

FREE GREAT NEW 'ZAT GAME

Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



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GRAND
TEST MATCH
SOUVENIRS

The Jester's Realm



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

Commissionaire: Only boxes and stalls left, sir!
Farmer: What d'ye take me for, an 'oss?
(Football to R. YATES, Quarry Lodge, Colwall, Malvern.)

SCRAPING THROUGH.

The sailor was recounting his experiences to a very old gentleman, who interrupted him.

"But what rank did you hold?" he asked.

"Ship's optician, sir."

"Ship's optician! I never knew there was such a rank in the Navy. What were your duties?"

"Scraping the eyes out of the ship's potatoes!" the sailor replied.

(Fountain pen to RISDON COX, 40, High Street, Pentrynmduw, Newbridge, Mon.)

A LOOKER-ON.

BILL: Why aren't you working to-day, Fred?

FRED: The foreman sacked me yesterday. You see, a foreman is one who stands round and watches the men work.

BILL: Well, what's that got to do with it?

FRED: Oh! He got jealous of me, because people thought I was foreman!

(Fountain pen to T. BODDY, White Gable, Wycombe Road, Marlow.)

SICKENING.

SCOT (to friend, about to hail a taxi-cab): Nae, mon, I can't stand taxi-cabs! When I sit wi' ma back tae the driver it makes me feel sick, and when I sit wi' ma face tae the taximeter it makes me feel nae better.

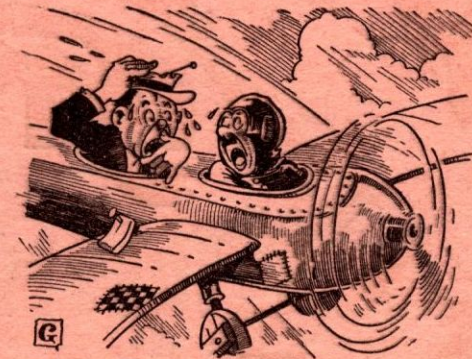
(Fountain pen to JACK HAMLEY, 2, Council Houses, Lydford, Devon.)

SMIFF! SNIFF!

OLD GENT (in tram, to boy with aggravating sniff): Have you a handkerchief?

Boy: Yes—but I don't lend it to strangers.

(Fountain pen to R. EGGLTON, 227, St. Albans Rd., Watford, Herts.)



Nervous Gent. (in airplane which is out of control): I'd give five pounds to be out of this!
Pilot: Keep your money; you'll be out for nothing in a minute!

(Football to HERBERT MIDDLEBROOK, 458, Whalley Old Road, Blackburn, Lancashire.)

DUDS.

At a very dull football match, in which two dud teams were taking part, one of the players suddenly got the ball right up to the goalmouth.

"Shoot, Bill, shoot!" shouted a home supporter.

"Why pick on Bill?" asked a gloomy onlooker.

"Why not shoot the whole lot of 'em?"

(Fountain pen to TERENCE CAMPION, 44, Cleveland Street, Shrewsbury.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

4/3/33.

IMMATERIAL.

BARBER: You'll have to hold your head up, sir, if you want a shave.

VERY TIRED CUSTOMER: Will I? Oh, well make it a hair-cut!

(Fountain pen to H. FURNIVAL, 41, London Road, Stoke-on-Trent.)

THE BEATING OFF.

"What's the matter, Mr. Flannigan?"

"Matter! why that young varmint of mine as swallowed a cartridge and I duns't wallop 'im, for fear it will go off!"

(Fountain pen to R. BURWOOD, 41, Ashville Road, Leytonstone, E.11.)

IT'S SOAR-FUL.

VISITOR: Doesn't this high flying get on your nerves?

AIRMAN: Well it makes me soar every time I leave the hangar!

(Fountain pen to F. OTTAWAY, 8, Northgate, East Dereham.)

THE GREATEST YARN OF MYSTERY AND INTRIGUE, OF SPIES, KINGS AND THE SECRET SERVICE EVER PENNED.

The MASTER of MASKS

By
JOHN HUNTER



BEGINS TO-DAY

BILLY TRENT was a page-boy at the great Imperial Theatre which stood in Piccadilly Circus. On this night when the fights of the Circus were flaring and rocketing, when the façade of the Imperial was more dazzling with blaze than all the rest of the Circus, Billy was very excited.

They had a show at the Imperial which was drawing all London. It was called "Lithkranian Medley," and was a mixture of circus, revue, and native dancing. All the players came from the great Central European empire of

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

Lithkrania. There were singers, acrobats, gymnasts, comedians, jugglers, dancers in native costume, and last, but by no means least, the great ape who was called Johann.

This creature's intelligence was simply uncanny. Its trainer claimed that it was "almost human." It seemed to be able to do anything but talk. One of its "acts" was tightrope walking of a peculiar kind. Round the front of the first tier of boxes and the dress circle a rope was fixed on short projecting bars, so that it encircled the whole auditorium, and was about a foot from the boxes and circle. Swinging from the middle of the domed roof of the theatre



CRASHING THE KIDNAPPER.—Billy let go of the trapeze and flew straight at the giant ape as it made off along the tight-rope with the diplomat.

was a long trapeze, which was kept swaying, pendulum fashion, while the great ape calmly walked round the encircling rope.

At intervals he would take a mighty leap from his precarious perch and clutch the swinging trapeze away out in the immense well of the theatre. With the terrific momentum thus gained he would swing right across the auditorium and fly off to the rope at the far side. It was an immense thrill for the audience, and, of course, below the trapeze a great net was stretched to protect the people in the stalls from any untoward slip on the part of the ape.

Billy had occasionally watched rehearsals of Johann, and he had observed one curious thing which, that fatal night, he remembered . . . too late.

On this night the reason for his excitement was the fact that the Lithkranian Ambassador was honouring the theatre with a visit from himself and his entourage, and Billy had been detailed specially to wait outside the ambassadorial box to attend on any of the Ambassador's requirements.

There was a great crowd in Piccadilly when the Lithkranian Ambassador arrived. He was probably the most famous diplomat in Europe, and a man of

great cleverness and unimpeachable honesty. Billy thought it was like looking at a page of the old-time diplomatic romances which were written in the days of Edward VII and Queen Victoria. There were blazing orders everywhere, white shirts crossed by tinted ribbons, gleaming uniforms, all the pageantry of an order which the Great War practically swept out of existence.

Billy was enthralled, and when the manager presented him to the Ambassador and that gentleman said a few words to him, he felt that life was really worth living.

The Ambassador occupied a box alone. In Great Britain he was the representative of his king, and the etiquette surrounding the King of Lithkrania was extraordinarily rigid. Billy stood outside the box.

The show was on and Billy could hear the beat of the drums to the folk dancing of the troupe of dancers. The dancing ceased amid a thunder of

applause, and Billy heard the slow and desultory music which is usually played when acrobats are performing. And so the thing proceeded.

Just after the interval, and when the audience had once more settled down, a man came hurrying round a corner of the lonely corridor in which Billy waited. He wore evening dress, and across his shirt front was the ribbon of a notable order. He paused by Billy and felt in his pocket.

"Have you got a watch, boy?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Billy displayed a solid, gannmetal timepiece.

"Good. Note the time." The man fished in his pocket and produced a large, square envelope. "In exactly ten minutes take this into the box and give it to his Excellency. You won't need to wait for an answer. Exactly ten minutes, remember!"

Billy took the envelope and the man hurried off. As he went, something fell to the floor, evidently partly dragged from his pocket when he pulled out the big envelope. Billy went and picked it up. It was exactly the size and shape of a visiting card, but instead of being made of white pasteboard it was of chromium-plated steel, very thin, supple and light. Engraved on it was an amazing inscription, something which looked like an arithmetical fraction. Thus: $\frac{3}{7}$.

Below this was inscribed: *To be found in London, on front of the age, every day, link-ups.*

Billy examined this extraordinary talisman for a minute or two, then remembered his instructions regarding the letter and glanced at his watch. He had yet some minutes to wait. The theatre was now silent, and he realised that the performance of Johann, the great ape, was about to commence.

As he realised this he was conscious also that the big square envelope which he had been asked to hand to the Ambassador was strongly scented in a sickly sweet, unmistakable fashion. He did not understand why this envelope should be perfumed, and he did not connect perfume with the steel

visiting card, Johann, or the definite ten minutes which must elapse ere he went into the box.

The seconds ticked away. He could hear the strange cries of Johann's trainer as he stood on the stage and, from there, directed the antics of his formidable and gigantic pet. At last the ten minutes were up and Billy, having tapped on the door of the box, was invited to enter.

He handed the letter to the Ambassador and explained that it had been given to him by a man in the corridor. The Ambassador took the big envelope in his hand and said: "Wait a moment, please." In face of this, Billy could not tell him there would be no answer, so he stayed where he was.

It was while this happened that the great ape, Johann, began his sensational walk round the rope that circled the theatre before the boxes and the first tier of seats in the dress-circle. He came with incredible swiftness along the rope, while the audience sat silent and breathless watching him. So amazing were his antics that the Ambassador did not immediately open the envelope he held, but sat staring in wonder at the gigantic ape.

It reached the box, and as it did so a flash of memory came to Billy—a memory of a rehearsal he had happened to witness a day or two earlier when nobody was about save himself . . . of a dummy . . . a square envelope . . . this same box . . .

And as he thought these things the gigantic ape sniffed loudly, got the scent of the perfume that drenched the envelope, the scent which was the signal he had been trained to obey automatically, and, reaching out a terrible hairy arm he encircled the Ambassador and lifted him from the box.

Shrieks and cries of amazement and fear filled the theatre. Johann was sliding in ugly fashion, stagewards, the diplomat half-crushed against his barrel chest, while he uttered loud roars which, of themselves, were terrifying in the extreme.

At this moment the long trapeze swung towards the box, and Billy, without stopping to think, leapt to the edge of the box and jumped into space, grabbing the trapeze as it fell away, and swinging with it, like the weight of a great pendulum right across the theatre and back once more.

On this return swing he madly loosed his hold, and thus converted himself into a human missile flying straight at Johann, who had nearly reached the stage amid the utmost confusion.

Billy actually hit the great ape in that appalling launch through space; but the mighty jungle creature yet retained his balance. He reeled on the rope. The boy was knocked breathless and half-stunned by the shock, and down he went on to the life-saving net below; there he lay, his eyes closed, his gallant effort to save the Ambassador wasted, while Johann, with a great drumming of his free hand on his chest, broke through the ring of stage hands who rushed at him and vanished with his burden.

Billy came round on the stage. The theatre was

rapidly emptying, and one of the Ambassador's suite was bending over the boy. Billy gasped out his story of the letter he had had to deliver, and then told of the strange rehearsal he had witnessed on that early morning when the stage manager happened to be indisposed and the Lithkranian ape-trainer and his assistant had the place to themselves for an hour. Of course, at the time Billy had thought nothing of it, but now he realised they had trained Johann to snatch from that one box anybody holding such a scented envelope.

Billy was taken to the manager's office. He found there a detective from Scotland Yard, the manager, and a stranger. This stranger was a lithe, dapper person in the most exquisitely cut evening suit Billy had ever seen. Over this suit he wore a cloak instead of the usual black dress overcoat, and in his hand he swung an opera hat. A monocle dangled on a broad, black ribbon from his neck, and he gaped at Billy through his pane of glass and said: "My word! It's a little boy!" As though he had expected to see a phenomenon of some kind.

The detective glowered at him and glanced at the manager who explained somewhat hurriedly.

"This is Mr. Sentence. Mr. Brame Sentence. He is the biggest shareholder in this theatre and he insists on being present, as his interests are affected."

"I should jolly well say they are," declared the



THE PILOT POTTED.
—The crook plane swooped low over Billy's machine. Suddenly his pilot threw up his arms with a gasp, then crumpled up.

vacuous Mr. Sentence. "Have they caught that beastly monkey yet?"

"No," said the detective shortly. "He's got clean away with His Excellency. His trainer and assistant trainer have vanished too. They had a fast car waiting. The thing was planned to the second. Now, my boy. Tell us what happened."

Billy again told them his story, and remembered the steel visiting card which, all this time, had remained unheeded in his pocket. He showed it to them.

The manager examined it carefully and passed it to Mr. Sentence, who, in fact, snatched it before the detective could take it.

"How frightfully funny!" he exclaimed. "Every man his own crossword puzzle, eh? Carry them about with you and never get tired of waiting for a 'bus. Awfully clever idea." He passed the steel to the detective.

The officer then took Billy's name and address, warned him the police might need him at any time, and told him to go home. The last thing Billy heard as he left the room was Mr. Sentence exclaiming: "What about my jolly old shares? I'll be ruined by this. And it's not my fault." Billy thought what a fool he was.

Billy walked home. He was an orphan, and he lodged with some people in a street off Shaftesbury Avenue, in Soho. They were very nice people and very kind to Billy. They were an elderly Italian couple named respectively Paolo and Maria Mantani.

Billy had left Shaftesbury Avenue, and was threading through the maze of narrow streets on its western side when a big car shot round the corner, eased as it came alongside him, and swung towards the kerb.

A hand came out as one of its doors swung open. The hand got Billy by the jacket shoulder, and gripping like steel, lifted him from his feet and jerked him sideways. In a trice he was inside the car, and the machine was roaring off.

Billy fought desperately, but the man who had grabbed him was as strong as a lion, and in a second or two Billy was clutched and helpless.

SWOP Your Duplicates of Our Free Test Cricketers' Portraits With Your Chums and Send for a Grand Game—'ZAT!

The car, by this time, had reached the point where the little streets debouched into Shaftesbury Avenue. Billy was now conscious that there was another car behind it, plainly the machine of a theatregoer, or of somebody who had been attending one of the various nightclubs in the vicinity.

The car carrying Billy naturally eased as it approached the much-used Shaftesbury Avenue, and the fellow behind made a mess of things. There was a crash. Billy's car slewed sideways, staggering terribly. Its body was so twisted by the sudden impact that one of the doors flew open, while its driver, Billy, and the man who held Billy, all went in a heap to the floor.

Billy was up first. He slid out of that door, and he began to run. But before he got into his stride he had time to notice several things.

The car that had caused the damage was an enormous Phantom Rolls with a low, rakish sports body that spoke of immense power and speed. It was fitted fore and aft with massive steel bumpers, and the front of these bumpers had completely protected it from all damage. The kidnapping car, however, had had its petrol tank smashed, so that the spirit was running into the gutterway, while its nearside rear wheel had collapsed.

Now people were rushing to the scene, and Billy, checking his run, thought it safe to watch for a moment or two.

To his amazement, Mr. Brame Sentence climbed from the Rolls Royce and began delicately to brush his clothing with a white silk handkerchief. The kidnapper had, by this time, got out, and he rushed murderously at Sentence.

Sentence saw him coming, loosed a shriek, dodged sideways, and did it so clumsily that he left a leg sticking out behind him, over which the kidnapper

fell in a heap, while the crowd roared with laughter. Above the laughter rang Mr. Sentence's shrill voice. "If you dare to strike me I shall tell the police!"

As a couple of policemen arrived on the scene at that moment all question of a fight evaporated, and Billy decided it was time to make himself scarce.

He was in the midst of telling his kindly Italian hosts all that had happened, when the door of the little sitting-room opened, and a man stepped inside.

"Excuse me, madame, and you, sir," he said. "But I couldn't wait on your doorstep to be admitted, so I let myself in with a funny little key I've got."

He was Mr. Sentence!

Old Paolo got up and looked rather annoyed; but Mr. Sentence had a remarkable way with him. He spoke, to begin with, to the old gentleman in fluent, liquid Italian, and at the sound of their native tongue the faces of Maria and Paolo brightened up, so that soon a criss-cross of talk was flung back and forth over the table of the little room. Billy had picked up enough of the language from Paolo and his wife to know that Mr. Sentence was displaying a remarkable knowledge of Italy. The end of it was that Mr. Sentence took Billy off to the best sitting-room, closed the door and spoke to him.

"Now, my boy, we're going to have a heart to heart talk."

No longer was it the squeaking, futile voice of the Mr. Sentence of the theatre and the roadway, but the crisp, decisive accents of a man of action; and no longer was the good-looking face vacuous and gaping, but set, hard, and businesslike.

In that moment Billy knew that the smash with the big Rolls was no accident; it had been deliberately engineered by Mr. Sentence and had saved the boy's life that night.

He told his story again and was subjected to an intense and searching cross-examination. At last Mr. Sentence said: "I believe you; but I had to test you out."

After a short pause he went on. "My boy, this is a very serious matter. It is, in fact, far more serious than just the abduction of an important person. Behind all this—if I may be permitted some extravagance of language—dark forces move strongly and those dark forces we have to meet and fight."

"We?" gasped Billy.

Mr. Sentence nodded. "Yes. You and I. You're sacked from the theatre. I really am a shareholder there, and, as such, that's all the manager knows of me. I insisted on your being sacked. I want to engage you. I need an assistant, and your manner commended itself to me. Look at this. What would you make of it?"

He extended towards Billy the identical flat steel slip Billy had picked off the floor.

Billy once again looked at it. "Sort of code, sir," he said. He was a bit bewildered and very excited. Things were happening to him.

"Look at it," urged Mr. Sentence; and Billy realised that he was being tested.

He steadied his fluttering brain and carefully studied the steel slip and the words engraved below its fraction.

"I'm afraid it wants looking at for some time, sir, before it's decipherable," he said.

Mr. Sentence took it back from him. "Hm. Yes, perhaps it was a bit steep to ask you. Now listen. Instead of 3 over 7, let's think of 3 of 7. Eh?"

Billy's eyes gleamed. "You mean No. 3 of a party of 7?"

"Good. An organisation, say, of seven; and this is No. 3, this fellow. I ought to say I'd got a start on you there, because I know that there is such an organisation in existence. Now the rest. 'To be

great that danger is I can't tell you. It's immense, incalculable. Further, you can expect no help from anybody except me; just as I can expect no help from anybody except you. We work under cover. The great world goes on and knows nothing of what we do. A man is killed here, or there . . . and to the world it is a common case of murder. But it might be you—or me. We work against a power which has not yet been measured, and we hunt one man, and one man only. On the day we catch him,



DOING FOR THE DANDY.—Brame Sentence stepped from the car that had caused the accident, and instantly one of the kidnappers rushed murderously at him. He did not guess that this ineane dandy was the coolest brain in the Secret Service.

found in London, on the front of the age, every day, link-ups.' What would you suggest is the vital part of that cryptic sentence."

Billy pondered. "Well, sir, London's plain enough. If you knew what 'the age' meant it would help."

"Yes." Mr. Sentence nodded approvingly. "I'll speak a sentence and see if it gives you a clue. This is it. 'The age we live in.' Now."

Billy thought hard, and his brain began to say 'on the front of the age.' 'The age we live in.' 'On the front of the age we live in.' 'On the . . .' And suddenly he thought of a word which meant, in that context, the same as 'age.'

He said: "The times we live in. On the front of the times. . . Front page of the *Times*, the newspaper!"

"Very good indeed," approved Mr. Sentence. "I'll explain the rest, as I see it. This is an address, and the address is that No. 3 of the organisation of 7 can be communicated with daily through the medium of the front page of the *London Times*. Usually the famous Personal column is selected, but this man has chosen . . . 'link-ups.' The marriages column; and a coded announcement of a marriage carries a message to him. And now listen, my boy. If you take service with me you walk into danger. How

on the day that man lies dead, either in a place of execution within the law, or somewhere outside the law, you can say, with me, that you have helped to save humanity from a greater threat than the World War which ended in nineteen-eighteen."

Mr. Sentence got up. "You'll hear from me again. Meanwhile—keep your mouth shut and tell your Italian friends here that you lent me the key of your front door to admit myself as I wished. Good night to you."

Billy followed him to the door. "Who is the man, sir?" he asked. "The man we hunt?"

Mr. Sentence glanced down at him. "I don't know. I only know that he is called One over Seven . . . in that Society of Seven who use the steel visiting cards and among whom he is the Master of Masks."

Mr. Sentence slipped out into the night, and Billy went back to tell his little tale to old Paolo and his wife, Maria.

So the great and incalculable fight began.

On Secret Service.

BILLY went to bed that night in a state of great excitement. He knew he was enmeshed in a net of international intrigue of vast importance,

and he had a shrewd suspicion that the man calling himself Mr. Sentence was a Secret Service man in the employ of the British Government. In this, Billy was right.

The following morning he received a packet. It was delivered by a postman, but it bore no stamps and it had never been through a post office. It contained a sum of money which made Billy gasp—fifty pounds in one-pound notes and about twenty pounds in French francs. There was also a short letter, which ran:

Go by air at once to Paris. I understood last night that you had not only picked up a smattering of Italian from your landlord but also some knowledge of French. Drive from Le Bourget air terminus to the Hotel Magnifique in the rue Terrais, near the Avenue de l'Opéra. Wait there for me.

SENTENCE.

Billy burnt this note after memorising the orders it contained, and told Paolo and his wife that he was going to France on business. Instant excitement ensued. His clothes had to be packed, and he had to get down to the Airways offices and book a berth.

The question of passport arose. Billy filled in the requisite form and tore away to the office to get one. It was instantly forthcoming—as though they had known he would apply and cleared the way for him. Somewhere the invisible hand of Mr. Sentence was working, but where Mr. Sentence himself might be, Billy had not the faintest idea.

He was motored to Croydon in the usual way, and he boarded an air taxi. He had expected to travel by liner, but when he gave his name he was informed that a taxi was waiting. The little machine zoomed into the clouds and Billy, looking down, saw Croydon and the Surrey hills slide away behind him.

He was now strung up to an intense pitch of agitation and of some apprehension. It was, he thought, impossible for him to make this journey without danger.

The coast was reached in an incredibly short space of time, and Billy saw the broad silver sheet of the Channel, dotted with toy-boats.

They were now over France, and as they crossed the coast a 'plane lifted from some flat land near Boulogne and veered high into the air. Billy could see the coast towns plainly: Calais, Boulogne, Le Touquet, Etappes, and the railway line which carried the big mail trains to Paris and the corners of Europe.

Somehow that big 'plane which had lifted as they crossed the border fascinated Billy. He kept watching it. It climbed high, sliding away out of sight above the few white clouds which floated against the azure. It reappeared after a little while, still high, above and just behind the taxi.

The pilot of the taxi carried on. He was used to flying things on this great air highway between the two capitals.

There was a telephone connecting Billy with him, and Billy picked it up.

"Do you think that big machine's all right?" he asked.

"Why not?" queried the pilot. "What could be wrong with it?"

"I don't know. I had a suspicious feeling, that's all."

There was a short silence. Evidently the pilot was thinking. Then he said: "You're on a special job, aren't you, sonny? We had orders from Higher Up about you. Got to get you through in record time. That's why you're on this fast machine. I'll keep my eye on that chap."

He had hardly spoken, and Billy had hardly

dropped his telephone into its place, when the big machine's nose dipped, and she came diving down at them. Billy could hear nothing more than the roar of his own engine and propeller, but he suddenly saw the starboard wing of the 'plane splutter into tiny holes, while the machine did a wicked sideslip from which only the superlative skill of the pilot saved it.

The truth came to Billy like a thunderclap. The other fellow was using a machine-gun and was shooting down the defenceless taxi as airmen had brought each other down in the Great War.

The taxi's pilot was clever and an old air fighter. He banked, so steeply that it seemed he must slide sideways to the earth, bringing his semi-crippled machine round, out of the way of the rush of the killer and out of the line of fire.

The killer went past them like a swooping eagle, travelling at two hundred an hour, pulled up and began to lift; but by this time the taxi was slashing down in a long slant earthwards. It was their one chance.

The pilot signalled to Billy to have his parachute ready. The boy had been told how to use the thing before he left Croydon.

The killer was round now. Billy heard a drumming tearing sound above him. The roof of the little saloon of the taxi ripped and split, and death shrieked through it on the wings of lead and nickel.

The pilot suddenly flung up his arms. The joystick wobbled and the machine spun dizzily.

Billy screamed. The man who had brought him across the Channel was dead, murdered on the highway of the air, murdered by order of that mysterious and terrible being who called himself One over Seven.

The machine was in a spin, reeling giddily groundwards, and the killer had swooped across it, was lifting and turning and climbing again for another burst of fire.

Billy flung open the emergency door at his side and jumped. He counted. They had told him to count. It seemed that he counted for all eternity while he dropped like a plummet to his death. It was this drop which saved him. It took him clean out of the line of fire the killer once more directed at the falling taxi, and when he pulled the rip-cord he was well down.

The great parachute spread gracefully. The fall was checked. He was going earthwards on a cushion, it seemed; and above him the great 'plane veered, finding its bearing once more, preparing to slide down wind and riddle him with machine-gun bullets ere he could make earth and a chance of safety.

But below him the ground was broken; low-rising pieces of grass-covered earth, trees, coppices, the sort of mounds that were called "hills" on the maps of the great war front.

Billy was now so near the earth that the machine could not swoop low for fear of hitting one of these mounds, or striking the trees. Suddenly his feet touched ground. He had been warned to touch as though he had jumped from a height, and he did so; with the result that he landed with hardly a jar and was instantly dragged over by the lolling, wind-filled parachute, which tangled itself in some trees.

He flung off the harness, freeing himself, and getting up looked anxiously around him. The 'plane was grounding not very far from him on a long, flat stretch of meadowland.

Billy turned to run. At first he ran blindly; then realised his luck was in. Ahead of him the ground broke and disappeared, and to his left, as he ran, he heard the hideous shriek produced by a French locomotive.

(Continued on page 10.)

THE EDITOR CHATS.

THE
WINNING
TOSS

MY DEAR CHUMS,
The popularity of the *Boys' Magazine* own game, 'ZAT', is spreading like an epidemic. Let me take this opportunity of thanking my readers who have helped to foster the idea by telling all their chums about this novel scheme.

Three More Miniature 'ZAT' Cards

will be given away next week. There are more to come, so you still have time to swap your duplicates and send your team in to me for a Set of 44 Enlarged

Super-Sepia Test Cricketers portrait cards, with which you can play the fascinating game of 'ZAT'. A card of instructions tells you how to play, but there are lots of other games you can enjoy with these cards. Here's a game you'll find very exciting. It also has the advantage that almost any number of players can take part.

Deal six cards to each of four players, placing the remainder of the pack face down on the table—except the top card, which should be placed face upwards beside it. All look at your own cards by spreading them out fanwise in your left hand. The dealer now takes a card from the pack—or the card face upwards if he wants it. He then puts any card he does not require for a sequence face upwards on the card already exposed on the table. The next player now takes a card in the same way, throwing away whichever card he does not want, and so on, each player taking it in turn to pick up and throw away until one gets a sequence of six consecutive cards. Scoring: Winner 10 points. Each wicket-keeper held by winner or losers: minus 2 points. Any sequence is permissible, viz.: from one to six; from two to seven, and so on.

If any of you chaps invent new games which can be played with these cards, don't forget to let me know.

Can you believe there is a clock in London that it takes two men five hours, three times a week, to wind up! Well, that's exactly the amount of elbow grease required to keep Big Ben ticking. You'll learn much more about our most famous clock next week when Falcon Swift,

Falcon Swift duels with ZITLOV and his BANDITS OF BIG BEN!—next week, chums.

ZAT

You Can Begin Collecting Your 'Zat Team Now. Three More Miniature Test Cricketers' Portraits FREE Next Week—And More To Come!

the Mag.'s Monocled Manhunter, fights

The Bandits of Big Ben!

Boys, this is a yarn you simply must not miss—the most unusual and exciting sleuth tale I have ever had the good luck to secure for *Boys' Magazine*. And that's saying a lot! But wait until you meet Dr. Krane Zitlov and his ruthless crook gang known as The Comrades of Crime. In addition to his other powers, Zitlov is an expert duellist—indeed, the yarn opens with a duel to the death with the foils between the two prime movers in this gripping tale—Falcon Swift and Zitlov. But though the Sporting Sleuth disarms his opponent, he is too sporting to administer the *coup de grace* to an unarmed man. So Zitlov lives to fight—and plot!—another day. The result of that plotting is a whirlwind battle of wits and wills between Swift and Chick on the one hand, and the Fencing Crook and his spider-like criminal organisation on the other. Most of the thrilling happenings take place in the monster tower of our Houses of Parliament that holds Big Ben. This is only the opening of this grand, long complete detective thriller. You'll read it for yourselves next week, chums.

The Master of Masks.

Are you enjoying John Hunter's great new yarn of the Secret Service that appears in this issue? As your Editor, I have been able to get far ahead with this story, and I can tell you, chums, it's
(Contd. on page 30).



THE MASTER OF MASKS

(Continued from page 8.)

Where the ground broke was a railway cutting, into which, by all the luck in the world, was coming the first portion of the Paris boat-express.

Men were running from the "plane—two of them. A vicious crack sounded above the train's thunder, and something went screaming across Billy's shoulder.

Dry-mouthed, tight-lipped, he reached the edge of the cutting and slid over—out of the fire, momentarily safe, tipping in a bundle down to the bottom.

The train had eased either for signals or a snaking line, and was now gathering speed. The enormous locomotive, ugly, powerful, unseemly like our perfect British products, went clanking past, its mighty driving wheels towering above Billy. Behind it the long coaches rolled. First lunch was being served. People were eating, talking, planning . . . while Death groped blindly at their sides.

Billy jumped. He got a foot on one of the lower steps of one of the great coaches, and never before had he been so glad that Continental trains are mounted from ground level instead of, as in England, from a high platform.

At the same time his hand caught a perpendicular brass rail and clung to that rail like grim death. He was whirled sideways. He hit the side of the entrance with a crash that knocked him half silly; but he kept his handhold and his foothold, and on he went with the train.

With this, something hit the brass rail just above his hand and brought to its dullness a high spot of bright yellow. Something else crashed the woodwork of the closed door; but he himself was unharmed, and the train was getting into its stride.

Somehow, he got the door open and fell inside. One of the numerous conductors on such French trains was passing, and he cried out as he saw Billy, and took him by the shoulder.

The boy stammered something in English. The conductor spoke the language fluently. Billy was about to explain, when he realised the trouble Mr. Sentence took to keep himself a secret, and secret, also, all his affairs.

They were past Amiens when Billy had convinced the conductor that he had jumped the train because he had not had time to reach the Maritime at Boulogne, and by that time the conductor had accepted payment for first-class fare, plus a handsome tip for himself—a tip which made him very polite and reassuring. And Billy had seen the big "plane" fly high above the train, heading towards Paris, beating the express easily, despite the recklessness of its French driver.

They were thundering on, touching eighty in places, smashing through to beat the schedule and earn the driver his bonus. They came to the ugliness of the works at St. Denis. The beauty of Sacré Cœur hove in sight, white and serene above Montmartre. They were slowing down, running easily, sliding into the Gare du Nord, coming to Paris and danger.

The giant locomotive was at rest at the head of the platform, sizzling steam, blackened from her run, her crew busy at her. The long line of wide coaches were still, and the platforms were crowded with travellers, clamorous with the cries of porter.

Billy had never visited Paris before, but he guessed all he wanted just then was a taxi and a quick ride to the Magnifique in the rue Terrais. He came out through the barrier with a crowd, passed through the crowd which always gathers at the head of the London platform, and so made his way through one of the many exits to the street.

A taxi instantly slid kerbwards. Billy was reaching for its door when he saw a man standing some

distance from him flick his hand in the direction of the taxi-driver, who nodded. Billy drew back. The driver loosed a torrent of French. The man near Billy started forward, and though there were crowds about Billy began to run.

They had had that taxi "planted" ready for him, he guessed. They probably had several about the station, at different exits, waiting. The men could easily prevent themselves from being engaged by keeping their flags down until they saw him.

Now he was in a wide street, tilting slightly downwards, along which trams thundered, great ugly trams, which were not so comfortable as those he knew in London. One of these trams had "Opéra" on its destination indicator, and he realised that this would be the safest method of travel he could select.

The tram had eased for a traffic block, and he swung aboard it, getting into its second-class compartment, and finding the fare, therefore, infinitesimal. A man had climbed to the tram after him, and stood near him, watching him. Billy marked the fellow. He was well dressed enough, but he had a lowering, slant-wise face and a hard, bitter mouth.

When Billy dropped off the tram behind the Opera House the hard-faced man dropped off, too. Billy had questioned the tram conductor as best he could while they travelled, and he knew in what direction to bolt; and bolt he did.

He reached the Place de l'Opéra, and there luck gave him a real break. The traffic running along the Boulevards des Capucines and des Italiens had been held up, and as Billy reached the pavement outside the Café de la Paix, it was loosed. He made a dive for it. He got to the island opposite the motor show-room and plunged on. He slid past a car's front wing by a hair's-breadth, and on the far pavement he flung a look behind him. Right across the Place de l'Opéra there now roared two high-speed walls of traffic, and beyond those walls, on the other pavement, was the hard-faced fellow who had ridden on the tram with him.

Billy scooted down the wide Avenue de l'Opéra, and finding an *agent de police*, asked him for the Hôtel Magnifique. Three minutes later he was within its massive doors, amid silence and thick carpets, luxurious furnishings and quiet efficiency.

His room was ready for him. They were expecting him. A page showed him up to a splendid bedroom overlooking the street, and there he sat down in a big chair and tried to steady himself. He had had a real chase, and there was that poor dead fellow of an air pilot to account for. He must let Mr. Sentence know about him at once.

Billy was deciding these things when there was a tap on the door and a *valet de chambre* entered bearing one of the hotel's envelopes, sealed. He explained that a gentleman was below, and wished to see Billy urgently, and very privately. For purposes of privacy he had enclosed his card in the envelope. The man eyed Billy and the envelope with some curiosity, for the envelope was quite heavy.

Billy opened it. There came into his hand one of those sinister steel visiting cards. He looked down at it and saw this:

1/7
Partout.

One over Seven! And his address was "Everywhere!"

One over Seven . . . calling on him . . . asking to see him, challenging him . . .

Billy's jaw suddenly set. "Show the gentleman up at once," he said.

Face to face with the super-crook of the century! Who is he? What is his real identity? Don't miss the cyclonic thrills of next week's enthralling incidents.

PANCAKE DAY ABOARD THE HAPPY HADDOCK

UPROARIOUS LONG COMPLETE FUN TALE.

PIP, PEP, AND PANCAKES!

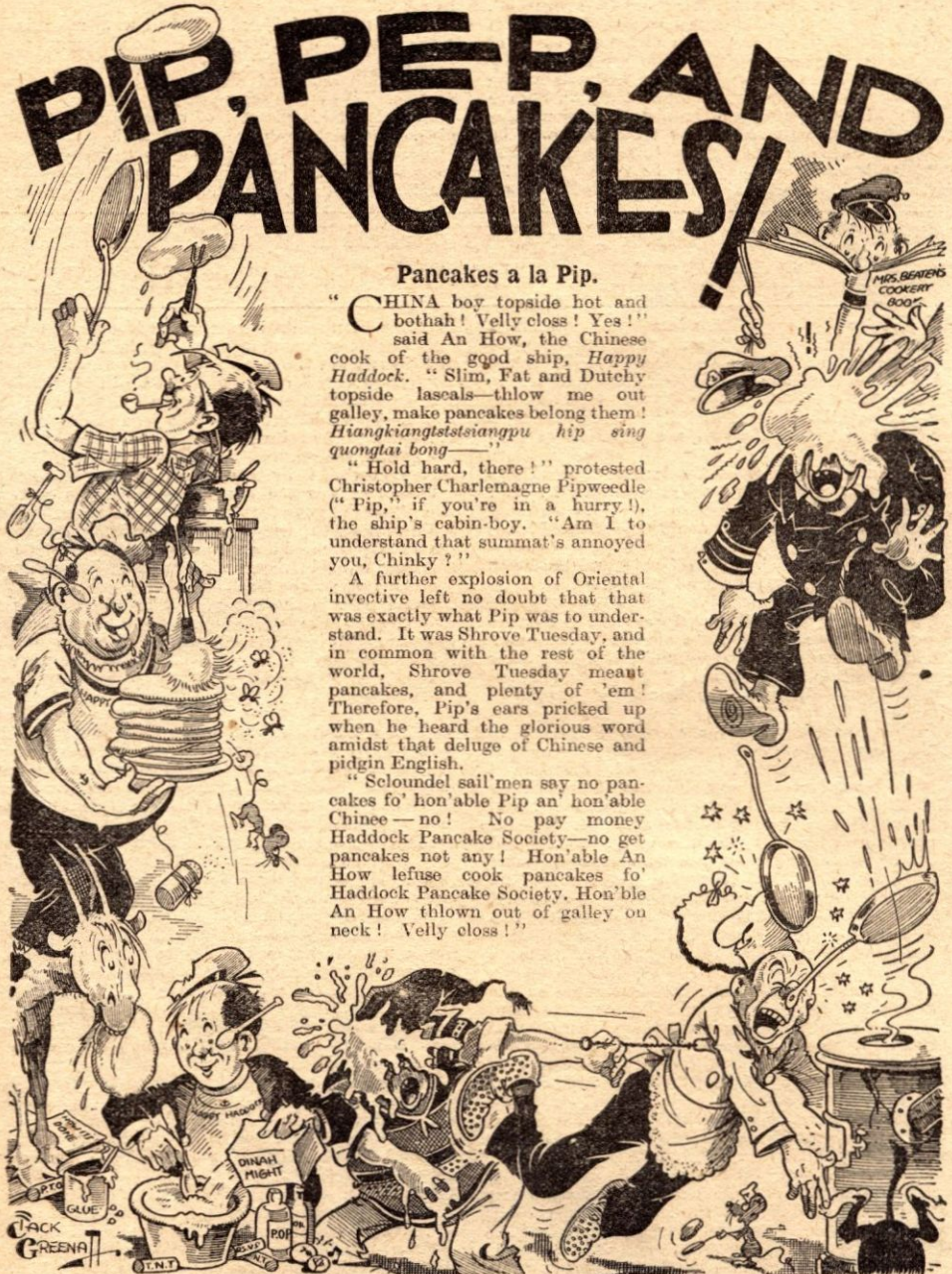
Pancakes a la Pip.

"CHINA boy topside hot and bothah! Velly closs! Yes!" said An How, the Chinese cook of the good ship, *Happy Haddock*. "Slim, Fat and Dutchy topside lascaal—thlow me out galley, make pancakes belong them! *Hiangkiangtstsiangpu hip sing quongtai bong*—"

"Hold hard, there!" protested Christopher Charlemagne Pipweedle ("Pip," if you're in a hurry!), the ship's cabin-boy. "Am I to understand that summat's annoyed you, Chinky?"

A further explosion of Oriental invective left no doubt that that was exactly what Pip was to understand. It was Shrove Tuesday, and in common with the rest of the world, Shrove Tuesday meant pancakes, and plenty of 'em! Therefore, Pip's ears pricked up when he heard the glorious word amidst that deluge of Chinese and pidgin English.

"Scoundel sail'men say no pancakes fo' hon'able Pip an' hon'able Chinee—no! No pay money Haddock Pancake Society—no get pancakes not any! Hon'able An How lufese cook pancakes fo' Haddock Pancake Society. Hon'ble An How thlown out of galley on neck! Velly closs!"



HAVE YOU HAD YOUR 'ZAT GAME YET?

"H'm!" said Pip grimly. "We'll see about this! Come on, An!"

Pip led the way across the rolling deck towards the galley, whence came the smell of cooking. The Haddock Pancake Society, it should be mentioned, had been founded by Fat Burns at their last port of call, where they had put in to pick up a cargo of unvulcanised sheet-rubber—the rough, yellow variety known as "crepe." Fat had been in funds at the time, and as they expected to be at sea on Shrove Tuesday, he had purchased the materials for making pancakes on the understanding that he should be repaid on the instalment plan by the rest of the crew.

"What's all this about us bein' out of it!" demanded Pip, entering the galley, where Fat Burns

Boldly they marched back to the galley holding the pseudo pancakes before them.

"Peace, shipmates," quoth Pip. "We've come to bury the hatchet and show you how pancakes *should* be made."

"Sink the ole lubber! How'd you manage to make them!" said Slim, gazing wonderingly at the plateful of rubber discs.

"Aha!" answered Pip roguishly. "A secret process. Like me to show you?"

Pip placed his plateful of rubber beside another plate piled high with the pancakes the Society had made. Side by side there was no telling one plate from the other. Pip took the frying-pan from Fat's hands without being invited, giving a sly wink to

Still Time to Send For One of the Mag.'s Grand 'ZAT Games, Chums. 3 More Miniature Cards Free Next Week

was joyfully tossing pancakes in a frying-pan, under the supervision of "Slim" Small, the fattest member of the crew, and Dutchy Jud, the Swedish bos'un. "We're members of the Haddock Pancake Society, ain't we?"

"You was," said Fat haughtily. "but your membership has lapsed through non-payment of subscriptions."

"Be fair, now, Fat, old shipmate!" said Pip pleadingly. "I paid my ha'penny—didn't I? If I don't get any pancakes, gimme it back!"

"By-law thirty says, 'A member shall forfeit his entrance fee if—'"

"Aw—you're only jokin'," said Pip. "I knew you was all the time, Fat, old seadog. Let's have a go with the fryin'-pan."

"Stand clear there!" roared Fat, as Pip tried to grip the frying-pan handle. "I ain't jokin'. You an' Chinky ain't paid your money, an' you ain't gonner get no pancakes! That's flat!"

"Well! Of all the frowsy, mean——"

"Clear off, I tell yer!"

An overpowering lust for revenge welled up in Pip's bosom. He seized a completed pancake and hurled it savagely at Fat Burns' head. Fat ducked just in time, and the pancake flopped harmlessly against the bulkhead. Pip grabbed another, and then dropped it hastily as the Haddock Pancake Society dived towards him in a body. He hopped nimbly up the companionway in the wake of the more discreet An How.

"Yah!" he yelled down the hatch. "You rotten, miserable sons of mean-spirited landcrabs! You fusty pancake-gobbling clams! I hope them pancakes choke you! I hope they're tougher than hickory! I hope they're like the rubber——"

Pip ceased suddenly and gazed into space as one who sees a vision—a vision of flat, yellow sheets of rubber packed tight, below decks there. Grinning, he led An How to the fo'c's'le, collected a large plate and a pair of stout shears, opened up a corner of the forward hatch, and drew forth a large rubber sheet from the hold.

"See, O Flower of the Orient!" he said to the cook. "Does not this merchandise bear a resemblance to the luscious pancake?"

An How grinned. There was no doubt about it, and the cheery Chink saw the cabin-boy's idea at once.

With the shears they worked for some time, cutting out circular pieces of sheet rubber and piling them one above the other on the plate.

"Well," Pip grinned at last. "I'd give a month's pay to see Dutchy's face when he gets his teeth in one of them! Come on, An. We've now got to do the quick change act."

An How. An winked back, and while all eyes were on the cabin-boy, took up the plateful of real pancakes and silently left the galley.

"The process is quite simple," cooed Pip. "Grasp the frying-pan firmly between the fingers, as in Fig. 1. Toss it into the air—Fig. 2—and—Hello! It's stuck to the ceiling!"

Pip had, indeed, hurled the pancake upwards with such force that it flattened on the ceiling and stuck. "Grrr!" growled Fat Burns, making a grab at Pip. "Tryin' your funny stuff again!"

Pip dropped the frying-pan and hastily departed. On deck he shouted down some derisive remarks, and then, grinning in pleasurable anticipation, went to join An How at the feast.

Fat Burns, in the galley, said certain remarks in reference to the cabin-boy, and cooked another pancake. This he placed carefully on top of the rubber discs, quite unaware of the swift exchange that had been effected.

Pseudo Pancakes.

NOW, Cap'n Keelson, master and owner of the *Happy Haddock*, chanced to be passing the galley just then on his way to take a compass reading on the bridge. But not even a master mariner concerned for the safety of his vessel could ignore that appetising smell that floated up from below decks. Cap'n Keelson sniffed appreciatively.

"Stap me! Pancakes!" he said, slapping his thigh. He turned down into the companion hatch and rattled down the steps into the galley.

"Good for you, boys!" he said to the Haddock Pancake Society congregated there. "I'd clean forgot it was Shrove Tuesday to-day, an' here are you cookin' pancakes without sayin' nothin' about it! *Her! Her! Her!* Goin' to surprise me, weren't you? Must say I appreciate the kind thought, boys. I reckon this plateful here'll be sufficient for me. Don't forget to make a few for yourselves and the rest of the crew!"

Cap'n Keelson grabbed the plateful of alleged pancakes, and chucking and "stap-me-ing" all the way, climbed again on deck. The members of the Society stared at each other in blank amazement.

"Sink the ole lugger!" gulped Slim. "He's gorn an' took 'em!"

"I've seen some nerve," said Fat Burns, dropping the frying-pan with a crash, "but this beats me, it do! We'll have to start and make another lot now!"

Meanwhile Cap'n Keelson went on his way to the bridge carrying the plate of pancakes before him.

"What d'y' think?" he chuckled to Mister Hettup, the mate, who was on duty there. "The boys've been an' gone an' made a lot of pancakes for us!"

Just take a bearing for me, will you, Mister, an' then come down to my cabin and we'll have a feed. Stap me!"

"Thankee kindly, Cap'n," said the mate. "I'll be right along."

Cap'n Keelson went to his cabin, produced a knife and fork, and sat down to enjoy himself.

The first pancake was a real one. Cap'n Keelson chewed it with the air of a connoisseur, jerking his head appreciatively as much as to say, "These are the right stuff."

But his expression changed when he came to the second pancake. His knife would not cut it and he had difficulty in getting his fork in it. He picked it up whole and bit it without appreciable effect. He tried to tear a piece off with his teeth, dragging his fork away from him. The rubber pancake stretched like a piece of elastic.

Mister Hettup opened the cabin door. Involuntarily Cap'n Keelson's teeth released the rubber pancake as he spoke to his mate. The rubber shot out like a released catapult and caught Mister Hettup a resounding smack in the eye. Cap'n Keelson stared blankly.



"Sorry, Mister. Must have slipped, accidental like. Sit down and have some."

Hettup sat down with a scowl, took a rubber pancake, and tried to chew it. Cap'n Keelson speared another with his fork, clamped his teeth into it, and tried to bite a piece out of it. As before, he could make no impression. He stretched out his fork again, trying to tear a piece off.

This time the other end of the pancake slipped off the prongs of the fork. *Smack!* It came back in the Cap'n's face with terrific force. He gave a yell and toppled backwards off his chair.

"Stap me!" he roared, scrambling up again.

"This your idea of a joke, Hettup!—throwing pancakes at your skipper! I'll—"

"I didn't throw it!" protested Hettup. "There's someth'n queer about these flapjacks, Cap'n. They're offul tough!"

Cap'n Keelson scowled at the plate of pancakes, suspicious for the first time. He picked one up and examined it.

Cap'n Keelson's face went purple with fury. "Stap me! Rubber! Those longshore lubbers bin playin' a joke on me! Here! Gimme them things! I'll show 'em a few jokes!"

The skipper of the *Happy Haddock* grabbed the plate of false flapjacks and strode from the cabin. Shortly afterwards the occupants of the galley were startled to see a pile of same, complete with plate, come hurtling down the galley companion at their heads. They dodged aside as Cap'n Keelson rushed in after the missile, roaring like a ravening lion.

"Think you're mighty funny, don'tcher! Stap me! Rubber pancakes, huh! I'll give you rubber jaws 'fore I'm finished!"

The skipper aimed a wild blow at Fat Burns' head. Fat ducked hastily and darted aside. Cap'n Keelson's

fiat hit the bulkhead with a force that made him bowl. He danced backwards, clutching his injured hand.

Sad to relate, the shock of that blow released the pancake that had been sticking to the ceiling ever since Pip had tossed it there from the frying-pan. It fell, *plop!* square on the skipper's head.

"Yarrrrrr!" yelled the skipper. "I'll kill 'em, I will! Stap me!"

He dashed the sticky mess from his head and grabbed the

nearest thing to hand—the second plate of pancakes. Slim, Fat and Dutchy streaked like rabbits for the companionway and the pancakes came hurtling after them.

"Skipper gone mad!" they yelled to Pip and An How, who emerged just then from the fo'c's'le and ran for their lives.

Pancakes, plates, frying-pans, hurtled from the galley, and finally came the skipper himself, on the verge of apoplexy.

"Shoot 'em! Sling 'em over board! I'll keelhaul the lot of 'em! Hettup! Pay those men off immediate! Gor! If I lay hands on 'em. Stap me! I'll—"

Ringing the Changes.

IT was fully ten minutes before the mate, Pip and An How could soothe the Cap'n, and during that time Dutchy, Slim and Fat discreetly disguised themselves as a winch and a deckhouse.

"Tell you what, Cap'n," suggested Hettup. "We'll have An How and Pip here make some real pancakes for us, huh?"

"All right, Mister," agreed the skipper, calm at last. "You and your mate, An How, make me

some—an' don't you try any of that rubber joke, or I won't be responsible for my actions."

"Hear that," hissed Fat Burns to Slim behind a near-by deckhouse. "That young rascal, Pip, must've checked our pancakes for rubber ones—an' the skipper thought we was japing him. Wait till I get my hands on that cabin boy!"

"Wonder where he got 'em," said Slim.

"Why! Don'tcher see?" grunted Fat. "He cut up some of that sheet rubber we got in the hold. But that gag can work twice! We'll make some rubber pancakes, an' we'll change them with the skipper's when they've made the real ones."

"Fat, you got genius."

The coast being clear, Dutchy, Slim and Fat once again joined forces. They chuckled in gleeful anticipation of the coming doom of the rivals as they made their way towards number one hold and the rubber. And it did not take the three of them long to carve out a sufficient quantity of pancake-like discs.

"Now the only danger is," said Fat, when all was ready, "how're we gonna bring the exchange about. That's where we might come unstuck."

"Bretend we wanta beg a banecake offen dem?" suggested Dutchy. "Un'you two keep glose togedders so I vos not seen vid de plate!"

"That's an idea!" agreed Fat. "Come on, boys."

Fat and Slim stood shoulder to shoulder and marched down the galley companion, with Dutchy out of sight behind them.

"Hello!" said Pip suspiciously, adding another pancake to the nearly completed pile on the stove. "What d'you blokes want?"

Fat and Slim edged in front of the plate of real pancakes so that neither Pip nor An How could see Dutchy effect the swift exchange behind.

"Please, Pip," pleaded Fat. "Give's a pancake."

"Not me!" answered Pip. "You wouldn't let me have none of your rotten society pancakes, you wouldn't. Besides, these here are special for Papa!"

"You ain't 'arf crool! Sink the ole lugger, you ain't!"

Dutchy nudged them behind to signify that he was ready. Still keeping shoulder to shoulder and facing Pip and An How all the time, Fat and Slim walked backwards up the companion.

"What's up with you?" queried Pip, noting the unusual position. "Can't you walk right way on?"

"Allus walk backwards," explained Fat hastily, "an' nobody can't never kick you in the pants!"

And they bore off the pancakes to the fo'c'sle, just as Mister Hettup rounded the corner of the main-deck and dodged down into the galley.

"Skipper's pancakes ready?" he asked of An How.

The Chink cook grinned in answer.

"There ain't never been pancakes like them before," chipped in Pip.

"Hope you're right," said Hettup, going up on deck with the pancakes.

It chanced that the old *Haddock* was rolling pretty heavily just then, and though the mate had reliable sea-legs, nobody can be expected to keep their balance with one foot on a slippery half-cooked pancake. This was a bit of the debris from the skipper's recent bombardment, and as he made his way across the heaving deck Hettup put his right foot squarely upon it.

He executed a picturesque forward dive and landed on his chin, while the pancakes flew in all directions. Mister Hettup said things, picked himself up and then the pancakes, wiping them as best he could on his jersey sleeve.

"Here's a gull-durned, all-fired mess!" he groaned. "I can't take these to the skipper like this!"

Then up from the fo'c'sle wafted a faint aroma—pancakes unmistakably! Hettup grinned.

"They got some down there, an' I guess exchange is no robbery. Dirty pancakes is good enough for seamen—partic'lar when they razzes the skipper!"

With his plate of rubber pancakes, the mate walked over to the fo'c'sle hatch, bawled down: "All hands on deck! Show a leg there, you lubbers!" and then dodged out of sight behind the hatch. There came some mutterings from below, then Dutchy, Slim, and Fat emerged.

The three of them walked off to the after part of the ship to look for the mate, for no sailor dare ignore the cry of "All hands!" When they had gone, the mate emerged, grinning, from their own fo'c'sle. He had a new plate of pancakes with him.

"Funny," said Fat, after they had been searching for fully ten minutes. "The mate seems to have disappeared."

"Must've bin a false alarm," suggested Slim, at last.

They returned to the fo'c'sle and swiftly forgot the mystery as they sat down to the luscious-looking plate of pancakes.

"Gentlemen," said Fat Burns, rising to his feet at the head of the table, "as President of the Haddock Pancake Society, I deem it my privilege to take first bite!"

"'Ear! 'Ear!"

Fat selected the top pancake and held it aloft in his fingers.

"Here's jolly good luck to me! May my shadder never grow less!"

Fat took a massive bite of the pseudo pancake. A troubled expression overspread his features. He tried again without result. Suddenly he began to tear and rend at the thing like a starving wolf, but the pancake resisted all his efforts. He stretched it apart in his fingers and his eyes nearly leapt out of their sockets.

"Gor! Rubber!"

Slim and Dutchy sprang to their feet. "We've been dished again!"

"It's that Pip!"

"Come on! He won't be Pip long!"

The three unhappy members of the Pancake Society rushed up the fo'c'sle companion and hurtled across the deck towards the galley.

But as they came in sight of the galley hatch, their pace slackened, and finally they brought up altogether and looked on in amazement. The skipper was there, talking to An How and Pip, with the smiling Hettup standing behind, and he was positively bubbling over with good-humour and benevolence!

"Best pancakes I've tasted since I was a boy!" they heard him say. "It does you credit, An How, the way you cooked 'em—an' you, too, Pip. Here you are, here's half-a-crown each for you to treat yourselves when we work to-night, an' stap me!—them pancakes was doct it!"

"Thanks, sir," they heard Pip answer. "An' d'you mind givin' shore-leave to Slim and Dutchy and Fat, sir, when we put into port to-night. Y'see me an' An here played a bit of a joke on 'em, an' we decided to bury the hatchet by treatin' 'em to a slap-up pancake supper at some restaurant ashore."

The skipper gave his permission dubiously.

"Sink the ole lugger!" said Slim Small with emotion. "It ain't no use tryin' to get the better of that boy. He's got us beat on brains, Fat. They allus sez eddication counts!"

Hoppy Travers, the boy millionaire, promotes a prize-fight in next week's chortling fun-tale. Look for the title "Hooks, Crooks, and Spooks."

THE BLACK SHADOW

Another Dramatic Exploit of the Mysterious
Leaping Man. ON SINISTER ISLAND!



The Rescue.

AS the moon came out from behind a big bank of clouds its ghostly light revealed a fantastic figure, bounding, in thirty-foot leaps, along a lonely stretch of coast. At a first glance one might have mistaken it for some gigantic insect trying to fly with crippled wings. But a closer examination would have revealed that it was a man clad from head to heel in a suit of gleaming chain-mail, while a long, black coat, fluttering behind in the breeze, created the illusion of wings. It was, in fact, none other than the famous Black Shadow, the leaping man of mystery.

A faint cry, hardly heard above the roar of the breakers, which seemed to come from the sea, caused him to halt and listen intently. Perhaps it was the call of some belated sea-bird, or the moaning of the wind!

A white-tipped roller thundered ashore, and receded with a hollow rattle of loose shingle, and then once more the mystery man heard the cry. Someone shouting for help! The Black Shadow strained his eyes, peering out to sea in the direction whence the cry had come.

Vaguely he made out the shape of a man clinging to a rock, about thirty yards from the shore, half in, half out, of the sea. Between this rock and the beach a welter of tumbling, angry waters surged and

thundered over a tangle of barely submerged rocks. This reef stretched for nearly half-a-mile in either direction, and prevented the man from reaching the shore, for amid the jagged rocks and swirling, boiling sea the strongest swimmer would have been helpless.

Judging his distance, the Black Shadow shot into the air in a twenty-foot leap that landed him, with a clang of his spring-heeled boots, on a flat-topped rock. Slipping on the slimy, weed-covered surface, he dropped on hands and knees, but somehow saved himself from pitching into the sea. Rising to his feet he leapt again, to land on a second rock in a crouching posture on hands and toes.

Whoomp-booom! a white-tipped breaker smashed over the rock, almost sweeping him away, and leaving him gasping for breath. Two more magnificent leaps and he landed upon the half-submerged rock where the castaway sprawled, to be swept off his feet by a mountainous wave. In the nick of time he grasped the edge of the rock with his metal-gloved hands, and hung on grimly while the receding water seemed as if it would drag him from his insecure hold. As the sea left the rock uncovered, the Black Shadow hauled himself to safety, and spoke to the man he had come to rescue.

"Get on my back," he said. "I will try to get you ashore."

The stranger did as he was bidden, and, as another

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wave came roaring towards them, the Black Shadow sprang into the air. Shooting through a smother of spume, they landed upon a rock nearer the shore. From this they straightway bounded towards another rock. But in taking off the Black Shadow's feet slipped on the slimy seaweed, with the result that he dropped short of the other rock for which he leaped. Both men plunged into the sea, and, weighed down as he was by his chain-mail, the mystery man might have been drowned but for the help of the man he had rescued.

As a powerful undertow sucked him backward, his companion seized him, and together, gasping and stumbling as the great breakers buffeted them, they struggled slowly to the beach, where they fell exhausted upon the shingle.

Gradually their senses cleared, and the stranger began to thank the Black Shadow. But the mystery man, smiling grimly, stopped him.

"I think we are quits," he said. "For without your help I should have drowned just now. But tell me, how did you come to be clinging to that rock?"

The stranger hesitated, and looked doubtfully at the Black Shadow; whereupon the latter seemed to smile behind his metal mask.

"Suppose I tell you something," he said. "Your name is John Highfield, and you belong to the Special Branch of Scotland Yard. You came to Saltmarsh on the track of a gang of crooks who are smuggling dope into this country, and you discovered that they have their headquarters on Sinister Island, which was recently bought by Silas Greer.

"How do you know this?" gasped the detective, gaping foolishly at his companion.

"I have my own methods of learning such things," the Black Shadow said. "I, too, have been following the trail of these crooks and intended to visit Sinister Island to-night. That is how I came to be here."

The detective frowned.

"I've often heard it said," he mused, "that you know more than we do at the Yard, but I never believed it. I guess it's right, though." He paused, stroking his chin thoughtfully. Then, as if coming to a decision, he looked straight at the Black Shadow. "Seeing you've been so frank with me," he said, "I don't mind telling you that I rowed across to Sinister Island from Saltmarsh this evening. My theory was that the smugglers brought the dope to the island in a seaplane, and that later it was conveyed to the mainland in Greer's motor-boat. I was right, for I saw them unload the stuff from their plane. Unfortunately one of the guards spotted me, and I had to bolt for my life. They headed me off from where I'd left my boat, and I ran into the sea. They started shooting, so I gave a yell and went under as

though I'd been hit. Afterwards I swam for the mainland, and just managed to reach the reef before my strength gave out."

"And now?" the Black Shadow queried.

"I'm going to get the coastguards and raid them," Highfield said grimly.

"That will take a couple of hours or more," the Black Shadow said. "In the meantime the crooks will have taken alarm at your visit and will make a clean getaway. However, maybe I can stop them—at least until you arrive with your raiding party."

Before the detective could speak again, the Black Shadow rose with a clang of metal-shod feet, and shot through the air. In a few moments he was swallowed up by the darkness.

A Living Target.

NEAR the outskirts of the little fishing village of Saltmarsh, the Leaping Man came upon a dinghy drawn up on the beach. Launching this, he pulled with long, powerful strokes towards Sinister Island.

But long before he reached it he heard the roar of an engine, and presently caught sight of a motor-boat, cruising round and round as though searching for something. Suddenly the occupants of the vessel seemed to sight him, for the motor-boat headed in his direction, slackening speed as it neared the dinghy.

As it approached him the Black Shadow saw that the man at the steering-wheel was rather grossly built, with heavy, hanging jowls, and cunning, little eyes almost buried in rolls of pinkish flesh. He recognised him as Silas Greer, and he guessed that he and his companions had been searching for the detective.

Greer, at this moment, let out a startled, angry yell, in a voice that was surprisingly shrill and high-pitched for his gross body.

"The Black Shadow," he said. "I suppose he means to meddle in our business, and sent that spy."

The Leaping Man rested on his oars and watched the smugglers, undecided what to do, till suddenly Greer opened his throttle to the full. As the motor-boat came rocketing towards the dinghy, the Black Shadow caterpulted towards it in a twelve-foot leap, that landed him among the four crooks in the motor-boat. Gripping one of his oars in both hands, he wielded this novel weapon like a broad-sword, and Greer tumbled back, bruised and bleeding. A second blow stunned another of the crooks; but next instant the remaining two had hurled themselves upon him, and brought him down to the floor. The Black Shadow fought like a tiger, but with Greer's

assistance, the crooks soon had him helplessly bound hand and foot.

Dabbing at his swollen, bleeding lips, and speaking rather painfully, Silas Greer addressed his prisoner.

"You're mighty clever," he snarled. "And you may have busted up a good many gangs. But this is the last time you go interfering with things that don't concern you."

"Going to bump him off, boss?" one of his companions asked, fingering an automatic pistol.

"That's too easy a death," Greer growled. "I want to give him time to be sorry he ever meddled in my affairs."

He glared at the Black Shadow with an almost maniacal expression of hatred on his face.

"That chain-mail suit of yours is bullet-proof, isn't it?" he demanded. "Well, you'll soon have a chance to test it against a high explosive shell. I'm leaving you on one of the floating targets that the battle cruisers from Porthaven are using for gunnery practice."

the Black Shadow began to struggle furiously with his bonds, writhing and straining in his frantic efforts.

While he was making these unavailing attempts to free himself, a searchlight leapt out of the misty darkness, and fumbled like a giant finger till it fell upon the second floating target.

Boom—boom! The splash and gurgle of the waves were drowned by a mighty, reverberating explosion, and the Leaping Man saw a fountain of water leap skyward as a shell fell some distance beyond the target. The gunnery practice had commenced, and the Black Shadow realised that the cruisers were firing from such a direction that the great, criss-cross timbers would conceal him from the gunners.

Boom—boom! There was another mighty roar, and a second shell went hissing into the sea. After that each shell fell a little nearer to the target, till finally the gunners scored a direct hit. The target vanished in a spurt of flame and smoke, and flying debris rained down upon the water. One jagged



THE SKULL-CRACKING SCULL—Wielding the oar in both hands the Black Shadow leaped from his dinghy as the motor-boat rapidly bore down on it.

He gave a shrill, hideous chuckle and, opening the throttle wide, sent the motor-boat roaring out to sea.

In a little while, two floating targets loomed out of the darkness. They were rafts, anchored to the sea-bed, and from each rose a square panel of massive, criss-crossed beams. Greer throttled his motor and steered the vessel alongside one of the rafts.

"Toss him out," he growled, and two of his companions threw the pinioned mystery man heavily on to the raft.

"The gunnery practice is due to start some time to-night," the master crook leered. "You can pass the time wondering how much longer you've got to live, while we make our getaway."

With a deep, burbling roar from its exhaust the motor-boat tore away into the darkness. Instantly,

fragment struck the Black Shadow with a force that would have cut his body in two but for the wonderful suit of chain-mail.

Quits.

AS the Leaping Man's senses cleared he realised that the rope about his wrists had been almost severed by the jagged edge of the flying timber. It was the work of a moment to tear his hands free, and loosen the rope that fastened his ankles.

While he was yet fumbling with the sea-soaked knots, however, the searchlight swept round and picked up the second target. Madly, the Black Shadow wrenched and tore at the rope! At last it was loose. At the same time, he heard another

(Continued on page 36.)

THE JOYOUS JUNIORS' LATEST ESCAPADES —
TOLD IN THIS GRAND DOUBLE-LENGTH SCHOOL
TALE! COMPLETE AND CRAMMED WITH THRILLS

Fun, Fast and Furious, with Johnny Gee & Co. to the Fore, when the Whole of St. Giddy's Celebrates the Great Annual Pancake Festival. Laughs with Catchpole's Patent Mechanical Pancake Mixer; Drama through a Schemer's Villainy Against Kindly Sir Corny Cripps, and then a Furore of Excitement when THE REMOVITES SMASH—
THE GREAT PANCAKE-DAY PLOT!

Cripps' Car.

JOHNNY GEE, the cheery captain of the Remove Form at St. Giddy's School, and the members of his famous Co., stepped out of the tuckshop in Merivale High Street, looking cautiously about them.

Johnny's quick eyes caught a glimpse of a blue and white school cap as it vanished down a side street.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. never lost an opportunity of scoring off the heroes of the Remove and, having got wind that Johnny Gee & Co. were in the tuckshop buying luscious edibles, they were preparing to do their worst.

"Those Earlswood rotters are about," announced Johnny Gee. "We must guard this prog with our lives, for we must have our Pancake Party tomorrow!"

The boys of St. Giddy's—or the juniors, at any rate—were keenly looking forward to Pancake Day. It happened to fall on the occasion of Half Term this year, and, of course, the Head had proclaimed the usual whole-day's holiday.

Study No. 4 had its preparations for celebrating the occasion well in hand.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tony Graham, as the Co. made their way along the High Street. "Old Sir Cornelius Cripps is going to run a free Pancake Presentation around the neighbourhood, to advertise his merry motor-cars!"

Johnny Gee & Co. chuckled as they saw the various highly coloured posters that had been stuck up all over Merivale. Sir Cornelius—and Cripps' Cars—were quite notorious in the neighbourhood. The cars were made at a large factory that had recently been built alongside the River Rudd. Not far away was another motor-car factory, run by a firm known as Murdock's Motors, and it was only comparatively recently that Cripps' Cars had entered the field as a rival concern. Sir Cornelius had invented a motor-car, among other things, and he was turning them out at his Merivale factory in mass production style, and everyone had been kept highly amused at the various publicity "stunts" put up by Sir Cornelius to advertise his cars.

"My hat! Not a bad idea, for an old 'un!" grinned Johnny Gee. "We ought to be in on this! 'Ware those Earlswood scallywags!" he added. "We'd better hide in this doorway for safety's sake and—Gug-g-great pip!"

A motor-car was coming along the High Street, proceeding in a series of jerks and misfiring badly. It was an open tourer of somewhat curious shape. Seated at the wheel was an old gentleman in frock coat and top hat who was the counterpart of the gentleman depicted on the Pancake Presentation

posters. A dark-visaged, alert-looking man was on the seat beside him, smiling cynically.

"Great pip! It's Sir Cornelius Cripps himself, driving one of his own cars!" exclaimed Johnny Gee.

Bang! Pop! Bang! The car zig-zagged along the High Street and finally, with a terrific bang and a cloud of black smoke, it petered out altogether nearly opposite the spot where Johnny Gee & Co. were in hiding.

They heard Sir Corny give an exclamation of annoyance. His companion jumped out of the car and went to the rear petrol tank. He unscrewed the nozzle and, taking a syringe-like object from his pocket, he squirted some liquid into the tank. Johnny Gee watched this operation in some astonishment.

"How annoying, Sir Cornelius!" the man said, as he rejoined the inventor. "It seems that your engine trouble is—er—rather incurable!"

"My engines are good, Mr. Sherlow!" roared Sir Corny. "I am convinced that someone has been tampering with the car, and—"

Boo! Cripps' Crocks! Take it 'ome and burn it! came a raucous roar from a number of village toughs.

Sir Cornelius Cripps, looking most distressed and harassed, got down from the car with his companion, and lifted the bonnet. He started to probe the interior.

"I must get someone to make a thorough examination of this engine!" wheezed Sir Corny, as he stood up, oily and distressed. "I cannot understand it, Sherlow; everything seems in order! Ah! What do you want, my lad?"

This last remark was addressed to Johnny Gee, who stepped out from the shop doorway and approached the car.

"Perhaps we can be of some assistance in pushing the car to a garage, sir?" suggested the Remove leader, raising his cap respectfully.

"Why, yes, thank you, boys!" exclaimed the inventor, wiping a smudge of oil from his spectacles.

"Come on, chaps—all hands on deck!" said Johnny.

The Removites dropped their tuck into the tonneau of the disabled car, and pushed manfully all together. The car was eventually drawn up at the kerb, outside the livery stable.

"Boys, will you look after the car for me, while my secretary and I fetch a mechanic?" asked Sir Cornelius.

Johnny Gee & Co. willingly promised to keep an eye on the car. Sir Corny and his secretary walked along the High Street, followed by the jeering village roughs.

THE SHROVETIDE SHEMOZZLE AT ST GIDDYS



"That secretary chap looks a fishy blighter to me," remarked the Remove captain. "It looked to me like water that he was squirting into the petrol tank. I'm going to have a look."

The Remove captain lifted the bonnet and unscrewed the top of the carburetter. Soon, a low whistle escaped his lips, and he turned to his chums with a grim expression on his boyish face.

"Just as I thought—water in the petrol!" he said. "That rotter Sherlow is a traitor to Sir Cornelius. I'm going to empty out the petrol that's in the tank, and put that in the spare can. Then we'll see how she goes!"

Johnny Gee quickly carried out this plan. Then he pressed the starter button, and soon the engine burst into life, running perfectly.

There was a sudden warning hiss from Snowball, the little sharp-eyed nigger of the Remove.

"I say, Massa Johnny, dem soppo coons from Earlswood am in de libberly stable!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, are they!" murmured Johnny Gee, and his eyes gleamed. "Listen, chaps—"

The Remove leader spoke to his followers in low, swift tones, and when he finished, they chuckled softly.

The tuck was swiftly emptied from the hamper, and stowed inside the car, the engine of which was still ticking over. Then Dick Bannister and Snowball lifted out the empty hamper and carried it between them into the yard of the livery stables, staggering

as though it were heavy! Dick called out to the ostler in loud tones, so that the Earlswood boys could hear.

"I say, Joe, may we leave this hamper in your old cab? There are some of those Earlswood fatheads knocking about the village, and they're after pinching out tuck."

Dick spoke some other words to Joe the ostler, though in tones that did not carry to the hidden Earlswood boys, and certain coin of the realm passed into Joe's horny palm.

"Right you are, young gent!" said the ostler, touching his curly forelock. "The old keb won't be wanted—smatter of fact, we put it out there, ready to break it up."

Dick Bannister and Snowball opened the door of the cab and dumped their hamper inside. Scarcely had they done so, than there was a rush of feet behind, and Tommy Rhodes & Co. came dashing out of the stable, yelling excitedly.

"Grab that hamper!" roared the Earlswood leader.

Tommy Rhodes, Bob Nutter, and Cakebread made a dive inside the cab, but Dick Bannister and Snowball promptly hopped out of the other door, then jammed it fast. At the same time, Johnny Gee and the others dashed into the yard, and set about the three remaining Earlswood boys. One by one they were bundled inside the cab.

Slam! The door shut fast, and it was held firmly by a couple of grinning Removites.

"You—you rotters!" yelled Tommy Rhodes. "Lemme out! I'll— Oh, crumbs! Wh-what the dickens—"

Whirrrrrrrrr! Tommy, to his unutterable amazement, saw Johnny Gee backing Sir Cornelius Cripps' car through the yard gateway! Snowball, who had already fastened a wire rope to the cab shafts, now fixed the other end to the rear of the car.

"All aboard, chaps!" sang out Johnny Gee.

The other Removites clambered on board the car as Johnny drove it forward, pulling the cab behind it.

The hapless Earlswood boys made frantic efforts to get the doors open, but their rivals had made those doors secure for the time being—and meanwhile, the cab was being gaily towed along Merivale High Street behind the car.

"Yah! Whooch! You rotters— Wow-wow-wow!"

Great was the excitement in Merivale! Roars of laughter arose as Sir Corny Cripps' car, with those merry schoolboys on board, and the unhappy cab-load behind, came careering along the High Street!

Sir Cornelius Cripps himself, and Sherlow, his secretary, emerged from the large garage near the

THOSE FREE
'ZAT GAMES
ARE GOING
LIKE
HOT
PANCAKES
GOT YOURS?

Market Square just as the car approached, and they stopped short in amazement.

"All serene, sir!" called out Johnny Gee. "We've got your car running beautifully, and are just giving a demonstration!"

Away went the Joyous Juniors in the car, and the ramshackle cab behind lurched dizzily, its springs creaking, giving its unhappy occupants a most terrible ride!

Johnny Gee and his chums were enjoying their ride! The Conqueror Car was going great guns now! The load that it had on tow did not seem to make any difference. Johnny took the route back to Merivale via the road that led past Earlwood School. He tootled furiously on the horn as he approached, and nearly all Earlwood came to the gates, to see what was "doing." When they saw Tommy Rhodes & Co. go whirling past in the derelict cab, their amazement knew no bounds.

"Let's see how we climb the hill back into the village!" cried Johnny Gee. "Hold tight!"

He changed gear deftly, as they approached the rather steep hill. Almost at the same moment another car came whirling out of a side turning, and set out to climb the hill, running alongside the Joyous Juniors' outfit. Johnny recognised the saloon and its driver, who was none other than the advertising manager of Murdock's Motors.

"Come on, old scout—let's see who gets to the top of the hill first!" he shouted.

The Murdock car tried to pass, its gears whining shrilly, but try as he might, the driver could not get it to climb that hill any faster! Johnny Gee kept his car well in the lead, and it maintained its fast, powerful pull.

At the top, a large crowd assembled, conspicuous amongst whom were Sir Cornelius and his secretary, Sir Corny was in a state of wild excitement when he saw that race up the hill, with his own car in front, and keeping its rival well at bay!

Johnny Gee topped the rise, and the whole outfit came merrily on to the road by the village green. The Remove leader took the bend rather sharply, and there was an ominous rending noise and a yell from the rear. Looking back, they saw the cab lurching dizzily, and the other car had to swerve suddenly to avoid a collision. The car went right off the road, across the grass verge, and plunged straight into the duckpond! The front wheels stuck in the mud, and despite all the driver's efforts, he could not get the car out again.

Meanwhile, the rending noise that Johnny Gee & Co. had heard, was caused by the shafts of the old cab snapping. The cab itself skidded wildly across the grass and plunged headlong into the duckpond. It had developed so much momentum that it did not come to rest until it was right in the middle of the pond. There it stuck, its wheels submerged.

"Ooooooogh! Gettus out!" howled Tommy Rhodes. "You awful villains——"

Johnny Gee brought the Conqueror Car to a halt, and the Removites clambered out, smiling broadly. Sir Cornelius Cripps rushed up to them, gushing with delight.

"Thank you, boys!" he cried. "You have

proved the real worth of the Conqueror Car, after all! What was wrong?"

"Water in the petrol, sir!" said Johnny Gee, with a meaning look at the dark-visaged secretary. "Perhaps Mr. Sherlow knows something about it."

"No—no! I don't think it could have been Mr. Sherlow!" said the old motor-car manufacturer. "I have thought all along that I am the victim of a plot to ruin the reputation of my cars! To-day, at any rate, the real power of my car has been demonstrated, and I am more than grateful to you, boys. I—er—think we had better get the Murdock car out of the mud."

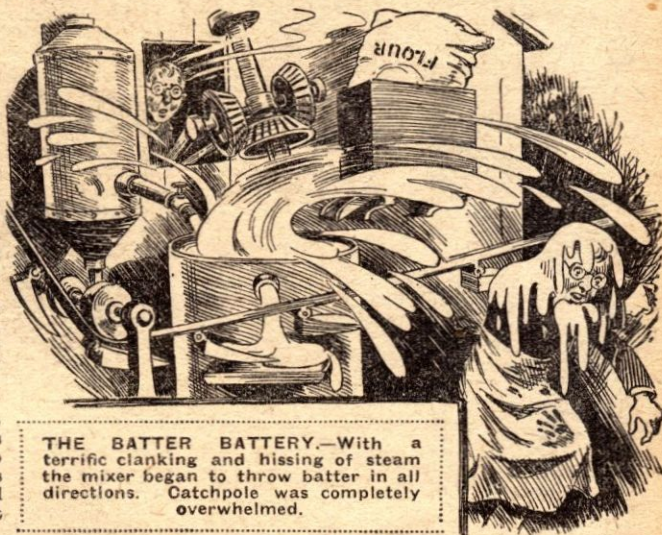
Johnny Gee & Co. carried out this operation with complete success. The rival car was dragged out of the pond, its front part completely smothered in mud, and its driver on the verge of apoplexy. Shaking his fists at the chortling Removites, he drove off down the High Street, his car shedding mud in all directions.

"Well, we must be off!" said Johnny Gee, with a chuckle. "No need to fret, Tommy, old scout—someone will rescue you. Bye-bye, Bluebells!"

Gathering up their tuck, and saying good-bye to Sir Cornelius, the heroes of the Remove left the village and wended their way towards St. Giddy's.

The Patent Pancake Plant.

"YOU clumsy ass, Fatty! Why all the hurry?" gasped Johnny Gee, as he collided with a fat form in the Remove passage. The Remove



THE BATTER BATTERY.—With a terrific clanking and hissing of steam the mixer began to throw batter in all directions. Catchpole was completely overwhelmed.

captain grasped Fatty by the scruff of the neck and yanked him up.

"Ow-woow! Leggo!" roared Fatty, struggling. "Catchpole is m-m-making pip-pancakes and giggiving them away. And I'm jolly hungry!"

Once released, Sammy Slocum scudded downstairs as fast as his plump legs would carry him. Johnny Gee, greatly wondering, called to his chums through the doorway of Study No. 4.

"I say, chaps, Catchpole's up to some larks—a pancake-making stunt!" he exclaimed. "I reckon we'd better go down and see what the ass is up to!"

The Co. hurried downstairs, and, guided by a crowd of hilarious juniors, and a dense black haze round

Hooks, Crooks, and Spooks, Featuring Hopsy Travers Next Week 21

the woodshed, they crossed the quadrangle. They managed at length to get through the press, and then they stopped short in wondering amazement.

Timothy Catchpole's latest invention was installed around and within the school woodshed. A mass of hideous mechanism was connected by various pipes, levers and belts to a weird generating plant inside. Peering through the doorway, Johnny Gee & Co. were able to see a comical species of boiler, from which ran a chimney, a steam escape pipe, and a maze of other pipes. Hank P. Peck, the American member of the Remove, could be seen, smothered in soot, snuts and coal dust, acting as stoker.

Timothy Catchpole himself was operating the fearsome-looking "plant" outside. In vivid contrast to Peck, the schoolboy genius was liberally bedaubed from head to foot in a white, powdery substance and smears of paste.

"My dear fellows," he cried proudly to Johnny Gee & Co. "You are privileged to gaze upon the Catchpole Patent Pancake Mixer, Fryer and Tosser, which I feel confident will create a great stir!"

The Removites looked more closely at the schoolboy inventor's amazing "plant."

Catchpole stood beside a large barrel-like receptacle, in the middle of which a kind of giant egg-whisk was whirring at terrific speed. Above this, was a water tank and a flour bin, from which continuous streams of water and flour poured into the mixing chamber.

Close to the mixer was a steam fryer of truly bewildering design. The mixed pancake paste was conveyed to this contraption by means of a long jointed belt, fitted with a number of scoops, which ran into the mixer, each scoop taking up sufficient paste for one pancake, and depositing it upon the fryer.

Catchpole pulled a lever, and immediately the tossing arms came into operation, yanking the pancakes from the fryer and catapulting them high in the air. Thence they dropped on to a distributing board, to be promptly seized by the eager hands of a number of Third Form fags who were gathered round. Sammy Slocum was well in the forefront with a pancake in each hand!

"Yum-mmm-mmm!" he murmured ecstatically, as he munched away. "These are prime!"

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith, wiping the steam off his monocle. "This is a regular knock-out, y'know!"

Several fellows grabbed samples of Catchpole's mass-produced pancakes, which were now being tossed forth from the machine at a great rate.

"Go it, Catchpole!" yelled Hooper encouragingly. "My hat! We shat! We shall be so stuffed with pancakes, at this rate, that we shan't want any to-morrow. Hallo! Who's this old fogey?"

"Sir Corny Cripps—and that shifty rotter, Sherlow!" exclaimed Dick Bannister, recognising the inventor, who had just come in the gates of St. Giddy's.

Sir Cornelius Cripps and his secretary were amazed when they saw pancakes flying in the air by the

woodshed, and Sir Corny hastened across to the chortling crowd.

It was just then that the perversity of Fate that always seemed to stalk Timothy Catchpole, took a hand in the proceedings. There was a loud bang from the interior of the woodshed, accompanied by a furious surge of steam and smoke. At the same moment, Catchpole's Patent Combined Pancake Mixer, Fryer and Tosser emitted a terrific clatter and clanking.

"Look out!" roared Smith minor. "The blessed thing's gone wrong at last, and—Yurroooooogh!"

The air was full of pancakes, hurled violently aloft by the wildly whirring Tosser! Johnny Gee & Co. ran for it! So did the rest of the boys of St. Giddy's. But Sir Corny Cripps and his secretary were hopelessly caught in that delectable deluge. Sir Corny gave a yell as a pancake struck his topper amidstships, and another smote him full in his venerable face! Sherlow too, went staggering back under a regular rain of pancakes! And that was not all! The scooper mechanism and the tosser were running too fast for the fryer, with the consequence that great chunks of clammy dough were fung in all directions.

Whizz—whizz! Bang! The mixing mechanism



FATTY GETS HIS FILL.—The Patent Tosser began to work at a terrific pace. Fatty gave a howl as one of the pancakes caught him in the face.

suddenly erupted with a deafening bang, followed by a cloud of smoke and a fog of steam. The roof was blown clean off the woodshed! Watched by scores of startled eyes, it sailed sky-high, together with the dismembered parts of Catchpole's steam-generating plant which had exploded.

Hank P. Peck, fortunately unhurt, came dashing forth, wildly dishevelled and smothered in soot. He stopped and glared ghoulishly at Catchpole, who was gazing in dismay at the scattered parts and collapsed structure of the Combined Pancake Mixer, Fryer and Tosser.

"You—you prize boob!" hooted Hank, amid roars of laughter from the fellows who had gathered round again. "You all-fired mugwump! Oo-ow-ow! I guess your inventions ain't worth a ha'porth of cold tripe! Ow! I guess I'm through, you big stiff!"

Hank stamped away, minus many of his tawny locks and all of his enthusiasm. Timothy Catchpole gonged a clammy mixture of flour and water from his eye, and sighed.

Boys! Look! ask your shop

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Sir Cornelius Cripps came striding over to him, his clothing still adorned with pieces of pancake.

"Never mind, my lad!" he cried sympathetically. "You are of an inventive turn of mind, I perceive. Well, well—I am an inventor, too, and have had similar mishaps and disappointments." Catchpole gasped. "I am pleased to make the acquaintance of a lad who takes such an interest in mechanics and inventions!" gushed Sir Corny. "You must come over to my workshop, Master Catchpole, and help me with my improved motor-car engine. At present, my invention is a close secret—eh, Mr. Sherlow?"

Sir Corny Cripps rubbed his hands enthusiastically, and beamed on the chums of the Remove. Timothy Catchpole, forgetting his troubles, smiled again.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" he gasped. "I shall—groooh!—be delighted to give you a hand in your workshop!"

Sir Corny Cripps chuckled deeply.

"You lads are probably wondering what is the reason for my visit to this school," he said. "Well, I'll explain. You rendered me a great service to-day, and in thinking out how best to show my appreciation to you, I hit on a great idea. Up in the north, where I come from, it is the custom on Shrove Tuesday to have a grand game of football in the open streets. The ball is kicked all over the district by anyone, and practically the whole town joins in."

"My hat!" exclaimed Johnny Geo. "It sounds ripping fun. We have a whole day's holiday to-morrow, and we'd enjoy a spree like that."

"Then you shall!" cried Sir Corny. "Knowing the—er—rivalry that exists between you and the lads of the other school, I thought it would be a good idea to arrange a free-for-all football contest for to-morrow. I have seen the Mayor, and he is in agreement. The village boys will be invited to take part as well, so that there will be three sides."

The boys of St. Giddy's listened eagerly.

"Dr. Ballantyne, of Earlswood, is willing for his lads to participate. I have now come to put the matter to Dr. Holroyd," said Sir Corny. "My plan is this: The ball, which will be presented by Cripps' Motors, will be kicked off by myself, outside the railway station in Merivale. The three sides will then attack the ball, which may be kicked anywhere in the streets or on public property. There will be three goals—this school, Earlswood School, and the priory in the wood. If you boys succeed in getting the ball through Merivale and into the gates of this school, you will be the winners, and can keep the ball as a

trophy. Similarly with your—er—friends from Earlswood, they win if they get the ball into their school. The village boys have to get the ball through the priory archway, then they will be the winners."

The juniors of St. Giddy's were greatly enthused at the old motor-car manufacturer's idea, and they followed him and his secretary across the quadrangle.

When at last the enterprising old inventor emerged from Dr. Holroyd's study, and he smilingly announced that the Head had given his consent. Whereat the Joyous Juniors cheered lustily, and looked forward with great eagerness to the morrow.

Free-for-All Footer.

THE boys of St. Giddy's made all haste into Merivale directly they were free on Shrove Tuesday morning, and they gasped with wonderment at the gay scene that met their eyes.

The old-fashioned cobbled High Street was hung with flags and bunting, everywhere dangled huge banners bearing the words "CRIPPS' CARS." The villagers were all agog with excitement, as well as the rivals of St. Giddy's and Earlswood.

At the station Johnny Geo. & Co. came face to face with their rivals, Tommy Rhodes & Co., and the village boys, led by Frank Towler, son of the local blacksmith. They all exchanged cheery greetings and made fun of each other's chances.

A loud cheer in the crowded High Street heralded the approach of Sir Corny Cripps. He came buzzing along in one of his own cars, and Johnny Geo. & Co. chuckled when they saw the gaunt, bespectacled form of Timothy Catchpole seated beside him.

Sir Corny stood up in the driving seat and held up a brand new football as soon as the car halted at the station. With a few well-chosen words, not forgetting to stress the fact that the Shrove Tuesday festivities were under the auspices of Cripps' Cars, Sir Corny stepped out of the car and solemnly gave the ball a kick-off.

Next moment there was a roar of voices as everyone rushed forward to get "on the ball." It was kicked fast and furiously from side to side. Tommy Rhodes captured the ball, and gave it a hard, lifting boot that sent it sky-rooting out of the station yard into the High Street. The massed players tore after it, and simultaneously a loud, raucous roar of voices sounded outside.

"Back up, mates! On the ball!"

Roker & Co., roaring with coarse laughter, rushed up the High Street with the ball, and a horde of indignant players gave frantic chase. A wild scrum formed in the High Street.

Mr. Snooks, the grocer, came dashing forth distractedly, as the football smashed through his shop-window, the result of a deliberate kick from one of Roker's gang. Various scrunching and rending noises gave evidence of more damage being done as the contestants rushed *en masse* for the leather. Cakebread, of Earlswood, was shoved bodily into a crate of eggs by one hulking lout on Roker's side. The hooligans were making the most of this opportunity to loot the grocer's scattered stock, and poor Mr. Snooks was helpless to stop them.

"Oh, crumbs—the rotters! They mean to muck up the game and turn it into a regular riot!" gasped Johnny Geo, already very dirty and dishevelled.

Next moment the rowdies were off with the ball again down the High Street. They simply carried their way by means of brute force and deliberate fouling. Shouts of rage and anguish arose from the other players as they saw the toughs running riot in the High Street.

The game surged onward into the Market Square. It was market day, and the stock enclosures were filled with cattle, pigs and sheep that had been

brought in to market while all around were the stalls and stands of the various traders.

Biff! The ball soared on high and went spinning into the middle of the square. The combined horde of players dashed after it and within the space of a very few minutes, a scene of wildest chaos and confusion reigned, for Roker & Co. knocked over the stalls indiscriminately.

Crash! Biff! Crash! Down went the barriers enclosing the farmers' livestock, and then pandemonium broke out in real earnest! Hordes of squeaking pigs, bleating sheep and lowing cattle stampeded, to mingle with the milling throng of footballers and distracted traders!

"Oh, crumbs! *Yarocop!* This is awful!"

"Come on!" yelled Dick Bannister, charging along a clear avenue. "This way, chaps! Soak into the rotters!"

The village roughs saw the avengers coming, and they promptly jumped off the car. An amazing scene was revealed. Sir Corny Cripps' motor-car was a complete and utter wreck! Doors and panels had been torn off that car, the wings were wrenched away, the windscreens smashed, the back portion of the body had parted company completely from the chassis, so that only the front seat remained. Sir Corny's topper was battered over his head, and both he and Timothy Catchpole were in a sadly dishevelled state.

"Never mind me, boys!" cried Sir Corny,



HANDSOME IS AS HANSOM DOES.—The shafts of the cab suddenly snapped, and the ancient vehicle shot across the green to come to rest, amid howls of anguish, in the middle of the pond.

gurgled Johnny Gee, clutching Tommy Rhodes wildly, as a shrieking porker charged at him. "For goodness' sake let's grab these rotters, and smash 'em! *Yah!*"

The rival players decided to combine, and get rid of Roker & Co. Their progress along the High Street, however, was impeded by the flocks of sheep that scampered willy-nilly in their midst.

A little higher up the High Street, a motor-car was buzzing along, its driver making frantic efforts to get into the Market Square. Sir Corny Cripps was at the wheel, with Timothy Catchpole still beside him.

Roker & Co. gave vicious roars as they rushed towards the car, which had now come to a standstill. One of the toughs gave the ball a terrific kick, which carried it into Sir Corny's car. Yelling with feigned excitement, Roker & Co. hurled themselves upon the car. Sir Corny Cripps and Catchpole disappeared in the midst of the shouting scrambling crowd of village rowdies.

chokingly. "Go after those young hooligans, and stop them at their ruffianly behaviour!"

The Triple Alliance of youthful footballers dashed in chase of Roker & Co, who essayed to escape down the side streets. They found the way barred, however, and the combined forces of the avengers swept upon them.

"Into the pound with the rotters!" shouted Johnny Gee.

Roker & Co. were howling now in real earnest. They found themselves assailed on all sides, and they had perforce to run into the market place, where a terrific fight ensued.

Tommy Rhodes and Snowball between them dragged open the gates of the pound—the strong enclosure in the middle of the market place, where stray and fractious cattle were incarcerated. One by one Roker & Co. were hauled inside and when they were all there in a wild, wriggling heap, the gates were slammed and fastened.

"There!" gasped Johnny Gee. "Now P.C. Dooley

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can deal with 'em—they'll never get out on their own!"

"Splendid boys—splendid!" cried Sir Cornelius Cripps, driving up in his battered car. "Now you can get on with the football match!"

The youthful contestants plunged once more into the game with great gusto. Right through the village went that excited crowd, with throngs of equally excited spectators following them up! Roars of laughter arose, as the players scrambled through the wide ditch that ran alongside the Merivale Lane.

After a hectic scramble in a deep dyke, Lord Reggie booted out the ball, which was instantly seized upon by Dick Bannister, Hooper, and Tony Graham, and kicked St. Giddywards! Away went that merry throng, o'er field and lea, until at length the ball went over the hedge back into the Merivale Lane, and a fierce fight was waged at the cross-roads.

This was a real strategic point, for here the roads to the priory, and Earlswood, and St. Giddy's converged. From the midst of that merry melee, Snowball emerged with the ball and gave it a hefty kick that sent it spinning along the road that led to St. Giddy's.

The players were after it like hounds chasing the fox! Despite the frantic efforts of Tommy Rhodes and Co., and the village lads, Johnny Gee and his merry men kept the ball in the Merivale Lane.

St. Giddy's was in sight now, and Snowball again had the ball. The lithe, little nigger dribbled it at lightning speed along the lane! Tommy Rhodes and Co. made a last desperate effort and crowded in the gateway, grimly determined not to let the ball pass!

Suddenly Johnny Gee wriggled his way out of the whirling, struggling mass with the ball.

Bam! The ball, whizzed high in the air, and ripped its way straight through the gateway of St. Giddy's. "Hooray! Good old Johnny! We win!"

Dr. Holroyd appeared at the gates, looking most shocked at the appearance of his cheery pupils. But there were no bones broken, and he smilingly looked on while Sir Cory Cripps solemnly presented the ball to Johnny Gee.

The Pancake Presentation.

AS soon as they had made themselves once more respectable, Johnny Gee & Co. hid themselves to Merivale to obtain the necessary ingredients for the pancakes with which they were going to celebrate.

Law and order had been restored in the village, following the great footer rag of the morning. Johnny Gee & Co. saw P.C. Dooley in the Market Square, and looked surprised as he came bearing down upon them.

"Just a moment, young gents!" he said pompously. "Sir Cornelius Cripps 'as lost some valuable papers—plans of a secret invention—and Hi want to trace 'em! Arter making certain investigations, we've come to the conclusion that they was extracted from the old gent's pocket in the rough and tumble this mornin'."

"Why, of course! Roker and his rowdies would have had plenty of chances to pick his pockets while they were ragging him in his car!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Have you searched them, Dooley?"

"Which they've hall been harrested and thoroughly searched!" the village constable replied. "We recovered a lot of stolen goods, but not the missin' papers."

"Sorry, but we know nothing about it," said Johnny Gee, in great concern. "Now I come to remember, that shady merchant, Sherlow, was in the Square when all the rumpus was going on. But I don't see how he could have got at the papers."

The chums of Study No. 4 went along to the village stores, and made their purchases. Unbeknown to them, Tommy Rhodes & Co. had been watching and listening through the doorway.

"My word! So they're going to have a Pancake Party—what?" murmured Tommy Rhodes. "What say we take a hand in that party, and muck it up a bit? I think it could be worked easily enough!"

The Earlswood leader went on to explain, with the result that they went off to make sundry purchases of their own. They dogged their rivals back to St. Giddy's, and climbed unnoticed through a lower window.

Johnny Gee & Co. had deposited the ingredients for their pancakes in Study No. 4. They had then gone off to find Fatty Slocum, and collect the cooking utensils and "crocks" for the forthcoming party.

"Good egg!" chuckled Tommy Rhodes softly. "Now's the time to do the necessary!"

The Earlswoodites crept in, and it did not take them long to remove a portion of their rivals' flour and mix in their purchases—cement and plaster of paris. Shortly after the raiders had departed, Johnny Gee & Co. returned, fully laden.

A space was cleared, frying-pans were brought into operation, and, under the combined efforts of Sammy Slocum and Snowball, the cooking proceeded apace. The pancakes, nice and brown, were turned out hot from the pan, and deftly tossed.

Soon all was ready, and the Joyous Juniors "whacked out" the pancakes between them.

"My word! These look good!" chuckled Dick Bannister appreciatively. "See me take a big bite at this one! *Ow!*"

Dick broke off with an exclamation of mingled surprise and anguish. The pancake had failed to yield to his boyish teeth. He quite hurt himself, in fact! The others, too, were having similar trouble. Yells of amazement and wrath arose.

"*Yah!* What's the matter with these blessed pancakes?"

"*Gerrooogh!*" spluttered Johnny Gee. "This tastes like nothing on earth, and— Oh, crumbs! Hark!"

From outside came sounds of loud laughter and cat-calls in well-known tones.

"Pancakes made from cement and plaster of paris are rather a new line in table dainties—what?" roared Tommy Rhodes and his fellow-japers.

"Gug-g-g-good lor!" gurgled Johnny Gee, turning wildly to his followers. "The rotters! The howling cads! Murder 'em!"

A fusillade of hard, stony pancakes burst forth from the study window. Jeering and laughing, Tommy Rhodes & Co. ran away, and the infuriated

(Continued on page 34.)

TEST FEVER! Fascinating Facts About the Tests, and a Who's Who of the English Test Cricketers.



THE TALE of the TESTS

The True Story of
THE ASHES and of
Some of the Great
Test Battles of the
Past.



NEVER before, in the whole history of cricket, has there been such excitement over the Test Matches as has raged during the present M.C.C. tour in Australia. Certainly enthusiasm has always been keen, but this year Test Match interest has reached fever-heat. And all this excitement over the winning of something that does not exist!

That sounds a bit Irish, but it is true, nevertheless. The English and Australian cricket stars have been waging match after match "down under" during the past few months for the "Ashes"—and, strange to relate, there have never been any "Ashes"!

We must go back to 1882 for the first mention of these mythical Ashes. An Australian team came to this country and, to the abject amazement of the whole cricketing world, trounced the English team. Following this unofficial Test Match, one of the London sporting papers published a humorous "In Memoriam" card:

In affectionate remembrance of English cricket (it read), which died at the Oval on 29th August, 1882. Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances.

N.B.—The body will be cremated, and the ashes taken to Australia.

This humorous announcement fairly roused the English cricketers, and when, the following season, a team visited Australia, it went out determined to recover those "ashes."

England's great will-to-win spirit triumphed, and, to mark the victory of our cricketers, a tiny urn was presented to the English captain, Lord Darnley, purporting to contain the "Ashes." Few people have ever seen that tiny urn, which means so much to English and Australian cricketers, for it is now in the possession of a famous Aussie ex-Test-player. But the old-time rivalry still persists in Test Matches—in fact, the contest for the "Ashes" has now become a bi-annual battle.

Let us go back even farther than the origin of the "Ashes," and see what happened in the very early days of the Tests.

The first English team ever to visit Australia were pioneers indeed, for our cousins "down under" had only an elementary knowledge of our great summer sport. They were willing and keen to learn, however, and everyone knows what first-class players they have become. During that very first tour in Australia, the English cricketers met teams of eighteen and even

twenty-two players—but they always triumphed easily!

Curiously enough, the first team of Aussies to pay a visit to this country was led by an Englishman—Charles Lawence, a Surrey player, who had remained in Australia after the first English tour. But it was not at cricket that the first Australian team won fame—they gave exhibitions of boomerang-throwing, and became a real "star-turn." You see, a number of them were Aborigines!

The first Test Match was played in Australia in 1876—and you will realise how the Aussies had progressed at our own sport when you learn that they won that match! So great was the enthusiasm in Australia over that game that a return match was arranged. This time the English team showed the Aussies just how the game should be played—yes, and won!

In contrast to the "boomerang displays" I have just mentioned, the English team that toured Australia in 1877 had a sideline. Selby, one of the English cricketers, was a star runner, and several races were arranged with Australian "foot-sloggers." Cricket was considered to be of secondary importance to these foot-races!

You have all, doubtless, read with interest of the heated discussions and arguments that have attended the present series of Tests in Australia. This keen rivalry was very evident in 1878. Australia won the first Test, then followed a match at Sydney, and an objection was raised to one of the English umpires. The English players stood up for their rights, and were attacked by the Aussie "fans." No one was hurt, fortunately, but the incident brought the series of matches that had been arranged to a premature close.

Prior to the present tour, 124 Test Matches had been contested by English and Australian teams. England triumphed in 47 of these games, while the Aussies have 50 wins to their credit. The rest of the games have been drawn. So you see it is now almost level pegging!

OUR TEST TEAM WHO'S WHO.

DOUGLAS R. JARDINE (Surrey).—Captain of England and his county. Born at Colombo. Aged 32. But learned his cricket in Scotland. Won his cricket "Blue" at Oxford. The greatest defensive batsman in England.

ROBERT E. S. WYATT (Warwickshire).—England's vice-skipper; also leader of his county, and first-wicket batsman. Born in Surrey. Aged 31. Has played cricket all over the world.

(Continued on next page.)

TEST MATCH WHO'S WHO

(Continued from previous page.)

HERBERT SUTCLIFFE (Yorkshire).—England's leading first-wicket batsman; hero of many Tests. Born at Pudsey. Aged 38. Was an officer during the War, and played his first cricket at the age of 16.

G. O. ALLEN (Middlesex).—Born at Sydney, Australia. Aged 30. His uncle once played for Australia against England. Fast bowler and forcing batsman.

THE NAWAB OF PATAUDI (Worcestershire).—Born in India. Aged 22. Followed Ranji and Duleep by scoring a century in his first Test. A triple "Blue" at Oxford; cricket, hockey, and billiards.

WALTER HAMMOND (Gloucestershire).—Born Dover. Aged 29. Played his first cricket in Malta, where his father was an Army officer. Was once a professional footballer with Bristol Rovers. Fast-scoring, hard-hitting, stylish batsman.

MAURICE LEYLAND (Yorkshire). Born Harrogate. Aged 32. Left-handed batsman and bowler, and marvellous fielder. Been playing cricket since his boyhood.

LESLIE AMES (Kent).—Born Eltham, Kent. Aged 27. Became wicket-keeper at school at Folkestone. Also a brilliant bat. As a footballer has played with Folkestone, Gillingham, and Clapton Orient.

HAROLD LARWOOD (Notts).—Born Nuncarcate. Aged 28. Considered the fastest bowler in the world. Was once a miner, and should have been a violinist. Learned to play cricket on a pit slag-heap. Fond of hitting sixes.

WILLIAM VOCE (Notts).—Born Nottingham. Aged 23. Another fast bowler, left-hander. Visiting Australia for first time. Was once a footballer, and a miner.

HEDLEY VERITY (Yorkshire).—Born Rawdon. Aged 27. Left-handed spin-bowler, who has followed in the shoes of the great Wilfrid Rhodes. Has three times taken all ten wickets in an innings. Grey-haired from boyhood.

GEORGE DUCKWORTH (Lancashire).—Born Warrington. Aged 32. Little, but marvellous behind the stumps. Followed father as wicket-keeper, and now keeps pigeons as a pastime. Follows Rugby Football.

MAURICE TATE (Sussex).—Born Northampton. Aged 38. Known as "Chubby"; batsman and bowler known all over the world. Wanted to be a footballer, but became a cricketer.

TED FAYNTER (Lancashire).—Born Oswaldtwistle. Aged 31. Left-handed batsman and bowler; star of the Lancashire run-getting contingent.

BILL BOWES (Yorkshire).—Born Yorkshire. Aged 25. Lanky, curly-haired fast bowler, famous for his "bumpers." Came out with the M.C.C., got his chance with Yorkshire, and is now a Test player.

TOM MITCHELL (Derbyshire).—Born Chesterfield. Aged 31. Formerly a miner who learned to spin a ball on a billiard-table. Wears glasses—but knows how to give opposing batsmen "spectacles."

F. R. BROWN (Surrey).—Aged 21. A Cambridge Cricket "blue." He is over six feet tall and is a slow leg-break bowler and "zoogly" merchant. An excellent bat and a tremendous hitter.

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	9 ..	8 ..	12 ..	11 ..	14 ..	13 ..	15
	14 ..	10 ..	15 ..	14 ..	16 ..	15 ..	16
	18 ..	16 ..	17 ..	18 ..	17 ..	18 ..	17

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FOOTBALL — AND
EERIE MYSTERY !

Grand Cup-Tie Series featuring The Tin-Can Trojans and
Their Arena of Fiends and Spectres.



Zorro The Sinister.

WELHAM PRIORS, the great, gloomy mansion in the Derbyshire hills, owned by Lord Welham, lay in darkness. A keen, bitter wind moaned and whistled round the ivy-covered gables and the crepered turrets.

The scientist-peer, although a bachelor, and living the life of a recluse, nevertheless had twelve "sons." These adopted boys, all of the same age, slept in a great chamber of the Black Wing—a comfortably furnished dormitory, reminiscent of their schooldays. Most of them were awake now, having only just gone to bed.

Twelve sturdy youngsters, these—brought up under conditions of rigid severity by the scientist-peer. He had named them after Greek gods, and Ajax, the mighty leader of them all, was talking now. He was the captain of their own private football club—a club which had amazed England by its brilliance. For the "Miracle Boys," as they were called, had succeeded in winning their way through to the Sixth Round of the English Cup Competition.

"Well, brothers, we're still in the fight," Ajax was saying contentedly. "To-morrow we play against Bellingdene in the Midland Counties League—and after that comes the round before the semi-finals!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Eos, the sturdy goalie. "If we can only win our next two ties, we're in the semi-finals!"

Argus, the brilliant centre-forward, Nike and Dike, Perseus, Boreas and the others were full of tremendous

With the Help of their Mysterious Guardian the Miracle Boys are Fighting for the Cup. But their Ground, The Crater, Cloaks Strange, Sinister Things.

THIS WEEK'S THRILL: THE MONSTER OF THE METEORITE.

enthusiasm. Never had they been more confident than now.

"We can almost look upon to-morrow's match as a dress-rehearsal," said Ajax. "Bellingdene are at the top of the Midland Counties League—one of the hottest teams in the country, and we'll have to fight every inch of the way. Everybody ready now? Right! Good night, then!"

They murmured "good nights" to one another and snuggled down in their beds. Within five minutes the dormitory was silent, except for the deep, regular breathing of the twelve healthy boys. Another five minutes elapsed. . . . Ten. . . . Fifteen. . . .

Suddenly, Themis sat up in bed. He had never been quite the same as the others; he was not even in the team, being, in fact, the reserve man. He never entered into the fun, as the others did, but held himself aloof. Now, he sat up in bed with a curiously far-away expression on his face. Yet he was wide awake; for he had been roused by a mysterious call which had come only to his brain.

Slowly, silently, he dressed; then crept like a shadow out of the room. He passed down the long, gloomy corridors of the old mansion, reached the lower floor, and noiselessly slipped out through a side door. He progressed like a shadow across the wooded parkland. Suddenly a black shape manifested itself out of a clump of bushes and barred his progress.

"It is well!" murmured a soft, gloating voice. "So you heard me, Themis, my son!"

"I heard you, father," whispered Themis, in a dull, mechanical voice.

"It is meet that I should hold this hypnotic power over you—since you are of my own flesh and blood," said Professor Mortimer Zorro, the archaeologist and arch-crook.

He was more like a grotesque insect than a human being. He was lean and gaunt, and he had a spider-like way of holding himself; he was hunched, his long arms hung loosely by his sides, and his whole appearance was one of sinister evil.

"Listen carefully, my son," murmured Zorro. "While your companions use the Crater as a football ground, my operations are hampered. The Trojans are acquiring fame, and the Crater is constantly being invaded by hundreds of football-crazed spectators. It must cease!" His voice became harsh. "There is only one way in which I can drive you boys away—and that is to strike through Lord Welham. Themis, listen carefully to these instructions, and heed them well."

While he talked in a low, tense voice, Themis listened closely.

LESS than five minutes later, Lord Welham was awakened by an agitated figure by his bedside. It was Themis, looking very wide awake.

"Chief!" panted Themis. "Quick! Argus and Perseus have been carried off by horrible-looking men with bird-like masks. I watched them from the window—"

"What of the others?" broke in Lord Welham urgently.

"They're still asleep, Chief," panted Themis. "I didn't know what to do. So I came to you."

"You were wise," muttered his lordship, as he rapidly flung some clothes on. "Come! You will show me just where the boys vanished."

He seized an automatic pistol and hurried out. All seemed quiet as they hurried across the parkland. Suddenly four strange figures leapt down upon Lord Welham as he passed beneath a great chestnut tree. They were Grey Men—weird, monstrous-looking creatures dressed from head to foot in tight-fitting grey costumes, with masks which entirely covered their faces and heads—masks which had great beaks, like fantastic birds.

The unfortunate scientist had no chance. He was borne to the ground by the Grey Men, cords were swiftly passed round him and drawn tight. Zorro appeared from the shadows, chucking evilly.

"The time has come, Lord Welham, when we can no longer maintain our former politenesses," he said mockingly. "You and your boys are becoming a nuisance to me. I shall take drastic measures—and you will be the first to go."

He made a sign to the Grey Men. Lord Welham was lifted from the ground and carried swiftly away. Themis, who stood silently by, now moved back towards Welham Priors without a word.

Far across the park went the Grey Men with their burden, to emerge on to a rocky hillside, within sight of the Crater—a great hollow, gashed in the hillside, which served the Orphan Footballers as a stadium.

The Grey Men descended one of the rocky sides, with Zorro leading. Soon they reached an immense slab of granite, which, at a touch from Zorro, swung back, revealing a black cavity. They passed within, and the rock fell into place behind them. Flashing an electric torch, Zorro led the way down a steep slope, until he and his men arrived in a great underground cavern, astonishing in its immensity. In various places torches were flaming, and giving forth a lurid light.

"I think you understand just where you are, Welham," exclaimed Zorro softly.

"I have known of this place for many years," replied Lord Welham. "I have known, too, Zorro, that you have been using the cavern for your own evil ends. You are a criminal, a robber—"

"Pah! Enough!" snarled Zorro. "I will show you something which will surprise even you! This vast cavern was formed, many years ago, by the fall of an immense meteorite from Outer Space!"

"That much I know," replied Lord Welham. "The meteorite fell during the lifetime of my father,

and he refused to allow investigators to trespass upon his property."

"I have been working in secret—for years," gloated Zorro. "In boring into the buried meteorite I made the most astounding discoveries. I found Life." He glared into Lord Welham's face. "Life, my friend! Life such as we on earth know nothing of! Wait! I will show you."

The Meteorite Monster.

"LOOK!" said Ajax tensely. He, Eos, Argus and Perseus were staring out of a window of their dormitory, across the moonlit parkland. It was fate, perhaps, which had caused Ajax to awaken—and to discover that Themis' bed was empty. In the moonlight they saw Themis hurrying away with Lord Welham.

"Something funny about this," said Ajax, his voice full of concern. "Come on, boys!"

It took them only a few moments to get into some clothes; then they sped off. As soon as they got outside they saw Themis moving towards them, and although it seemed certain that he must have seen them, he walked straight past, and went indoors.

"What's wrong with him?" whispered Argus. "Is he walking in his sleep?"

"I don't think so—but we won't bother with him now," replied Ajax grimly. "Come on! There's something ugly in all this—and I'm worrying about the Chief."

Instinctively, they ran towards the Crater, making excellent progress. Thus, they arrived on the lip of the rocky depression just as Lord Welham, in the hands of his captors, was being forced into the secret opening. Ajax, creeping nearer than the others, had distinctly seen how the great rock was operated.

"I knew it!" he whispered, as he rejoined the others. "Remember those giant bats we saw the other night? And the Grey Men? Zorro's at the bottom of it all—and now he has imprisoned our Chief."

"Well, we can rescue him, can't we?" muttered Perseus eagerly.

They slid down the rocks, and Ajax, after one or two attempts, discovered the method by which the great slab of granite could be moved. It swung back, revealing the black opening. The boys pressed on, leaving the door open as a quick way of escape.

Having reached the end of the sloping passage, they suddenly found themselves within the great, mystery cavern. As they stood there, deep in the shadows, they witnessed one of the most astounding experiments ever undertaken.

Professor Zorro was standing almost in the centre of the cavern, Lord Welham was beside him—still bound, and guarded on either side by Grey Men.

"Watch!" Zorro was saying, in a gloating voice. "You shall see this thing with your own eyes, Welham."

He indicated two curious, metal structures—like cradles, supported on criss-cross girders. One of them was quite dark, but the other was entirely surrounded by a great circle of dazzling bulbs. They were like gigantic wireless valves, glowing with a tremendously intense, purple light. Fixed in the cradle was an enormous egg, coloured a deep, mottled brown, and in places, quite black.

"What foolery is this?" asked Lord Welham, impatiently.

"You are witnessing the hatching of one of the great meteorite eggs," replied Professor Zorro smoothly. "I discovered a number of these eggs firmly embedded in the meteoric rock. Each one was protected by a casing of peculiar, heat-resisting quartz—which prevented these eggs from being consumed by heat as the meteorite was hurtling

through our atmosphere. My theory is that the living creatures on some distant planet purposely sent this meteorite hurtling into space, taking with it the eggs of the planet creatures—to be hatched possibly, after a lapse of hundreds of years. By scientific methods, I have already hatched a number of them out!"



THE HORROR HATCHED.—Without warning the giant egg burst asunder, and from it emerged a monstrous creature, half-lizard, half-centipede, with a fantastic head and great luminous eyes.

The listening boys knew that Professor Zorro had spoken the truth; for they had seen those monstrous Transparent Bats—creatures of incredible size and unearthly in aspect.

"This egg should be hatched very shortly now," continued Zorro. "For the heat has been applied for many days."

He turned and spoke to his Grey Men. In a moment Lord Welham was seized and carried swiftly to the top of the second girder structure. Here he was laid in the cradle, helpless. With a chuckle, Zorro pressed some hidden switches, and festoons of purple-glowing valves sprang into life all round the prisoner.

"From that perch you will have a much better view," taunted Zorro. "Within an hour, Lord Welham, the radiance will send you into a sleep from which you will never awaken. At last I have you where I want you—and it will not take me long to clear your infernal boys out of the Crater, and to keep them out."

Crackle—crackle—crash! Without warning the mysterious egg suddenly burst asunder. Portions of the shell, eight or nine inches in thickness, and resembling armour-plate, fell on all sides of the "incubator."

"See!" shouted Zorro triumphantly. Then his cry changed to one of consternation. For the thing which emerged from the broken shell was no Transparent Bat, but a monstrous creature as black as night itself, shiny with great scales, and rearing its fantastic head grotesquely. It was something like an enormous centipede, yet it bore, too, a vague resemblance to a lizard. There were two, great, luminous eyes perched on the extremities of its shiny, tube-like antennae, not unlike a snail's.

"Master!" croaked one of the Grey Men. "This monster—"

He got no further. For that creature from Outer Space, suddenly heaved itself from its smashed egg, shooting forth two great claw-like feelers. They waved about uncertainly for a moment, and then lunged forward to seize Lord Welham in the adjoining cradle. In a flash, his lordship was lifted on high, and sent hurtling to the floor below.

Crash! Luckily, his lordship collided with one of the Grey Men, and his fall was broken. Zorro and the other Grey Men backed away, shouting with fear. From the crashing eggshell came the black-sealed monster, gaining strength with every passing second. Lord Welham was lifted again, and this time he was flung to the back of the Black Lizard. The creature stood on its great feet now, its long neck waving slowly to and fro, its great eyes oozing in and out.

"Chief!" shouted Ajax urgently.

The boys leapt forward, they seized their beloved guardian, and clung to the scaly back of the strange monster. It seemed that the creature exerted some magnetic influence, for the boys found it difficult to free themselves. As though guided by instinct, the creature growing perceptibly, ran with loping strides towards the exit.

It reached the open, and, thankfully, the boys felt the night air blowing upon their cheeks. Now they would be able to get free—to escape from this... But no! Wings, unfolding themselves like shiny, black frames of silk, spread outwards from the lizard's sides. With a clumsy movement, the great monster essayed to fly. It staggered drunkenly, but next moment it got into its stride and rose awkwardly, soaring higher and higher.

It was like a nightmare. As they flew, Ajax managed to get out his clasp-knife, and he ripped through Lord Welham's bonds.

"Drop, boys, it's our only chance!" panted Lord Welham. "Look! The lake!"

Ajax and the others understood. With a great effort they flung themselves sideways—and it required all their strength to drag themselves away

from the peculiar "pull" which held them to the lizard's back. Down they went—down—down . . .

Splash! They struck the water, unhurt, and the monster from Outer Space soared aloft to vanish into the night sky. When Lord Welham and his boys dragged themselves ashore there was no further sign of the unearthly visitant.

But Professor Zorro, standing in the deep shadows, had seen all. He cursed under his breath. And, then and there, he swore that he would drive the "Tin-Can Trojans" out of the Crater by other means.

The Unearthly Visitant.

NEXT day, in the bright sunshine, the happenings of the night seemed unreal. Lord Welham advised the boys to keep the secret to themselves—for there was no sense in disturbing the minds of the others.

"Leave it to me, my dear boys," said the scientist-peer kindly. "Play your match to-day, and afterwards, perhaps, we will take some action against Zorro."

Zorro, however, was desperate, and he was determined to get the boys away from the Crater at any cost. Once before there had been a strange "explosion" at the football arena. Well, there could be another—and people would put it down to a purely natural cause—a forgotten dynamite charge, left, perhaps, by excavators.

A considerable crowd turned up for the big game—for this match against Bellingdene was of some importance. Turnstiles had been built, enclosures constructed, and the boys were even preparing the erection of a grand-stand. They did everything themselves—for their guardian believed in giving them plenty of hard work.

The sun was shining brilliantly when the two teams took their places on the bright green turf. Hundreds of people occupied the arena, and the cheers for the "Football Orphans" were hearty and lusty. Never had there been such brilliant exponents of the game as these sturdy boys.

"Come on, the Trojans!"
"Play up, Welham's Boys!"

Once the game was started, Ajax and his merry men forgot all about the sinister character of their arena. It was a football stadium now, and they had a game to play. Bellingdene was a hot team, and it was determined to put an end, if possible, to the Trojans' winning streak.

It seemed that to-day they were inspired, however, Ajax, at centre-half, controlled the field with all his magnificent supremacy. The manner in which he directed his forwards, and controlled his defence, left the visitors helpless.

From a pass by Ajax, Nike, in the outside left position, swept up the field. Across came the ball, and before either of the Bellingdene backs could get within yards of it, Argus, the lightning centre-forward, swooped. Taking the leather in his stride he shot, a glorious first-time kick, which left the visiting goalie helpless.

Wham! The leather hissed past the goalie, struck the side of the post, and slithered obliquely into the back of the net.

"Goal! Well done, Argus!"

With their usual brilliance, the Miracle Boys had scored. Yet another team were bewildered and flabbergasted by the Tin-Can Trojans.

The game continued, and although Bellingdene fought gamely, Perseus, at inside-right, rattled home another goal after ten minutes. Receiving a nippy pass from Argus, he did not even wait for the visiting defenders to get near him. He steadied himself, and sent in a long shot which had all the fire and zip of a penalty kick.

Under this unexpected treatment, the Bellingdene players became more and more ragged. During a particularly hectic spell, while the visitors were attempting to break through the Trojans' defence, the sky suddenly became darkened. The game was so fascinating that nobody thought of looking upwards. A passing cloud—nothing more . . .

"Look!" suddenly screamed a spectator.

The cry was taken up by others. The referee's whistle gave a short, shrill blast. The game stopped, and the players stared up into the darkened heavens.

"Great guns!" breathed Eos. "The Black Lizard!"

The thing which hovered over the Crater was a monster of unbelievable size. Since it had been hatched, it had grown fifty times as big—and was now a flying creature of such dimensions that players and spectators alike stood frozen with horror. In a flash, Ajax knew the truth. The thing was "homing"—instinct had brought it back to the Crater.

It suddenly swooped, descending lower and lower. Shouting with horror, players and spectators fled from the arena. The turf was left empty.

Boom! Just as the Black Lizard was landing in the arena, a terrific explosion burst forth in the centre of the playing pitch. This was the evil work of Professor Zorro. But it was the great Lizard which received the brunt of the explosion. With a great croaking cry it soared into the air, rising higher and higher until it became a mere speck.

It was strange that the Lizard itself should have saved the Trojans from Zorro's malicious plot. For, owing to the appearance of that weird monster, everybody had left the arena in time.

There was a great sensation—but nobody connected the Lizard with the Crater itself, and only the Miracle Boys knew the truth.

The Tin-Can Trojans still on the road to Wembley! "Kidnapped at the Cup-Tie" is crammed with unusual thrills and astounding Footer next week.

THE EDITOR'S CHAT

(Continued from page 9.)

great! Each instalment seems more thrilling than the last, and when Billy sees the Rat-trap—but I am anticipating too much. I'll have you to enjoy the second instalment—when One over Seven himself appears.

The Iron Spider

is another crook yarn—but, as this is a special sleuth and crook number, I'm sure you won't mind. On the contrary, you'll be thrilled and gripped by every one of the unique new story features in next week's number. The Iron Spider, then, is the most marvellous invention of the age. It has been designed by a young inventor to explore the Great Abyss in the heart of the Abyssinia Mountains. But it falls into the hands of Flash Harry, *alias* Professor Silver, and then excitement is piled on thrill. Don't miss this smasher.

Football enthusiasts will enjoy every line of the latest exploits of the Miracle Boys at their Stadium of Spectres. Ajax and his brothers are

Kidnapped at the Cup-Tie

thanks to the cunning of Zorro. More eerie thrills, as well as dizzy football, in this gripping yarn. And, by way of contrast, you'll enjoy the doings of Hoppy Travers, the Boy Millionaire, in

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A special surprise tale and other attractive features complete next week's number. And look out for more news from

Your sincere friend, THE EDITOR.

**DICK RYAN OF THE
CANADIAN MOUNTIES.**

**Whirlwind Complete Yarn Introducing a Great
New Go-Getter of the Wilds.**



The Killer's Warning.

TELL Constable Ryan that if he does not turn back he will die.

This message, handed to him by the wrinkled shaman of an Indian village, told Dicky Ryan, of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, that Pierre Anton had got wind of him. Dicky would have to go warily now, for he could expect short shrift from this killer.

With a short laugh he pushed on north, for Dick Ryan, true to the tradition of the force, meant to get his man at any cost.

Two days later, when he stopped at a trapper's cabin, the same message was waiting for him. This time, however, the words were scrawled upon a rough rectangle of bark, and concluded with the signature, "The Shark." Still undeterred, Dick pushed on.

All through the afternoon he had a feeling that he was being watched, and though young in years, he was too wise at the game of man-hunting not to heed that presentiment.

Pierre Anton was a killer. Six months before, he had committed his first murder. Since then headquarters had received information which led them to believe he was responsible for the deaths of four trappers. In each case the victim had received a message signed by "The Shark."

First one and then another of Dick's fellow-policemen had been sent out to get him. Corporal Dillon had followed Sergeant Browell. Neither had returned. It said a lot for the faith headquarters had in young Dicky Ryan that he was given the job after these two veterans had failed.

That night, still conscious of the feeling that he was not alone in that vast expanse of snow, he pitched his tent and piled his equipment inside. After a rough meal he crawled into his tent, but did not roll up in his blankets. Instead, he wriggled out at the back, and crept as silently as a wolf to a clump of spruce trees. There he made himself comfortable, and dropped off to sleep almost as soon as his head touched the pile of twigs that he was using for a pillow.

In a few minutes, it seemed, although the faint grey light of the open spaces told him that it was nearly dawn, he awoke with a feeling of danger at hand.

Suddenly Dick stiffened as one of his dogs gave a

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES! That was the Shark's Motto—so he Killed Man after Man sent on his Trail. But he Reckoned without Mountie Dick Ryan—and the White Bear!

yelp, which broke off with a gurgling sound. Dick parted the thick branches of the trees, and dimly made out the forms of his dogs through the mist of descending snow.

There came another yelp, quickly stifled like the first. Then something moved to one side, and Dick leapt to his feet, yanking his gun from its holster as he moved forward through the swirling snowflakes.

Crack! Dick saw the spurt of flame, and felt the bullet fan his cheek. Next moment he made out the form of a man, wrapped in furs, bounding away into the snowy mist. He heard a sharp crack, like the snap of a whip, followed by the barking of dogs and the creaking of traces.

Desperately Dick fired in the direction of the rapidly retreating sledge, but the intruder was quickly swallowed up in the gloom of the falling snow.

"Got clean away," Dick muttered. "And goodness knows what the blighter's done with my dogs."

In the faint dawnlight Dick approached one of the dark objects which were rapidly being covered with snow. He bent down, and, as he turned it over, he gave an exclamation of anger and dismay.

It was the body of one of his sled dogs, with its throat slit!

Feverishly he examined one little mound after another. All his dogs had been treated in the same swift, deadly way.

The Mountie's blue eyes were like pin-points of steel as he spotted a piece of bark lying across the body of the last dog. He picked it up and peered hard at the rough scrawl upon it.

Constable Ryan, turn back, or you will die.

The Shark's Dupe.

DULLY Dick replenished his smouldering fire and sat down to think. Snow had ceased to fall when he at last stood up, the light of determination in his eyes.

With a last look at his dead dogs he set off on foot in the hope of finding a trapper's cabin. All along

the trail he had found the hunters chary of speaking about "The Shark," and he had been led to the conclusion they either knew nothing of Pierre Anton or were afraid to tell what little they did know of the villain. He was determined to find out definitely from the next trapper he met.

An hour later he struck a beaten trail, which he guessed led to some trapper's shack. He was following the track through a clump of pines when he heard the sounds of scuffling. This was followed by a man's cry, and rushing forward, every sense alert, Dick came upon a strange scene.

A trapper, wearing a thick coat of furs, was struggling in the crushing embrace of a huge white bear. With one down-sweeping blow of its huge paw the bear could have broken the trapper's back like the snapping of a rotten twig, but instead of doing so, the massive creature simply bumped him upon the hard snow on the edge of a swift-running stream, while the poor fellow beat impotently with his fists at the beast's great chest.

"Gosh!" Dick muttered, and raising his gun, took aim.

The bear presented a tricky target, however, for he had to avoid hitting the trapper. His weapon aligned on the bear's head, Dick pulled the trigger.

Crack! The echo of the shot rattled through the tops of the pines as the huge brute released its victim to claw at its face.

Choking, gurgling roars came from the slavering, blood-smearing jaws, while the trapper rolled clear and jumped to his feet. Before Dick could get in another shot to put the beast out of its agony, it plunged madly into the water, to be swept swiftly out of accurate range of the Mountie's gun. As the bear was carried round a bend out of sight, Dick turned to the trapper.

"Are you hurt, chum?" he asked.

"No, m'sieur; only am I short of ze breath," the trapper, a little nervous Frenchman, replied, with a twisted smile of gratitude. "I am Jacques Lavette. You are poleesman—it ees regret."

Dick's quick eyes noticed an unnatural nervousness about the man, in spite of a frank, open look in his darting, black eyes. The Mountie was certain that his uniform had caused it.

"Why is it regrettable?" Dick asked. "Surely you are not disappointed because I saved your life."

"No, no, m'sieur!" the Frenchman hastened to assure him. "But to be seen with ze poleesman may mean death. You are Constable Ryan?"

Dick nodded, wondering how the fellow knew.

"Ah, then I am, indeed, regret. You will die. For eet ees arranged by The Shark!"

The little Frenchman was so sure of Dick's fate, and his sorrow so genuine, that Dick burst out laughing.

"We'll see about that," he grinned. "Now, d'ye mind if I have breakfast with you? This fellow, The Shark, has killed my dogs, so that I can't push on even if I wished. Or are you too scared of this fellow Pierre Anton?"

Jacques Lavette was obviously scared of The Shark, but he would not admit it.

"Eet may be my death, m'sieur, but ze constable saved me from ze bear," he said stoutly, and led the way to his cabin.

It was a two-roomed, log-built structure, half hidden in one of the numerous rocky niches at the base of a snowy ridge.

As the trapper reached the door he hastily tugged from it something that had been pinned there by a thin-bladed trapper's knife. The quick-eyed Mountie had seen, however, that it was a piece of bark similar to the one on which he himself had received that grim warning from Pierre Anton.

Dick said nothing, but decided to get a closer look at that piece of bark as soon as possible.

His opportunity came after the meal of hot coffee and bill-tong which Jacques placed before Dick with many regrets for its meagreness, explaining that times were bad. Dick's puzzlement increased, for there was abundant evidence that game was plentiful.

The Frenchman disappeared into the bedroom of the cabin, while Dick ate. When at last he reappeared, the trapper was once more wearing his furs ready to go out.

"Busy?" Dick queried. "Got some traps to look to?"

The little Frenchman nodded nervously. "Yes—yes—" he stammered. "But ze constable need not hurry. Ze cakes, zey are good, m'sieur? And ze coffee? Good! Will ze constable be going before I get back?"

The Mountie was certain that the fellow was honest. But for some reason Lavette was uncomfortable in Dick's presence. He seemed to be torn between two desires—to do the right thing by the man who had saved his life, and still he was afraid of something. What? Pierre Anton, obviously.

"Yes, I'll push on!" Dick answered quickly. "Good-bye! I'll have gone when you return."

A look of relief passed over the trapper's face as he turned and stepped out of the cabin. Dick waited until the little trapper had been gone for some minutes, then he pushed aside the bear-skin, which was draped across the doorway leading into the other room, and entered.

On the bunk he found the piece of bark, with the words facing upwards. Quickly Dick read the message:

If Constable Ryan comes to your cabin this morning, you know nothing. For yourself, four mink, two marten, and one cross fox, by to-night. Do not fail.

THE SHARK.

When he had read the message, the young Mountie returned to the living-room, and sitting on a bench in front of the stove, he tried to solve the bewildering puzzle into which he had been plunged.

So that was why Jacques Lavette was acting queerly. The Frenchman, like all the others, was being terrorised by Pierre Anton. And the villain was using this fear to make them provide him with furs. Four mink, two marten, and one cross fox by to-night were what the Frenchman had to deliver. No wonder he had gone out immediately. Seven skins before dark would want some getting.

It was all becoming clear to the young Mountie now. The trapper's nervousness; his reference to the lean time he was having, and his relief when Dick had said he would be gone when the trapper returned. Jacques Lavette was not ungrateful, but fearful for his own life, should the killer conclude he was aiding the law.

Dick realised that he had to move cautiously now. He decided to leave the cabin as he had told Jacques Lavette he would. That would at once clear the Frenchman and make it appear to Pierre Anton, if he were watching, that Dick had no suspicions.

Wrapping his own greatcoat around him, and putting his gun at half-cock, with a final glance round the room, he passed out. Jacques Lavette's tracks were plain in the virgin snow. The trapper had gone off in the direction of the belt of pines that had almost witnessed his death. Dick struck off in the opposite direction, towards the north, making no attempt to cover his tracks.

Once out of sight of the cabin, hidden from it by a fold of the snow-bound landscape, he made a careful detour to a spot whence he could keep his eye upon Lavette's cabin. Here he settled himself comfortably on the snow behind a thick spruce, and waited.

For two hours he kept his vigil, before the little trapper returned to his cabin carrying a bundle of furs over his shoulder.

"Looks like he's got what The Shark wanted," Dick muttered. "If my hunch is right, he'll hump 'em to where he has to deliver 'em as soon as it's dark. That'll be my chance to meet The Shark, I reckon." And Dick settled himself to wait for dark.

Vengeance.

NIGHT had dropped like a heavy blanket upon the landscape of snow. The weird cry of a coyote, and the fearful fluttering of disturbed birds, were the only sounds that broke the stillness. Still Dicky kept his vigil, though his limbs were cramped and numb.

At last the rectangle of dull red light that marked Lavette's cabin went out, and almost immediately Dick heard the opening and shutting of the door.

"That's the French, comin' out, and I miss my guess if he's not got those furs with him," Dick thought.

He heard the *slush, slush* of the trapper's feet in the snow, which enabled him to trail Lavette. Again the trapper was heading for the belt of pines. With every sense alert Dick followed.

Right at the far end of the clump of trees the trapper halted. Though Dick listened keenly, he heard very little, but he guessed that this was the spot where the trapper had to bring the skins Pierre Anton had ordered.

In a very few moments Dick heard Jacques Lavette return, and the Mountie hastily concealed himself.

He waited long after the slush of the Frenchman's feet had died into silence. Dick's patience was playing a prominent part in this job. But after another hour he decided he would investigate more closely. He had waited so long without anything happening that he was beginning to fear that his conjectures were wrong. He would make quite certain that the furs had really been left by the Frenchman.

Stealthily as a timber wolf, he moved across the soft snow. He knew that he was giving way to his curiosity, and he did not intend to take any unnecessary chances.

Presently his groping fingers came into contact with a post stuck upright in the beaten snow. Feeling with his fingers, he discovered that the post was about his own height, with a broad slab of wood on the top, forming a kind of one-legged table.

"Pretty neat!" Dick grunted, and felt upon the wooden slab, though he was now quite certain what he would find there. There were skins piled upon the top—and Dick knew they would be the furs of four mink, two martens, and one cross fox.

But the Mountie was given no time for con-

templation. There came the veriest whisper of a sound from behind.

"Don't move, policeman!"

In spite of himself Dick felt his spine prickle as that command cut through the gloom. Then Dick felt what must be the muzzle of a gun in his back. Now it was too late to do anything; he was at the other's mercy—the mercy of a killer, Pierre Anton.

"Aha! Another policeman! You are the third, my friend. Presently you go the way of the others. Pierre Anton makes good his threats, you should know that."

Pierre Anton chuckled wolfishly.

"You were patient, Constable Ryan, but not patient enough. I was beginning to fear you had not come. You see, I expected you to follow that Frenchman to this place. I knew he would disclose very little to you, but I knew, too, that your trained instinct would piece things together, just as Sergeant Browell and Corporal Dillon did before you."

Again he chuckled in the darkness.



KILLER GETS KILLER.—As the Mountie leaped aside the bear's great paw skimmed past his cheek and felled Pierre Anton before he could move.

"No!" continued that cold, icy voice. "Jacques Lavette knows nothing. He is only a dupe, and does not know that you, as well as the other two, followed him to this spot. Pierre Anton works alone. I would have killed you this morning when I killed your dogs, but you were clever then. But you are not clever enough. If you have prayers to say, Constable Ryan, say them now, for in ten seconds you die."

Constable Dicky Ryan's thoughts raced madly through his brain when that murderously cool voice finished speaking. Should he take his chance? Should he whirl round and aim for Pierre Anton's jaw? Could he possibly get his hand to his gun and shoot it out? No, that was impossible, for he could feel the other's fingers resting lightly upon the gun-butt at his own waist.

All these questions flashed through the young Mountie's brain. In a split second he had made up his mind. He hunched his fist ready for the blow. . . .

Then out of the blackness it came, a heavy, padding footstep, so startling in its sudden appearance that Pierre Anton, the killer, never thought of increasing the pressure on his gun trigger. Both men were simply frozen images of human beings.

A moment later Dick heard a hot, panting breath, a throaty snarl, then something furry skimmed his cheek.

Thud! The gun muzzle that was pressing into Dick's ribs was suddenly removed. He heard Pierre Anton's last gasp rattling in his throat as he went staggering across the snow, his neck broken. The next moment Dick leapt forward, crashing over the rough, one-legged table. That leap saved him from sharing Pierre Anton's fate.

Immediately after he had jumped, there sounded a crashing and splintering of wood, as the huge creature that had appeared so opportunely impaled itself upon the smashed wood. It had struck at the young Mountie, and missing him had staggered into the wrecked table.

Dick had gained his usual nerve by now. His gun was out, and guided by that cracking sound, he fired. Up till now neither knew nor guessed what it was that had appeared so dramatically.

Dick fired again, and as a coughing roar split the silence of the night Dick knew to whom he owed his life. It was the death cough of the huge white bear that the Mountie had wounded in the afternoon. Now it had returned, probably to seek revenge, but only to save Dick's life and help the red-coat to "get his man."

When the dawn of another day broke, Constable Dicky Ryan gazed upon the still form of two killers—Pierre Anton, "The Shark," and the great white bear.

Look out for the Iron Spider next week, the story of the most amazing crook device ever invented. You must not miss this startling detective tale, chaps.

THE SHROVETIDE SHEMOZZLE AT ST. GIDDY'S

(Continued from page 24.)

Remove juniors dashed downstairs after them. By the time they reached the quadrangle, the Earlswood boys were out of the gates.

"After 'em!" howled Johnny Gee. "Go for the rotters!"

The Removites made a wild dash after their escaping rivals. Tommy Rhodes & Co. lost no time in getting down the lane!

"Let's lead 'em a dance in the wood, and lose 'em!" grinned the Earlswood leader.

The oncoming Removites, seeing their rivals turn into the wood, leaped over the fence and dashed through the trees after them. Then began a lively hunt amidst the woodland, and Johnny Gee & Co. found themselves being drawn far into its inner fastnesses. At length they drew to a halt, blinking wrathfully at one another.

"We've lost the beggars!" gasped Dick Bannister. "They—they've given us the slip, somehow!"

"Hack!" hissed Johnny Gee suddenly. "Did



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(4/8/33)

you hear those sounds of voices—over there towards the Heath Road? Kimmon!"

With the stealth of Red Indians, Johnny Gee & Co. crept along the woodland path, and eventually they found themselves close to the main heath road. They started, when they heard deep, coarse voices, and saw a number of rough-looking figures.

The prowlers were Roker & Co., and drawn up at the roadside was a lorry—one of Cripps' Carrier Cars. It was laden with sacks of flour, and even as Johnny Gee & Co. gazed wonderingly through the trees, they saw the village hooligans climb up into the lorry and start to drag down the flour sacks.

"Urry up, mates!" said Roker. "We'll put the tin 'at on old Cripps' pancake-presentation stunt this afternoon. Mr. Sherlow gave us the tip nicely, didn't 'e?"

"Haw, haw! We waylaid the lorry all right, didn't we?" guffawed one of his burly companions. "The six men the old boy 'ad employed to fry the pancakes—we bought them off easy enough. There'll be a riot when old Cripps don't 'and out the promised pancakes."

"That's just what Mr. Sherlow wants!" said Roper. "I must say, Mr. Sherlow's stood by us 'andsome. 'E paid well for them papers we rooked out of the old boy's pockets, and 'as promised to pay our fines for the row we caused in the village this morning! Hurry up now and empty them bags of flour in the ditch!"

Johnny Gee & Co., hidden amongst the trees, had heard every word! They exchanged meaning looks. "This is where we chip in, chaps!" muttered Johnny Gee. "Down into the ditch with those rotters—and be careful of the flour. Charge!"

On the word, the Removites dashed out and fell upon Roker & Co. They swarmed over the hooligans and proceeded to smite them hip and thigh!

"*Yaroooh! Yah! You little whelps—Gerroooogh!*"

Splash! Splash! Splash! One after another, Roker & Co. were sent hurtling from the lorry into a deep, slimy ditch.

"Done again, you rotters!" chuckled Johnny Gee. "Now we know who's at the bottom of all this plotting against Cripps' Cars. Chaps, what do you say to taking the chefs' places ourselves? We know how to fry pancakes, don't we?"

"What ho!"

Whilst Johnny Gee & Co. dressed themselves in the chefs' costumes, the rest of the Remove party fetched rakes and ropes from a near-by farm, and the hooligans were rounded up as they clambered out of the ditch. They managed to get the rowdies roped together, and tied in a line to the back of the lorry.

The cheery schoolboy chefs clambered on board, the banners were readjusted, and Johnny Gee drove off slowly towards Merivale, whilst the other Removites followed on behind, prodding Roker and Co. with sticks.

In this manner, the triumphant procession wended its way into Merivale! Loud cheers arose when the Cripps' Carrier (as appeared in the High Street with its load of flour sacks and schoolboy chefs!

Johnny Gee drew the truck to a halt outside the large shop, where the pancake presentation was to take place.

"Dear me!" cried Sir Corny, in tones of great relief. "What does this mean, boys? We have been waiting nearly an hour. What happened—and where are the six men I engaged?"

Johnny Gee explained. Sir Corny Cripps and the crowd of villagers listened in shocked amazement. When Johnny finished, a wrathful howl went up from the waiting throng, who clustered round Roker & Co.

"Mob the young villains! Run 'em out of town!"

Johnny Gee & Co. turned the hooligans loose, to the tender mercies of the incensed villagers. The vast throng chased them up the High Street, and Roker & Co. were quickly run out of Merivale!

The Joyous Juniors looked inside the shop, and they chuckled. They understood, now, why Catchpole had been so busy all the afternoon. He had rigged up a wonderful arrangement for frying and conveying the pancakes—not such a weird and complicated affair as his last ill-fated contrivance.

"Well, sir, let's get busy!" said Johnny Gee. "We'll do the cooking, and attend to all the necessary."

The schoolboy chefs soon had the pancakes made, and sizzling on the fryer, and as each batch came down on the conveyor, they were put on cardboard plates and handed to the eager hands of the poor folk of Merivale.

"No need to hurry—there's plenty for everyone!" bawled Dick Bannister. "Here you are! Quite

free for the asking, and all guaranteed best quality—like Cripps' Cars! Roll up, roll up!"

Sir Corny Cripps stood and beamed at the animated scene in the shop. Those pancakes, done to a turn by the cheery schoolboy chefs, were going literally like hot cakes!

Dusk was falling when at length Johnny Gee and Co., very hot and floury, but full of good spirits, wended their way back to St. Giddy's.

"My word! What a Pancake Day!" chuckled Johnny. "And there still remains the good old ceremony of Tossing the Pancake in Hall this evening."

Evening deepened over St. Giddy's, and the whole school assembled for the last ceremony of the day—the time-honoured custom of Tossing the Pancake, while the Head, the masters, and Sir Corny Cripps sat on the dais at the opposite end of the Big Hall to watch the lively proceedings.

Dr. Holroyd arose, and made a short speech, becoming to the occasion. Then the cook entered with a sizzling hot pancake in the pan, and a tense hush fell.

Phweeeep! Wellesley blew the whistle, up went the pancake, and a concerted swoop forward of scores of eager schoolboys, all keenly watching the downward fall of the pancake as it descended from the region of the ancient rafters!

The door at the side of the Hall at the juniors end opened, and a tall, dark man walked in.

"Sherlow, by gum!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Grab him! We'll get those plans if he's got 'em on him, or—*or* slaughter him in the attempt!"

The chums of Study No. 4 acted with alacrity! They grabbed Sherlow as their form-fellows surged forward *en masse*, and whirled him along with them. The hapless secretary disappeared beneath a tumbling, milling heap of juniors in the middle of the Hall.

The scramble for the pancake had commenced! Figs and Removites fought for possession of the pancake—or as large a chunk of it as any of them could grab. Johnny Gee & Co., however, were not concerned with getting the pancake—they were in the vortex of the scrum, but were devoting all their attention to Sherlow, whom they had on the floor!

At length, the whistle sounded, and the scramblers got to their feet. One sole, solitary figure was left recumbent on the floor in the middle of the Hall. Sherlow lay, writhing and moaning. He scarcely had a rag on his back! Half his clothes had been torn from him ruthlessly and deliberately!

"Bless my soul!" cried Dr. Holroyd, starting up on the platform. "Boys! What—who is this?"

Johnny Gee gave a ringing, triumphant cry. He held in one hand a piece of Sherlow's overcoat, and in the other he displayed a packet of crumpled papers.

"Here are the missing plans, sir!" he cried. "Sherlow had 'em sewn into the lining of his overcoat! We had to tear most of his clobber off, though!" And he went on to explain how they had learned of the rascal's duplicity.

Sir Corny Cripps danced for joy at the recovery of the plans.

"Thank you, boys—you have done wonderfully!" cried Sir Corny. "Now I can go ahead with my new car without fear of treachery, and Cripps' Cars will at last come into their own!"

And, as Dick Bannister breezily remarked, "everything in the garden was lovely!"

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AFLOAT WITH DOOM—*(Continued from page 17.)*

distant detonation, followed by the shrill whine of a shell passing overhead. Not twenty yards away, a great fountain of water spouted into the air, drenching the mystery man with spray.

With icy fear gnawing at his heart, the Black Shadow hastily peeled off his suit of chain-mail, knowing that the next shot might send him sky-high. Then, using every scrap of power that the pneumatic springs of his boots could generate, he leapt away from the raft. Even as he lifted into the air, he heard a distant, muffled explosion and the shriek of the shell. A good sixty feet from the raft, he struck the sea, but ere the dark water closed over his head he saw the shell strike the target, shattering it into a thousand fragments.

When the Black Shadow rose to the surface again, debris was scattered all around him. The search-lights had vanished, however, for the gunnery practice was finished and the cruisers turned to steam back to their base.

The Leaping Man settled down now to a steady breast-stroke, as he wished to husband his strength for the long swim that lay ahead.

Before he had gone half-a-mile he heard the faint throbbing of an engine, and, treading water, he peered through the darkness, wondering whether it was the smugglers' motor-boat.

With a gasp of relief he saw the vessel and recognised it as the cutter from the coastguard station near Saltmarsh. With all the power of his lungs he hailed it and swam towards it. At first he feared the cutter was going to pass him; then he heard an answering hail, and the boat altered its course and headed towards him.

A few minutes later, he was in the vessel, telling his story to John Highfield and the coastguards.

"We've got to get to that island before they can escape in the seaplane," rapped the detective, when the mystery man had finished.

"We'll do it," said the coastguard confidently.

The Black Shadow gave his attention to the spring-heels of his boots, and had just satisfied himself that they had suffered no serious damage from the salt water, when Sinister Island loomed out of the darkness like the peak of a half-submerged mountain.

Suddenly the roar of a powerful engine woke the echoes in the cove between the beetling cliffs, and a seaplane appeared, lightly skimming the water, which went curling back from its pontoons.

"They're going to give us the slip," roared the detective and, drawing a revolver, blazed away at the vessel. Several of the coastguards also opened fire with rifles; but the shots seemed to be without

effect, for suddenly the seaplane rose from the surface of the water and began to climb skyward.

"Give me that gun," snapped the Black Shadow to the detective, and, rising to his feet, almost snatched the weapon away. As the seaplane went roaring overhead, about fifty feet up, he sprang with all the power of his spring-heeled boots, arms outstretched above his head. Normally, the pneumatic springs had to lift the quite considerable weight of his suit of chain mail; now, relieved of that burden, they sent him shooting through the air like a bullet.

His clutching hands found a hold on one of the pontoons and he was swept dizzily forward. With the agility of a trapeze-artist he swung himself on to the pontoon, and from there he climbed swiftly up to the closed, streamlined cabin.

Before the smugglers fully realised what had happened, he had smashed a window in the side of the cabin with his borrowed gun and was pointing the weapon at the pilot.

"Throttle your motor and make a landing," he snapped.

The man gaped at him, too startled to move or speak; but Greer, who was seated in the cabin behind, uttered a shrill scream of rage and anger, and whipped out a gun. He fired and the report echoed deafeningly in the confines of the cabin. As he pressed the trigger, however, the seaplane lurched in an air-pocket and the bullet, missing the Black Shadow, passed within an inch of the pilot's head. The shock made him jerk the joystick and rudder-bar, with the result that the vessel nose-dived towards the sea. The pilot grabbed for his controls, but Greer came tumbling headlong across the tilting floor of the cabin, and clawed at him, screaming with terror.

Before the pilot could shake himself free and regain control the seaplane hit the water with terrific force. At the moment of impact, however, the Black Shadow made a magnificent leap clear of the diving 'plane. A great fountain of water shot into the air as the machine dived below the surface, its engine snarling defiantly.

The coastguard cutter picked up the Black Shadow, none the worse for his experience, and cruised around for some time, searching for the crooks. Pieces of wreckage from the 'plane and streaks of oil floated on the surface of the water, but there was no sign of the smugglers, who had but received their just deserts.

At last the coastguards returned to Saltmarsh and the Black Shadow disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared to the puzzled Highfield.

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