he admitted a party of tanned young Territorials, "but this is the first time I bin a blinking doorman! It don't seem very exciting ter me, neither!"

The thought had hardly passed through his mind than he gave a sudden start. Was he seeing things, or had the German tank actually moved? He was not long in doubt. The flags and bunting draping the hideous juggernaut were vibrating tremendously, and the next moment the roar of a powerful engine throbbed on the air! Clouds of bluish vapour spurted from the exhausts as the tank lurched clumsily forward!

Smutty stared at it with bulging eyes, then a puzzled grin spread over his face. "Hey!" he said, grabbing the arm of one of the village constables who were on duty. "Is this a little surprise for the captain?"

Neither of the policemen answered. They were gazing goggle-eyed at the monster, which was now slowly swivelling round towards them on one revolving tractor belt.

Smutty realised the truth in a flash as the steel-clad colossus came rocking forward the barrel of the machine-gun protruding grimly from its port-hole. Smutty whipped out his automatic and sprang towards the monster. Then he recoiled

as he saw the gun swing round, following his movement, and lower its muzzle in his direction. He flung himself face downwards just in time. There was a staccato rattle, and a stream of bullets sang over his head.

Yells of alarm burst from the loafers gathered outside the hall, and they scattered in all directions. One of the policemen was brought down as the gun slowly circled round, raking the air with bullets.

Smutty, crouching on all fours, scrambled to one side as the tank moved towards the steps.

"Lor lummy!" he gasped aloud. "Tiny told me not to let anyone in, but I can't stop a blinkin' tank!"

The metal monster was now charging ponderously up the steps. Smutty shrank against the side of the low stone balustrade from the menace of those crushing metal links. The next moment its great armoured snout crashed into the door, bursting it asunder like matchwood. Grasping his pistol, Smutty followed the tank into the hall. As the machine-gun lifted and sent a rattling volley over their heads, the men rose from their seats with gasps of alarm!

The tables formed three sides of a rectangle, the open side being opposite the door, so that the tank advanced, rocking and rumbling, across an open space.

Smutty, standing in the shattered entrance, saw a small, red-coated figure, at the middle of the top table, suddenly stiffen. Next moment the little captain ducked his head and raced blindly towards the tank. But suddenly the muzzle of the machine-gun, which had been pointing upwards, dropped to the level of his chest, and he halted within a few feet of its sinister snout.

The lid of the turret flew up, and Konrad Vogel, his red face smeared with oil, emerged with a revolver in his hand.

"Not this time, Captain O'Flynn!" he sneered. "No man can der tank capture twice!" He glared round. "Der first man who moves dies!" he threatened. "Now, men! Quick!"

At the command, two masked ruffians scrambled out from the turret, dropped to the floor and laid hands on the little captain.

The Territorials, helpless under the threat of the machine-gun, looked on in helpless fury as their hero was dragged up the side of the tank and thrust out of sight into its cavernous depths. Then Vogel ducked down, closed the lid, and, with one track whirling, the tank wheeled ponderously round and made for the exit.

It thundered through the shattered doorway, toppled lumberously down the steps, and, as men, women and children fled before it, rocked away through the narrow village street.

Taxi and Tank.

KONRAD VOGEL sat on the driver's seat inside the tank, his hands on the levers, his short-sighted eyes peering through the observation slot.

His crew consisted of six villainous ruffians of various nationalities whom he had hired for this daring job. In the dead of night they had helped him overhaul the old engine, fill the petrol tank and radiator, and load the single machine-gun. They had actually been lurking inside with Vogel when the villagers had decked the tank with bunting that day. Now one man stood at the gun, and the others peered through the look-outs.

Suddenly one of the men shouted: "There's a cab after us!" It was ME2, with Smutty driving like mad, and another figure sitting beside him. "Train der gun on it!" barked Vogel. The gun swung round, but Smutty luckily saw it in time. He wrenched at the steering wheel, and the ME2 skidded up an alley as a stream of bullets whined through the air.

"That will them teach their distance to keep!" snarled Vogel. The outline of a steep hill, known as Stoke Mountain, now appeared above the cottages, and skilfully he steered the tank round and charged at a stone wall. The wall crumbled beneath the crushing onslaught, and pigs

scattered, squealing as the tank squelched through the mud of a sty. Another wall went down with a shuddering crash—across a furrowed field lumbered the rocking colossus—smack through a hedge—and then up Stoke Mountain!

On the summit of this hill was an ancient tumulus, and on the tumulus stood the remains of a ruined tower. Vogel had chosen this refuge because it would be impossible for any vehicle, save another tank, to follow him, and he could keep almost any number of armed men at bay with the machine-gun.

At last the tank came to a rumbling halt at the base of the tower. Vogel threw open the turret and scrambled out. "Now let us to der Captain O'Flynn talk!" he cried.

Two men seized the helpless captive, hauled him out and flung him down on the ground. He fell with his face in the mud.

"Ho, der man who captured a tank single-handed!" he jeered. "With a revolver, eh, Captain O'Flynn? Nein, it was not! You der tank captured with your own patent anti-tank gun, *nicht wahr?*"

There was no answer, and one of the ruffians gave the prisoner a brutal kick.

"Ha, you will not speak, is it?" went on Vogel savagely. "It is *verboten* to tell, eh? Well, I *know*, Captain O'Flynn. You der plans of your patent gun have hidden sewn up in your uniform! I want them or—" he drew his revolver—"you will my brother join!"

The silent figure at his feet made a mighty effort, rolled round and then propped himself into a sitting posture.

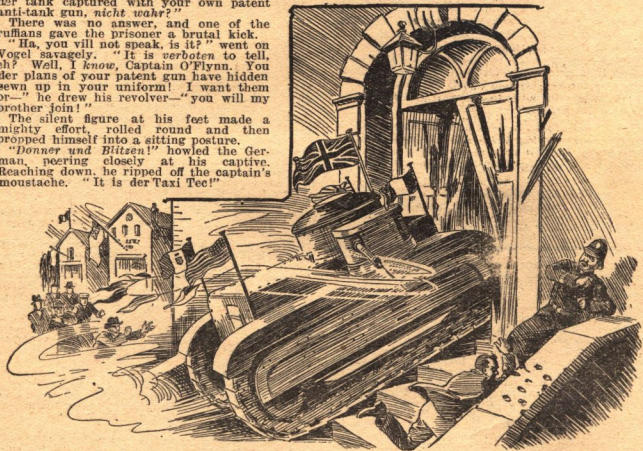
"*Donner und Blitzen!*" howled the German, peering closely at his captive. Reaching down, he ripped off the captain's moustache. "It is der Taxi Tee!"

of Territorials fight with that! Now drop this fool back into der tank!"

"I warn you—" began Tiny, but before he could finish the sentence he was seized, bundled up the side of the tank and sent crashing down inside it. As he sprawled on the floor, helpless in his bonds, he saw Vogel jump down after him. The German gave a powerful wrench to the starting handle, and the confined space of the cabin once more vibrated with the terrific throb of the engine.

"You are on a little journey going down der hill!" snarled Vogel in his face. "See—I fix der lever! At der bottom dere is a river, deep enough to drown you in der tank. Good-bye!"

He engaged the gear, and, as the tank lunged violently forward Vogel clambered out of the turret and sprang clear. The next moment the juggernaut toppled over the edge of the tumulus and began rolling down Stoke Mountain, with Tiny, securely pinioned hand and foot, being tossed helplessly about in the cabin.



THE GATE-CRASHING GIANT.—Smutty flung himself flat as the machine-gun belched lead. The bullets whizzed over his head, while the tank went crashing through the door.

"Sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Vogel," said Tiny politely. "I thought it would be wiser to impersonate O'Flynn, especially as he actually had the plans of his gun in his uniform lining, in case any unpleasantness of this kind should occur! I might inform you, Mr. Vogel," he went on, "that this hill will soon be surrounded by Territorials thirsting for your blood; you haven't got the plans; and I shall look on with great pleasure at your ultimate arrest and punishment!"

"Nein, nein, you shall not that satisfaction have!" screamed the German, in a sudden frenzy of rage. He swung round on his accomplices. "Take der machine-gun out of der tank!" he commanded harshly. As his hirelings hastened to do his bidding he continued: "We can an army

But the descent of the tank was not unobserved. Smutty, racing along one of the country roads in ME2, with Captain O'Flynn sitting beside him, suddenly jammed on the brakes with a screech of skidding wheels.

"Look!" he cried, pointing up the hill. The little V.C. saw the tank tumbling down the incline towards the river. In an instant he had sprung out of the cab. "Faith, 'tis the spalpeens at last," he shouted, drawing a revolver. "That rascal Vogel said I could not capture a tank single-handed. Well, it's meself will give him the lie!" and, vaulting over a hedge, he darted off up the hill.

Smutty, stopping only to turn off the petrol, followed as fast as he could on the captain's heels.



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The tank was now rocking downhill at a speed which made O'Flynn wonder if the crooks, who he imagined were still inside it, had lost control. He ran obliquely across the hill, hoping to cut off the tank before it reached the bottom, and thanks to his prowess as a sprinter, he succeeded.

The captain's position was now similar to that of a certain August day in 1918, except for the far greater speed of the tank. But, as if to counter-balance this disadvantage, there were no guns belching death from its empty port-holes.

He waited his moment, sprang aside as the tank thundered down on him and then leapt, clutching at one of the links of the tractor belt. With incredible agility he swarmed up the side of the tank, tore open the lid of the turret and dropped neatly inside, revolver in hand. To his amazement the cabin was empty—save for a single bound figure rolling on the floor.

Tiny recognised him the moment he entered "The river! The river!" he shrieked. "Steer us away from the river!"

O'Flynn grasped the position at once. Seizing the levers, he stopped one belt revolving, with the result that the tank swung round in a smother of mud on the very brink of the river.

"Faith an' begorra! 'Twas lucky me name's Terence O'Flynn!" exclaimed the little V.C. with justifiable pride.

He was stooping to free Tiny when another figure dropped through the turret and landed heavily beside them. "Strike me pink!" gasped Smutty. "Where's the blooming Boche?"

Tiny peeped through the observation slot, and then uttered a sharp cry. "They're running down towards us!" he shouted.

He had seen seven figures descending the incline at the double. The leader was obviously Vogel. Two others staggered under the burden of the machine-gun.

"If you arsts my advice—" began Smutty, and

suddenly broke off. The crooks had turned abruptly at right angles, and were now making for the road. "Great jumping catfish!" yelled Smutty. "They're after ME2!"

Tiny instantly gave the starting handle a terrific turn, and, as the engine sprang into raucous life, seized the levers and sent the tank crashing forward again. "There's just a chance we may race them to the road!" he muttered grimly.

But in a few moments they realised that this was impossible. The crooks, seeing the armoured colossus rocking over the ground, redoubled their efforts and reached the road a few yards ahead of it.

Reaching ME2, the ruffians boarded her on all sides, Vogel taking the wheel, and the two "gunners" forcibly thrusting the machine-gun through the window at the back. The tank ripped its way through the hedge with a rending crash, at the same moment as the shabby old cab shot off along the road.

"They've got away!" groaned Tiny. "No, they ain't," retorted Smutty cheerfully. "I turned the petrol tap off, and they're only running on the juice in the carburettor. It'll give 'em a jiffy!"

"Good man!" muttered Tiny, and he drove the tank along the road in laborious pursuit.

ME2 raced along like lightning, and Vogel was astounded to find that the savage pressure of his foot had knocked up the speedometer to over sixty in a few yards.

"Look out, boss!" yelled one of his men suddenly, standing on the running board. "There's a level-crossing ahead!"

A man with a red flag was stationed by the railway track, for the gates were under repair and there was nothing to prevent traffic from crossing the main line. But Vogel paid no attention to the warning. He stamped on the gas and was astonished when the only response was an ear-splitting back-fire!

The petrol had been burnt up in the carburettor. The taxi, however, was carried on by the momentum of its speed. While Vogel was still wondering what was happening, ME2 came to a halt in the very middle of the railway track! "Don't stop!" shouted the man with the flag. "There's a train coming!" The rumble of an approaching express shook the air as he spoke.

Tiny, peering through the observation slot of the tank, realised what had happened before Vogel himself had grasped the full gravity of his situation. "My old bus!" he shouted. "It will be smashed!" And then, with sudden determination, he accelerated the tank and drove it straight at the taxi.

Braking sharply to lessen the impact, he steered the tank into the back of ME2, and gently propelled it forward off the line. They had hardly cleared the track when the train rushed past behind them with a roar and a whistle.

The crooks had been paralysed with fright by the imminence of death, and when Tiny, O'Flynn, and Smutty sprang out armed with revolvers, all but Vogel were prepared to surrender.

But blind hate and baffled fury robbed the German of any thought but that of revenge. "Shoot, you fools, shoot!" he howled, and, drawing his revolver, he levelled it at Captain O'Flynn.

A stream of water from Tiny's harmless pistol took him between the eyes, and staggered him. His arm went up, and the bullet hummed into the air. Next instant the Taxi Tec had sprung upon him and borne him kicking to the ground. There was a click, and Konrad Vogel was in handcuffs.

The Taxi Tec clapped his hand on the German's shoulder. "You owe Captain O'Flynn an apology, Mr. Vogel," he said, "for to-day he has re-enacted the gallant feat which you said was impossible, and which won him the V.C.!"

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The ICE PIRATES



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Discovered

THAT lurid explosion of the iceberg achieved many startling results. It lit to the startled gaze of Lieut. Carruthers, high above in the airship, the swoop through the air of Captain Silent and the boys on skis—and the fact that the observation car was occupied by a black-moustached foreigner, Captain Carl Lieberstrom.

In a flash the airship officer realised the imposture, and, highly incensed, he acted in a manner characteristic of his.

Carl Lieberstrom, in the best simulation of Captain Silent's voice he could manage, had been exhorting those in the airship to haul him up swiftly. He had not been choice of language, for his immediate concern had been to evade the upblast from the exploding iceberg.

He had been successful in that, for the airship's crew had hauled the car up a hundred and more feet above the berg before it exploded. But directly the gigantic flash, accompanied by the shaking roar of the explosion, revealed Carl Lieberstrom, he was hauled upwards no more.

"Why, by thunder! An imposter! Stop!" cried the lieutenant; and he surveyed the scene below, aghast. He was relieved, however, to see the boys and Captain Silent land safely on the ice from their perilous ski jump.

What influenced him most in his subsequent action was the notion that the scheming spy in the observation car might have provided himself with arms, or even dynamite, with the intention of subjugating the airship's crew and taking over the dirigible.

"We'll ease off that fellow," decided Lieutenant Carruthers. "We don't want him, even as a prisoner. Let the cable run out—and sharp. Let go, men!"

The crew obeyed immediately, allowing the cable to run out wildly. The observation car with its alarmed occupant fell crazily, like a bucket tumbling down a well. At the end of its cable length it came to a violent, jerking stop.

The U-boat commander was flung out like a sack of meal. He went hurtling down with a piercing scream of terror.

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

Mayo Runs Amok

OF Lieberstrom's fate, Captain Silent and the boys had no knowledge. Nor had any of the rest, Ned Bunnicome, Pitaluk, Sir Vallance or the crew. Indeed, all had quite enough to concern them on the ice.

The three on deck, and the tensely watching crew of the *Pride of Bideford*, could not tell what had happened. Following the explosion of the berg, masses of ice flew at the ship, smashing in the bulwarks and depositing great lumps on its decks.

The staunch old ship bore herself well through that dreadful cannonade. But then came a crack like the sound of Doom. The ice itself rent under her, and the ship was driven at the mercy of the wild ice and waters.

Ned Bunnicome and Pitaluk, however, saw the flying figures of the ski-jumpers alight on deck and go swooping down on to the ice.

"Aye, there they be," cried the old Devon sailor. But his cry was snatched away in the shrill, spiteful whine of an uprising gale.

As if by some sinister witchcraft, suddenly, an Arctic storm came up, with a whoop and a roar; the sky became overcast and seemed to swool down on the ice adventurers.

Clambering down the Jacob's ladder to a lee of ice, Ned Bunnicome, Pitaluk and Sir Vallance ran to where the skiers had come to a halt.

"Thank Heaven, we be safe; zur!" cried Ned Bunnicome fervently, and his look embraced the lads. "But 'ere be a storm coming up. Us'n had better make f'r shelter."

"Ay," cried Captain Silent vibrantly. "But look." He pointed to the debris of the exploded iceberg as he spoke. Riding out of the piled-high masses of ice wreckage were the five treasure ships.

A noble sight indeed the Spanish galleons presented, spite that the rigging of all lay in wild tangles of ice and iron across the decks. Nothing could dim the dignity of those towering castles at prow and stem, the many decks and high poops.

Bunched together the treasure ships came out under a dusky lowering sky—a sky that burst a

fresh and mighty blast of joy wind around them and sent them heeling, rolling drunkenly, dipping into an uprearing black sea.

"They're secured together—made fast by hawsers and grapnels," said Captain Silent. "That was Captain Crossbones' precaution; let's hope the storm doesn't rend them asunder, else we may lose some of our treasure ships."

Despite the wildness of their surroundings, the gale roaring like a lion, the lads continued to gaze in awe at the five, fairy-like ships.

"The lodestone that attracted them to the

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magnetic rock must have gone by the board," said Captain Silent. "Yes, see, the bowsprit of the foremost is completely smashed by the ice. That means the ships are at the mercy of the gale, as the *Pride of Bideford* is," he added tersely.

The stout Devon craft was scudding under a reefed fore-topsail on to the piled mountain of ice that was the exploded berg. But the crew were fearful of foundering on the mighty magnetic rock. All hands were on deck, watching the enemy as they closed amidst the uproar of cannoning ice.

They ran up on the piled masses, and the crew dropped their heaviest anchor, and were successful in warping the ship in the lee of the rock in the turbulent, leaden-hued water.

The five treasure ships fell back in the gale helplessly, and it seemed as they plunged back with a thundering, roaring crash that they would smash the little *Pride of Bideford* to splinters. But the ice-covered argosy plunged past, then stopped like a reined horse, wallowing and rolling in the waters.

Suddenly Captain Silent pointed again. "Look," he shouted in a voice of amaze and fury; "the *Pride of Bideford*'s afire—those scoundrelly pirates . . ."

Horrified, the companions of Lost Land saw a spurt of red flame stab through the wild darkness ahead. It came from the lazaret, and was followed by screaming cries.

Wildly Captain Silent and his companions raced along a lee of ice, thirty feet thick. The storm had not yet broken up that ice flooring, save for mighty cracks, that had widened to twenty-foot leads. Thus they were able to approach within a hundred yards of their burning ship. And there was aid coming out to them to reach the ship; for Rough Brian O'Malley, the sailing master, was rowing a dory across the tumbled waters to Sir Vallance and his companions.

"What happened?" Captain Silent demanded as they were rowed across, but he knew the answer beforehand. The pirates, desperate at the pitching

and rolling of the ship, had set fire to the lazaret in which they were imprisoned. The crew had been forced to let them out, and there was even now taking place a running fight on board between the men of Devon and the pirates.

"We'll soon quell this—with the help of a dose of hot lead," said Captain Silent grimly.

The dory had to steer in between the hulls of the *Pride of Bideford*, and the towering side of one of the Spanish galleons, so near were the treasure ships lolloping in the black waters round the Fang. As Captain Silent reached for the Jacob's ladder that hung like a slender black web from the *Pride of Bideford*'s waist a heavy figure ran out on the ice-covered plank.

It was a figure in knee breeches, dirty white stockings and buckled boots. A figure with a black patch to hide an empty eye socket, while the other glowered maniacally. As he launched himself along the plank for a spring, a wild, bloodthirsty cry came from his lips.

"The gold! The keys to the treasure chest are in the cabin, and Black Mayo's first."

Leaping from the plankway, he managed to scramble up into the ice-covered waist of the Spanish galleon.

"Black Mayo's got ahead of us," gritted Captain Silent. "How did he escape from his fetters?"

His fierce shout about the keys of the treasure was not without meaning to Captain Silent and Sir Vallance Treherne.

Sir Vallance had written in the log book how Captain Crossbones had made a habit of collecting all the keys of the treasure chests together and retaining them in his own possession.

In the commander's cabin of one of those Spanish galleons the great bunch of keys was probably to be found. And Black Silas Mayo, no doubt, had the keys in his greedy hands now and was unlockingsome of the chests, peering at their glittering contents.

Not that it mattered for the one-eyed scoundrel couldn't get away with that great load of treasure. So the gold adventurers decided after a swift conference.

There was work to be done; the fire to be put out. It was not until an hour later that Captain Silent and his helpers succeeded in extinguishing the blaze on the *Pride of Bideford*. And by then other things were happening. The storm had mounted to a fury such as those seasoned sailors had never witnessed before. Before it the *Pride of Bideford*, made fast in the lee of the treasure ships, was driven like a cork. But suddenly at last a great calm fell.

In Sir Vallance Treherne's stateroom, where the adventurers sat round a table, waiting tensely—expectant of they knew not what—Captain Silent suddenly stood up.

"We've been blown by the gale into the caves," he said, placing his clenched hand softly on the table.

"We're going back the way we came, and—I think it's time to find out what's happening to our friend, Black Silas Mayo."

Curiously a chill of unnameable fear and dread fell upon all of them as they strode out on to the ice-covered decks. With relief they saw that Captain Silent had estimated rightly—they were in the calm waters of the cave land. As they gazed around, suddenly there rose on the weird, shivering air of the cavernland a piercing, blood-curdling scream.

Ghost or Man!

BLACK MAYO found fearful difficulty and danger in clambering about the steeply slanting, pitching deck when first he jumped on the ice-covered galleon. Cursing, horrified and frightened, the pirate

was thrown this way and that in the storm until he was almost out of his wits. Then Providence came to his aid; the fore-castle scuttle fell open with a crash and admitted him as he was slung across the deck. He crashed down the companionway and there lay still till the storm abated.

But the black-patched pirate opened his eyes, and his heavy wits stirred after a while. Obstinate-ly he pulled himself up.

Grumbling and grunting to himself, he pulled himself by the aid of some of the tangled gear to the poop ladder, and mounted with unsteady steps, his cutlass between his teeth.

He reached the great, heavily rafted stateroom of that Spanish ship; once it had been magnificent, with priceless oil paintings, hangings on its walls, and furniture of exquisite craftsmanship. Now it was dark and gloomy—f forbidding.

But looking through the window, Black Patch came upon a startling sight. A small table stood in the middle of the cabin, and on it were the heaped rusty keys of the treasure chests.

"Now what so 'ee make of that?" Black Mayo muttered, and pushed against the scuttle. It flew inwards, and Black Silas lurched into the dark state-room, staring at the keys. He stretched out his hands towards the rusty pile. An awful fear struck him, warning him.

The warning came too late. A powerful, hairy white arm, gripping a cutlass, shot out from a door of a cabin adjoining the state-room, close alongside the table, and swept in a whistling cut for the pirate's muscled neck.

With a fearful shriek Black Silas threw his head back, quivering horribly. Then with the blood spurting, he collapsed and fell heavily. He was dead.

The blade was withdrawn. The door closed. Was it phantom—or what—guarding the keys of the Arctic treasure?

The Death Chamber.

THAT wild, unearthly scream gave the little party of gold-seekers to pause. Roger and Phil looked at one another with faces suddenly white and scared, their scalps tingling with fear of the unknown.

"A death scream," said Captain Silent, his eyes glinting sharply. "Our friend, Black Patch has got his. But how . . . ?"

There was no answer for a moment. A hushed air of mystery lay over the drifting ships like a heavy pall.

Then Sir Vallance Treherne ventured a suggestion. In his quaint old Devon speech he propounded the theory that the rats—plague rats whose bite meant a terrible death—might have got Silas Mayo.

This menace of the plague rats Captain Silent and Sir Vallance Treherne had discussed between them. For they were a serious obstacle to his getting the treasure chests out of the holds.

While the boys slept and rested, however, and the ships drifted through the caverns, the naval explorer had been at work to meet this peril. Captain Silent had no mean qualifications as a scientist. He had manufactured a poison gas which would be deadly to the rats, and two quantities of this gas he had enclosed in spheres of blown glass.

Now that fearful scream served to remind Captain Silent of the rats and of the poison gas bombs he had manufactured.

"Nobody is to get aboard those ships until I've laid my rat traps," he ordered tersely.

He went back to the stateroom, presently re-appearing with the gas bombs. They were glass globes about the size of a cricket ball, and the poison gas swirled like smoke within.

Equipped with these sinister spheres, Captain Silent led the way, climbing carefully aboard the Spanish galleon. The little party followed him, moving quietly as possible, their faces tense, set in expression.

"Look out for yourselves," said Captain Silent



THE MYSTERY KILLER.—Black Mayo gave a wild shriek as a powerful, hairy arm gripped a cutlass, shot out from the shadows in a whistling cut for his neck.

in a low tone. "I'm going to place these bombs in the hold; we'll have to leave the ship before they're exploded, for the gas spreads. Keep a look-out for our pirate friend. You'd better come with me, Bunnicome."

Roger, Phil, Pitaluk and Sir Vallance Treherne were left together on deck while the two crept forward. There followed a time of waiting and uncertainty. Every noise seemed accentuated to get on the boys' nerves, the rattle of gear, the sigh of the wind in frozen rigging and the hiss of waters.

Suddenly Roger pointed to the frozen, snow-covered decks. "Look, footsteps, Phil," he whispered tensely; "Black Mayo! See, he's gone towards the cabin for the keys."

Some fearful fascination pulled the two lads, as if

on a string; prompted them to follow the trail on tip-toe, cautiously. Sir Vallance and Pitaluk had gone in the opposite direction to investigate a sudden sound; they, too, had been lured away. For the ship seemed haunted, and the nerves of all were on edge.

A shivering excitement warned Roger and Phil of danger, but it was as if they could not help themselves.

They reached the high poop cabin, and pressed cautiously against the door. It answered inch by inch. What they expected to find neither lad could have hazarded a guess. But the sight that actually greeted their eyes made them catch their breath sharply in fear and horror.

On the floor lay Black Silas Mayo in a pool of blood, his head twisted horribly to one side. His single eye stared at the boys with the glassy stare of death. In the tomb-like silence that followed, as the boys stared, transfixed with clammy fear, could be heard the *drip-drip* of blood.

Roger first conquered his fears. He wished he had not come. He saw that Phil was deadly sick. Yet even now something urged him on.

"Look, Phil," he whispered; "the keys!"

The rusty keys to the treasure chests still lay untouched on the table, near that door to the inner cabin. Something must have warned Roger, for he pointed to the door.

"Look out; someone may be hidden behind there," he whispered.

Cautiously the boys entered the darkened cabin. The lure was pulling them on. Stalwart Roger had it in his mind to rush that closed door. An instinct, amounting to a conviction, was upon him that something dreadful lay behind. But the real danger came from elsewhere.

Neither of the lads saw the two heavy treasure chests balanced on their sides across two of the massive oak beams of the cabin above them. To the lids of those treasure chests were attached lengths of thin manilla rope. And, too late, Roger and Phil saw those ropes!

The door opened, the arm stretched out and pulled on those ropes. The lids of the treasure chests came open, and from them crashed a thousand, minted pieces, bright discs a-dance with some devilish yellow light.

Pieces of Eight! They cascaded and crashed around the boys. Both went down under the deluge of gold coins, bewildered and almost stunned by the weight of them.

From behind the door came a cackle of wild laughter. And the next moment Carl Lieberstrom dashed out, the cutlass raised aloft.

The Monster Roused

"STOP! Turn around and put your hands up high. Quick; and no tricks, mind!"

A voice had cut in from the entrance to the state-room like the crack of a whip.

In the doorway stood Captain Silent, his Service revolver in his hand, his narrowed eyes grim and peering. Behind him, silent and tense, were Ned Bunnicombe, Sir Vallance and Pitaluk.

The crash of the falling coins had brought them running from the hold, where Captain Silent had laid the poison gas bombs to kill the rats. And they had arrived in the nick of time.

Insane fires gleamed in Carl Lieberstrom's eyes. "Drop it, I say; and raise your hands," Captain Silent blazed at him.

The cutlass clattered to the floor. But the villain's eyes were dark pools of savage mockery. Slowly he raised his hands half-way above his head. Then

suddenly the U-boat plottter went into swift, devastating action.

He plucked a knife from a cradle behind his back, caught it by the point and flung it over his shoulder with the force of a bullet.

It was the overarm throw of the Neapolitan knife-thrower. A fearful thing, the knife travelled like a flash of silver fire straight at Captain Silent.

Instinctively the naval explorer threw up his arms to ward off that blurred silver lightning bolt.

The knife struck his gun. He was lucky. The keen point of it snapped against the barrel of the Service revolver. But the blade bit deep through his fur-gloved hand and out his fingers almost to the bone.

In that moment of intense pain the revolver blazed and crashed thunderously, but the bullet hummed past his enemy's head and thudded into the wood-work of the cabin. In his agony, Captain Silent dropped the revolver, clattering to the floor.

Instantly with a pantherish spring, the U-boat commander fell upon it. He had acted with chain-lightning speed, and as he straightened he held the revolver—and the whip hand.

"I thought to kill you," he said distinctly, his eyes icy, mocking alits as they rested on Captain Silent. "But it is just as well, my friend. I have a use for you, and you shall die another way. About turn: quick march!"

He punctuated his order with a stabbing thrust of the gun, after turning it swift as the weaving head of a rattlesnake upon the boys.

Captain Silent glared, his eyes hot and dangerous. But there was no help for it. Slowly Captain Silent, Bunnicombe, and Pitaluk turned and marched out into the freezing cold of the ice-covered decks, while Carl Lieberstrom stood in the doorway, and with a wicked grin motioned to Roger and Phil to pick themselves up and follow.

Both the lads were still dazed by their fall, but surreptitiously a few moments before Phil had scooped up handfuls of the golden coins that had crashed about their heads and stuffed them in his pockets.

Roger had noted the act of his fair-haired cousin and wondered. But, of course, he said nothing, and as they stumbled past Carl Lieberstrom at the door it was evident the villain had not seen Phil's covert act.

Carl Lieberstrom stopped the lads as they made to pass him, and swiftly, dexterously pinioned their wrists with cruel iron handcuffs working on a toothed ratchet.

It may have been merely an evil jest of the U-boat plottter's, but, as he followed the two lads out, it seemed that there was at least a fearful method in his action.

The boys saw to their amaze that they were back near the entrance to Lost Land. The five treasure galleons, of which the one they were aboard was the foremost, and the *Pride of Bideford*, all looked together, were being borne along by some irresistible flood and were charging down upon the great rock that guarded the entrance to Lost Land, and the lair of the monster.

They could only crash into that great blank-stone wall—crash and recoil, perhaps to sink with all lives and the treasure. Such was the boys' instant thought.

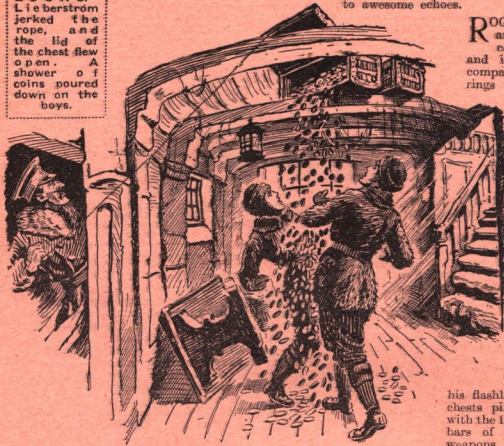
"Vorwärts—you!" The German growled to Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicombe. And at the revolver point he forced them swiftly up the great, winding fore-castle stairway of the Spanish galleon.

They stood on the high deck there, staring at the mighty wall of stone. In that rock, as Carl Lieberstrom pointed out to them, were iron rings. Men

had been suspended from those rings before now by Captain Crossbones and his pirates as bait and food for the Monster that guarded the Rock.

"You will jump for der rings—and catch them," ordered Carl Lieberstrom with his cruel smile. "Else—I will shoot der poys!"

DELUGED WITH DOUBLOONS.—Lieberstrom jerked the rope, and the lid of the chest flew open. A shower of coins poured down on the boys.



Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicome exchanged desperate glances. What evil plan was in Carl Lieberstrom's mind they could only guess. But this might be a way out; it might provide a chance of escape for them all. Grimly Captain Silent nodded his acquiescence.

The iron rings in the wall loomed before their eyes as the galleon with the others in its train bore down upon the Rock. Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicome crouched, prepared for their spring.

Crash! The violent shuddering impact of the foremost galleon against the rock baffles description. All five ships recoiled from the collision in a great wall of water as if mortally stricken. But a moment ere the impact came Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicome had leapt.

Each caught at one of the iron rings; and there they hung, some fifty feet above the surging turmoil of waters.

An awesome, shattering roar broke through the turmoil of the cavern land. Carl Lieberstrom gave a harsh, insane cackle as he pointed his revolver unwaveringly on the three boys and Sir Vallance in the waist of the ship.

"See how I shall escape with der treasure out of Lost Land," he shouted triumphantly; and his revolver for a moment stabbed out in the direction of the monster. "When he wakes he is used to find food hung from der rings in der wall. Again he shall haf it but a fire ship shall tickle him up. And in his pain he wrestle with der rock and move it."

The boys gasped, horrified. For they had seen the monster in pain wrestle with that mighty mountain of rock and push it aside. In this way had they been able to enter Lost Land.

Whether it had seen the human bait hanging from the stone wall of Guardian Rock, or not, cannot be said, but at any rate the monster was making for the rock with roars that shook the cavern land to awesome echoes.

ROGER and Phil, with Pitaluk and Sir Vallance Treberne, could only stare hopelessly and in horror at their two companions hanging on the rings in the rock, while the monster, roaring shakingly, slowly approached.

"Get in der hold where der treasure-chests are," growled Lieberstrom, his eyes glittering blackly. "You shall be food for der rats."

Casting haggard, glances at one another, the boys, Sir Vallance, and Pitaluk turned. Down the dark companionway they groped, with Carl Lieberstrom coming behind, his revolver in one hand and powerful flashlamp in the other.

The U-boat plotter was grinning wolfishly. The white beam from

his flashlamp turned on treasure-chests piled high, some of them with the lids thrown open, revealing bars of pure gold, goblets and weapons and trinkets encrusted with flashing jewels.

"All mine!" gloated the U-boat plotter, laughing evilly. "And for you, death from der rats!"

Gutturally he ordered them to lie full length in the dank and fearsome-smelling hold. Already the four could hear the scuttling and scraping of the ferocious plague rats whose bite spelt agonising death.

With a wicked glittering grin on his face, he commenced moving towards them with several lengths of rope in his hands to tie their ankles. Suddenly, however, he stopped, attracted by something on the ground at his feet.

"Ach, vat is dis?"

Instantly Roger and Phil recognised it. It was one of the large glass spheres containing the poison-gas, left there by Captain Silent, to kill off the rats.

Entirely unsuspecting the potential danger it contained, the German U-boat commander picked up the glass sphere and held it in his hands, closely examining it.

And suddenly a desperate plan was born in Phil Treberne's brain. The fair-haired youngster remembered the handful of gold coins he had scooped up and crammed in his pocket. He had also a powerful catapult, in the use of which he was fairly expert. If he could only break that glass sphere in Carl Lieberstrom's hands!

Desperately he fitted three of the coins in the sling of the catapult, and gripping it between his teeth, held the prong in his pinioned hands, stretched the elastic—and let fly!

Clang! The coins flew straight, unerringly, and

hit the glass sphere in Carl Lieberstrom's hands. There was a loud crack. The sphere broke!

Came a hiss as liquid acid spurted, and became smoke. The terrible corrosive acid squirted into Carl Lieberstrom's mouth and eyes.

And so death came to the U-boat plotter. Scream upon scream fled from his mouth. Terror and pain were at every nerve he had. His lips were burned and swollen instantly, and down from the side of his mouth spilled a long red streak.

He stiffened quivering, his mouth opened with blood spurring, and then he dropped by the revolver and the broken sphere and the flashlamp. He was dead.

Sir Vallance and Pitaluk, Roger and Phil, were all on their feet, groping blindly for the companionway. They had seen death in one of its most terrible forms, and they fought for escape.

But as they groped for and found the companionway, Roger Treherne saw the other sphere lying amidst the treasure chests. And some wild instinct made him stoop and pick it up before hastening after the others.

As they rushed out on deck they were greeted with a fresh terror that brought startled gasps from their lips.

They were bearing down again upon Guardian Rock—being swept upon it fast. But before them the monster had arrived upon the spot, and was reaching up with its colossal, fearsome talons for its prey—Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicome, hanging from the rings.

It was the monster they hit. The crash of the galleon's prow into its scaly body made it turn with an enraged roar.

Again they were confronted with that nightmare horror that had greeted them at their entry to Lost Land, the immense gargoyle face with its saucer-like eyes, invulnerable as armour plating, the great mouth open to reveal serrated rows of teeth, a jolling immensity of tongue, half veiled by clouds of steam.

Towards that horror Roger ran across the icy, slippery decks. Fear gripping at his heart, but with a wild idea burning at his brain. In his right hand he held the glass poison sphere.

With a wild cry Roger hurled the thing into the red, steaming cauldron of that throat!

What happened after that remains only as a dizzy, confused and terrible memory to the boys. They knew the next second that the treasure ship had again struck Guardian Rock with a terrific impact that almost shattered in its bulwarks. And as if in a blur they saw Captain Silent and Ned Bunnicome drop to the upper deck.

The monster, in its death agonies, was thrashing the water into a boiling flood. Its cries were sufficient to appal the hardiest of living creatures.

Mercifully its agonies were short. But with its passing came the final transformation. For, true to its habit in life, it wrestled madly with the great mountain of rock. And in a mighty blur and flood of waters the rock moved and rolled over on the monster.

When the great upheaval had at last subsided, it was seen that the way out of Lost Land was clear.

IT was all like a miracle to Roger and Phil. Beyond, high in the gloom of the Arctic skies, hovered their airship. And in the days that followed they were to witness the hauling of chest upon chest of treasure up to that great ship of the skies. But, indeed, they realised little of it all for some time to

come, for they were tired, and they slept. How they slept!

They learnt in their waking moments that in the terror of that last experience the pirates aboard the *Pride of Bideford* had tried to abandon the ship in the boats, and all had been lost in the flood.

There only remained now the Eskimos and Sir Vallance and his crew. To their regret, but not greatly to their surprise, Sir Vallance and his men of Devon decided to remain in Lost Land.

In the airship the lads slept. Until there came the day when the great silver vessel commenced droning through the skies for distant England. Looking down, the adventurers of Lost Land saw the entrance blocked. The Eskimos had done that. They had moved Guardian Rock back into its original position, and had locked themselves within Lost Land for all time.

As they looked their last from the airship, the little party of adventurers saw the great white mountains and peaks grimly wrapped in winter, white, frozen, glittering and implacable, standing sentinel, as if glad to be left in their silence.

Pancakes produced in dozens by Catchpole's Patent Pancake Mixer. Only one of the screamingly funny incidents in the Great Pancake P.O.t at St. Giddy's next week.

THE TALKIE TIMBER SHOOTERS—

(Continued from page 22.)

again to firmer footing on a larger trunk. He was safe, sweeping downstream in the centre of the drive, standing firm and secure upon the log. The jam was broken; the logs were sweeping unchecked through the Swan's Neck!

"Great! Great!" Joe shouted, dancing with excitement as he turned his camera.

Even as his shout died away, two struggling figures appeared on the high bank opposite—on the rival side. Lone Pine and Finnigan, fighting furiously.

Neither was armed. A veritable battle of giants, one beef and brawn the other sinew and whipcord. There on the high bank they fought, while below the logs raced.

Suddenly Lone Pine, with an adroit twist, gripped Finnigan by the neck and the waist. Next moment he swung him high.

"Thus dies the killer of Red Eagle, the brother of Lone Pine!" the Indian shouted, so that the breathless watchers on the other bank could hear, as also could the relentless ears of the sound recorder which Jerry was working.

Next moment Finnigan was tossed out and down into the milling maelstrom of logs below, never to rise again. Lone Pine turned and disappeared in the trees. It was the last time he was seen there.

"BLIMEY, wot a picture!" Joe cried enthusiastically. "One in a million, and that's about the odds against it ever being shown as a news event for it 'ud never get by the blinkin' censor. But gosh, what a finish it'll be to that picture Imperial Films are going to make."

"Why I never heard about that, Joe?" Don said. "Did you Jerry?" and the youngster shook his head.

"Neither did anyone else!" Joe growled. "I've only just thought about it myself. But I'm going to see it made!"

Nearly got your team of Test Cricketers, chaps? Send them in as soon as you can for an enlarged set of 44 ZAT cards to play the fascinating new game of ZAT.