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Boys' ^{2D} Magazine

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READ

THE HOUSE OF MOCKING SHADOWS

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THE WHITE BOSS OF
THE JUNGLE TREES!

Grand Long Complete Yarn, introducing a Great New
Mag. Hero On a Secret Jungle Mission.



"TIGER BOY"

A Terrific Tale of Drama and
Excitement among the Wild
Beasts and Wilder Men of the
Mysterious Annam Jungle-lands.

The Jungle Killer.

A SCREAM woke the jungle to palpitant life. It came from near the river. It was the scream of a poor native lad in fearful, sudden agonies.

It rang out, piercing, blood-chilling and terrible. And then for a moment there was an awful hush. As if paralysed with dread, fear and fascination, the tree-people of the Tenois tribe stared.

They saw Ulangi, the young son of their headman, rolling over and over, blood gushing redly from his body. Something over him; bright, striped, flashing in the sunlight. The poor native boy's fearful shriek rang out again.

That woke the tree-people to frenzied activity. Joining their shrieks to his, grunting, screaming in wildest fear, they swung themselves upward from branch to branch of the great banyan-trees until they reached the safety of the limbs. There the sturdiest topmost

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

they stared in terror and fascination at the jungle tragedy being enacted below.

It was the *petang* tiger—the sacred tiger of the jungle. Supposed to be unkillable. The fierce striped terror had claimed another victim from the tree-people.

The chief, Tabi Ipong, struck his knuckles to his teeth, and wailed with fear and horror to see his son. "O White One of the Sun, come quickly!" he cried in his anguished terror.

It was a fearful sight on the ground. The tiger, its haunches up, fanged jaws open to emit hissing breath, eyes glaring, mad pools in its whiskered face, was pinning the struggling Ulangi, and one great tawny paw was raised to cave in his skull.

By some superhuman effort the boy wrenched his body away. He got to his feet, screaming still, and running to the river, plunged in.

A moment, it seemed, he had escaped. But the tiger, although he is not over-fond of the water, can and will swim after his prey. Scrabbling round, the big cat stretched its neck to the water for that stealthy swift spring that should take it in, swimming after its prey.

But just then something happened.

The headman's wild, frenzied cry for help from the trees had elicited a response. Through the thick, stout branches of the banyan-trees came swinging—a white youth.

He could not have been more than sixteen, or seventeen at most, a mere lad. But he was splendidly built, with muscles rippling as he swung hastily through the trees—for he was clad only in a breech clout of tapa cloth, with his yellow hair held loosely back by a band of coconut fibre.

"Quick! A spear!" he cried sharply, as he landed lightly on the creaking bamboo platform in front of the headman's tree hut. "Let me get at the brute!"

Ulangi, the chief's son, was the white boy's best friend amongst the tribe. His clean-cut young face was aflame with anger and grief. He snatched the spear out of the chief's nerveless grasp, and swung down lithely with another fierce shout.

The tree-people uttered gasping cries. To them the *petang* tiger was a djinn, and it was little more than useless their trying to combat the fierce jungle killer. And the white lad knew it as he grasped his spear; knew that it was but a poor weapon, and as he landed lithely amongst the jungle grass, he well realised that his life stood in deadly danger.

Nevertheless, with a furious shout, the lad drew the spear back and poised all his splendid young strength for the throw.

Whizz! It whistled through the air, hurled with force and precision. The man-killing tiger turned about with a hissing show of fangs on the river-bank. Flattening, it just eluded the spear, which flew over its striped back and with a thud tore into the trunk of a tree, quivering there.

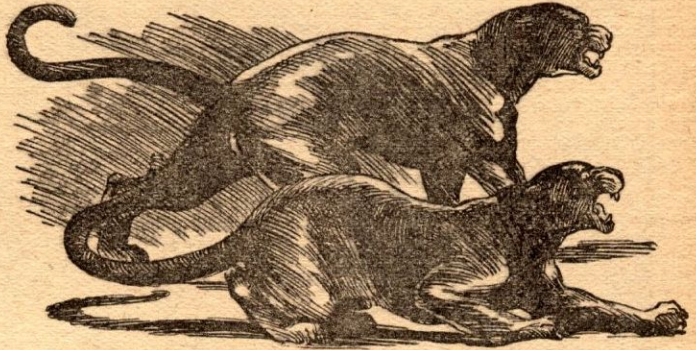
With a scream of fury the great striped killer turned to the river. The blood of its intended victim was dripping from its fangs, and with the taste of blood the *petang* tiger was determined on the kill.

With a great splash, the striped killer plunged into the river, and coming up, swam after its prey.

The white lad halted now, watching with flashing blue eyes, his lips compressed and jaw grim. He had delayed pursuit those precious few seconds. Would Ulangi get clear on the other side of the river?

Though severely mauled by the tiger and streaking the river crimson with his blood, he was swimming strongly some yards ahead. Swimming as he had never done before. He gained the opposite bank and sprang out, staggering. Running madly now—running for the safety of the great banyan-trees.

With a choking, staccato scream the tiger emerged, dripping, and in a few space-shrivelling leaps covered



The great black panthers circled about the idol, snarling and growling angrily.

the ground after his prey. Then a great glad shout rang out from the tree-people.

Ulangi had caught the lowest branch of a banyan-tree, and with the strength born of utter despair had pulled himself up, just as the tiger came on in a last terrific burst and leapt up under him.

But the lad had gone, climbing upwards in the swift, apish fashion of the tree-people.

The big killer remained at the foot with arched back and ugly head raised, snarling. But then Ulangi's knife whizzed down, and all but found a billet in the haunches of the brute. It was enough for the *petang* tiger for the time being. With a last scream of murderous rage and fear, it sprang away and vanished in the jungle thickets.

Ted of the Tree Tops.

THE terrible suspense now allayed, the white lad was surprised to find himself palpitant.

Trembling, not with fear, but with a fierce, primitive anger—a wild desire to hunt that jungle killer down and rid the forest forever of its fierce domain.

But he remembered sharply that he was Ted Topham, a young British Secret Service agent, with special training in Oriental matters. And he had been sent out from headquarters to find Ferrand—Jim Ferrand, his chief in the British Secret Service.

Ferrand had wormed his way into the Forbidden City in the heart of the Annam jungle. The Forbidden City that had been built before the wall of China itself. And his messages had confirmed the fact that the Secret Society of the Typhoon was ready to launch its fury upon the world.

At the head of the organisation was the Typhoon itself. A hooded, mysterious personality, his identity

unknown even to those nearest him. He it was who was gathering the forces of the human whirlwind to destroy the white man's supremacy in the East.

Ferrand, in spite of his clever disguise as a native, had been discovered and unmasked in the Forbidden City. And his last message had been a frantic SOS for help. He was to die in the Temple of the Beasts.

That was what had brought Ted Topham flying over the jungle in a frantic search for his chief. He had been instructed to find the Forbidden City, to rescue Ferrand, and, above all, to go secretly.

Somehow the dead secret leaked out.

A certain Mr. Koofarli had called to see Ted Topham, the savage-trained boy, at the Foreign Club in Singapore. Now Mr. Koofarli was an exceedingly wealthy merchant, a Eurasian. When one says that he was a Eurasian, it means that he was a half-caste—half white.

He was all the more dangerous for the mixture of eastern and western blood. What secrets did he not know of the interior of Indo-China, this suave, softly spoken man with the deadly white face and curiously oblique, Oriental eyes? Garbed in the height of European fashion, with costly black pearls in his shirt front, black silky hair brushed sleekly back, this elegant Eurasian leant across the table and lisped his warning.

"If I may offer just a little advice, I should say it would be unwise for you to go on the air trip of yours in quest of the Forbidden City."

And here enters the matter of the young Secret Service agent's folly. Or was it folly? Quite openly he went down to the flying field at Singapore, climbed into his aeroplane and took off.

Ted of the Tree-tops winged high, lashing the speedy, zippy Curtiss 'plane on over the coastline. On, on, above the dark tangle of jungle that to the white man was *terra incognita*. And forbidden!

Did the boy flyer suspect the danger hovering above? It looked like a fly against the blue vault, but in reality it was a 'plane manned by a man—half yellow, half white. A pilot who sat hunched over his controls, with teeth bared and hate running like poison in his veins.

The pilot was Mr. Koofarli. From his superior height he came pouring down the sky, his engine roar like thunder. Ted Topham looked up to see a

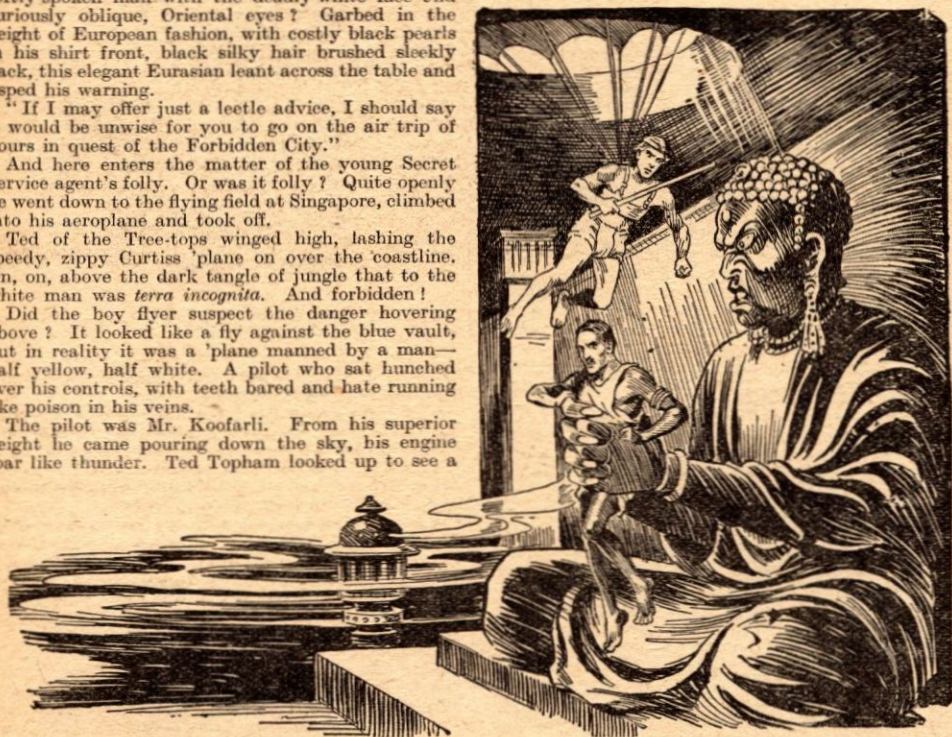
above the raging storm, and, reaching his ceiling, he high tailed it for home.

Ted, to put it in vulgar parlance, caught the whole packet.

The wind swooped on him with a shriek and a roar. It lifted the 'plane in the sky, and then threw it down again. It turned it over and over, and finally sent it down in a tail spin. There was a great crash, things bursting all around him as the 'plane melted into the earth. . . . He was swimming in a sea of darkness.

He came out of that to find the tree-people bending over him. Brown, curious, not unhandsome, these simple fisher folk of the jungle cared for the boy, believing that he had come from the Sun. They adopted him as their own most powerful djinn, or god.

All this happened eight months ago. Ted had learnt their language, had learned to travel in the trees by swinging from limb to limb, and he had learned, too, to like these simple, rather timorous people of the tree-tops.



'CHUTING THE CHUTE.—Ted dropped lower, spilling the air out of his parachute skilfully. At last he fell straight into the shaft of the temple, where Ferrand was a prisoner in the lap of the idol.

white-faced demon with bared teeth crouched behind two sinister, chattering guns.

Rat-tat-a-tat-tat! Hot bullets were turned on the boy as if from two hoses. And then the Eurasian's 'plane tore past.

By a miracle the boy escaped unscathed. And luck favoured him. With the suddenness typical of the East it came on . . . the typhoon.

The Eurasian flyer sheered off. He put all the horses in his engine into a climb in an effort to get

Only—there was Toowambi, the wizened, evil little witch doctor of the tribe. He was the fly in the ointment, and a poisonous fly at that.

The Flying Death.

AS the white lad turned round from the river bank, he could hear the ranting voice of the witch-doctor up in the tree-tops. Some of the natives were putting out canoes to cross the river to Ulangi's

aid, but many of the tree-people remained to listen to Toowambi's fierce harangue.

"I tell you," he cried, striking his scraggy chest with his fists, "this is but the first sign, this coming of the *petang* tiger. The forest djinns will send N'shambi-N'shambi, the djinn of the storms to tear down your houses from the trees. They will send your enemies to eat you up. They will send the *petang* tiger day after day. The gods are angry with you. And why?"

He paused impressively, and a deep murmur went up.

Ted Topham smiled scornfully to himself as he crossed swiftly over to the trees. He had tried to cast out superstition from these people, but in vain. And fear—fear was like a canker at their hearts! And Toowambi, the witch-doctor, pandered to their fear, for he hated Ted of the Tree-tops because the white lad threatened to undermine his power.

"I have talked to the djinns," Toowambi snarled. "And they say they are angry because you have taken this White One in your midst. He is the evil one who is bewitching you. When he goes, you will not see the big cat for many moons. Nor any sign of your enemies, nor the storm djinns that tear down your homes. You will live in peace."

Toowambi spat out the words with a fearful malevolence. He was a little horrid, wizened creature, much darker than the Tenois tree-people. For he was not of their tribe. He was decorated with many bones and bladders, and his body was painted with gruesome white circles.

As he sat cross-legged, his dark, snake-like eyes flashed fire. With a cry he sprang up and threw a handful of herbs into the fire within his hut. Instantly clouds of dark, aromatic smoke spiraled through the smoke hole. The witch doctor made further frantic gestures as if repulsing the white lad as Ted sailed down from an overhanging branch and landed with a light thud on the large bamboo platform in front of the witch-doctor's ceremonial hut.

"Old bag-o'-bones, you speak falsely," he cried. "This is no sacred tiger that cannot be killed, and I will prove it to you. I will go out in the jungle—alone, but I shall bring back the skin of the *petang* tiger."

A queer light leapt into the horrid evil eyes of the witch-doctor.

"You go?" he jeered. "When will you do this thing?"

"Now; at once," snapped Ted. "And depend on it, before many nights are passed I shall bring back the skin of the tiger. For I hold the secret of the Flying Death."

He swung away through the branches of the banyan trees to his own tree-hut.

A few seconds later Toowambi was astonished in the midst of his fierce haranguing by a flaming meteor that came hissing up through the branches of the trees, to whizz close past his face.

Toowambi screamed in wildest terror as he started back. And then he snarled horribly as Ted Topham's mocking, laughing voice rang out from beneath.

"Beware, Toowambi, of the Flying Death. It may get you, as assuredly it will get the man-killing tiger of Annam."

The Battle of Jungle Giants.

TED'S mysterious weapon was simply a great six-foot bow of black palm, and the flaming brand that had hissed in front of the witch doctor's eyes was a fire arrow.

To the civilised mind the great black bow he carried across his shoulders as he sped away was nothing remarkable. Nor was the quiverful of strong arrows, tipped with stone and trimmed with eagle's feathers.

But the truth was, none in the jungle had ever seen such a bow and arrow before.

The lad had had the utmost trouble to find wood suitable to make the bow, and stones with which to tip the arrows. Weeks he had spent on the weapon. Now he had a bow such as an old English archer might have envied.

Hastily the lad sped through the jungle until he came to lianas. The tangled mass of forest growth stretched away for mile upon mile.

Ted Topham did a queer thing. He commenced rapping the thickest of the lianas, dealing them doughy blows. He was sending a message by the jungle telegraph. Presently he bent down and applied his ear to the boughs. An agitation told him that his message had been received.

"Good old Chang," he murmured.

Somewhere, miles away it might be, a mighty elephant was tugging at the lianas with his trunk, occasionally thwacking the branches. It was Chang, lord of the jungle.

The lad had made friends with the great elephant under queer enough circumstances. He had chanced upon Chang in a mud-hole. The elephant was throwing mud over his head, and appeared very dejected, and an examination revealed the cause to Ted.

A vicious, barbed jungle thorn had pricked the elephant's tender spot, his eye. Ted extracted the thorn and salved the inflammation with mud plasters. Thereafter he made a friend of Chang, for life.

Very soon the elephant, shaking the earth with his great tread, came upon the boy in answer to his signals. His trunk whirled upwards, and he trumpeted in greeting.

Quite without fear Ted caught hold of Chang's trunk and directed it down towards the spoor of the tiger.

"Think you can follow it, Chang, old chap?" the boy asked softly.

The elephant seemed to understand. He lowered his great head, and seizing the tusks, Ted climbed up upon its broad back.

Chang set off with the rocking speed of a mighty ship before the wind. They annihilated distance in this way, making for the hills where Ted believed the *petang* tiger had its lair.

And he was right. It was the next day, with the sun a fiery ball directly overhead, when they came upon the mankiller.

The tiger flattened, with haunches up, eyes like fiery, green balls in its striped and fearful head, ready to spring. It opened its jaws, baring the white cruel fangs, and a fearful cat-hiss came from its mouth.

The whiskered, snarling cat's rage mounted instantly as the Tiger Boy rose to view between the great sail-like ears of Chang.

"*Twang!*" The Tiger Boy's form suddenly unbent, his head went back. And the stout, stone-headed shaft flew in a blur of speed.

It tore deep into the tiger's haunches, and a fearful, blood-curdling scream suddenly rang through the jungle. The striped killer thrashed and scrambled around in fearful agony. Now it suddenly came at the Tiger Boy in a terrific, plunging spring.

Desperately, Ted of the Tree-tops plucked an arrow from his quiver and fitted it to bow. He pulled the long bow back to the arrowhead, and, with a mighty *twang*, it was loosed.

Would it stop the tiger? Suddenly, the lad loosed a great cry; his heart leapt.

Straight and true, the arrow struck through the brain, knocking the tiger backward with the sheer force of its impact.

Looking down, the jungle lad saw the tiger in its

death throes. Then it was still. The jungle terror had raided and killed for the last time.

With a cry of triumph Ted of the Tree-tops sprang down, his knife in his hand, and bent to the task of skinning the tiger.

After a while, quite unconcernedly, Chang, the elephant, lumbered away to strip some bamboo shoots that he saw in the distance.

Engaged in the ticklish operation of skinning the tiger, Ted of the Tree-tops appeared to be all

unbelievable. And the manner of it—the swift, silent Flying Death—it made them afraid of the strange white jungle boy.

But the white boy was to be taken. Flitting from branch to branch, like a hideous ape, swung a black, evil figure, Toowambi, the witch doctor of the tree-people. So preoccupied was the lad that he did not appear to notice the shadow flitting overhead.

Swoosh! Something dropped from the trees. It was a blanket made of tapa cloth and soaked in the



ONE BULLET ONE BILLET.—Tiger Boy, with but one bullet in his gun, was in a quandary. Which of these mirrored men should he shoot in order to kill the real man?

absorbed; oblivious of everything else in the hot, still, oppressive jungle.

But, in reality, he was holding himself keenly on the alert. Was his work here in the depths of the Indo-Chinese Jungle to come to a crisis at last? He had hunted the sacred tiger down because he believed that its lair was somewhere near the Valley of the Forbidden City. By hook or crook he had got to get into that place of dark intrigue to rescue Ferrand of the Secret Service, if he was still alive; but at all costs he meant to find out the identity of that mysterious personage who called himself the Typhoon.

So, as he stripped the pelt from the jungle cat, Ted of the Tree-tops appeared to be oblivious of the figures that drew round him stealthily in the undergrowth.

Some were black, Malays. But the bulk of them were fierce, yellow men with high cheek-bones and slanting, yellow eyes. Their mushroom hats bobbed as they crept nearer, with their fierce curved *kris*, or knives, in their hands.

Yet none seemed ready to lead the attack against the daring white lad. They had seen the jungle boy kill the sacred tiger. And to them it appeared

juice of some sickly tree buds that induced a state of coma.

Ted of the Tree-tops sprang to his full height just in the nick of time. A stifled cry escaped him. He managed to dash the loathsome cloth from his head, but reeled back partly overpowered by the stuff.

And then, as if emboldened, the fierce, yellow men dashed in from all sides and secured him.

The Tiger Boy, struggling desperately in the grip of his enemies, heard suddenly the roar of an airplane overhead.

A queer thrill ran through the lad. Was the leader of these yellow men in this 'plane? Was he to see him? Learn the identity of—the Typhoon?

The machine looped like a silver fish in the blinding sunlight. Now it was coming down in a sheer dive. Whoever was at the controls was a genius of a flyer.

With a roar of opened-out engine, the 'plane made a neat three-point landing in the jungle clearing, and from out of the driver's cabin stepped a lithè, tigerish figure in white drill and sun-helmet.

Ted of the Tree-tops stared. The man who was crossing over to him had a deathly white face, but with startlingly black eyebrows and oblique Oriental eyes. It was Mr. Koofarli, the Eurasian

The Hooded Horror.

THE Eurasian strode over to the boy, and stared at him with a terrible frowning malignity.

"So! You have been very cunning, my young friend," he lisped softly. "I thought your plane crashed in the jungle and you were dead. But you are bent on visiting the Forbidden City, and you plan deep, eh?"

He glanced, as he spoke, at the carcass and the skin of the sacred tiger. That glance told the lad that his deep-laid plans had been read and understood by the wily Eurasian.

The young Secret Service agent determined on a very bold move indeed.

"You are the Typhoon," he said suddenly.

The Eurasian started as if he had been struck a blow. A fierce gleam flowed from his eyes, then it seemed that a shutter was drawn over them. Mr. Koofarli smiled, a thin, twitching smile.

"The Master would strike you dead for that insult," he said softly. "He is a very great one, indeed. My little friend, I fear you must go before the Master."

Ted of the Tree-tops felt a thrill of real fear. Who was this Master then? This Typhoon? So mysterious, all-powerful that the Eurasian should flinch at being mistaken for him, for fear of his anger?

At a few words from Koofarli, growled in Chinese, Ted Topham was thrust forward by three of the fierce yellow men who held him. And in a file the others came after, one of them carrying the tiger skin.

For hours they travelled, until the trail turned abruptly and entered a deep and very dark ravine. Its sheer rocky sides extended upward for a thousand feet or more. As they pressed on the lad saw that in the jungle undergrowth were gleaming white bones, mocking skulls of men—a veritable trail of them—and despite himself, he shuddered.

Then, suddenly, rounding a bend in the valley, the jungle boy saw the temple of the Forbidden City. And for all that he had expected, he gasped aloud.

It was a marvellous sight. Probably a thousand feet high, and with great stone steps leading up to it, this ancient temple was hewn out of the living rock. Down from the top of the cliff excavations must have been made, to leave a vast central core, the inside of the temple. And as he gazed upwards, the lad saw that its façade was carved with wonderful skill and, no doubt, incredible labour. From the carvings around the plinth the great pinnacled temple appeared to be carried on the backs of a number of mighty stone elephants.

At a sign and a barked word from the Eurasian one of the fierce yellow warriors stepped forward and banded his eyes.

He was led up what seemed an interminable flight of stone steps, through dank, evil-smelling compartments of stone. They had the fearful stench of wild beasts. The boy shuddered, thinking again of the fearful tortures he had heard accredited to the Typhoon!

Then suddenly the heavy bandage was whipped from his eyes, and a blinding light struck them like a blow. He blinked dazedly. Somewhere a mighty temple gong struck a deep resonant note that shattered the silence in waves of terrifying vibrations.

The Tiger Boy could see now. He was in a great, vast temple apartment, and wave upon wave of figures all around him were slowly raising themselves from a prostrate position, with their foreheads on the stone floor.

And staring before him with wide, blind eyes, the young Secret Service agent saw—the Typhoon.

He was seated in a great carved throne behind a hanging curtain of silver beads. A terrible, hooded figure in red. Eyes glittering blackly through the slits in the hood like those of a snake.

The lad's brain was whirling. He felt a burning desire to dash at that hooded figure in the carved chair, to grasp with his hands and wring the life from it. Yet some instinct warned him—warned him that that monstrous hooded figure was luring him on.

Suddenly the jungle boy was surprised to find another figure standing by his side. Also a prisoner obviously. With a start Ted of the Tree-tops recognised him. It was a Cantonese named Wi Lung who had been an agent of the British Government. He had been sent into the jungle some months earlier to try to discover the Forbidden City.

And now he was a prisoner here. His scarred, worn face told that he had suffered terrible tortures. He was clenching and unclenching his hands, his face twitching, his body strained.

With a dumb, inarticulate animal snarl, that told that his tongue had been torn out by the roots, the Chinese secret agent hurled himself across the intervening space, his hands outstretched.

He ran full into the curtain of glass-like beads that hung between . . . and screamed, a terrible, piercing, blood-chilling scream, while the glass beads seemed to writhe about him like snakes. Then he crashed down and lay staring upwards, with sightless eyes full of horror.

Those glass beads held fine needles dipped in a powerful poison.

Ted of the Tree-tops felt a cold prickle of horror run up his spine as he realised that, but for his warning instinct, he would have shared the Chinaman's fate. A rapped order in Chinese and men broke from the ranks to remove the body.

The hooded figure in the chair leant forward. He beckoned, and a Chinaman, evidently of superior rank, in full ceremonial robes stepped up on the dais by his side. To him the Typhoon spoke in rapid, guttural Chinese.

The Temple of Terror.

"WHAT do you say now, English boy? Is there not fear in your heart for the death that is to come to you?" The Chinaman in robes was speaking. He was acting as interpreter.

Ted of the Tree-tops felt a pang of disappointment. That meant that the Typhoon could not speak English. The Tiger Boy suddenly determined on putting up a reckless, bold front; on telling the truth.

"I am not afraid," he said in Cantonese. "Listen. I have come, and now I am master. Soon the white lords of the British Government will come to blow you all into the air with bombs, if I give the word. Did you not see the mighty elephant, Chang?" he went on, seeing he had got a grip on his awed listeners. "That elephant is my servant. He will linger around near the Forbidden City until further orders. And—listen you, Typhoon—that elephant has got a great white circle painted on his back. More, I've sent a message out by jungle telegraph, for a fleet of airplanes to come to look for the elephant. Where the elephant is, there they will find the Forbidden City. And there they'll find me. Savvy, Typhoon?"

The hooded figure in the great carved chair started as if naked fire had touched it. The whole atmosphere was changed. He rapped out orders fiercely, swiftly, in Chinese. Detachments of yellow-faced warriors left the temple.

"They've gone to fine poor old Chang," thought Ted of the tree-tops. And his heart sank like lead.

As a matter of fact when sending his message by

OUR READERS' OWN FUN PAGE.**THE JESTER'S REALM**

Football's 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: I've brought these trousers to be re-seated. I sit a lot.

Tailor: Yes, and I'd like my last bill receipted. I've stood a lot.

(Football to J. BELL, 85, Durham Road, Manor Park, E.12.)

DATED.

A Scotsman called up a doctor in great agitation. "Come at once!" he said. "Ma wee child has swallowed a saxpence!"

"How old is it?" asked the doctor.

"1894," replied the canny Scot.

(Fountain pen to SAMUEL PIKE, 22, Burder Street, Hollinwood, Oldham.)

HIS TURN.

Bill Jones and Jack Brand had come to London to see the cup-tie, but it was very late by the time they found lodgings, so that they were only too glad to sleep anywhere.

"A bed, sir?" said the owner of the house. "Certainly, I've got the very thing, a lovely feather bed."

In the small hours of the morning Bill was rudely awakened by Jack, who yelled: "'Arf-time, Bill!"

"Get off," Bill replied, sleepily, "this ain't a football match."

"I know," said Bill, "but it's my turn to sleep on the feather."

(Fountain pen to M. EVANS, 12, Unity Street, Aberdare, Glamorgan.)

THE DOOR.

JOB HUNTER: Have you an opening for a bright young man?

BUSY MANAGER: Yes, but don't slam it on your way out!

(Fountain pen to N. CUMMING, 63, Avondale Road, Peckham, S.E.)

MUTE.

DEAF AND DUMB BEGGAR (having received sixpence): Thank you, sir!

OLD GENT: Eh? I thought you were deaf and dumb?

BEGGAR: No, sir. I'm only minding the corner for the deaf and dumb man; he's listening to the music in the park.

(Fountain pen to W. GUNNER, Childs Farm, Cooling, near Rochester.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

8/4/33.

the jungle telegraph he had asked for only one airplane to come to his assistance. One secret airplane, flying high. He hoped that it would get through unscen, and he continued to play his bold game.

Now his voice rang out strongly again.

"I am the Tiger Boy. Lord of all animals. Here in the Temple of Annam, where animals kill, I defy death. You cannot put me to death, Typhoon."

It seemed that the hooded figure in the great carved chair stirred restlessly. For a murmur had risen from the massed thousands of yellow men there.

It was very true that this was the Temple of Beasts. The whole cult of Siva had its basis in the worship of fierce jungle animals. And justice demanded that if the Tiger Boy was to be killed, he should be offered on the altars to the wild beasts of the temple.

But what if the Tiger Boy could fulfil his boast and defy the beasts of the temple?

The Typhoon was plainly uneasy; but he had to

satisfy his fanatical, superstitious horde. Suddenly he leant forward, speaking rapidly in Chinese.

A great murmur rose. When it had quieted, the gorgeously robed Chinaman who stood on the dias interpreted for the lad's benefit.

"You will be taken into the Temple of a Thousand Echoes. When your screams ring out the people will know that you have died, indeed, and that you cannot defy our gods."

The Tiger Boy was seized from behind, and his hands and feet were securely tied with rattan. Fear boiled in him then. He knew that his moment of dire peril was at hand.

A sudden babble arose from those in the temple. The white lad understood enough Chinese to know that they were demanding that the Flying Death should be deposited in the Temple of Beasts with him. Truly they were superstitious.

But what use were bow and arrows to him, trussed hand and foot like a fowl?

He was borne away by three Mongol warriors

rolled into a great, dark room of stone. It was a vast apartment, so vast that it seemed as infinite as space itself. Ted of the Tree-tops knew that this was the Temple of a Thousand Echoes, so called because the screams of victims dying in agony were carried through fluted pipes and heard in a greatly intensified volume by the thousands of worshippers of Siva kneeling at the foot of the temple a thousand feet below in that great mountain defile.

What a terrible fate was to be his! He was carried to a great stone pillar, tied there and left.

An awesome silence descended after the footsteps of his captors had died away. A silence so deep and terrible that it seemed to him like a tangible thing.

The young Secret Service agent had commenced to struggle at once like an eel.

Silence—no—by heavens, no! The vast, dark stone chamber was full of sinister sounds. Was it just his fancy, or was there someone else in this chamber of crawling darkness and horror?

His eyes now used to the dark, Ted of the Tree-tops saw a fearful sight.

Rearing almost to the roof was an enormous figure of a squatting idol. And on its great outstretched stone hands lay the bound figure of a man. It was Ferrand of the British Secret Service, the man Ted Topham had come to save.

"That you, Ferrand?" he cried out.

"Great guns!" came the hoarse reply. "Is that Ted Topham of headquarters? For Heaven's sake, save me, lad, if you can! They've tortured me, and now they've put me up for the black panthers to get. They're released at the height of the Seventh Moon—and that's to-night. And they come clawing at a man's stomach. By the Lord Harry, Ted, I can't stand the thought of it."

The big, bearded adventurer of the British Secret Service was utterly unnerved by the fate in store for him. And well he might be.

"Righto—but be quiet!" hissed Ted of the Tree-tops as he struggled desperately.

And a silence fell. A silence emphasised by unreal, subdued noises, like the whispered flight of owls and bats. Then the soft, sithering sound of a heavy body sliding along the stone floor. Desperately the jungle boy struggled, for he knew what it was.

Suddenly he cried out as he saw the monstrous Thing. Before him was a mountain of barred and spotted coils gathering rapidly on top of each other. He saw the sallow gleam of an endless, yellow belly, a great flat head, mounting higher and higher till in a few moments it swayed high above the lad.

The forked tongue flickered. The baleful yellow eyes shone pale as cold, dead opals. That immense reptile was poised to strike. . . .

And in that instant Ted of the Tree-tops burst free of his bonds and he seized up his bow and arrow.

Hiss! The arrow flew—and struck against that seething mass of brown and yellow cable. There was a sudden wild thrashing about, a crackling and swirl of bones on the stone floor of the temple. . . . and the monstrous Thing lay still. It had been hit in the one vital spot and was dead.

Tiger Boy's Triumph.

THE jungle boy's laugh of triumph and relief rang out. He knew what it was he had killed—a great rock python such as is seldom seen in the whole of the Malay peninsula.

"All right, Ferrand," he called out in a cheery voice, "if I can clamber up that great stone idol, I'll soon have you free!"

He turned, about to make an attempt to clamber upon to the lap of the great stone idol, when suddenly

he was distracted by a sound, and he whirled again like lightning.

Standing in the far recesses of the stone chamber, surrounded by a ghastly aura of light was the hooded terror. The red-garbed figure of the Typhoon.

Without a word, without a sound, the Typhoon raised his right hand in which was a heavy Service revolver, and he took deliberate aim at the lad.

The shots blazed through the cavern with ear-splitting thunder. Pantherishly the Tiger Boy leapt to one side. His deadly enemy was unnerved; he was wasting shots in the darkness—five he fired in all—and then as there came a pause in the thunderous blast of sound, the Tiger Boy determined to risk all in a plunge.

With a sudden mad rush he flung himself upon the hooded figure. His charge was so sudden and so precipitate that he took the dreaded leader of the Chinese secret society utterly by surprise.

They closed, struggling like two great, grim cats in the darkness. The young British Secret Service agent tried to tear off the hood of his enemy, but the whole cowl was in one piece, and strong. The Typhoon, too, had the steel-wire strength and ferocity of a tiger. And suddenly the man wrenched himself free with a snarl, turned and ran.

Gasping, the Tiger Boy stooped for the revolver. Now there was a silence in the great stone chamber again. A silence, broken by fearful, soft, stealthy scuffling sounds. The sound of pawed, furtive creatures.

And suddenly the thing happened. An *oubliette*, or round man-trap in the roof of the temple, fell inwards, opened to the moonlight. And through it, on to the great stone lap of the idol, tumbled two, sleek, sinuously twisting black forms.

"The black panthers!" Ferrand cried hoarsely. "Heavens, they'll get me."

Despite himself, Ted of the Tree-tops felt cold wave upon wave of horror surge over him, rendering him weak and trembling. The black panthers had sprung away instantly from the shouting men. But they were in the torture chamber. . . . somewhere.

Ted of the Tree-tops hesitated, revolver in hand. The impulse strong in him was to rescue Ferrand. But he remembered sharply that he was under orders from the British Secret Service. They wanted to know the identity of the Typhoon, and they had charged him to discover that information at all costs—aye, even at the cost of his own life and others.

And Ted of the Tree-tops knew that there was but one bullet left in the revolver. One bullet with which to rescue his friend. . . . or a bullet with which to end the infamous career of the Typhoon?

He called out in a voice he strove to make strong. "Ferrand, old chap—I've got one bullet. Can I leave you—the black demons are cowards; they'll keep off for a bit, if you shout at them—can I leave you?"

Then came Ferrand's answer, hearty and reassuring. The voice of a man who had found his courage, and found it still strong.

"You go, Ted. Blot that yellow devil out. I'll wait—don't worry about me."

It was the answer the sorely torn lad needed. He dashed through the dark after the mysterious, hated Typhoon.

The jungle Secret Service lad turned a dark corner, and so he came into a place of light, a place of mirrors. And he saw the hooded figure of the Typhoon reflected in at least two dozen long, polished glasses.

He was tricked—tricked. He had but one bullet in the gun, and there seemed a dozen hooded terrors facing him. He felt his brain must snap.

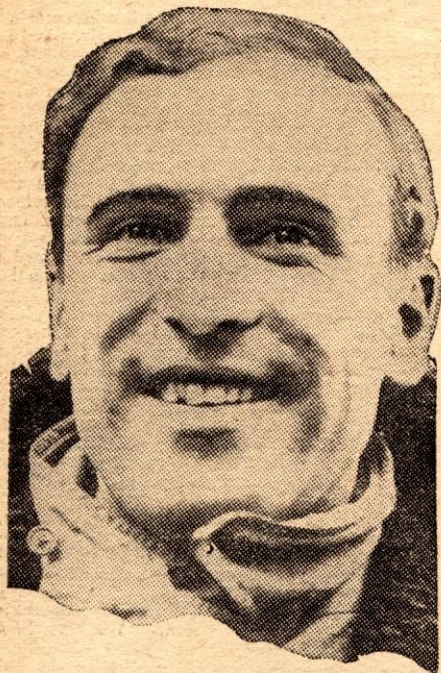
Suddenly, however, he gave a short, grim laugh. He had spotted one image which differed from the

THIS WEEK'S CHAT FEATURES A CHAMPION FLYER.

EVERY BOY'S HEROES

No. 2.—SMILING JIM MOLLISON

All About His Records in the Air.



flying records—and smashing 'em to smithereens.

His first attempt on the Australia to England flight ended in failure, when he crashed at Port Darwin, Australia, in trying to take off from the flying field, which was only 550 yards long.

In his second attempt, in August, 1931, however, he came through with flying colours, covering 8,350 miles in the record time of 8 days 22 hours 25 mins. This was an epic fight for Mollison had to battle his way through the torrential rain of the monsoons and blinding dust storms; he had only ten hours sleep in eight days, and once lost his way so that he was forced down near the Euphrates.

Less than a year later, in March, 1932, he had set up a second splendid record by his solo flight from England to the Cape, covering the 6,255 miles in 4 days 17hrs. 19 mins. This flight was all the more praiseworthy in that "Jim" Mollison flew practically without sleep over a new and hazardous route that took him across 2,000 miles of desert. He was, at one time, forced down on the bank of the River Niger and had to get the help of natives to dig his plane out of the mud. And he finished this wonderful flight by crashing on to the beach.

On August 20th, 1932, Jim completed the magnificent solo flight of nearly 3,000 miles across the lonely Atlantic wastes in under thirty hours. His actual objective was New York, but owing to lack of petrol, he was forced to land at Penfield Ridge, fifty-five miles from St. John.

By this amazing achievement he completed, the first and fastest solo flight across the Atlantic from East to West.

His latest and probably his greatest achievement was completed early this year, when he flew from Lympe to Brazil in 82 hours 8 mins. This flight included the crossing of the South Atlantic from Thies, Senegal, to Port Natal, 1,940 miles, in 17½ hours. This flight added more laurels to his already crowded crown. He is the first airman to fly solo across the South Atlantic from East to West, and the first man to have done both the North and South Atlantics. He also beat the French record of 4½ days for the whole journey.

Jim Mollison gives the following as the secret of success and as a splendid piece of advice to boys: "There's nothing finer in the world than loyalty. Loyalty to your flag, loyalty to your commander, loyalty to your comrades."

JAMES ALLAN MOLLISON ranks high among the Great Adventurers of the Air. Born in Maxwell Park, Glasgow, twenty-seven years ago, his life has been one long thrill. As a boy he attended the Academy—a school which has produced many great Scots. His first ambition was to be a Field Marshal, but it was when he was twelve years old that flying got into his blood. For it was when passing through Stockport that he saw Mr. Grahame-White, the famous air pioneer, and his first aeroplane.

From that moment, he tells us, J. A. Mollison dedicated his life to flying. At seventeen he was in the air; and such great strides did he make in his craft that at the early age of twenty-one he became test pilot for All-India—the youngest test pilot in the Royal Air Force. Before that he served through the Waziristan War.

Eventually he was appointed senior pilot of Australia National Airways.

Since then he has been taking hold of lesser men's

others. The buttons showed on the right side of his jacket, whereas in the other figures the buttons were on the left side. He had found the Typhoon.

He raised his revolver and fired. A sudden, wild scream rang through the place. No pane of glass shattered—instead the rest made curious gestures of terror as the hooded figure collapsed.

The Tiger Boy gave a great shout of triumph as he dashed forward and bent over the hooded figure, ripping the cloth of the hood with a knife. He gave a gasp as he tore it aside and gained a glimpse of the face.

And then a strange sensation of terror overcame him. For somewhere a gong sounded and instantly the great chandelier overhead, hung with hundreds of crystal-clear glass pendants, went out—and darkness came down like a blanket.

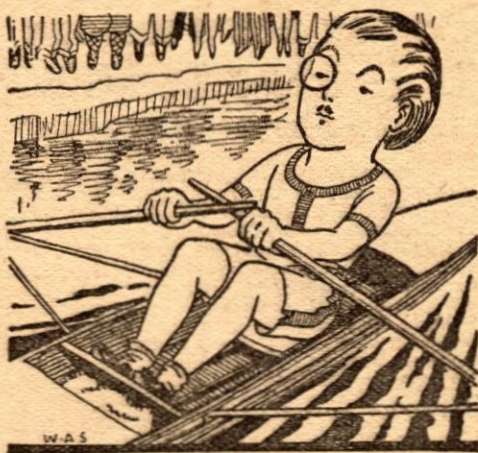
Creeping, crawling darkness. A darkness full of a wild flurry of movement. Ted of the Tree-tops knew what was happening. The Typhoon's yellow cohorts were crowding through the temple, and were dragging the body away.

The boy turned, darted away.

And as he raced there came to Tiger Boy the full-throated, elemental roar: the song of an airplane's engine. He knew he had to escape at all cost.

He dashed through dark, pillared stone rooms and narrow passages. And so, more by instinct than by any preconceived knowledge of the temple, he came out on its wide, stone portico and stood in the yellow moonlight, gazing down as strange a scene as had ever met a white lad's eyes.

In the moonlight before the temple were thousands of kneeling natives. They were doing him homage



When he's striking thirty four
To the minute with his oar -
Says the Rower.....

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

With an exultant laugh Tiger Boy raced down the stone steps. He had got to escape; the British Secret Service must learn who the Typhoon was.

These massed, ignorant yellow men did not try to stop him. He raced over their backs, so closely were they packed together, and so escaped, running past the beehive huts that thronged round the foot of the temple. There was still that engine roar above, seeming to blast the sky apart. In the moonlight he saw the machine, and knew it for a British Secret Service 'plane.

"Chang's somewhere around," the boy gasped. "Must be."

He raced on, behind a great belt of trees, and suddenly heard the trumpeting of the elephant. Nor was it long before he was raising himself on Chang's tusks, and then standing on the elephant's back, he signalled wildly to the 'plane.

It came down in a mad crash dive, then miraculously banked around into the wind and came down like a gull alighting. As Ted of the Tree-tops raced to the 'plane, he saw the grinning face of Flying Flynn, the special pilot of the British Intelligence.

"Boy, you've still got the motors running? Good!" gasped Ted as he scrambled in. "Let's go. It's important."

Flying Flynn made no mistake about it. He took off with a toppling surging run of a hundred yards, and went up like a pole vaulter. Up, up in a sheer zoom, then he banked around.

"What's on your mind, fellow?" Flying Flynn called out. But the jungle lad stopped him with a hand clenched tight on his shoulder. "Look!" he gasped.

It was another 'plane in the sky. With skirring

propeller like a great white whisker, wings teetering madly, it came on, apparently for a head-on crash.

Flying Flynn crouched over his controls. And he did everything but make them speak.

At last Flying Flynn came out of a tricky Immelman turn high above his foe, and zoomed down in a roaring death-dive on the other's tail.

"Shall I give him the works?" cried Flying Flynn. And the jungle boy nodded grimly.

The pilot squeezed his gun trips, squinting through the sights, as he roared relentlessly down on the other's tail. Two streams of nickel-jacketed lead poured with chattering fury from his guns and enveloped the cockpit of the 'plane in front.

The pilot, with a last despairing gesture, turned a face frozen with despair and looked back. It was the face of Mr. Koofarl, the Eurasian.

Then his head slumped forward. The 'plane turned over, nose-dived, and went down in a roaring spin to its crashing finale.

"The last—of the Typhoon!" gasped Ted of the Tree-tops fervently.

For that white faced Eurasian with the strange eyes was none other than the Typhoon after all.

Ted of the Tree-tops thoughts reverted in a state of panic to Ferrand now. Briefly, quickly, he told the pilot of the Secret Service man's plight, and what he intended to do.

Flynn stared at him. "It's almost certain death, lad," he said gruffly.

"But there's no time to try any other way," cried the jungle boy. "Those panthers—the black demons—they'll be at him. . . ."

Flying Flynn saw that the lad meant to have his way. "Here, take this," he said. "It's better'n a gun—always use it myself."

And he handed Ted a walking stick as the lad slipped a parachute pack over his shoulders. The boy's face was grim and determined. Cautiously he climbed over the edge of the cockpit, clung there for a moment, then at a sharp cry from Flynn he dived sheer down from the hurtling 'plane.

Down, down. He was counting to himself, while the blood rushed to his head. Trip hammers seemed beating at his temples. His hand went to the release ring and he tugged.

Now . . . the manhole in the temple roof was beneath. Ted of the Tree-tops unhooked the parachute and dropped.

Straight and true through the manhole, he fell to land with a jarring shock that felt as if every bone in his body was broken. He was in the dark temple, and Ferrand was shouting furiously, striving to keep off the black panthers.

Ted of the Tree-tops had arrived just in the nick of time.

He scrambled up, the cane that Flynn had given him in his hands. And it was no ordinary cane, as was quickly proved when he darted in, making savage lunges at those green, glaring eyes that swam about him in the dark. Soreams of agony came from the black panthers, and they rolled over and dropped with soft thuds, dead. Electrified! For the cane was charged with a powerful electric battery sufficient to administer a death shock.

"Come on, Ferrand," cried Ted of the Tree-tops cheerily. "The job's done. And a perfectly good show, too."

Five minutes later they were racing from the temple with none to say them nay. And but five minutes following that an aeroplane was droning in the moonlit sky, making for Singapore.

Look out next week for another ripping yarn of the Iron Spider. Once more the Square Crook comes up against Falcon Swift in his efforts to get free of his terrible prison.

TAILS-UP DRAKE—SKY SCORPION!



The Scarlet Squadron.

"WE don't know what we're up against yet, Drake. From the information you have obtained, I do not doubt that Britain's air power is facing the most serious challenge to its supremacy since the World War."

The iron-grey Air Marshal looked gravely across the desk at the young Squadron Leader.

For the last quarter of an hour Tails-Up Drake's voice had sounded through that quiet room of the Air Ministry as he had recounted to Britain's Air Chief the amazing happenings at Flamborough Service Aerodrome.

Squadron Leader Geoffrey Drake, D.F.C., was in command of the coastal defence aerodrome that was the vital aerial gateway to Britain's northern industrial centres. There was a mass concentration of service aircraft there for a great Air Force film. Amazingly, Drake had stumbled on a sinister plot to break Britain's air power, had discovered that the cinema organisation headed by Phillip Garson—*alias* Red Garson—was a cloak behind which a mysterious, relentless Bolshevik confederation was planning to strike a deadly blow at England's air fleet. Post-

No. 2 of Our
Mighty New
Series of
Flying Yarns.
Speed-filled,
Thrill-Crowded
Exploits of
Two Demon
Aces of the
Air.

haste, Drake had travelled to the Air Ministry for guidance.

The Air Marshal's fingers drummed on the desk.

"We've got to tighten the net carefully, Drake," he said grimly. "I suspect that Garson and his bogus cinema organisation at Flamborough are, so to speak, only the spearhead of the attack. We must throw Garson off his guard, let him carry on as if we have no suspicions. Then, when we get the real instigators of this dastardly plot into the net, we'll close it."

"I understand, sir," Drake smiled.

The Air Marshal rose. "You will be given no definite instructions, Drake," he said. "That is impossible! We must rely solely on your courage and resource."

Squadron Leader Drake saluted. "The Air Service is prepared, sir. We shall not fail."

Yet Tails-Up Drake's face was anxious when, an hour later, he opened out the roaring Rolls-Royce engine of his Hawker Hart and streaked across Hendon Aerodrome on the first stage of his swift return to Flamborough.

It was the uncertainty of the mystery menace he was up against, that was disturbing. Already he had learnt that Red Garson was utilising advanced discoveries of aerial science to aid his sinister scheme.

But when the roaring Hart plunged through the clouds above Flamborough Aerodrome, the grey sheds and the living-quarters with their white posts and trim paths looked peaceful enough.

Two Vickers Virginias were lumbering over the aerodrome on dummy bombing-practice for the circle of film cameras before the sheds. Drake smiled grimly. According to plan, Red Garson was being allowed to carry on.

He was circling to land, when his quick eyes discerned a stocky figure gesticulating on the sands at the foot of the towering cliffs.

Bonehead Murphy! Drake grinned as he dived lower, with wires screaming, and surveyed the little Irish mechanic. He looked more glum and melancholy than ever with the extremities of his bathing-costume flapping about his skinny limbs. Yet there was something urgent in Murphy's signals.

A dizzy side-slip to lose height, and, falling like a tumbler pigeon, Drake perched the quivering biplane on the sands in a perfect, three-point landing.

Bonehead Murphy scrambled over the rocks to the machine.

"Begorra, it's covered with seaweed that Oi am, sorr," he said mournfully. "But Oi've a clue to where the murderous spalpeen in the hooded 'plane disappeared last noight."

"Good lad!" Drake jerked.

"Oi swam out to the headland and had a good look at the cliff, sorr." The stocky little Irishman was dressing as he talked. "Oi found some iron steps let into the face of the cliff, with a handrail painted white so that you wouldn't be seeing it against the chalk. It leads up to a score of six-foot panels of bullet-proof steel let into the chalk, with observation slits and machine-guns jutting out like an Irish pig's bristles."

"Garson's work, of course!" Drake snapped. But why the deuce is he turning the headland into a fortress—"

He broke off as Murphy suddenly gripped his arm. "Begorra, d'ye see that, sorr?"

The stocky mechanic was pointing across the waters to the distant cliff, where a dark, eerie shadow was slowly spreading like a giant hand.

Tensely, Drake bent forward, straining his eyes through the gathering dusk to decipher the riddle. But a clue came from a different quarter. Drake jerked back his head as from the darkness, now stealing across the night sky, came the muffled throb of aircraft.

Drake's jaw-muscles tightened. Diving out of the clouds, in perfect spearhead formation, were six hooded 'planes—scarlet, streamlined brutes capable of lashing speed. More of Garson's mystery brood of fighting aircraft. This time they wouldn't slip through his fingers.

"Hold tight, Murphy!"

Tails-Up sent the thundering Hart hurtling forward as Bonehead Murphy scrambled into the rear cockpit.

Whipping open the leading edge-slots, Drake climbed almost vertically, the Rolls-Royce Kestrel lifting the slender biplane above the mystery sky marauders.

With rudder jammed hard to port, and wing-tip ailerons flicking, Drake straightened out. The slip stream smashed against his leather-clad head as he leaned from the hurtling cockpit, watching his quarry.

He whistled at what he saw. That tight formation of bullet 'planes were hurtling at break-neck speed, straight at the face of the cliff, as if to certain disaster.

"Begorra, it's mad the devils are," Murphy gurgled.

But Drake's keen eyes discerned a giant panel sliding back in the chalk. As it opened, the shadow of the cavity beyond deepened—the mystery shadow that had puzzled him five minutes before.

With sudden reckless decision, Drake yanked down the Hart's silver nose, pulling out of that dizzy dive clean on the ugly tails of the hooded fighters.

His nerves taut, Drake hung on, crept closer to the scarlet brood of aircraft whose thundering engines drowned the roar of his own.

Drake's hand tightened spasmodically on the joystick as with startling suddenness a great booming rush of sound smashed against his eardrums.

The hooded craft had plunged into the domed cavity in the cliff, their engines throwing back thunderous, ear-shattering echoes from the walls beyond.

Close on the tails of his quarry, Drake sent the Hart hurtling through the gateway to unknown peril.

As the 'plane dropped on a surprisingly smooth landing-surface, Drake heard to his relief the *twang* of flexible rubber cables wrapping about the undercarriage and smoothly slowing the machine to a standstill.

"Begorra, we're in!" muttered Murphy, throwing

an uneasy glance back to where the great panel slid back across the opening, shutting out the starlight.

Drake's keen eyes raked the darkness—the gloom that for the moment had saved the Britisher's daring intrusion from discovery. The hooded 'planes had shot forward into the further recesses of that surprisingly long landing-chamber, hollowed out of the cliff. The lair was an ambitious enlargement of the old smugglers' caves that existed in the cliffs.

It was a startling object lesson of the thoroughness of Garson's plans. But in those brief moments Drake discerned a good deal more that startled him. His gaze flashed over the massed lines of hooded aircraft ranged on either side. It was clear enough that Garson was concentrating beneath Flamborough Aerodrome a fleet of fighting aircraft which, when the time was ripe, he would launch ruthlessly against Britain's air power.

On a higher level to which access was obtained by slender steel ladders, Drake suddenly spotted Red Garson. He was bending over a great switchboard, where wireless mechanism gleamed, giving his face a weird, unearthly light.

As if warned by some presentiment of danger, Garson jerked his head round. Drake saw no longer the suave, smiling film producer who had so disarmingly introduced himself into Flamborough Aerodrome. Immeasurable evil was stamped on his sinister features as he stood for a moment staring with incredulous, hate-filled eyes at the intruding Britishers. His hand reached for a switch and, as he flung it over, the great catacomb was suddenly filled with the purple glare of mercury vapour lamps in the chalk roof.

Concealment was impossible now. On that upper gallery a ring of swarthy faces stared at the Britishers with mingled astonishment and rage.

"Bejabers, it's shivers down me spoine Oi'm getting," came Murphy's doleful tones. "A graveyard would be a cheerful change intirely..."

His voice was drowned by the sudden roar of the Rolls-Royce Kestrel. Grimly, Drake spun the biplane round, its rear skid lashing like a scorpion's tail, smashing against the advance guard of the crooks surging down on them.

In those vital moments of confusion, Murphy slithered from the cockpit of the taxiing biplane. With a grunt, he swung over the switch controlling the sliding panel.

Drake opened the throttle as the giant panel swung back. As with quickening speed he edged long the landing-platform with Bonehead safely back in the cockpit, the sounds of pursuit surprisingly died down.

The next moment he knew the reason. There was a thunderous roar of engines, and on either side of him two hooded 'planes were racing along the landing-platform.

Drake's jaw hardened. Out in the open he would be a "sitting target" for the machine-guns of those scarlet monsters.

The young Squadron Leader took a sudden desperate chance. He swung himself from the cockpit and leapt along the Hart's quivering wing, a crouching figure of dynamic energy. He balanced himself for a split second as the whirling disc of the port-side machine's propeller flashed past. Then he sprang at the streaking fuselage, his hands clawing the hood above the pilot's cockpit from its fastenings.

He had a fleeting glimpse of a swarthy, amazed face, then his rigid hand closed over the metal ring on the ruffian's chest. He yanked it sideways and he heard the twanging of rip cords, the snapping of silk as the parachute was whipped from its pack by the propeller slip-stream.

With a grim laugh he dropped clear, as the filling parachute whipped the yelling pilot from the cockpit.

Like a weight on a giant pendulum, the helpless crook went smashing against the white wall. As he fell in a huddled heap on the rock, Drake's flying leap sent him slumping into the Hart's fuselage.

He grinned as he opened out the engine. His luck was in. The pilotless black brute had yawned across the rock, smashing into the second hooded fighter. There was a mighty crash of splintering spars, and the roar of racing engines, as the machines lashed to destruction.

Coolly, Drake lifted the port-side wing of the hurtling Hart over that smoking shambles and shot out to the starlight. Rapidly, the yells of the out-witted crooks died in the distance.

"Second round to us, Murphy," grinned Tails-Up cheerfully, as he swung the nose of the Hart in the direction of the aerodrome's twinkling lights.

Garson's Devilish Plot.

THE night's astonishing discoveries in the catacombs beneath the aerodrome had impressed Drake with the vastness of Garson's criminal organisation. No doubt, he decided, there were other

"Good morning, sir!" Garson said suavely.

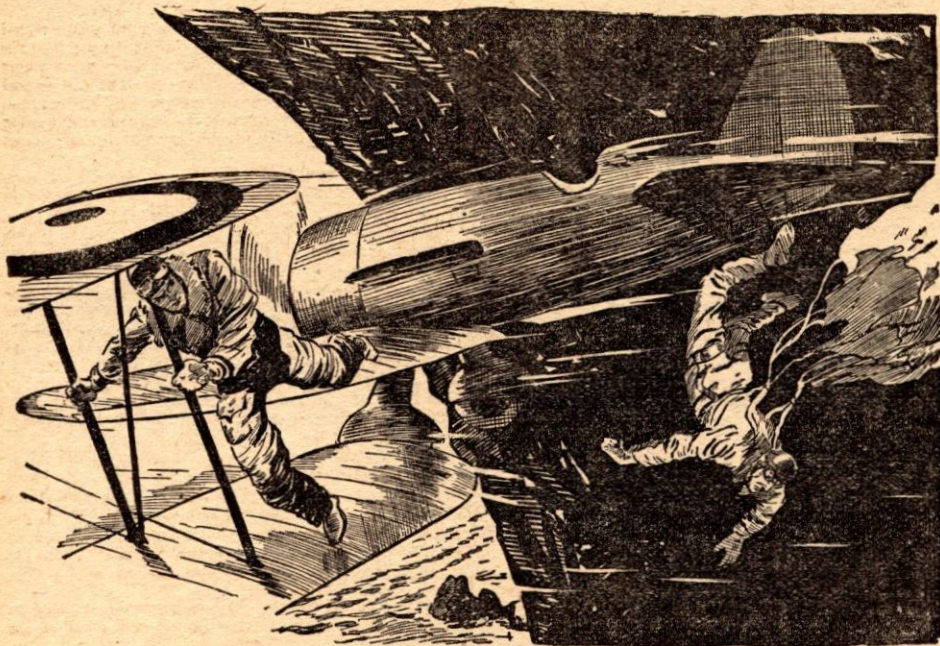
For a moment they looked at one another, the two men who a few hours ago had been at one another's throats. Garson's smiling, imperturbable face revealed nothing. Drake was the less calm of the two. A fighter by nature, this silent fencing left him at a disadvantage.

"What is your programme this morning, Garson?" he said abruptly.

A smile flickered over Garson's thin lips, that bleak smile that never reached his expressionless eyes.

"With your permission, Squadron Leader, my men would like to obtain pictures of your bombers. To obtain a more effective film, I should like my aeroplane with the cameras to follow the bombing fleet across country as if they were proceeding on a raid." He paused for a moment, and again that cold smile flickered about his lips. "And I understand that you will give your pilots orders to demonstrate the automatic control with which your bombers are fitted."

Drake nodded. He could see no risk in a demonstration flight of bombing aircraft.



GIVING HIM THE WIND-UP.—Drake tugged at the pilot's parachute ring. The canvas billowed out, was caught by the wind and lifted the pilot out of the cockpit.

nets of hostile aircraft and scientific killing-devices scattered throughout the country. Exactly where the sinister tentacles had spread was yet to be discovered.

Before turning in, the young Squadron Leader sent a detailed report in wireless code to the Air Ministry. For all his nerve-racking experiences, he slept soundly. He was out on the aerodrome at an early hour, but Garson was there before him. Drake could not help admiring the man's amazing nerve.

It was towards midday when, with a thunderous roar of massed engines, the bombers took off from Flamborough Aerodrome, the diminutive camera-plane rocking in their mighty slip-stream. It was an impressive sight, the mammoth Vickers manoeuvring lumberingly into a far-flung diamond formation. They circled the aerodrome majestically, then swung southwards, the sunlight gleaming on bombs beneath the wings. For this grim pageant of twentieth-century war was to conclude with a

spectacular display of bombing on a ground target set in a desolate part of the Yorkshire moors.

As Drake watched the bombers recede into the distance, he was conscious of a queer uneasiness. That vague apprehension deepened as the Squadron Leader saw Phillip Garson's furtive figure moving quickly through the doorway at the side of B Flight sheds.

Apart from the curious fact that the crook had not thought it advisable to accompany the camera plane, there was a queer exultant expression on Garson's face that alarmed Drake.

He made a quick decision to watch him. Strolling with apparent casualness to the sheds, he slipped inside. Drake saw no sign of his quarry. But the faint echo of distant footsteps on the concrete floor drifted to his ears and then abruptly died away.

Tails-Up moved forward through the silence, every nerve alert. He went directly to the end of the hangar where the sound of Garson's footsteps had seemed to die away. For a moment that gave him no clue as to the crook's strange disappearance. Drake had halted by the test bench, where engines were run in, and suddenly he bent forward, his eyes narrowing. Clearly outlined on the oil-smeared surface of the metal trap giving access to the deep sump beneath the test bench was a hand with a missing thumb!

Garson's hand had recently lifted that trap. Cautiously, Drake opened the hinged panel of metal and slithered down into the sump. His keen eyes spotted a second trapdoor let into the right-hand wall, an entrance cunningly chosen, for the flying oil of the test-bench engines almost obscured it.

blown to destruction." There was a ring of madness in Garson's laugh. "With one swift coup we shall have destroyed, the nerve centre, the brains and organisation of Britain's Air Power. . . ."

Drake's hands clenched on the metal rungs. There was a grim ring of confidence in Red Garson's voice.

A hoarse shout of alarm startled him into activity. Through the gloom below he saw Garson's evil face peering up at him—saw the ominous glint of a revolver.

He scrambled up the rungs, a sudden ear-splitting roar in his ears as Garson fired. A bullet screamed perilously near, ricocheting off the curved wall.

Drake climbed with desperate haste. It was the work of a few moments to slither up through the hinged panel in the sump and back into the shed.

He went racing out to the aerodrome, grabbing his parachute pack and flying leathers from the Squadron office in his whirlwind dash to his machine.

The Air Ministry to be blown up! It sounded madly fantastic . . . and yet. . . .

"Start her up Murphy!" Drake yelled as he leapt into the cockpit of the Hart that Bonehead was tuning. "We've got to find those bombers."

The Raid.

DRAKE'S fears deepened as an hour passed and his combing of the skies failed to locate the bombing squadron. His youthful face grew tense as he peered anxiously through the oil-flecked windscreen.

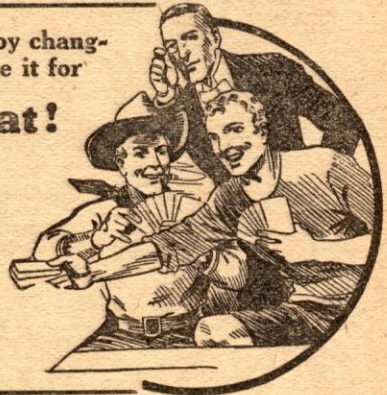
It was clear enough now that something had gone drastically wrong. His pilots had not followed out the mapped course. The bombers should have been,

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Levering his finger-tips into the narrow crack in the concrete wall, he pulled. To his relief the panel swung back. Contracting his broad shoulders, he wriggled into the opening, and felt the metal rungs of a ladder beneath his feet. Loosening his revolver in its holster, he commenced to descend.

He was working entirely in the dark now. His sense of direction told him that he was climbing down into the catacombs beneath the cliffs. He checked his descent down the darkened shaft, as he caught sight of a dim glow of light piercing the gloom below.

Wireless valves. He caught the gleam of the ebony switchboard, heard Garson's exultant voice.

"Code this message for the Master," he was saying to someone who was out of the line of Drake's limited vision. "The bombers are flying South to London according to plan. In a few hours England will be stunned by the news that the Air Ministry had been

over the ground target by now dropping their eggs. But the white circle of the target practice ground was intact when he hurtled over it.

It was then that he swung the biplane's quivering silver nose to the south. He must eat up the miles to London with all possible speed. For all the seeming impossibility of his pilots bombing the Air Ministry to destruction, he must discover what lay behind Garson's amazing boast. With whining superchargers, the Hart hurtled over towns and villages and trim green meadows.

At last Drake saw the silver ribbon of the Thames beneath the spreading planes, and then the smoke and mist of London's outlying suburbs.

It was Murphy who spotted the bombers.

"There they are, sorr!" The stocky Irish mechanic was pointing over the top plane.

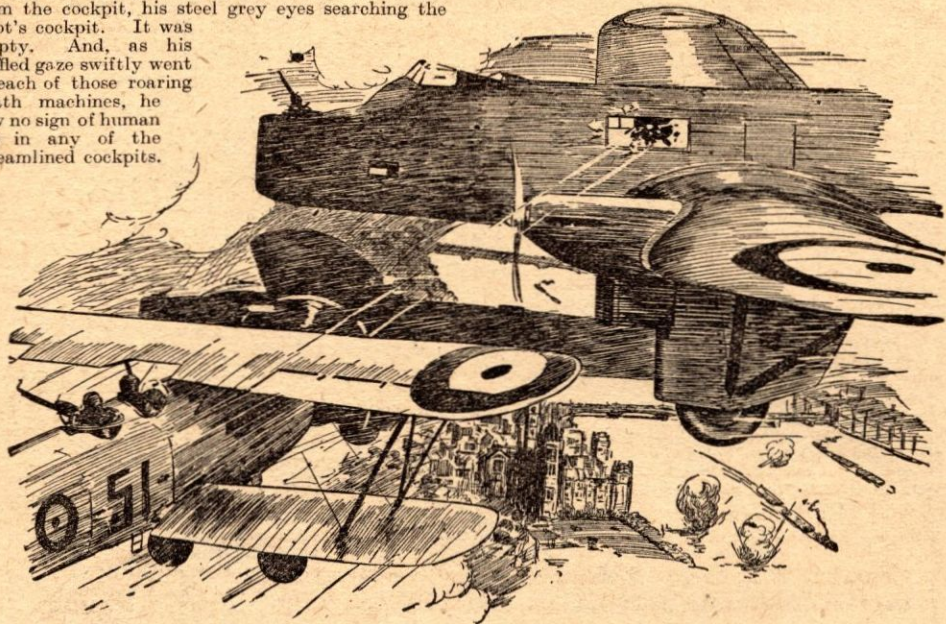
Drake's gaze went swiftly to where the hurtling

monsters were flying low over the heart of London, following the course of the Thames.

His lips set grimly. From that height he could see those blunt gleaming noses directed straight for the high square building—the Air Ministry.

Drake crammed on every atom of speed. The Hart roared level with the rear bomber and Drake leaned from the cockpit, his steel grey eyes searching the pilot's cockpit. It was empty. And, as his baffled gaze swiftly went to each of those roaring death machines, he saw no sign of human life in any of the streamlined cockpits.

swung on relentlessly towards the Air Ministry, following blindly the compass course Garson had set. Drake took a sudden, desperate chance. Swiftly he outlined his plan to Bonehead Murphy. Then he dived down amongst the bombers, flying with inspired skill in that grim duel with death.



THE DESTROYER DISARMED.—Drake swooped among the bombers, his gun chattering. The bullets shattered the bomb release control, and the bombs dropped harmlessly into the river.

To Drake's professional brain the fact that the machines kept height and direction with no human hand on the controls, was not surprising. The bombers had partially been sent up to demonstrate the amazing efficiency of the automatic pilot control—a highly technical device which kept the machine continually level, and through compressed air tubes, operated rudders and ailerons to correct mechanically the yawing of the aircraft from a set compass course.

It was clear to Drake that the automatic pilot was flying the bombers now. But why? What were the pilots doing?

Daringly he banked closer, the great slip stream of the bombers' propellers tossing the Hart like a cork. He stared through the porthole windows of the fuselages, and the startling truth was revealed.

The pilots lay unconscious on the cabin floors, utterly oblivious that their machines were flying blind, with bombs that would fall when the timing device freed them.

Drake's hand clenched on the control. He had caught a glimpse of the grey, ashen hue of the face of one of the unconscious pilots. Poison gas! Garson had plotted with deadly efficiency. According to plan the British pilots had gone back into the cabin, to allow the bogus film men to photograph the bombers controlled by the mechanical pilot. Then poison gas, that must have been concealed in cylinders there, had done its dastardly work. And the bombers had

The bombers, still plunging blindly on, were perilously close to the Air Ministry now. A few more minutes and it would be blown to destruction.

Crack! Crack! A stream of bullets from Murphy's machine gun sent lead smashing into the bomb release control in the cabin of the foremost bombers. There was a sudden surge of bombs flashing from the wing, a thunderous roar as they exploded in the Thames below, sending up a mighty water-spout.

Into each of the bombers Murphy sent a hail of lead, releasing its load of bombs, which hummed downward into the Thames.

Within five minutes the ghastly danger was averted. The Air Ministry was saved and, since the bombs had all exploded in the river, no damage at all was done.

It was a matter of moments before the pilots revived and were able once again to take over their controls.

Thanks to the resource and daring of Tails-Up Drake and his mechanic, Red Garson's ruthless threat to Britain's Air Headquarters was averted. Once again the daring flying ace had baffled Garson's diabolical schemes.

At last Garson has revealed the tremendous, evil forces he has to carry out his diabolical plans. Look out next week for a whirlwind flying yarn of Tails-Up Drake's fight against this terrible menace.

FATTY SLOCUM GIVES THE WHOLE SCHOOL A DAY'S HOLIDAY! The Most Daring April Fool's Jape Ever Perpetrated! And the Fat Fellow of the Remove Form at St. Giddy's is the Perpetrator! How He Works the Wangle and the Startling Events that Follow will Give You Thrills and Laughs Galore, Chums. Don't Miss the Grand Long Complete School Tale Below.

Fatty Slocum's Scheme.

SAMMY SLOCUM gave a low, deep chuckle—though there did not seem to be anything for the fat youth of the Remove Form at St. Giddy's to chuckle about. Rather, indeed, was there good reason for him to be dismayed, for the Remove were due for an exam. under Mr. Cattermole's arbitrary aegis that morning. And Fatty was the laziest fellow in the Form—a notorious slacker and a dunce.

It was not often that the slow, lethargic mind of Samuel Arbuthnot Slocum was roused to any degree of activity, but Fatty had prepared a deep plot for this morning, the First of April.

He rolled out of the hall when brekker was over, still chuckling softly.

"I wonder whether my cousin, Wally, in London, received the letter I wrote him last night," he murmured. "My word, if a wire does come, and the Head and all the masters go rushing off to London on a wild-goose chase, it will be the greatest April Fools joke on record. He, he, he! No lessons this morning—no exam! Oh, I'm artful, I am!"

Fatty had reached the Hall door, and as he did so, the telegraph boy from Merivale arrived breathlessly with a telegram. Fatty Slocum's grin widened.

"For Dr. Holroyd?" asked Fatty. "Right-ho, I'll take it along to him!"

Sammy Slocum clutched the buff missive in his fat hand, and hurried away to the Head's study. Unless he was very much mistaken, Fatty knew the contents of that wire! Dr. Holroyd was sorting his books and papers when Fatty arrived.

"A telegram for me, Slocum?" he exclaimed. "Dear me! Whatever can be the matter! Yes, please wait, as there may be a reply." Thus saying, the Head opened the envelope and read the following:

Conference School Governors called this morning Hotel Majestic, London. Attend with all masters. Expect you first train. Urgent.—WESTBROOK.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head. "There is a conference of the School Governors in London this morning, and my presence, with all the masters, is requested! How extraordinary! I must notify the masters at once!"

Fatty Slocum left the Head's study, chuckling deeply. His First of April joke was working!

Buttons, the page, was soon to be seen scurrying about to round up the masters to the Head's study.

Wellesley, however, damped the juniors' ardour by informing them that prefects would take the juniors for lessons that morning, and the Remove heard with alarm that Remington, their old enemy of the Sixth, was to supervise them!

Fatty Slocum, however, was equal to the occasion!

Hidden in the drawer of his desk in Study No. 12 was a sheet of paper bearing the Head's signature, which he had been keeping for such an emergency. Impatiently he waited until Dr. Holroyd and all the masters set out from St. Giddy's.

A few moments later the plump form of Fatty Slocum crept along to the Head's study.

Fatty got inside, and slipped a sheet of paper into the typewriter. It was the sheet that bore Dr. Holroyd's signature. Fatty was very, very careful not to make a mistake in typing, and he had looked up all the words in the dictionary beforehand, to make certain of the spelling. The bell rang for lessons while Fatty was typing.

When he had finished, the coast was clear, and he pinned the paper on the notice-board.

"He, he, he!" he chuckled. "No one suspects me of being at the bottom of this grand First of April joke! Wally sent the wire from London all right, and the Head's swallowed it whole! Now that notice will complete the job. He, he, he!"

The Remove were all assembled in the form-room, and Herbert Remington was there, when Fatty arrived. The prefect gave him a thunderous glare.

"You lazy young scamp!" he cried. "Why are you late for lessons?"

"Late for lessons?" said Fatty. "Why, I like that, Remington! There aren't going to be any lessons! Haven't you seen the notice on the board?"

"Why, you little sweep, if you think you'll catch me that way—!"

"I'm not trying to make an April Fool of you, Remington—honour bright!" said Fatty. "There's a notice on the board saying that to-day's a whole holiday. You go and look!"

Remington turned to Johnny Gee.

"Hold this young rascal till I come back!" he said, and hurried off to the notice-board. There, sure enough, was a sheet of paper with the following words typed:

NOTICE.

In view of the absence of myself and the Staff, it has been decided that morning lessons shall be cancelled. To-day, therefore, will be a whole holiday.

(signed) H. J. HOLROYD, M.A., Headmaster.

"Well, I'm dashed!" muttered Remington. "I wonder why this notice wasn't spotted before! Oh, I see!"

Remington strode back to the Remove form-room. He fixed Fatty with a grim look.

"The notice is there all right, and morning lessons are cancelled!" he said. "But what I want to know



is who removed it from the board and stuck it up again after the lessons bell had rung? Did you, Slocum?"

"Me? Nunno!" gasped Fatty. "I—Yaroooh! Stoppit! Yah!"

Remington cuffed the fat youth soundly, while the rest of the Remove trooped off to spread the great news.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tony Graham, as the chums of the Remove gathered in Study No. 4. "This gives us a great opportunity to play some larks on Earlswood—what?"

"Rather!" agreed Johnny Gee. "We shall have to be jolly careful, though, and— My hat! I've got it! Remember we heard yesterday that the Schools Medical Officer is due to visit Earlswood to-day? Supposing we disguise ourselves, and turn up there as the M.O. and his staff! We could give those rotters a high old time, and make lovely April Fools of them!"

The Remove leader proceeded to explain to his chums, and they lost no time in putting their plans into execution.

A Medical Case.

AT Earlswood School, meanwhile, lessons were in progress, and Tommy Rhodes & Co. of the Fourth Form were imbibing knowledge under the instruction of Mr. Bootles, their meek and mild Form-master.

All at once the door opened, to admit the tall, dignified form of Dr. Ballantyne, the Head of Earlswood. Behind him came a rather short, stoutish individual with a red face, a wealth of whiskers and extremely long white starched cuffs. This strange-looking gentleman was dressed in a frock-coat, baggy trousers and spats, and he carried a topper in one hand. In the other hand he carried a large, formidable-looking black bag.

"Ah, excuse me, Mr. Bootles, but the—ah—Medical Officer has arrived, and will proceed to examine the boys of this Form!" said Dr. Ballantyne. "Would you kindly attend to Dr.—ah—Swisher."

the Head of Earlswood retired, and the M.O. advanced further into the class-room. He peered keenly at the assembled Form.

"Huh! A most an mic-looking collection, sir," he piped. "I must call in my assistants."

Dr. Swisher went to the door and beckoned. Half-a-dozen personages appeared in white smocks, whiskers and spectacles, all carrying fearsome-looking medical instruments.

"Boys!" thundered the M.O., addressing the class. "I will now examine you. Kindly strip to your waists!"

Tommy Rhodes & Co. hastened to obey. Dr. Swisher's eyes turned on Tommy Rhodes, and the junior leader was selected to be the first victim of the "once-over." Tommy blinked when the "medical officer"—Johnny Gee in disguise—opened his bag and took out a strange contraption, something between a stethoscope and a pair of radio headphones. He applied this to Tommy Rhodes' bare chest, and bent down to listen. He gave a cry of horror.

"Good Heavens! This boy is misfiring badly!" he cried. "I must give him some medicine at once. Here, boy—swallow this!"

Tommy Rhodes swallowed the fearsome-looking liquid that the M.O. handed to him in a bottle. His face immediately screwed itself up into all manner of contortions, and Tommy spluttered wildly.

The M.O. summoned his "assistants," and the rest of the Earlswood Fourth Form were put under test! Their chests were thumped and pummelled, they were made to utter the most weird noises, and fearsome potions were forced down their necks.

"A very poor lot of boys, but they may improve, sir!" said the bogus Dr. Swisher, turning to the astounded Mr. Bootles. "Now, we will examine their teeth."

Dr. Swisher rammed an instrument, that looked very much like a tyre lever, into Tommy Rhodes' mouth, and started operations.

"Hm! Very bad! Very bad!" murmured the M.O. "Half these teeth must be extracted. But

these boys are so weak that we must use an anæsthetic. Bring in the gas apparatus!"

Two of the assistants ran outside and fetched in a huge gasbag, to which was connected a number of pipes and rubber bags.

There were a dozen of these "gasbags" attached to the apparatus, and the M.O. beckoned to Tommy Rhodes and eleven of his chief followers. These youths demurred at being "given gas," but the bags were clapped unceremoniously over their faces, and Dr. Swisher started to pump energetically.

Hisssss-ssssssss. Johnny Gee chuckled to himself as he pumped away merrily, for the bag contained nothing more harmful than "laughing gas."

Gradually Tommy Rhodes & Co. sank into unconsciousness. Suddenly, however, they began to grow gay. Merry gurgles and chuckles sounded from behind the rubber bags that smothered their faces, but soon these sounds gave way to roars of uncontrollable mirth.

"Dear me!" cried Mr. Bootles in alarm. "Whatever is the matter with them, doctor?"

"Hm!"
The M.O. was thoughtful "Their health is in a poorer state than I thought and the gas has gone to their heads. They must be taken for a walk in the sunshine. The other boys in the class can wheel them in bathchairs!"
"But, sir—" gasped the gentle Mr. Bootles.

"It can be arranged!" said the M.O. airily. "There is a bathchair hire service in Merrivale, you know. One of my assistants will go with you, to telephone for a dozen bathchairs to be brought here at once!"

"Very well—anything you say, doctor!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

Johnny Gee and his fellow japers chuckled as they dragged the gasbags from the faces of Tommy Rhodes & Co. Their ruse was working even better than they had imagined.

The bathchairs—they were the oldest "crocks" in the establishment—were not long in arriving, and were deposited within the gates of Earlswood.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. were carried out and each was dumped into one of the rickety, squeaky bathchairs. The M.O. and his assistants saw that they were securely strapped in.

"Come on, boys!" cried the M.O., beckoning to the other Fourth Formers who had not had gas. "Follow me! I and my assistants will be in attendance, in case our services are required."

Squeak! Squeak! Rattle! The bathchair procession led by Dr. Swisher wended its way out of Earlswood. Pushed by the boys of the Fourth Form, they jostled and creaked and wobbled along the lane, down into the village High Street. Roars of laughter greeted the appearance of the procession.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. had now almost recovered from the effects of the laughing-gas. They glared wrathfully about them, and struggled to get free. "Don't get excited, boys!" cried the M.O., stroking Tommy Rhodes' brow. "You will only over-exert yourselves again, and—"

"*Yah! Wow! We're all right!*" hooted the Earlswood leader. "Let us out! *Yah! Oooooop!*"

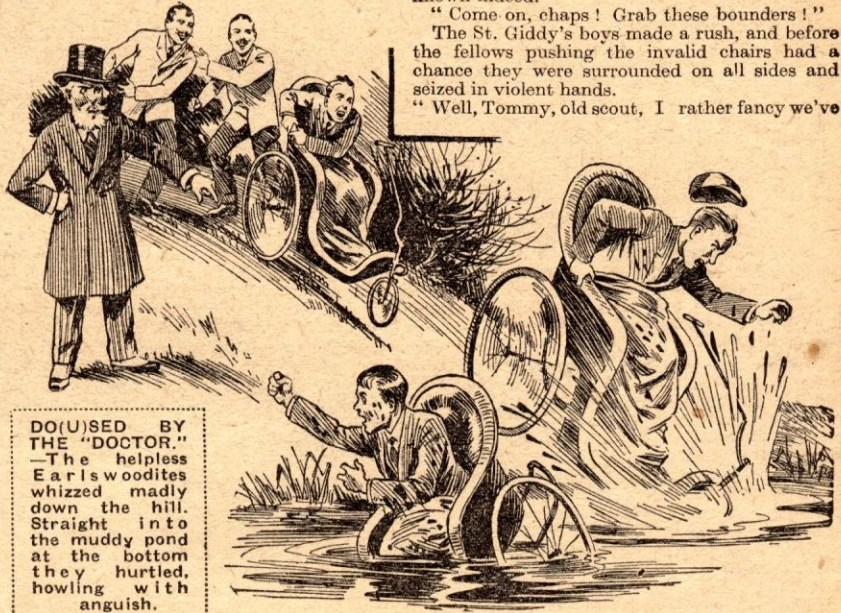
Johnny Gee & Co. exchanged glances. It was time, therefore, for the denouement of the great First of April jape! The bogus "M.O." looked round in the High Street, and saw that most of the Remove and a whole crowd of whooping fags were there, enjoying the spectacle. The word was sent round.

All of a sudden the "Medical Officer" let out a loud, ringing shout, in tones that were very well known indeed.

"Come on, chaps! Grab these bounders!"

The St. Giddy's boys made a rush, and before the fellows pushing the invalid chairs had a chance they were surrounded on all sides and seized in violent hands.

"Well, Tommy, old scout, I rather fancy we've



DO(U)SED BY THE "DOCTOR."
—The helpless Earlswoodites whizzed madly down the hill. Straight into the muddy pond at the bottom they hurtled, howling with anguish.

done you in the eye this journey!" chuckled Johnny Gee. "Now, aren't you a priceless set of April Fools? Ever been had? Ha, ha, ha!"

Tommy Rhodes & Co. kicked and wriggled, but were powerless to get free! Over the bumpy cobblestones they went along the lane, the bathchairs creaking and wobbling beneath their weight.

"Whew!" gasped Dick Bannister. "What shall we do with the bounders, Johnny?"

"Let's see how they race on their own down this hill," said Johnny Gee. "There's a horsepond at the bottom, and it will be jolly exciting to watch the finish!"

The bathchairs, their occupants howling and writhing, were lined up on the brow of the hill. At the word "Go!" those rickety vehicles were sent flying away in grand style.

They whizzed down the hill like chariots, rocking

wildly, but still going on and on! Their finish was sudden and hectic.

Right into the muddy, shallow horse-pond they whizzed, and howls of laughter arose from the St. Giddy's boys.

The chortling St. Giddy's contingent, led by Johnny Gee & Co., trooped off to St. Giddy's, leaving the hapless Earlswood boys to extricate themselves from their predicament as best they could.

"Well, that's made Rhodes and his gang sing small!" said Johnny Gee, when the chums were gathered in Study No. 4. "My hat! Isn't it ripping having the whole day off! Let's buzz off on our bikes after dinner, and have a spin to Pebblecombe."

"Rather!" agreed Dick Bannister. "But what about a drink, chaps?" He opened the cupboard door, then gave a roar of wrath.

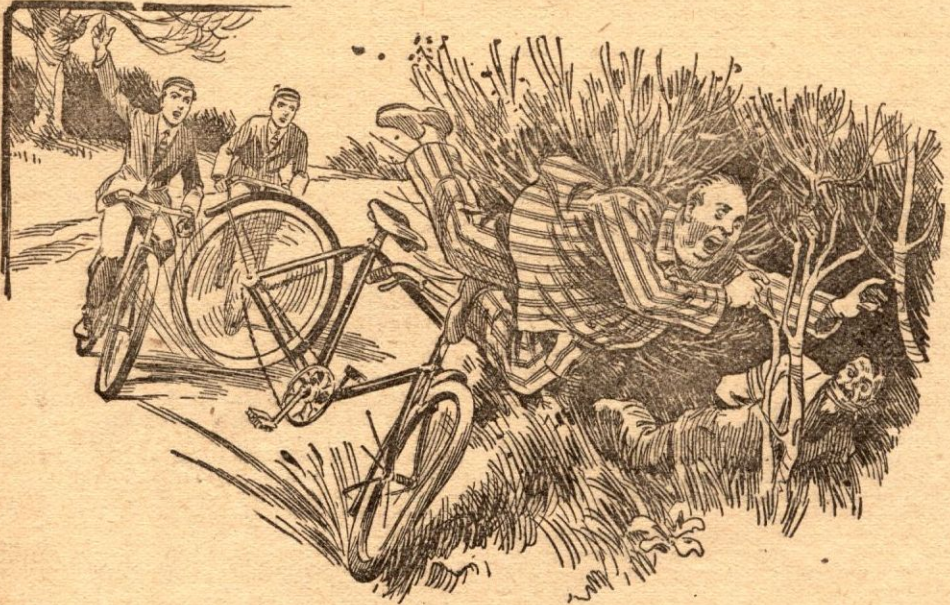
boxroom Dick Bannister bent down, and grabbed the plump foot. To his utter horror and dismay, the foot—or, rather, one of Fatty Slocum's boots with a stuffed sock inside it—came away in his hand!

At the same moment they heard the door slam and the key grated in the lock.

"He, he, he!" came Fatty Slocum's voice. "April fools! You can stay there now, till you promise honour bright not to touch me."

Fatty Slocum trotted away, to obtain another sock and shoe. In vain did the Removites kick and hammer at the door, and they shouted themselves hoarse.

Time went by, and their fury increased. The dinner bell rang, and still Fatty had not returned!



THE "TALE" OF THE HEAD (ER).—Trying to avoid Dick Bannister, Fatty swerved wildly. His wheel mounted the grassy bank, and he went sailing over the handle-bars.

"Oh, crumbs! Someone's been in here, guzzling our ginger-pop, and—and the cake's gone, too! That awful little pirate, Slocum, has been up to his tricks again! Where is the rotter?"

The chums of the Remove went forth in search of Sammy Slocum. They suddenly spotted his plump form running up the back stairs, which led to the boxroom regions.

"We've got the fat fraud now!" chuckled Johnny Gee.

They arrived on the top landing, a dark, remote region, at the very top of the School House. There were three boxrooms along this landing, and Johnny Gee opened the door of the first boxroom. His eyes took on a gleam when he saw a plump foot protruding from behind a pile of trunks.

"He's hiding in here!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Kimmon—we'll soon have him out!"

The chums of Study No. 4 made a rush into the

Tommy Rhodes' Revenge.

THE sound of the dinner gong at St. Giddy's had been awaited by certain other youths who were in hiding in the cloisters. Tommy Rhodes and Co. had come into the enemy camp, thirsting for revenge!

"All serene now!" murmured Tommy Rhodes. "We've a clear half-hour to work the giddy wangle."

The Earlswood raiders crept into the School House. They were making their way, by a devious route, to the Remove quarters, when they were startled to hear heavy footsteps on the corridor ahead.

"Someone coming!" muttered Tommy Rhodes. "Let's hide—round here, quick!"

Tommy Rhodes wrenched open the door of the nearest room, which happened to be the prefect's room, and they all scuttled into hiding. Much to

their surprise, the footsteps stopped at the door of the prefects' room, and the stout, uniformed figure of Sergeant Rumble came in. He went across to the telephone and lifted the receiver.

"Ullo!" he said. "Hi've changed the hextension from the lodge across to the prefects' room. Can you 'ear me better now, sir? Yes, it's Rumble speakin'. Is that you, Dr. 'Olroyd? Speakin' from London? Wot? You and the masters fetched hup there on a wild-geese chase? Someone sent a bogus telegram? Oh, my heye! You're comin' back on the next train—will arrive at Merivale on the four-fifteen? Right you are, sir. And the masters will return hon a later train this hevenin'. Very good, sir."

Sergeant Rumble set down the receiver, and, muttering to himself and shaking his head, walked slowly from the prefects' room.

Tommy Rhodes & Co. blinked at one another in amazement.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Bob Nutter, as they came out of hiding. "Did you hear that? Someone's spoofed the Head and the masters into going off to London and giving the school the morning off. What a frightful nerve!"

A wide grin suddenly suffused Tommy Rhodes' face, and he smote his fists together enthusiastically.

"My word! I've got it—the wheeze of the season!" he exclaimed. "We'll get old Chowle, our down-and-out actor friend, to impersonate Dr. Holroyd, and turn up here in about an hour's time. He does the 'old gentleman' stuff jolly well, and he can rag Gee and his crowd bald-headed! Kimmon—I'll fix things with Chowle!"

Tommy Rhodes & Co. departed from St. Giddy's, eager to put the new "wheeze" into execution.

Just before dinner was over at St. Giddy's, Sergeant Rumble received another telephone message. This purported to be from Dr. Holroyd again, although, in reality, it was Tommy Rhodes speaking, and he announced that he would be back sooner than he had at first intimated.

Meanwhile, Johnny Gee and his chums were taking desperate means to escape from their prison! For half-an-hour they had been hacking away with their pocket-knives at the woodwork round the lock, and at last it gave!

Johnny Gee pushed the door open, and they all rushed downstairs, where they met the rest of the school trooping out of the dining-hall.

"Where the dickens have you chaps been?" demanded Hooper.

"We've been spoofed," howled Johnny. "Locked up in a boxroom—by that rotter Slocum! Where is he? We'll spifflicate him!"

A terrified howl came from Fatty Slocum, who tried to dodge down the passage. But he was seized in violent hands and swung back. Johnny Gee & Co. were in the act of bumping him when Wellesley came striding along, with Duncan and North of the Sixth and Sergeant Rumble.

"Here, stop this ragging, and get into your Form-room—all of you!" rapped Wellesley. "It seems that the wire the Head received this morning was a fake—a daring April Fool joke. Dr. Holroyd rang up from London, directly he discovered the hoax, and he's given orders that all boys are to be kept in and assembled in Hall by the time he gets back."

Johnny Gee & Co. looked quickly at Fatty Slocum, who had suddenly gone very limp in their arms. Fatty's face was chalky white, and he was trembling like a leaf.

"Oooogh! Yah! Ooooooogh!" he wailed, woefully.

"What's up, Slocum?" demanded Wellesley. "Are you ill?"

Fatty took the hint with both hands.

"Oogh! Yah! Yes, I'm ill!" he bawled. "It's all Gee's fault, bumping me on top of a good dinner. Grooogh! Lemme die in peace! Oooogh! Help! I'm sinking fast!"

"Take him away to the sanatorium!" snapped Wellesley. "He'll be better after a dose of physic."

With difficulty Johnny Gee & Co. lifted Fatty and carried him along to the sanatorium.

"Fatty—you—you awful little spoofer!" hissed Johnny Gee. "So it was you who had that fake telegram sent to the Head!"

"Oooooogh!" wailed Fatty. "Don't gimme away, Gee—I—I mean, it wasn't me, of course! Yah! I haven't got a cousin in London, and I wouldn't think of asking him to send the Head a wire—"

"My hat! So that's how it was wangled!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Yank him along!"

Fatty was howling in real earnest, by the time the sanatorium was reached. He was straightaway put to bed and given a strong dose of physic.

Meanwhile the rest of St. Giddy's had been herded into the School House, not without some difficulty, and all Forms were assembled in their classrooms—the Sixth and Fifth, the Upper Fourth, the Third and the Second.

When Johnny Gee & Co. entered the Remove classroom to join their Formfellows, they were surprised to find the majestic form of Dr. Holroyd—or so they believed—in there, waiting grimly for them. They received a shock, too, on beholding Tommy Rhodes & Co. there in full force.

"Boys!" cried the "Head" (Tommy Rhodes had assisted Chowle the actor in making up into a marvellous impersonation of Dr. Holroyd.) "I have several matters to go into with you. Not only have I and the masters been sent to London on the strength of a fraudulent telegram, but a daring and most outrageous practical joke has been perpetrated against Earlswood School in my absence!"

Johnny Gee & Co. gasped with dismay.

"As you see," went on the "Head," "I have summoned these lads—the victims of your audacious practical joke this morning! You will kindly apologise to them for your insulting behaviour!"

"Apologise to 'em?" gasped Johnny Gee. "Oh, crumbs!"

There was nothing for it but to obey, and the Remove captain gulped out an apology, which was received by Tommy Rhodes & Co. with broad smiles.

"Now," said "Dr. Holroyd," grimly, "Rhodes and his friends will each take a cane, and proceed to chastise you boys for the liberties you took with them this morning. Stand in a row in front here, and touch your toes!"

The Removites glared wrathfully, and almost exploded at this. But the Head's word was law! "Dr. Holroyd" had sent for a bundle of canes, and these were distributed to Tommy Rhodes & Co, who set about that castigation of Johnny Gee & Co. with great gusto!

Whack! Whack! Whack! Tommy Rhodes and Co. put plenty of vim and vigour into it. The rest of the Remove looked on with mixed feelings, but most of them felt it was a blot upon their escutcheon!

"Desist!" commanded the disguised Mr. Chowle, at last. "That will do, boys."

Johnny Gee & Co. stood up straight, gasping and shuffling uneasily.

"I shall now proceed to make an example of this Form, which I consider is the most unruly in the school!" rapped the bogus Headmaster. "You will dig up the waste ground behind the chapel under the supervision of Sergeant Rumble, who will report any junior who is lazy or disobedient!"

(Continued on page 34.)

THE BIG THRILL LIBRARY SECTION.



Great New Feature, containing a Breathless Long Complete Thriller. The Exploits of **BULLDOG HAMILTON—ADVENTURER**



Two figures, silent and vague in the darkness, broke through the fringe of trees which came down to the water's edge.

"Look!" whispered a boyish voice, throbbing with suppressed excitement. "There it lies, sir, just as my uncle described."

The other figure, much bigger, stood stock still, staring out across the waste of dreary-looking water, on which the cloud shadows swiftly

THE House of Mocking Shadows stood stark and mysterious, a place of hidden secrets, deep in the centre of the wooded valley. The night wind was howling mournfully through the dense woods which crowded the hillsides. Overhead, the moon appeared fitfully as the scudding clouds raced raggedly across the Heavens.

Tucked away in the picturesque Surrey hills, the wooded valley formed the very centre of the high fenced estate of Greystoke, owned by the sinister Count Karno Klaws. It was rumoured in the surrounding villages and hamlets that poachers who entered the Greystoke Woods never came out alive. More than one man had disappeared as completely as though the earth had swallowed him up. The place was shunned, even by day. The long, winding drive, weed-covered and rutty, which led from the main road to the lake, was seldom used. The outer gates were always barred and bolted. For Count Karno Klaws was a recluse, a man of mystery.

paced. The scene was indeed eerie. Greystoke House was no ordinary residence. It stood perched on a rocky foundation, in the very centre of a wide lake. Its walls ran flush down to the water's edge; and one received the extraordinary illusion that the house itself was resting on the water.

The walls, rising sheer, were penetrated at intervals by narrow, prison-like windows; to the north a round tower rose to the sky, dominating the battlements. Worst of all, from that turret a vague, sinister shadow seemed to spread, hovering menacingly over the whole edifice. The sight caused the boy to catch his breath, but his companion was unmoved.

"Dick, I like the look of it," said the big figure, in crisp, staccato accents. "Getting into this place will be difficult. Getting out will be doubly difficult. Yes, I like it. It means adventure."

Dick Challenor, fair-haired, fresh-faced, glanced at his companion in wonder. Dick was a boy of

fifteen, as plucky as most boys, but this dread place had chilled his very blood. He was surprised, therefore, to detect the gloating, joyous note in the voice of Bulmer Hamilton—known throughout two continents as "Bulldog Hamilton."

He stood now, on the edge of the lake, just visible in the moonlight—a powerfully built man, still comparatively young, with great square shoulders and an out-thrust, aggressive jaw. Between his teeth he gripped a briar pipe with an enormous bowl; Bulldog Hamilton was seldom seen without his pipe. He was an adventurer, first and last. His nerves were like steel, and he was a man for any grim emergency.

"Uncle Rod is in there," whispered Dick.

Bulldog's reply was characteristic: "Can you swim, Dick?"

And when the boy replied that he could do so, Bulldog Hamilton walked calmly forward into the lake, fully dressed as he was, and commenced swimming, with silent, powerful strokes. Dick followed, the cold water chilling him to the marrow.

He gritted his teeth and kept pace—for he was the best swimmer at Hildene College and, athlete though he was, he was also the school's cleverest boy-scientist. It was because of his scientific genius that this present adventure was toward. For Dick had invented a wonderful "personal" radio apparatus. It was an instrument which could be carried in the pocket, and yet it incorporated both receiving and transmitting units. He had made two of these sets as an experiment, and in absolute secrecy. One he had kept himself, and the other he had sent to his Uncle Rodney, in Kent. And at an appointed hour they had both tuned in—thirty-three miles apart. The range of this experimental set was fifty miles. Clearly, the two had conversed and, then, suddenly, Dr. Challenor had gasped out that he was in danger.

"Wait, Dick!" he had advised. "I may be able to get in touch—"

Then his voice had been cut off. Dick had waited for four hours, tense, anxious—he had waited till after midnight. Then a vague, feeble call had come to him, proving that Dr. Challenor was now more than fifty miles away, for the set was in perfect order.

"Can you hear, Dick, lad? . . . Have been kidnapped," the voice had come. "Count Klaws . . . brutally seized and carried . . . lake . . . grim old house . . . Greystoke . . . Surrey . . . useless to bring police . . . Klaws is too cunning. . . . Aaaaaah! You cowardly hound—"

At that point Dr. Challenor's voice had ceased with startling abruptness.

Dick Challenor, frantic with anxiety, had remembered his friend Hamilton of the Sixth; Hamilton had told Dick that his famous elder brother—the redoubtable "Bulldog"—was in London. Making an excuse to get away from school Dick had gone up, and Bulldog Hamilton, sensing an adventure after his own heart, had entered into the hunt.

They had come down into Surrey in Bulldog's own car; they had left the car at a quiet inn, and had forced their way through the Greystoke Woods. Now, at midnight, they were nearing their grim objective.

THE wind came sweeping across the lake, whistling eerily. Black shadows stretched out from Greystoke House, like evil fingers.

Bulldog Hamilton was slightly in advance, and his ultra-keen eyes were scanning the rock for a possible landing place. Some of the windows were within reach of the water, but they were heavily barred. The great door of the old house, visible in the moonlight, was a massive, iron-studded thing, not a foot above the water's level. No entry that way.

And Bulldog Hamilton, Adventurer, gloated inwardly. Success in such a venture as this would be worth the having. A cry from Dick interrupted the adventurer's thoughts.

"Mr. Hamilton! Help! Something has caught hold of my ankle—"

At the same moment, Bulldog Hamilton saw a hideous thing rise half out of the water. It was as black as night, a vile monstrosity with a fish head, and gleaming teeth. And as big as a shark.

Quick as lightning, Bulldog dived. And as he did so he plucked a heavy dagger from his belt. Something brushed against him under water, and he had a curious, nauseating sensation of sliminess. He swam on, and then rose like a cork, shaking the water out of his eyes as he broke surface.

Crash! With tremendous force, the Adventurer drove his knife into the side of the nearest monster. Bubbles rose noisily, and the Fish rolled back in the water. He struck with his knife again, and the second Fish fled.

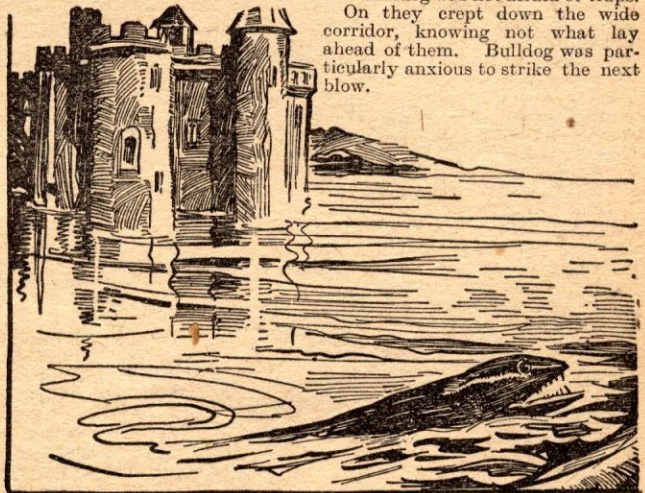
Dick was gulping in the clear air of the night. Fortunately, he was little the worse for the experience—although his nerves were shaken.

"What—what were they, Mr. Hamilton?" he whispered. "Oh, I've never seen such ghastly things . . ."

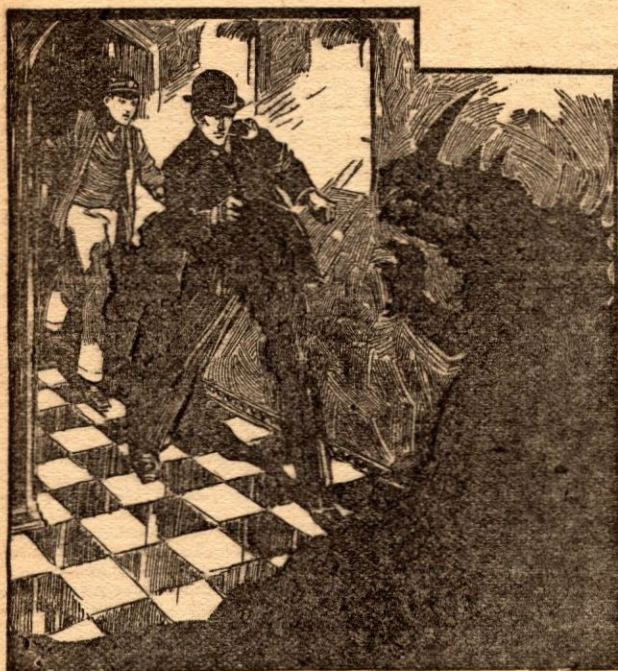
"Come on—those things can't frighten us!" gritted Bulldog, and with Dick following, he swam on towards the eerie house. Through the sheer rock a flight of steps had been cut. They reached these and went up them. A door at the top stood open, and through this the pair slid. They found themselves in a marble corridor. Danger, they knew, lurked in the shadows. That open door was a trap.

But Bulldog was not afraid of traps.

On they crept down the wide corridor, knowing not what lay ahead of them. Bulldog was particularly anxious to strike the next blow.



MONSTERS OF THE DEEP.—Hideous monster fish rose all round the swimmers.



SINISTER SHADOWS.—Bulging masses of the grotesque shadow surged and took shape. "Looks like a—a dragon!" whispered Dick, in horror.

With a sudden intake of breath, he paused. He stood rigid. Dick clutched at him, uttering a murmur of horror. Shadows were moving on the floor ahead of them, along the passage. It was a tessellated floor, and the moonlight showed it up clearly in patches. And advancing weirdly, mysteriously, came a grotesque shadow.

It covered not only the floor, but it filled the whole passage, like something alive, something charged with evil. It was visible on the walls, on the arched roof, and it came on—on, as though to envelop the intruders.

The House of Mocking Shadows!

This shadow, so horrific, was mocking, indeed! There was no object in view which could cast such a shadow. It was a leering, mocking shadow of mystery.

For now, with dramatic suddenness, the Shadow was taking shape. Points of it had been stretching outwards, and then withdrawing; bulging masses of blackness had surged horribly, only to retreat. But now the ghastly thing took definite shape.

"Looks—looks like a dragon!" Dick dared to whisper.

"Not exactly," muttered Bulldog calmly. "I should say it represents a prehistoric animal—a stegosaurus!"

Dick gulped. It was true. The shadow thing was an exact representation of one of those giant reptiles that roamed in far-off

prehistoric times. It became blacker, and then, in a flash, it seemed to vanish, leaving the passage utterly silent and dark.

"Bulldog!" whispered Dick. "What—what happened?"

"Some vile trickery, I'll be bound," retorted Bulldog, curtly. "I've had enough of this! I—"

He broke off suddenly. All about them, tiny sounds came to their ears. And greenish lights seemed to grow out of nothingness, bathing the whole corridor in an unearthly glow. Bulldog spun round. He and Dick, during these past few seconds, had become entirely surrounded by green-garbed figures—men with repulsive murderous features, all of them armed with automatics.

"Hands up!" snarled a guttural voice. "You're trapped!"

"Not yet!" rapped out Bulldog Hamilton.

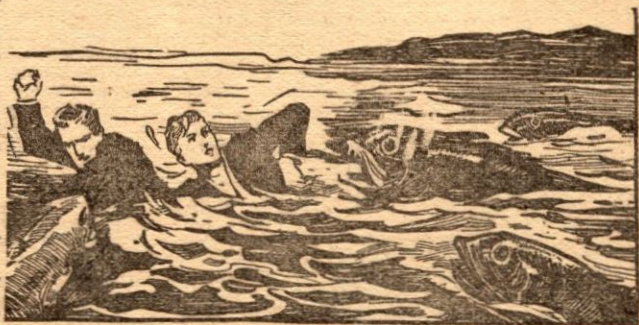
Crash! He was essentially a man of instant action. Not for a split second did he wait to argue with the enemy. He sent his mighty fist crashing into the face of the nearest Ghoul Man, and with a groan of agony, the fellow collapsed. *Crash! Slam! Crash!* Like a whirlwind, Bulldog continued the fight, and Dick Challenor, taking his cue from his chief, sailed in, too. So tremendous was the force of Bulldog's onslaught that four of the enemy were routed in the first half-minute.

"Fools! Incompetent scum!" came a harsh, strident voice. "So this is how you obey my orders!"

A figure appeared at the end of the wide corridor, and Bulldog Hamilton and his young companion stared. They did not doubt that they were facing Count Karno Klaws.

He was a tall man, impressive, with a sharply pointed chin and a massive brow. He wore a double-pointed beard, and his raven black hair was sleekly brushed. It was white at the temples, and on the back of his head sat a little skull-cap.

He was attired in a long, flowing dressing-gown of rich Oriental design, and perched on his shoulder



Desperately, Bulldog Hamilton and Dick struck out at their queer foes.

was an owl as black as night. The whole picture, in that greenish light, was weird.

It was Bulldog Hamilton who spoke first.

"Count Klaws, I think," he said, in his abrupt staccato way. "I'll trouble you to put your hands up."

Bulldog had seized one of the fallen automatics, and he was one of the slickest shots in the world.

"Foolish," said Count Klaws, contemptuously.

He removed a hand from his pocket, and something gleamed. . . .

Crack! It was Bulldog's gun which spoke, and the bullet sped true. But Count Klaws did not move an inch; he uttered a mocking laugh, which turned into a snarl of rage.

"Satan, the gun!" he snapped.

And, like a flash, the black owl left his shoulder, and winged its way straight towards Bulldog Hamilton. The strange creature uttered a wild screech as it came near, and its talons clutched at the automatic in Bulldog's hand, and seized it. In a moment it was back on its master's shoulder, silent and unblinking.

"Do not try that again, my friend," said the Count, curtly. "I have methods of dealing with my enemies which will surprise you—if you force me to put them into execution."

"I'd like to see them," retorted Bulldog, aggressively.

Fearfully he sprang forward, but before he had covered half the distance between himself and Count Klaws, the latter rapped out an order, and something appeared from behind him—something bulky and grotesque, bearing with it a strange and fetid odour. It swept past its master, and reared itself up before Bulldog Hamilton, barring his progress.

"Stop!" snapped the Count. "Hold him there!"

A stegosaurus! It seemed to know the very words of its master, for it remained rigid, its hideous jaws open, revealing the ugly fangs—and a tongue which licked in and out like that of a python. A more fearsome creature could not be imagined.

"Well, my friend?" asked the Count, mockingly.

"You win!" said Bulldog, with a shrug.

By this time the Ghoul Men had recovered, and they looked an ugly crowd. At a word from their master, they gathered round the prisoners and held them tightly. The stegosaurus retreated reluctantly, a light of absolute menace in its eyes—for it knew that its master had robbed it of its prey.

A minute later Bulldog and Dick were forced into a great chamber which was full of black shadows. There were two lights in the room, cunningly shaded, so that the only gleams fell upon the soft carpet, a desk, and two or three easy chairs. A log fire flickered in the enormous grate, and the leaping flames added more shadows.

Shadows everywhere—pointing, leering, mocking. Never had Dick Challenor found himself in such ghostly, fear-haunting surroundings. But he scarcely gave a glance at the mocking shadows. A cry escaped him, and he attempted to reach a tall, bronzed-looking man who was suspended in a cage in the very centre of the room. It was an almost exact replica of a parrot's cage, but with enormously thick steel bars. Inside crouched Dr. Rodney Challenor, a helpless prisoner.

"Dick, my boy!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Oh, I was a fool to tell you! You should not have come."

"We'll save you, Uncle!" panted Dick. "Bulldog can do anything! He's not beaten yet."

"So I am honoured by a visit from the celebrated Mr. Bulldog Hamilton?" said Count Karno Klaws, suavely. "That explains a lot. I thought I recognised you, my aggressive friend. Well, well! So you are the famous fire-eater, the notorious

Adventurer, the Man Who Cannot Be Killed! Tonight we shall see!" He took a step nearer, and glared into Bulldog's face.

"You came to rescue that man, did you not?" he went on, with sudden fury, as he pointed to the cage. "Within an hour you will have disappeared—you and your brat. And unless Dr. Challenor agrees to my terms, he will share your fate."

"Kill me and get it over!" said Dr. Challenor, contemptuously.

"I have yet one more card to play, my friend—but this burly gentleman shall not participate in the scene I have planned," replied Count Klaws. "He and the boy will be removed to a dungeon—and their lives will depend upon your answer. Thus I have a double weapon, and I thank you, Mr. Hamilton for assisting me so admirably."

He laughed again, all his rage gone. And Bulldog held himself in check with difficulty. It was obvious that the Count had not yet gained his object—and equally obvious that he was intent upon using his new prisoners as a lever to gain his end. Dr. Challenor must agree or have the death of his would-be helpers on his conscience!

"Away with them!" snapped the Count, curtly.

The Ghoul Men made no mistake this time. Ropes were fastened round the wrists of the prisoners; their very arms were pinioned to their sides with more ropes. They were forced out of the Room of Shadows, marched down a black corridor, and then thrust down some steep steps, and into a vaulted crypt. Here, an enormous stone slab in the floor was raised. And one after the other the captives were dropped down into the black depths.

The Column of Death.

THUD! Thud! They landed on a hard stone floor, twelve or fourteen feet below. Dick Challenor was jarred badly by the fall, but Bulldog Hamilton, tough and hardened, was not even bruised. With a crash the great stone slab, weighing several hundred-weights, was lowered into position, and the prisoners were left in pitchy darkness.

It was a sad end to the adventure—to their high hopes.

"We're done, Bulldog," came a groan from the darkness. "Poor old Uncle Rod! Oh, the fiend, to cage my uncle like that!"

"Do you know what the Count's object is?" asked Bulldog, abruptly.

"I know nothing—except, perhaps, that Uncle Rod made a marvellous scientific discovery some weeks ago," replied Dick. "He's not really a scientist you know—but a real doctor. He knows more about medicine. . . ."

He broke off abruptly, and a gasp escaped him. For, near him, a match had flared, and he beheld Bulldog Hamilton squatting on the floor, calmly lighting his big pipe!

"I'm glad they didn't pick our pockets, boy," said Bulldog, as he puffed luxuriously.

He sprang lightly to his feet and clicked open a big clasp knife. In a moment, Dick's bonds were cut through.

"But—but Bulldog!" ejaculated Dick. "How did you get free?"

"Did they think to hold me with string?" jerked out Bulldog.

Dick looked at the cords. They were of fine texture and enormously strong. Bulldog, seeing his amazement, picked up one of the lengths and broke it with a twang. Even Dick had never realised the almost superhuman strength of this man.

"But we're not out of the wood," said Bulldog grimly.

He had his torchlight, too, and with this they surveyed their prison. There was no escape, apparently. It was very much like an oldtime dungeon, but the height was much greater, and that stone slab in the ceiling was far out of reach. It was the only exit. At least, so it appeared at the first examination.

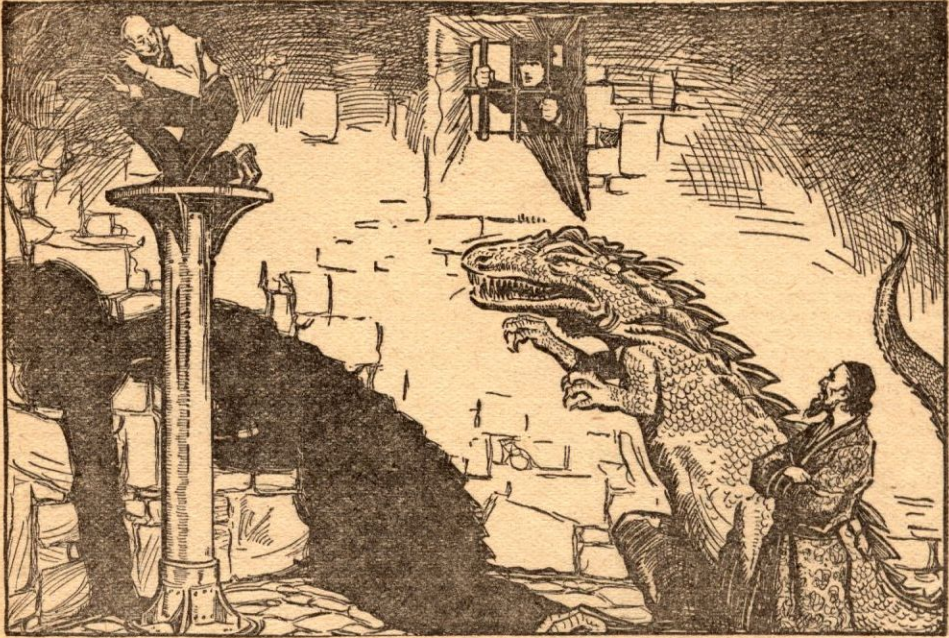
Bulldog, however, was not the kind of man to give in easily. He continued the search. And presently he gave a low cry of satisfaction. He kicked the accumulated filth of years away, and revealed a rusted metal grating, which evidently covered some drain-pipe. It was the sloping angle of the floor which had given him the clue to the thing. He merely glanced at Dick, and Dick understood. Together they worked.

"Got it!" croaked Bulldog triumphantly.

With a rending and smashing, the grating came up, and it was flung aside with a dull metallic clang. Without even pausing, Bulldog flashed his light into the depths. There was a drop of some feet, and below, the entrance to what looked like a narrow tunnel, not more than four feet round—perhaps a great deal less.

"It's an old drain of some kind—or a way of escape that was devised by the feudal lords of old," said Bulldog. "Come on, boy!"

He dropped down, and Dick followed. They knew not whither they were going, but any kind of activity was better than meekly awaiting their fate. They found that the tunnel was scarcely more than two feet across, and Bulldog could only just manage to



THE PIT OF PERIL.—The stegosaurus reared up, jaws open, pawing wildly at the air. But as Dr. Challenor crouched on the sinking pedestal he saw a figure appear at the grating.

And they were aware of a dreadful suspense, hovering over them like a menace. It was impossible to forget that Count Klaw's was wreaking his will upon Dr. Challenor, and at any moment the doctor might make his decision. That would mean the return of the enemy. And Bulldog's plans of escape would be frustrated.

"Ah!" breathed the Adventurer suddenly.

They had scraped and scooped the caked earth and dust away, and now the grating was seen to be three feet square. Bulldog bent down, seized the heavy bars, and heaved with all his terrific strength. At first nothing happened. The perspiration poured from him, his veins stood out like whipcord on his forehead, and he turned almost purple under the strain. Dick was helping, too, but he knew that his efforts were trifling in comparison with those of his companion.

squeeze through. They crawled on into the inky darkness, and one fact which gave the Adventurer hope was the perceptible current of air which blew into his face. Somewhere ahead, in the mysterious blackness, there was an outlet!

COUNT KARNO KLAWS was in a grim mood. He was, in fact, alarmed. Bulldog Hamilton and Dr. Challenor's nephew had succeeded in penetrating into Greystoke House. There was no guarantee that the pair had not told others of their intentions. So they must be dealt with drastically, and at once, so that no evidence would remain of their disappearance.

By day, Greystoke House was peaceful enough; boats were moored near the front door, and if visitors chanced to come they would find the recluse quietly absorbed in his library. His servants were ordinary.

looking in their workaday uniforms. Only on special occasions—such as this night—did they become ghouls of darkness.

"It has become necessary, my good doctor, to hasten matters," said the Count, his voice so soft as to be almost a purr. "It is unfortunate that your friends should have been so rash. However, it is within your power to save their lives."

Dr. Challenor was still in the cage, but the latter had been lowered to the floor level—so that conversation between captor and captive could be the more easily carried on.

"You are a treacherous villain, Count Klaws, and I will never consent to the fiendish plan you have proposed. For the sake of gold, you are willing to sacrifice the lives of tens of thousands of innocent people. No! A thousand times no! Kill me if you will, but I will remain silent until my dying gasp—no matter what tortures you inflict upon me."

"You are a brave man, Dr. Challenor—and a fool," snarled the Count. "You do not know of the tortures I have at my command. Remember, your nephew, a mere boy, dies if you maintain this obstinate attitude. Would you be the murderer of your own flesh and blood?"

But Dr. Challenor was contemptuous.

"Do not seek to influence me by such a cheap device," he said, with scorn. "If Dick dies, it will be by your hand—not mine. Better that he should die, and Mr. Hamilton, too, than I should live to see thousands of innocent souls perish in mortal agony. Count Klaws, all your efforts are useless. You shall never drag my secret from me."

The Count turned away, his face livid with baffled fury. Money was his god—gold—gold—gold! For years he had practised villainy of every kind in order to increase his ill-gotten hoard. And now he saw a way of becoming the richest man in the world. In scientific institutions his name was honoured—for, to the world, he was an honest man, an ardent scientist. An eccentric, perhaps, but sincere.

Thus he had met Dr. Challenor. He had learned that the doctor, in the course of his researches, had discovered a marvellous drug, which could be cheaply produced, which cured all human ailments. For years Dr. Challenor had experimented; the drug, at first, had seemed the marvel of the age, an elixir of life which would bring joy to millions of sufferers. But there was a ghastly snag. This drug, after effecting an apparent cure, left the victim, a year later, a tortured wreck. His original ailment returned with dreadful complications, and he would be doomed to die in paroxysms of agony. Even a second application of the drug would avail him nothing. So Dr. Challenor, after thinking, at first, that he had made an epoch-making discovery, had destroyed the formula and every scrap of written data in connection with it.

But the formula still remained vivid in his memory—and it was the object of Count Klaws to obtain it. Having done so he would experiment—keeping the doctor alive meanwhile until the formula was proved to be the correct one. In that case, his plan was to spring his "discovery" on the world, and for six or nine months he would sell the drug at fantastic prices in every continent. It was a vile, devilish scheme—for whilst Count Klaws would become a multi-millionaire, he would leave the world bestrewn with agonised human wreckage. Small wonder that Dr. Challenor preferred death to revealing his secret.

"MY friend, we shall see," said the Count, evilly. He spoke to his raven-black owl, and the creature winged off, and made its exit by a tiny circular hole in the wall near the ceiling. In less than a minute it was back, when it perched once

again upon its master's shoulder. Then came the Count's servants, evidently summoned by the owl. They opened the cage, they took the prisoner from it, and marched him away.

This time they did not remain within the interior of the old house, but passed out into the moonlight—into a great square inner courtyard. The house built flush with the water, was square in section, and the inside of the square was open to the sky. There were even well-tended flower-beds and gravel pathways. The centre of the courtyard was occupied entirely by a circular flower-bed of considerable size which was already colourful with Spring flowers.

A strange thing happened.

At the touch of a secret lever, the flower-bed swung completely round on a pivot, revealing a deep, circular pit—the home of the stegosaurus! Here the dread creature lived, and in the courtyard it took its exercise. It was in the pit now, and Count Klaws, descended by means of an iron ladder.

He spoke to the stegosaurus, and it moved stealthily aside, crouching against the brickwork. Dr. Challenor was lowered into the pit, and while the Count was present, he was safe.

"So this is your torture?" he said scornfully. "A variation of the old Roman trick? Instead of throwing me to the lions, you are throwing me to the dragon!"

"But in a novel way," said the Count, smoothly. "Dr. Challenor, you will stand here."

He placed his victim in the very centre of the pit, and then gave a sharp command. Instantly, a part of the pit, apparently, rose upwards, carrying Dr. Challenor with it. In fact, it was a heavy metal rod, not more than eight inches in diameter. There was a flat iron plate atop of it on which there was just sufficient room for Dr. Challenor to stand.

"Let me advise you, doctor, to remain steady," said the Count, mockingly. "A slip, and you will fall. And when I give the word to this faithful creature, it will tear your limb from limb."

The rod was now high in the air, and Dr. Challenor was perched on the top. The Count stood aside, and suddenly he rapped out a few words, in a foreign tongue, to the stegosaurus. The hideous creature, looking doubly vile in the moonlight, snaked its way to the foot of the column and reared itself up. Its jaws were open, a hot, frothy slime falling from its horrid mouth.

"Think well, Dr. Challenor!" gloated Count Klaws. "This is your last chance. If you fall, you know what your fate will be. This creature does not kill its victims quietly. Yesterday you saw it kill a sheep, its normal diet. It was slow and agonising was it not? So you will be treated. The claws will tear into your flesh—"

"Stop—you hound of Hades!" panted Dr. Challenor. "I will not reveal my secret—and you may do your worst."

His voice contained a new sound of triumph—quite unaccountable, it seemed. But Dr. Challenor had seen that which was hidden from the view of the count—since it was almost immediately behind him.

High up in the circular wall of the pit there was a narrow iron grating—a device designed, no doubt, for the overflow of water in case the pit should ever become flooded. But behind the iron bars two faces were visible—the faces of Bulldog Hamilton and Dick Challenor!

SO this was the exit of the long-forgotten drain! Fate had carried Bulldog and his young companion along a strange path! Right to the very spot, in fact, where Count Klaws' other prisoner

(Continued on page 36.)

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. What was the Rat Trap? Who was the Rat? What terrible mystery lay behind his being held a prisoner?

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.

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, The Master of Masks, known to his myrmidons as One Over Seven."

Yet once again Billy was baffled by the all-powerful One Over Seven. The boy had traced Wertzheim and had caught up with him on the Hamburg-Berlin train, only to find that he was dead.

The train was wrecked by Billy's enemies and he was captured. Making no secret of their destination,

Billy's captors headed south, for Venice and the Palazzo Marani. While resting at a small wayside town Billy made a dash for liberty and escaped by jumping on to a passing car. It was a smugglers' machine Billy discovered and he was taken before the swarthy Lithkranian chief.

"You!" he gasped in English. "The Rat Trap... And the Rat... Like a rat in a trap... You are..."

The man broke off and eyed the boy in gaping wonder. Once again Billy was hearing those strange words, but he was no nearer a solution of the mystery.

Billy made a daring getaway in one of the smugglers' cars and reached a railway station where he boarded a Venice train. He arrived at that city, determined to solve the mystery surrounding the Palazzo Marani.

The Society Of Seven.

FROM the railway station, the Grand Canal winds through Venice exactly like an inverted letter "S," a wide stretch of water which widens and ends by the world famous Piazza San Marco, where stand the Church of St. Mark, the Ducal Palace, and the famous Pillars. Off the Grand Canal, on either side, are labyrinths of narrower waterways, intersecting the magnificent city in all directions, so that, as Billy soon discovered, no wheeled vehicle travels in Venice whatsoever, no car or cart, but only the quiet gondolas, larger cargo-carrying boats, and the new swift motor taxis which are destroying the romance of the Queen of the Adriatic.

Billy stood on the steps for some time looking about him with wonderment. He had imagined nothing like this. Beyond the iron bridge he could see the little dancing lights on the beaked prows of gondolas, the tall masses of the great palaces which once had been the glory of Venice.

It was a strange sensation to know that he would walk from the lower step of the station into a boat and from that boat would land on the doorstep of his hotel. A courteous representative of a big travel agency recommended an hotel to him, and Billy, lounging in a gondola, glided off. The gondola did not cling to the length of the Canalazzo, but struck straight across Venice through the narrow *rà*, constricted and silent waterways between tall dark buildings, sometimes sinister, sometimes beautiful, lighted by means of lamps affixed to wall corners.

The gondolier stood aft, above Billy, using one long oar to control his boat. And Billy found that his man could, when travelling at full speed, bring the gondola to a dead stop, like a heavily braked motor-car, with one twist of his oar. He steered so close to the wall corners at every turning that there was actually no room for Billy's finger between the gondola-side and the brickwork; yet never once did he have a collision. At every crossing of the waterways he gave a low, musical cry of warning, just as a car driver sounds his horn at cross streets. His skill was superb. Billy sat and marvelled at it, and so, at last, came to his hotel, which was near the Piazza San Marco, fronting on the Grand Canal and, therefore, opposite the great church of Santa Maria della Salute.

Billy was tired, and he went straight to bed in a great, oaken room which once had sheltered people whose names are linked with Venice's golden history; for, like most of the better hotels, this had once been a palace. He spent the next day sightseeing and covertly observing the Palazzo Marani.

It was a typical Venetian palace; a gigantic square structure made of great blocks of stone, several storeys high, with a flat roof. From the waters of the Grand Canal a flight of broad steps swept up to its ornamental iron gates, beyond which were doors of bronze.

It looked dead in the daytime, and Billy wondered what dark secrets it might hold.

He took a typical Italian dinner that night, and then set off for the Palazzo Marani. It was now fairly late and Venice was quiet. That was what Billy noticed about it most particularly—how quiet it was, silence all the time, the silence of water-borne craft.

He came through to the back of the great palace, cutting along a footway above a narrow canal and reaching the gigantic wall of the building, wherein were various small doors and gridded windows. He was alone and he felt very small and isolated; but he was determined to try and discover the secret of the Palazzo Marani, so he began to test the doors.

To his surprise one of them came open under his hand, and he slipped through it and along a dark passageway beyond, to find himself in the tremendous kitchen apartments of the palace.

He moved quietly across the enormous kitchen, where uniformed lackeys once had worked for friends of the *Doge* himself, and, passing through another passage he reached a heavy door. On opening this door cautiously, he stepped into the living quarters of the place.

He was in a lofty hall from which a magnificent staircase of Carrara marble swept upwards majestically. There was a dim light burning high above him, where candles gleamed in a great pendant suspended from the doomed roof of the hall. Statues stood against the walls. The floor was of polished

Austrian oak, and it gleamed like dark silver in the light.

One of the carved doors opening off the hall was ajar, and Billy peeped through it. He saw a splendid room, long and high and wide, its walls and ceiling covered with the usual decorated panelling, and with three long windows overlooking the Grand Canal. These windows were covered by heavy velvet curtains.

Down the middle of the room ran a long table, around which were ranged seven high-backed, carved chairs. At the head of the table was a chair which, to Billy, looked like a throne, so great and splendid was it. At the top of its tall back a crown had been carved and tinted scarlet and gold.

Four very tall candles, in silver sticks, stood on this table in a row, equidistant. Their flames did not tremble in the motionless air. The room had an atmosphere of waiting.

Suddenly Billy heard a slight sound and, diving sideways, he hid himself swiftly behind one of the statues, his heart thumping madly.

Two men were walking into the place by the way in which he had entered.

One of them said to the other, in English: "Where's Benedetto? He should be on duty."

The other laughed quietly. "We're a little early. Doubtless Benedetto has gone to a café near by. What's that?"

It was a door closing in the rear of the house. The speaker raised his voice: "Hey, is that you, Benedetto?"

A man came running through the passages and presented himself. He was a big fellow, loose-limbed with dark close curls and hints of gold at the lobes of his ears. He was plainly in a state of fear, and he jabbered coarse Italian in a stream.

"I did but slip out to the post, *signori*. But three minutes was I gone . . . two . . . one . . ."

"Say you weren't gone at all," said his questioner, good-humouredly. "You're a fine caretaker; and on such a night, too. All right. It doesn't matter."

Benedetto bowed, he scraped, he overwhelmed them with thanks. They turned into the long room and sat down, and each drew from his pocket a little rolled bundle of the finest black silk.

The bundles were disclosed as great, hooded robes, with eye-slits in front of the hoods. The men donned these and waited. Two more arrived, chatting. They too, donned black robes and sat at the long table, until yet three more arrived, and garbed themselves in the same fashion—all seven being now seated on each side of the long table.

For a moment Billy visioned what he had read about that golden history of Venice which none should miss; how the dreaded Ten had thus sat in judgment, hooded and black-clad, pronouncing sentences of death in the darkness of the great judgment chamber.

Benedetto scurried into view from the rear. He hissed: "*Signori*, he comes!"

He flung open the door. The Seven stood up. A figure, already hooded as they were, strode across the hall. Each one of them lifted his hand in the Roman gesture of salutation, and the salutation was returned.

Billy, quivering with excitement, knew that he was witnessing a meeting of The Seven; that he had in coming to the Palazzo Marani, come to their headquarters.

The last hooded figure strode to the great throne-like chair at the head of the table and stood for a moment.

"One Over Seven," he said, in a sonorous voice, "greets Seven Below One."

"The greeting is gladly received and reciprocated,"

said the others in unison. They all spoke English, as a universal language.

One Over Seven sat down and the others imitated his example. Before him, lying flat on the table, was a long, slim dagger with a beautiful hilt of chased gold set with rubies, a marvellous weapon, the blade of which was delicate and brilliant in the candle light.

One Over Seven picked up this dagger and, with some solemnity, buried its point in the table before him, so that it stood up straight and quivering slightly, its golden hilt shimmering red and yellow.

"The meeting is opened," he said.

There was a short silence. The dagger swayed slightly, a deadly thing standing like a slim monument to death in that vast room. Then One Over Seven spoke again.

"Not yet can we achieve our ambitions. He will not speak." The voice was brooding, deliberate. "But I hoped to make him speak. I had given certain orders which are new of no moment. The man to whom those orders were given failed to carry them out. Of that . . . later."

until at last he saw a garret in high Montmartre, a man dying on the floor of that garret—the man Debar, who had been Wertzheim's friend.

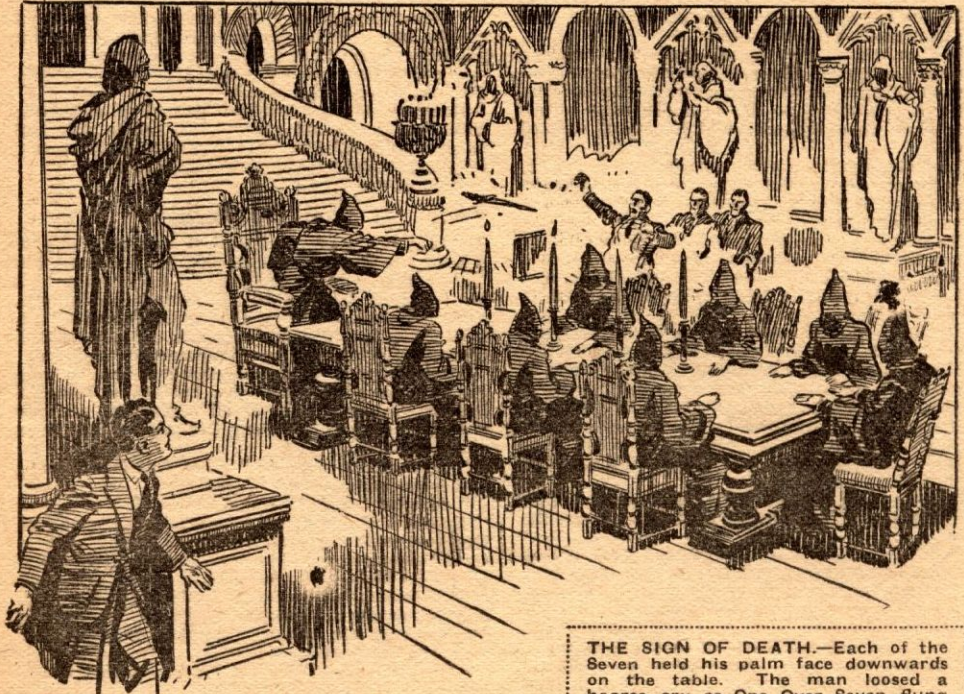
Debar had tried to tell him something. "Stahn . . ." he said, and nothing else except "Schloss." But now Billy knew.

Debar had tried to tell him that the heart of the secret lay at a castle at a place called Stahnfeld. He recalled those other dying words of Debar's—"Snow and dark trees and great mountains . . ."

Stahnfeld Castle was among the mountains, and he guessed those mountains were the continuation of the mighty Alpine range which ran through Lithkrania.

While he had been thinking this One Over Seven had finished his harangue and he now cried an order. There was a scuffle in the rear of the house, and two great fellows projected into the hall a third man, who struggled ineffectually.

Billy instantly recognised him. He was the leader of the little gang who had kidnapped him and brought him down from Germany in the car. The man was hustled into the room. Once there he ceased



THE SIGN OF DEATH.—Each of the Seven held his palm face downwards on the table. The man loosed a hoarse cry as One Over Seven flung the great dagger.

He paused, and when he continued his tone had changed to one of bitter wrath.

"To think that just a few words that go unspoken by the lips of one man could give us the empire of the world. To think that if that man would but say those words we could rule all the earth and the kingdoms thereof !"

Again he was silent, and Billy wondered what lay behind this gigantic claim. That it was a true claim, he had no doubt.

On went the voice. "I have just come from Stahnfeld, and he refuses to talk."

Stahnfeld ! The word awakened an echo in Billy's memory and, still listening, he strove to recall it,

to struggle, and stood straight up at attention at the foot of the long table, facing One Over Seven.

The Dagger Of Death.

ONE OVER SEVEN addressed the prisoner. "You were given certain instructions. They were of vital importance, though you did not understand them. You failed to carry them out. Why ?"

The man visibly shook under this terse and direct indictment.

"Ex..." he began, and checked himself. "Master. The boy escaped. I could not help it. He was clever and cunning. An Englishman, who is a fool, blundered into us else we might have caught him." He explained what had happened at the hotel and, for the first time, Billy realised that Mr. Sentence had got himself mixed up with his pursuers in some asinine fashion and hindered them.

"And that is all, eh?" One Over Seven leaned forward. "Are you aware that but for your bungling we, sitting at this table, should now be in a position to rule the world?"

"Master..." The man's voice held a depth of pleading.

One Over Seven looked round the table. Each of the six held his hands flat over the table, side by side. And the palms were faced downwards! Had they been faced upwards the man would have gone his way.

The man loosed a hoarse and startled cry and tried to move; but he was too late.

The great dagger came from the table top. It flashed through the air, across the candle-light, like a streak of red and gold and brilliant light. And then the steel was gone, while the gold and the rubies stood grotesquely on the chest of the man who sank to his knees and died.

And, on this, Billy, in his excitement, moving without thought to the assistance of a man foredoomed, crashed into the statue which covered him and sent it headlong to the floor. It broke with a noise that woke the echoes of the vast, vaulted place.

Instantly, the Seven were on their feet. Instantly, Billy turned to bolt. But Benedetto appeared at the door leading to the rear quarters of the house and so cut off his retreat.

There was nothing for it but the stairs, and he turned towards them, leaping for them, and would have made them, only one of the big fellows, who had escorted the slain man, came barging out of the room in time.

He flung himself forward full length, and he got a grip of Billy's left ankle as the boy jumped for the third stair up. The clutch brought him down with a crash that, for half-a-second, stunned him. When his scattered wits had gathered themselves together he found himself dragged to his feet and thrust forward towards the candle-light room, into which he stumbled with a great hand on his shoulder, biting into it cruelly.

The giant who held him flung him forward so that he hit the table edge and went to his knees beside the dead man.

One Over Seven snarled something in a tongue allied to German—the Lithkranian language. The man instantly babbled words which were obviously apologetic and helped Billy to his feet.

Then One Over Seven snarled more words. The giant and his companion picked up the slain fellow and carried him away, while the Seven, reseated, stared at Billy through the ominous slits in their conical black hoods, while a little murmur ran through them.

One Over Seven began to laugh. It was the laugh of a man who, sunk in despair, suddenly sees incredible triumph in his grasp. It rang through the great chamber demoniacally, terribly, triumphantly.

"At last!" he panted. "And of his own free will! At last!" He added: "Boy, how did you come here?"

There seemed no reason for Billy to lie to him. "All the men in the car that brought me from Germany spoke in English and they discussed this place. I decided to have a look at it. That's all."

"Quite. An admirable project. Well you're

here." This was the English-speaking voice of One Over Seven, the suave wicked accents to which Billy had listened in the Parisian hotel and on the Berlin express. "We have you... at last. Magnificent! You shall not escape from me."

There was a tap at the door. One Over Seven called sharply: "Come in."

Benedetto entered, cringing. He spoke Italian, and Billy pretended not to understand what he said.

"Signori, a man has arrived. He says he come across great mountains with an urgent message for a *signor* he calls One Over Seven."

It was evident that Benedetto knew very little of the strange people who met in the great palace of which he was caretaker.

"What manner of man?" asked One Over Seven in Benedetto's language.

Benedetto's hands spread graphically. "A big man, *signor*. He talked to me in a tongue I did not understand. Then he talked to me in English—very bad English. He asked me if a little boy was here. I said yes, of course."

There was a stir at the table. Benedetto went on, not realising that he had committed a blunder.

"Then," he added, "the man said he wished to see the boy and the person in charge of him, who might be the man he called One Over Seven."

One Over Seven looked round. The others nodded. The man was to be brought in.

He came, a gigantic fellow, shambling, awkward, with huge hands on great square wrists swinging in ungainly fashion at his side, and at sight of him Billy's heart nearly leapt through the roof.

For this was Fritz!

Fritz The Fighter.

BILLY could have yelled: "Good old Fritz!" Only he dared yell nothing at all. Instead, his brain quickly worked out how Fritz had got in. Mr. Sentence, judging the big German accurately, must have told him that if ever he wanted to get into the enemy's camp mention of the dreaded name One Over Seven would secure him admission.

Fritz had used this information and here he was, standing in the candle-light, his heavy Teutonic features utterly devoid of all expression, and his clear blue eyes staring along the table at One Over Seven.

"You wish to see me?" asked One Over Seven, with some impatience.

"*Jawohl!*" said Fritz, and stepped forward.

He put both his tremendous hands on the edge of the great table and pushed. The other end hit One Over Seven and knocked him and his great chair head over heels, at the same time extinguishing the candles, which fell over as the table moved. Right and left swung the massive table, its far end legs serving as an axis, and right and left it knocked the men who sat to either side of it.

"Hop it, mate!" cried Fritz, in a high cockney accent.

Billy laughed with gladness and relief as he bored with Fritz for the lighted hall. They met Benedetto.

In about one second, Benedetto wished he had never met the German. Fritz hit him, and Benedetto hit the nearest wall and then the floor. They were the only things he hit that night.

The Seven were scrambling up behind them, hindered by their cloaks. Fritz and Billy smashed on through the rear passages, with one of the Seven close after them, shouting. He had shed his robe, tearing it off, and was coming along like a hare.

The fugitives reached the back door and pulled it open and, as luck would have it, at that very moment the two giants, who had carried off the slain man,

appeared in sight round a corner of the palace which cut off the retreat of Fritz and Billy along the *riva*.

The one of the Seven who followed, yelled orders to these two, and Billy saw the gleam of steel in their hands.

"That's a bit of all right," grunted Fritz.

Below them, in the canal, a gondola was moored. Fritz dropped into it and Billy followed. The German picked up the great oar while Billy desperately cast off the single line hitching the gondola to the canal side. A mighty shove from Fritz and the long, beaked, black craft was in mid-water.

"Fritz, you're a marvel," Billy gasped. "You saved my bacon."

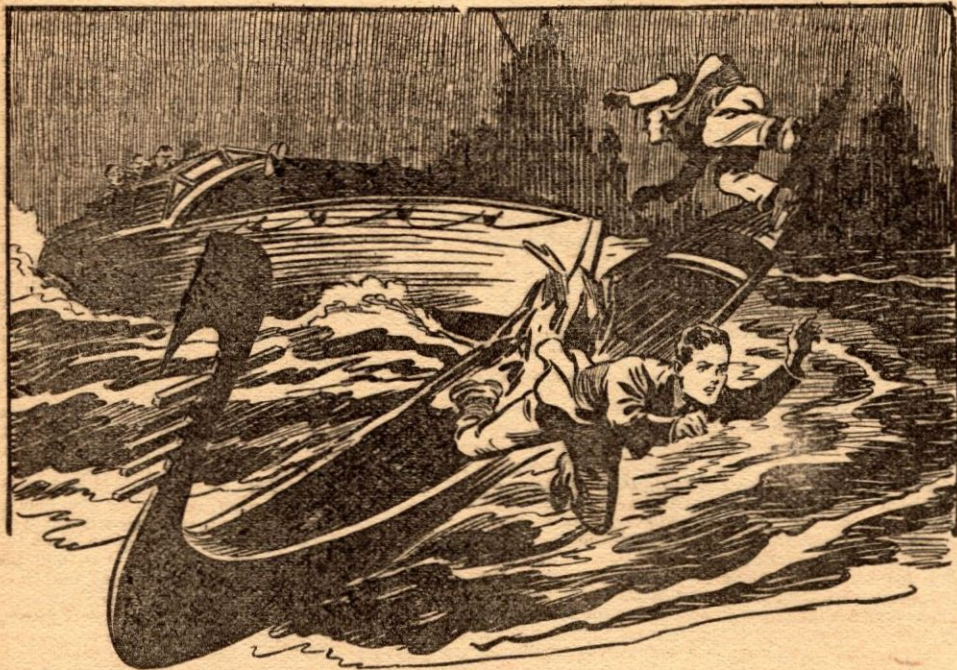
The shout came to Billy's ears in liquid Italian. "Heave to! We're going to run alongside. It will be worse for you if you try to escape."

"What's the game?" asked Fritz, and Billy translated for his benefit, speaking the English slowly, for half his time Fritz did not exactly know what he meant when he spoke English.

"Tell him to put a sock in it," he advised earnestly.

Billy grinned, despite the excitement. The big boat tore on after them. At that moment Fritz did something which Billy did not expect.

He dug his great oar deep into the swirling, dark water. The gondola came round on her axis, broadside on. There was a yell, the mad grate of gears,



THE GONDOLA A GONNER.—With a mighty heave of his paddle Fritz brought the gondola broadside on. Next moment the motor-boat took the vessel amidships.

"Don't mention it," said Fritz, politely. It was one of the stock phrases he had learnt.

They shot out from the shadow of the Palazzo Marami into the wide darkness of the Grand Canal.

"Pull straight across," said Billy. "We'll go to my hotel."

As he spoke, they heard the unmistakable splutter of a marine motor engine behind them, and Billy looked at Fritz, aghast.

"They've got a motor-boat!" he gasped. "They'll take us, for sure."

The vessel arrowed off on the wrong tack at first, travelling very fast, and during this time Fritz covered quite a lot of water. He had got halfway across before their pursuers' boat swung on its boiling heel and tore towards them.

The big motor-boat came haring on, and suddenly, from it, sounded a shout. They were seen.

a churning of water at the stern of the motor-boat as, in reverse, her engine was given full throttle.

Then she took the gondola clean amidship and, cutting it in half, was badly holed herself.

Both Billy and Fritz had jumped before the moment of impact, and Billy, going deep, came to the surface some distance from the scene of the collision. He heard yells and cries, but saw no sign of Fritz. The tide was running strongly, and he began to beat at it, swimming as hard as he could across current.

But as he struck out he realised one thing. The lights of the Piazza San Marco drifted away to his left . . . drifted further and further. To his right hardly any lights showed.

A dreadful understanding of his position came to him. He was being swept out to sea.

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FATTY'S ALL FOOLS HOLIDAY

(Continued from page 22.)

Johnny Gee & Co. were forced to get shovels and spades from the gardener. With coats off and shirt sleeves rolled up, they toiled away in the warm afternoon sunshine, while Tommy Rhodes & Co. went off chortling with laughter.

The "Head" stalked away, leaving the helpless Removites hard at work.

Ten minutes later two men—rough looking characters—came in at the gates of St. Giddy's and crossed the quadrangle to the School House. The man masquerading as Dr. Holroyd met them in the Hall, with a large bag—one of the Head's own suitcases.

"Is all the stuff in 'ere, Mister Chowle?" demanded one of the men, in a coarse voice.

"All that I have been able to lay my hands on!" was the reply in deep, cautious tones. "But I can't get the Headmaster's safe open without the key. You will take away this swag and hide it in the lower vault in the ruined abbey. We'll split it later. But we must get the contents of the safe, and I have a plan. Dr. Holroyd is arriving at Merivale by the four-fifteen train. He will naturally charter the station cab, to drive him to school. You two can waylay the cab in a lonely part of the Merivale Lane' get the keys from Dr. Holroyd and bring them back to me. With those keys in my possession I can open the safe, remove all the money and other valuables and meet you at the ruined abbey in the wood."

"Righto! You can rely on us, Mister Chowle!", growled one of his companions.

The two men hurried from St. Giddy's, the taller of the two carrying the bag of swag.

Over on the waste ground Johnny Gee & Co and the rest of the Remove were still slaving away with spade and shovel while the rest of St. Giddy's remained in their Form-rooms under "Head's" orders.

Fatty Turns Up Trumps.

THE four-fifteen train arrived at Merivale somewhat late, as usual. The tall, distinguished-looking form of Dr. Holroyd, the Head of St. Giddy's, emerged from the station and he chartered the cab to take him up to the school.

Dr. Holroyd's usually kind old face wore a very stern and set expression, as the ancient hack rumbled through the High Street.

They had reached a narrow part of Merivale Lane bordered by trees on either side, when suddenly the cabby pulled up with a jerk, and low, coarse voices greeted Dr. Holroyd's ears.

The door of the cab was wrenched open by one of the ruffians, while the other dragged Old Harry down from his seat. Dr. Holroyd raised his umbrella in an attitude of defence.

"Back—keep back, you scoundrel!" he cried. "Do not dare to lay hands upon me—Oh!" The Head reeled backward with a low cry as a cruel blow struck home. He sank to the floor of the cab with a moan and lay silent and still.

The other fellow, meanwhile, had overcome Old Harry and dragged him through the thicket, leaving him bound and gagged on the other side of the hedge. He returned to the cab, mounted to the driver's seat and whipped up the horse, his companion remaining inside the cab with the senseless Head.

The cab turned off into a narrow lane leading into Merivale Wood, and eventually reached the old ruined abbey. Dr. Holroyd was lifted from the cab and carried down into the dark labyrinths of the ruins.

A short while later, the rascally actor, still impersonating Dr. Holroyd, met them at the gates and took the stolen keys from them.

"You had better come in, and take the stuff away in another bag, which I have ready," said Chowle. "This way—and remember, I am the Headmaster here, and you are to treat me with respect!"

The only boy abroad at St. Giddy's that afternoon was Sammy Slocum. "Fed-up" with lying in the sanatorium, and feeling that tea-time was due, Fatty, clad only in his pyjamas and slippers, stole out in search of food.

Proceeding with infinite caution, Fatty crept downstairs. The sight of two strange, burly men talking apparently to Dr. Holroyd, caused the fat youth of the Remove to draw back into an alcove, gasping.

"Is that the lot, guv'nor?" inquired one of the men.

"That's everything of negotiable value from the safe!" was the reply, and Fatty Slocum almost dropped with amazement, for it was not the Head's voice at all. "Get away with it quickly, and I'll meet you at the ruined abbey."

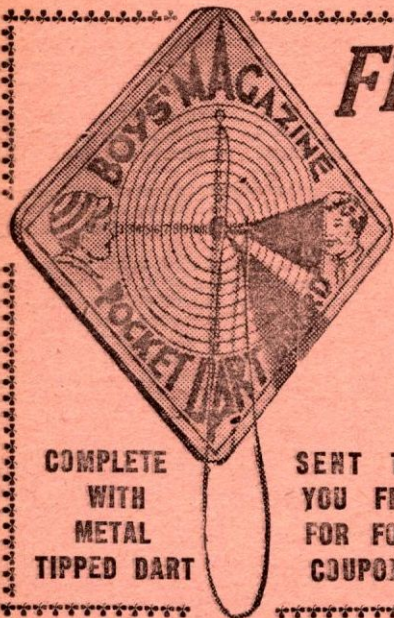
The two men went, and the supposed Dr. Holroyd walked onward, slowly.

Fatty scuttled away, forgetful that he was clad only in his pyjamas and slippers. He rushed into the Remove Form room, and a roar greeted his appearance.

"I say, you chaps, I've got news!" yelled Fatty. "You've all been made April Fools of! That wasn't the Head at all, but some awful villain, and he and his gang have been burgling the school!"

"Bosh!" snapped Johnny Gee. "It's a bit too late in the day to catch us with that yarn, Fatty."

At length, Fatty gave it up, and dashed away. Johnny Gee & Co., watching from the Form-room window, gasped in astonishment when they saw the round, pyjama-clad form of Sammy Slocum take out a "bike" and clumsily attempt to mount it! Johnny Gee & Co. blinked at one another, truly concerned for their plump Form-fellow.



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"Come on!" gasped the Remove leader. "The fat idiot's brain must have turned suddenly. After him!"

The chums of the Remove dashed down to the bike-shed, got out their machines, and rode out swiftly after Sammy Slocum. They caught sight of his round form ahead of them, pedalling away as fast as he could go!

Johnny Gee & Co. rode at top speed after him, but they were in the narrowest part of the Merivale Lane before they caught up with the runaway. Dick Bannister swooped up alongside, and made a grab at Fatty, who tried to dodge. Up the bank went Fatty, his machine turned turtle, and he was flung headlong into the thickets!

"Yaroooooogh! Oh, crumbs! Help!"

Johnny Gee & Co. dismounted, and ran to the great hole in the hedge. To their amazement, they saw lying amongst the bracken, not only the form of Sammy Slocum, but that of a man as well.

"Great pip! It's Old Harry, the cabby!" ejaculated Johnny Gee. "Ch, my hat! He's been bound and gagged!"

Swiftly, the Removees freed Old Harry, and the cabby spluttered out an explanation.

"There you are, Gee, what did I tell you?" exclaimed Fatty.

Johnny Gee turned swiftly to his chums. "The rotters are at the ruined abbey," he cried. "Kimmon! We'll soon settle their hash!"

Furiously, they rode through the wood to the abbey. Leaving their machines amongst the trees, Johnny Gee & Co. plunged into the dark labyrinths of the ruins.

"There are the rotters!" shouted Dick Bannister suddenly. "Go for 'em!"

Johnny Gee & Co. attacked the three rascals with a concerted rush.

Chowle and his two confederates fought like tigers, but Johnny Gee & Co. were not to be shaken off! Meanwhile, Snowball released Dr. Holroyd, and the Head rose to his feet, with a cry of relief.

The three men were overpowered at last, and Johnny Gee & Co. dragged their prisoners forth. Dr. Holroyd took charge of the "swag" and his keys.

"Boys, how can I thank you for coming to my rescue in such a timely manner?" he exclaimed. "You have saved the school from a great loss—Dear me! Slocum! What are you doing in that extraordinary attire?"

Fatty explained, in rather highly coloured terms, how he had risen from a bed of agony to bring the villains to book.

Dr. Holroyd held a strict inquiry into the affair of the bogus telegram and the forged notice, and from the evidence offered by Remington suspicion fell upon Sammy Slocum. As soon as he heard that, Sammy felt it convenient to have a "relapse," and Dr. Holroyd eventually discovered him back in bed in the sanny.

"Dear me!" said Dr. Holroyd. "I think that—er—under the circumstances, I will overlook Slocum's offence, outrageous though it was."

When Tommy Rhodes heard from Johnny Gee over the 'phone of Chowle's little "extra" turn as a masquerader, he merely gave a faint gasp, and rang off!

An old Mag. favourite returns next week, chaps. Corporal Keith and his dusky pal Timberhead in a thrilling Mountie yarn entitled "The Reptile Wrestler."

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THE HOUSE OF MOCKING SHADOWS

(Continued from page 28.)

was in such dire straits! It seemed that the hand of Providence had appeared here.

With a fierce grip, Bulldog prevented Dick from crying out. The Adventurer knew that his presence, so far, had not been discovered. And he saw a chance here of again utilising his terrific strength. Something else claimed his attention—and held it for a moment.

The circular pole, with the doctor perched on the top, was slowly but surely sinking downwards. It was carrying the victim nearer and nearer to the waiting stegosaurus.

"Think well!" shouted Count Klaw. "You have ten seconds left, my friend! You are almost within reach of the reptile's claws. Will you speak? Your secret!"

"My secret shall die with me!" cried Dr. Challenger.

The Count snarled in his fury, and at the same second a crashing sounded immediately behind him. Something big and bulky hurtled through the air Bulldog Hamilton, risking all on the one big chance, had flung himself bodily downwards upon the enormous reptile of death.

He straddled its scaly back, and his iron fingers closed round the loathsome throat. A horrid gurgle sounded from the creature, and it writhed and twisted and lashed itself into wild contortions.

It was at this second that Dr. Challenger lost his balance. He struck against Count Klaw, and the latter, reeling to recover his balance, fell within reach of one of the stegosaurus' lashing claws. He was struck down, and he rolled beneath the monster's dripping jaws.

The thing that happened then was unexpected. The monster, probably terrified by the commotion, flung itself upon its master, and pinned him down.

"The ladder—quick!" roared Bulldog Hamilton.

Dick had followed him out of the grating, and with lightning presence of mind, had grabbed

the Count's gun, which the latter had dropped. *Crack! Crack!* Dick fired grimly at the Count's men, and they fled, already terrified by the disaster to their master. They were panic-stricken, demoralised.

Crack! Crack! This time Dick fired at the dragon, but the bullets took no effect on that scaly hide. It was useless. Better to reserve the bullets for another use.

A minute later the valiant trio were on the lip of the pit, and Bulldog Hamilton swung round. Richly though Count Klaw deserved his fate, Bulldog could not go thus.

"You two go!" he commanded, in his jerky way. "Get into the lake and swim for it. It's your only chance. Before I go I've got to kill this infernal—"

He broke off abruptly. The flower-bed was swinging round, and in a moment it had completely covered the pit. In that last second a wild wail of dreadful anguish came upwards—a scream—and then an ominous silence. Either Bulldog himself or one of the others had accidentally touched the hidden spring which operated the "lid."

In vain, Bulldog strove to heave the flower-bed aside. It was immovable. Fate had cast the die. He ran lithely after the others, and together, they went charging through the House of Mocking Shadows. None of the Count's men barred their path.

Somehow, they reached a window, and in a moment they had plunged into the lake, and were swimming strongly—Bulldog helping the doctor along. They reached the opposite bank without mishap and then they ran. Breathless, aching in every limb, they forced their way through the woods. And, at last, they emerged upon a great highway.

Free! Bulldog Hamilton's mission had succeeded, and the House of Mocking Shadows was left behind in its tree-girt lake.

Another ripping thrill tale of Bulldog Hamilton next week, chaps. It's called the "Werewolf of Blackston Hall," and it will keep you thrilled and tense from beginning to end.



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