

MONSTER ENLARGED GIFT NUMBER

# Boys' 2D

EVERY SATURDAY

# Magazine



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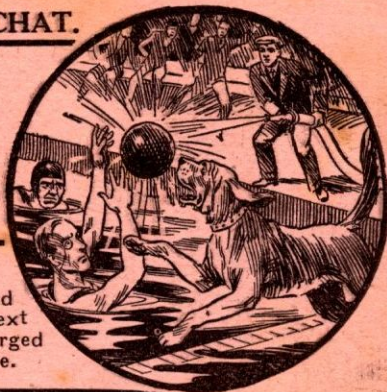


## YOUR EDITOR'S DETECTIVE CLUB CHAT.

## HOW TO USE YOUR B.M. CLUE POWDER



More Hints for Amateur Sleuths Below, Boys. And Full Details of Next Week's Monster Enlarged Story Programme.



**M**Y DEAR CHUMS,

There's such a bumper budget of yarns in this special enlarged number that I am afraid I'll have to wait longer than usual for you to get on to my chat. How have you enjoyed the *Mag.*'s latest feature—the Thrill Library? The first of the Four Death Riddles strikes a new note in thrillers. And you won't be disappointed, my masters, in the second quest of Jack Tempest next week.

### The Riddle of the Red Eye

takes Jack and O.K., the Jap chap, to the heart of wildest Africa. Here, amid the miasmatic swamps and animal-infested jungle, they search for the jewelled tusk which means so much to John Ranger. The astounding adventures and dangers they face—thanks to a villainous witch-doctor who is really an envoy of Dr. Zog—will give you a hair-raising half-hour of tense reading.

Before I continue describing the good things for next week, here's a few more hints to amateur sleuths. With the

### Detective's Clue Powder

given in this issue you can complete your amateur detective outfits. The previous items for these ripping outfits—The Detective's Metal Badge; Mystery Message Maker; Fingerprint Taker; Invisible Ink and Secret Message Duplicator were given away inside our last five numbers. For the benefit of new readers a limited number of these issues containing the gifts can be obtained from The Editor, 200, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, price threepence per copy (in stamps) post free.

To test the clue powder given this week you can stage a mock robbery with some of your chums in your own den at home. Let your chums be alone in the room while you go outside. While you are away the "robbery" (theft of a pencil box or some other object previously decided on) can be committed. Your task as the detective is to find out which of them has stolen the box. First you should search for fingerprints which as you know are the most valuable clues a detective can find. To make it easier for you, you can arrange beforehand that whoever "steals" the box shall press his fingers on a piece of smooth, glazed paper which you place on the table with the pencil box before going out.

Usually fingerprints are too faint to distinguish clearly. That's where the clue powder comes in!

See that the powder is perfectly dry, then sprinkle a little from the envelope in which it has been presented to you, on to the faint prints on the paper. Shake or blow off the powder and the lines of the fingerprints will be clearly revealed. Now, by using the fingerprint taker given in your copy of the *Mag.* dated May 27th, take all the fingerprints of each of your chums.

If you compare these with the prints revealed by the clue powder you can soon discover to whom the "crook's" prints belong. Then make your arrest, warning your quarry that anything he says may be used as evidence at his trial.

Next week's number has again been specially enlarged; so as well as the Thrill Library you'll have a full-sized programme of *B.M.* yarns. First on the bill is Falcon Swift, our famous Monocled Manhunter. In the case of

### The Vanishing Sportsmen

he comes up against one of the most terrible crooks of his career. Ferdinand Kreller is no ordinary villain. He is plotting to gain the kingship of a whole nation in Central Europe. With his Spike Helmets and shock troops he plans to seize the throne from King Carl, who is at present in Eng and disguised. There is a great sports meeting at Laugzig, the white capital of Turania, and Falcon Swift and Chick take part. So they come up against the undercurrent of plotting and intrigue that is even then bursting into hot flame. You mustn't miss this magnificent international sleuth and secret service tale, chums.

The second exploit of Professor Bill, the Science Sleuth, who made his bow this week, is even more startling than his duel with the Master of Lightning. In

### The Sky Car Raider

he comes up against a veritable devil in human guise. The Sky Car will certainly grip the imagination of those of you who are interested in mechanics. Add a smashing crook plot which has been cleverly interwoven with the scientific thrills and you will have some idea of the treat in store.

Fatty Slocum, too, to the fore at St. Giddy's next week. You'll enjoy the uproarious doings of

### Fatty Slocum—Strong Man.

He takes a dose of a mixture that increases strength about one hundred times. It isn't an invention of Timothy Catchpole, the muddling inventor—so it works—and so does Fatty! Laugh? Well, I haven't stopped yet!

Tommy Pink, the Chem-mystic Kid, simply had to be included in this grand science story number. You'll agree when you read "Tommy the Titan" on Saturday. Also more fascinating chats by our Engineering Expert, jokes, articles and surprises.

Your sincere friend, THE EDITOR.



(With which is incorporated "Pals.")

**WHZZZZZZ ! DRAMA AND THRILLS ON ROAD AND TRACK IN THIS DIZZY DUEL BETWEEN A RACING DEMON AND A DEMON RACER !**

# THE SMASH BANDIT!



**INTRODUCING THUNDERBOLT THYRLE — Not Forgetting PISTON SLAP, his Likeable Kid Mechanic.**

**Zed !**

A CHURCH clock tolled the hour of midnight in sonorous tones. Each booming stroke echoed through the still night, and reverberated along the thoroughfares and by-ways of Barking.

In Carey Street, a narrow side-road hemmed in by the drab walls of warehouses, a man waited in a car. At the sound of the chimes he glanced involuntarily at a building outside which he had pulled up a few minutes before.

Both man and car might have aroused the curiosity of any passer-by. The machine was a black Dinehart tourer, powerful as a dread-nought, with bold radiator, massive head-lamps and short, slanting wind-shield—a semi-sports outfit guaranteed for a hundred-and-ten miles an hour on the road.

The man wore a racing helmet, the flaps hanging loose against his cheek. Tinted goggles covered his eyes, and below these his features were entirely concealed by a face-mask. It was impossible to judge his height as he sat there with the Dinehart's big steering-wheel almost in his lap, but he was broad-shouldered and deep-chested.

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



He was the only living thing to be seen in the street, and no other vehicle was in sight except a huge lorry standing in a yard hard by—apparently abandoned for the night.



As the last stroke of the hour died into the quiet of the night, a staccato "pinking" sound became audible in the car. It emanated from a small cabinet attached to the dash-board, and the man at once leaned forward to open this, revealing a miniature radio set, highly selective.

He turned a dial, fumbled with one or two switches and then spoke softly into a tiny microphone, with which the instrument was equipped.

"This is Zed here," he declared. "What's the news?"

The name "Zed" would have conveyed a great deal to anyone within hearing—would have struck a chord of alarm. For it was the name by which a ruthless and mysterious personality of the Under-world had become known. Zed the elusive, the man who had slipped through the fingers of the police time after time; the active genius behind a bandit organisation that was crippling commerce and terrorising the roads throughout Great Britain.

The only man who heard Zed's softly spoken words, however, was the individual who had made contact with him over the radio—a radio so designed that the messages passing to and from it could not be picked up by any ordinary set.

"Number 513 reporting," came the voice of Zed's informant. "There's a Flying Squad outfit driving through Bow towards junction of Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road—away from you. Disguised as delivery van, equipped with wireless, five plain-clothes men aboard."

"What about the open road?" demanded Zed.

"Number 306 reports that there are two mobile police officers patrolling the Southend road," came the answer. "If the alarm is raised they can cut across to stop you within ten miles of the Metropolitan area, whichever route you take."

"No need to worry about them," Zed retorted. "Instruct 174 to rig up mirror at usual point this side of Ferndale. That's all!"

He switched off, and closed the radio cabinet. Then, leaving the car, he walked across the street to a telephone box and put through a call.

"Hello!" he said, when he had been connected. "Is that Scotland Yard? There's something suspicious going on at Romberg's Depository, Carey Street, Barking. Looks like car bandits . . ."

He cut off before any questions could be asked, and hurried back to the Dinehart. Meanwhile a message was being wirelessed from New Scotland Yard to a fake delivery van that was travelling down the Whitechapel Road—a van fitted with a powerful motor under its innocent-looking bonnet.

"Mysterious warning just received. Traced by telephone exchange to call-booth in Carey Street, Barking. Car bandits claimed to be at Romberg's Depository there. Investigate."

The van swung round in the width of the road, and, accelerating violently, headed for Barking. In the space of a few minutes it had reached the north end of Carey Street, and as it swung madly round the corner its occupants saw a big Dinehart sports car roar away from a tall warehouse.

The driver of the Flying Squad van gave chase. A colleague in the back of the vehicle spoke rapidly into a radio "mike."

"Morgan here," he reported to the wireless room of New Scotland Yard. "Have just sighted suspicious car in Carey Street. Chasing it. Think it may be Zed. Will call you again to indicate route he takes. Send general alarm to all stations and police boxes."

The bandit motorist was pulling away in second gear. He skidded from the south end of Carey Street and took the Ferndale road, slapping the gear-lever

into third, and a few seconds later into top. Throwing a glance over his shoulder, he saw the Flying Squad van hurtle into view once more, and behind the tinted goggles his eyes gleamed with excitement.

Back in Carey Street, a group of thugs had appeared from dark corners, and they clambered aboard the lorry that stood in the yard near Romberg's Depository.

The lorry was loaded to the roof with costly furs plundered from the Romberg warehouse a little while before midnight, and inside the Depository an unfortunate night-watchman lay trussed, gagged, and unconscious. The cumbersome vehicle rolled in leisurely style from Carey Street, turning off towards the City of London with its cargo of loot.

Meanwhile Zed was heading for the open road at ninety miles an hour. From this colossal pace he steadily accelerated until the needle was "clocking" a hundred-and-five.

The police van was a match for it even at this terrific rate, but, skilled as its driver was, he was not to be compared with the dare-devil crook at the Dinehart's wheel. The man handled that car like a speedway ace.

In the Flying Squad van a radio message was being sent through to headquarters again.

"Morgan reporting. Suspect headed for Ferndale. His car is high-powered sports outfit—black body—racing wind-shield. Index mark and number—M T A 608. Warn all patrols."

The mad chase continued, until the fugitive came to a dangerous "S" bend, and the men in the pursuing van saw the sweeping glare of his lights as the auto turned the curves in break-neck style.

The Flying-Squad outfit skidded furiously round the first bend. Next instant the driver saw what appeared to be the flaring head-lamps of another vehicle rushing towards him, and he wrenched on the steering-wheel.

The other lights seemed to swerve with him, and, travelling at headlong speed, the police driver pulled harder to the right. Still the opposing glare came straight for him. It all happened in split seconds of time, and the detectives scarce had a chance to cry out, before the van dashed with shattering impact into a stone wall.

With a grinding of twisted metal the vehicle burst through the wall and pitched on its side. From the wreckage came a hollow groan, then followed a deathly silence.

Two or three hundred yards farther on, the Dinehart had turned and was coursing back to the spot where the pursuers had met with disaster. There was a leer in his eyes as the driver directed his gaze towards an enormous mirror propped up at the roadside opposite the broken wall.

It was bow-shaped, to fit the left-hand rim of the bend, and it was of monster proportions. What the Flying Squad men had imagined to be another vehicle, had merely been the blinding, baffling reflection of their own head-lamps.

With an unholy chuckle the crook left his car and hurried across to the wreck. There was clotted oil on the back-axle of the overturned van, and, dipping his gauntleted hand into the black grease, he wrote the name "Zed" in sprawling literals across the side of the vehicle. Then he made his way back to his auto.

He re-entered it, pressed a switch and the car was immediately transformed. From sockets in the sides and back of the machine, the collapsible framework of an all-weather body jerked into view. The racing wind-shield dropped into a groove, and was automatically substituted by a square, upright screen. Reaching towards the rear of the automobile



the crook pulled a fabric hood over the top of the car and fastened it in position. When he had rolled up four windows the sporting tourer was completely changed into a saloon.

It only remained for him to remove the existing registration plates, and, with the index mark and number reading R K B 89, he drove in the direction of London. By the time the police arrived at the scene of the crash, the gigantic mirror had been transported by Zed's agents to a lonely shed in a near by field.

The prince paramount of organised motor banditry made a wide detour that took him northward, and en route he calmly stopped a country constable on a push-bike to ask him for a match.

Eying the man while he was lighting a cigarette, the constable felt that his features were familiar, and suddenly recognised him as one whose photograph had often appeared in the newspapers.

"Ah, I thought as how I knew you, sir," the policeman exclaimed. "Just come from town, sir?"

"Yes, and bound for bed," was the reply.

"Thanks for the light, constable."

The motorist drove on. Half-an-hour later, when he turned into the drive of a magnificent estate, he was again quite close to the spot where the Scotland Yard van had crashed. He garaged his car and let himself into a sumptuously furnished mansion.

A valet accosted him in the hall. "I was beginnin' to get worried about you, sir," the manservant faltered. "Why do you have to tackle these jobs, anyhow? You've got men workin' for you all over the country."

"You'll never understand me, Marks, will you?" was the drawing rejoinder. "I do it for the thrill of the chase. And by thunder I like to lead those Flying Squad devils the merry dickens of a dance—before I smash them!"

He bit out the last words viciously. The silence that followed was broken by a spluttering sound at the other side of the hall, and he crossed to a cabinet. When opened it disclosed an instrument that was an enlarged facsimile of the radio-set in his car. He turned dial and switches, then spoke into the microphone.

"Zed here," he announced crisply. "Who's calling?"

"Number 16, reporting from Birmingham," was the response. "We pulled the Dawson-Mathers job all right. Got away with half-a-hundredweight of precious metal from their premises."

"Fine," the listener commented. Switching off, he turned to his valet again.

"Any messages while I was away, Marks?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," the manservant replied. "Number 125 reported failure."

His master scowled. "That's the third time in a month," he grated; "125 and his gang are bunglers. I'll see that the police nab them red-handed the next time, for they're no use to me."

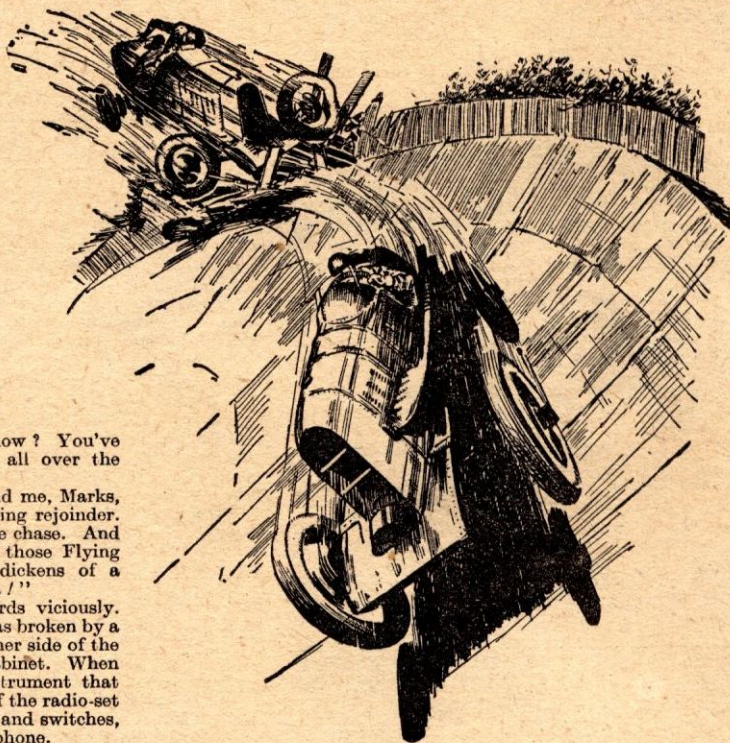
## The Speedway.

THE June Meeting of the famous Beacon Circuit was in progress, and the entrants for the Three-Lap race were in the pits with their cars.

The cream of Britain's racing talent was represented there, and among them was Thunderbolt Thyrle, the greatest dare-devil of all time. Holder of the world's records on land and water, he leaned against the 30-98 Dinehart Special in which he had blazed a trail of unparalleled fame, and, with the butt of a Corona Corona gripped between his teeth, he supervised the work of his mechanics.

No figure had flashed across the speedway firmament with the same meteoric triumph as Thunderbolt Thyrle—a dashing ace who feared no man, devil or disaster.

Tall, stalwart and dark-haired, with audacity sparkling in his grey-green eyes. Tight, clean-shaven



TRICKED ON THE TRACK.—Silbermann, trying to stop Don passing, skidded. The car spun round in circles, then crashed through the fencing and somersaulted in mid-air.

features, with a rakish scar running from cheek-bone to jaw. Recklessness personified. That was Thunderbolt Thyrle.

His chief mechanic presently turned towards him. He was a little red-headed Cockney with china-blue eyes and a smudge of oil on his nose. Billy Cole by name, but more familiar to Thyrle as Piston Slap. This was because of his terrific punch! Despite his



diminutive size Billy had been known to put a six-foot navy to sleep with one blow.

"She's all set, skipper," the Cockney announced, "an' she oughter go like smoke."

"She'll have to," Thunderbolt commented in drawling tones. "Bust my brakes if we aren't up against a regular galaxy of stars to-day, Piston Slap, me lad."

He tossed aside the stump of his cigar, and Billy promptly dived for it. He retrieved it, quenched its glowing tip, and placed it with several others in a tin box that he took from his overalls.

"You shouldn't chuck 'em away, skipper," the little Cockney reproached. "Yer knows as 'ow I allus keeps 'em for extinguished visitors."

Thyrlé laughed, and climbed into his racing car. A pressure of the accelerator, and the deep-toned

agree with me, my friend, when I have crossed the finishing line ahead of you."

"In that crate?" Thunderbolt exclaimed laughingly. "Never in your life, Baron. But here we go—stick around, will you, and let me know if my smoke bothers you."

The fleet of cars moved forward, circled the track in formation and then stormed across the line in a perfect start.

Silbermann dashed into the lead, the Logan's engine-note rising to a sonorous roar as he whipped into "top." A green speedster challenged him for first position, and was close up on him when he hit the first bend. But the Baron took the curve in flashing style, and pulled out of the turn several lengths ahead of his rival.

From the bunched cars behind a gleaming racer nosed its way—instantly recognisable as a Dinehart. Thunderbolt Thyrlé crouched behind the wheel, a Corona Corona held tightly in the corner of his mouth, a devil-may-care glint in his bold eyes. He stamped on the accelerator, and the moan of the supercharger synchronised with the swelling harmony of the exhaust.

Thyrlé drew abreast of the green speedster, but

the driver made a fierce bid to regain his place. He took the curve wildly and failed to hold his machine. It spun into a screaming skid and went circling round the bend in crazy spirals while Thyrlé thundered in pursuit of Silbermann.

Logan and Dinehart blazed across the line, lapping it at a hundred and thirty miles an hour. The crowd roared with excitement, but none yelled louder than a little Cockney in the pits.

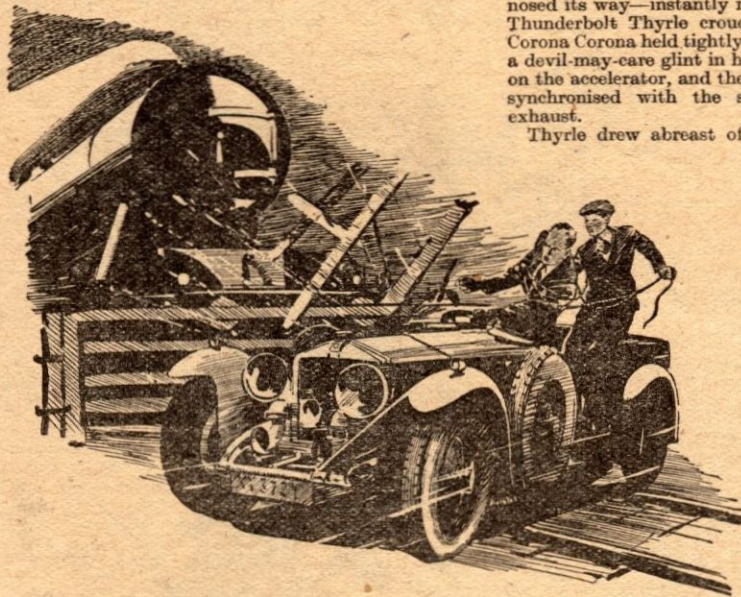
When the two cars crossed the line for the third and last lap, Silbermann was but a length ahead of Thunderbolt. The other cars were not far behind, but none looked like catching up with the first two, and the attention of the spectators was riveted on Silbermann and his rival.

As the Baron stormed round the bend at the end of the front straight within three or four yards of its top rim, he saw Thyrlé out of the tail of his eye. The Dinehart was stealing level with him, inch by inch, and Silbermann could not shake it off. Both cars came out of the curve wheel to wheel, and dashed along the back straight like shells from a gun. They thundered into the last bend, and suddenly the Logan's engine blurred spasmodically. It was "missing," and the car at once lost speed. The Baron, cursing viciously, stabbed at the accelerator but Thyrlé forged ahead on the home stretch.

The rest of the entrants passed Silbermann with a rush, but not one of them could make up on Thyrlé, and the checked flag signalled victory for the Dinehart as it raced over the finishing-line.

Thyrlé drove on round the track amid the cheers of the onlookers, before turning into the pits.

"The old crate gave me a smashing ride, Piston



IN THE PATH OF THE METAL MONSTER.—Even as Billy tore at Thunderbolt's bonds the speeding special appeared. Thyrlé was free at last, backing the car when the train hit the gate.

muter of the engine rose to a full-throated roar.

The other drivers were beginning to move up to the line, and the dare-devil in the Dinehart steered from the pits to take his place among them. There was some delay in starting, however, for one of the entrants appeared to be having difficulty with his car, a big Logan Straight-Eight.

The driver was the famous Baron Silbermann, who had won renown on Continental tracks before he had adopted British nationality. He was a heavily built man with a square, blond head and somewhat blunt features. He had an imperious, domineering way with him, and he was soundly cursing his mechanics.

The Logan was ready at last, and Silbermann drove alongside Thyrlé's Dinehart.

"Everything all right now, Baron?" Thunderbolt asked him genially.

Silbermann shot a sneering, sidelong glance at him.

"The Logan is perfect," he answered. "You will



Slap," he said to his chief mechanic. "A smashing ride!"

He had hardly climbed out of the car when the thick-set figure of Baron Silbermann approached. The man brought himself smartly to attention as he confronted the young ace, and he clicked his heels in a manner that was characteristically foreign.

"Congratulations, Thyrlé," he said stiffly.

"Thanks, Baron," Thunderbolt drawled. "It's too bad your engine gave out on you. The result might have been very different."

A faint sneer played around Silbermann's mouth. "It pleases you to be modest," he observed, "but I pay you the compliment of admitting that you are a magnificent driver. It seems to me that there is only one man who might usurp your place as the world's greatest race driver—and he, too, seems to favour a Dinehart, if what they say is true."

"To whom do you refer, Baron?" Thyrlé inquired.

There were a number of people within hearing, but Silbermann did not trouble to lower his voice.

"I mean the mysterious criminal who calls himself 'Zed,'" he rejoined.

The green glint in Thyrlé's eyes became dangerously prominent.

"So you're the man who's been spreading these rumours about me," he ground out. "Listen, Silbermann. For weeks past fools have been trying to connect me with 'Zed.' I'll be glad if you'll keep my name out of your conversation when you happen to be discussing this crook."

Silbermann shrugged, muttered some apology, and turned away. At the same time he pulled out a gold cigarette-case, and as he did so a visiting-card fell from his pocket. The Baron did not see it, but Billy Cole pounced on it, and was about to call the man back when he saw the name inscribed on the card.

The little Cockney changed his mind and retained the visiting-card in his fingers . . .

### The House of Silbermann.

ON leaving the Beacon Circuit Thunderbolt Thyrlé entered a Dinehart sports car of standard design. He was about to start up the engine when Billy Cole came abreast of him on a motor-bike.

"Just a minute, skipper," the Cockney said.

"Take a look at this, will yer? It dropped outter Silbermann's pocket."

The racing crook took the proffered visiting-card and to his surprise saw that it bore his own name and address.

"This is queer," the Dinehart ace murmured.

"Yus, that's wot I thought," Piston Slap declared.

"Listen, skipper. I reckon Silbermann started them rumours all right, and him carryin' that visitin'-card around—"

Thyrlé nodded slowly. "You're right," he said, "and I've a mind to drop in on Silbermann. Piston Slap, don't mention a word about this to anyone. I'll see you to-morrow."

They parted, and Thyrlé drove in the direction of town. He recalled that the Baron had an estate in Essex—an estate that encompassed a great deal of land. Silbermann, indeed, was reputed to be a millionaire, and the racing game was a mere hobby to him.

Darkness had long since fallen by the time Thunderbolt Thyrlé had passed through London and had at last reached the wrought-iron gates leading to Silbermann's estate.

He pulled up a little way from them, and, abandoning his car, stole through to the drive. He passed down a long avenue of trees, at the end of which he could see a pretentious mansion looming darkly against the starlit sky. As he approached he caught sight of a man emerging from an adjacent garage.

It was Baron Silbermann, and Thyrlé watched him go into the house. Then he hurried forward to the garage, and, though the doors were locked, he was able to gain access to it by a small window.

Without switching on the lights, he was able to see the outlines of a car—a Logan tourer. There was



HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE

- 1—AS BIG AS A CHURCH STEEPLE
- 2—AS STRONG AS A THOUSAND CARNERAS
- 3—A HUMAN POLICE TENDER?

See next week's tale of the Chem-mystic Kid entitled, "Tommy the Titan," the funniest scientific yarn ever told, chums.

another machine in the garage, however—entirely concealed by a dust-sheet. Thyrlé's eyes gleamed as he drew the covering aside and beheld a Dinehart saloon.

Its presence proved nothing, of course, particularly as Thyrlé failed to discover that the whole car could



be transformed into a sports model similar to his own. But he examined it interestedly nevertheless, and the radio set in the small cabinet on the dash-board did not escape his scrutiny.

Deciding that there might be more to be learned from an inspection of the house itself, he clambered from the garage and made a complete circuit of the mansion. There were no windows open on the ground floor, but there was one on the second storey that suited his purpose.

He climbed to it, and, pulling himself across the sill, found himself in a dark room. From this he made his way to a narrow corridor, which led to a gallery overlooking the hall.

He peered down and saw Baron Silbermann. The racing driver was rummaging through some papers in a bureau, but as Thyrlé watched him a spluttering sounded within a cabinet on the Baron's right.

Silbermann turned, and Thyrlé leaned over the balustrade of the landing to follow his movements. At that moment, however, he heard a footfall on the gallery, and he turned to see a manservant approaching.

The fellow caught sight of the intruder and gave vent to a sharp cry that reached the ears of Silbermann below. Thyrlé acted on the spur of the moment. He wheeled round, and dashed along the landing to another passage, hoping to find some way of escape.

At the end of the passage, however, he was stopped by a blank wall, but there was an iron ladder reaching up to a skylight. As he set foot on the first rung, he looked back and saw that Silbermann was running along the corridor with his valet.

Thunderbolt Thyrlé scrambled to the top of the ladder, hoisted himself into an attic, and thence clambered to the flat roof.

Thunderbolt raced to the low parapet and looked down upon a sweep of lawn. The wall beneath him was sheer, and offered no foothold; but he glimpsed a circular, ornamental pool of water-lilies quite close to the house.

Silbermann, a revolver in his hand, and his manservant appeared on the roof, and Thyrlé set foot on the parapet. He could not tell the depth of the pool, but resolved to take a chance. The blast of a shot split the night as Thyrlé threw himself headlong, and a bullet ripped past his vanishing heels.

Thunderbolt hit the water, and dived down, down. Mercifully there was depth to the pool.

Fearful of Silbermann's gun Thyrlé swam on below the surface, fighting his way through belts of tough creepers.

"There he goes!" Silbermann rapped out the words as from the parapet he saw a bedraggled figure crawl out of the pool. The revolver was levelled again, and three times in swift succession the Baron fired.

The gloom was in Thyrlé's favour, but the hot slugs whistled perilously close to him. He took to the trees, heading along the border of the drive for his objective.

"Missed him," Silbermann growled to his manservant. "Didn't see who he was, Marks, did you?"

"No, sir," was the answer. "Why not go after him by car, sir?"

"Oh, it's not worth it," the Baron growled. "By the time I'd got it out there wouldn't be any trace of him. Here, put this gun away for me. I must be getting back to the hall. . . I'm wanted on the radio."

### Piston Slap on the Scent.

THE following Friday night Billy Cole worked late on the Dinehart Special, and, as his motor-bike was temporarily out of action, he was compelled to make his way home by rail.

He caught the last train, and when he reached the neighbourhood where he lived the streets were as quiet as the grave. From the station Billy took a short-cut, down a narrow alley and was about to emerge on to a shopping thoroughfare, when he heard voices just ahead of him.

"Zed's orders were to bring the stuff to the barn if everything went off all right. Don't forget to leave Thyrlé's card lyin' about . . ."

Billy stole to the corner of the alley, and peered round the angle of the wall. Only a few paces from him were two men, in caps and mufflers, standing outside a jeweller's shop, the door of which had been broken open.

A car was at the kerb, and its engine was ticking over. The two men were obviously look-outs for a gang of motor bandits engaged in looting the jewellery store, but, thanks to the fact that Piston Slap was wearing rubbers, they had failed to hear his approach.

Breathlessly Billy watched them, and presently three more men laden with spoil hurried from the jeweller's premises. All five of the rogues entered the front of the car, one of the look-outs taking the wheel, while the other threw a visiting-card towards the threshold of the burgled shop, and a moment later the vehicle was moving from the kerb.

Piston Slap slipped from hiding, snatched up the visiting-car, and darted to the tail of the crooks' machine. He managed to grasp the spare wheel and settled himself in a position that was fairly secure if uncomfortable. Then followed a long drive to open road, the car finally swinging through a gateway and pulling up outside an old barn, abreast of another machine.

Lowering himself from his perch, Billy began to retreat through the darkness. But he was unlucky enough to stumble into a pot-hole filled with rain, and the splash of water reached the ears of the gangsters. With muttered exclamations, they whipped round, and at sight of the Cockney they rushed him in a body.

Billy stood up to them, but even his prodigious hitting powers were unavailing against such odds. He was seized and hustled to the barn.

The crooks blundered across the threshold with their prisoner and closed the door behind them. The place was illuminated by a lantern, and Billy saw bales of merchandise stacked high against one wall of the barn. But his attention was chiefly held by a huge, semi-circular mirror, occupying a considerable portion of the building's interior.

A man was standing with his back to this mirror, a tall man of powerful physique. He wore a racing-helmet, and tinted goggles covered his narrow eyes, the rest of his features being entirely concealed by a face-mask.

"A snooper, chief," one of the crooks panted. "We caught him sneakin' away from the car."

The man known as Zed advanced a few paces and looked piercingly at Piston Slap.

"It is sometimes dangerous to meddle in other folk's affairs," he told the Cockney in a menacing tone. "You are going to find that out."

The gangsters had slackened their grip on Billy's arms. Suddenly the little mechanic tore free and snatched the mask from Zed's face to reveal—Baron Silbermann!

The Cockney was immediately seized again, and Silbermann stood glaring at him, a murderous light in his eyes.

"You men have seen my features for the first time," he grated to his minions. "Let each one of you guard the secret of my identity as you would guard your lives."

"So even yer own gang didn't know yer!" scoffed



Piston Slap. "Well, yer needn't worry, Silbermann—the 'ole blinkin' world'll know yer for a crook pretty soon. The skipper's got you pretty well taped, for one!"

"So Thyrlé suspects, eh?" Silbermann said softly, his eyes narrowing. And Billy could have bitten his tongue out for having uttered those words.

Zed turned to his men. "Leave your loot here," he said curtly. "Then follow me to my house. Bring the prisoner with you."

The spoil of the jewellery raid was dumped on the floor of the barn, and the crooks then filed out with their captive, Silbermann fastening the door behind him with a heavy padlock.

Within ten minutes the two automobiles were drawing up in front of Silbermann's magnificent home, and Billy Cole was conveyed to a room above the big garage.

"How about tyin' him up, chief?" one of the gang suggested.

"No need for that," Silbermann rejoined, indicating that the window of the room was barred.

He turned and scowled at Billy, then went on.

"I might mention that we'll find a way of keeping you quiet for all time," he said viciously. "As for Thunderbolt Thyrlé, his suspicions will never be confirmed, for he'll ride to his death within twenty-four hours, if I have my way!"

The Baron and his hirelings filed from the room and locked the door after them. But they lingered outside for a few minutes, and Billy overheard Silbermann addressing the gangsters.

"I want you men to show up here to-morrow night at twelve-thirty," the racing crook announced. "We're going to pull the biggest job we've ever tackled. Two hundred thousand pounds' worth of bullion is being landed to-morrow . . . Conveyed by special train from Harwich . . ."

The crooks moved off, and Billy was left to his own reflections. Towards dawn he fell into a troubled slumber, from which he was awakened by the sound of a car's engine.

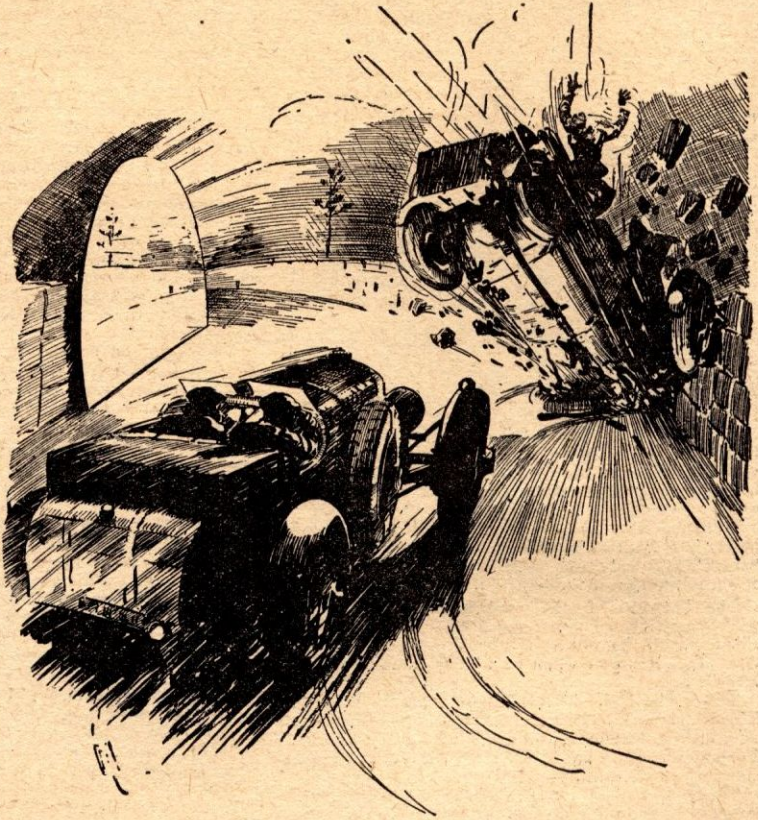
He rose from the floor and looked down through the bars of the window. It was broad daylight, but a drizzle of rain was falling. Below him, Silbermann was backing his Logan tourer out of the garage. When it was clear of the doors, he emerged from the car and passed into the motor-shed once more.

An idea flashed across Billy's mind, and, rummaging in his pockets, he found pencil and paper. Then he scribbled a hurried message.

*Silbermann is the crook known as Zed. Am a prisoner in his house. Don't let him ride to-day. He means to crash Thyrlé.*

BILLY COLE.

Billy wrapped the note round a piece of mortar that had crumbled from the wall, and tossed it through the bars so that it fell on to the back seat of the Logan. There was just a remote chance that it might be discovered by someone at the Beacon Circuit—a chance in a thousand.



THE CRASH TRAP.—Silbermann sped round the bend, and the lights of his car, reflected by his own mirror trap, met him. He swerved violently, hitting the stone wall with a grinding shock.

### Treachery on the Track.

IT was the last race of the day at the Beacon Circuit, and the entrants were roaring from the starting-line at specified intervals.

The event was a ten-lap handicap, and Baron Silbermann and Thunderbolt Thyrlé were the back-markers. The Logan driver pushed forward a few seconds ahead of his rival, but Thyrlé, a dead



cigar-stump gripped between his teeth, stormed undaunted in pursuit.

The thundering speed monsters flashed along the straight, and one after another they hurtled into the turn. Fighting to reduce the handicapping odds that had been so heavily against them, Silbermann and Thyrlé both took the bend at mad pace, and there was a harsh squealing of tyres on the concrete surface of the track.

Lap after lap they zoomed at terrific speed round the circuit. Gradually, Silbermann, with Thunderbolt close on his heels, overtook the leading cars, until there were but two in front of him.

The entrants were circling the track for the seventh time when Silbermann swooped into the back straight to snatch second place by a margin of a few yards. Almost at the same time Thunderbolt Thyrlé was forcing his way into fourth place, and he hurtled round the bend to drive flat out in pursuit of the man whom the Baron had just passed.

A drizzling rain had begun to fall again, and the track was perilously wet, but the speed-demons were scornful of the danger. Thyrlé, reckless as ever, screamed past his nearest rival at the next bend, a thin mire spraying the latter's machine as the Dinehart drew ahead.

Another lap completed and now Silbermann had drawn level with the leader. The two speed monsters seemed to hang together as they rocked round the bend into the back straight. But another challenger was coming into the picture—Thyrlé, careering along the rim of the bend with a dare-devil grin on his lips.

The yells of excited spectators mingled with the swelling racket of the exhausts. Silbermann passed the man who had held the lead for so long, and three seconds later Thyrlé had beaten the fellow into third place. It had become a race between the millionaire Baron and Britain's record-breaking wizard.

But four yards separated the two speedsters as they flashed over the line on the final lap. The Dinehart was nosing close to her rival, however, in a determined attempt to overtake Silbermann, when the Logan seemed to side-slip on the wet track.

It turned sharply into Thyrlé's path, and its tail grazed the front of the Dinehart. A shudder passed through both cars, and then Thyrlé's skidded wildly towards the rim of the banking.

The thousands of onlookers held their breath. But with masterly hands, Thunderbolt controlled the side-slip, and he was still only half-a-length to the rear of Silbermann when he swung on to the back straight.

Those who had witnessed the occurrence believed it had been an accident, yet Thyrlé sensed otherwise. And on the next bend he knew his instinct was true. For as he tried to pass Silbermann, the Baron again slewed into his path.

Thyrlé was ready for him this time, however, and swerved back to the off-side. Silbermann attempted to counter the strategy by turning in again, but Thyrlé was thundering abreast of him, and the hubs of the front wheels clashed savagely.

The cars swung apart. The Dinehart zig-zagged like a mad thing, the tyres shrieking as they skidded across the concrete. Thyrlé grappled with the steering-wheel, stabbed his foot at the accelerator. It seemed humanly impossible to correct that desperate speed-sway, and for agonising seconds the crowd watched the battle 'twixt man and machine in breathless suspense.

The Dinehart rocked crazily, came up on two wheels and shot towards the inside rails at terrific speed. Thyrlé hung on to the steering-wheel grimly, and the auto suddenly-dropped back on all four tyres. It was still racing in the direction of the fencing, but

with all his skill and strength thrown into play he straightened it in the nick of time.

The car scraped the rails and then blazed on along the home-stretch to victory. In the instant of turning the bend Thyrlé saw Silbermann's speedster whirling around in circles, completely out of control. Suddenly it burst through the fencing and somersaulted in mid-air, pitching Silbermann out bodily. The car, bounding clean over him, crashed to earth thirty paces beyond him, and burst into flame with a muffled report.

The Baron himself rolled for a considerable distance, and finished up within the glowing heat of the burning wreckage. It seemed a foregone conclusion that he had been killed instantaneously, yet as fire-fighting and ambulance equipment were being rushed to the scene the Baron lurched to his feet, staggered away from the blazing wreck of his machine and then collapsed in a heap . . .

### Bullion.

THE track medical officer briskly answered Thunderbolt Thyrlé's questions about Silbermann.

"The Baron was unconscious when we picked him up," he observed, "but regained his senses for a few minutes. He absolutely refused to be taken to hospital, and as a matter of fact there's no need for it, though I think it might be advisable for him to be kept quietly in bed for a few days—just in case he suffers from the after-effects of shock."

Thyrlé pursed his lips thoughtfully. Here was a chance for him to gain admittance to Silbermann's house again.

"Doctor," he announced, "if you'll permit me I'll take the Baron home in his car."

The medical officer agreed, and shortly afterwards two attendants carried the unconscious Silbermann to his Logan tourer.

Night overtook Thyrlé shortly after he had reached the outskirts of London. The drive through the crowded streets occupied fully an hour-and-a-half, and it was not until the car was bowling along a quiet Essex road that the young racing man heard movements behind him.

He turned his head and saw that Silbermann was coming round, and as the Baron uttered a groan Thyrlé stopped the car. He climbed out, and, opening the door, leaned over the huddled occupant there. He was about to ask him how he was feeling when he saw a scrap of paper lying on the seat beside the man.

Picking it up curiously, Thyrlé glanced at it in the light of the tail-lamp. He read it aloud, and then gave vent to a sharp exclamation.

"Wreck me!" he rapped out. "This explains why I couldn't get in touch with Piston Slap to-day—"

He got no farther, for Silbermann, who had roused himself while the young speedster had been scanning the note, brought a heavy spanner down on Thyrlé's skull with all his force.

That blow was the last thing Thunderbolt remembered until he found himself, lying bound and gagged in the back of a car—a Logan tourer—with Billy Cole. Beside the machine stood Baron Silbermann, who had fully recovered from his crash, with some of his thugs.

"I'm glad you've recovered your wits," said Silbermann, a sinister smile playing about his lips. "I wanted you to know what's going to happen to you and this meddling mechanic of yours."

He paused and Thyrlé gazed wonderingly about him. The Logan was standing across a railway track.

(Continued on page 35.)



THE MOST EXCITING MOTOR-CYCLE  
RACE IN THE WHOLE WORLD, CHUMS!

A Gripping Chat About the Goggled  
Knights of the Road Who Duel in the  
Senior T.T.

# Those Tourist Trophy Thrills!

By  
THE MAG'S  
MO'BIKE  
EXPERT.

C-R-R-R-R-A-A-A-C-C-C-C-C-K-K . . . Try and make a noise like a T.T. winner. Can't be done except by the winner itself. Well, perhaps not! Ever seen a T.T.? If you haven't, save up for the next one—it'll be worth it. Of all the grand displays of machine-handling, this is the best! The astonishing work of those French and Italian drivers of Bugattis and Alfa-Romeos in road racing on the Continent is marvellous. But just see a T.T.!

The car-drivers have four wheels to go on, anyway; they only have to slam on their brakes and sling their tails round at the corners. Fellows like Hunt, Woods, Dodson, and the hosts of others have to get round by sheer skill and the finest judgment. Why, last year's race was won at 79½ m.p.h., which beats the speed of the Targa Florio!

The British motor-bike rider has no equal in the world; he becomes part of his machine for the time. His bike calls on him for every ounce of skill, and in its turn gets thrashed up hill and down, and put over hairpin bends at fifty miles an hour. That's the

way the breed of motor-bikes has been improved, so that neither man nor machine has a peer anywhere.

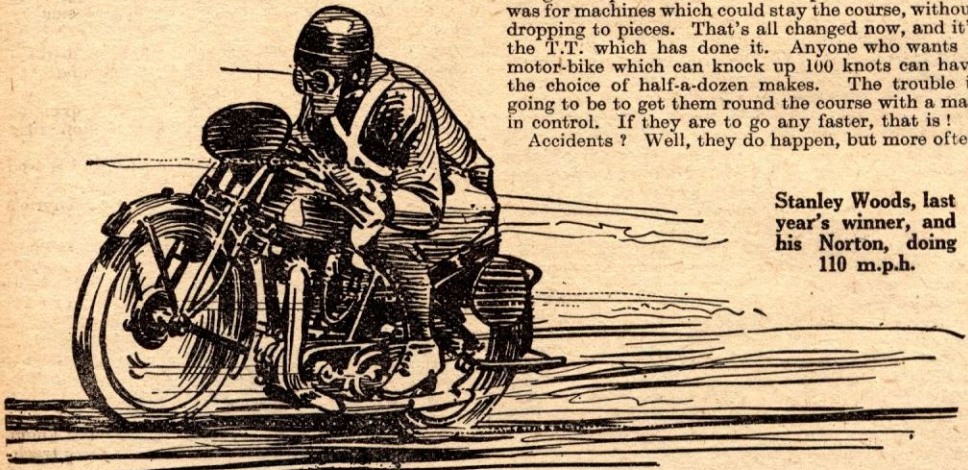
Year by year the speeds go up, and each year it seems that it can't be possible to whack it up any higher. Last year it was just short of 80, though the winner did a lap at 80.5. This year—? Eighty miles an hour for a course, 264 miles altogether, up and down at least one mountain, Snaefell. Quite enough of a mountain to bring any machine down to an intermediate gear and so lower the average speed. But what they lose on the uphill pull they'll gain on the long run down the other side.

Stanley Woods, last year's winner at 79.38, reckoned that he did the downside of this stretch at 110 miles an hour. And Woods is a fellow who can tell the difference between 79 and 80 when it's in miles an hour; no extravagant claim that, either. He knows what his speed is exactly, without a speedometer, and what's more he knows to a fraction the speed at which he can take a hairpin bend.

It's fellows like that who have made the T.T. race the grand spectacle it is. Once upon a time the cry was for machines which could stay the course, without dropping to pieces. That's all changed now, and it's the T.T. which has done it. Anyone who wants a motor-bike which can knock up 100 knots can have the choice of half-a-dozen makes. The trouble is going to be to get them round the course with a man in control. If they are to go any faster, that is!

Accidents? Well, they do happen, but more often

Stanley Woods, last  
year's winner, and  
his Norton, doing  
110 m.p.h.





through lack of judgment on the part of the younger fellows. Getting round the corners like Governor's Bridge, Kirk Braddon, or Quarter Bridge is done nowadays with the help of speedway rider's methods. Not quite broadsiding, certainly, but you could call it slithering the model. Over comes the machine at an unbelievable angle, down goes the rider's foot, and he's round. Sometimes they don't change gear, either. You want a real rubber-neck to enjoy a T.T.!

Quarter Bridge is the place to see the best of the riding, or so we think. You hear the throb of the engine a long way off, then comes the change-down, engine roars up to a scream and there you see him leaning over at a terrific angle. He changes up again almost before he's straightened out and away to Braddon. Here he gets another chance to show a bit of cornering style, as there's a double—first right and then left. The road is well clambered up at this point, however, so the rider gets more help.

Every so often a rider has to pull in to the pits for a fill-up of oil and petrol, and here's where you can see slick work. Try and get the filler caps of the tank off, the tanks filled, and the rider away all in twenty seconds! You'd want some practice to get it done in twice the time, yet it's been done in sixteen seconds, and the rider out of sight in another ten!

It's things like that that help the man who's winning to hang on to those precious seconds of lead. Last year, the first man got home at 79.38, second at 78.47, third at 78.38, and fourth at 78.34. Only three seconds between third and fourth, and about nineteen between second and third, while first man got home with the comfortable lead of about two minutes and twenty seconds. Now that's racing!

Of course, it isn't a race in the sense that they are all started off in a bunch to fight for a lead, but you certainly see them neck and neck at times. What about four chaps coming along at something over 80, a cricket-pitch length covering the lot of them, heads down on the bars, each man striving to get that last bit out of his bus and shake off the chap behind!

There's another spot, Bray Hill, where the expert cuts off a few seconds. A sudden dip, more like a dive, and you can be doing a 100. And they do! Once upon a time there was a drain manhole near the bottom which often fetched off good men, but that's done away with now. Try hitting a manhole at 100 miles per hour!

Look at the fellow at the top! He's just clearing Ballig Bridge, an old-fashioned type of bridge with a hump back. Going over it at anything like speed will cause the outfit to leap clear. Inches clear, too, as the sketch shows. Our other sketch pictures Stanley Woods on the Norton which won last year.

What about the machines? Well, they are, according to the rules, stock touring machines to be bought in any shop. Of course, we aren't going to say that the competing machines can be duplicated exactly by your local dealer. They are specially tuned up for the job. They need to be!

The actual design of the machine is the same, but it is well known that when large numbers of engines are made all to the same pattern, every now and again a "star" engine turns up. On test, these engines give far more than the power expected of them, and they are reserved for racing jobs. A good 500 c.c. engine, such as they put in for the Senior T.T., will give about 25 horse-power, where its ordinary rating is about 5!

Do you know the barbed-wire fences twang in response to the engine's exhaust as they rev. at 5,000 on the way up Snaefell? They do! But even such engines as these will conk out at times under the merciless thrashings they get. The rider who has

brought his machine through the gruelling of practice and the race itself has got an outfit he may well prize. Who wouldn't have one?

Just before closing down, here are a few facts of interest about this classic race.

It was first run in 1907, and won by C. R. Collier on a Matchless at 38.23 miles per hour. The distance was then 158 miles. In 1913 the race took two days, with an increased distance; the Senior was won at 48.27 miles per hour by a Scott. 1914 saw it won by a Rudge at 49.49.

No more racing, owing to the Great War, until 1920. The 226 miles' course was then covered by the winner at 51.79 miles per hour, this time a Sunbeam.

The first time 60 was exceeded was in 1924, when a Norton got it at 61.64.

The only occasion when it was won by a foreign machine was in 1911, when Indians (U.S.A.) took the first three places, the best speed being 47.6 miles per hour. Pietro Ghersi, on an Italian Guzzi machine, came in second in the Light-weight in 1926, but was disqualified.

Next week: "By L.M.S. to Chicago." A thrilling chat about the British train that is astonishing U.S.A.

## PROFESSOR BILL—SCIENCE 'TEC

(Continued from page 28.)

When the lightning flashed, now, vivid greenish-purple flares came straight down to the ship, apparently smothering it, and yet no man felt any shock.

All the passengers, leaving the ship first, had remained calm—but puzzled. Nobody but the senior officers knew the exact reason for all this excitement. The boats cleared her sides, the sailors rowing with all their strength, getting as far away as possible.

At last, no living soul was left aboard—except Dr. Zeetzin himself. And he, staggering on deck, found that he was alone on the liner.

*Booom-oooom—craaaaash!* The deadly glare shot from the sky, enveloping the liner fantastically, and Zeetzin caught his breath in, and his face grew haggard.

His sanity had returned. He thought only of his own wretched life. Staggering dazedly, he dashed down into the interior of the ship, reeling down the wide staircases. He was intent upon finding the baggage room where he had hidden the globe—intending to escape from the doomed liner in one of the boats.

At last! Dr. Zeetzin stood in the baggage room. Overhead the lightning flashed again; it seared down into the very heart of the *Atlantianic*; a greenish-purple flare of fire surrounded Dr. Zeetzin, blinding him, and at the same moment the voltage in the globe passed the safety mark. . . .

Professor Bill and Freddy, a mile or two away in their flying boat, watched. They saw the lightning strike—they saw the fine ship enveloped—and then a flash that spread from sea to sky. And the *Atlantianic* disintegrated into powder!

A vast tidal wave was caused by that devastating explosion—a tidal wave in which many of the ship's boats, miles away, nearly capsized.

"At least," said Professor Bill, "we've saved all those innocent people—and Dr. Karl Zeetzin has paid the penalty for his greed."

How do you like this new Mag. sleuth, chums? More thrills in the science world next week with Professor Bill and his assistant. Make sure you set No. 2 of the Thrill Library next week.



**Cheers for the Final Daring Exploit of Red Mask !****GRAND AND GRIPPING COMPLETE WILD WEST TALE, CHUMS.****QUIT GUNNING  
YUH GREASERS!**

**Here They Are—The Dandy Cowboy, Bud Malone, Jack Jakers, and the Rest of the Bar-Eight Boys in Daredevil Doings that will Hold You Tense !**

**The Torture Cabinet.**

**J**OSE ONATE, the most powerful cattle thief in all Mexico, was a much mystified and angry man. He sat in the *sala* of his desert hacienda in a deep armchair before the fire and brooded—on death. Outside the full round Mexican moon seemed to sit atop the *patio* wall, and the night pulsated with the mystery of life.

He was handsome in his fierce way, as is the hawk. His brown face, swarthy, with coal-black eyes, was as sharply chiselled. The firelight brought out points of light in his gorgeous costume—the bright waistcoat, the jewelled knife hilt that protruded from a sash at his waist, the white-horn butts of twin weapons on his hips.

The great room, deeply raftered, with its barred windows and adobe walls, was not one whit behind in barbaric splendour. It was softened by gorgeous Navajo blankets that splashed the firelit gloom.

Many things played their part in the drama of that night. And not the least amongst them was a strange affair, like a telephone kiosk, that struck a strange alien note in that room.

Jose Onate turned in his deep armchair and peered at its long, frosted windows with face darkly glowing and evil; and his thoughts dwelt upon his sworn enemy, Señor Red Mask.

He hated the young Americano with the red mask and cloak, who once had been a border bandit chief. Hated him—and his heart went hungry for revenge. That was bad for Señor Red Mask, because at that precise moment he happened to be a prisoner there in the desert hacienda of Don Jose Onate.

At length Jose Onate clapped his hands; and it was an almost startling sound in the stillness.

He had decided that to-night the hated gringo should die, and in a most painful and unpleasant fashion.

Fear thus far had tied him; held his hand. He

had found that Señor Red Mask had a habit of being in two places at once, of turning up in staggering fashion when least expected. He did not know that Señor Red Mask had a double, his twin brother, and that they each in turn played the same part, to bewilder and confuse their enemies.

At the sharp clap of his hands, a peon, bare-legged and as brown as a coffee berry, appeared through the tapestries. And to him Jose Onate issued sharp orders in the Mexican dialect.

The peon withdrew, and almost instantly the hacienda became alive with movement. There were fully two score of Mexicans, with their horses within the *patio* walls, and these were the men of Don Jose's band.

The gaoler with the keys went down to the dungeon, and an armed bodyguard of swarthy, villainous men of the South escorted Señor Red Mask into the *sala*. The rest of the Mexicans lined the walls.

The young Americano looked pale, his face set. He had slept in chains in a dark dungeon in which rats and other vermin crawled. Yet his grey eyes flashed fire as they met Don Jose's dark orbs flowing with menace.

"*Beumos noches, señor,*" he mocked. "Have yuh decided tuh surrender tuh me, then. I have sworn to get yuh, mark it!—and Señor Red Mask never breaks a vow."

Fury choked Jose Onate. He saw how Red Mask's confidence registered with his men—and he, too, was touched with a queer secret fear.

"You will not live to see another sunrise," he hissed wickedly. "Señor Red Mask, have you ever been burned by steam?"—the unexpected question came with a sudden sinister softening of tone.

A pallor crept up beneath the young Americano's tan, as he turned his head and followed the baleful eyes of his interlocuter to the strange kiosk with its thick plate glass.

"When I made a trip back East," went on Don



Jose in that sinister, mild tone, "I came across a device that the gangsters of Chicago used for making their victims talk. It is that box you see there. Imagine something a thousand times more painful than scalding steam, Señor Red Mask. A man placed in there may get it slowly, at first—but the burning gases can be intensified. As it is turned full on, the gas fills the eyes and burns them from their sockets; it scalds the roots of a man's hair; his tongue is burned out. Now that is what I call a fitting death for you, Señor Red Mask."

A look of horror dawned in the eyes of the young caballero.

"Yuh're a fiend, Don Jose," he growled deeply. "Lemme tell yuh I got something as good fer yuh, and it's coming right soon."

"Enough," snarled the raging Mexican. "Gag and bind him. Then put him in."

Greasers jumped to do as their leader commanded. Then the door of that terrible lethal chamber was opened, and he was thrust inside into a deep chair that stood within.

The door clanged upon him. Through the glass they could see Señor Red Mask writhing in his bonds. With a terrible smile on his swarthy face, Don Jose lifted his hand to the crank that, once turned, would send the gases seeping into that lethal chamber.

Then suddenly he started and stopped as there sounded from somewhere the single, deep reverberating clang of a gong. The pattering of bare feet followed, and the peon burst into the room.

"The masters!" Then babbling words in his own dialect fell hot from his lips.

"So they have escaped and come back," Don Jose muttered, amazed. And the next moment there stalked into the *sala* three of the most complete-looking scoundrels it had ever been any man's lot to look upon. They were Don Jose's lieutenants—Pedro Iribas, gaunt and grim; Antonio Cuyas, the fat round genial-looking peon, and Miguel Savedra, handsome and dashing as a cavalry officer in his gay Mexican trimmings.

Surprise was expressed at seeing them, for it was believed that they had been captured and taken prisoners by Rex Remington and his Bar-Eight cowboys.

"Hola!" cried Don Jose in delight. "Ho, Pedro—and you, Savedra—what happened then?"

"We got away," growled the grim, gaunt Pedro Iribas. "Crossed the desert with mules—and I am as dry as a bone. But what means this gathering?"

"You come just in time, *amigo mio*, to witness the passing of Señor Red Mask," replied Don Jose, exultantly. "Look, you see him in that chamber. He will die in torments delightful to watch."

As he spoke he crossed to the cabinet, and turned the lever that sent the gases hissing into that death chamber.

### Bearding a Bandit.

THE whole barbaric room was lit as weirdly as a flickering stage. Everyone was staring at the cabinet. They could see the silhouette of a man behind the windows, writhing as if in torment. The peon, Antonio Cuyas, who was one of the three to arrive at the last minute, nudged the gaunt, grim Iribas.

"My gosh," he whispered hoarsely. "What're they doing tuh Red Mask?"

"Hsst!" whispered back Iribas. "We've just come in time, Bud; we gotta stop this."

"Should say so," growled Bud Malone—for it was indeed the fat cowboy of the Bar-Eight in disguise. Pedro Iribas was in reality Tex McNaughten, and Miguel Savedra was Rex Remington

made up to look like that dandified Mexican and wearing his clothes.

Desperate, with no other hope of entering Jose Onate's hacienda, the three Bar-Eight boys had resorted to the expedient of making up as their captives.

But how long could the mad masquerade last? The Dandy Cowboy for one, did not care if it lasted not a moment longer. He was aflame with anger—and quivering with fear.

And yet all three realized that they stood against almost an army. Swarthy faces lined the walls of the huge room—shadowy figures, bulky, large men who would kill without a second's thought.

The three from the Bar-Eight were forced to hold themselves under iron control. They were waiting for Jack Jakers, the fighting foreman—Señor Red Mask's twin brother—and Wun Lun, the little Chinkie cook.

Tex McNaughten, in his guise as Pedro Iribas, had secured from the peon the key of the great timbered gate of the hacienda, and had tossed it over for the two to find. But would they come too late?

"What are you doing to him? What is it?" cried Tex McNaughten hoarsely in the Mexican dialect.

"Gas-scalding, burning acids and gases," came Don Jose's voice with a terrible laugh. A gasp exploded from Rex Remington's throat. There was a creak of leather, and both his guns were in his hands. *Brang! Brang!* He was shooting at that cabinet above Señor Red Mask's head.

"*Caramba!* Who is firing?" shouted Don Jose. And then suddenly before him appeared the figure of Jack Jakers, the fighting foreman of the Bar-Eight; only he was in mask and cloak, in the guise his twin brother wore.

"You see me?" he cried. "Señor Red Mask speaking."

### Red Mask's Lone Quest.

JOSE ONATE stared—and gasped. He had put Señor Red Mask in the gas chamber, yet here he was before him, advancing with guns levelled.

"Open that chamber, yuh fiend," Jack growled deep in his throat. "Or by heck, I'll blow yuh apart."

Fear and consternation were writ on Don Jose's face as he crossed to the kiosk. The door swung quietly open. Horrible, noxious fumes met Jack Jakers as he rushed and dragged out his twin brother. Then Jose Onate saw how he had been tricked and he recovered his nerve.

"*Dios!* They were doubles—twins!" he roared. "At them! Do not let them escape!"

Jack Jakers still covered him with a gun, but there were forty of his fierce devils around the room, and they looked to Pedro Iribas for a lead.

Tex McNaughten strode forward, followed closely by the Dandy Cowboy and Bud Malone.

"I will attend to them, *señor*," growled Tex McNaughten, and made as if to bow. But the disguised Texan suddenly seized a white buffalo rug, on which Jose Onate was standing, and tugged at it violently. The Mexican came down with a crash on the ground, hitting his head with a force that all but stunned him.

"Come on, fellers," yelled Tex McNaughten; "we gotta git while th' gittin's good."

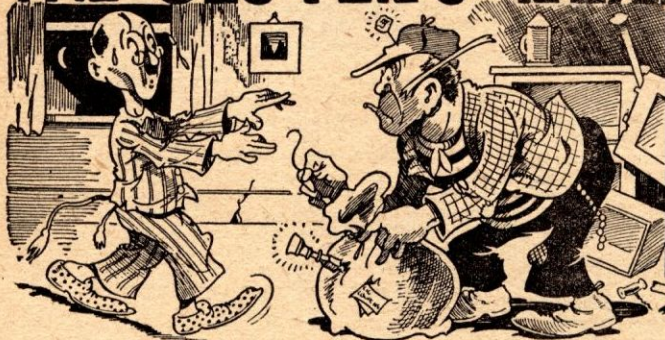
The Mexicans round the walls, recovering from their surprise, made a concerted rush across the *sala* upon the departing punchers, shouting fiercely.

Then suddenly Wun Lun appeared before them, and though he was never allowed a gun, he was free.

(Continued on page 16.)



# THE JESTER'S REALM



Cricket Bats and Fountain Pens awarded to the 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.

**Timid Householder: D-d-don't take any n-n-n-notice of me—I'm only w-w-walking in my s-s-s-sleep!**

(Cricket bat to ROBERT FRITCHARD, Weymoore Cottage, Bucknall, Salop.)

## THE TREASURE HUNT.

**HOUSE-OWNER:** Hey! What are you looking for?

**BURGLAR:** Money!

**HOUSE-OWNER:** Wait a minute. I'll light the light, and we'll both look!

(Fountain pen to J. DRAWER, Curscombe, Feriton, near Honiton, Devon.)

## JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine, 17/6/33.

## OCHRE O.K.

**OWNER OF VILLAGE GENERAL SHOP:** A pound of ochre? Do you mean red ochre for painting bricks?

**SMALL BOY:** No, it's 'tapioca to make a puddin' with!

(Fountain pen to R. M. STEVENS, Lythurst Hill, Barnet Green, Worc.)

## A MOUTHFUL.

**SINGING INSTRUCTOR (to nervous singer):** Now then, don't be afraid. Open your mouth and throw yourself into it!

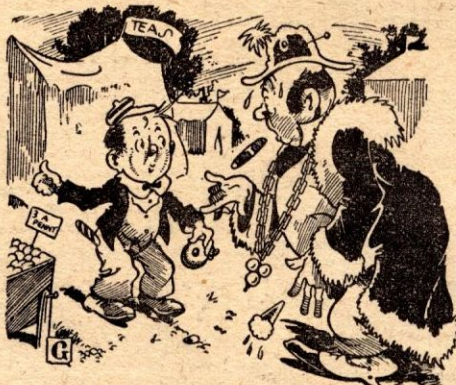
(Fountain pen to A. G. OWEN, 32, Light Oaks Road, Pendleton, Salford 6, Lancs.)

## NOT SO DUSTY!

**PA:** Come here, my boy, I'm going to dust the seat of your trousers with this cane.

**JIMMY:** Don't be so old-fashioned, father; why not use the vacuum cleaner?

(Fountain pen to HENRY ADSHEAD, 37, Lark Hill Road, Edgeley, Stockport.)



**Little Jimmy (to mayor at Sunday school picnic):** Please, sir, Miss Smith says will you go to her at once as she's a mug short.

(Cricket bat to JAMES HUTTON, 31, Cussick St., Belfast, Ireland.)

## PERSISTENT.

A man was being pestered by a hawker trying to sell his wares. At last, thoroughly out of patience, the man halted, and turned on the persistent pedlar.

"I don't want anything, I tell you," he roared. "If you don't stop pestering me I'll call the police!"

"Ere y'ar, sir!" replied the hawker. "The very thing—a police whistle for a tanner."

(Fountain pen to L. TWILLEY, 11, Finsbury Road, Wood Green, N.22.)

## ECONOMY STEPS.

**LEVI (taking his son Abey for a walk):** Are those the boots I bought you yesterday?

**ABEY:** Yes, father.

**LEVI:** Well, take longer strides.

(Fountain pen to LEONARD HOWARTH, 17, George Street, Salford, Lancs.)

## GETTING IT

### EGGS-ACT.

The old gentleman had just bought a bowl of goldfish for his nephew.

"Oh, by the way," he said to the shopman, "What food does one give goldfish?"

"Ants' eggs, sir."

"Ants' eggs. I see—and should they be soft or hard boiled?"

(Fountain pen to B. WILDISH, 38, Defoe Avenue, Kew, Surrey.)

## IN THE WAY.

**TRAINER (to boxer who is being continually hit):** Why don't you stop them lefts, Bill?

**BOXER:** Well, none has passed me yet, have they? (Fountain pen to JOSEPH BEALE, 94, London Rd., Derby.)



## QUIT GUNNING YUH GREASERS

(Continued from page 14.)

at all times, to indulge his passion for fireworks. But they were not ordinary fireworks. His hands made throwing motions, and fiery daggers travelled through the air towards the Mexicans. They exploded with terrific bangs. The greasers thought it was some form of magic and shied like horses in fear.

Amidst all the confusion, the Bar-Eight punchers made their exit swiftly with Señor Red Mask. In the patio, or courtyard, their horses were waiting for them, and they swung into the saddles and galloped them out through the great arched gateway.

"YUH oughta hev taken th' greaser with yuh, Tex," growled Bud Malone, the fat cowboy, as they rode through the arid wastes of sun-baked sand a day later. "Your brother done promised tuh take him back a prisoner."



"Yeah," said Jack Jakers softly; "and I reckon Jerry hyar kinda aims tuh keep that promise hisself."

"Yuh've hit it dead centre, Jack," said Señor Red Mask quietly. He was without a single soar, for though the gases had overpowered him, some of the pipes had not been turned on to produce the proper mixture that burned in the horrible manner José Onate had suggested.

"And I guess I know how to git José Onate," Señor Red Mask gritted. "While I was in th' cells, th' gaoler boasted that José and his bandits intended tuh hold up th' Union Pacific Express at San Saba—and wal, I'm riding *caballeros*," he added quietly, "and I'm shore thanking yuh."

He raised his gauntleted arm, and then let his horse have rein.

Bud Malone and Tex were for spurring after him there and then, but Jack Jakers held them back.

"He's right, fellers," he said in a low, earnest tone. "Let him go his own gait. But we'll be there at San Saba in case we're wanted."

San Saba was a town of shacks and adobe buildings in the fiercest part of Mexico. It was on the edge of the Bone-dry Desert, which is a great stretch of

rolling sand dunes—just bone-dry as its name suggests.

But somewhere in the midst of its vast expanse of hot sand was a green oasis. And there was the village of the fierce Apajos Indians. Occasionally in the past these Indians had raided the railway. They did it no more, however, for an electrically charged barrier of wire had been put up at San Saba, separating the Bone-dry desert from the rest of the world.

It was towards this fierce spot that Señor Red Mask rode on the second night after leaving the Bar-Eight pards. The hold up of the Pacific Express was to take place the following night—so he understood. He had got to prevent that, and he had got to capture José Onate. His chances of doing either seemed slim to Señor Red Mask.

Far below he saw the silver headlight of a train was crawling through. He could hear the laboured grunt

THE FIREWORK FURORE.—As the Mexicans surged after the disguised Bar-Eight Boys Wun Lun appeared, and started to throw blazing firework daggers in their midst.

of the distant engine pulsing rythmically on the night. Suddenly the advance of the light ceased.

*Crack!—Crack-crack-crack!* Red Mask started. The next moment he was sending his horse plunging recklessly down the mountain-side. He knew what that faint sound was. Gunfire!

### The Train Hold-up:

AS Danger, his red stallion, slid and lunged past trees and rocks, lights flashed out along the length of the train.

More shots barked out, louder, clearer, nearer at hand, accompanied by the swift, mad tattoo of galloping horses.

To his amazé Señor Red Mask saw the Bar-Eight pards racing down the track from San Saba, their guns belching red fire into the terror-lit faces of the bandits.

Red Mask joined in the fight with a fierce zest. He used one gun, fanning the hammer with his other hand. It was a marvellous example of quick shooting.



Every "fan" of the hammer knocked it back, and of course the cylinders moved for a fresh shot. And Señor Red Mask made every shell tell.

Suddenly he saw the man he sought, and cried out with a sharp word.

"Jose Onate! Stand—hold, *hombre*, and fight!"

Don Jose Onate, with something like terror twisting his face, turned his charger and spurred it in a frantic gallop down the length of the train. Señor Red Mask was after him like a shot.

Don Jose plunged for the town. That mad clatter of hoofs frightened him. He had a plan for escape—and it looked like Señor Red Mask might gum it all up and put the kybosh on it.

He dashed through the long, winding street of San Saba, people scattering from his path with frightened cries, and neckreined his horse in front of an adobe building. It was the power station. Don Jose dashed in with his gun in his hand, and seeing the engineer standing there, the villain shot him dead.

The desperate Mexican wanted to get at the lever that controlled the electrically charged fence that guarded Bone-dry Desert.

He switched off the current, and dashed out, going up on his horse with a rush and spurring away. He had to get through that fence before it was charged with electricity again. Besides he knew the fierce Apajos, and had consorted with them before. Though he told no one, there was Indian blood in his veins—Apajos blood.

Approaching the electrically charged fence, he rose in the saddle, bent and graceful for the spring. His charger raced straight for the fence, but at the last moment swerved aside. But Don Jose had leapt to the twenty-foot high fence.

### In The Apajos Village.

IT was an hour later when the fence was raised, and Señor

Red Mask crept through. His two long, heavy Colts were in his hands, his belt full of cartridges. Desperate and tense was the handsome face, for Señor Red Mask reckoned on little time longer to live now. For he knew all about Jose Onate being in league with the fierce Apajos.

The fence had gone down, and he knew that it was immediately charged with electricity. He was in a dreaded No-Man's Land. And doomed! Doomed! Every footfall in the rustling, sifting sand seemed to say it. Doomed!

Deeper, deeper, plunging down slopes, laboriously climbing the dunes, he trod. Suddenly he stood stockstill, and an awful fear came to life rushing through him.

They stood in a circle round him, grim statuesque, casting shadows in the moonlight—the fierce Apajos.

There sounded the twangs of their bows; whining arrows came in flight. Swift as light Señor Red Mask plopped down.

*Br-rang! Br-rang!* The crashing of his guns awoke the echoes.

But they came twisting, sinuous, through the sand. Like snakes. Red Mask shot again and again, and fear and desperation was in him.

They were driving him back now. He was forced to retreat, crawling backwards over the sand as arrows hissed perilously near. Then he saw Don Jose Onate suddenly, and cried out fiercely, turning his guns in the Mexican's direction.

Suddenly a gasp tore from Señor Red Mask's raw throat. He was sinking! He was being sucked under by invisible hands. He was in the quicksands! The cunning Apajos had deliberately shepherd him there.

The Apajos came up, striking at him with their weapons, laughing and jeering at him, spitting in his face. They let him sink until all but his head was submerged, then they hauled him out.

He struggled fiercely, but they bound him up. And then they gathered round and tortured him afresh, driving knives into him, kicking, striking.



THE HUT OF HORROR.—Red Mask, freed of his bonds, set fire to Don Jose's terrible treasure house. He leapt clear even as the Mex. was climbing to the hut.

Sheer agony pumped through every inch of Red Mask's body when they had done, and his mind hovered on the border of unconsciousness.

But they were artists in torture. They stopped then, and swimming in a sea of pain Red Mask saw Jose Onate's evil smiling face.

"I have not finished yet, *señor*," he mocked.



"Now we go to *El Cañon de los Espectros*—the Canyon of Ghosts."

Red Mask felt himself lifted, his ankles and wrists were tied to either end of a thick bamboo pole which was slung over the shoulders of two of the warriors. His body hung helpless and inert, dragging, a torture-weight as the procession filed away.

They came at last to Ghost Canyon. Across the great chasm stretched a suspension bridge—a mere spider-web of rope.

The ropes at his wrist were cut, so that he hung head downward, with the cord moved to the centre of the pole as they went over that swaying, rickety rope bridge. Staring down into limitless space, Señor Red Mask was overcome by an awful nausea, his senses swimming—heart pumping wildly. Then mercifully oblivion claimed him.

He came to his senses to find himself in the native village of the Apajos Indians. It was a real oasis in all that vast desert land.

Don Jose ordered Señor Red Mask to be brought to him in his native hut. These huts were built of matted rushes and grass that grew shoulder high here.

Red Mask was carried into the hut and squatted down before Jose Onate. The Mexican grimly twirled his moustache.

"Señor, your friends on the other side of the fence will be expecting you back. If you will tell me when you arranged to go back, I will grant you this boon—a swift and merciless death."

*Watch for Big  
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Señor Red Mask's mind leapt. At once he understood the Mexican's cunning. When the electric fence was switched off, he intended with his followers to attack.

"They expect me back to-night, when the moon is at its height," he said. "Now you will keep your promise, Don Jose?"

"I will," said the Mexican, with a mirthless smile. He clapped his hands, and had Señor Red Mask taken up and borne out on the pole. At a native hut that was set on great poles, like stilts, the party halted.

"My treasure house," Don Jose said in a jeering voice. "None of the Indians will go near it, for that hut has seen many secrets. Take him up."

With expressions of fear on their faces the two Apajos Indians carried Señor Red Mask up the rope ladder, and thrust him through the great wide entrance. He was in evil-smelling darkness, filled with rustling, crawling things.

"Guard my treasure well, Señor Red Mask," Don Jose grinned through the doorway. "I promised you a painless death, and at the rising of the moon the snakes will come to you."

With a low, evil laugh he disappeared. Red Mask bit on his lips and tried to control himself. Things slithered in that crawling fearful-smelling darkness. It had the smell of death—worse. He moved, and his hand touched some whitened bones and a skull, which rolled over.

And at the rising of the moon . . . the snakes would come!

Señor Red Mask commenced to struggle frantically, groping around in that fearful, hot, evil-smelling darkness, bound hand and foot as he was.

Cautiously he worked himself round his raised prison. And suddenly his tied hands touched the chest of treasure—Jose Onate's treasure. To his surprise the lid opened, and his fingers pried amongst every variety of ornament and valuable. Then hope sprang alight in Señor Red Mask's heart as he touched the hilt of a jewelled dagger which lay near the top.

In a few seconds he had contrived to saw through the ropes that bound his arms and wrists. Free now, he got frantically to work. He commenced hacking at the thatch structure; the dagger was sharp and it came away in cakes. Soon he had made a hole sufficiently large to admit the passage of a man.

He saw in the moonlight that it was a fifteen-foot drop to the ground, yet thick foliage would break his fall. Escape lay before him. But first—he had something to do.

He lit a match, and cupping the flame in his hands, gathered together all the thatch he could find. He applied a match to it, and it crackled fiercely, great flames licking upwards. In a second the tree-top hut was a flaring torch in the night.

Red Mask did not hesitate. Turning from the flames, he hurled himself through the broken wall. He had waited as long as he dared. Now as he landed on all fours, his heart gave a mighty bound.

The Indian village was given up to pandemonium: Terror was loose. Running, shrieking figures seemed to explode likeimps in the lurid glare. All this Red Mask saw—then a human figure dropped clean upon him from above. It was Jose Onate who had been climbing the rope ladder that led up to his treasure hut. Now, seeing his captive escaping, he leaped to detain him.

His right hand came up with a gun in it, his left gripped like a vice at Red Mask's wind-pipe. The border adventurer saw everything through red mist. But with a last despairing effort, he crashed out his right fist, and as Jose's head went rocketing back, he snatched at the gun.

A single twist! The gun was free! Red Mask's eyes were blazing as he brought down the butt with crushing force. Jose Onate's body quivered, the breath escaped in a long hiss between his teeth. He collapsed and lay still.

\* \* \* \* \*

IT was two hours later that a staggering, lurching figure came within hailing distance of the electric fence, and raising his revolver fired the last shot in the chamber.

The Dandy Cowboy, Bud Malone and all the rest of the Bar-Eight pards came running up as the fence was lifted. They stared at the figure that lurched through, dragging something on a rope.

"By th' great horned toad, it's Señor Red Mask!" gasped Bud Malone.

"And what's he got there?"

It proved to be the figure of Don Jose Onate, wrapped up like a cocoon in ropes. Señor Red Mask had dragged the Mexican bandit all the way from Ghost Canyon in the face of the hostile fire of the Apajos.

He had earned his redemption. Now he could ride again, a free man, in the cattle lands of the Golden West.

The second Monster Number of the Mag. appears next week. Order your copy early and make sure of getting the Thrill Library, our special Eight-page Supplement of adventure yarns.



Well, if it Ain't  
Ole Washington!

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**A Laugh! A Yell! A RIOT! Telling How Our Tame Sleuths Take on the Job of Returning a Penitent Bill Sikes' Loot—and Put it Back in the Wrong Safe!**

### Helping a Reformer.

WASHINGTON HAYSEED and his young assistant, Tim Buskit, looked a trifle suspicious as their latest client produced a valuable pearl necklace and placed it on the desk in their office.

"I know it must look fishy to you," said the man, who had told them that his name was Salmons, "but I'm not a regular crook. I got desperate, you see, and I had stolen this thing before I rightly realised what I was doing. Then I thought it over and regretted it. All I want you to do is to get the thing back in the safe where it belongs and say nothing more about it."

"Say, dough," said Washington. "Why don't you go to do police, or put it back yo'self."

"If I go to the police, they'll arrest me, whether I've regretted my rash act or not, and as for putting it back myself—well, frankly, I haven't the nerve now. Of course, if you wish to betray my confidence, report me to the police right away. I'm entirely in your power."

"Lor!" said Tim Buskit, "we wouldn't do a low-down trick like that! But how're we to know that this isn't some sort of a frame-up?"

"Well," mused Salmons, "all I can say is that I will willingly submit to being held a prisoner here while you put the necklace back in the safe."

"Sounds genuine enough, that."

As Tim spoke he looked at Washington's dusky face questioningly. It certainly was the strangest job they had been asked to perform since they began

their varied career as private detectives. And the man seemed to make his story ring true, somehow.

Washington picked up the necklace and looked at it, undecided, for a few seconds. Then he turned to his young assistant.

"Ah guess dis yar gen'lman is tell'n de trufe. Crooks don't offen reform, an' Ah'll say it seems a mighty big shame not to encouragise 'em when dey does. What yo' say, Tim?"

"All right," said Tim, "if you agree, so do I. Where's this place we've got to replant the necklace?" he added to Salmons, whose face had lit up with gratitude at their agreement. "And how do we get in an' everything?"

Salmons gave them the information and copied out the address of the burgled house from a little notebook.

"Okay," said Washington, cheerfully pocketing the necklace. "Ah t'ink we'm best keep yo' under lock and key till we get back, like yo' 'greed—dat's if you ain't got no objectionableness?"

"None at all," answered Salmons. "Here—I brought along some burgling tools in case you need them. This is the combination of the safe—better write it down. Turn the dial to fifty, then back..."

### The Burgling 'Tees.

SO it was that our dusky sleuth and his youthful chum set forth that eve to do a little job of inverted burglary.

They found the house to be one of those large, old-fashioned suburban places, very square looking, and



the front porch decorated with a couple of stone lions. It stood well back from the road in a large area of unkept garden, and when Washington and Tim approached, there were no lights visible anywhere.

Still, they had to be cautious. Tim Buskit was carrying the bag of burgling tools, because he knew that if Washington did so he would be certain to drop them.

"Looks as dough all de winders is barred and shuttered," whispered Wash. "We gonna force our way in?"

"Not if we can help it," answered Tim. "Let's have a good look round first!"

They made a surreptitious tour of the place and examined every possible way of entry at ground level, including a servant's basement at the back of the house. But there was nothing doing.

"Well," Tim said at last. "We'll have to try the second storey. The left wall of the place is covered with thick creeper. We ought to be able to climb up that. Come along."

They crept round again to the ivy-covered side of the house. Tim Buskit tested the strength of it, and then said to Wash:

"Seems strong enough, but we can't be too sure. You had better climb up first, Wash. Then if you fall, I shall know I was wrong."

"Say," Washington grunted, with a hint of sarcasm. "The things you think of is marvellous. Ah guess—"

"Don't quibble now, Wash. Up you go."

Washington tested the thick, tough tendrils of the ivy a little dubiously. They certainly seemed firm enough, as Tim said. Carefully groping for a foothold and clawing through the leaves to grip the thick stem of the plant, he started to climb slowly upwards.

His fingers were almost within reach of the sill of the second storey window, when disaster came. He placed his foot on a rotten part of the creeper, and at the same moment clutched for the window-sill. The branch snapped suddenly and Washington proceeded earthwards with a startled yell.

Wildly his arms clawed for a grip in the ivy as he slid rapidly to earth. He tore away a handful of leaves and then, almost miraculously gripped the main branch of the creeper, thus bringing his headlong fall to a stop.

"Tim," he croaked in a pitiful voice. "Save me! Ah's slip'n fast! Help!"

"Well slip, you chump!" said Tim's voice within a foot of his ear. "Your feet are only a couple of inches off the ground!"

Washington turned in surprise to find that he had arrested his headlong fall a bare second before he would have struck the ground.

"I thought perhaps the ivy would not bear your weight," said Tim with casual cheerfulness as Washington slid to the ground. "Anyhow, it doesn't matter now. I found a ladder while you were up there testing it!"

Washington glared at his off-hand young assistant, but Tim appeared to be too busy to notice. He lifted a long ladder from the ground, propped it against the wall, and then started to climb up it. He came down again in a moment and then shifted the ladder along to a second upper window, then to a third and fourth, and so on, right round the house.

"It's no good," he said finally. "All the top windows are locked, too. We'll have to smash a lock after all."

"What about de roof?"

"That's an idea," said Tim. "Surprisin' how I

always think of somethin' when we're in a tight corner. Come on, Wash. Follow me."

Tim Buskit trotted up the ladder again, carrying his bag of burgling tools, followed by Washington Haysed. The ladder stopped short about a couple of feet from the flat roof of the house, but they were able to negotiate this gap quite easily.

They stood on the roof and peered round in the darkness, surrounded by the shadowy shapes of chimneys and ventilators.

"This way," said Tim. "I'm pretty sure we shall find a way in up here. Don't step off the edge of the roof by mistake, Wash."

"Say—"

"Shshsh! Haven't I told you not talk so much. Somebody might hear! Shurrup!"

"See yar, young fella, if Ah has any mo' o' your impotence, Ah—*Yow! Hoooooow!*"

Washington's voice seemed to sink swiftly below Tim's feet, then came a heavy crash from somewhere in the same direction and he turned to find that his dusky pal had mysteriously vanished from his side.

"I'm!" groaned a small voice, apparently some distance below. "Ah's descended into de bowels o' de earth or sumph'n. Where is yo'? Help! Tim!"

"All right, keep quiet, you ass. You've found the way in, that's all. I'll be down with you in a minute, when I can find the hole you've fallen through."

Tim Buskit searched round and found an open fanlight through which Washington must have tumbled. Tim kneeled down and dropped his bag of tools gently through the skylight. They struck the floor below with a loud crash.

"Shshshsh!" said Tim, with the force of a steam boiler that has sprung a leak. "Don't make such a din!"

"See yar, Ah ain't made not a murmur—*Yar!* take your foot off my face!"

Tim Buskit, letting himself gently through the skylight, had inadvertently mistaken Washington's upturned face for *terra firma*. Wash squirmed out of the way hastily, and Tim, lacking essential support, descended on top of him. They fell collectively with a thud that shook the floorboards.

"You clumsy chump!" abused Tim, scrambling to his feet. "Why didn't you help me down?"

"Not wid mah face!" said Wash indignantly. "Ah's—"

"Don't talk so much, I tell you. You've already made enough din to wake the Seven Sleepers! Now I reckon somewhere about there must be a staircase leading—*Ouch! Hellup! I'm—*"

*Bump! Jangle! Tingle! Wallop! Thud! Bump! Crash! Rattle! Bump! Thud! BUMP!*

"Now what's dat boy up to?" meditated Wash as he listened to that rhythmic series of thuds and clanking tools.

"I've found the staircase, Wash," came a weak, feeble voice somewhere below.

"Oh, dat's it are it," murmured Washington. "Well, Ah's goin' to descend it slowly an' mo' dignificantly. Ah's jes' disremembered Ah's got a torch in my pocket!"

Washington switched on his electric torch and descended the attic stairs more gracefully and much less painfully than Tim had done. When he arrived at the base, he found his young assistant painfully rubbing his bruises.

"Come on," said Wash, "dere ain't no time to waste now. We gotta find de safe an' put de necklace back. De guy Salmons said de safe was in de drawin'-room."

Tim Buskit picked up his bag of tools and followed Washington into the main part of the house. They



went warily, but it soon became evident that they were the only human beings in the place.

They entered room after room, searching for the alleged safe but could find no trace of it. Eventually they re-visited a large library, which seemed the most likely spot, and searched round for the third time without success.

"Well, dat's mighty queer," said Washington. "Do yo' tink dat guy's been lead'n us up de gardenia?"

"Dunno. Do seem a bit strange."

Washington leaned thoughtfully against an oak panel in the wall. He seemed to push the panel in an inch or two with his weight and then—lo and behold!—an adjoining panel slid quietly open and revealed the safe!

"Why, there it is," said Tim with a start. "Behind a secret door. He never said nuth'n—"

"Never mind. Let's get busy."

Tim produced the written combination of the safe and proceeded to turn the dial. Nothing happened! He repeated the process several times, with the same result.

"Try it backwards," suggested Washington.

"Maybe you wrote it down left-handed an' de instructions is wrong way on."

Without much hope, Tim tried the code in the reverse direction. There was a tell-tale click immediately. Tim eagerly turned the handle and the safe door swung open easily, revealing within a gleaming array of valuable jewellery.

"Gosh!" murmured Wash in awe. "Wonder why Salmons didn't take no mo' dan dis yar necklace?"

"Got the wind up, I expect," said Tim popping the necklace they had brought with them in the very centre of the pile. "Well, that's that," he added slamming the safe door. "I think we can risk leavin' by the door."

Washington followed Tim Buskit, complete with his bag of tools, towards the front door of the house. They pushed back the bolts cautiously and peeped out to see if the coast was clear. Then, carefully shutting the door behind them, they left the place, and proceeded joyfully on their way back to the office.

But on arriving there they found their client far from joyful at the news that they had been successful.

"I've made a ridiculous mistake!" he moaned. "I gave you the wrong address! It's this one!" And he pointed out another address in his notebook.

### Sensational Round-up.

THEUS once again we find the firm of Hayseed and Buskit approaching the house guarded by the goofy-looking stone lions. They had seen nothing else for it but to go back, get the necklace out of the safe again and put it in the proper house.

They found the ladder where they had left it and ascended again to the roof, carefully letting themselves through the open fanlight. They reached the library and slid back the secret panel without waste of time.

"Funny this safe should be just the reverse numbers of the other one we've got to open," said Tim, as he opened the door and drew out the necklace from the pile of jewellery where it nestled.

"Guess dey must be twins," said Washington. "Well, we got de goods again an' it only remains to—"

"Put 'em up!" commanded a sharp voice behind

them. And at the same time the light was switched on. "I've caught you red-handed!"

Washington and Tim spun round in alarm to find themselves confronted by a tall man, holding a very unpleasant-looking revolver. Their arms crept promptly ceilingwards.

The man with the gun strode forward and snatched the necklace out of Tim's upward stretched hand.

"Trying to rob me!—Me! Cyrus Dumpem!



PUTTING HIS FOOT IN IT.—"Yah! Yow! Take yo' foot out of mah mouth!" yelled Wash, as Tim Buskit mistook the darkie's face for terra firma.

Ah!"—he gave a short incredulous little laugh—"I've never seen such cool cheek in—"

The man had given a casual glance at the necklace, at first, but now it seemed to attract his attention more. He obviously didn't recognise it, and was puzzled.

But his interest in the necklace gave Washington and Tim a chance. Dodging down suddenly, Tim grabbed the corners of a rug, on which the man was standing, and gave it a sharp jerk. Cyrus Dumpem uttered a wild yell and executed a graceful backward somersault, landing with a thud on the floor.

"The door!" yelled Tim. "It's our only chance."



Bang! Zzzzz! Mr. Cyrus Dumpem blazed at their retreating forms through the doorway, as he found his feet again.

"Gosh! He'm one a' dem shoot-an'-ask-questions-afterwards blokes! Feet! Do yo' stuff!"

Tim and Wash grabbed the front door simultaneously and tore it open. Almost as they did so there came the low *phoop* of a police whistle and they saw a crowd of blue-uniformed men, headed by a plain-clothes police detective running towards them.

"Gosh! The police!" gulped Tim, arresting his headlong flight through the door. "Come on! Back into the house! It's our only chance!"

Cyrus Dumpem, rushing after them and brandishing his revolver, was suddenly taken completely off his guard by the two fugitives turning right about face and charging back at him wildly. He was so surprised that he forgot to fire his revolver again, and merely spread his arms wide apart in the hope that this would stop them.

In desperation Washington and Tim hurled themselves upon him and down went all three, writhing and struggling in a heap. So fierce was the struggle that they failed to mark the tramp of heavy feet behind. Then numerous large hands dragged them apart and Washington and Tim looked round to find themselves surrounded by police.

"All right, Mr. Hayseed," said the voice of the plain-clothes man. "If I had known you and your assistant were engaged on this case I wouldn't have butted in. I see you've beaten us to it again!"

"Huh?" grunted Washington blinking round at the detective, whom he recognised as having met before. "Jes' say all dat agin!"

"Why, I've been shadowing Dumpem for weeks to get the goods on him—and here I find you bearding the lion in his den!"

Washington and Tim gazed round in blank amazement to find that the police were not touching them, but devoting all their efforts to the struggling, snarling Mr. Cyrus Dumpem!

"So you're a couple of narks, eh?" he spat, at Washington and Tim. "Might have guessed it, nosing round my safe! Collecting evidence, I suppose, well—"

"Keep your remarks for the judge, Dumpem! You'll get a nice long stretch for your games! Been handling the Coston Pearls, too, I see," continued

the 'tec, picking up the pearl necklace. "Where's the rest of the stuff?"

"Find out!"

"The—the—stuff," stammered Tim Buskit, realising deeper meanings behind all this, "is in the safe in here."

In a haze, he led the detective to the safe and opened it.

"Phew!" whistled the police detective. "He certainly went in for the business in a big way. Why, this little necklace—it was pinched from the Coston home a couple of nights ago as I expect you've heard—is a fleabite to the rest of the stuff!"

"Ye-e-es!" said Tim non-committally. "It is, isn't it? Will all this stuff be sent back to the original owners?"

"Of course. Well, I'd better be getting him along to the lock-up! Thanks for your help, Mr. Hayseed and Mr. Buskit. So long!"

Washington and Tim looked at each other still a trifle dazed as the detective collected up the contents of the safe and ordered his men to bring Dumpem along.

THEY didn't get it all sorted out until they got back to the office and questioned the reformed thief, Salmons.

"Yes," Salmons said. "The first address I gave you was the headquarters of a notorious fence, Cyrus Dumpem. I got his address before I stole the necklace, thinking I could possibly sell it to him. Has the necklace been given back to the owners?"

"It will be," answered Tim. "I see it all now. Dumpem must have entered his house while we were on our way back to get the necklace out of the safe again, followed by the police!"

"An' Ah guess," grinned Washington, "that it won't hurt dat guy Dumpem to take de responsibility fo' de necklace. Ah guess we'm completed de case successfully—even if it was a bit sudden-like!"

"Fatty Slocum—Strong Man," is the title of next week's grand school yarn of the Joyous Juniors of St. Giddy's. Fatty's unusual adventures will keep you in tucks of mirth.

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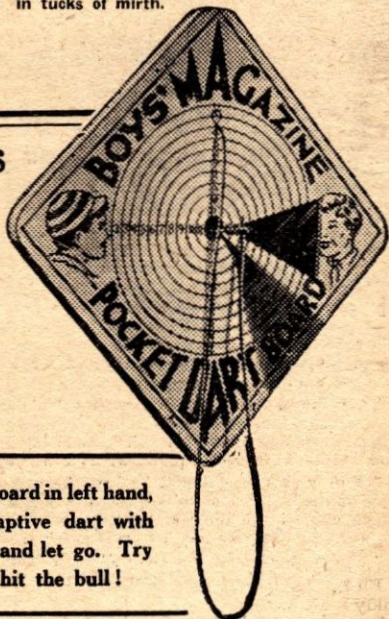
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\*\*\*\*\*

### The Science Sentinel.

"WELL, I'm dashed! It's Big Bill!" The words came eagerly from the well-dressed, plump-featured, youngster as he almost collided with an untidy, down-at-heel young man on the sunlit Embankment. It was the lunch hour, and Freddy McNutt, fresh from school, and looking for a job in London, had come to the Embankment to munch his sandwiches.

"Eh?" The untidy young man looked at Freddy blankly for a moment, and then a light of recognition appeared in his eyes. "So it's you, Nutty? Haven't

seen you for years! How has the world been using you, kid?"

Freddy grinned. He had been Big Bill Trafford's fag when Big Bill was in the Sixth Form at St. Stephen's. Big Bill had been untidy in his school days; to-day he was not only untidy, but shabby. His big, loose-jointed frame was festooned with an ill-fitting sports jacket and baggy flannel trousers. His open-necked shirt was crumpled and his shoes were innocent of polish. His fingers, as ever, were stained with chemicals.



"By jingo! It's great to see you again, Bill," said Freddy McNutt warmly. "I'm trying to find a job, but there's no luck."

"Time's are bad," said Bill Trafford, eyeing his young companion with interest.

"Bad for both of us, it seems," said Freddy, ruefully. "What are you doing on the Embankment?"

"Waiting for a thunderstorm."

"What!"

"It doesn't matter," said Big Bill, his grave, bony face breaking into a grin of extraordinary cheeriness. "Had your lunch?"

"Not yet—it's in my pocket."

"Great Scott! ejaculated Freddy in awe. "Are you really a professor?"

"Sorry if I don't look the part," grinned Big Bill. He went closer to the door.

"Ak-bak—bik!" he said distinctly.

As though by magic, the heavy all-metal door swung noiselessly open. Freddy gaped. There was no living soul in the austere furnished hall. They entered, and after a moment the door mysteriously swung to and the latch clicked.

"But—but I don't understand!" ejaculated Freddy McNutt.

"Simple enough, kid," replied Professor Bill.

"That's one of my own inventions. My front door won't open until I give the password."

They entered a comfortable living room—and to Freddy's further amazement, the door of this room opened of its own accord as they approached. No words of any kind were spoken.

"An invisible ray," explained Professor Bill casually. "As you cross the ray, an electrical contact is made, and the door automatically opens. Hungry?" he added.

"Rather!"

Freddy gulped as Professor Bill pronounced more of those magic words. An extraordinary thing

happened. A section of the carpet between them slid noiselessly back and a part of the floor rose, forming itself into a table. There were several clicks, flaps folded back, and in front of Freddy appeared a table loaded with food.

"Coffee or tea?" asked Professor Bill, reaching for the silver pot. "You can have which you like—they're both in the same vessel. And get busy and carve that chicken—I'm no hand at the job."

They were soon lunching sumptuously, and Freddy piled in with a will, for he was ravenous.

"Looking for a job, you say?" said Bill suddenly. "How would you like to be my assistant?"

Freddy jumped.

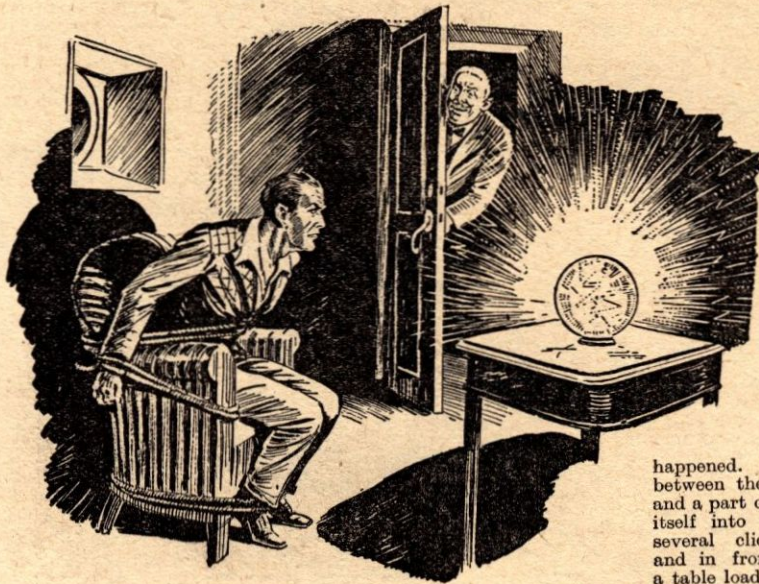
"You're joking!" he ejaculated breathlessly.

"Not at all," replied Professor Bill. "I'm lonely here—and I don't want servants knocking about. But you'll have to be ready for work at any hour of the day or night, and you might have to take risks now and again."

"It—it seems too good to be true!" gasped Freddy. "But what's your work, Professor Bill?"

"It's hard to explain," said the other. "I call myself the 'Science Sentinel.' I'm a sort of watchdog—a science detective. It's my business to keep my finger on the pulse of modern science—to detect any crooks who misuse it. During the past year I have built up a kind of practice, and the scientific world knows me pretty well. Even the Home Office recognises my status, and it has called me in more than once."

"A—a science detective!" muttered Freddy, his eyes glowing. "You really want me to be your assistant? Oh, it's too wonderful!"



**THE GLOBE OF DEATH.**—With a fiendish chuckle Zeetzin left Professor Bill with the globe, which would blow him to smithereens with the next flash of lightning.

"Forget it, kid, and come home with me," said the other briskly.

To Freddy's surprise, Big Bill signalled to a passing taxi, and they both got in.

"Krell House," ordered Big Bill briefly.

"But, I say, taxis are expensive—" began Freddy.

"The weather forecast says that a thunderstorm belt is likely to be with us for some days," said Big Bill musingly.

He seemed unaware of Freddy's presence now, and, presently, the taxi arrived at the gigantic office building in the Strand known as Krell House—the highest edifice in London, and virtually a skyscraper. Entering with long strides, Big Bill went down a side corridor and reached a little private elevator. They both entered and rose rapidly to the summit of the great building. Emerging on to the flat, sunlit roof, Freddy was astonished to see a picturesque bungalow squatting there. There was a bronze plate on the door, bearing the words: "Professor William Theobald Trafford," and after the name there was a long string of imposing letters.



"At any minute I might be called out to chase after some crooks," continued Professor Bill. "And it's a bare-fisted job. Better back out, now, kid, if you've got any qualms. I'm not questioning your personal courage, but parents are sometimes squeamish. That's why I've been unable to employ an assistant—"

"But I'm an orphan," broke in Freddy McNutt eagerly. "There's nobody in the world to care what happens to me."

"That's great—for I'm in the same boat," said Professor Bill approvingly. "Kid, you can consider yourself engaged! You're the very youngest—By glory! That was thunder, wasn't it?"

He leapt up, and ran to the window. Over North London black clouds were gathering, and even as Freddy joined his new employer, there was a vivid lightning flash.

"Come!" said Professor Bill briefly.

He ran, apparently, to a blank wall; but a panel slid back, and as he and Freddy stepped within a little cupboard, it shot upwards, taking them to a tower which surmounted the bungalow. There was glass on every side; queer-looking dials here and there; and, mounted on a tripod, in the centre of the tower, there was a great telescope. Professor Bill directed the instrument towards the hills of Highgate and Hampstead.

"Yes, I was right!" he said feverishly. "There are those mysterious flashes again! Look, kid!"

Even with the naked eye, Freddy could see a strange, purple-greenish flash on Highgate Hill as the lightning split the heavens. In some extraordinary way, the lightning seemed to send the greenish-purple shafts down to one certain spot.

"There's something mighty queer going on there," said Professor Bill grimly. "And, what's more, kid, I mean to find out what it's all about!"

\* \* \* \* \*

MARSTON LODGE, old and dilapidated, standing in the centre of a dense beech plantation, occupied a prominent position on Highgate Hill. It was the property of a foreigner, Dr. Karl Zeetzin.

As the storm thundered overhead, Dr. Zeetzin himself stood in his garden laboratory, and the entire roof was composed of a special glass. There was another man by his side, a shrivelled, brown-faced man with a mis-shapen back. In front of the pair, occupying the centre of the floor-space, was a great gleaming machine; and the lightning, occasionally, came searing and hissing down from the sky—striking through the overhead glass, leaping into that machine with terrifying waves of greenish-purple fire.

Dr. Zeetzin was watching the delicate needle of a great dial. On either side of the machine, with its glowing tubes, was a small metal globe, and each globe had its own dial.

"See, Dass," muttered Dr. Zeetzin, his eyes burning with fanatical fire. "I have succeeded! I am the Master of Lightning—the conqueror of the elements!"

"The dial, Master!" exclaimed Dass, in fear. "The needle draws near the danger mark."

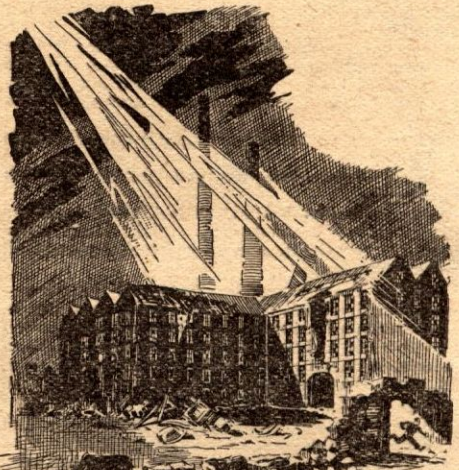
"Pah! We are safe yet," said the crook-scientist.

Those gleaming globes were chock-full of harnessed lightning! Small as they were, each globe was more powerful, more deadly, than ten thousand tons of cordite!

### Crash of Terror.

IT was an hour later when Dr. Karl Zeetzin presented himself at the West End offices of the famous Atlantis Steam Navigation Co., Limited. Entering the palatial building, he demanded to see the managing director; and so insistent was he, so wild his manner, that he was admitted.

"I will come to the point without waste of words, Mr. John Milner," he said, opening his case and producing a glittering globe on which there was a dial. "I have sent one of these globes to Southampton, and it is being put aboard the great liner *Atlantianic*. Do not think that you can trace the globe, for it is cunningly hidden and will be stowed in the very bowels of this ship."



LIGHTNING UNLEASHED!—From their hiding place Professor Bill and Freddy watched Zeetzin rush madly away. There came a flash of lightning, and the factory disrupted in a terrific explosion.

"But why do you tell me this?" asked Mr. Milner, the managing director, in astonishment.

"Unless you pay me fifty thousand pounds in cash," exclaimed Dr. Zeetzin, "I shall cause the *Atlantianic* to be blown to infinitesimal fragments when the next thunderstorm breaks over the vessel."

"Indeed!" said the managing director, cynically. "Very interesting, my dear sir!"

"You think I am crazy, yes?" leered Zeetzin. "Look at this globe! It contains harnessed lightning—millions of volts of electricity. At present it is safe; but, charged with electricity as it is, it will



attract further lightning—and at a certain point it will explode. A similar globe to this is going aboard your great liner. But wait!" he continued, as Mr. Milner was about to speak. "I do not ask you to accept my bare word. I know of an old empty factory where I will take this globe and the building shall be blown to powder. The thunderstorms are still hovering about, and there will be further electrical displays to-day. I shall return—and then you will be more willing to listen to me."

He dropped the globe into his bag, bowed stiffly, and walked out. And the managing director was relieved. He was still convinced that he had been dealing with a tame lunatic; yet he took the precaution to ring up Scotland Yard.

Outside the shipping office, Dr. Zetzin jumped into his car. Dass was already well on the way to Southampton—with definite instructions. Zetzin himself drove out of London by way of the East End; and he was unconscious of the fact that the occupants of a sports car, in his rear, were vastly interested in his movements.

"He means mischief, kid," said Professor Bill, as he drove. "I've had my eye on Dr. Zetzin for some months—and I wasn't surprised to find out that he was responsible for the strange greenish-purple flashes."

"Where do you think he's going now, Chief?" asked Freddy.

"Don't know—but we can follow," replied Professor Bill.

Leaving London behind, at last, they took the great Southend arterial road. And, finally, they traced Dr. Zetzin to a lonely stretch of marshland near the Thames.

Ahead of them loomed a great derelict factory—a vast building which had been used, in wartime, in connection with munitions. It had been allowed to go to rack and ruin; it was a place of broken windows, crumbling walls, and leaning chimneys. And, from the cover of a neighbouring ditch, the pair watched Dr. Zetzin make his entry.

*Boom-oom!* Unexpectedly, dramatically, a roll of thunder sounded overhead. A dense black cloud was rolling across the sky, obliterating the sun, and making this drear landscape even more melancholy.

Rain began to fall in torrents, but Professor Bill took not the slightest notice. As the lightning blazed, the Science Sentinel uttered a quick, eager exclamation.

"Did you see, kid?" he snapped.

Freddy had seen—a greenish-purple flash from the sky, shooting irresistibly down towards the factory.

"Come!" said Professor Bill suddenly.

They left their place of concealment, and approached the derelict factory. Suddenly Freddy McNutt pointed. A figure was running at full speed from the factory towards the road.

"Zetzin!" said Professor Bill, halting. "It looks ugly."

Professor Bill was suddenly aware of a sense of impending peril. The foreign scientist had obviously taken some sort of action within the building, and he was frantic to get away from some unknown terror.

*Zzzzzzzzz!* Lightning flashed—sizzling and hissing down straight upon the factory.

*Boooooom—craaash!* Mingling with the clapping of the thunder there came the most devastating explosion Professor Bill had ever heard. For a fraction of a second he and Freddy saw the derelict factory go skywards in a thousand million fragments. Bill and his assistant were picked up as though by a giant hand. Stunned, deafened, their senses rocking,

they went hurtling through the air, to fall into the Thames!

For during those awful moments they were carried nearly half-a-mile—shot through the air like bullets. Professor Bill was the first to recover, and, swimming like an otter, he reached Freddy's side and supported him.

"All right, kid?" he asked anxiously.

"I—I think so!" gasped Freddy.

"By glory! I'm beginning to understand now," exclaimed Professor Bill excitedly. "That wasn't an ordinary explosion; it was concentrated lightning!"

They swam ashore, and as they hurried to the car, tiny fragments of the factory were to be seen on every hand. There was not a brick left whole. Just dust and scraps. And where the factory had stood there was a crater two hundred feet deep.

At high speed Professor Bill raced back to London. Caring nothing for his bedraggled condition, he went to the *Atlantian* offices and demanded to see Mr. John Milner. He and Freddy were admitted, and they found the managing director in a great state of agitation. For news of the devastating explosion had reached him.

"The thing is incredible, Professor Trafford," he said hoarsely. "That madman warned me that he would demonstrate his terrible power—"

He told the Science Sentinel of the surprising interview, and Professor Bill nodded.

"Now I understand!" he said. "It's no good trying to locate that second globe of concentrated lightning. If you will let me act—"

He broke off as an agitated clerk came bursting into the office.

"Beg pardon, sir!" he panted. "But—but that foreign gentleman is demanding to see you again."

"Show him in!" said Professor Bill, before the managing director could answer.

Dr. Zetzin was admitted—and he was arrogant, cool, triumphant.

"You have the money ready?" he asked, grinning evilly.

"You are a rash man to come here like this," said Mr. Milner tensely. "I have but to call the police—"

"And the *Atlantian* is doomed!" said Dr. Zetzin, with a shrug. "Agree to my proposal, and I will send a wireless message to the liner, instructing my agent to render the globe harmless. Refuse, and my silence will be the signal for over two thousand souls to be sent to Eternity."

"I think not, Dr. Zetzin," put in Professor Bill crisply.

Zetzin swung round, scowling.

"No?" he snarled. "Who are you?"

"My name is Professor Trafford—sometimes known as the Science Sentinel."

As he spoke, Professor Bill leapt forward, and before Dr. Zetzin could move a step, a terrible ju-jitsu grip was fixed on him.

"But—but what are you going to do?" asked the managing director.

"Save the *Atlantian*," replied Professor Bill coolly. "Leave this matter in my hands, Mr. Milner, and I will not fail you."

And without waiting for Mr. Milner to reply, Professor Bill marched his prisoner out.

### The Ship Of Doom.

IN Professor Bill's fast car, Dr. Karl Zetzin was carried to the riverside just below Chiswick.

Here, in a special water-front hangar, the Science Sentinel kept his private flying-boat.

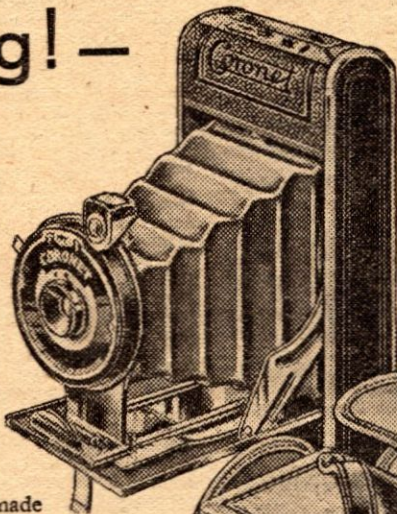
"Now, Zetzin!" said Bill grimly. "You're going

(Continued on page 28.)



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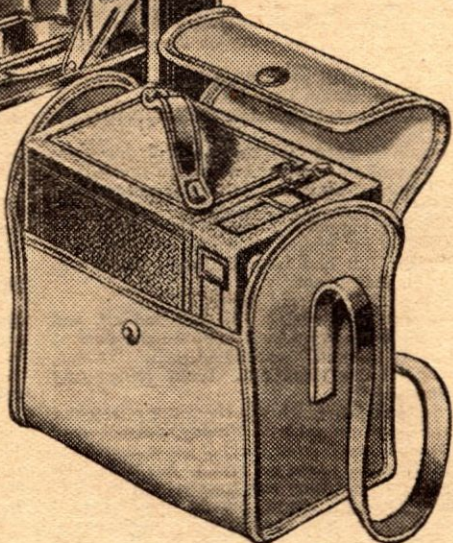
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## PROFESSOR BILL—SCIENCE 'TEC

(Continued from page 26.)

to tell me, here and now, just where the second globe was placed on the *Atlantico* by your crooked assistant?"

"Fool! Do you think I will speak?" gritted the crook-scientist. "I am the master of the situation—" "You think so—but I'll show you otherwise," interrupted the Science Sentinel, producing something from his pocket which looked like a big silver cigar-case. "Do you know what pain is, Dr. Zeetzin? Let me demonstrate! Hold him, Freddy."

Freddy McNutt, muscular, brawny, had a firm grip on Zeetzin's arms at the rear. Suddenly, a half-stifled scream escaped the scientist.

Strange, wavering, gleaming wires seemed to project from Professor Bill's instrument towards the prisoner. They were not wires at all—but visible rays of agony.

"I hate doing this," said Bill, calmly. "If you'll give me the information I need—"

"Deck D," gasped Zeetzin. "State-room No. 34—"

"Try again!" snapped Professor Bill, his voice as hard as granite. "There's a dial on my side of this instrument, which tells me that you are lying."

"Deck E!" screamed Dr. Zeetzin. "The globe is contained in a big portmanteau in Cabin 56."

Freddy stood by, agape. Even he did not know that Professor Bill had been bluffing. There was no dial on his instrument.

"Good enough!" he said curtly. "There was a little click as he switched off, and Zeetzin crumpled into an inert heap on the floor."

"He's only fainted," exclaimed Bill. "Come, kid! We'll get this 'plane out. We're going to fly to the *Atlantico*."

The flying boat was quickly in the water; Professor Bill, in the front cockpit with Freddy, did not even see Dr. Zeetzin creep from the hangar and conceal himself in the spare passenger seat, at the rear.

Soon, the sturdy 'plane was soaring into the sky. They flew through storm clouds—they dodged thunder and lightning all the way to the south coast. And when, at length, they flew over the Channel, a storm was gathering threateningly.

"See! The *Atlantico*!" said Professor Bill, pointing downwards.

The great liner, a vision in cream, with golden funnels, was sailing serenely on the calm sea. She was well clear of land now—practically in mid-Channel. She was filled with gay holiday-makers, who had no suspicion of the deadly peril which threatened them.

Professor Bill sent the seaplane diving steeply. She landed ahead of the liner and the *Atlantico* herself floated with silenced engines.

"Look!" gasped Freddy. A greenish-purple flash of lightning tried to reach down towards the liner, but seemed to hesitate.

"Too far distant," rapped out Bill. "But the storm is getting nearer, and then..."

He taxied on the flying-boat to the vessel's side; then he flung himself out, swimming, ordering Freddy to remain. Neither of them noticed Dr. Zeetzin as

he slipped out of the rear seat and dropped silently into the water.

As Professor Bill reached the deck, hauling himself up by means of ropes, he was met by the captain.

"What foolery is this?" harshly demanded the latter.

"No time to explain," panted Bill. "Excuse me."

He brushed past without another word, leaping across the deck and making for ship's interior. Amazed and bewildered, passengers and officers watched him. He tore down the great companion, reached E deck, and dashed into state-room No. 56. As he did so, the very air became filled with a greenish-purple fire—proving that this time the lightning had reached the deadly globe.

"This time, my young friend, I am the master!" rasped a familiar voice.

*Crash!* As Bill entered the state-room, a chair smashed itself over his head, and he went hurtling across the floor, to lie prone. Dr. Zeetzin had forestalled him!

The rascally scientist had climbed up the vessel's side and had entered by means of the port-hole. Now he lifted Professor Bill and quickly bound him to a chair. Then he opened the fateful portmanteau, produced the globe, and placed it on the table.

"So, my friend!" snarled Zeetzin. "I have failed—yes! But when you awaken, you shall see this globe before your eyes, and when the explosion comes..."

With a wild laugh he ran out of the cabin, and locked the door. Within a few moments Professor Bill awakened, and a cold fear gripped him when he realised how Dr. Zeetzin had turned the tables. To shout would be futile, for the cabins on this deck were not occupied. He was trapped with that globe of concentrated death!

Dr. Zeetzin was chuckling like a maniac as he locked the door on the outside; but the chuckle died away as he suddenly found himself face to face with Freddy McNutt.

"What devilry have you been up to?" asked the plucky youngster. "Where's Bill?"

Zeetzin aimed a blow at him, and in a moment they were struggling furiously. *Crash!* Freddy succeeded in getting in a terrific uppercut, and his adversary went hurtling backwards, the key flying from his hand. Freddy, staggering, snatched it up, unlocked the door, and burst in.

"Chief!" he gasped.

He leapt at the chair, greenish fire playing round him, and thunder rolling overhead. He slashed through Professor Bill's bonds, and as the latter heaved himself out of the chair they both heard a fiendish, cackling laugh.

"The globe!" shouted Professor Bill.

They spun round—but the table was empty! During those moments, Zeetzin had leapt in, had taken the globe, and had fled. Like streaks of lightning, Professor Bill and Freddy sought the captain.

"You must abandon ship!" commanded Bill harshly, after he had explained. "There is just a chance that you can save your passengers and crew if you act at once."

"Are you sane?" put in the captain. "I've had wireless messages from my head office, but I do not believe—"

"You had better change your mind!" interrupted Professor Bill earnestly.

In a few moments he convinced the horrified captain that the thing had to be done. Orders were quickly given, boats were swung out, and as the storm gathered, so the great liner's personnel was transferred to the boats.

(Continued on page 12.)



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**H**ERE is your opportunity to become the star cricketer of your team; to learn how the great men in the game achieve success.

Everything is simple when you know how, and if you follow carefully the tips that will be given here every week, your cricket will be so much improved that you will soon be able to more than hold a place in your team.

For my first lesson I will show you how to defend your wicket.

A "slogger" may make a big score occasionally, but it is the result of mere chance. Unless a young batsman studies the game thoroughly and makes up his mind to watch the ball right on to the face of the bat, he will never develop into a reliable player.

If you watch Jack Hobbs or any other great master, you will see that he puts himself into the right position for every stroke. The weight of his body is on the right foot, and his balance is such as to give him the extra power in swinging the bat.

### THE ART OF DEFENCE.

So, as in boxing, golf, lawn tennis, or any other game, correct footwork is the only great essential. If the feet are in the wrong position you can be sure that the arms and wrists will also be at fault.

In most junior cricket there is a tendency to move away towards short-leg when the ball is bowled in a line with the leg-stump. Funk! And this fear, or lack of confidence in yourself, can never be eradicated until you have learned the art of correct defence.

I want you to keep in mind the fact that you will back yourself to stop with your hands any sort of ball which is thrown to you by one of your colleagues, provided it is not thrown faster than bowling pace.

That is true, isn't it? Well, the reason for this is that you don't funk it, and that you get into the best possible position to take the ball.

### WHY YOU ARE BOWLED.

Now, do the self-same thing when you are batting, holding the bat straight and getting the ball plumb in the middle of it. The slightest drawing away, or funk, will result in your being bowled, or edging the ball into a fieldman's hands.

The secret of playing a straight bat is to place your body as near as possible to the flight of the ball, and the left elbow directly over the bat. This position may feel a little awkward at first, but with

practice it becomes as easy as winking.

### THE FORWARD STROKE.

There are two departments of defence, the forward and the back, and only your cricketing sense will tell you when to adopt either method.

However, there is one golden rule which you should remember, and here it is!

If the bowling is straight and you think that by reaching out the left foot the ball will pitch within an inch or two of it, you should play forward; but if the ball bounces farther away from you—yet is not a long-hop—you should play back.

The forward stroke will call for more courage when you first attempt it, because you've got to get your body right over the ball. Try it first with the ball that looks as if it is going to pitch about a yard, or a yard and a half, from your feet.

Well, here it comes! Now throw out your left foot so that it will rest as near as possible to where you expect that ball to pitch, at the same time pushing the bat forward to meet the ball immediately after it touches the ground. To make the stroke perfectly, you must get your left shoulder and elbow right over your bat; otherwise you will give an easy catch.

Now the back stroke is perfectly simple. First of all keep your eyes glued on the ball, and take a short step towards your wicket, bringing all your weight on to the right foot and your body as near to the ball as you can. Push your bat forward, holding your left elbow over the bat so that your forearm is in a straight line with it. Make the middle of the bat meet the ball, while your right elbow is directly behind it.



The Simple Back Stroke.



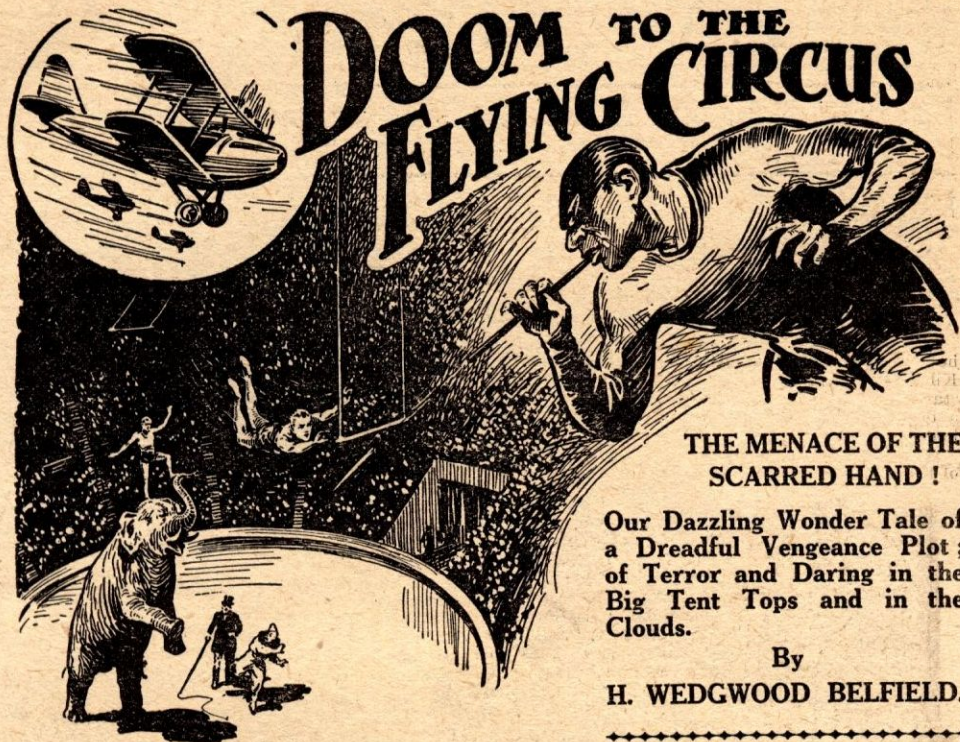
In Forward Stroke get left foot close up to the bounce of the ball.



A front view of the Forward Stroke.



EVERYBODY'S READING THIS GIGANTIC NEW YARN OF THE DAREDEVILS  
OF SANGSTER'S CIRCUS ON SECRET SERVICE.



THE MENACE OF THE  
SCARRED HAND!

Our Dazzling Wonder Tale of  
a Dreadful Vengeance Plot;  
of Terror and Daring in the  
Big Tent Tops and in the  
Clouds.

By  
H. WEDGWOOD BELFIELD.

"I—Hsuan, the son of Chang, vow vengeance to the white devils who encompassed the fall of Chang," hissed the Red Avenger. "With the Jade Buddha in my possession the world will fear my vengeance. For inside the Buddha is death—death that will lay waste continents and armies—striking terror into the hearts of all. Yet engraved on the Buddha is also the secret of Life."

His plan was thwarted for Dick Derring, wonder acrobat of the Flying Circus, had taken the idol from Chang's city when they had brought about his end. Unfortunately it was stolen when the Flying Circus reached Madrid on its world tour.

Dick and his pal, Don Hawkins, traced the Jade Buddha to an old curio shop. There, however, they were attacked by the Red Avenger's men, and Dick, with the precious joss, fell into their hands.

Hsuan sent an imitation of the Buddha, which was really a bomb timed to explode at nine o'clock, to Don Hawkins, with a letter purporting to be from Dick. The note told Don to carry the Buddha on his person for safety.

"And for you, spawn of evil, I have another fate," purred Hsuan, silkily to Dick. He was left tied to a spoke of a water wheel to meet a slow death by drowning. While his Chink guard had left him alone, however, the boy acrobat freed himself.

Nine o'clock—doom to the Flying Circus! Could he get there in time to save his pals? He staggered towards the door and at that moment the Chink reappeared, with another man.

### Racing Against Time.

DICK DERRING froze in his tracks. It was tough luck that the Chink should choose that moment to return. But he wasn't caught yet. Sick and dizzy as he was, he'd put up a stiff fight for freedom.

The two men crossed the threshold and halted, invisible in the darkness. There came the scrape of a match, and a light sprang up, revealing the Chink holding the flame to the wick of a lantern. The flickering light illumined the features of the second man, and Dick caught his breath as he glimpsed the long, narrow face, with jet-black hair, red, animal eyes and pointed ears.

Kung the Killer!

Two ruthless foes, and at any instant now they would see him. His one chance was to get in the first blow.

Bunching his muscles, he sprang, coming upon the man in a single leap. One whirling fist sent the lantern flying from the Chink's grasp; his other drove squarely into Kung's evil face.

The light went out amid a shattering of glass. The two men reeled apart with sibilant, Chinese oaths. Dick saw the grey patch of the doorway between them and hurled himself towards it.

Behind him yells broke out—a bestial snarl from Kung. But now he had gained the doorway, to find himself at the top of a short flight of steps with the mill-yard six feet below him. And in the yard was a motor-bike—the bike whose arrival had drawn the



Chink from the mill. Beside it stood a goggled, leather-clad man, gazing inquiringly in his direction.

Dick's brain raced: A chance! On that bike he might make a getaway—might thwart the Avenger's cunning scheme to destroy the Flying Circus.

A thrown knife sliced past his head with a deadly hiss. As if that was the signal for action, Dick gathered himself and leapt—upwards, and, gaining fresh impetus from a lightning somersault, swooped down upon the man by the bike. He landed, feet together, fully in the man's chest, felling him like a log, and he stayed down.

A screaming outcry came from the mill, but Dick did not hear it—did not see Kung, running, crouched almost on all fours, like some jungle beast of prey. He jerked the bike from its stand, flung a leg over the saddle and jabbed at the kick-starter.

The hot engine fired at once, and he slammed her into gear, letting in the clutch with a jerk. Even as he did so, he heard a snarl behind him and a talon-like hand caught at his shoulder, all but yanking him out of the saddle, as the bike jumped forward.

The machine went into a slashing broadside. Somehow Dick brought it straight, but now Kung the Killer was clinging to his back—temporarily too startled to do more than hang on for dear life, but a deadly menace for the future. Dick knew it—knew he must get rid of the Killer.

Gripping the bars with one hand, he caught hold of Kung's wrist with the other. Then, all in the same

moment, he flattened himself along the tank, slammed on the brakes, and jerked at Kung's wrist with all his might.

The bike stopped almost dead, bucking like a living thing. Only the fact that he was prepared for it and gripping the tank with his knees prevented Dick from shooting over the handlebars. Kung, however, yanked forward by that powerful jerk, went somersaulting over Dick's head like a stone from a sling.

There was a thin scream and a thud as he struck the ground. Then Dick had straightened up the bike and was thumbing the throttle wide open.

Whizz! He was off, his exhaust flinging back a deafening challenge to his enemies. The white beam of the headlamp picked out a gate, and he sent the machine hurtling at it—crashed through it and into a grassy, rutted lane, where it needed all his skill to keep the slithering bike under control.

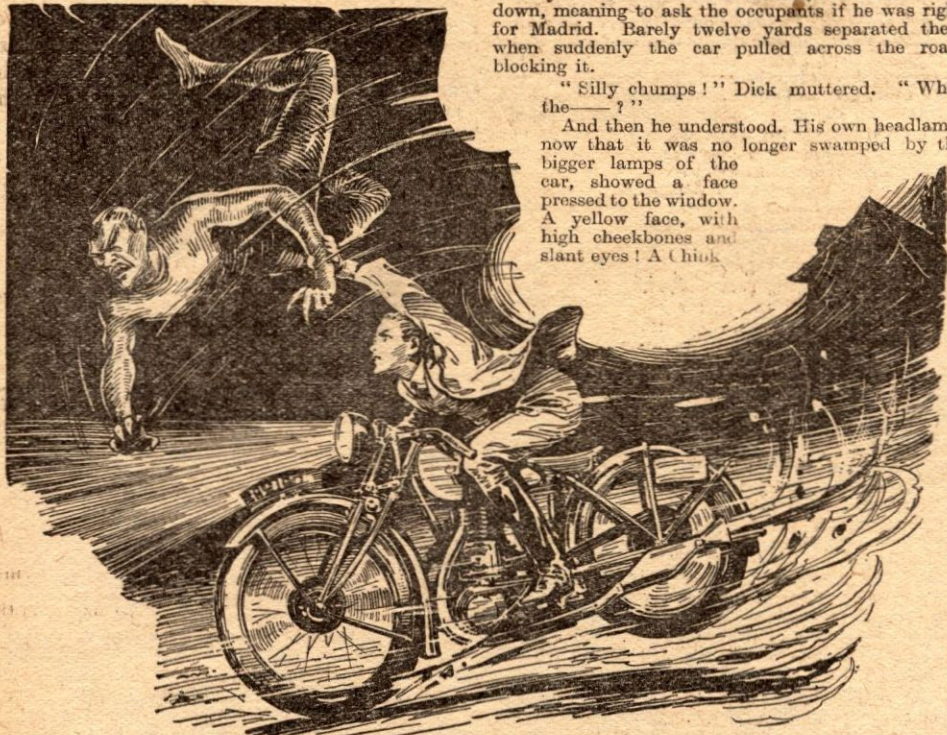
Ahead, he could see a faint glare in the sky. Madrid! He looked at his wrist watch, fortunately undamaged by its immersion. Eight-thirty! Under half-an-hour to cover ten miles or so. Barring accidents, he'd do it!

After a tortuous mile the rutted lane brought him to a road, with the reflection of the lights to his left. He swung the machine that way and roared down a hill with the throttle wide open. There was traffic on the road. Over the crest of the next hill he saw the glare of a car's headlights.

They met on the crest of the hill, and Dick slowed down, meaning to ask the occupants if he was right for Madrid. Barely twelve yards separated them when suddenly the car pulled across the road, blocking it.

"Silly chumps!" Dick muttered. "What the—?"

And then he understood. His own headlamp, now that it was no longer swamped by the bigger lamps of the car, showed a face pressed to the window. A yellow face, with high cheekbones and slant eyes! A Chink



**PULLED FROM THE PILLION.**—Dick caught hold of Kung's wrist and flattened over the tank. At the same time he slammed on the brakes and jerked the Chink over his head.



*Wheep-p-ph!* Something whined past his head with a hum like that of an angry wasp. A bullet!

He had no time to think. The car was blocking the narrow road, with six inches to spare and a high bank behind its tail. Dick flung the bike at the bank; there was no other way. The machine bucked, heeled over, shaved the car's rear bumpers . . . and skidded back to the roadway . . . past the barrier.

More bullets droned past him. But the shooting was wild, and he was flattened over the tank, giving the engine all she would take.

But now the car was turning for the pursuit. The headlamps picked him up, wavered past him, picked him up again, and this time clung to him. The chase was on!

Head down, Dick juggled with the controls, nursing the engine to get the utmost ounce of its power. The bike responded nobly, but the car was gaining on him. Her lights were brightening; he could hear the shrill whine of her supercharger; she was creeping nearer . . . nearer . . . and on that straight road there was no chance of giving her the slip.

Nearer! A falter crept into the even drum of his engine. It was overheating badly. He pumped oil with frantic zeal. Something began to chatter. But he kept the engine running all out as he stormed up a long hill.

He had no choice! The powerful car was eating up the distance between them, her dancing headlamps lighting the road like day.

*Zip!* A bullet kicked up the dust beside his spinning wheels, short by a couple of yards. A second struck the road to his right and ricocheted into the darkness.

He soared triumphantly over the crest, zigzagging a little to avoid the bullets that now droned round him. Beyond, the road dipped steeply into a black hollow, with lights—tiny pinpricks of red and green—showing here and there; and Dick realised that there was a railroad in the valley.

*Pop-pop-pop—poppety-pop!* His engine was misfiring badly, and he cut out for a moment to give it a chance. The headlamps picked him up again as the pursuing car swooped on to the down grade, and he ran on in a dazzling blaze of light. And it was this which showed him the peril ahead.

A level crossing! Barriers across the road! A huge locomotive, belching sparks from her squat funnel, thundering down upon it! And Dick, in a swift mental calculation, realised that he and the train would just about hit the crossing at the same moment.

And the car was close on his heels, his enemies firing wildly over the windscreen.

It looked like death, anyway!

But Dick had seen a chance. The barrier was a single bar across the roadway. On his low-built machine he might scrape under it; he might beat that thundering train to it.

He thumbed the throttle wide open, then flung himself flat along the tank as the machine jumped for the barrier.

Now he had reached it. He felt the bar scrape the crown of his head as he shot beneath—felt the bike wobble as it struck the track—skidding, and he wrenched desperately at the handlebars. There was a thunderous clamour in his ears. He glimpsed the dark mass of steam-shrouded metal lunging at him out of the night—felt a wind that threatened to lift him out of the saddle—braced himself to meet a crash that would send him flying like a toy kicked by a giant. He wouldn't do it . . . couldn't . . .

That moment of suspense seemed like a whole lifetime.

He was through . . . no! . . . the steel monster was on him. Something scraped his back mudguard, and

the tail slewed round in a hair-raising skid. Dick flung himself sideways as the machine went over, hit the track in a mad whirl of dust, and skated on, the bike with him. Under the opposite barrier he went and sprawled flat in the roadway.

By a miracle he was no more than bruised, and he heaved himself to his feet, while the mighty locomotive was still thundering past.

*Crash!* Dick knew what had happened, without hearing the medley of screams that shrilled high on the night. The car had tried to follow, the man at the wheel realising too late the impossibility of his project. The train had flung it aside—a crumpled, useless wreck.

With a shaky laugh, Dick crossed to his bike. The back mudguard was almost torn off, the foot-rests twisted, the handlebars askew; but no vital damage was done.

But the spill and the whirlwind happenings of those last few seconds had left Dick sick and dizzy. Could he last out the distance?

Through his brain as he swung himself to the saddle was running a clamorous refrain. Nine o'clock! Doom to the Flying Circus! Nine o'clock! Could he beat the hand of Time?

### One Minute to Nine!

**H**ANNIBAL SANGSTER, resplendent in faultless evening attire, gazed round the sawdust ring with a worried frown.

There was no obvious reason for that frown. The Big Tent was packed to its utmost capacity, and the show had made a hit with the crowd of Spaniards.

Every turn had been greeted with a salvo of applause that threatened to lift the canvas roof.

But Sangster was worried. He drew out his watch for the third time in the last two minutes and glanced at the dial.

"Five minutes to nine—gone," he muttered.

"Young Derring ought to be here now. If—"

He whirled at a touch on his arm. Don Hawkins stood there, a look on his face that brought a swift question from the showman's lips.

"You've got news of him? He's back?"

Don shook his head.

"No, but—" He thrust a slip of paper into Sangster's hand. "Read that. A lad brought it along a couple of minutes ago."

Sangster took the paper, and the frown disappeared from his face as he read.

"From Dick," he chuckled. "Going to be back in time for his turn. Good lad! And he sent you the Buddha! Got it safe?"

Don indicated something tucked under his arm.

"You bet. I wrapped it in a handkerchief, in case any of the Avenger's thugs happen to be sitting in the crowd."

Sangster glanced at his watch again.

"Two minutes to nine! He shouldn't be long. You'd better park yourself in the middle of the ring there, so that I can keep an eye on you. Off you go!" he added, cracking his long whip for the next turn.

Don moved away. There was sense in Sangster's precaution; under the eyes of that immense crowd nothing was likely to happen. But there they were both wrong. For Jerry the clown, keeping the crowd in roars of laughter with his antics, turned a backward somersault and barged Don in the middle of his back.

Don went flat on his face, and Jerry sat up with an expression of comical surprise.

Then he glimpsed the Buddha, which had been jerked from under Don's arm. He certainly did not



realise that the Buddha was the instrument of Hsuan's vengeance. He saw in it only a means of raising another laugh.

Like a flash he pounced upon it and somersaulted to his feet, leapt to the top of a stool and proceeded to juggle with it, weaving his body into such contortions that the crowd rocked in helpless laughter.

Don stared aghast. "Jerry, you fool!" he hissed. "Give me that—"

But Jerry had no intention of surrendering the Buddha. As Don leapt at him, he sprang away, diving clean through a paper hoop—gave another exhibition of juggling on the other side, and was off again, dodging round and round a post.

that the thing would probably go off in his hands. But he took the risk, snatching it up as a riderless circus pony galloped by.

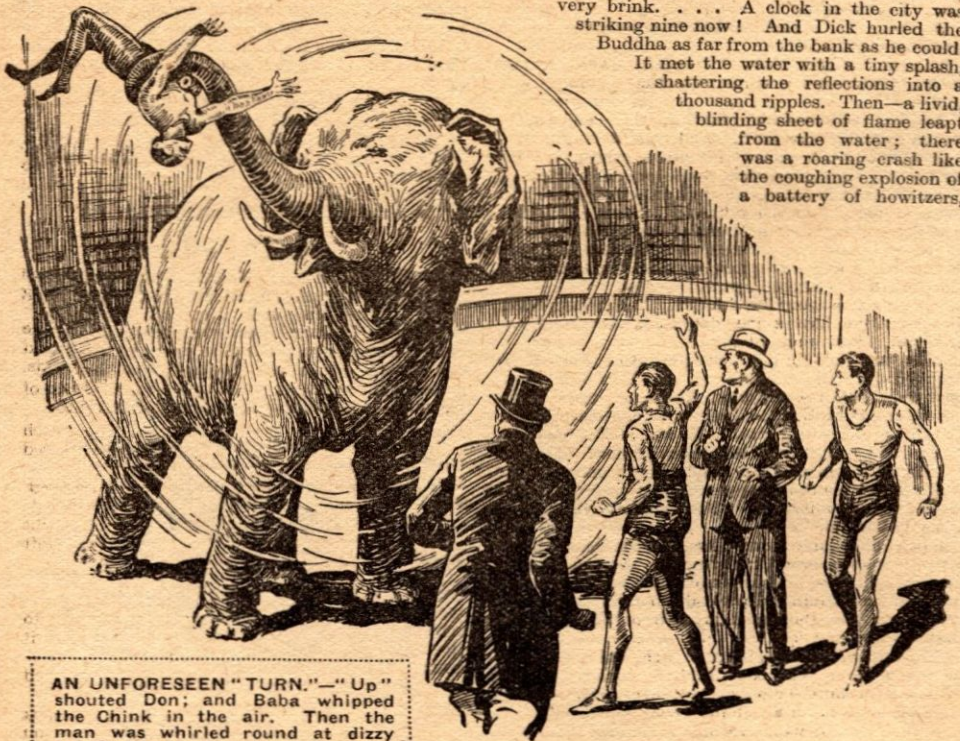
In a bound Dick gained the animal's back, and the audience applauded wildly, not having understood Dick's shout and thinking it all a novel turn.

Ten seconds to go!

Perspiration stood in beads on Dick's forehead as he sent the pony galloping out of the ring, scattering Atlas and Leo and half-a-dozen clowns who had gathered in the entrance.

Five seconds! Ahead, a sheet of ornamental water reflected the circus lights. Using his knees, Dick brought the pony back on to its haunches on its very brink. . . . A clock in the city was striking nine now! And Dick hurried the Buddha as far from the bank as he could.

It met the water with a tiny splash, shattering the reflections into a thousand ripples. Then—a livid, blinding sheet of flame leapt from the water; there was a roaring crash like the coughing explosion of a battery of howitzers,



AN UNFORESEEN "TURN."—"Up" shouted Don; and Baba whipped the Chink in the air. Then the man was whirled round at dizzy speed, his head grazing the sawdust at every turn.

To the crowd it was just pure foolery. Not one of them guessed that Jerry was playing with Death. . . . Ninety seconds to go!

And then came sensation. A figure, dishevelled, dusty and breathless, burst into the ring and stood for a moment, rocking slightly. It was Dick Derring, and for him the comedy being played on the sawdust was stark tragedy.

He saw the Buddha, tossed to the tent-top by Jerry, and as if shod with springs, he heaved himself forward, caught a rope and swung across the ring. He landed beside the clown just as Jerry caught the Buddha and prepared to dart off afresh.

"Jerry!" he yelled hoarsely. "Drop it! It's a bomb!"

Jerry dropped it. In fact, he fell over himself in his haste to get rid of it. Dick dived after it. He knew that there were only seconds to go; realised

a vast fountain of water gushing to the redlit skies. . . .

And that was all!

### The Avenger to Play.

THERE was a conference behind closed doors in Hannibal Sangster's office. The circus boss was there, Dick and Don, and a keen-eyed, square-jawed man who was known in the British Secret Service records, as X.

"They've vanished—clean off the map, so far as we can learn," the Secret Service man said wearily. "Hsuan and the whole gang of them—and the only clue we've got, which mayn't be a clue at all, is that mysterious plane we heard, flying in a southerly direction during the night of the attack on the circus." X. looked across at Dick. "You said the Red Avenger spoke of his destination as the City of the Dead?"

Dick nodded.



"Yes. Sounded to me as if that was his hide-out. Anyway, he said he was going there to make preparations for letting loose this plague."

"That's how I see it," X. shrugged. "But where is the City of the Dead, anyhow? What is it? We've not the ghost of a clue. But we've got to know. To-morrow is your last day in Madrid?"

"Yes. Then we move across to North Africa," replied Sangster. "We're giving a couple of performances in the desert—at El Kantora, where there's to be a big gathering of Arabs. Some sort of a religious festival."

"The very spot where the Avenger could stir up trouble," frowned the Secret Service man. "We'll make sure, though, that nothing happens before then. I'll have—"

He broke off. A shrill and awful scream came from somewhere outside.

"Baba," jerked Dick. "Our king-elephant, you know. Sounds as if something has got him wild. And—"

Another scream—high-pitched, thin and reedy with a dreadful fear, and . . . a human scream!

Don and Dick, followed by the others, headed for the Big Tent, from which the sounds had come. A single electric lamp, slung high, emphasised the black immensity of the canvas structure. But that was enough to show a towering mountain of flesh in the sawdust ring. Baba! And in Baba's trunk, held, kicking and struggling, a dozen feet above the floor, was a red-garbed figure.

Dick gave a breathless laugh. "It's happened. The Avengers have come, and Baba's collared one of them. Hold him, Baba."

Baba was holding him—upside down. Something dropped from the man's hand, and Don stooped to recover it from the sawdust. It was a powerful air-pistol, and close beside it were several tufted darts.

"Be careful with those," X. was at Don's elbow, "See that yellow stuff on their points? Poison! I'll take charge of them, if you don't mind." He whipped out his cigarette-case, and Don dropped the deadly missiles inside. "Now we'll have a word with that yellow devil."

At a command from Don, Baba lowered the struggling man into Dick's arms. Dick dealt with him scientifically, first frisking his person for weapons and tossing a couple of wicked-looking knives across the ring; then pushing him in front of the Secret Service man.

The latter fired questions at him, but the man—he was a Chink, with a prominent scar on the back of his right hand—always gave the same reply, a shake of his head or a "No savvy!"

Don butted in impatiently. "Let me have a go at him." He raised his voice. "Baba! Get hold of him."

Baba's trunk whipped out, fastened round the Chink's waist and plucked him high into the air.

"Up!" shouted Don; and the Chink went up, tossed from Baba's trunk as if he had been a shuttlecock. Down he came, legs and arms sprawling, to be caught by the trained elephant and whirled round and round at a dizzy speed, like a human Catherine wheel, his head grazing the sawdust at every turn.

Actually, Baba was repeating one of Dick's most thrilling turns, for usually it was Dick who, to the huge delight of the crowds, submitted to the elephant's rough handling. But Dick was an acrobat; the Chink was not. The fear of death was on him when Baba suddenly dashed him to the sawdust and made as if to kneel upon him.

"Me speak plenty," he screamed breathlessly.

Don hauled him to his feet.

"Get on with it then. Now the Avenger—where is he?"

"Big master him gone City of the Dead," he lisped.

"Where's that?"

"Plenty far away in desert. El Kan—"

That was as far as he got. Something popped in the shadows, and the Chink straightened up with an odd jerk. The word froze on his lips, his eyes bulged; and sticking out from the side of his neck, Dick saw the tufted head of a dart.

"Gosh! He's been shot. Look out! There may—"

The man stiffened and went over like a falling log—dead before he sprawled on the sawdust. There came another pop, and something brushed past Dick's cheek. Then X. had whipped out a gun and was firing at a vague, moving shape among the shadows. A scream followed the shot, the crouching figure vanishing amid the shadows of the tiered seats.

When the pals reached the spot, the only signs of the assassin were a few spots of blood and a dropped air-pistol.

"Lost him," grunted Dick. "That's hard lines. We might have made him spill the beans."

"But we've got the clue," broke in the Secret Service man. "The desert and El Kan—something or other."

Dick whistled.

"El Kantora! Where we're bound for!"

## Death in the Desert.

"GET hold of this. No looking for trouble before you've been five minutes in the place."

That had been Hannibal Sangster's last warning to Dick and Don when they left the circus camp pitched among the date palms on the fringe of the desert—where the Flying Circus had arrived some eighteen hours previously—with the avowed intention of exploring the narrow, crooked ways of El Kantora.

They entered the town expecting to find it bristling with the Avengers' yellow horde. Instead of that, they found only a motley crowd of Arabs, Berbers, and Senussi, with a sprinkling of negroes and Jews.

They were mildly disappointed.

Then they came to Ibrahim's café—and Ibrahim's was the surest spot in the desert to find trouble.

They went inside, halting on the threshold to survey the long, low, smoke-filled room. The place was crowded with as wicked-looking a collection of men as the pals had ever seen—dicing, drinking, or dosing at the small tables arranged round the four walls. Ibrahim, bearded and hawk-nosed, watched the proceedings from behind a counter through a single glittering eye.

Dick pointed to an unoccupied table. "We'll squat here for a bit," he said. "We may pick up some news in a joint like this."

They threaded their way through the tables. Dark eyes scowled at them, a big desert Arab with a face like a hawk spat an oath at them.

"Seems we aren't popular here," grinned Don, seating himself at the table.

They ordered coffee and sipped the syrupy stuff while they let their gaze roam idly round the room.

"No Chinks here," murmured Dick.

Then he tensed in his seat. Close by their table was a doorway, draped with dark curtains. Those curtains were moving, and Dick froze into immobility as he watched them drawn apart by some invisible agency. Now there was a gap of an inch, and through that gap came a hand—marked with a livid scar!

The Scarred Hand!

Is this the Red Avenger's hide-out? Have Dick and Don walked into some deadly trap? Don't miss next week's whirlwind incidents, chaps.



**THE CRASH BANDIT***(Continued from page 10.)*

At a level crossing, close to the lines, stood a light van and a Dinehart sports.

Evidently these vehicles had carried Silbermann and his gang. The Baron's soft, mocking voice broke in on Thunderbolt's thoughts.

"This is going to be the finish for you two," he said. "A special bullion-carrying train is due in ten minutes. I have had the signalman disposed of and the points a little further on are closed so that the train will derail itself, when I will be able to—er—appropriate the gold. But before that you will have been smashed to smithereens.

"It will look just as if you and your mechanic were the accidental victims of the bandits who derailed the train to steal the bullion. Of course, I shall state that I lent you my car so that you could get back to town, and no one will be more dismayed by your fate than I . . ."

He turned and rapped out an order to one of his men, who promptly bound the prisoners' ankles to the steering-column so that they could not possibly escape from the car. Then the crooks hurried off to a safe distance, but they were scarcely out of earshot before Thyrlé hissed something to Billy (oie.

"Piston Slap—look!" he breathed. "There's an electric cigarette lighter on the dashboard! Can you push your hands forward and reach it!"

The Cockney's eyes gleamed, and he shifted his position. He managed to reach the lighter but it was some moments before he could reach the switch that operated the instrument. At last the wick ignited, and he contrived to make contact with the little flame, pushing his bound hands towards it.

The cord burned slowly, but at last a couple of strands parted and it was an easy matter for Piston Slap to snap the rest; with his hands free he had no difficulty in slackening off the other bonds.

Silbermann and his underlings were not near enough to see what was afoot, and Billy quickly set to work on Thunderbolt's bonds. Even as he wrenched at the knots he heard a sound like distant thunder, and away along the railway track, he saw the glare of an engine's furnace—the "special" was in sight!

"Quick—Piston Slap!" Thunderbolt panted. "There's not a second to lose!"

The Cockney tore feverishly at the ropes and after a desperate struggle they parted. In a moment

Thyrlé released his ankles from the steering-column and backed the car rapidly towards the signal cabin.

He and Billy leapt from the car, and the roar of the oncoming train filled their ears as they dashed up the steps. Suddenly there was a terrific crash, resounding through the air even as Thyrlé and the Cockney blundered over the threshold of the cabin. The "special" had burst through the gates and was headed for disaster.

The signalman lay on the floor, conscious but bound hand and foot.

"The points' switch," Thyrlé shouted to him. "Which is it?"

The man nodded to a lever close at hand, and Thunderbolt pulled it over. Peering through the cabin windows, Billy saw the train cross the points safely to the tune of grinding brakes. Then he heard footsteps on the stairway leading up to the cabin. He stuck out his foot just in time to trip Silbermann as the millionaire bandit plunged through the doorway with a revolver in his hand.

The gun fell from the Baron's grasp, and Thunderbolt snatched it up as the rest of the crooks swarmed in. He covered them and waved them against one wall of the cabin.

"Get over there with the rest of the rats, Baron," he ordered curtly, as the master crook struggled to his feet. "Burst my cylinders if—"

Thyrlé never finished the sentence, for Silbermann made a sudden dive through the doorway and plunged into the darkness. The wizard of the tracks made after him, and little Billy Cole followed, pausing only to lock the door of the signal box.

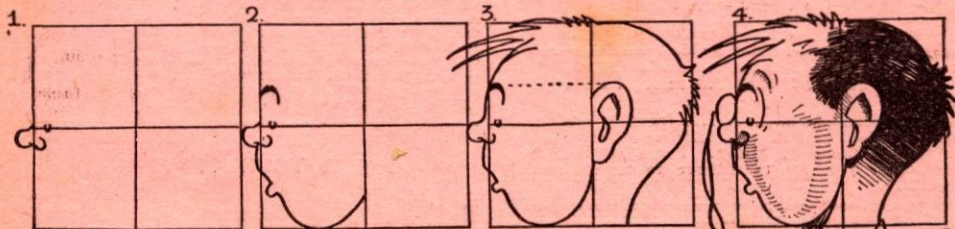
Thyrlé saw the Baron scrambling into the Logan, but was too late to board the car ere it stormed away. With Piston Slap at his heels he rushed to the Dinehart, and within a few seconds the racing crack and his mechanic were speeding in pursuit of the fugitive.

Up in the signal cabin Silbermann's hirelings were hurling themselves at the locked door. They succeeded in breaking it down, and were about to emerge when one of their number checked abruptly.

"There's the lights of the two cars," he panted. "The chief's taken the Ferndale road! Listen, we can 'phone Marks from this cabin and tell him to see that the mirror's rigged up on the 'S' bend! Quick—before anyone comes from the train!"

"Good idea," another of the gangsters jerked.

*(Continued on next page.)*

**HOW TO SKETCH A B.M. FUN FAVOURITE**

First draw a square (in PENCIL) as shown in Fig. 1. Divide it as indicated. Add nose and eye, Fig. 2. Draw in eyebrow, lips and chin, keeping the chin well inside the little square, and upper lip slightly out of it. Fig. 3. Add ear. NOTE THAT TOP OF EAR IS IN A DIRECT LINE WITH TOP OF EYE. BROW, then draw in hair, making it break the square where shown, add neck well inside square again. Fig. 4. Add monocle, collar, tie and ribbon. Then take up your pen and go carefully over all your pencil lines EXCEPT LINES OF SQUARE. Black in hair, shade where indicated, black in bow, and shade coat. Then, when DRY, rub out ALL PENCIL marks, including lines of square, and you'll have a life-like portrait of your pal HOPPY TRAVERS, the BOY MILLIONAIRE. REMEMBER—ONLY DRAW ONE SQUARE.



**THE CRASH BANDIT***(Continued from previous page.)*

"But you'd better tell Marks to let Zed know about it over the radio. . . ."

The rogues had jumped to the conclusion that Silbermann was in the Dinchart, whereas he occupied the Logan, which had no wireless fitted. Thus, some few minutes later, Thyrlle and Billy heard a series of crackling sounds in the radio cabinet on the dash-board.

Piston Slap opened it curiously, and fumbled with its controls in a vague and puzzled fashion. Then all at once he heard a voice.

"Are you there, Zed? Number 174 reporting."

Thyrlle and Piston Slap exchanged a swift glance.

"Zed answers," rapped out Thunderbolt.

"We know everything," the voice continued.

"Don't worry—the mirror will be rigged up on the 'S' bend this side of Ferndale, so that it will throw the reflection of Thyrlle's lights against him, and he'll crash."

Thyrlle looked at Billy in some bewilderment, and at that same moment the little Cockney remembered the mirror he had seen in the barn.

"I've got it, skipper!" he yelled. "Ease up when you gits to that bend! I'll tell yer when we're near it!"

Thunderbolt drove on, following Silbermann's tail-light. The crook was touching a hundred miles an hour on the straight stretches, and raking round the corners in headlong style. At last his head-lamps picked out the danger-sign that marked those curves where the Flying Squad van had been wrecked a week before.

Silbermann tore round the first bend, and his lights blazed on to the mirror. The glare of them was flung back into his eyes, and involuntarily he covered. He was taken unawares by his own villainous contrivance, and he wrenched the Logan aside from what appeared to be an oncoming car.

The lights in the mirror swerved with him. Too late he realised the truth, and tried to regain the crown of the road. The tourer hit the stone wall with a grinding shock that ripped the side of it clean away. Silbermann himself was smashed against the masonry, and the scream that he uttered was stifled by the hand of death. . . .

Thyrlle and Piston Slap came round the bend steadily, and met the reflection of their car's lamps.

Alert and prepared, Thunderbolt drove on without a falter.

**S**TANDING with Thyrlle in the pits at the Beacon Circuit a day or two later, Piston Slap Cole read aloud the headlines of a newspaper.

"More abaht Baron Silbermann," he quoted. "A'stahndin' secrets of crime ring revealed by search of 'is 'ouse. Police make 'olesale arrests on evidence of 'inc-imeriminatin' dockments. Bandit organisation curr-r-rushed."

He laid aside the newspaper, and with a lordly gesture, produced his grubby tin box of half-smoked Coronas.

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### A Test of Courage.

A BLEAK wind sent ragged grey clouds scurrying furtively across the face of the wintry moon, casting strange, living shadows towards the frowning battlements of the great gaunt castle perched on the peak of the hill.

Jack Tempest paused at the foot of the slope and, taking a newspaper from his pocket, turned the light of an electric torch upon a marked advertisement in the "agony" column:

**DEATH BECKONS TO YOU!** If you are prepared to accept the challenge and undertake hazardous adventures in the most dangerous corners of the globe, here is your chance. You will be called upon to show an iron nerve and indomitable courage, and you will be subjected to the severest test from the outset. If you win through, a fortune is yours. Apply personally to John Ranger, Gaunt Castle, Abbeyst. Important: Applicants must come alone and unarmed.

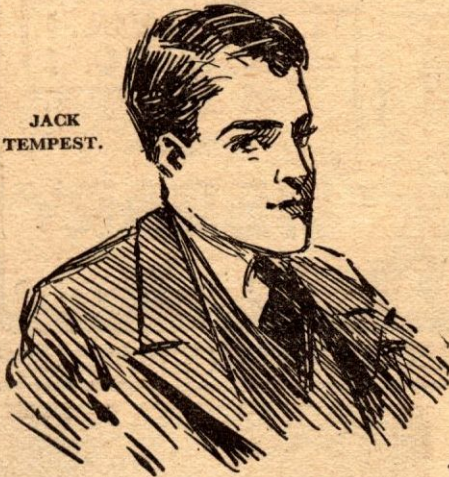
He read the amazing



**THE SECRET OF THE SQUARES.** Remembering John Ranger's instructions, Jack Tempest stationed O.K. and himself on two of the white squares. The square corresponding to that on which the third draughtsman had stood, slowly sank.



**JACK  
TEMPEST.**



notice through for the twentieth time that day. He had come many miles, and at last it seemed that his destination was in sight.

Drawing his overcoat closer about his ears to keep out the icy, cutting wind, he mounted the steep hill. Steadily he climbed, with his eyes fixed upon the forbidding walls of the castle.

From beyond those gaunt walls a sudden, high-pitched scream of mortal terror dramatically shattered the deathly quietude. It was repeated again and again, and then, with a rattling of mildewed chains, the huge drawbridge came swinging down across the moat. At the same instant the vicious-looking portcullis was raised and a solitary figure came reeling out.

Across the drawbridge the figure sped, stumbling, and with hands outthrust before him, his face distorted with fear. He reeled past the spot where Jack stood and, oblivious of his presence, went tearing headlong down the hill, till he was swallowed up in the darkness.

For an instant Jack stood rooted to the spot, amazed and horrified. Then, as if driven by some unexpected instinct, he pelted across the drawbridge which was even then slowly rising once more. He dashed beneath the portcullis, its iron teeth narrowly missing him, as it, too, descended, and shot into the great open yard of the outer ward—to be brought once more to an abrupt halt.

For, as he crossed the threshold of the outer ward, the world of the twentieth century rolled away behind him—rolled swiftly back eight hundred years and more. Not merely was the scene medieval, but it teemed and bustled with the life of its own times and its own people in their ancient chain mail, their hauberks and steel helms, that glinted redly in the malevolent flames from a huge pit.

Jack stared aghast, rooted to the spot. High up along the crenellated ramparts of the keep were ranged mailed figures, armed with huge bows and arrows—figures that loomed threateningly over a hastily rigged gibbet. From this sinister framework was suspended a man, grotesque in modern clothes, pinioned, gagged and helpless, over that yawning pit of fire. And one of the mailed soldiery slowly paid out

the iron chain that held their victim, lowering him, inch by inch, to his doom.

Only for an instant did Jack remain still. Then, with a shout, he dashed forward, regardless of the fact that he was unarmed and making for almost certain death.

As he ran, Jack glimpsed the jutting ledge of a dungeon window and clambered on to it, reaching up towards the mullions of a tall window above. Clutching for a handhold, he hauled himself up. If he could but grab that slowly descending chain and drag it towards him!

It was a mad, reckless impulse seemingly foredoomed to failure. For a great shout went up and arrows whistled and hissed about his ears.

Oblivious of his danger, Jack reached the nearest mullion. Clinging with one hand to the deeply indented stonework, he leaned forward and made a wild grab at the chain.

By a miracle of luck the swaying figure gave towards him like a huge pendulum, and he got a hold of the chain. Still the arrows whined and hummed about his ears, and it seemed that only the amazement of the archers caused them to miss. Its impulse spent, the human pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction.

Jack clung desperately with his free hand and his feet to the mullion as he felt himself being pulled relentlessly outward. With the strength of despair he made another attempt, flinging his body backwards, and once again the figure swayed towards him. Suddenly the chain slackened and its burden sagged upon the wide ledge.

Jack released his handhold and stooped to wrestle frantically with the great iron hook clamped into the slot of the belt round the helpless man's waist. The archers had ceased firing, and were speeding along the battlements towards the stone steps that led down into the yard, intent upon cutting off Jack's retreat.

The great hook fell away at last, but already the soldiers had streamed across the ward and were massing beneath the wide ledge on which Jack stood. Moreover, the portcullis and drawbridge were closed, and the youngster realised that he was hopelessly trapped, with a hundred arrows pointed with deadly aim upon him.

At that moment, to his utter amazement, the

**JOHN  
RANGER.**





hitherto helpless figure at his feet stirred: one hand was shaken miraculously free of its pinions and dragged away the gag between his teeth. Then a voice, astoundingly clear and level, rang out across the courtyard:

"Dismiss!"

Instantly the soldiers relaxed, fell away and dispersed in an orderly file. Jack stared in bewilderment. The man he had rescued was free of his bonds—they had fallen away loosely—and he stood erect, a strange, half-cynical smile on his lips.

"I am John Ranger," he said. "Welcome to Gaunt Castle!"

### The Quest of The Elephant's Eye.

IN the great hall of the castle, Jack Tempest stood face to face with the amazing man who had called himself John Ranger. A myriad lights revealed him as a tall, giant of a man, ruggedly handsome, his face bronzed and wrinkled through exposure to tropic suns. His fine grey eyes gazed into Jack's in stern but friendly welcome.

"I regret that it was necessary to play that trick upon you," he said. "But in my advertisement I gave you fair warning that all intending applicants would be subjected to a severe test. The last man to apply here ran shrieking with terror from the castle. You alone have come through the trial. I congratulate you, Jack Tempest!"

He extended his left hand, seizing Jack's in a grip that almost made the boy wince.

"I am sorry I cannot shake hands in the usual way," he explained, and held up his right arm. The whole limb was as loose and flabby as its fellow was firm and powerful, while three fingers were missing from the hand.

"A little memento of my last adventure," he continued. "It has put me out of action for good, quite apart from the fact that I am a doomed man. That is why I advertised for someone to take my place and complete the mission which it is my life's ambition to fulfil!"

He motioned his visitor to be seated, himself taking a chair beside a table on which were set out a draughtsboard and men. They were quite alone, but the air seemed to be steeped in mystery and danger.

"It is necessary for me to be brief," John Ranger continued. "Only when I am alone can I speak openly. When Dr. Zog is here, my lips are sealed and such instructions as you may receive will perforce be conveyed by signs and symbols."

"Who is Dr. Zog?" Jack asked.

"My physician—a medical genius, and the one man in the world who has the knowledge of my



THE PIT OF PERIL. Clinging with one hand to the stonework, Jack made a wild grab at the chain. Luckily the swaying figure swung towards him and he secured a hold.

particular case to keep me alive! But"—the explorer's voice dropped to a whisper—"he is an enemy though I daren't let him know I suspect him, or he will let me die. He—"

John Ranger broke off abruptly. Crossing swiftly to the nearest door, he flung it wide. There was nobody there, and, with obvious relief, he closed it again and returned to his seat.

"Listen closely, Jack Tempest," he went on. "All my life I have known adventure and peril. I have penetrated to places remote and hazardous—plague-spots of mystery and danger.

"In the heart of the Indian jungle, far from the haunts of men, I once stumbled upon a City of the Dead, untouched and unknown. A city of magnificent temples and halls, of paved streets and squares, all intact and yet steeped in the utter silence of death. Over its gateway I discovered a magnificent carving—the symbol of the sacred elephant, and, since the city was deserted, I saw no harm in taking from that carving four exquisitely jewelled details. I brought these away with me and subsequently gave them as presents to friends in different parts of the world.

"I did not realise till long afterwards that I had unwittingly done a great wrong. News reached me that a handful of people, descendants







"May I venture to remark," he continued, "that forethought is half the battle to those who leap before they look?"

Despite himself, Jack had to laugh. The fellow's queer English, though perfectly pronounced, was terrifically comic. It was with amazement, however, that he watched the Jap unfasten the parcel and take from it two long white robes and a small wooden box.

"Unfortunately," O.K. explained. "It is not permissible to enter the sacred precincts of said dusty temple like respectable Englishmen. It is desirable that we should be attired in similar disgusting raiment to that of every cock-a-hoop high priest! I regret, also, that we must besmire our handsome features with this exceedingly stinkful grease!"

Jack knew that what the little Jap said was correct—only in disguise could he hope to enter the Temple of the Thousand Splendours.

He studied O.K. closely. The fellow was difficult to read, his thin, sallow face inscrutable. Was he a friend? Or was this a cloak, an elaborate trap prepared by Dr. Zog? He guessed, however, that the dwarf would hardly seek to prevent him from obtaining the Elephant's Eye—he would even be anxious to assist him in getting hold of it.

Jack holstered his gun and silently divested himself of his pilot's kit, reaching out for one of the long white robes.

### The Temple of Terror.

**I**N the darkness two figures in priestly robes stole through the streets of the ancient town of Tso-tung, gravely acknowledging the humble salaams of serfs and peasants, as they made their way slowly towards the Temple of a Thousand Splendours.

Despite the lateness of the hour, the town was astir in preparation for a special midnight festival and the air vibrated with the blasts of trumpets and the clash of cymbals.

A procession of red lamas appeared and shuffled along in the wake of a long line of acolytes with drooping banners and prayer-wheels. Behind them came the thrurers, with their smoking censers, and the musicians.

The two white-robed figures joined the others unnoticed, shuffling in step and lifting their voices in tune with their wails and laments, till the procession reached its destination.

Slowly it mounted the crumbling steps of the temple and passed under the long lines of fluttering praying-flags. As the priests entered, their chanting was flung back in eerie echoes from the walls, while the lights of a hundred candles sent quivering, yellow fingers pointing upwards to the massive effigy of the sacred Buddha squatting high above them.

Beneath the cowl of his white robe, Jack Tempest furtively studied his surroundings. Ten minutes later, a little group of priests rose and filed through the door and with them went Jack Tempest and his companion. The priests disappeared into yet another room beyond, but Jack and O.K. fell back and shrank into the shadows. Only when they were alone did they step forth again, and now Jack's eyes were fixed with a fascinated understanding upon the floor.

It was covered with flagstones of alternate black and white, like a huge draughtsboard.

Jack's thoughts raced. He had carefully memorised the positions of the three white pieces

left on John Ranger's board at the end of that queer game played with Dr. Zog. And now, in a flash, he understood. He turned to O.K.

"Stand over there!" he commanded in a whisper.

O.K. shuffled forward obediently taking up the position indicated by Jack—the position of one of the three pieces on the draughtsboard at Gaunt Castle. Jack also moved, assuming the second place.

"There were three draughtsmen," he murmured, his gaze directed to the third square. Then his eyes widened. For even as he looked at it the square moved.

Slowly and silently it was sinking below the surface of the floor. Obviously by taking up the new positions he had indicated, their combined weight had released some hidden spring. And now they stared spellbound into a yawning pit, access to which was revealed by a flight of crumbling stone steps.

"You first!" muttered Jack, drawing his automatic and prodding the Jap.

The dirge of the priests in the main hall faded to a dim echo as they groped their way down the steps. A point of light appeared, widening out till they reached the bottom.

Before them stretched a vast, crypt-like chamber, its stone wall laced with cobwebs and mouldering in the dust of centuries. It was steeped in darkness save for one corner, where countless candles were arranged in glittering crescents round a gargantuan stone figure from whose flat, Mongol face a solitary eye gleamed redly.

"The Elephant's Eye!" Jack whispered, and then started as the Jap's bony fingers closed over his wrist, while with his other hand he pointed beyond the stone figure.

Out of the shadows something took gradual shape—a host of white, hooded figures, kneeling in orderly rows before the effigy!

Jack's lips set grimly. Till now their arrival had passed unnoticed, so wrapped in prayer were those silent, kneeling figures. If he could but get past the priests and mount the steps at the side of the idol, it seemed that he would only have to stretch out his hand. The eye looked loose and easy to pluck away. . . .

Slowly and cautiously he skirted the wall, keeping well back within the deepest shadow. The Jap followed and they both made for their objective, their eyes fixed upon the worshippers.

Suddenly O.K. tripped and with a gasp pitched forward. Jack flung out a hand but was a split second too late. The Jap fell sprawling into one of the kneeling figures and Jack, his temples beating, sprang back, the automatic cocked.

Then he, too, gave a gasp of amazement. For as O.K. collided with the robed form, it fell sideways, against its neighbour, offering no resistance. The Jap pitched headlong and one by one the robed figures were knocked over like ninepins, while the stillness was broken by an uncanny rattling. O.K. scrambled up and backed away, wide-eyed.

"They are all very dead!" he gasped. Jack stared in silent horror. Beneath the disturbed cowls and robes were the time-bleached bones of skeletons, their grinning skulls leering weirdly in the half-light.

Suddenly from above came the sound of surprised and angry voices, and a mass of swifly



moving shadows were spilt over the stone floor immediately beneath the still open trap.

"The priests!" cried O.K.

But already Jack Tempest had made a dash for the idol, clearing the steps in a couple of leaps and clambering along the grotesque upper lip of the effigy to the nose.

The stone steps of the trap were alive with shouting and gesticulating figures, tumbling over each other and streaming in a threatening river of humanity across the floor towards the idol. Ahead of them was the High Priest, brandishing a gleaming scimitar.

"Sacrilège!" he yelled. "Thieves in the Crypt of the Sacred Dead!"

Poised on the bridge of the great stone nose of the Buddha, his back towards the screaming mob, Jack wrenched desperately at the solitary red eye. The High Priest was close behind, clambering along the ridge of the upper lip. The shadow of the scimitar was flung suddenly against the broad, ivory face of the idol, clear-cut, swooping . . .

Came a sudden yell from O.K., and the Jap dived headlong at the ankles of the High Priest. The scimitar clattered to earth as the priest toppled backwards and crashed, cracking his head like an eggshell against the stone flags.

With a final wrench, Jack plucked the red eye clear of its socket. There was a loud click immediately below, and another cry from O.K.

Jack whirled round to see that the lips of the idol had fallen apart in a gigantic

yawn, released by a spring which Jack had evidently broken in wrenching away the eye. Already O.K. was clambering like a cat towards the huge gap.

But one of the acolytes was close on his heels. Jack, perched on the bridge and momentarily helpless to assist, gave a warning shout and the Jap looked back. At that moment the acolyte's arm rose, something glinted maliciously in the light of the candles and flashed in a deadly swoop.

In the nick of time O.K. dived aside, lost his footing and plunged headlong into the yawning mouth of the idol.

At the same time a horde of priests swarming up the great idol like ants, surrounded Jack Tempest. He fought furiously, sending one after another reeling and crashing. Numbers told at length, however, and with yells of triumph the boy was dragged away, a prisoner.

### The Cunning of O.K.

STIFLING a groan of pain, O.K. dragged himself to his feet, his eyes straining into the smothering darkness. As from a vast distance he could hear the clamouring of the outraged priests, growing ever louder.

He was unhurt save for a few bruises and his brain was icy cool.

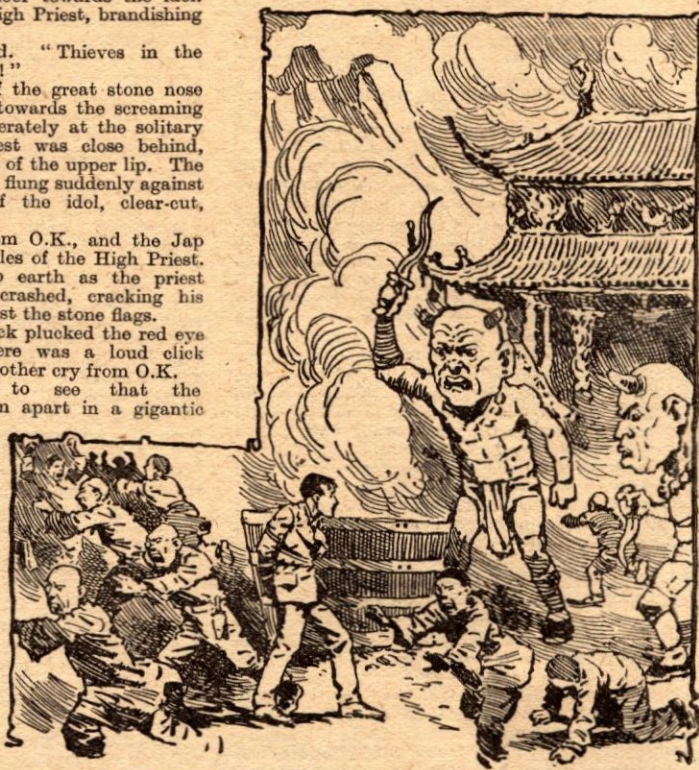
"It is against honourable inclinations to

debunk," he murmured, with a sigh. "But, as the English say, the shortest way home is the longest way round!"

And, as the priests poured over the lip of the idol, he broke into a run. He did not go far however, for the priests were but a few yards behind him.

His almond eyes narrowed as an idea flashed into his brain.

Stopping dead in his tracks, he flattened



UNEXPECTED MAGIC. The din ceased abruptly as the huge idols round the square came to life. With howls of terror the priests fled, leaving Jack to his fate.

himself against the wall. The darkness was so intense that there was more than a sporting chance he would not be seen by the furious priests.

They drew nearer, their yells echoing in a terrific din from the narrow walls of the tunnel. They swept past the little Jap who, waiting only till the last remnants of the horde drew level, adroitly joined them, lifting his voice with theirs and tearing along in their wake . . .

The tunnel wound in and out like a snake's route. But at last there was a glimmer of light far ahead, which steadily grew larger.

Presently they emerged into a huge square, brilliantly illumined by moonlight, its high stone walls flanked by tall, grotesque effigies of nightmare appearance.

The priests and acolytes stopped dead and gazed at each other in blank dismay.



"We have one of the infidels!" their leader exclaimed. "But what has become of the other?"

A murmur arose from the priests, while O.K. waited and watched.

"The Buddha has punished him!" cried a voice suddenly. "Even as he fell into the sacred mouth was he not swallowed up entire? The Buddha is avenged!"

A roar of affirmation went up from the others and their leader lifted a thin, taloned hand.

"And the other—he who stole the sacred eye?" he demanded. "What punishment is meet for him?"

At once the answer came in a thunderous shout. "Death! To the Pool of Liquid Fire with him!"

The lips of the leading priest parted in an evil smile.

"So be it!" he replied. "At dawn, he shall be handed over to the Devil Dancers."

Satisfied, they began to disperse. The little Jap, seizing his opportunity, slipped away unobtrusively, following a handful of the others who had turned towards an opening in the wall. From their talk O.K. knew they were the Masters of the Ceremonies and had been detailed to make the final arrangements for carrying out the sentence of death passed upon Jack Tempest.

The hole in the wall gave on to a narrow chamber filled with weird masks and costumes, the raiment of the Devil-Dancers. Here the handful of priests halted a while and conversed, completing their fell plans. O.K., still unobserved, slipped adroitly behind a pile of vivid costumes hanging from one wall, and waited patiently till they had dispersed.

When he had the stuffy chamber to himself, he crossed to an alcove, where a number of huge, coloured balloons hung from long strings. And the little Jap's lips parted once more in that slow, inscrutable smile . . .

### The Pool of Liquid Fire.

AS the golden orb of the sun rimmed the east with its dazzling light, the stillness was rudely broken by the clash of cymbals, the high-pitched wail of reed-pipes and the thunder of innumerable drums.

The great stone square, flanked by its stolidly grinning idols, was slowly filling with a horde of gargantuan figures in grisly masks. Fiendish, nightmare faces mocked and nodded and swung spinelessly upon long necks, to the ceaseless rhythm of the dance.

Wild and wilder drew the music as a door was flung wide and another procession emerged. In their midst a solitary figure who, bound and gagged, was thrust brutally forward towards a huge vat of boiling oil set in the middle of the square.

But as they neared their objective, another cry went up.

"Search the infidel again! The Red Eye must be found!"

The procession halted and two of the priests hastened forward. They became more and more frantic as their search utterly failed to produce what they sought. Jack's secret pocket was well-placed and time and again those yellow, long-nailed fingers had passed over it all unknowingly. Finally they stepped back, shaking their heads, baffled and infuriated!

The multitude surged forward shouting angrily. "Death to the infidel!"

The drums of the devil-dancers thrummed anew and the skirling wail of the reeds piped a funeral chant horrible in its discord.

Jack Tempest was thrust forward, nearer and nearer to the vat. Filled with a cold fascination, Jack stared at the steaming maw. Another ten paces—eight—six—

And then, with incredible suddenness, the din ceased. The procession halted precipitately, the prisoner and his guards swaying dizzily almost at the edge of the huge vat.

Slowly and with fascinated horror, priests and people turned and stared at the great stone effigies that flanked the walls of the square—stone effigies that had taken on the form and shape of life as, one by one, they stepped ponderously down from their pedestals. Stepped down, yet still remained behind, like ghosts vacating their fleshy bodies!

With a shattering scream of panic, the mob turned and fled in all directions. In a trice, the square was deserted, and then Jack glimpsed a single, diminutive figure peering from behind a stone pillar.

"O.K.!" he muttered behind his gag.

The little Jap streaked across the square, trailing a length of string. As he came, the weird effigies floating in the air were jerked so that they bobbed and bowed grotesquely. Jack gasped as he saw that they were simply gargantuan balloons ingeniously threaded together.

"Good for you, O.K.," he exclaimed, when the little Jap had cut his bonds and removed the gag. "You're my pal from now on!"

O.K. bowed. Only the twinkle in his eyes revealed his pleasure at the other's words.

Then, turning, they sped across the square and through the empty streets, the shrieks of the panic-stricken people fading to final silence as they left the straggling town behind.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN the great hall of Gaunt Castle, John Ranger faced his visitors alone. The glittering red eye of the Sacred Idol of Gongpur was poised between his finger and thumb.

"You have done well, Jack Tempest," he said.

"And you, too, O.K. I congratulate you both!"

John Ranger held out the Red Eye.

"You will take charge of this," he said, "and beware lest it be stolen from you, and, with it, your life! There are those who would stop at nothing to gain possession of it, for it contains the clue to the next adventure!"

He ceased speaking abruptly. The door had opened and, with the same cat-like stealth which characterised his every action, Dr. Zog entered the room.

Bowing ironically, the dwarf fixed his solitary eye upon them, his yellow teeth bared in a fang-like grin.

Silently, John Ranger led them from the room and bade them farewell at the top of the keep steps.

"The Red Eye sleeps seldom," he muttered and his lips parted in an enigmatic smile.

What is the hidden meaning of John Ranger's cryptic remark? Look out next week for No. 2 of the Thrill Library and the second enthralling adventure yarn of Jack Tempest entitled "The Riddle of the Red Eye."