

THE LIGHTNING BLUES

FEATURING THE MONOCLED
MANHUNTER: INSIDE.

Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



THE BOYS OF ST. GIDDY'S; THE DARKIE SLEUTH; FALCON SWIFT; THE MIRACLE
FOOTBALLERS; THE MASTER OF MASKS; PAL OF THE MONSTERS: WITHIN.
VOL. XXII—No. 577—March 25, 1933

REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION
BY CANADIAN MAGAZINE POST.

FOOTERS OF FUN FOR JOKE OR PUN

THE JESTER'S REALM



Footballs 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.

Customer (who has sent for the manager): Oh, I have a serious complaint.

Manager: Sir, this is a restaurant—not a nursing-home!

(Football to W. RUSHTON, 42, Furnival Street, Crewe, Cheshire.)

A BARGAIN!

CUSTOMER (to pawnbroker): How much is this coat worth?

PAWNBROKER: About four shillings!

CUSTOMER: Good, I'll have it then, it was marked 30 shillings outside.

(Fountain pen to R. BATEMAN, 9, Amhurst Road, Hackney, E.8.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

25/3/33.

WINDY.

SERGEANT: Hello, beauty, where have you blown from?

RECRUIT: Came in with the last draft, sir!

(Fountain pen to—
E. REYNOLDS, 7, Newcastle Ave., Blackpool.)

BLEATING.

CLERK: How did you get on with the boss about a rise?

OFFICE BOY: Oh, he was like a lamb! He just said baa!

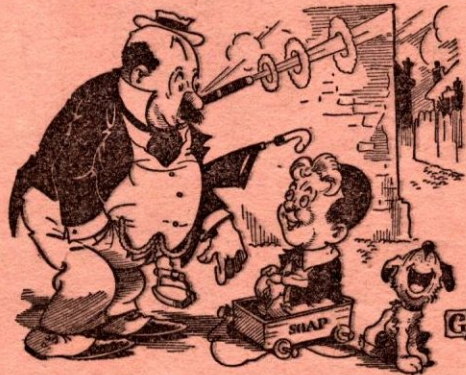
(Fountain pen to THOMAS FENDLER, 9, High Street, Smallthorne, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.)

A GOOD SEAT.

How do you like our show, Bob?

"Well, zur, if I warn't sittin' down I'd feel like I was wastin' time."

(Fountain pen to ERNEST COATES, 10, Chape! St., Colchester, Essex.)



Uncle: How many fingers have you, Bobby?

Bobby: Ten!

Uncle: Well, if four were missing, what would you have?

Bobby: No more music lessons!

(Football to A. J. COOKE, 56, Griffin Road, Plumstead, S.E.18.)

SPARE.

Joek dashed into the shop where he had recently purchased a bicycle.

"It's about the bike, mon," he said.

"Hasn't it arrived yet?" asked the shopkeeper.

"It has," said Joek. "But where's that free wheel you spoke about?"

(Fountain pen to H. GRAHAM, 20, Heathbourne Road, Stacksteads, Bacup, Lancashire.)

THE CULPRIT.

JUDGE (sharply): Are you the defendant in the case?

MILD-EYED PRISONER: No, sir, I have a lawyer to do all the defending. I'm only the man who stole the goods!

(Fountain pen to HENRY DAVIES, 4, Hendon Street, Kemptown, Brighton.)

SCENT.

CHEMIST: You want twopennyworth of something, but you've forgotten what it is?

BOY: Yes; but you'll find the smell in the bottle!
(Fountain pen to L. R. ELLMER, South Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex.)

THE BARE IDEA.

TEACHER: Now, Johnny, can you tell me what a skeleton is?

JOHNNY: Yes, sir! Bones with the boy rubbed off!

(Fountain pen to JAMES LOWE, 6, George Street, Hindley, near Wigan.)

BOXED.

GENT.: My hair is falling out. Could you give me something to keep it in?

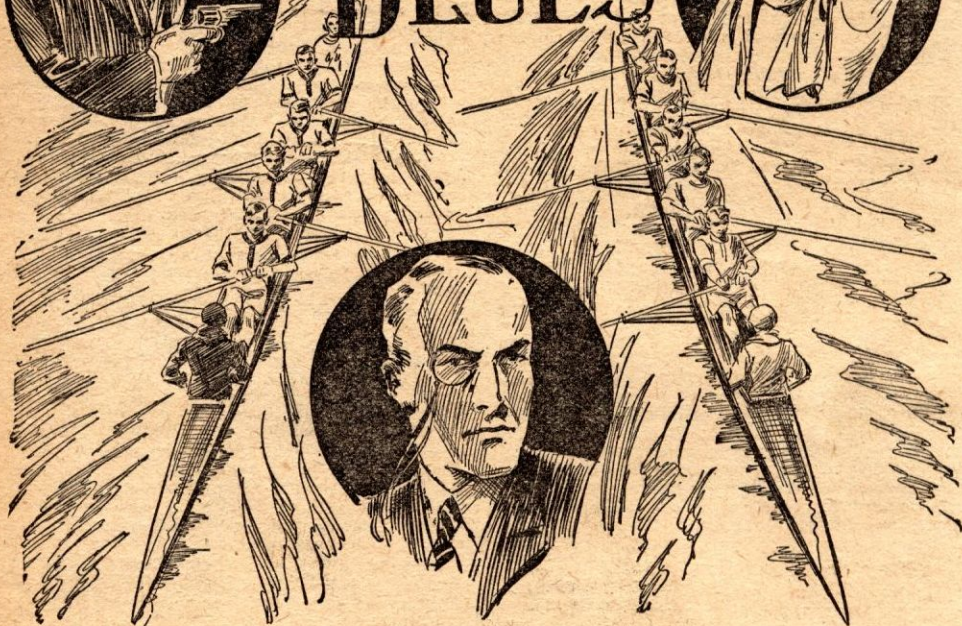
BARBER: Yes, here's a cigar box!

(Fountain pen to EDGAR CLIFT, Tamhay, Golant, Par, Cornwall.)

OUR GRAND BOAT RACE SPECIAL. You'll Enjoy Every Yarn in this Splendid Number, Chaps.

NEW THRILLS! WHITE HOT DRAMA AND A BAFFLING MYSTERY IN THIS GRIPPING YARN.

THE LIGHTNING BLUES



A Stiff Test.

"All right, you men—get set," snapped big Bill Nye, the famous Cambridge stroke.

To a rowing enthusiast it was a stirring scene. The banks were crowded with Cambridge men, amongst whom was Falcon Swift, a famous Old Blue. Out on the sparkling river two, long, slender racing shells were jockeying into position.

Bill Nye leant forward and spoke in a low tone to Chick Conway, his coxswain. The triple rowing

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

Falcon Swift, the Mag's Monocled Manhunter, Solves the Secret of the Cambridge Stroke.

Blue had his own methods with the Cambridge crew.

His ambition in life was to stroke Cambridge to victory for the third year in succession, and knowing Chick's ability as a waterman—the lad had been brought up on the lower reaches of the Thames and knew the river's every mood—the famous

Blue had persuaded Falcon Swift to send Chick up to Cambridge. In this, his Freshman's year, the lad had been selected for the honour of steering the Light Blues in the boat race.

It was the last day of the Trial Eights on the

sheltered waters of the upper Thames. On the morrow they were leaving for Putney for the fortnight's training over the Championship course before the race.

At the pistol bark the two crews went away with a quick, clean rush that sent the shells leaping from under them like living things.

No. 2 boat, differently coached, was keeping up splendidly. Side by side they swept down river in a gruelling race.

Chick leaned forward. The post signalling the last mile flashed by, and now the strain was telling enormously. Both crews were rowing might and main. The flashing oars were pulling, feathering at thirty-six strokes to the minute, and speeding up.

A quarter of a mile from the boathouse Bill Nye's crew flashed ahead. Finishing splendidly, they won the trial by three lengths.

The big, fair-haired stroke seemed far from his usual confident, cheery self, however, as he came out of the showers and spoke to Chick.

"Look here, is your boss coming back to Coll. with you?" he asked in a low voice.

"Why, yes," answered Chick wonderingly.

As an undergraduate Chick had to "keep term," that is spend a certain number of nights in his College, and Falcon Swift was driving the youngster back to his rooms at Cambridge that afternoon.

"I want to see him," said Bill Nye urgently. "Would you ask him to meet me in the Old Court of St. Agnus College to-night? It's really urgent."

Chick consented. But he wondered mightily at the reason. And Falcon Swift, queerly enough, had little to say on the matter when he was informed of it.

The Radio Mystery.

THERE was an unwanted sparkle in Falcon Swift's eyes, however, as they passed through the great wrought-iron gateway. Rousing memories came back to him of this, his old college at Cambridge.

The Old Court of St. Agnus College, Cambridge, is typical of the University in its monastic grandeur. It was almost deserted now, shimmering in the moonlight, backed by the numerous archways, cloisters and the towering spire of the college itself. Almost—but not quite deserted. For Bill Nye came rushing over to the detective and assistant.

"He's due to turn up at my rooms any moment now," he exclaimed; "the scoundrel!"

Falcon Swift's monocle glimmered in the moonlight as he screwed it in.

"You have not told us," he said quietly, "but I believe the visitor you refer to is Rufus Kernahan, the big bookmaker." The detective turned to Chick. "This crook is laying two to one against Cambridge all over the place. Very generous odds, eh? Every Cambridge man has been snapping up those odds.

"And if Cambridge lose—?" queried Chick.

"Our friend, Kernahan, will scoop in a fortune," said Swift grimly. He turned to Bill Nye. "You say he's coming to see you, this bookmaker who ruined your younger brother?"

Bill Nye flushed. It was true his younger brother had betted heavily and lost huge sums to the rascally bookmaker while at Cambridge. So seriously had he depleted the family fortunes, indeed, that Bill Nye himself was said to be doing some private work in chemistry and physics, to keep him at the 'Varsity.

"If he thinks he'll buy me over to betray the crew—" he breathed indignantly.

Falcon Swift permitted himself a slight smile.

"He's got another guess coming if he tries that," he snapped. "Listen. I'll hide in your rooms with a recording dictaphone. If he makes any such

proposal, we'll have him arrested on a pretty formidable charge."

"Good; that's what I wanted," said the Cambridge rowing stroke, fervently.

His rooms were in a cloistered, old-world house overlooking the college. The study into which the detective and Chick were shown had an air of scholarly seclusion. There was a profusion of books, chemistry shelves filled with labelled bottles, and a chemical-stained sink near the window. A somewhat incongruous note was struck by a large and ornate wireless receiving set on the table.

Falcon Swift and Chick hid themselves in a cupboard concealed by a curtain, and they had the dictaphone with them.

Not long after they had concealed themselves Bill Nye's manservant knocked on the door and announced "Mr. Rufus Kernahan."

He came across the room with hand outstretched. "Ah, how d'you do, Mr. Nye? Too good of you to see me. Highly honoured, I assure you."

The Cambridge stroke ignored the hand. He leant against the mantelpiece, pale, cold, and impassive.

Kernahan was short, fat, and sallow, with curly black ringlets of hair and a hooked nose. He conveyed a distinctly unpleasant picture to the clean-cut rowing man.

"What do you want with me, Mr. Kernahan?" he asked directly. "Is it about the boat race? Because Cambridge will win; I can tell you that."

Mr. Kernahan smiled gently. "Maybe we could fix things," he said, making a suggestive gesture towards the wireless set.

Bill Nye started, his face paled.

"Never! You scoundrel!" he cried. He stepped threateningly towards the rascally bookmaker.

Kernahan leaped back, his hand reaching for the electric light switch, and plunged the room in darkness. Instantly Falcon Swift dashed from his place of concealment, his powerful torch switched on.

Then Kernahan did a strange thing. He had made a rush at the table in the dark, and now, with a strength that seemed amazing, he lifted the wireless set in his arms and hurled it at the window.

Crash! It shattered the window with a sound like an explosion, and dropped in the court outside, but no crash of its fall was heard.

The truth was that, down in that darkened court, one of Kernahan's accomplices was waiting to receive it, and he dashed away with the mysterious wireless set and disappeared.

A strangled yell—like a wild cry of terror—had burst from Bill Nye's lips as he witnessed the act. He seemed paralysed. But Falcon Swift and Chick made a combined rush at the bookmaker and between them the two sleuths quickly secured him.

"He's mad, I think, but we'll have him arrested for this—" Falcon Swift ejaculated.

Then he looked at Bill Nye, and stopped. The famous Cambridge rowing Blue was ashen to the lips. He trembled. His eyes were shadowed with a wild, unmovable terror and remorse.

"You—you hound!" he choked, standing over the bookmaker with fists clenched.

Rufus Kernahan, in the grasp of the two detectives, sneered. He looked dishevelled, but gloatingly triumphant.

"It will be delivered to its proper destination, Mr. Nye," he said. "If—" and he stopped significantly there.

Falcon Swift took affairs in hand. "We'll call the police and make a charge," he said brusquely.

But Bill Nye quickly interposed. Terror and chill dread rang in his voice.

"No, no; let him go! I won't make a charge—I can't!"

Rufus Kernahan shook himself free and spoke slowly and impressively; the words purred from his mouth with a terrible, deadly venom.

"If you'd done anything, I should have let everything go, Mr. Nye. I'm in this deep. You understand?"

No answer, he shrugged, and turning, went out of the room, while Bill Nye sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands. The sporting detective stood over him.

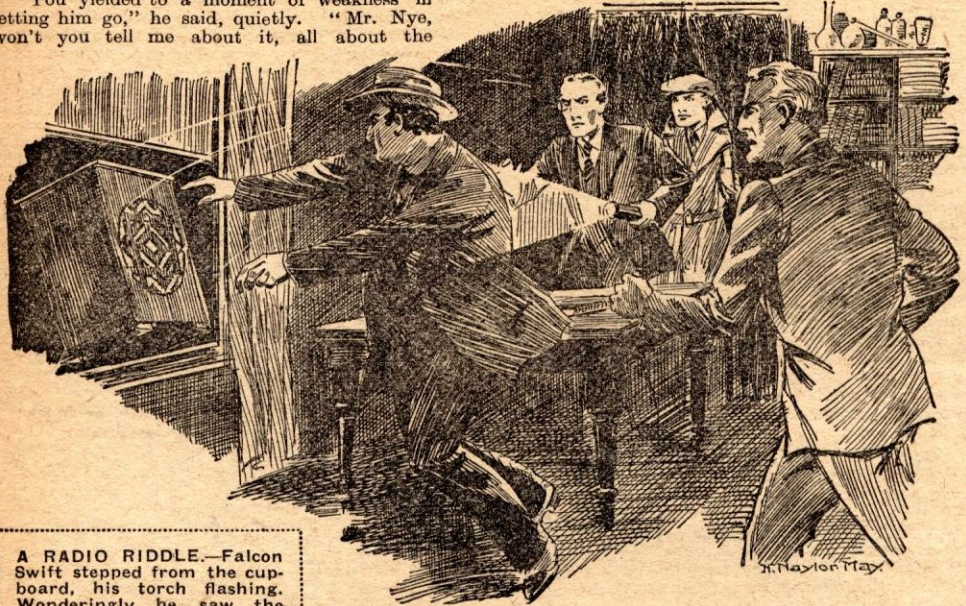
"You yielded to a moment of weakness in letting him go," he said, quietly. "Mr. Nye, won't you tell me about it, all about the

wrong. You're not getting into it correctly. You don't go forward all the way—and you've got a bad check in the boat."

And Bill kept silent. Whereas he should have stopped the shell there and then in midstream and explained; asked to show what they could do under his system.

They were a light crew, beautifully balanced, and there were three old Blues in the boat besides Bill Nye. But their style was not orthodox.

"There is but one good stroke, and that is the old English one," said the coach sententiously. "Body forward all the way, shoulders back faster than the



A RADIO RIDDLE.—Falcon Swift stepped from the cupboard, his torch flashing. Wonderingly he saw the bookmaker seize the wireless set and hurl it out of the window.

secret that Kernahan is holding over your head?"

slide, weight on the blades when they dip—it's the only stroke for the tide water."

Bill Nye should have put him right gently, yet firmly. But he gave in listlessly, though his eyes were haunted.

As a result the Cambridge crew proceeded to unlearn all it had learned. And therein lay tragedy. At the end of the first week the men were listless, worn out and rowed to death. Confidence was smashed.

In desperation Chick at last 'phoned up Falcon Swift to inform him of the turn events were taking. The Monocled Manhunter had been trying to track down Rufus Kernahan, but he had found that gentleman strangely elusive.

The Monocled Manhunter came down to Putney, and saw the crew as they skied the shell. He scarcely knew them. They moved without energy, without ambition. But Bill Nye looked the worst of the lot; his face was pale and drawn, almost ghastly.

"Good heavens!" the Sporting Detective exclaimed when he had got Chick away. "What is the matter?"

"It's the new training," the young cox said succinctly. "They've been rowing twenty miles a day, bawled at all the time by the coach because they can't get the new stroke. But that's not the worst of it," he added. "It's poor Bill Nye. They sense the change in him. They know he's in trouble—and it's got them all worn down to shadows."

There was a pause, then the rowing man said in an agitated voice. "I—I can't. If I told you it would release forces that would turn London into a place of fear—into a charnel house."

The detective and Chick looked at one another, baffled. What lay behind the mystery of the stolen wireless set?

Playing Straight.

CHICK never forgot the next few days on the Putney to Mortlake course. It seemed that the Cambridge crew, who had displayed such splendid dash and speed on the sheltered waters of the Cam, were utterly unable to struggle with tidal conditions on the Championship course; were going all to pieces.

Of course it was not so. Chick knew what was wrong, and he was deeply dismayed and troubled.

For one thing they had a new coach. He was a famous old Cambridge Blue, but he followed the crew in the launch on the first day and through the megaphone poured a continuous stream of criticism on their luckless heads.

"Terrible, terrible!" he cried. "Your style is all

Falcon Swift, as an old Blue, knew that queer things can happen to a rowing crew during intensive training. They can go off form, and it is hard to spot the trouble. The detective sought out the Cambridge stroke in the boathouse.

"Look here, Bill Nye," he said directly in a low tone. "You're not selling the crew to Kernahan—excuse my being blunt—are you?"

The fair giant looked up haggardly; but he looked Falcon Swift straight in the face.

"No," he said quietly, passionately. "What I've done, I—I've done all for the best. Look here," he added on a sudden impulse; "I'm going to speak to the men, and perhaps—after the race—you'll understand."

He gathered the crew round him in the boathouse.

"Look here, men; I'm going to stick to my old methods," he said briefly. "I—I thought I might be wrong. But the coach is wrong, and I am right."

They stared at him.

"You mean we're going back to the old style, row the way we used to?"

"Yes," said Bill Nye. "I'll speak to the coach, explain my theories. You rest a bit—then we'll show 'em. We're going to have the courage of our convictions, and row all out to win."

Such a cheer went up then in the boathouse as might have been heard a mile away. The spirit of the rowing men seemed to soar from that moment. For Bill Nye was with them again.

There was a trial that afternoon over the course from Putney to Mortlake, and it was in somewhat choppy water. But it astounded the watchers and confounded all critics. For suddenly Cambridge had got back their dash and verve. Their timing mystified the coaches, for they dropped when by all the laws of watermanship they should have quickened. But they shot the two bridges in perfect style, and finished the course in under twenty minutes.

After the trial Falcon Swift took his young assistant apart.

"Bill Nye's playing a straight deal, of course—according to his lights," he said. "But he's juggling with immense forces that may be beyond his control. And to-night, laddie, I've an idea we may come to the crux of the matter."

The Night Marauder.

IT was ten o'clock, and Bill Nye, the Cambridge stroke, sat in his room alone, distraught and restless; watching and waiting, listening and starting at every sound.

While at Putney the Cambridge crew were staying at the Raleigh Club, which was a rambling old house, abutting on the river near the towing path. Bill Nye occupied one of the topmost rooms, and to-night he was expecting a visitor who would possibly arrive without announcement and in the most unconventional manner.

Unknown to him, there were others also, expecting the same visitor.

Up on the great flat roof Falcon Swift, the Monocled Manhunter, crouched with Chick Conway, his assistant. They were scanning the sky as they waited behind a chimney stack. It was a fairly light night, but there were low, scudding, fleecy clouds.

There was a drone; it did not swell to much more than a muffled roar.

"Ah! Here it comes, Chick!" exclaimed Falcon Swift.

But presently there appeared from out of the clouds a helicopter. It dropped lower over the roof, became almost stationary.

Falcon Swift had received a report from the Air Ministry that an unlicensed machine of this type

had been observed. And to him it formed a very strong clue.

"Look, Chick!" he exclaimed in a low tone; "a rope ladder!"

From the cockpit of the helicopter it was lowered, and a man commenced clambering down. He was short and squat, garbed in tight-fitting, black airman's garb, and there was a great hump on his back; something he carried strapped there.

He alighted on the roof with a lithe, catlike jump, and a length of the rope ladder dropped at his feet, as the helicopter lifted into the clouds.

The marauder picked it up, and as he hastened across the roof, Falcon Swift and Chick caught sight of his face. It was Rufus Kernahan.

He affixed the hooks of the short rope ladder securely to the edge of the roof above the Cambridge stroke's window and commenced to clamber down.

At his stealthy tap in the window, Bill Nye within the room started violently. Then, crossing to it, he raised the sash, and the marauder clambered into the room.

Above, on the roof, Falcon Swift turned his gleaming monocle on his young assistant. "We will use the rope ladder our friend has so kindly provided," he said grimly. "It is necessary to listen-in to this conversation."

Inside the room, Rufus Kernahan was snarling:

"A fine time you're giving me! I've got to come this way to see you, owing to the marks laying for me—Falcon Swift in particular, hang him!"

"Did you bring the—the box?" demanded Bill Nye tensely, breathlessly.

It was dark in the room, save for the light from a glowing electric heater, which cast a red, unnatural radiance.

"Ah, but you haven't gone according to the contract, Mr. Nye," he said cunningly.

"I have," cried the rowing Blue hotly. "I put the crew off their stroke by giving in to these new methods; that's what I agreed to do."

The black-garbed figure took a chair and folded his arms; he was grim, and there was something of desperation in his own manner.

"Aye, and I thought that would be enough," he said harshly. "I thought the crew would go ragged, and it would look natural, their losing."

"And now you've got to hand over that box," said the Cambridge man, doggedly, desperately.

"And if I don't? . . ." sneered the other.

"I'll tell the police—Falcon Swift; I'll make a clean breast of it all," cried Bill Nye wildly.

The scheming bookmaker stood up. He unbuckled the pack from his back, and set it on the table. It was the wireless set.

"I believe you would," he said in a convinced, disgusted tone. "I can only hope Cambridge lose. Well, the police are watching for me, and I can't try anything desperate. Here's your box, Mr. Nye, according to the arrangement we made. I said I'd deliver to-night if you put the crew out for a week."

Bill Nye sprang to his feet with a great exclamation of relief.

He strode over to the wireless set and laid his hand on a knob. And it was then it happened. Neither Falcon Swift nor Chick, who were watching from the window, could see properly. They could not make it out. In the dim, uncertain light it seemed that the façade of the wireless set opened like the door of a cupboard, and from it emerged a wild flurry of movement, like a grey bubble of smoke that burst and was gone.

A wild, strangled cry of fear burst from Bill Nye's lips, and he staggered back.

"You—you fiend!" he gasped. "Close the door . . . quickly . . . the window!"

From the man in the black aviator's garb came a grating, mocking laugh. He deliberately opened the door, but, before disappearing, he thrust his head round.

"That will keep you occupied, Mr. Nye," he jeered. "And if you row like a man inspired in the boat race on Saturday—well, I shall be very much surprised!"

Then he was gone. Out in the corridor he swiftly rid himself of the betraying black leathers of a flyer, and, donning a cap, Mr. Rufus Kernahan walked coolly out of the Raleigh Club and disappeared.

Meanwhile, Falcon Swift and Chick had swiftly entered the room via the window. They found Bill Nye in a state of stupor, completely overcome. He seemed unconscious of their presence in the room, and to questions, even shakings, remained mute and insensible.

Falcon Swift, however, had something to do. He took up the supposed wireless receiving set. It was simply an empty box of polished wood.

"I'm going to make a thorough examination of this, and also get on the track of our friend, Kernahan," he said briskly. "You, Chick, watch after Bill Nye. I'm afraid his honour's at stake—and a great deal more. But we must keep it dark for his sake, and he's the

THE THREAT OF DEATH.

"If you will not tell me, then—this!" Bill Nye hurled something at the cabin wall. There was an ear-splitting explosion, and water commenced rushing in.

only man who can stroke Cambridge to victory in the boat race."

"Sure, boss; I get you," said Chick swiftly; and on that understanding the famous Sporting Detective left them together.

CHICK was on the telephone the next day to the detective's flat in Half Moon Street, and he had important news.

"Bill Nye's come to life, boss," he said in a suppressed tone of excitement. "But he's acting stranger than ever. He's cleared the whole crew out of the Raleigh Club premises; says it isn't suitable for them. We're to be guests of the Leander Club, and to use their boathouse. But Bill Nye's staying in the old premises, alone. He's cleared all the servants out—everybody."

"It's as I thought," Falcon Swift's voice came gravely over the wire. "Listen, laddie, this is what I want you to do."

He gave his instructions in swift, low tones. They were simple and concise, but they did not enlighten the mystified young slouch.

"Righto, boss. I'll set about it at once."

That evening at ten o'clock the figure of a young down-and-outer, in cheap suit and cloth cap, and with a grimed face, might have been seen slouching in the vicinity of the Raleigh Club.

Lights blazed from every window and from the

hallway. "There certainly is something queer," muttered the ill-kempt youth as he approached up the steps to the massive doorway, and knocked.

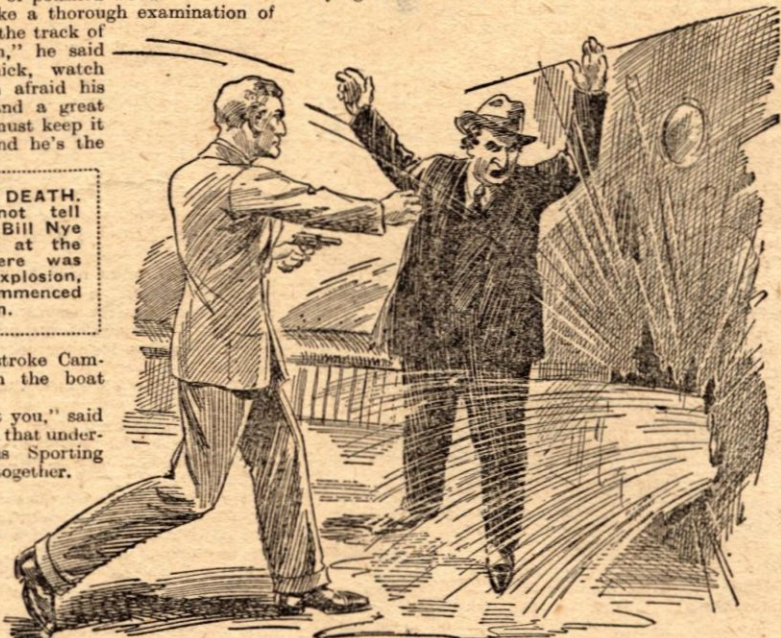
There were sounds of footsteps, and Bill Nye, the famous Cambridge stroke, himself answered the door. He looked haggard and ill, with wild burning eyes that stared suspiciously at the ill-dressed youngster.

"Ning, sir. I've just come up from the country looking for work," said Chick—for it was he—in a feigned voice. "I'm an honest lad; been working on a farm."

Bill Nye stared. Into his clean-cut face leapt a queer look. "You've been working on a farm?" he repeated slowly. "And you want a job?"

"Yessir."

After further questions, somewhat to his surprise, the famous rowing-man told him to come in. "You'll get twenty-five shillings and all found; I'm wanting a sort of handy man to do odd jobs," Bill Nye was saying in a strained voice.



But the detective's young assistant scarcely heard him. He was staring around with a queer sense of shock. All the linoleum and rugs had been taken up, and the floors were bare. The doors of the rooms were all wide open, and the electric lights were on in every room. Even the stair carpet was gone. What did it all mean?

Chick had to confess to a chill feeling of fear and dread as he followed the famous rowing-man up the bare stairs. The fear of the unknown was on him, and it seemed to communicate itself to him from the once self-contained, dependable Bill Nye.

He showed the disguised young detective into a room, devoid of all furniture save for a bedstead.

"I shan't want you to work before to-morrow; then there might be—a big job to do. You see, I'm getting this place ready for the Cambridge crew. I'll have it ready for them to come in to-morrow—I hope."

He was talking at random, feverishly. Yet it was quite evident that his ears were strained and that he was listening tensely. All at once he shot Chick a hard, searching glance.

"If you've been a farmer's boy—you can use a gun?" he asked abruptly.

It gave Chick a chill shock. "What was wrong in this house?"

He answered, "Yessir."

But perhaps he looked a little scared, for the Cambridge Blue did not press the point. As he went out and closed the door, Chick distinctly heard the key turned in the lock. The young detective did not like it at all. There was something very much wrong, something eerie, uncanny about this house.

The boss had sent him here to play his part, however, so he took off his boots, dropping them heavily to the floor. Then he got on the bed, making it creak a lot. Very quietly he got off again.

Very carefully step by step Chick approached the door. His heart was hammering wildly. Something urged him to wait and listen for some sound in the house, but none came. He moved towards the door again, hesitantly.

There was a transom above, that is a pane of glass, through which the light from the hallway shone in a yellow flood. Chick got a chair and climbed up, peering through the pane of glass.

What he expected to see he scarcely knew, but the sight that met his eyes sent a fiery thrill running through him.

Out on the landing, under the brilliant glare of the electric light, stood Bill Nye, a shotgun in his hands, and he was peering down the stairway with a strained, haggard expression on his handsome face.

Stealthily, step by step, as though hunting some furtive foe, he approached the stairs and went down them one by one. But Chick could see nothing.

The young detective got down from the chair, his heart beating painfully. He had got to find out. He extracted from his pocket a skeleton key. With a soft click the lock turned, and in a moment Chick was sliding out into the lighted hallway.

Softly he crept down the stairs after Bill Nye, and now he had his revolver in his hand. He came down into the lower hall. The famous Cambridge stroke had vanished.

Suddenly Chick gave a wild start. Like a crash in his eardrums came the sound of a shot.

He located the direction, and turning, hurried for the servants' hall. Down the stone steps a single gas jet flared, then through the kitchen and darkness. A crawling terrible dark. With it was brought to the boy's nostrils a smell of burning flesh and hair that nauseated him, made his senses reel with some unnameable horror. There was a dull, red fire in the kitchen grate. What had Bill Nye been burning alone in this house?

The lad pursued his course doggedly. A distant cold draught apprised him of some door open to the night air. Through it Bill Nye had evidently gone.

Chick trod out into a flagellated courtyard, the sight of the boathouse told him that he was down near the towing path. He saw a faint light glimmering through the windows of the boathouse.

Cautiously he approached. The door was locked, but Chick's skeleton key fitted. He entered the long, dim boathouse with its racing shells on their trestles, oars in the racks, its faint smell of waterlogged things. There seemed no one there, but some instinct was warning the boy as he tiptoed across the threshold.

Suddenly he stopped. An awful wave of fear shook him, cold terror gripped like biting iron at his heart. And he stared . . . stared . . .

On the floor of the boathouse suddenly appeared a glowing head, shapeless and grotesque, but unmistakably a human head. And it seemed to roll at the lad's feet!

Chick Conway could stand no more. His nerve broke at the sight. And though no sound issued from his lips, he turned and ran from the boathouse as fast as his trembling limbs would carry him.

Five minutes later he was in a convenient telephone booth, and in communication with the Sporting Detective.

"Come quickly, boss," he cried in a shaken voice. "There's something terrible in the boathouse, fearful."

* * * * *

RIGHT, laddie;" Falcon Swift breathed as he trod cautiously towards the boathouse by his young assistant's side. He had come post-haste in his Hispano car in answer to that urgent appeal. "Just hold on to your nerve, and I think we shall have an explanation of all this business in a minute."

They entered the dim boathouse, and Chick's strained eyes searched for the lighted head rolling on the floor, but in vain.

As they advanced, however, there came an equally startling apparition before them. Quite suddenly some of the floorboards of the boathouse were pushed back, and from the deep cavity thus revealed there abruptly emerged a figure clad in white surgeon's overalls and grotesque cowl, completely covering the head. It was a sight to set the nerves tingling.

At a sound from Falcon Swift the cowed figure spun round suddenly with a start of affright.

"Bill Nye," said Falcon Swift quietly, "th' game's up, old chap."

Bill Nye—for the cowed figure was he—reeled and would have fallen had not the detective and his assistant rushed to his assistance and placed him in a chair. They removed his mask, and he sat there slowly recovering, his pale ashen face stricken with grief.

"All right now?" asked the Sporting Detective gently at last.

Bill Nye made a gesture of despair. "We'll have to tell the police," he groaned.

"But I don't understand," burst out Chick. "What was—?"

"Rats," said Falcon Swift succinctly.

The boy slouth stared. "I thought you had tumbled, Chick," said Falcon Swift. "Our friend Bill Nye here is by way of being a scientist of some distinction, and to eke out his private income he accepted a commission from the Russian Government to discover a remedy for the terrible bubonic plague. He has been experimenting on—rats."

Chick gave a real start. "And—the rats escaped?" he queried in real horror.

"Let us go back to the start," said Falcon Swift quietly. "Our friend here, somewhat injudiciously, concealed the infested rats in a box resembling a wireless set. Now Kernahan learnt of his work, and conceived his dastardly idea of getting hold of the box—and hoped to force Bill Nye to sell the boat race by threatening to release the rats."

"The utter scoundrel!" breathed Chick.

"All this time he has held Bill Nye torn with torment," went on the detective. "As a compromise with his honour our friend here agreed partially to let down the crew in training, on the understanding that he got back the box two days before the race. Bill Nye thought he could pull the crew round again even then, and as we have seen he was right. And last night, Kernahan came with the box, as arranged."

"And in spite he—he released the rats?" exploded Chick in horror.

The Monocled Manhunter nodded, polishing his monocle the while. "You can reason out the rest, for yourself, Chick. Desperate, and determined to recapture the rats, Bill Nye here cleared out the rest of the crew from the house. I, of course, took away the box and examined it, and having made inquiries,

caught all but three of them—I had metal tags on so I recognise them," he said heavily. "I'll get the others yet—and I'll row to win to-morrow—row to win!"

Falcon Swift laid a kindly hand on his shoulder.

"My poor friend," he said gently. "Don't you realise Kernahan dare not release those rats—he dare not! He bluffed you last night. The rats he let loose were perfectly harmless, others that he had substituted. We've traced Kernahan to a boat-house at Mortlake—just beyond the finishing-point of the boat race. He's got the rats with him, and I'm informing the police, so that we shall round him up to-night."

Bill Nye started up, and on his clean-cut face was depicted a riot of emotions. Amazement, unbelief—then suddenly his eyes blazed. Judgment was unbalanced, common sense was fled to fear. In a flash he whipped out a revolver, and jerked it up at Falcon Swift and his assistant.

"No, don't move!" he cried harshly. "Put your hands up. I'm sorry, Mr. Swift—I've got to get them back from Kernahan at once. Put your hands up, or I'll have to shoot!"

The detective saw that he was beyond all reason, and he slowly lifted his hands, an example which Chick copied.

Muttering feverishly, the Cambridge stroke seized some rope and bound their arms behind them. He was in haste to get away, yet he trussed them securely—too securely for Falcon Swift's liking. Then he made them step into the cavity and, having bound their ankles together, covered them over with the floor-boards.

"I'll be coming back, Mr. Swift, to release you," he cried huskily.

"But I must get hold of Kernahan before anything happens—I must!"

And with something between a groan and a sob he darted away into the night, leaving Falcon Swift and Chick in the evil-smelling darkness.

The Houseboat.

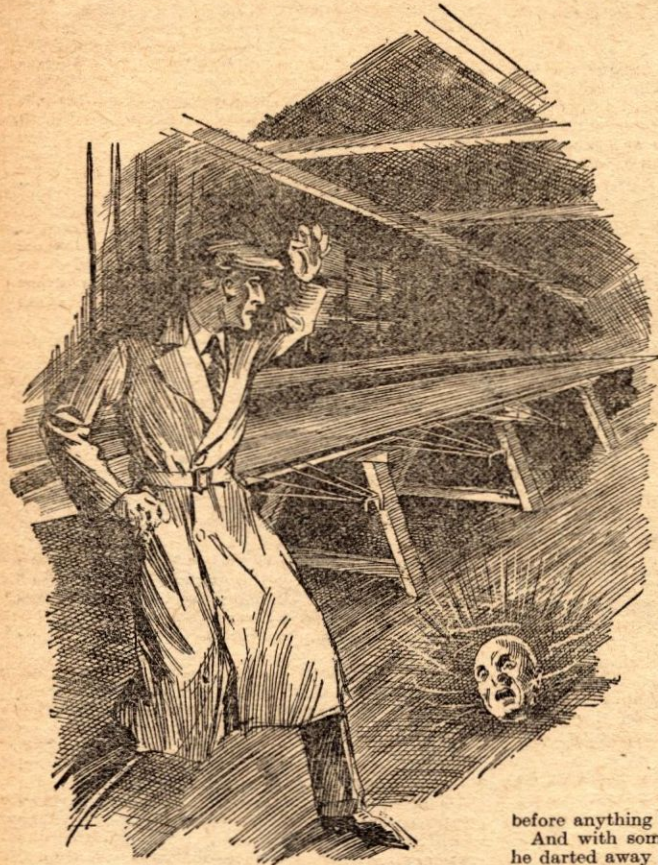
BILL NYE reached Mortlake at dead of night, and found it easy enough to secure a boat, in which he rowed out upon the dark, whispering river. He soon marked out Kernahan's boathouse. A blaze of lights from its ports denoted that the bookmaker was holding high revelry.

The desperate rowing-man climbed aboard stealthily, and tiptoed for the cabin.

Within, Rufus Kernahan sat at the head of a table with a few of his choice cronies. He was just raising his glass, about to make a toast. "Here's to our big win to-morrow when Cambridge lose the—"

The door suddenly opened, and a vibrant figure slid inside, closing it quickly. There was a gun in Bill Nye's hand, and his handsome face was distorted with utter desperation.

"Hands up, all of you!" he gritted from between his teeth. "That's right. Now I want Kernahan—alone. The rest of you can go. Get away quickly. Kernahan and I have business, deadly business."



HORROR IN THE BOATHOUSE.—Chick started back, cold terror gripping him. On the floor had appeared a glowing head, shapeless and grotesque, seeming to roll at his feet.

I began to see light. I sent you round pretending to be a lad up from a farm."

The detective paused quizzically.

"But rats run to earth," he went on. "Bill Nye knew that, and he set traps down here in the boathouse. When you came in here and saw the rolling, lighted head, it was simply our friend coming up from under the floorboard with his mask on."

"I see," said Chick again. "But Kernahan—the utter scoundrel—to do it! I suppose he wanted to get Bill Nye in such a state he'd muff it in the boat race."

"Exactly," nodded the Sporting Detective.

The Cambridge rowing stroke looked up. "I've

As the three fear-stricken cronies of the bookmaker fled from the cabin, Bill Nye advanced to the table. And there was no mistaking the deadly earnestness either in his tone or look.

"Kernahan, I want what you have taken, and quickly. You've got them here. Where?"

"Suppose I haven't—suppose I won't tell?" blustered the bookmaker.

"Then—this!" With the words Bill Nye whipped something from his pocket and hurled it against the side of the cabin. There was a harsh, ear-splitting explosion that seemed to shatter the cabin in smoke and lurid flame. Then the water commenced rushing in, for the boathouse cabin was below waterline.

Backing to the door, Bill Nye held the revolver threateningly while the water gurgled and splashed up around the knees of the two men.

"Where are they, quick? If you want to save yourself from drowning like a rat..."

Palsied with fear, the bookmaker pointed to a box. Bill Nye splashed over to it, and a swift investigation satisfied him the rats were within.

"Go"—he pointed—"while there's still time to save your miserable life."

Making horrid sounds of fear, the bookmaker struggled out of the flooded cabin, and was just in time to plunge off the deck and swim frantically out of distance before the boathouse went under, leaving a swirling cataract to mark its watery grave.

Bill Nye had done what he believed to be the best. He had gone down with the sinking boathouse in his frantic desire to make an end of the plague-infested rats.

A Great Race.

"FREE at last, Chick!" gasped Falcon Swift.

Though they knew the trick of the thing, they had struggled for hours with their bonds before they could get free. Now it was broad daylight, and the Varsity boat race was twelve o'clock that day.

"Come on, Chick; we've got to find out what's happened," gritted the detective, and he dashed out of the boathouse with his young assistant in his wake.

As they hastened into the open air, they were greeted by anxious members of the crew and Cambridge rowing authorities.

"Bill Nye's all right," said Falcon Swift as he climbed into the Hispano, which had been waiting outside the boathouse all night; "I'm just going to get him. He'll stroke the Cambridge crew to victory to-day, don't worry."

He was hoping for the best. Without giving time for further argument, he drove away—to Mortlake.

There he found a very grave inspector of police, who had news for him. The sinking houseboat had been observed, of course, the previous night, and the police had detained Kernahan and his cronies pending an investigation. The bookmaker's story was that the houseboat had sunk by accident, and he said nothing about Bill Nye.

The time for the start of the boat race was fast approaching, and Falcon Swift sent Chick back by car to Putney to get ready for the boat race while he went to conduct his investigations at the sunken houseboat. The young boy sleuth could make no answer to the anxious questions of the crew in the boathouse. He hurried into the dressing-rooms and got into rowing vest and shorts, his heart as heavy as lead. He knew that Bill Nye could not turn up. The Cambridge stroke was at the bottom of the river. They would have to row a substitute.

Chick knew this, for Falcon Swift had gone to the police station and interviewed the cowering Kernahan, and he had soon got the story out of him.

Suddenly he turned as the door opened, and an audible gasp escaped his lips.

"You?" he shouted.

For Bill Nye stood there, in rowing shorts and vest, smiling grimly. But as Chick advanced gladly with outstretched hand, he got a shock that left him dazed for minutes afterwards.

"Why, boss!"

It was the cleverest disguise he had ever seen, and only he could have penetrated it. It was Falcon Swift, the Sporting Sleuth, standing there.

"Hush," whispered the detective with a grip on his arm. "Not a word. I'm going to row in Bill Nye's place. I've studied his theories, and—well, it's just something you and I can do for him, eh—take the Cambridge boat to victory, laddie?"

"I—I think he'd like to feel Cambridge had won," said Chick.

It all passed in a daze to the young sleuth, however. The disguised detective tossing with the Oxford stroke for position—the Dark Blues won, and chose the more sheltered Surrey side—the carrying of the long racing shells down to the river; the jockeying for position on the smooth water.

Falcon Swift leant forward and spoke at last, pretending to give instructions to his cox.

"I'll tell you exactly why I'm doing this, laddie," he said in a low urgent voice. "I was coming here to tell Cambridge that Bill Nye was dead—couldn't row—when a message came through on the wireless from the Police Inspector, saying he had received some rapping messages from the sunken houseboat. S.O.S."

"What? So Bill Nye's alive after all?" exclaimed the astonished Chick.

"Can't make it out," said Falcon Swift grimly.

"But I'm getting to that sunken houseboat as soon as possible—and this is the quickest way, now that the roads are choked. Besides, after all that's happened, I want to see Cambridge win."

At last the signal was given. From the Umpire's launch came in ringing tones the question:

"Are you ready?"

In an instant the Cambridge shell was a living thing—the experts said theirs was the better racing start. It leapt forward, hung, and then went on again.

Then Chick began to hurl abuse at man after man. Four was splashing, six was rushing his slide. But the plucky young cox was steadying them. They straightened out in the first dozen strokes and the feel of the leaping shell told Falcon Swift that the crew was rowing as one man—in perfect rhythm.

"You're altogether now!" cried Chick sharply.

"Hold that—hold it! Steady all."

They were at the mile, slicing past the towing path, crowded with frantically cheering spectators. Chick called for a quickening.

Cambridge responded beautifully. Falcon Swift could see the stern of the Oxford shell, with the coxswain yelling, and then for a moment the stroke. How they rowed! Beautifully, all together.

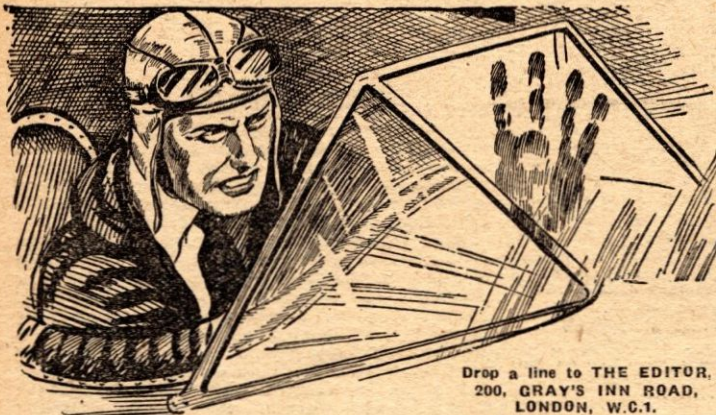
"Steady all!" cried Chick again, as he saw Oxford slicing ahead. Falcon Swift had dropped his stroke from thirty-six to thirty-four to the minute.

Hammersmith Bridge ahead. And round that bridge the water swirls, and then rushes out in currents. The experts had said there was bound to be "a popple," and there was—ragged, uneasy water that might swamp a racing shell that was not poised knife-like, with every blade pulling in perfect rhythm.

"One—two—three—four!" shouted Chick. "For the love of Mike, quit rushing your slide, No. 5. Are you ready? Now!"

(Continued on page 12.)

YOUR EDITOR'S PAGE



Drop a line to THE EDITOR,
200, GRAY'S INN ROAD,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Special Story Attractions in Next Week's Great New Favourites Number, including—

TAILS-UP DRAKE—SKY SCORPION!

(Great New Tale Series featuring an Ace of the Clouds).

KING OF THE CHARIOTS

(introducing Ericus the Briton—a gladiator of Ancient Rome).

CASTLE SINISTER

(featuring the Gay Musketeers), Thrills of Football, Fun at Sea, and many other surprises.

MY DEAR CHUMS,

Three rousing cheers! One for Ericus the Briton, another for The Gay Musketeers, and an extra loud one for

Tails-Up Drake—Sky Scorpion!

You'll meet them all in next week's Red Hot number of the Old *Mag*. And once you've met 'em, well—I feel it in my bones that you'll want a lot more of their adventures in the weeks to come. The well-known writers who have created them specially for the Red Wonder *Mag.*, as some of my chums call the *B.M.*, have given of their best. Thrills that you have never read before are crammed into the doings of these great, new adventurers.

Perhaps the most thrilling of all is Squadron Leader Drake, or Tails-Up, as his pals call him. This reckless, devil-may-care Ace of the Airways, with his sun-tanned, speed-lined, yet always laughing face, will grip your imaginations, hold you spell-bound as he hurtles through the clouds in his Hawker Hart 'plane with its super-charged Rolls Royce Kestrel engine. Behind him in the cockpit sits Bonehead Murphy, his droll Irish observer—a fellow you'll immediately take to your hearts. The first yarn of their exploits tells how Phillip Garson, a rascally film-producer, comes to the flying ground. The R.A.F. are assisting him to make a film of England's flyers. But this is not Garson's real motive for getting behind the scenes in Drake's camp. Actually the man is a terrible menace. If he is allowed to mature his plans dark forces of evil and terror will be unleashed. But Tails-Up suspects—and with only the help of Bonehead he sets himself the dangerous task of unmasking the plotter and his myrmidons. After that it is all thrills—thrills in the air and on the ground. Now get ready to meet Drake and Bonehead in the first complete yarn of this grand new series of flying yarns next week.

To meet Ericus the Briton in the flesh you'd have to go back nearly two thousand years to the days when Rome was the hub of the civilised world. Ericus, captured by the Roman legions and brought from his native land to the land of the Caesars, graduates from slavery to the ranks of the gladiators. He is also

King of the Chariots.

You couldn't beat the ancient Britons at chariot driving, and Ericus is a veritable demon with the

"ribbons." His popularity with the populace, however, puts him in dreadful danger. For there are those who are jealous, desperately envious of the handsome young Briton. And among them is none other than Nero himself. A friend of Ericus, another Briton, is to be sold as a slave in the Forum. Ericus decides to buy his freedom. And in this Nero sees a way of ridding himself once and for all of the gladiator he dislikes. Of the treachery and intrigue that engulf Ericus, the exciting scenes in the arena and the Forum of glittering Rome, you will read in the tense, double-length yarn introducing this great new hero next week.

And the Gay Musketeers? Yet another period, another country, are the setting of their gallant exploits. Tony Dale, Launcelot St. John, and Troddles are English Musketeers in the service of Charles the Second. Their King sends them on a secret mission to

Castle Sinister

in Picardy. There, in that gloomy, mysterious old pile, they encounter dangers that even their adventurous lives have not hitherto given them. You'll be thrilled by their exploits, but best of all you'll like the Gay Musketeers themselves.

For the laugh of your lives turn to the latest story of the Crew of the *Happy Haddock*, which appears under the title

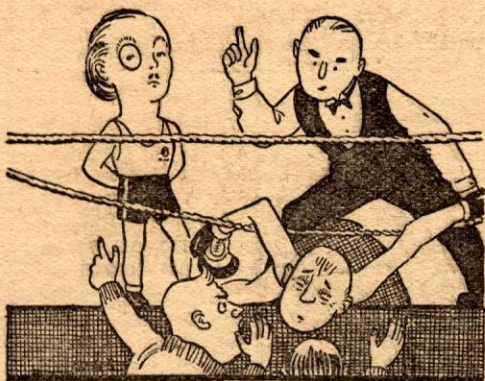
Sink the Ole Luggar!

Yes, chaps, the good ship *Happy Haddock* actually goes to bed on the bottom of the briny next week. But, fortunately for us all, not for good. Pip invents a new salvage apparatus, and thinking that raising sunken wrecks is more profitable than carrying cargoes to the four corners of the globe, Captain Keelson tries it out. The results are as amusing as they are unexpected. You'll get far more enjoyment out of reading of their adventures than the comical crew did from experiencing them!

Another three sepia 'Zat cards will be given next week. When you have collected a team of eleven different cricketers, send it to 'Zat Dept., 196, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and a magnificent set of forty-four enlarged Test Players Snapshots will be returned to you post free. With these you can play the popular new *Boys' Mag.* game of 'Zat.

More news next week.

Your sincere friend, THE EDITOR.



When the righthook to the jaw
Lays his man upon the floor
Says the Boxer.....

Sharp's the word
and
Sharp's the Toffee
I like best of all

THE LIGHTNING BLUES

(Continued from page 10.)

That was the signal to quicken, and miraculously the stroke quickened up to thirty-six. They went under the bridge like some skimming javelin thrown from the hand of a giant—both crews making it in record time.

Falcon Swift barked a few words at Chick. And the cox nodded. The plan was that they should quicken again as they went past the *Stork* training ship, Swift reckoned that his men would just have got their second wind.

"Steady all," cried the young cox. "Be ready to quicken—now!"

The result was electrifying. How the cadets aboard the *Stork* training ship cheered as the Light Blues flashed by.

Past Chiswick Ayot they sliced, oars biting, pulling, feathering back.

"Now then. Six good ones! One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Oh, well rowed! Hold it—hold it! Keep it up!"

They were doing thirty-eight a minute.

"How far?" signalled Falcon Swift's lips at last.

"Going past Duke's Meadows," cried Chick. "Another mile."

"Tell 'em to reach out a bit!"

The crew responded nobly. But it was not until the shadow of Barnes Bridge fell upon the Cambridge shell that Falcon Swift really asked for it.

"Tell 'em—quicken!"

Chick nodded. He barked at the men—hurled abuse at them. But suddenly it changed to a great shout, for with shoulders and thighs going into the pull, the Cambridge crew were rowing from thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven and up to forty; Falcon Swift stroking them grandly.

"Oh, well done! Hold it. Well rowed!" shouted Chick.

There was a tumultuous roar of cheering from the spectators. Oxford were going all out to keep their lead. But Falcon Swift's heart leapt as he saw, out of the corner of his eye, the pointed stern, the struggling, swaying bodies of the exhausted Oxford men. Twenty yards to go. And every man in the Cambridge crew pulling like a Hercules.

"We've passed!" cried Chick. "Come on—oh, come on!"

In a moment all Falcon Swift could see of that Oxford shell was its bow, hanging on, beaten but indomitable. There came the bang of a gun and the eight Cambridge men let go their oars and tumbled forward, listening with their hearts and heads burning to the din that raged on the bank.

Some of them did not know which was first at the post. But when the colours of Cambridge ran up two or three seconds after the pistol cracked, one or two of the crew managed to smile with tired triumph.

Not Falcon Swift, however. He was thinking now of Bill Nye—Bill Nye who had helped win the race with his theories, and would have stroked the crew to victory if he had been present.

A police launch was speeding out towards the Cambridge shell. Falcon Swift stood up unsteadily and climbed aboard the launch.

"Quick! Have you got the diving helmet?" he cried.

There was no time to don a complete diving suit. He put on the helmet, and grasping another with its life line, he went down under the water.

In the cabin of the houseboat he found Bill Nye, and strange to relate, he was alive. An air pocket had formed in the cabin, air which even the inrush of water could not expel. And in this the Cambridge stroke stood, his head above water, breathing the last of the fetid, used-up air.

Falcon Swift came just in the nick of time. He got the helmet on Bill Nye and had him up as quickly as possible. He was rushed away to hospital.

He woke in the morning, fit and well, to find himself famous. For the newspapers were full of the accounts of how he had stroked Cambridge to victory. Needless to say Falcon Swift would not let him reveal the truth. He had to take the credit.

As for Kernahan, he got out of the country. While Bill Nye's discovery of a serum against the bubonic plague in time brought him fame and fortune.

ZOOOSOOM! Coming with a roar next week, chaps, a stupendous yarn of War in the Air, featuring a ripping new bunch of Dare-devil Flying Aces.

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Boys' Magazine, 25/3/33.

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

The MASTER of MASKS



Everybody's Reading This Gigantic New Story of the Mysterious One Over Seven. By JOHN HUNTER.

"THE Rat Trap! And the Rat! Caught like a rat in a trap! Just that! Like a rat in a trap!" The words babbled from the lips of the demented Jules Debar. "Wertzheim knows all about the Rat . . ."

From the shadows reached the Hand of Death, and Debar was no more. And Billy Trent was left with a mystery, the mystery of the Rat Trap and its strange prisoner.

Many more times Billy was destined to hear those strange words. Always they were associated with danger. What was the Rat Trap? Who was the Rat? What terrible mystery lay behind his being held a prisoner "like a rat in a trap"?

On one never-to-be-forgotten night, when the Ambassador of Lithkrania was kidnapped from the theatre where Billy was employed, the boy had been plunged into the maelstrom of mystery and unknown things.

Trying to solve the riddle of the Rat Trap was Mr. Brame Sentence, who had taken Billy on as his assistant. Under the vacuous, futile exterior of a dandy, Mr. Sentence concealed the keen, decisive brain of the smartest agent of the British Secret Service.

"Behind it all are immense, incalculable forces—forces organised by the greatest crook confederation ever known," he told Billy in his lazy tones. "And we hunt one man only."

"Who is he?" asked Billy.

"The Master of Masks," replied Mr. Sentence

quietly. "Known to his myrmidons as One Over Seven."

Following up the clue given him by Jules Debar, Billy travelled to Hamburg in search of Wertzheim. When he reached the man's house he found that his enemies were there before him and were trying to get at Wertzheim. But the wily German escaped out of a window into a boat at the back of his house.

Hot on his heels went his assailants. And close behind them followed Billy. Out into the Oberhafen, one of Hamburg's greatest docks, rowed pursuers and pursued. Wertzheim kept ahead, however, and so sought the protection of the dock workers.

Billy decided to go after him, and noting his direction rowed with all his might. A cry made him look up, and, doing so the sharp prow of a great ship crushed his little boat like an eggshell.

Strange Allies.

BILLY went down and down, but as he sank he began to strike out with legs and feet.

He rose towards the surface, his lungs bursting and his head reeling; but still he swam with desperation; and luck favoured him.

A boat was racing towards him, and a man stooped out of it and grabbed him.

"*Gestatten Sie,*" he grinned, and flopped Billy into the bottom of his boat.

Dazedly Billy looked up at him. He was a big fellow, typically German, his fair hair cut *en brosse*, his jaw heavy, his shoulders high and broad. But there was a twinkle in his light blue eyes which supported the humour of a man who could say "Allow me" when he pulled a drowning man out of the water.

Billy said, in English: "I don't speak German very well. Only a very little." Then he added: "You saved my life. Thank you very much."

Now of this the German understood only one thing. The pronunciation of the English word "thank" is very much the same as the pronunciation of the German word "dank," and they mean the same. The German grinned and nodded; then he dropped home the gear of his boat and set the little craft careering across the dock.

The German was evidently a very good soul, and he kept gesturing to Billy, jerking a massive thumb across one of his mighty shoulders, and winking. What that meant, Billy did not know.

They ran ashore at some steps, and the big German got Billy up them and through a labyrinth of lanes to a small house. It was the first poor German house Billy had ever visited, and he never forgot it. His big German's *Hausfrau* was a large, blonde lady of the old German type, and her house simply glittered with cleanliness. The bare floors were as white as the decks of a yacht or battleship. The brass candlesticks gleamed like gold. The furniture shone as though illuminated. Everything was in apple-pie order, and, into the bargain, there was a tremendous "homey" feeling about it all.

The blonde lady was bestirring herself. A big copper kettle was on the fire. She was bustling around talking. Blankets were brought and a tin hip-bath, for the humble little house boasted no bathroom. In half-an-hour Billy had had a steaming hot bath, was wrapped in blankets, given a cup of hot cocoa and was seated by the big fire.

Unfortunately, of course, he could tell his kindly hosts nothing about himself, and he kept wondering where Wertzheim might be and whether the gang had "got" him. While he pondered these things his big German went out and returned with another man, slightly older than he, and just as ponderous.

This man said: "I spik English. I prisoner war. You tell me. Johann say they come after you. You not afraid here. Johann o.k." The unexpected use of these famous letters nearly made Billy laugh. Some English Tommy had obviously taught his prisoners that if anything is o.k. it is all right.

Also Billy now realised why Johann had kept stabbing his thumb across his shoulder. Johann had been indicating that any possible pursuers had not a ghost of a chance of catching him.

He said: "I am in danger." He knew he had to speak very simply, for the interpreter's English was, to say the least of it, limited. "Danger. You understand? Men are trying to find me to kill me. See?"

"You go west. That's right. My name's Fritz." "I want to get away from here without being seen," added Billy; and Fritz wrinkled his brows. Billy repeated what he had said, very slowly.

Fritz's face once again brightened. "You want buzz off. I know. You hop it. That's right. Not half." Billy now realised that Fritz had been in charge of a London regiment. There was no doubt about that. Fritz added: "You not worry. Johann and me see to it. Betcherlife."

Billy thought he would try a bit further. "I am looking for a man named Karl Wertzheim." He added

the address at which Wertzheim had been staying before flying for his life. "I suppose you don't know anything about him."

Fritz turned and hurled guttural German at Johann, who had been sitting by smoking a cheap cigar. Johann hurried back German at Fritz. The blonde lady jomed in. Her word seemed to be law with these slow gigantic men, for Fritz turned to Billy and said: "You kip here to-night. You not leave till morning." *Mutter* say so."

"It's awfully kind of you," stammered Billy; and felt a bit overwhelmed.

He was taken upstairs to a bedroom which was as spick and span as the rest of the house and was introduced to a good old-fashioned German bed. This was a massive affair built, it seemed, of the piles of some pier which had run spare. But the bed-clothes staggered Billy. There were spotless sheets and—greatest wonder of all—a German eiderdown. Billy stood and stared at it.

It looked like a great red balloon. It was at least three feet thick. It towered on top of the bed like a bloated monster, and it was as soft as silk.

Billy got under it. The bed was marvellously comfortable, and when he had solved the trick of balancing the enormous eiderdown on top of himself he found it delightfully warm and comforting and as light as a feather. The house settled down to sleep.

He was awakened in the darkness by a hammering on the street door. He heard movement below, and, slipping on his trousers, which had been dried before he came upstairs, he crept to the door of the room and looked down the stairwell.

Two men were standing in the hall. Johann was with them in a vast nightshirt tucked into his day trousers. He held a lamp aloft, and his left hand was as high as the lamp; for into Johann's ribs jutted the squat muzzle of an automatic pistol. Billy recognised the Englishman.

His enemies had evidently tracked Johann when he escorted Billy from the docks to his house, and they had waited till the small hours of the morning to raid the home.

The men with the Englishman was speaking German to Johann. "We want the boy. If you give us no trouble and hand him over you'll be all right."

Johann stood very still. "There is no boy here. He had left—hours ago. He would not stay."

Billy could not follow this. The Englishman said: "Tell him he's a liar. Tell him we know the boy's here, and that he'll get his if he doesn't hand him over."

That was enough for Billy. While the other man translated this to Johann, who still stood like a lump of rock, Billy came down the stairs.

"It's all right," he said. "Don't hurt that man. He's been very kind to me. I'm surrendering."

The Englishman uttered a glad cry. He turned and shot out his hand, grabbing for Billy's coat; and as he did this Johann brought his left fist down like a hammer.

Now Johann was one of the toughest fellows Billy had ever encountered. His fist took the Englishman on top of his head and just smashed him floorwards. Billy, jumping in swiftly, grabbed the man's gun before he could use it, and clung to it, though it was still gripped by the Englishman's fingers.

The second man jumped at Johann; which was a most foolish thing to do. Johann hit him. It must be born in mind that the big German, all this time, held the lamp in his other hand, quite steadily and calmly.

The second fellow took Johann's left in his face

and the wall on the back of his head inside a split second; and he just slid dazedly floorwards.

The Englishman was just recovering from his blow, and was getting the better of Billy, when Johann's hand closed on his gun arm and twisted it. He shrieked with agony. The gun dropped from his nerveless fingers, and Johann threw him in a heap against the bottom of the stairs.

The victory was won.

Johann was just debating what should be done with the prisoners when the utterly unexpected happened. Through the still open street doorway walked Fritz. He had a man by the arm, a man who walked unwillingly, and yet did not resist.

Fritz pushed this man forward and said: "You want Wertzheim. I spot him. Look all night. This Wertzheim."

The Wreck.

FRITZ was very pleased with himself, as he had reason to be. He had found Wertzheim among the dock labourers at the side of the big ship in the Ober Hafen, and he had persuaded him that all was safe if he came with him.



JOHANN—JAW-BREAKER!—The second man leaped at Johann! The German's left shot out and took him on the point. He went staggering back to crumple up against the wall.

But while Billy stared at Wertzheim and Wertzheim stared at Billy, with Johann and Fritz congratulating each other, the man against the passage wall was able to pick up the Englishman's gun unnoticed. He did it very swiftly and silently, then he watched and waited.

Then he got up and spoke.

"Everybody here will stand back with their hands up. I'll shoot to kill if I'm disobeyed." He spoke this first in German and then in English.

The tables were turned. The Englishman got to his feet. He grabbed Billy. Fritz and Johann looked as though they would hurl themselves at him but Billy said to Fritz: "Don't do anything. I beg of you. They'll murder you, otherwise."

The two Germans remained still. The man with the gun jerked words at Wertzheim, who sullenly turned towards the street door, walking with drooped shoulders and lagging feet. He reached the door and woke to terrific activity. He ducked round the jamb like lightning. The boom of the gun crashed the echoes; but Wertzheim was gone.

Johann threw the lamp at the gunman as he fired at Wertzheim. By great fortune it went out as it hurtled through the air; but it hit the gunman on the side of the head and it sent him to the floor, smothered in paraffin and really knocked out this time. Fritz bored in at the Englishman, who, turning to meet the attack, loosed Billy.

Fritz roared: "You hop it! Quick!"

Billy went to the street, ducked round the house, and came in the back way. All was now quiet. He slipped upstairs, dressed and found his store of money intact. When he came down Fritz and Johann were sitting on their prisoners. Billy told Fritz he was off. They would let the two men go. They had nothing to fear once he had departed.

Johann looked at Fritz, who said: "I got no wife and kids. Nobody. See? And I got no work either. I come with you. What d'you say, kiddo?"

Billy looked him over. He himself knew no German. Fritz had a peculiar knowledge of English, but it served; and he was as strong as a lion and completely friendly and docile. Billy put out his hand. Fritz split his face into a gigantic grin and engulfed Billy's hand in his big paw.

Johann shook Billy's hand. "Auf Wiedersehen," he smiled; and Billy went out with Fritz.

Fritz spoke outside. "That Wertzheim say he got a place in Berlin. He want to scoot there."

"We'll risk it," said Billy. "He wouldn't stay in Hamburg any longer; that's certain."

They hurried to the station. A train was due to leave for Berlin very shortly. Their theories were justified; for Wertzheim was on it.

The train had pulled out and was roaring through the night when a man walked along the corridor and got into their compartment. He was a curious looking fellow. His face was grey and pinched, and his eyes were jet black. He had pointed yellow teeth like a dog's fangs, and his head was covered by a great, tangled mop of black hair.

Somehow, Billy could not help watching him; and, doing so, his heart went cold. For he realised that this was One Over Seven in another of his marvellous masks.

After a little while the master crook got up and went back to the corridor. Billy lounged after him,

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leaving Fritz comfortably snoring on his seat. One Over Seven halted by a certain compartment, and, turning swiftly, fixed Billy with his eyes and beckoned him.

"Well, my young friend? We meet again. See there?"

Billy looked into the compartment. Karl Wertzheim was inside it. His head lolled curiously. The train had slackened greatly, with a grinding of brakes. One Over Seven's grey masklike face was creased in a wolf's grin.

"Wertzheim will never reach Berlin," he said softly. "He has started a much longer journey I'm afraid."

As he said this a man appeared in the corridor. He was whistling softly to himself. At the same time the train ground to a standstill.

One Over Seven suddenly put his arm round Billy. The carriage door was wrenched open and One Over Seven jumped into the darkness with Billy. The man who had just walked into the corridor was running along it. Fritz came blundering out of his compartment. There was a babble of voices.

Billy hit the ground, One Over Seven with him. The man's strength was enormous. He began to run, dragging Billy with him, half carrying him, in fact, towards where the lights of a car showed on a near roadside.

But the man who had come running along the corridor was quick and agile. He overtook them ere they could reach the car and he did a singular thing. He grabbed at One Over Seven's great mop of hair.

It came away in his hand. It was the cleverest move of the night. One Over Seven shrieked something in a strange tongue, lowered his head to hide his face, loosed Billy, and bolted for his life. He dreaded to be recognised.

The car's engine roared. Great headlamps split the night. The machine went thundering away, and Billy heard a calm voice say: "Well, I'm jolly well hanged. That chappie's hair came off in my hand. Literally, my dear boy. Absolutely literally. Would you believe it?"

It was the voice of Mr. Brame Sentence, and Billy, turning, was in time to hear Fritz observe: "That's a bit of all right, that is."

They went back to the train. Wertzheim, they found, was dead; but on him was an address in Berlin. Mr. Sentence looked at Billy, and Billy almost imperceptibly nodded. He knew he was due to go on to Berlin.

The train restarted. It got into his stride, thundering along all out, with the dead man now in the guard's van. Few of the passengers knew of the

tragedy, and those were sworn to secrecy by the guard.

They were within striking distance of Berlin when through the train ran a dreadful shock. The big locomotive almost upended, crashed off the rails, dragging the next two coaches with it, and overturned. The train had been deliberately wrecked.

The Blizzard.

MR. SENTENCE, Billy, and Fritz began to climb out of their compartment. Fortunately there was no fire. As they got out and surveyed the wreckage a great white light travelled along the train—the powerful spotlight of a motor-car.

The light picked them up and held them. Mr. Sentence cried: "Duck!"

They ducked and bolted. Mr. Sentence went off one way, Billy and Fritz another. The light held Billy and Fritz, and the boy hissed: "Fritz, get away. They want me; but they'll kill you."

"Not on your sweet life, soldier," Fritz grunted. "I stick. See?"

"Better chance for both if we split," Billy panted. He fumbled in his pocket and found the piece of paper bearing Wertzheim's Berlin address. "Take this," he said. "I'll meet you at that address, or write you. Please!"

Fritz hesitated and then lumbered off, taking cover with the skill of an old soldier whose life had often been saved by little bumps of shell-torn ground. Billy held on.

The car was now following him, though he streaked across open country. It bumped and swayed and lurched, but it ran faster than he.

They got him at last. The car ran alongside. Powerful hands came out and dragged him in. A harsh, guttural voice ordered him to be quiet. The car held on, reached another road across the open grassland, and roared along it.

They pulled up at last and consulted a map by means of an electric torch. Billy, from his seat, could see this map, as a big finger traced a route vaguely across it.

Billy heard words . . . guttural, jarring, with two liquid words among them. "Palazzo Marani. Palazzo Marani." Then, standing out from the flow of guttural talk one more graceful word. "Canalazzo. Canalazzo." Billy listened and drank them in.

Four more words made themselves plain. "Santa Maria della Salute. Santa Maria della Salute . . ."

Billy's brain was working. The men were tracing a route to Venice. He knew Italian as well as he knew English. Old Paolo had taught him it. He knew that the Grand Canal was called the Canalazzo, in Venice. He guessed that the Palazzo Marani must be one of the great palaces on the Grand Canal. And . . . it was near the great church of Santa Maria della Salute. There could be no doubt of that.

The men were taking him to Venice!

The car smashed on its way. It stopped at last at a small wayside inn on the fringes of the great Bavarian forest land.

Billy was put into a bedroom. There he snatched an hour's sleep, after which he wrote a letter. It had been one of his precautions always to carry with him two or three envelopes and some notepaper. The letter was addressed to Fritz at Berlin. It told Fritz where he, Billy, was being taken. He sealed the letter and went downstairs with it. His captors were busy with the car and Billy boldly walked into the inn kitchen. He did this all naturally, and therefore it succeeded. He showed the letter to the landlady of the inn, and also showed some money. She took some of it and nodded. On the big dresser, she found a stamp, stuck it on the letter, and, smiling

again, she went out. She posted the letter in a small box affixed to a tree trunk near the inn, and nobody took any notice of her. Five minutes later Billy was on his way.

They travelled hard all day, and they slipped across the Austrian border at night by means of a track across the fields. The chauffeur seemed to know his way well. He had, one of the men told Billy, driven cars all over Europe. The men were not unfriendly in their attitude, and they chatted to Billy quite casually. They confirmed that they were bound for Venice.

"Do you know any Italian, boy?" one of them asked.

Billy shook his head. "Not a word," he lied.

"Hm. Neither do we, barring a few odd words. Anyhow, we'll get on all right."

They came to the mountains with night, and they rested a little while. The men were now tired and surly and Billy himself was dead beat, though he occasionally dozed in his seat. The chauffeur was a bit red-eyed, but orders were orders. They had to get on.

Now they were climbing. The heights were terrific and the road made Billy dizzy. It was merely a twisting ledge, clinging to the sheer face of a mighty mountain. The driver went along it at breakneck speed, like all his kind.

On the top of the pass they halted, and there was some discussion. The driver evidently was very tired and wanted to sleep. He looked nearly all in. The man who was in charge appeared to be threatening him, but the driver merely shrugged his shoulders.

So up there in the marvellous mountain air, clear and crisp and heady as wine, they stayed for an hour while the driver slept.

All was still and silent save that far below they could hear the crash and roar of a torrent as it thundered through the cañon at their very feet.

The driver woke up. The engine was restarted, and as the car moved something slid through the night and touched Billy's cheek, while a great wind suddenly whistled and howled among the crags.

The men began to yell at the driver. A blizzard was coming on and he was to blame for keeping them up there. Now the snowflakes thickened, and the car, lurching madly, went sliding down the twisting pass, overhanging the lip of the cañon.

The driver turned and expostulated. Obviously he wanted to stop till the blizzard had passed. They drove him on.

The car was slowing now, going more cannily, yet still sliding on that hideous path; and dropping to the lower levels all the time.



PERIL OF THE PRECIPICE.—Swinging a bend the back of the car skidded round; for a breathless moment it hung, then over it went like a kicked stone.

Billy sat with his heart in his mouth. The great hills were lost to them in the white-whirled darkness. The wind tore at them. The roar of the torrent was louder; for they had dropped much nearer to it.

And the car slid the more. The driver yelled phrases at his companions. They yelled at him. There was fright in the car, high terror.

Swinging a bend she lurched, her stern came round. For a breathless second she hesitated. Then over she went, like a kicked stone, down to the roaring, snow-filled darkness below.

Crashing to Death in the rock-filled torrent below! Is this the end for Billy? Will he meet this terrible doom? Look out for next week's thrill-filled episode.

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The Robot Rower.

BLOW Catty!" Dick Bannister's usually cheery face was like a thundercloud. His expression was reflected in the faces of the rest of his chums. Boat race day was in the offing—and Johnny Gee and Co. had arranged a novel race to celebrate. There were two rival schools in the vicinity of St. Giddy's—Earlwood and Asheton. Hitherto Asheton had been undisputed champions of the river, but now a race had been arranged to decide who really were the best oarsmen of the rival schools. First St. Giddy's and Earlwood were to row a race on the Rudd—the winners to battle with Asheton for the coveted title.

And now on the morning of the race with Earlwood a bombshell had fallen. The Joyous Juniors were gated and forbidden the river. In addition they were due in Mr. Cattermole's study at 2 p.m. for a licking. "Admiral Thresher's blessed fault, too," grunted Tony Graham.

A little unreasonable of Tony to blame the Admiral. The truth was that the old seadog was working on an Unbreakable Code for the Admiralty in his little riverside bungalow. Henschel, an international spy, wanted that code, but the admiral had seen that his bungalow bristled with traps and burglar alarms. All unwittingly the Joyous Juniors had sprung the traps hidden in the river-approaches to the place and the Head had gated them for this.

In spite of the ban, however, Johnny and his chums had gone for a moonlight practice on the Rudd and in dramatic circumstances had saved Admiral Thresher from the machinations of Henschel the Spy. For this the Admiral had promised to 'phone the Head and ask him to rescind his decision forbidding the Removites to row that afternoon. It was now midday, however, and the message had not come through.

Meanwhile, Davenport & Co. were chuckling amongst themselves. Davenport, the Cad of the Remove, had formed a rival crew among his cronies to take Johnny Gee & Co.'s place in the St. Giddy's boat.

Up in the Remove Common Room, Johnny Gee & Co. grew more desperate. The Removites had arranged to meet their rivals out in the lane, to discuss a secret meeting-place for the race. And at last Johnny Gee & Co. dashed out of St. Giddy's, and met the Earlwood fellows.

Desperately, they explained the situation.

"Whew! Hard cheese, old scouts!" exclaimed Tommy Rhodes. "What are you going to do?"

"Look here, Rhodes," exclaimed Johnny Gee. "I've got a wheeze—but it will require some nerve to work it. My idea, is that you should come to St. Giddy's, disguised as Admiral Thresher, interview Catty, and insist on his letting us off!"

Tommy Rhodes chuckled. Impersonation and making up were his particular hobby.

"Right-ho, you scallywag!" he said. "Hold off the execution as long as you can, and I'll work the giddy oracle!"

Tommy Rhodes "cut" off and the chums of Study No. 4, feeling much more hopeful, returned to St. Giddy's. The clock was striking two as they went into the quadrangle.

"Time for us to go up for the licking!" said Johnny. "Let's hide in the cloisters, and make Catty look for us."

Mr. Cattermole, fuming and raging, searched high and low for the missing juniors. Not until half-past two, did Johnny Gee and Co. give themselves up.

"Follow me!" roared Mr. Cattermole. "I shall make you young rascals smart for this!"

The juniors trooped behind him, to his study. Catty, his eyes glinting, selected his stoutest ashplant and swished it viciously in the air.

"Now, Gee" he rasped. "Hold out your hand!" Tap! Tap! A sharp rapping sounded at the door, which opened a moment later, to admit a plump, red-faced figure in Admiral's uniform. A sly wink told Johnny Gee & Co. that this was Tommy Rhodes.

"Ha!" cried this worthy, in a stentorian voice. "Mr. Cattermole, I presume? My name is Thresher—Admiral Thresher! I perceive that you are about to punish these lads for visiting my property against orders. Well, sir, they did me a very great service last night so I forbid you to hurt a hair of their heads!"

"B-b-bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Cattermole, greatly taken aback. "Why—what—how—"

"Let me deal with them, Mr. Cattermole," boomed the bogus Admiral. "Boys, do you promise to be good little lads in future?"

"Oh, crumbs! We—we promise!"

"Then you may go!" said the "admiral" grandiloquently. "Not a word, Mr. Cattermole! They are fully pardoned."

Johnny Gee & Co. went hurriedly from the House-master's study, gasping. The wheeze had worked, and they lost no time in getting ready for the river.

Soon afterwards, the bogus Admiral was seen stalking from St. Giddy's. Tommy Rhodes was followed down to the river by his chums. He left his disguise in the St. Giddy's boathouse, for Johnny Gee & Co. to return.

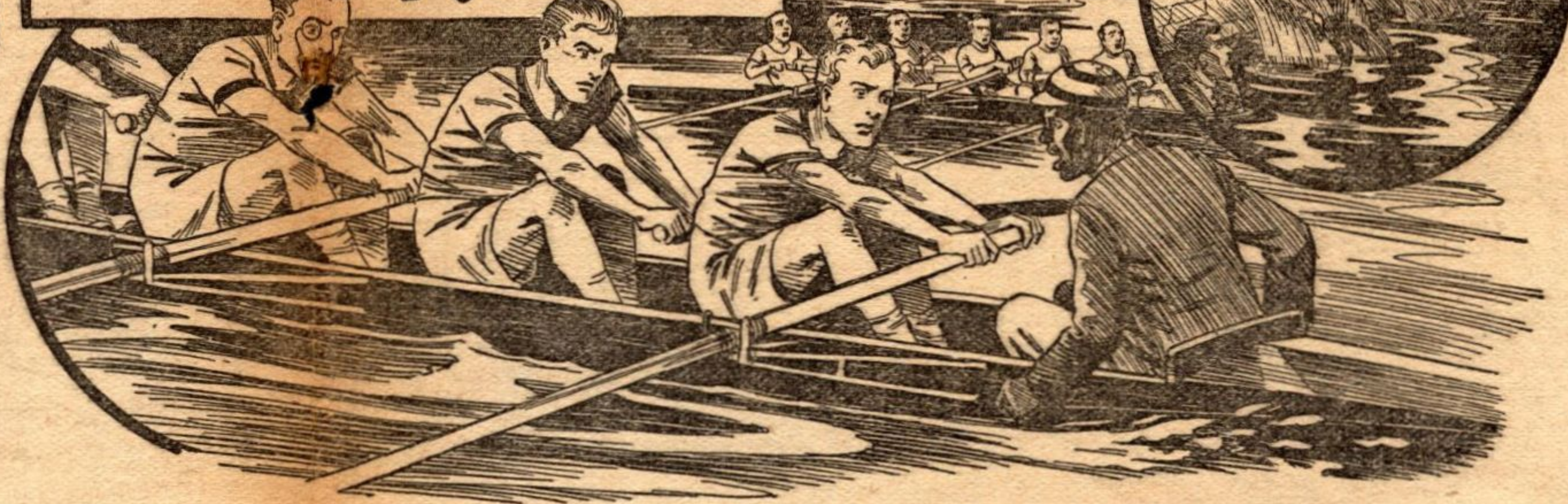
The Earlwood boys went off grinning to their own boathouse.

The juniors were surprised to see Timothy Catchpole walk out of a shed, some distance from the boathouse, and beckon to them.

"My dear fellows, will you kindly lend me a hand in launching my Mechanical Pacer?" he asked.

Johnny Gee & Co. blinked into the shed. The Mechanical Pacer consisted of an ordinary rowing-boat, on the seat of which was perched a bulky,

CHAMPIONS OF THE RIVER



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mechanical figure, its arms operated by various levers and swivels.

Greatly amused, the Removites lugged the lugger forth, and set it afloat.

Whirrrrr-rrrrrrrr! Splash! Splash! The Robot Rower was set off, and it really rowed—in circles, in the funniest manner imaginable.

"Hi, look out, Catchpole, you ass!" came a sudden frantic shout. It was uttered by Davenport, who had appeared with his racing eight round a bend in the river. The brand-new racing-shell lurched dangerously as they tried to avoid the mechanical oarsman. But the effort was abortive. Crash! Smash! Splash! Catchpole's invention took the frail craft amidships, sending the rotters' brigade willy nilly into the unsympathetic waters!

"Dud-d-dear me!" gasped Catchpole, blinking. "It appears, my dear fellows, that a few further adjustments are necessary!"

"They are—they is!" grinned Johnny Gee. And while the unfortunate oarsmen squelched ignominiously back to St. Giddy's, the juniors made their way along the towing-path. Clarence Vane had hired a handsome motor-boat in which he and his fellow-knits had been parading proudly up and down the river. Now it was at the landing-stage, tied up to one of the posts. As Johnny Gee & Co. approached, there was a roar on the river, and a long, low, powerful motor-boat swept into sight, driven by a man in a peaked cap, wearing thick eyeglasses and a pointed moustache.

"Great pip! It's that scoundrel Henschel!" cried Johnny Gee. "If only we could capture the rotter, and—why, here's the very thing! We'll bag this boat!"

With an agile leap, the Remove captain landed in the Upper Fourth knits' motor-boat, and his chums tumbled in eagerly after him. There was a howl of wrath from Clarence Vane and his fellow-dandies inside the boathouse.

"Haw! You cheeky, Wemove wottahs!" shrieked

the priceless Clarence. "Come back with that bally boat!"

Zooooo-ooooooooom! With a roar, the motor-boat moved away from the landing-stage and headed swiftly upstream.

Suddenly, as they neared the creek, a dull roar sounded and they saw a pall of black smoke and earth rise behind the trees.

"My hat! That was an explosion in the creek!" gasped Johnny Gee. "What roguery is Henschel up to? Hold tight—I'm going down there!"

Johnny swung the tiller hard over. Low cries of amazement burst from the Removites' lips. The upper part of the creek had been blown up, and all the Professor's hidden apparatus lay in ruins in a great water-filled crater.

Johnny Gee manoeuvred the motor-boat to the side, and they made fast to a tree. As they raced towards the house, which was in confusion, Admiral Thresher came stamping across the grounds.

"What has happened, sir?" cried Johnny Gee. "We chased Henschel along from our boathouse, but he's gone now—"

"Yes, by thunder, and he's taken Professor Postlethwaite with him!" boomed the Admiral. "He exploded the new depth-charge in the creek, and ruined all our apparatus. Now the villain has taken Postlethwaite to his secret hide-out up the river and will attempt to force the secrets from him—I know his game, by thunder!"

Johnny Gee turned to his chums.

"We must try and trace where they've taken the Professor, and rescue him!" he exclaimed. "Mummy hat! I think I've got it! We'll dress up Catchpole's mechanical sculler to look like Admiral Thresher, set the merry contraption rowing down the river, and decoy the rotter out of hiding to give chase. Then we shall spot where he comes from, and rescue the Professor!"

"Great pip! It's a rare wheeze, Johnny!" Eagerly, they set the motor-boat racing back along the river, to the St. Giddy's boathouse. Timothy

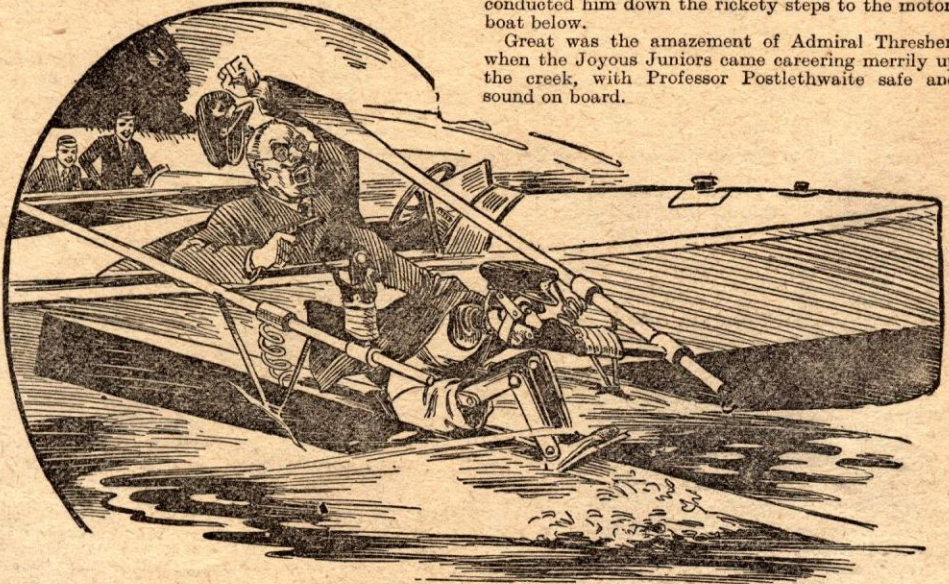
Catchpole was demonstrating his wonderful Robot Rower when they arrived. Swiftly, Johnny Gee put his idea to the Remove inventor.

"The Mechanical Pacer is at your disposal, my dear fellows!" he said. "I have made all the necessary adjustments, and you can go right ahead, my dear Gee."

Johnny Gee & Co. steered across to the tumble-down boathouse. They drove straight under the pilings, through the secret opening, and came to some wooden steps, that led upwards to a room above. There, lying bound and gagged on a pile of sacks, was Professor Postlethwaite.

Swiftly, the Joyous Juniors released him, and conducted him down the rickety steps to the motor-boat below.

Great was the amazement of Admiral Thresher, when the Joyous Juniors came careering merrily up the creek, with Professor Postlethwaite safe and sound on board.



RIVER-HOG ROBOT!—The robot suddenly ran amok! Working the oars at a terrific rate, it sped straight at the crook's boat, almost braining him.

Watched by a wondering crowd, Johnny Gee & Co. fetched the Admiral disguise that Tommy Rhodes had left in the boathouse. Johnny Gee worked deftly and swiftly, and it was amazing, the life-like resemblance to Admiral Thresher that it bore.

The Robot Rower was taken in tow, and the Joyous Juniors drove back to the creek in the motor-boat. Then Catchpole cranked up his apparatus, and it was set going.

Johnny Gee & Co. chuckled as they watched that marvellous contraption go rowing merrily up the river. The motor-boat followed, at a respectful distance.

All at once, Dick Bannister gripped his leader's arm.

"Look—over there, Johnny!"

The dummy Admiral had just rowed past a dilapidated, tumble-down boathouse. And now a section of the rotted staging had swung inwards. A low, grey motor-boat emerged and sped away up-river in pursuit of Catchpole's mechanical sculler!

It was the arch-spy's motor-boat, and Henschel himself was at the wheel! The villain drew a revolver, and commenced firing into the back of the dummy oarsman!

Johnny Gee & Co. chuckled—then they gasped in amazement. The Robot Rower was running amok! The dummy started to work those oars at a rate utterly beyond the powers of ordinary man, and the boat fairly shot up the river. Then the craft turned and whizzed back, straight at Henschel's boat.

Skilfully the villain dodged and sent his motor-boat sweeping up the river.

"Why, rake my boilers, this is amazing, boys!" he boomed. "You have done magnificently! But I mustn't detain you lads—you have a boat race to row."

Johnny Gee & Co. sped off in their commandeered motor-boat. The Admiral's launch followed, for both Admiral Thresher and Professor Postlethwaite intended to watch the race.

Two tall figures were standing grimly on the landing stage when the Remove heroes drew up. They were Mr. Cattermole and the Head.

"Boys!" cried Dr. Holroyd sternly. "How dare you flaunt my orders in this deliberate manner! You must all return to school with me immediately, for a flogging, and—"

"By gad, sir, these lads are to be highly commended!" roared Admiral Thresher, and he told what had happened.

At that juncture, Tommy Rhodes & Co. came rowing up in their boat.

"Are you scallywags ready!" demanded the Earlswood leader. "Of course, if you prefer to do the sensible thing, and scratch—"

"Rats!" responded Johnny Gee promptly, and he turned to Dr. Holroyd. "We are due to row against these Earlswood chaps now, sir," he said. "Our boat was smashed over the weir last night, and—er—we thought that the Sixth would lend us their boat."

"Why, certainly!" said Dr. Holroyd. The cheery Remove crew dived into the boathouse to change. Within a quarter of an hour the rival crews were at the starting point, jockeying into position.

"Are you ready?" cried the starter. "Go!"

Sixteen shining blades dipped into the water simultaneously, and both crews were off! Both strokes set a fast pace, and the rival racing skiffs glided swiftly along the river, the St. Giddy's boat slightly in the lead.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. drew level as they swept round the bend, and for nearly a quarter of a mile, they raced neck and neck.

Magnificently did those two schoolboy crews vie with one another along the last stretch! But within the last few yards of the winning post the St. Giddy's boat crept ahead, and a tumultuous roar of cheering arose as it flashed first past the post.

Tommy Rhodes, a sportsman through and through, clapped his rival on the back.

"Jolly good race, Gee!" he gasped breathlessly.

"Thanks!" grinned Johnny Gee. "Now we've got to lick Asheton."

Davenport's Duplicity.

FRIDAY came, and directly lessons were over, the heroes of the Remove went down to the river, for some last-minute practice.

Behind a clump of trees on the towing path, a tall, handsome fellow stood with scowling brow and glittering eyes, following the progress of the Remove oarsmen. Cecil Davenport turned to two roughly-

enormous spectacles, rowing a skiff and blinking in dismay at the poles and barbed wire that barricaded the creek mouth.

"Hallo, Catchpole!" exclaimed the Remove leader. "Anything important on board?"

"Indeed, yes, my dear Gee!" responded the schoolboy inventor solemnly. "I wish to submit to Admiral Thresher and Professor Postlethwaite my new depth charges—"

"D-d-depth charges! Great pip!" Johnny Gee & Co. blinked in great astonishment at the pile of small, round objects that lay at the bottom of Catchpole's boat. They were metal globes, of about the size of a cricket ball, fitted with floats, and each had a small nozzle on the top.

"They are quite safe, until they are under water and have been set afloat!" said Catchpole. "Besides, they are merely filled with ordinary gunpowder, which is not so effective as dynamite, and—dud-d-d-dear me! Are these horrid-looking fellows friends of yours?"

The juniors in the Remove boat turned sharply, and they gasped with alarm as they saw a number of rowing-boats converging on them, manned by riverside "toughs" from Merivale.

"Ere they are—the 'igh and mighty college kids!" roared their leader. "Go for 'em! Give the young swanks a ducking!"

At the sharp command from Johnny, the Removites



SUBMARINE SQUIBS.—Over went Catchpole's boat, his patent depth charges going with him. Terrific detonations rent the air as those mines exploded, upsetting the rowdies' craft.

elad fellows. He spoke in low, brusque tones, and certain money changed hands.

"Right you are, Master Davenport!" said one of them. "We'll fix things for you."

Johnny Gee & Co., meanwhile, were taking a breather at the island. Then they turned, and rowed leisurely back on their course.

When they came to the Admiral's creek once more, they beheld a tall, bony youth with a large head and

bent to their oars, and Snowball, the dusky cox, manoeuvred the tight craft deftly, so that it just missed the bow of the leading rowdies' boat.

The river rowdies started in pursuit. They rapidly overhauled Timothy Catchpole, who was making a desperate effort to escape, and his skiff was grabbed in heavy, ruthless hands.

"Ooogh! I s-s-s-say—Yarooooooop!"

Splash! The boat went over, and Catchpole

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disappeared below the surface. He was followed by his "demonstration" depth charges.

Bang! Crash! BANG! Terrific explosions rent the air, and the water arose in huge waves, all around the attackers' craft. Fortunately, Catchpole's depth charges, being filled with home-made gunpowder, had no drastic effects. The attackers' boats were simply blown over, and the occupants thrown out into the river.

"**Yah! Help! Geroogh! Gug! Oooogh!**" The rowdies gurgled and spluttered, while Johnny Gee & Co. roared with laughter.

Suddenly out of the bushes by the side of the creek two, scared figures emerged. They were Admiral Thresher and the Professor.

"By thunder! What's happened, boys?" demanded the Admiral. "Who's been throwing bombs—hey?"

Chortling with laughter, Johnny Gee explained what had happened, while the rowdies clambered out of the river and slunk away.

"Well, bend my bulkheads, this—is this infamous!" roared the Admiral. "It isn't safe for any craft to use the river until all those depth charges have been taken out again, or exploded! Split my turret, it's disgraceful!" And he stamped away with Professor Postlethwaite.

"Oh, my hat! Of course!" gasped the Remove captain. "If they aren't fished out by to-morrow, the boat-race will be off!"

Trapped on the Thames.

[T was in very anxious mood that the heroes of the Remove rose next morning. At prayers, however, all their hopes were dashed when Dr. Holroyd announced that no racing was to take place on the river until Catchpole's submarine squibs had been removed.

Later on the boys of the Remove were most amazed when they saw Johnny Gee, who had been summoned to the Head's study, dashing along the passage, waving his arms and laughing in an abandon of joy!

"Hooray!" yelled the Remove leader wildly. "Let us rejoice, chaps! The boat-race is coming off,

after all—on the Thames! On the genuine 'Varsity course from Putney to Mortlake! Admiral Thresher has turned up trumps—the noble old sea-dog! He and Professor Postlethwaite are going to London, to transfer their plans and eode and what-not to Riverside Manor, Admiral Thresher's house. But they haven't forgotten us! Admiral Thresher has arranged with our Head and the Head of Asheton College for the crews to be his guests at Riverside Manor for the day. We're going to see the real Boat Race from the Admiral's private motor-launch, and then our own boat-race will take place, over the same course."

"Gee whizz! That's great!"

The railway company were running a special cheap excursion train to London for the Boat Race, and when Dr. Holroyd further announced that any boys who so desired might make up a party, under the supervision of prefects, there was general rejoicing.

The train which left Merivale for London was packed with eager St. Giddy's boys. At Lexham Junction, the Asheton fellows came on board in full force, and the journey to London was enlivened by the exchange of good-natured chaff between the rival schoolboys.

When they reached London, Johnny Gee & Co. were "treated" to taxis by Lord Reggie, and three taxi-loads of jubilant boyhood threaded their way through the traffic-filled streets of London, making for the Admiral's house.

Admiral Thresher and Professor Postlethwaite were there, and they gave their schoolboy guests a warm welcome. The motor-launch was ready at the Admiral's private landing-stage.

The sounds of tumultuous cheering greeted their ears as they sped along to Putney. The Oxford and Cambridge crews were coming out for the big race.

The Boat Race commenced, and Admiral Thresher's motor-launch followed up the crews. Eagerly did Johnny Gee & Co. watch the magnificent rowing of the 'Varsity crews.

When Mortlake was reached, and the race was over, Johnny Gee & Co. stood up in the Admiral's launch and cheered the victors to the echo.

The motor-launch returned to Riverside Manor, and the Admiral and Professor Postlethwaite went off to do some important work while Johnny Gee and the chums of Study No. 4 took out a double-sculled skiff. They passed beneath the wide arches of Putney Bridge and went onward.

"My hat! What's this silly ass doing?" exclaimed Johnny Gee, as a large, fast motor-launch came speeding towards them, apparently running them down, and Snowball had to steer the skiff close in to the tall, dingy wharves.

To the juniors' amazement, the motor-launch slowed up as it drew alongside, and a dark, bearded figure in peaked cap and heavy top-coat peered at them out of the cockpit. The man's deep-set eyes glittered through the thick lenses of his eyeglasses. Henschel, the spy!

A thrill of horror ran through the Removites as they saw the blue-black barrel of an automatic gleaming in Henschel's hand.

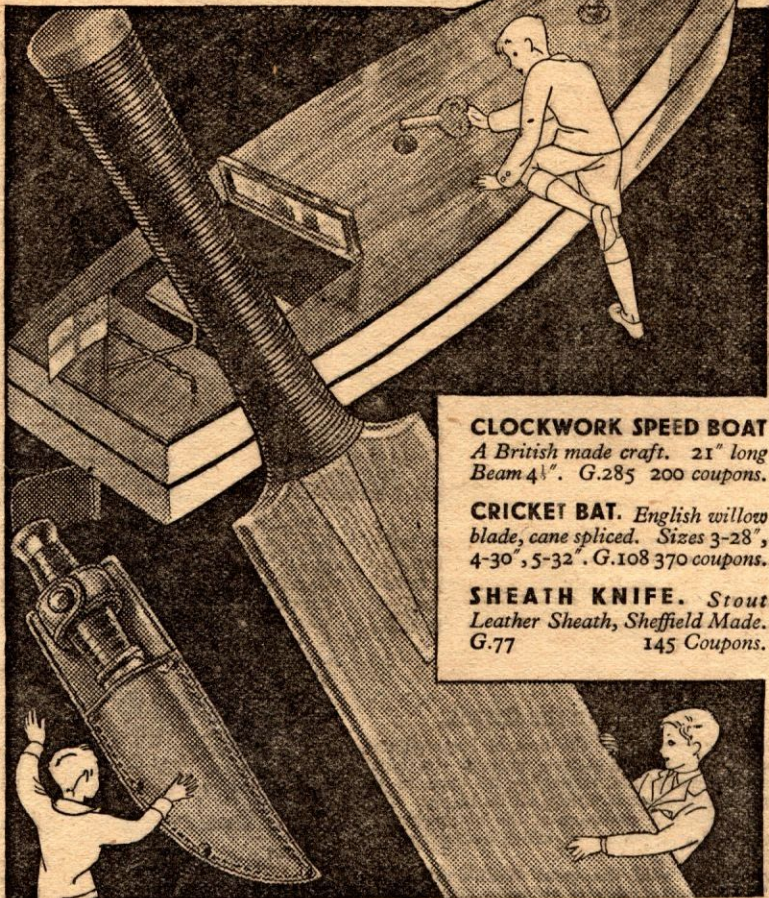
"Row across to that wharf!" hissed the spy, indicating a grim, dark, deserted building abutting on the water's edge. "Ach! Do not try to escape, my young friends, or I will shoot—and this gun is silent!"

Under the menace of the revolver, they brought the skiff alongside the crazy, rotted landing-stage of the wharf. At a curt order to enter the building, the juniors went in, followed by Henschel.

The trapped juniors found themselves inside a deserted, stink-smelling room. Henschel moved,

(Continued on page 35)

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Washington on the Carpet.

THE senior member of the firm of Hayseed and Buskit, Private Detectives, entered the office of that organisation, managing, for once, to get the door open without it falling off its hinges. Tim Buskit, the youthful assistant of the darkie sleuth, was within, admiring a carpet which overspread the floor of the "office."

"Say, now!" said the great Washington Hayseed. "If we ain't done gone an' come over all posh of a sudden! Where'd you get it, Tim?"

"Bid two an' ninnepence for it at an auction," answered Tim, meditatively. "But there's more in that carpet than meets the eye, Wash. By the way, have a cigar."

Washington's eyes grew round with wonder.

"Cigars! Say, what's de mean'n' of all dis yar gorgeousness?" He approached the cigar-box, which stood invitingly on the desk before him, and beaming in pleasurable anticipation, lifted the lid.

Zzzzzzz! Washington fell back with a yell of horror as a green snake, with bright, yellow spots, shot out of the box and leapt towards his face. Almost at the same instant the four corners of the carpet rose up and closed round him like a bag.

Then, from some vague point in space, came the dim, far-away sound of Tim Buskit's voice:

"This," said the voice, calmly, "is the Buskit Patent Reciprocating Crook-Catcher. I just wanted to show it to you, Wash."

"Lemme go! Lemme— Wow! Ouch!"

The folds of carpet about Washington suddenly relaxed, and the floor rose up and hit him a violent blow. The coon sleuth blinked around as the outer world was revealed. Then he gave another yell, and clutched the green and yellow spotted snake, which was entwining his neck affectionately—to discover it to be merely the familiar joke contrivance of springs and canvas. Washington glared at his playful chum menacingly, and scrambled to his feet.

"See yar, young fella! What's de mean'n' of insultin' my indignity wid joke snakes an—"

"All right, Washing!" replied Tim, backing away discreetly. "I just wanted to demonstrate my invention. The snake's just a little stage-effect to take the crook off his guard while we switch on the works."

"De crook?" queried Washington. "What crook?"

"Why, any crook. Don't you realise, Wash, that as our fame grows wider, our lives become more endangered. Any day some criminal, thirsting for vengeance, might pounce in here an' try to bump us off. Come over here to the window, an' I'll show you what a smart idea it is."

Washington conquered his urge for immediate reprisals, and went over to the window. Tim's "invention" consisted of four cunningly concealed wires attached one to each corner of the carpet and passed over pulleys fixed on the ceiling. All the wires were led over to the window and attached to an extra-heavy weight, which normally stood outside on the window-sill when the carpet was lying on the floor. If the weight was pushed off the window-sill, the carpet naturally ascended to the ceiling, and a further contrivance drew the corners of the carpet towards each other, so that it formed a bag, enclosing any unfortunate person who happened to stand on the carpet. The procedure was, according to Tim, first to ask your victim to have a cigar. Then, when he was taken off his guard by the jumping snake, to rush over and push the weight off the window-sill, thus making him a prisoner in the folds of the carpet.

" Dere do seem to be someth'n' in it," admitted Washington. " De only fly in de appointment seems to be de cigar business. If a crook was about to blow yo' head offen you, it don't seem kinder nat'ral to say, 'Have a cigar, old-timer, jest to show yo' Ah don't bear yo' no ill-malice!'"

" Oh, that'll be all right," answered Tim, optimistically. " Anyhow, we'll see if I can't think of something better when I've got more time. I've been waiting for you to arrive so that I can buzz off. I've decided to give myself the afternoon off, to watch the Arsenic play Chidwingsford Friday. So long!"

Washington frowned at the door whence Tim Buskit had disappeared, and as he frowned, the door re-opened, and the head of that same youth bobbed round the side of it.

" Ly the way, Wash, I forgot to mention there's a note addressed to you on the desk. It was delivered by hand this morning. See you later."

Tim's head was again lost to view before Washington could reply, so the coon detective turned to the desk and picked up the letter. Tearing open the envelope, he extracted a single sheet of notepaper, on which was written:

Washington Hayseed, us guys of the profess have stood your interference too long. You got it coming to you. From now on you can consider yourself on the spot.

Washington's optics bulged, and his mouth lolled open as if he had lost control of it.

" G-g-g-gosh! D-d-dey're gonna b-b-bump me off!"

The coon sleuth turned round swiftly and looked behind him as though expecting to see his would-be murderers already there. The absence of his young assistant gave him a sinking feeling in his tummy.

" S-say! What'm Ah to do?" Washington asked empty space, and as it offered no suggestions, went on: " Ah gotta do someth'n'! An d-don't wanna be bumped off!"

The Cop's Plot.

IT was about ten minutes after he had read the warning letter that Washington Hayseed dashed into the nearest police station and demanded breathlessly to see the inspector.

" I'll go and find the inspector for you, Mr. Hayseed," said the policeman in charge, for Wash was well known to the police nowadays. " Do you mind waiting?"

The policeman climbed off his high stool and left Washington alone in the charge-room. A buzz of conversation from an adjoining room startled the coon sleuth. Involuntarily he listened.

" Go on!" laughed a voice. " You don't mean you did it!"

" 'Course!" said another. " I said I would. That Washington Hayseed thinks he's smarter than us police, and so I thought I'd have my little joke and give him a scare to take him down a peg. I sent him an anonymous letter saying he was going to be bumped off by gangsters! Lor! I'd give a month's pay to see his face when he reads it!"

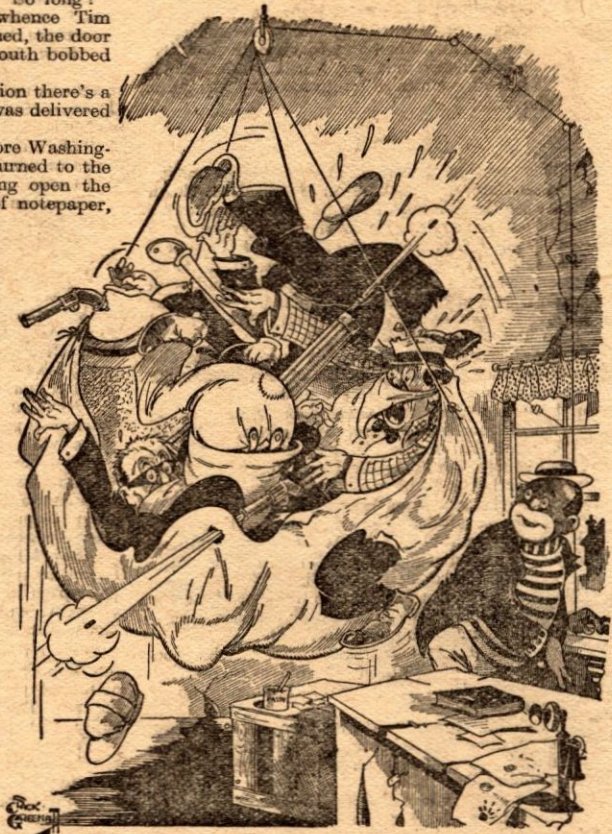
He would probably have given another month's pay to see Washington's face as he listened in the next room—it was well worth it, anyhow!

There was a loud guffaw of laughter, and then

another voice said: " You haven't carried the joke far enough, Simmy. Why not dress up as gunmen, and go and give him a real good scare?"

" I say, but we could do it, though!" announced another chuckling voice. " We're all off duty this afternoon—the three of us. Jiminy, boys! We can't miss a chance like this! Joke's don't often come our way in the force!"

" We'll do it!" said another voice. " You see if you can't rake up three masks or something to cover our faces, Jim, and you, Simmy, you can..."



SORE GUNMEN SOAR!—Wash pushed the weight off the sill, and the animated carpet closed round the gunmen. Yelling wildly they were hoisted into the air.

Washington Hayseed heard no more, for at that point of the conspiracy somebody unfortunately closed the door. But Washington had heard enough.

" So it's deir little joke! Ah guess Ah seen some mighty low-down, no-account sences of humoroussness in mah time, but dese yar cops take de first prize! Jealous, dat's what dey is—jealous of mah brilliantine career! Ah've a mind to——"

A fleeting thought of Buskit's Patent Reciprocating Crook Catcher flitted through his mind. Washington gazed entranced into space, as one who sees a vision.

At that moment the Inspector appeared, accompanied by the policeman who had set forth in search of him.

"Afternoon, Hayseed! You wanted to see me?"

"Er—er—er—shuha, spector," hesitated Washington, finding himself with changed plans. "Ah jest wanted to say—Ah—Ah jest wanted to ask yo' de time, 'spector. Yo' remember de words of Spear-shaker, de great dromedary, 'When yo' want to know de time, ask a policeman!'"

"See here, Hayseed, if this is your idea of a joke, I—"

But Washington did not enlarge on the theme. He withdrew hastily, and hurried back to the offices of Hayseed and Buskit, chuckling to himself gleefully.

"Ah sorta fancie dem guys will kinder get a surprise when dey comes to bump me off! Ah guess dey shuha will!"

On the Spot.

AFTER testing Buskit's Patent Reciprocating Crook Catcher, Washington Hayseed sat down to wait the coming of the imitation gunmen as patiently as he could. He whiled away the time pleasantly enough picturing the chagrin of the jokers when they would have to explain themselves to their inspector, who, of course, Washington would send for when they were secured, under the pretence that he believed them to be real gunmen. Wash could not help chuckling at the thought.

He heard stealthy footsteps, at last, outside the office door. Counterfeiting a look of earnestness, he pretended to busy himself at the desk.

Suddenly the door was flung open violently. A gent with his face half covered by a mask, and with a large, black, automatic pistol in his hand, strode in. Two others, similarly disguised, followed. One of them carried a light machine-gun of the type favoured by Chicago thug circles.

"We come to gitcha!" snarled the leading gent. "Howdedo, gents!" said Washington, smiling blandly. "Ah shuha guess we'm have'n some gosh-awful weather lately, don't yo' t'ink?"

"We ain't come to talk 'bout de weather!" hissed the masked man. "We come to give youse yours, buddy! We come to bump youse off!"

"Now, ain't dat jest too bad," said Washington with a sad shake of the head. "Ah's so gosh-awful busy to-day dat Ah'm 'fraid Ah'll have to ask you to call to-morrow to—"

"Say! Take an eyeful a' dis!" said a second of the masked men, thrusting forth the machine-gun. "Shuha!" said Washy cheerfully. "Ah's allus ready to oblige."

He closed one eye and then spied down the barrel of the machine-gun after the manner of one using a telescope.

"Ah can't see nuth'n. When's de little birdie 'pear?" Then he added: "But about dis little matter of bein' bumped off? Ah b'lieve dat's what yo' called 'bout, huh?"

The gunmen gasped at his calmness. "Now, see here, buddy," said the leader in a more friendly tone. "We admire your nerve, but we got our business principles to think of. We're only hardworking gunmen what's got their livin' to earn. So be a pal an' be bumped orf quiet."

"Well," said Washington with a shrug of the shoulders, "if you put it dat way Ah s'pose Ah can't do nuth'n else but dismablige yo'. Now, what position would yo' like me in, full-face or profile?"

"Aw-shucks, please yourself about that, buddy. How'd youse like your body to look when it's found? It depends on that."

"Ah'd shuha like to be seated in mah chair wid a

happy smile on mah face, like yo' read 'bout in story books."

A broad smile spread across Washington's ample features.

"Or mebbe Ah'd look better stand'n up?"

Washington tried it, leaning against the desk office in a posed attitude as of one about to be photographed.

"How does dat look!"

"It sure looks swell, buddy," was the slightly impatient answer, "but me an' my mates is busy men—"

The man with the machine-gun crouched down and took careful aim at Washington. He took the first pressure on the trigger.

"Now ain't dat jest low-down of me," said Washington. "Ah ain't asked yo' to have a smoke. Might as well be comfy while we're on de job, what? Have a cigar."

"Thanks, buddy, but—"

"Do have a cigar," insisted Washington. "Jest to show dere ain't no ill feel'n between us."

"Okay, buddy, anythin' t'oblige."

The leading gunman opened the cigar-box. Nothing happened.

"Guess you're out of cigars," he said. "The box is empty."

Washington Hayseed blinked and then he stared round the room until his eyes rested on a green toy snake with yellow spots, lying in a corner of the room. He had forgotten to replace the thing in its box, after the last experiment!

"Gosh! Dey must've all bin smoked," said Washington.

"Now, are you ready?" said the man with the machine-gun, crouching down again. "Look pleasant."

The man with the gun levelled the muzzle at Washington's head, which was split laterally by the broadest of broad grins. Again the gunman was about to pull the trigger when a bright idea flashed into Washington's head.

"Say," he cried. "Jest hold on a minute. Ah forgot to pull down de blind of de window out of disrespect fo' mah corpse. Ah'd be obliged, too, if yo' gents would remove yo' hats after my decease. Scuse me, but Ah like all de formalities."

The gunmen began to show signs of impatience, but Washington tactfully ignored them, and walked calmly over to the window. He risked a glance behind. The three men were standing plumb in the centre of the carpet.

With a sharp jab of his hands, Washington sent the heavy weight, which controlled the apparatus, over the edge of the window-sill. He heard the crash and clatter of guns flying from the gangsters' hands and a volley of wild yells, and turning, was just in time to see the animated carpet close round a chaos of arms and legs.

For a moment or two he surveyed the swelling bulging bag and listened with satisfaction to the wild yells from within. Then he took up a small, springy board that he had handy, for chastising purposes, and started in to work in earnest.

"This yar," he said, punctuating his remarks with resounding thwacks on the bulging carpet, "is to teach yo' cops not to try an' play jokes on a smart, fast-rate defective like Washin't'n Hayseed! Yo' thought yo' was mighty smart—*thwack!*—but—*wallop!*—Ah—*thud!* I was smarter—*Biff—by—smack!*—long chalks!"

The carpet heaved and writhed madly, but Washington kept on relentlessly, until the office of Hayseed and Buskit was thick with dust beaten from the carpet—at the gangsters' expense.

(Continued on page 36.)

PAL OF THE MONSTERS. The Prehistoric Boy on Board a Mystery Ship.



Lashed to the Mast, Duke watched the maddened Orang-utan shambling towards him with deliberate malevolence. In another second those huge, cruel, half-human hands would be at the explorer's throat.

A Queer Passenger.

"WHO is this passenger ya want me to take aboard?" Captain Jabez Stellheim's eyes narrowed.

"Well, ze fact is——" Professor Lucien Temeraire began, and then broke off in embarrassment. The little Frenchman's British pal, Duke Humphreys, finished the sentence for him. "He's rather a queer customer, that's all, Captain Stellheim."

A look of greedy cunning crossed the Yankee skipper's face. "Ah, that's how the wind lies!" he cried with a wink. "Wal, if the passage money's big enough, I don't care if he's a criminal!"

"Oh, it's nothing like that, skipper!" laughed Duke. "But you can see for yourself." He stepped across to the open door and gave a low whistle. An astonishing creature leapt into the untidy little office. He was smaller than a man, but his arms were disproportionately long and powerful, and it had a hairy, simian-like face. A stream of guttural words issued from his lips. "My name Pal! Very well, thank you! How de do?"

"Rot my eyes—it talks!" gasped the skipper. "He, please, not it," put in Duke quietly. "Pal is a man—as much a man as you or I, skipper." He then explained to the astonished Yankee that he and Temeraire had discovered Pal (short for Palaeolithic) in the lost Albino Mountains of Siberia, one of a race of men which had somehow survived the last Great Ice Age. They had decided to take Pal to Europe, and had just arrived at the little Japanese seaport of Nagasaka. They did not wish their secret to be revealed, however, so, instead of approaching the usual travel agencies, they were on the look-out for a discreet skipper.

"Professor Temeraire is returning to Siberia to excavate some mammoth-ivory we found there," went on Duke, "but I shall come with Pal."

Stellheim studied Pal with fascinated eyes, and then burst into a roar of laughter. "Wal, I guess he's a rum crittur!" he cried. "But I've had queerer passengers in my time. As a matter of fact, my cargo——" he broke off, to add abruptly: "A thousand dollars!"

"Oh, that's absurd!" said Duke. "We'll pay five hundred."

"Your secret's worth that," began Stellheim

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shrewdly, but at last he compromised on eight hauled, to be paid in advance. As they bent over the table to sign the agreement a horrid burst of howling, like demoniac laughter, rent the air outside.

"Good Heavens! What's that?" gasped Duke. Before the skipper could answer, the howls were repeated, though more faintly. Pal, his hair stiffening with horror, darted under the table.

Stellheim gave a bluff laugh. "That's nothing!" he exclaimed. "It's probably some Japs mourning their dead in the street. Come on, you ain't signed your name!"

A few minutes later Duke, Temeraire, and Pal were walking back to their lodgings through the sordid dockland streets, the strange, eerie howls completely forgotten.

Horror Let Loose.

THE next day Duke and Pal said good-bye to Temeraire, and, as soon as it was dusk, went aboard the s.s. *Liberty*. Stellheim showed them to a comfortable little cabin with two bunks.

Duke felt rather tired, and, so, after a meal, he and Pal turned in.

He was soon fast asleep again, and it was already morning and they were at sea when he was awakened by a loud cry which made him sit up in his bunk with his heart beating rapidly. A guttural voice was yelling: "Jee-ook! Jee-ook!" and a glance at Pal's bunk showed him that it was empty.

"Pal sounds frightened!" he thought; and once more he pulled on some clothes and went hurriedly on deck. The sight that met his eyes at first astounded and then enraged him.

Captain Stellheim and some of the deck-hands—a motley collection of lascars, Japs, Chinks and down-and-out whites—were gathered in an excited group round a large cage. It took Duke several seconds to realise that Pal was inside it; moulting his rage at the indignity of captivity.

"Jee-ook! Jee-ook!" he howled, the moment he saw his friend. "Let me out!"

Duke pushed his way through the throng. "What is the meaning of this, Captain Stellheim?" he demanded angrily. "Did you put Pal in this cage?"

"Sure! It's the right place for a chimp!" grinned the Yank. His air of bluff heartiness had vanished to give place to open insolence and cupidity. "He's gonna berth in the hold, with the rest of my cargo!"

"I know he's not!" snapped Duke, and shoving the skipper aside he released the catch of the door. Before the others could prevent him, Pal had sprung out from the cage and went up the mast.

"Hey! catch him!" shouted Stellheim. There was a rush for Pal, but Duke, his eyes blazing, barred the way. His fist met the jaw of a lascar, who crumpled to the deck. A violent struggle ensued, in which Duke's superior strength and courage might have triumphed over the undersized deck hands, but Stellheim, stepping up behind him, struck him a treacherous blow over the ear with a marlinspike. The young athlete crashed half-stunned to the deck.

"Lash the young fool to the mast!" rasped Stellheim savagely. In a few moments a couple of seamen had bound Duke upright to the mast.

"This is an outrage, you scoundrel!" gritted Duke in bewildered anger. "You've taken my money—"

"Yep, and I'm gonna keep it!" jeered the skipper. "Did ya think I was gonna give you and your precious chimp a passage to England? No, sir! I'm bound for the States. I've already got a cargo of chimps below—orang-utans they call 'em—which I'm selling to an American zoo. Your chimp is gonna join 'em, and you're going on a trip on ya own! Lower the boat, men!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded several grinning seamen, and they rushed to one of the boats.

During the last few minutes attention had been diverted from Pal to Duke, but now it was suddenly attracted to the primitive boy again. Hanging like a monkey from the mast, he was reaching down with one long arm in an attempt to free Duke.

"Hey! catch that chimp!" yelled Stellheim. Instantly those who were not engaged in lowering the boat made a rush for Pal. He shrank away, but one man clutched his wrist, and with a sharp jerk brought him tumbling to the deck.

Gibbering with rage and fear, Pal struggled to his feet. A scream of pain rang out as his sharp teeth met in a lascars' calf. Another man started back from a slashing blow of his clawed hand. The next moment he had broken free and was bounding across the deck on all fours.

"After him!" roared Stellheim, hurling the marlinspike at the retreating boy without effect.

The prehistoric boy made straight for the hatchway which had been opened specially for his benefit. He dropped down the ladder through the open gap, and Stellheim could have trapped him by closing the hatch. But, instead, the infuriated Yankee clattered down the ladder in pursuit.

Suddenly a frightful chorus of maniacal howls—hideous, uncontrolled sounds—welled up from the depths of the hold. There came a curse—a scream—and a triumphant yell from Pal.

The next instant there were stampeding steps on the ladder and Stellheim appeared through the hatch in frantic haste. His face was white with terror.

"Quick! Get a gun, somebody! He's let the chimps loose!" were the words that came bubbling from his ashen lips.

The terrified seamen scattered in panic as a huge male orang-utan clambered out on deck with clumsy deliberation.

There was a scurry of steps across the deck, and the slamming of doors. The crew had taken refuge with Stellheim in the deckhouse.

The next to emerge from the hold was Pal. He shot out through the hatchway as if propelled by some unseen force, and, seeing the great ape master

of the field, made a flying leap for the ropes of the main-mast again.

Then there poured through the hatchway a small army of long-armed, gibbering monsters. They were all orang-utans, of varying sizes, though none so enormous as the "old man" who had first appeared.

Pal, terrified by the effects of his bold and desperate move, hung to the rigging above Duke's head. The sweat burst from the young athlete's temples. "Heaven help me!" he whispered, struggling to free himself from the biting ropes that held him to the mast.

Terror On The Deep.

TWISTING his head round, Duke was just able to see the big orang-utan cautiously descending the companion steps which led to the deckhouse door behind him. Then the monster passed out of sight below the level of the deck.

He stared at the sinister group above the open hatchway. The apes were moving about with nervous curiosity, getting accustomed to their new surroundings. So far they had not realised his presence, though he stood upright within a few yards of them.

Man and beast exchanged a glance which held all the primitive fury and terror of the jungle. The ceast, maddened by pain, saw a victim ready for his wrath. Duke fought desperately with his bonds, and screamed: "Pal! Pal! Help me!"

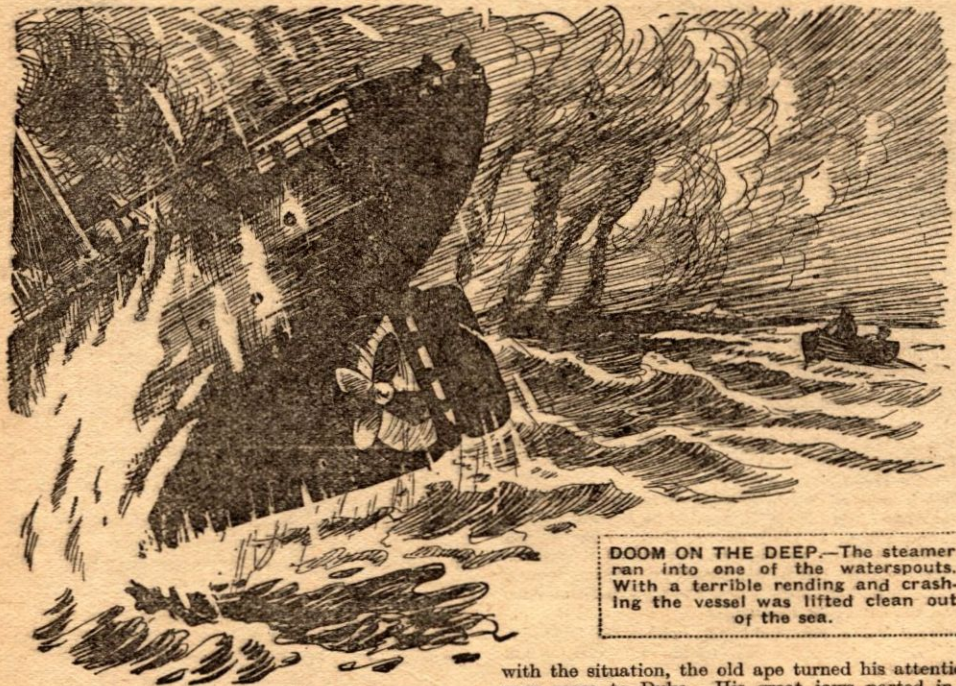
The orang-utan shambled towards him with deliberate malevolence. In another second those huge, cruel, half-human hands would be at his throat.

But at that critical moment a diversion occurred which caused the monster to wheel round. Pal, seeing Stelheim's marlinspike lying in the scuppers, had dropped lightly down on to the deck.

A young orang-utan was actually stretching forward to pick up the short iron bar when Pal, with incredible speed, whipped across the deck and snatched it almost out of his hands.

Pal launched himself once more into the shrouds, this time pursued by the disappointed ape. The other orang-utans, excited by their companion's cries, joined in the chase.

The "old man" who had been threatening Duke stared up at the singular sight, uncertain what action to take. Satisfied at last that his family could deal



DOOM ON THE DEEP.—The steamer ran into one of the waterspouts. With a terrible rending and crashing the vessel was lifted clean out of the sea.

Suddenly, with the unexpectedness of a thunder-clap, a shot rang out—followed by an inhuman scream.

Stelheim had found a gun and fired through the door. The blind shot winged the great ape in one arm, and, more alarmed than hurt, he bounded back, biting and licking the wound.

Another deafening report, and the crackle of splintering wood! The bullet whizzed by the orang-utan's head, and, seized with terror, he turned round and retreated up the companion-way. As he reached the deck, whirling round as if to defy the unseen enemies in the rear, his eyes fell on Duke, bound to the mast.

with the situation, the old ape turned his attention once more to Duke. His great jaws parted in a grinning snarl, and his enormous arms rose in the air, the hands curving for a death-grip.

At that moment the marlinspike, released by Pal, dropped through the air at increasing speed and buried itself in his skull like a stone going through butter. The "old man" crashed forward on his face, and lay, a grotesque carcase, on the deck at Duke's feet!

Almost immediately after, Pal, eluding the clutches of two of the nearest apes, slid down the mast and landed on Duke's shoulders. In a flash his pointed teeth were biting through the ropes. Duke felt them slackening, and, bracing himself for a mighty effort, he tore himself free.

"Thank you, Pal!" he gasped. "Well done!" There was no time to be lost, for the apes were converging on the two strange chums.

"The boat!" panted Duke—and raced across the deck. Pal bounded at his side.

With desperate haste they clambered over the side and saw the boat which the seamen had launched. As they slipped down the side of the steamer an ape's hairy face appeared over the bulwarks and glared down at them.

They dropped into the boat. Duke unmoored the little vessel and, snatching up an oar, gave a shove which sent it bounding away from the side of the steamer. One of the apes took a flying leap at the boat, but fell short and splashed into the sea.

"We must get away," panted Duke. "We might strike an island—or get picked up by a steamer!"

There was a strong current running which was carrying them in the same direction as the steamer, whose wheel had been abandoned. Duke dipped his oars and tried to fight against the pull of the water.

Suddenly the boat heeled over to one side, and Pal clutched his arm. The drowning ape was clinging to the side of the little craft; his wet, terrified face was peering up at them out of the waves.

Duke felt almost sorry for the poor beast, but he realised that it would be fatal to let him clamber on board. He raised one oar to strike at him, slipped and fell in the bottom of the boat. In his fall the oar escaped from his hand and was carried off in the current.

"That was clumsy!" exclaimed Duke. "We mustn't lose that oar!"

He pulled hard with the other, and the boat went round in a circle. The oar was now dancing on the waves, far out of reach, and the current was drawing them nearer and nearer to the steamer again.

For the rest of the day Duke laboured to recover the lost oar; and late in the afternoon his efforts were successful. He was faint from exhaustion and lack of food, yet he settled resolutely down to row away from the steamer. It was hard work, but he was relieved to find that he was drawing steadily away from the ill-fated *Liberty*.

As night was falling he heard shots from the little tramp, and later saw dark figures moving on the deck, and the flash of fire-arms. Stelheim and the crew had issued forth to attack the apes, but darkness came before Duke could learn the outcome of the battle.

He instructed Pal in the art of rowing, and then handed the oars over to him while he snatched a few hours of sleep. In the morning, Duke awoke from a troubled sleep to see the steamer riding the waves in the distance, but with a steadiness that suggested Stelheim had triumphed over the apes and was once more master of his own ship.

"Our luck's out, Pal!" he whispered hoarsely. "When that scoundrel sees us he will probably run us down!"

His words proved prophetic. After a while they saw the *Liberty* slowly turning round until her prow was pointing in their direction.

Duke felt almost too exhausted to take to the oars again, and Pal was lying spent and helpless in the bottom of the boat. The heat was stifling, too, and black, thundery clouds hung over them, so low that they seemed almost to meet the water.

"Yes, our luck's out!" repeated Duke hopelessly. "Even if we had escaped Stelheim we should be drowned in the storm. Look!"

He pointed—though Pal was too far gone to follow his outstretched finger—at the agitated rim of the horizon. There was obviously some disturbance in the elements. The sky was inky-black behind the

approaching steamer, and the massed clouds were gathered together as if in cogitation.

A cold wind swept over the sea, curling the waves and drawing the clouds together. Gradually a spiral was formed out of the latter, which now hung down right over the waves. For a breathless second or two the water seemed to hesitate and tremble; then it rose unsteadily in a whirling column behind the steamer, sucked up by a whirlwind, and sea and sky, meeting, clung together in unwholesome fellowship! "Good heavens!" gasped Duke. "A waterspout!"

The crew of the *Liberty* had evidently seen it, too, for the vessel suddenly changed her course and darted aside like a frightened beetle. The waterspout began to move at a terrific rate, bearing down on the ship. Then suddenly, in another part of the sea, sky and ocean met, and two giant columns, black and threatening, swept straight towards the *Liberty*.

Yet another and another cylinder of inky water joined sea to sky, and soon the *Liberty* was lost in a network of waterspouts!

Then Stelheim lost his head. Instead of keeping straight on, he swung the steamer round—changed his mind—altered his course again—and finally put her head right into one of the whirling spirals. Even at that distance Duke heard the crash of the falling waters as they burst about her decks.

The next moment another spout struck her in the stern, and lifted her bodily out of the water. They saw her screw churning the air. The giant column burst with a thunderous report, and, as the vessel heeled over beneath the weight of falling water, two more spouts smote her amidships with a roar like heavy artillery!

Duke hid his eyes. . . . When he lowered his hands again he saw the nose of the *Liberty* lifting out of the seething water. The rest of her hull was buried beneath the wallowing waves. She was sinking.

"It's our turn next!" Duke groaned, and his face whitened at the menace of the advancing elements.

One vast trunk of seething water was striding on ahead of the rest, like the leader of a phantom army. Duke knew that it would pluck his little boat out of the water and pass on relentless as fate. Yet even as he gazed, fascinated, at the advancing spiral, there was the crash of a report, and it exploded. Half the sky seemed to come down with it. Another spiral burst into a cloud of spray. Then another melted to hissing foam, while the air vibrated with the thunder of detonations.

Pal was pawing his arm and pointing frenziedly behind them. Duke, bewildered, knowing only that the frightful danger had been miraculously averted, turned—and saw a British cruiser bearing down towards them!

Unseen by him, the battleship had been approaching until it came within range of the forest of waterspouts, which it had utterly destroyed with its guns.

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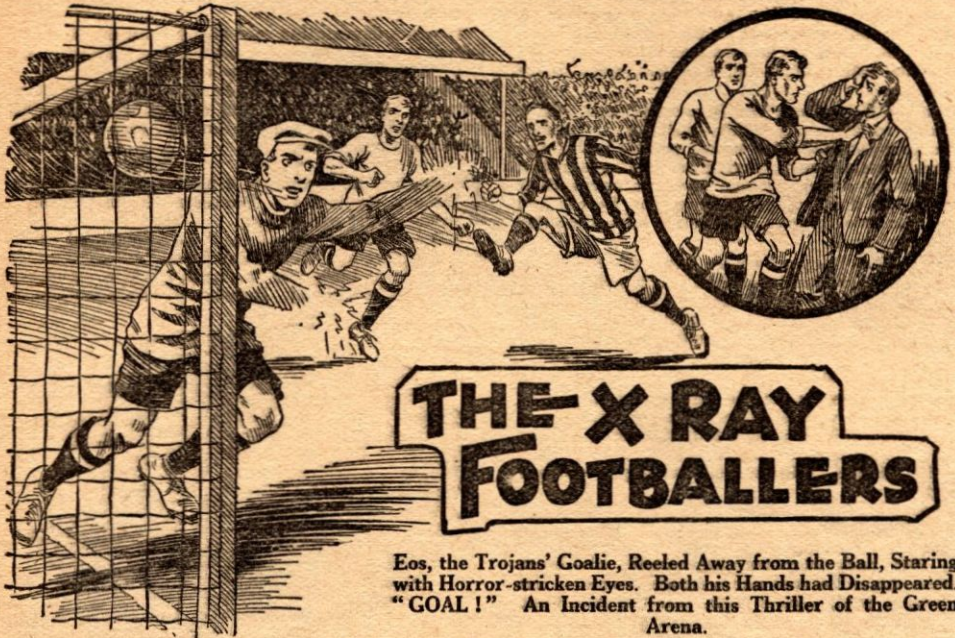
THE first person on whom Duke's eyes fell when he boarded the cruiser was—Professor Temeraire!

"*Eh bien*, you are surprised to see me, *n'est-ce pas?*" cried the little Frenchman. "But we have been searching for you ever since you left Japan! No sooner had you gone than we heard that Captain Stelheim was a crook who had stolen a cargo of orang-utans which anzuzer ship was to take to England! Where are zey now—ze poor chimps?"

"Under the sea, with Stelheim, where I should be," replied Duke grimly, "if it hadn't been for Pal," and he stretched out his hand and seized the hairy paw of his prehistoric pal.

Meet three staunch pals next week in an eerie, hair-raising, old-time yarn. They are three soldiers of fortune who face a terrible foe in CASTLE SINISTER.

THE GOALIE WHOSE HANDS VANISHED ! Big thrills with the Tin-Can Trojans in the Semi-Finals—and Zorro the Sinister.



Eos, the Trojans' Goalie, Reeled Away from the Ball, Staring with Horror-stricken Eyes. Both his Hands had Disappeared. "GOAL!" An Incident from this Thriller of the Green Arena.

The Game of the Season.

IT looked like being a record for Maple Park—the fine, up-to-date stadium of Maplestead City. To the merry clicking of the turnstiles, the crowds were pouring in their thousands into the great football arena.

To-day's game promised to be of exceptional interest—of breathless excitement. For it was one of the semi-finals for the English Cup. Rodwell Rangers, the world-famous First Division club, was to play Welham Wanderers—and the ground, of course, was neutral.

Already the excitement was at fever-heat, for Welham Wanderers, otherwise known as the "Tin-Can Trojans," were not ordinary footballers. They were the adopted sons of Lord Welham—a lowly amateur team which had forged its winning way, round after round, to the semi-final.

The whole country was amazed. Lord Welham and his "Miracle Boys" were the talk of the nation. The scientist-peer had adopted the boys in babyhood, and it had been one of his whims to name them after mythical Greek gods. Well-named they were, too—for with their magnificent physique and athletic prowess they were like young gods, indeed!

In the well-equipped dressing-room reserved for the Wanderers, the mighty Ajax and his team were changing for the great game. Ajax was the manager, captain and trainer; and he was now talking earnestly to his players as he laced his boots.

"We mustn't let the importance of the game affect our nerves, my brothers," he was saying, in his cheerful way. "We're out to win—and Rodwell Rangers are no better than some of the other teams we've beaten."

"But there's a difference," said Eos, the stalwart goalie. "We're not playing on our own ground, Ajax. And the good old Crater has enabled us to keep up our run of luck."

"Rais!" retorted Ajax. "Luck nothing! We've won our games because we've played hard, sound football—and that's not boasting. As for the Crater, it's just as well, perhaps, that we're playing on the Maplestead ground. That crook, Zorro, can't play any of his dirty games here, thank goodness!"

He noticed that Argus and Perseus were looking at him; then he thought of Themis, the one reserve of the team, who was within earshot. Ajax understood. For it was an unfortunate fact that Themis was Professor Mortimer Zorro's son.

Themis, apparently, had not heard, but a strange sensation had come over him, and he knew that his crook father, by hypnotic influence, was communicating with him.

Themis now acted mechanically—and, indeed, against his own inclinations. Strolling casually over to the wash-basins, where some members of the team were washing, he slapped Eos heartily on the back.

"We're counting on you, Eos, not to let the ball go past you!" said Themis, smiling.

"I'll do my best," promised Eos, who was soaping his hands.

In a twinkling Themis, unseen by the others, emptied a tiny phial of something which looked like mercury into the water of Eos' basin. The stuff vanished at once, leaving no trace.

It was done so quickly, so casually, that none saw. Eos rinsed his hands, and was aware of no change in the water. Little did he know that his hands and

arms, after being dried, were coated with an invisible, metallic salt!

The Miracle Boys ran out into the arena amid tumultuous applause. They looked a sturdy, healthy team as they indulged in a preliminary kick-about. Then the whistle sounded; a tense hush fell upon that vast multitude; the toss was taken, and Ajax won. The teams lined up, and the great game started.

From the first minute the Rangers pressed. They were out to snatch a quick, decisive advantage. So the game started with a real cup-tie rush; the Rangers, pressing hard, playing brilliantly, launched a devastating attack. Their forwards swept their way through the Trojans' defence, and Boreas and Eurus, the backs, were completely out-generalled in that first rush.

Slam! The Rangers' centre-forward, seizing his chance, sent in a sizzling shot in the top right-hand corner of the goal. But Eos was there. With a mighty leap he got his fingers to the ball, and held it. Next moment he sent the leather well back into midfield.

"Well saved, kid!"

In a flash the aspect of the game changed. Argus was on the ball with such speed and determination that the Rangers had no time to hinder him; he was away, running like a hare, the leather in perfect control at his feet. He swerved, he dodged—he was through!

"Shoot, lad—shoot!"

Argus steadied himself for one of his cannon-ball shots, when he experienced an extraordinary sensation. His body throbbed alarmingly, his heart thumped, his pulse beat like a sledge-hammer. His shot was a wild, useless kick, and the ball went feebly into the hands of the Rangers' goalkeeper.

A groan of disappointment went up from the Trojans' supporters—never had Argus failed so lamentably. Argus himself, after that one second, was as fit as ever again.

It was Ajax the Mighty who retrieved the situation. With uncanny cleverness he anticipated the goalie's move; he swerved to the very spot where the leather fell, after the custodian had kicked it clear. He trapped it neatly, ran forward, cleverly tricking a couple of opponents, and sent in a pile-driving shot from thirty yards out, that beat the goalie all ends up.

"Goal!"

"Well done, Ajax!"

It was a magnificent goal—a grim shock for the Rangers.

"What went wrong, old son?" asked Ajax, as he ran up to Argus.

"I don't know!" muttered Argus miserably. "I seemed to come over queer for that one second. I'm awfully sorry, Ajax."

"Why be sorry?" laughed Ajax. "We scored, didn't we? You'll be all right now."

The teams lined up again, and the excitement was intense. Rodwell Rangers were grimly determined to wipe out that deficit. For the Rangers never admitted defeat. They were famous for their fighting qualities.

Now they played as though inspired. Even Ajax, the cleverest pivot in football, was surprised. The Rangers' forward drove through, with short, snappy passes that bewildered the opposing halves. A great roar came from the Rodwell supporters as the centre-forward broke clear, with only Eos, in goal, to beat.

Slam! The shot came—deadly, accurate, and with tremendous speed. Eos leapt, and as he did so he, too, experienced that astonishing, throbbing sensation. And more. To his utterable con-

sternation, as he made an effort to punch the oncoming ball, he saw that he had no hands.

The shock was so great that he reeled, shouting with horror. Both his arms had vanished!

"Goal!"

It was a devastating roar of joy from the Rodwell supporters. Eos swung round blankly, staring. The ball was lying against the back of the net.

Eos, looking at his hands, saw that they were normal. The throbbing had ceased, too. Was he going mad? He thumped himself, and his hands were not even numb.

* * * * *

IN the first floor room of a house overlooking the famous stadium sat Professor Mortimer Zorro, archaeologist and crook.

"The wonders of science," he murmured with evil complacency, "are illimitable!"

In front of him, near the open window, stood an instrument on a tripod. It looked like a cross between



Behind the goal, among the photographers, stood Zorro operating a strange, camera-like apparatus.

a telescope and a camera. Yet it was neither. It was an apparatus for projecting the invisible Meteoradium Ray!

For Zorro knew the secret of the Crater—the Trojans' strange football arena on Lord Welham's estate. Scores of years ago a meteor had crashed to earth at that spot, forming not only the Crater, but a great rock cavern beneath. That mass of material from Outer Space not only contained the eggs of Space Monsters, which Zorro had succeeded in hatching out, but great quantities of a metal which was unknown on earth. Lord Welham had really discovered it, and he had named it "Meteoradium"—since it had some of the properties of radium, but was a thousand times more powerful.

Fragments of that strange metal, in Zorro's instrument, projected as a ray, had a devastating effect upon its victims. Argus had felt that effect. This mystery ray, when used in conjunction with certain metallic salts, also found in the meteorite, had an X-ray effect. Thus it was that the startled Eos had been under the impression that his arms had gone.

"This shall be the end!" muttered Zorro, between his teeth. "To-day, the 'Miracle Boys' will cease their miracles, and drop back into the obscurity from which they sprang."

He was employing a subtle method of robbing the Trojans of their strength. By losing this game they would lose their fame; and later, it would be easy enough for Zorro to apply the finishing touch.

While Professor Zorro sat behind his strange

instrument, directing it upon Argus and Eos as he willed, the game continued. By confining his attentions to the centre-forward and the goalkeeper—the two most vital members of the team—he would achieve his object, and the rest of the team would naturally assume that the centre-forward and the goalie had failed because of the great tension of the game.

The Rangers, having equalised, were more dangerous than ever. Again they broke through, and again that mysterious phenomenon took place—but it was known only to Eos. Ajax and the rest, feeling nothing suspecting nothing, were amazed and dismayed when Eos made a bad fumble and allowed the ball to pass him. Only Eos knew that his hands had vanished, and he was lost in consternation and bewilderment. Again, as before, his hands were normal the next second.

It looked, indeed, as though the boys were cracking up. Once Argus got the ball—three minutes before half-time, and he was instantly away. Then he stumbled, miskicked, and the opportunity had gone. The leather was swinging back into the danger zone; the Rodwell forwards pounced upon it. One of them sent in a stinging shot, and Eos punched wildly, for he could not see his hands.



THE HAUNTED FOOTBALL.—Argus dribbled brilliantly through; he had only the goalie to beat. As he steadied himself to shoot, the ball seemed to swerve, and he miskicked badly.

“Goal!”

The crowds were laughing now. These boys were no good, after all! Their “marvellous” goalie was a washout; their “devastating” centre-forward was feeble.

Half-time came—with the Miracle Boys two goals down and the game as good as lost.

The Miracle Boys Justify Themselves.

“WELL, it’s all over bar shouting,” said Perseus, the inside-right, in a gloomy voice.

The boys were in the dressing-room, resting, washing down and partaking of lemon. Most of them were looking glum, for they felt that they had shot their bolt.

“There’s something beastly funny about it!” said Argus, fiercely.

“By Jove! You’re right!” exclaimed Eos, giving him a quick, hard look. “What, exactly, do you mean, Argus?”

Argus explained the sensations he had felt every time he had been about to shoot; and Eos, wild with excitement, told of his own extraordinary sensations.

“You’re off your head, Eos,” scoffed Nike, the outside-left.

“Mad as a hatter!” said Dike, the outside-right.

“Well, I’m only telling you what happened,” said Eos, half-angrily. “When I went to punch at the ball, I had nothing to punch with—and that’s why I failed to save. I can’t tell you of the horrible sensation—”

“There may be something in it,” interrupted Ajax, grimly. “Even here, in Maplestead, we may not be free from the evil scheming of Professor Zorro!”

A grim suspicion had come into the captain’s mind; he was looking at Themis, who had accompanied the players into the dressing-room, and he was struck by the fact that Themis was looking dreamy and absent-minded. Acting on impulse, Ajax confronted Themis, and took him by the shoulders.

“Do you know anything about this?” he demanded, staring straight into Themis’ eyes.

“N-n-no,” faltered Themis. “What should I know, Ajax?”

“Once before you were hypnotised by your father!” said Ajax, tensely. “By gosh! I believe you’re under his influence now!”

The others crowded round. Ajax stared unblinkingly into Themis’ eyes; he exerted every atom of his will power. The battle went on for some seconds; the veins stood out on Ajax’s forehead, for he was concentrating as he had never done before. Gradually, slowly, Themis changed. The pallor left his cheeks, a flush taking its place, and his eyes burned strangely.

“Ajax!” he panted hoarsely.

“Well?” snapped Ajax.

“Zorro—my father—his power has gone,” whispered Themis, his whole body shuddering. “He saw me last night; he gave me a little bottle, and I emptied it into Eos’ wash-basin before the match.”

“I knew it!” yelled Eos.

“Wait—wait!” urged Ajax, and he turned back to Themis. “Where is your father now? Tell me!” And Themis told them; for Professor Zorro had given him precise instructions and directions.

“Come on!” said Ajax, his eyes flaming. “There’s only one hope for us—we must settle Zorro’s hash!”

They went swarming out, much to the amazement, and even consternation, of the ground officials. They tore out of one of the deserted exits, stared at by sundry idlers, raced across the road and plunged into the open doorway of a boarding-house. Up the stairs they ran, and burst like a flood into the room where Professor Zorro was operating.

“On him, brothers!” hissed Ajax.

Zorro leapt back, but he had no chance. The infuriated young footballers fell upon him. In a few moments he was bound helplessly to a chair with cords from the blinds—and they took care, too, to tie a scarf round his mouth, so that he could make no outcry.

"This is the thing—this is the cause of all the trouble!" said Eos, pointing to the Meteoradium machine.

"Smash it!" said Ajax, grimly.

Zorro writhed helplessly. His precious scientific instrument was flung to the floor and stamped upon; it was broken, battered and rendered useless.

Then, in the same lightning, breathless way, the Trojans raced back to the stadium, and they were in time to go out upon the field for the second half—as though nothing had happened.

* * * * *

"GOAL!" It was a delighted roar from the numerous supporters of the "Miracle Boys."

The second half was three minutes old; the boys, galvanised into an electrifying activity, swept the Rangers off their feet. It was a smashing restart, and Argus, making one of his dazzling runs, had scored unerringly.

It looked like the turn of the tide. The Trojans were fighting, back, and the Rangers lost some of their confidence.

Like a relentless machine, with every part working on oiled wheels, the Trojans moved once again to the attack. With long, swinging, accurate passes the Trojans swept down the field, irresistibly, bewilderingly.

"Ajax!" went up a sudden roar. "Go on, Ajax!"

The mighty centre-half, towering above his fellow players, was running through on his own. The Rangers dashed at him, suddenly afraid. Too late, they learned that Ajax was merely drawing their defence. At the last second he sent the leather, in a glorious pass, to Dike, on the right-wing. Dike trapped it, was off along the touch line; he centred, the ball flashed from the foot of Ajax, and it was in the net.

"Goal!"

Three—all! Already the Trojans had equalised! The excitement was at fever pitch.

* * * * *

PROFESSOR ZORRO had brought two of his men with him to Maplestead. At night they usually dressed in strange garb, and they were known as "Grey Men." But now they looked like ordinary, well-dressed citizens. By chance the two men went up to Zorro's room, and they discovered his plight. In a moment they released him.

"The young demons!" cursed Zorro evilly. "They think they have got the better of me—but there is still another chance."

He grabbed at his instrument, and made a discovery. Although the "telescopic" property of the thing was ruined, it could still be utilised at close quarters.

Zorro made some quick repairs; his eyes were burning with hatred. His machine looked like a camera; and it should be easy enough for him to gain admittance into the ground as a Press man. And crouching behind the goal, he would be able to repeat his villainy of the first half.

Fate gave Professor Zorro an added advantage. As he was crossing the street the football bounced almost at his feet; it had been sent right out of the ground by one of the Rodwell defenders—a wild miskick.

In a flash, Zorro's expression changed; he pounced

upon the leather, and as he took it in his hands he drew forth a little object which looked like a pistol. He pressed a spring, and a spray of invisible Meteoradium, like a fine powder, enveloped the ball, coating it. That amazing metal was only present in minute quantities, and it could not be seen. But it would be sufficient for Zorro's grim purpose.

He kicked the ball over the wall, and it was on the playing-pitch before a reserve ball could be utilised. Once again the play continued.

Zorro got in without difficulty; he placed himself behind the Rangers' goal, and set up his "camera."

He arrived at a crucial moment, for Perseus, the inside-right, was through and about to score. Even as he kicked, Zorro switched on. The ball came unerringly at the goal—and the custodian had no earthly chance of reaching it. Yet, at the last second, the ball swerved, as though beaten back by a great gust of wind, and it passed feebly over the top of the bar.

"Oooh!" went up a groan from the Trojans' supporters.

Little did they know that the Ray from Zorro's instrument was reacting upon the Meteoradium on the football!

The Trojans were pressing hard; they had the Rodwell defence in a panic. Again they came through, Argus receiving a short pass from Ajax, he swerved, dodged round an opposing back, and he took a hard shot.

The same thing happened—the ball swerved mysteriously, so that the goalie had no occasion to touch it.

"Great Scott!" gasped Argus, under his breath.

Staring goalwards, he had just seen Professor Zorro—and he guessed that it was Zorro, by some fresh trick, who was working this evil.

Argus said nothing to the others; but he acted with brilliant cleverness. Four minutes elapsed before he again had possession of the ball, and then, instead of passing, as the occasion demanded, he ran off wildly, as though in a desperate effort to score. He kicked feebly at the last second, staggered, and apparently unable to save himself, went blundering off the field of play.

He collided with a crashing blow against Zorro, sending him flying. In the confusion he stamped on the "camera," kicked it, and smashed it to atoms.

"Sorry!" he gasped loudly, and in an undertone he added: "Now try any more of your dirty tricks, you crook!"

Zorro cursed wildly, but Argus was back on the field of play. Within a minute Argus was his own cool self. When he again had the ball at his feet he gave the most amazing display of dribbling. Opponent after opponent he tricked; he cleaved through the final lines of defence, and he sent in a smashing, low shot, defeating the goalie completely.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

Now, indeed, the game was all over—"bar shouting." The Miracle Boys had won. The last few minutes of the game meant nothing. As the final whistle sounded the cheering increased—for every one of the Rangers' supporters joined in, madly enthusiastic, and appreciative of the Trojans great victory.

"Brothers, we've done it!" panted Ajax, with glowing eyes. "We've jumped the last hurdle! And now it's all aboard for Wembley!"

The Miracle Boys in the Final! Yet Zorro is still free to work evil before the Trojans go to Wembley. Don't miss next week's sparkling Footer yarn, chaps.

CHAMPIONS OF THE RIVER*(Continued from page 22.)*

cat-like, across the rubbish-littered floor and opened a trap-door at the far end.

"Get you down here—quickly!" he rapped.

There was no alternative but for the boys to obey. They stumbled down the rickety wooden steps, to the low, damp basement.

The Swiss adventurer called out orders in German to his confederates, who hurried down with ropes and proceeded to bind Johnny Gee & Co. hand and foot.

"So!" sneered Henschel. "It has been easier than I thought, to get you boys in my power. Soon, both the Admiral and Professor Postlethwaite will be decoyed from Riverside Manor by means of a trick, and brought here. The Admiral is an obstinate man, but perhaps if he sees you young rascals threatened with death, he will capitulate with me."

He laughed sardonically, and his beady eyes glittered like a fiend's.

slowly open, revealing a wide, black aperture behind, through which rushed a torrent of water.

In fascinated horror, the Removites watched the waters slowly rising. Hearts pounding with desperation, they tugged frantically at their bonds. But Henschel's men had done their work well.

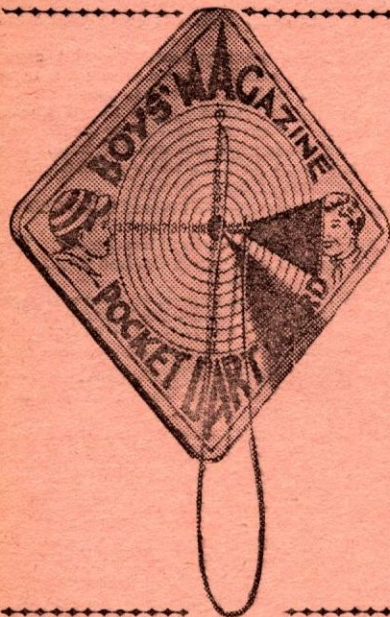
Quicker, now, the water was rising—it reached almost to their waists.

Suddenly, with a thrill of joy, Johnny Gee felt the bonds that encircled his feet commence to slip! Frantically, the Remove leader worked his feet back and forth until, with a cry of relief, he wrenched one foot out. His legs were free!

"What can you do, Johnny?" asked Dick Bannister miserably. "The trap-door is bolted on the other side, and you can't get out!"

The Remove captain gritted his teeth. He realised the truth of Dick's words. But a deadly gleam came into Johnny's eyes, as he turned his gaze to the wide aperture through which the river water was flowing.

"There's room for me to squeeze through that pipe!" he exclaimed eagerly. "If I can get through



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"This cellar, it is below the level of the river!" he went on. "On the other side of this wall is a pipe which emerges underneath the pilings, just below the high-tide mark. Thus, as the tide rises, so it fills the pipe; and should it be open at this end, the cellar is slowly flooded. I am going to open the upper pipe. The tide is now rising, and it shall rest entirely upon Admiral Thresher's decision whether you are released before the cellar fills, or are drowned like rats."

"You villain!" burst out Johnny Gee hoarsely. "You dare not do this! You——"

"Bah! I dare anything!"

Henschel climbed up the steps, and his confederates followed after him. The trap-door shut upon the Removites with a hollow clang, and they heard the bolts being closed fast.

Suddenly, a grating noise assailed their ears, and to their horror they saw a section of the stone wall

to the river bank, I can attract attention and get help! It's a chance—and here goes!"

Without another moment's hesitation, the plucky Remove leader waded to the flood-pipe. There was just room for him to insert his body head-first into the pipe, and push along with his feet.

Head of the River.

"WHERE on earth have those silly duffers got to!" It was Tommy Mugeridge of the Remove who asked that question, in exasperated tones. The boats had arrived at the Glendarvon Boathouse, where the race between the junior eights was to start, and Courtney & Co. were there ready.

But Johnny Gee & Co. were missing.

"Dash it all, they must be somewhere!" exclaimed Dixon, who was rowing at bow in the Remove eight.

"Which way did they go—towards Battersea?"

exclaimed Brooke. "Right-ho! Then we'll take out the boathouse launch, and look for the beggars."

A dozen anxious Removites put out from the Gendarvon boathouse in a large, fast launch.

They were passing a row of dingy wharves, when all at once they heard a clear, loud whoop.

"Stop! Help! Rescue, Remove!"

Standing in the mud and water underneath the landing-stage of a wharf was Johnny Gee. Gasping with excitement, the juniors were taken across to their leader, and they were amazed to see that he had his hands tied behind his back!

Swiftly, Johnny Gee explained all that had happened while his bonds were cut.

"The cellar must be nearly flooded now, and there isn't a moment to lose!" he said. "Come on!"

The rescue party dashed into the wharf. The trap-door was opened, and Henschel was seen standing there with one of his gang. They had Admiral Thresher and Professor Postlethwaite prisoners.

Johnny Gee and Tommy Mugeridge charged together at Henschel. The rascally Swiss went reeling over, to pitch headlong through the trap-door into the water below. The other man attempted to run for it, but a dozen violent hands seized him and whirled him over to the trap-door.

"Got 'em!" said Johnny Gee grimly. "All serene, chaps—we'll soon get you out of there!"

The juniors in the cellar were hauled out one by one, and the ropes promptly cut.

"By thunder! This is wonderful, my lads—magnificent work!" boomed Admiral Thresher. "The villains got me here on a trumped-up message from the Admiralty. Huh-huh! They're caught this time, by gad!"

Outside in the street, the man seated at the wheel of the waiting car, was also captured.

Admiral Thresher and the Professor drove away in the car with their prisoners to Scotland Yard.

GOOD DAY, GUNMEN!

(Continued from page 26.)

At last, from exhaustion, he paused. And no sooner had he laid aside his weapon, than the door of the office was thrust violently open and three men entered—masked, and carrying revolvers.

"Stick 'em up!" said the leading man.

Washington Haysced nearly fell over with astonishment. "S-say! Who'm you guys?"

"You know who we are," snarled the leader. "We're the guys what sent that letter sayin' you was on the spot! And now we've come to bump you off!"

"De guys what sent de letter!" shouted Washington, in amazement. "Den you're de policemen!"

Washington's goggle-eyed gaze passed back and forth from the men in front of him to the heaving, bag-like carpet suspended from the ceiling.

"It's no good, Simmy," said one of the masked men. "He's rumbled us right away! Better own up and admit it was a joke."

The foremost man took off his mask sheepishly. "Sorry, Mr. Haysced," he apologised. "Reckon you're too smart for us. I'm P.C. Simpson. We were trying to play a little jape on you, but—"

"Ah know!" gulped Washington. "Ah know all dat! What Ah don't know is' who'm dese guys in de carpet?"

He pointed at the carpet.

"Ah must have three real gangsters in dere! Dey come to bump me off!"

Meanwhile, the Remove heroes rushed back to the Putney boathouse. They had a vigorous rub-down, and eventually came out in rowing togs, looking as fit and fresh as daisies.

The Remove leader was fortunate in winning the toss and chose the Surrey side of the river.

Bang! The pistol went, and the crews were off! Side by side the rivals shot down the river, blades gleaming in the water and sweeping with regular, faultless rhythm.

From midway between Putney and Barnes bridges, the Ashton boat, rowing a fast stroke, took the lead. They were a magnificent crew, and slightly heavier than the St. Giddy's boys.

Once past the rough patches, the Remove skipper called upon his men for all they had in hand, and they responded nobly!

They were on the bend, now, and the long straight stretch to the winning post came to view.

It was here that Snowball, by a smart bit of steering, gave the Remove boat a clear quarter of a length round that bend, and now both boats were dead level.

Johnny Gee & Co. scarcely heard the wild, eager shouts—they were putting every ounce of their energy, now, into a last desperate, lung-bursting spurt. Gradually, the Remove boat forged ahead. The stroke was a terrific one—thirty-six to the minute—but Johnny's crew did not fail him! The St. Giddy's boat shot past the white-painted post a clear length in front of their rivals.

"Hooray! Well rowed—well rowed! St. Giddy's wins!"

It was Admiral Thresher's bull-like bellow. The race was over and Johnny Gee & Co. had won!

Thrills galore in the sanded arena, when the KING OF THE CHARIOTS rides in the great Chariot Race. Look out for this unusual yarn of the Romans.

"What, really!" shouted P.C. Simpson. "Here, boys, lend a hand. Let's have 'em out of that and have a look at 'em!"

The three burly P.C.'s hoisted down the Buskit Patent Reciproating Crook Catcher and exposed to view three battered and dazed gunmen.

"Lor! Three members of Goofy Gobble's Gang—that's the lot that used to work in with Slug Peters, the crook you caught some time ago, Mr. Haysced. Must say I feel right ashamed. Here's you been facing real danger, and collaring three desperate gunmen single handed while we've been planning—"

"All right," gulped Washington, full of unutterable emotions, "don't apologise. Jest take dem dere gangsters to de station, before dey properly revives."

* * * * *

ALL was quiet when Tim Buskit returned from his football match about half-an-hour later.

"Hello, Wash," he said, bouncing cheerfully into the office. "S'pose nothin' startlin' happened, as usual?"

"No," replied Washington, with an attempt at biting sarcasm. "Ah've only been put on de spot twice, nearly riddled wid bullets from a machine-gun, and at last captured three desperate gunmen, what came to bump me off in revenge for Slug Peters' capture. Apart from dat it's jest been de usual quiet afternoon!"

Cap'n Keelson and his jolly tars undertake a strange mission in next week's chortling yarn of the crew of the "Happy Haddock."