

FREE! FLYING MODEL MONOPLANE COMPLETED

Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



THE DANDY COWBOY APPEARS WITHIN

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YOUR EDITOR'S NEWS.



**Comes to the Thrill Library
Next Week Among Many
Other Splendid Attractions.**

MY DEAR CHUMS,
Before you read my chat this week, I suppose most of you will have finished assembling **Our Free Gift Monoplane** with the Elastic Motor, Retaining Pin, and Propeller Shaft, presented with this number. Well, isn't she a dandy? And a ripping flier! Don't forget, if any of your models won't take the air, you can send it to me carefully packed and with postage prepaid, and

THE PHANTOM OF THE PUEBLO.

(Continued from page 12.)

beneath a curtain of overhanging scrub that grew out of the cliff wall, and swallowed up in a roaring, racing sluice as black as night.

Even in that moment of bewilderment the Dandy Cowboy kept his faculties about him. And he grasped the significant fact that he had been drawn into a subterranean stream that bored beneath the cliff.

It carried him like a leaf on its red tide, beneath a rocky vault, and threw him up on a shelving bank as if it had no further use for him. So must the victims of the ancient shamans have been treated by the River of Sacrifice. With his ears humming with water, he staggered to his feet, reeling like a drunken man, and found that he had not relaxed his grip on the rope.

The Phantom's horse, unhurt by the plunge, was clambering out of the whirlpool, and, gazing round him, Rex saw that he was in one of the vast, circular kivas of the Pueblo.

A low whistle escaped the Dandy Cowboy, for the hall was chock-full of lowing cattle—the herds that had been rustled during the last fortnight—and Rex realised that this was a secret corral. No doubt the Phantom had stampeded the stolen herds over the drop, and then kept them here until he was able to smuggle them out through one of the many hidden passages—probably to Mexico.

But where was the Phantom?

our aeroplane expert will put it right for you or send a new machine. Remember, you must follow the flying and assembling instructions carefully, however, or you cannot expect your "bus" to do its stuff. It is most important to bend up the back of the tail-planes, see both front wings are straight and true, etc. But all this is carefully set forth in the three articles which have accompanied the parts for the 'plane.

And now for another huge slice of news! Nothing less than another magnificent gift is on the way to you all.

A Working Model Speedboat

is to be presented inside every copy of *Boys' Magazine* in three sections—the first the week after next. Tell all your chums about this marvellous new *B.M.* Gift, chaps—and lock out for full particulars on this page next week.

One of the grandest story programmes I have ever had the good luck to secure is also in store for you in this great issue. First, another gripping number of *The Thrill Library*. As you know, each of the yarns in our free gift supplement is its author's masterpiece. Next week, H. Wedgwood Belfield, author of "*The Flying Circus*," takes his turn with

Cap'n Flame—Firebrand Buccaneer!

Yes, you've guessed it. It's a yarn of pirates, of drama and daring in those old rollicking days of the Spanish Main. Ned Hawkins is captured by Flame's pirates from his lonely Devon home and taken to the Main. For Ned has a secret—the map of a dead and gone buccaneer's treasure, tattooed on his foot!

The desperate adventures he goes through because of it make one of the most stirring tales of the buccaneers I have ever read.

To cram in all the other good things this week, I have only left this measly space for my chat, so I cannot detail the rest of next Saturday's attractions. There are six smashing yarns, science articles, jokes, etc., so I can assure you you are booked for a high old time.

See you next week.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Almost instinctively Rex pulled at the rope, and, just as if he were landing a big fish, he saw the dripping body of the Indian, dyed husky red by his bath, emerge from the water. A brief examination showed that the noose had slipped up under his chin—and his neck was broken.

"Gee! yuh're a goner!" ejaculated the Dandy Cowboy. "Now I shall never know who yuh are!"

But he was mistaken. The water had swept the luminous paint from the ruffian's face; and, as Rex stooped over him, he recognised the familiar scarred features of Roarer Soames, now pallid in death!

"Huh! You played 'possum once too often, Roarer!" muttered the Dandy Cowboy. "Waal, I guess that clears my name. My days as an outlaw are voer!"

THE second "death" of Roarer Soames and the round-up of the discomfited Roarer boys caused a nine days' wonder in Border City. The next sensation was the public disgrace and deposing of Sheriff Wicklow, who was only saved from lynching by the prompt action of the boys of the Bar Eight Ranch.

Now Elmer Dance, who, as landlord of the Border Range, keeps law and order on the pastures, wears the sheriff's badge.

Another Double-length Complete Yarn appears next week. It features *The Jungle Sleuth*, an entirely new character whose exploits will hold you spellbound.

(With which is incorporated "Pals.")

THE DANDY COWBOY AND HIS BAR-EIGHT BUNCH!

The PHANTOM OF THE PUEBLO



\$500
REWARD



The Roarer Boys.

CRASH Brrrang! Boom!

As Rex Remington the Dandy Cowboy, rode into Border City, there was a sudden explosion of gunfire from Clancy's Bar. It was followed by the crash of shattered glasses and a hoarse frenzy of shouts and laughter.

The young boss of the Bar-Eight Ranch reined in Firefiend. "Guess that'll be the Roarer Boys," he muttered grimly.

"Roarer" Soames and his bunch of roughnecks had caused trouble enough already in the little cowtown. Sheriff Wicklow was a weak man, without the courage to check the riots of this disorderly section of the stock-raising community. Unfortunately, it did not stop there. Soames raised stock himself, and, although there was no actual proof that he was a rustler, no other breeder could call his cattle his own on the Border Range. Herds disappeared in a night—and Soames grew steadily richer.

A New Menace Comes to the West when Rex is Outlawed and the Phantom Rider Terrorises Border City. Complete.

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

The Bar-Eight Ranch was on the other side of the mountains, in New Mexico, but it was a suspicion that it might soon be his turn to suffer losses which had brought the Dandy Cowboy over the border. He just wanted to warn Soames not to burn his fingers!

Dropping out of the saddle, he hitched his horse to a ring in the adobe wall of the tavern. The next moment the cheroot that he was puffing nearly fell from his lips.

He was staring at a picture of himself on a poster, which bore the astonishing legend:

WANTED!

Information as to the whereabouts of Rex Remington, of the Bar-Eight Ranch, suspected of Cattle Rustling, is required by Sheriff Wicklow, Border City, Arizona.

The accusation was so absurd that Rex almost laughed. "I guess the Roarer's behind that set-up!" he thought. "Wonder what it means?"

Another outburst of shooting interrupted his meditations. Calmly pulling at his cheroot, and with his hands resting easily on the butts of his low-slung forty-fives, the Dandy Cowboy kicked open the door of the saloon. "Say, buddies, what's the racket?" he rapped out.

A huge, gaunt cow-puncher, with a scarred face, stood with two smoking Colts in his hands beside an overturned table. Behind it cowered Clancy, while pale, anxious faces peered out from every kind of cover the shack provided. The floor was littered with broken glass. The only inmates of the saloon who remained standing were "Roaer" Soames, his ten jeering punchers and—a young stranger in a rig-out that almost rivalled Rex's for smartness.

Rex gave the latter more than a passing glance, for he cut an odd figure in that rough Western bar. He was a good-looker, well set-up and athletic, but his skin was not tanned, and he was clad in a stylish riding suit with highly polished black boots.

"Say, stranger," drawled the Dandy Cowboy, "yuh seem kinda outa place hyar!"

"You said it, pardner!" cut in Roarer Soames. "He's another goldurned tenderfoot, an' me an' the boys is jest givin' him the low-down on Western life! I've already shot two glasses o' his lime juice pi'son outa his mitt, and—by heck!" he wheeled round as the tenderfoot, pale but determined, tremblingly raised a tumbler to his lips. "Gosh darn it, if he ain't startin' on a third!"

He lifted one of his six-guns to shoot again, but Rex pressed trigger a fraction of a second sooner. The Dandy Cowboy had drawn and fired in one lightning movement—though not at the speaker. He had aimed at a slop-pail balanced on the rail of the gallery running round the room. His shots overturned it and brought it crashing neatly down over Roarer's head! There was a dull roar, as the bully, blinded by the pail, staggered back and sent two bullets thudding into the roof.

He raised his hands to free his head when Rex's voice, icy-cold, checked him. "Leave that yar bucket on ya lid, pardner. I wanna talk to yuh!"

The tenderfoot allowed a short laugh to escape him, but the rest of the inmates of Clancy's Bar, skulking behind chairs and tables, did not dare to betray amusement at the ruffian's plight. The Roarer Boys stood around, playing with their gun-butts. The sheer personality of the Dandy Cowboy—and his reputation as a crack shot—held them as if spellbound.

"Yuh blamed cattle rustler!" bellowed Soames, his voice sounding hollow within the bucket.

"Easy, Roarer, easy!" warned the Dandy

Cowboy. "Many men hev bin shot fer sayin' less than that! Who's cattle hev I rustled?"

"Mine!" gurgled Soames. "I've told Sheriff Wicklow your corral's full o' my unbranded beeves. He's round at Bar-Eight now!"

Rex raised his brows again. "That bein' the case, I'll trouble yuh to come along with me," he said steadily. "I kin show yuh figures, but if yuh kin prove the cattle's yores yuh kin hev the lot! Put back yore guns! That's O.K. Now yuh kin take off yore hat!"

The Roarer tore off the pail and hurled it savagely across the room, glaring at Rex with a murderous expression on his scarred face.

"Say, stranger," said the tenderfoot, timidly, "I feel grateful to you, rustler or no rustler, and I don't like to let you ride alone with that bully!"

Rex laughed. "Guess I kin take keer o' meself, kid," he rejoined. "What's yore monicker?"

"I'm Elmer Dance," said the boy eagerly. "I'm out here to—well, I'll tell you later. It's a long story."

"Well, Elmer, if yuh are feelin' anxious on my account, yuh kin foller us. My ranch is located th' other side of the divide; we gotta go through the Pueblo Pass." Still covering Soames with his gun, he swung towards the door. "C'm on, Roarer. The sooner we hev it out with the Sheriff the better for both of us!"

The Gorge of the Gods.

ONCE out on the open prairie, which stretched, mile upon rolling mile of purple sage, to the rugged divide, Rex returned his guns to their holsters and gave Firefiend his head. Roarer Soames loped along beside him without a word, while Elmer Dance, mounted on a sober mare, followed at some distance.

"Say, Roarer," said Rex suddenly, "why don't yuh come clean? Own up yuh put them beeves yoreself in my corral!"

"Yuh kin tell that tale to the judge," grunted Soames savagely, and spurred his horse on in stubborn silence.

Half-an-hour's steady ride brought them to the Pueblo Pass, a dry and rocky ravine through the mountains. On either side the steep limestone walls were riddled with cliff-dwellings, once the pueblo (village) of the prehistoric ancestors of a tribe of Indians still called, for that reason, Pueblos. Rex was staring curiously up at the cliff-dwellings. But the sudden rattle of hoofs awoke him from his day-dream—to see Soames disappearing round a bend.

"Huh! What's the game?" he snapped, and pressed Firefiend's sides. He rounded the bend just in time to see Roarer forcing his unwilling bronc into a narrow cutting in the rock. He knew that it was the Gorge of the Gods, and ended in a precipice, over which the Pueblo shamans used to hurl their victims. "Hey!" he shouted. "Yuh'll kill yoreself!"

Only the mocking thunder of Roarer's hoofs answered him. Rex, urging Firefiend in pursuit, dragged out one of his Colts as he caught a sudden glimpse of the brink of the precipice, and the bright blue sky between the gap in the cliffs.

Crash! he loosed a shot into the air as a warning, and at the same time Roarer's horse bounded into space. Man and steed hung in mid-air for a second, then dropped from sight. There came a remote splash, and—silence!

The Dandy Cowboy reined Firefiend back almost on his haunches on the very edge of the drop. Below he saw nothing but a strip of turbulent water, dyed red with the sandstone deposit. It was the River of

Sacrifices, and Roarer Soames had apparently been swept away the moment he had plunged into its racing current.

Rex pushed his Stetson back on his head. "Suicide, by gosh!" he muttered. "Waal, I guess it saves me giving him the lie about those beeves!" He wheeled Firefiend round and met Elmer Dance waiting for him at the entrance to the Gorge of the Gods.

"Where's Soames?" demanded the tenderfoot, wide-eyed.

"Got away," said Rex tersely. "Killed, most likely. He jumped the precipice!" He dropped his forty-five back into its holster, suddenly aware that Elmer was staring at it uneasily. "We'd better be getting along to my ranch to spill the news to the Sheriff."

Elmer swung his horse round in the direction of Arizona. "P'raps I'll go back to Border City," he said slowly.

"Say, yuh don't think——" began the Dandy Cowboy.

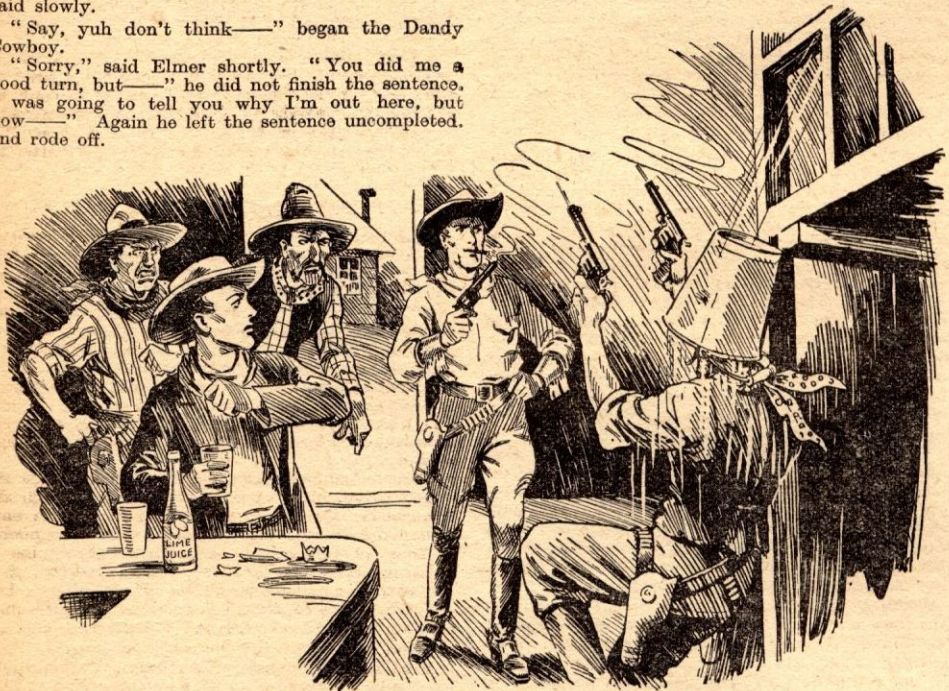
"Sorry," said Elmer shortly. "You did me a good turn, but——" he did not finish the sentence. I was going to tell you why I'm out here, but now——" Again he left the sentence uncompleted, and rode off.

McNaughten and others of the Bar Eight boys that the unbranded cattle in the corral belonged to the ranch. But he had threatened to return with Roarer Soames . . .

"That was a rum go last night," Rex was thinking. "Cain't quite figger out why he tuk that leap! Suicide kinda don't seem to be in Roarer's line!"

His reflections were interrupted by a sudden clatter of hoofs. He sprang from his rocking-chair, and peering through the window, saw three horsemen dismounting in the yard. He recognised the tall, thin figure of Sheriff Wicklow, a ginger-headed Roarer called Red Jake, and Elmer Dance, the smartly dressed tenderfoot.

It was Elmer's presence that made Rex sense danger. Most of the boys were still out on the range, and he hardly fancied the idea of leaving the ranch with a halter round his neck. A sudden whim made



PLUGGED BY THE PAIL!—Before Roarer could shoot, the Dandy Cowboy's six-gun boomed and roared. His shots brought the slop pail neatly down over the badman's head.

Rex stared after him. "Guess the kid's too soft for this life," he muttered, as he turned Firefiend's head towards New Mexico.

A Slick Getaway.

THE Dandy Cowboy was sitting in his room in the Bar Eight Ranch, deep in thought. It was evening, and his dusty riding-boots standing up in one corner showed that his hard day's work out on the range was done.

When he had arrived the day before Sheriff Wicklow had gone, more or less satisfied by Tex

him empty his holsters and drop their deadly contents in his boots.

When the door swung open to admit the three grim-faced visitors, they found the Dandy Cowboy rocking in his chair in stocking feet, calmly puffing one of his favourite cheroots.

"Come right in, boys," he said cheerily, as they hesitated on the threshold. "Cain't quite kernize yuh in this light," and he turned up the wick of the oil-lamp, which threw a sickly glow over the timbered room. "Huh! The sheriff! Step in, sheriff!"

Wicklow strode into the room, and the lamplight

glittered on the barrel of his six-gun. "Say, yuh're plenty cheerful fer a—murderer!" he snapped. "Rekernize that?" He flung a dirty, red-stained Stetson on the table.

Rex picked it up. "Seems like a hat with a bullet-hole drilled through it!" he remarked coolly. And added "Stained with sandstone!"

"Stained with blood, yuh mean!" thundered the sheriff. "Don't move! I arrest yuh fer the deliberate murder of Roarer Soames. Soames' drowned pony and this hat has bin washed up from the River of Sacrifice, and this hyar young man," he waved his gun at Elmer, "states that he heerd a shot when yuh was chasin' Roarer through the Gorge of the Gods!"

"I'm sorry, Remington," burst out Elmer, his face glistening with sweat. "I wouldn't have spoken, but—"

"It ain't yore fault, kid," said Rex heavily. "Things look kinda black agin me, but I tell yuh Roarer jumped tuh blazes himself!"

"Oh, yeah?" sneered Wicklow. "Hand over yore guns! Oh, I see," his eye travelled to the empty holsters. "Waal, yuh better come along tuh Border City right now."

"Let me put my boots on first, sheriff," pleaded Rex plaintively.

Wicklow nodded, and the Dandy Cowboy strolled across to his boots and bent over them. When he straightened up a couple of six-guns glittered in his hands!

"Look out!" yelled Red Jake, ducking away behind the table.

Wicklow pressed trigger without thinking, and the next moment the room rang and echoed with the sudden crashing boom of six-guns. Rex's first shot sent the sheriff's weapon whirling from his grasp; his second struck the oil-lamp, spinning it sideways off the table. It fell like a flaming comet, but the instant it exploded on the floor the room was plunged into a darkness made more intense by that last sudden blaze of light!

Wicklow, though unhurt, was scared stiff, and flung himself face downwards, expecting another bullet to smash through his head at any moment. But the shooting ended as suddenly as it had begun, and a sinister silence, broken only by the hissing intake of breath, brooded over the darkened room, like a lull between thunderclaps.

Then Red Jake, crouching down behind the table, saw a tiny red circular glow move in the gloom. For a moment he watched it, fascinated, wondering what it could be. Suddenly he realised. Rex's cheroot!

His lips twisted in a cruel grin as he pulled out a gun and thumbed back the hammer. The red glow was moving slowly, almost imperceptibly across the room, as if Rex were tiptoeing through the darkness. Presently it paused, and Red Jake took deliberate aim some inches below it, where he judged the Dandy Cowboy's heart to be.

The silence was torn asunder by a thunderous roar and the darkness stabbed by three lurid flashes! But the circle of glowing red ash remained unmoved!

With a baffled roar, Red Jake hurled himself across the room and crashed against solid wood. His hand, clutching for the Dandy Cowboy's throat, met the door-post, and he realised that the oigar had been wedged in the chink. It fell at his feet in a splutter of sparks.

As he wheeled round, expecting a shot in the back, the thunder of hoofs came to his ears from outside. In an instant he had raced madly across to the window, and, finding it open, hung halfway out.

He was just in time to see the phantom figure of a horseman bounding away through the night.

His gun crashed out again, and as the flashes lit the darkness the fugitive turned in the saddle. There was a staccato crack—and Red Jake felt a searing pain in his shoulder. "He's got me!" he groaned, dropping his guns and sinking to the floor.

Sheriff Wicklow made a half-hearted attempt to follow, but the Dandy Cowboy was already galloping for the mountains on Firefiend. "It's no good!" gasped Red Jake from the floor. "He's got away, and that durn hoss of his'n could give the Union Pacific a start an' beat it!"

Wicklow ground his teeth. "Waal, onyway, he daren't show his face hyar again!" he muttered. "Thar Dandy Cowboy is an outlaw from now on!"

The Phantom Shows Up.

It was a fortnight later. The Bar-Eight boys were scattered among an excited group outside Clancy's Bar, reading a notice posted up on the wall. They looked a tough set, in their Stetsons and goatskin chaps, with six-guns slung low at their hips, and there was a sombre glint in their eyes as they stared moodily at a picture of their outlawed boss. They had ridden across to Border City to lodge a protest with Sheriff Wicklow, but the altered wording of the poster had made them realise the hopelessness of their case.

FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD

is offered for the capture, dead or alive, of Rex Remington, late of Bar Eight Ranch. This man, now known as the Phantom of the Pueblo, is wanted for the murder of Roarer Soames and for sundry cattle raids.—SHERIFF WICKLOW, Border City, Arizona.

Since Rex's flight to the hills, the district had been terrorised by the daring raids of a man, dressed, it was said, in the garb of an Indian, who was supposed to have a secret lair in the Pueblo Pass. His exploits had diverted attention from the activities of the now leaderless Roarer Boys, and, since cattle branded with the Bar Eight were studiously left alone, it was naturally assumed that the Dandy Cowboy was the guilty party. The intricate nature of the ancient cliff-dwellings, and a general reluctance to explore their labyrinthine caverns, had prevented his arrest.

"Say, of Rex is the Phantom of the Pueblo," remarked Tex McNaughten, "he's the dandiest outlaw I ever heard tell on!"

"Trust Rex to do a job good an' proper—even cattle rustlin'!" chimed in Bud Malone, the fat puncher.

Ace Kinnoull snorted his disgust. "Yuh don't believe he's crooked, huh?" he exclaimed. "Guess it's a set-up of some kind. Say, kid," he turned to Elmer Dance, who stood among the group, "yuh had a glimpse of this Phantom. D'yuh reckon it's our boss?"

The tenderfoot, who had got a job as night herdsman on Sheriff Wicklow's ranch, had been held up once on the range by the mysterious raider. He shook his head.

"Couldn't say," he muttered in some embarrassment. "He was dressed like a Pueblo, with a sort of luminous war-paint on his face, and any way I couldn't have recognised anybody after the bat on the head he gave me with his gun!"

A lone horseman, trotting down the street, drew up on the outskirts of the little group. His wide sombrero was pulled down to shade his eyes from the sun, and he was biting his neckerchief to keep his mouth free from the dust, which lavishly powdered his steed.

"Say, why listen to that kid, anyway?" Tex McNaughten was sneering. "He's the guy who accused Rex of killing Soames! I guess we oughter ride the range ourselves, and—"

"Get jailed fer rustling, eh?" cut in Bud Malone. "Sheriff Wicklow warned us we'd be rounded up ef we was found on the ranges after dusk."

"Say, buddies!" The horseman pushed his way through the throng. Curious glances were turned up at him. "Yuh surely ain't afraid of that skulking coyote, are yuh? Lemme give yuh a tip, tenderfoot," he tapped Elmer's shoulder with his quirt, "ef yuh scent danger on the range to-night, light a beacon. I guess the boys of the Bar-Eight will ride out ter rescue yuh then, sheriff or no sheriff. Eh, boys?"

The punchers stared up at the speaker in astonishment. "Say, who are yuh, stranger?" burst out Ace Kinnoull.

"The Dandy Cowboy!" was the unexpected reply, and, with the words, he wheeled round his horse and galloped away in a cloud of dust!

His departure was so sudden that for a moment not a man stirred. Astonishment robbed them of action. Then Red Jake, who happened to be among the crowd, whipped out his guns and blazed away at the fleeing figure. At the same time he began running towards his pony, which was tethered near by.

The Dandy Cowboy, without slackening speed, swung off the saddle and underneath his horse in one masterly movement, to avoid the leaden hail. As he swept past a corral his hand shot out and struck up the bar of the gate. The next moment the gate was violently butted open by the irresistible charge of a herd of steers, which streamed out into the street with lowered heads and lashing tails. The volumes of dust they kicked up formed a screen which completely screened Rex.

Several other cowboys had jumped to the saddle, but the escape of the bullocks had created inconceivable confusion in the narrow thoroughfare. Red Jake, vaulting on to his pony, found himself hopelessly entangled among the blundering beasts, which swept him back as if caught in a flood. The other horsemen were in a similar predicament, and for the next half-hour, the population of Border City was engaged, with true cowboy instinct, in rounding up the liberated herd before it could get away to the prairie. Meanwhile, the Dandy Cowboy had vanished.

The Bar-Eight boys, for once in a while, took no part in the good work. "Rex has sure got a nerve!" grinned Tex McNaughten, watching the wild scene with grim amusement.

"Waal, I guess I'll take his tip," said Elmer Dance quietly, "and light a beacon if I'm attacked on the range."

"Then yuh kin sure count on us, kid!" stated Ace Kinnoull, generously. "We'll lodge at Clancy's to-night and keep a look-out for yore signal."

Red Jake, struggling with his bucking bronc, glanced sharply at them—and then forced his mount through the press of horses and steers towards Sheriff Wicklow's office.

Night Riders of the Range.

"HERE they come!" Trembling with excitement Elmer Dance flung off his pony and dragged her by the bridle towards a heap of brushwood which he had piled on an iron outcrop among the sage scrub.



HIS HORSE ALL OF A HEAP!—Sure-footed Firefiend escalated the sheer cliff steps. But Roarer was not so lucky. His horse made a gallant attempt—then rolled over and tumbled backwards.

A full moon made the prairie as light as day, and over a distant bluff he had caught a glimpse of a band of horsemen riding like the wind. Ahead of them galloped one of Wicklow's other herdsmen, who was sharing Elmer's night watch. He was quiring his horse in a frenzied effort to out-distance his pursuers and raise Border City. Even the cattle, scattered over the vast, rolling Border range, had caught the alarm, and were moving off in bunches. Their plaintive bellowing carried terror on the night air.

Elmer had not expected an attack that night—but he was glad it had come. He struck a flint and hastily ignited the brush. A tongue of flame leapt hissing into the air—a shower of sparks flew up. The Bar-Eight boys would see the blaze and ride out

to round up the rustlers. Even if he got killed before they came Elmer felt it would be worth it.

Boom! The echo of a shot made him turn his head. The raiders were now close on his heels, and Elmer saw with a start that they were led by a Pueblo Indian on a black horse!

As he stared he saw the feathered leader raise his hand, which was instantly hidden by a puff of smoke. The herdsman reeled, clutched blindly at the air and then slithered from his horse, which galloped wildly on. The slain man hit the turf at the same time as the report of the shot reached Elmer's ears.

Sudden blind terror assailed the tenderfoot. "It's killing this time!" he muttered. "No need to stay and get plugged!"

'PLANES BY POST.

If you missed the parts from the B.M. FLYING MODEL MONOPLANE already given away you can obtain them from the Editor, "Boys' Magazine," 200, Gray's Inn Road, as follows:—FUSELAGE, RUDDER, and CHASSIS given away July 15th. Price 3d. in stamps. METAL NOSECAP and PROPELLER given last week. Price 3d. in stamps (POSTAGE FREE).

Then he was on his pony, twisting in and out of the rough tracks between the sage brush towards Border City. Unluckily for him, a bunch of the stampeding herd took the same direction, and the night-riders, anxious to cut them off, thundered in pursuit. A wild shout from the rear made him glance back over his shoulder. Through the drifting smoke and red glare of the beacon he saw the plunging steers, followed by the raiders' brones. One after another they were swallowed up in a dip—one after another they streamed out on the other side. Then the feathers of the Pueblo leader emerged—he saw the black horse kick out for a foothold—and the whole colossal figure of man and steed was sharply silhouetted against the skyline. The luminous war-paint shone white and ghostly on the face of the Phantom.

The youngster was gazing back in horror at this sinister figure when his mustang, all awither with fear went skyfishing. Elmer, still an unpractised rider, was tossed heavily from the saddle. Twisting round on the ground, his head singing, he saw the flashing hoofs of his mount as it careered on.

He had no time to rise. The sheriff's cattle were stampeding past him and he had his work cut out to dodge their hoofs. The Phantom of the Pueblo, thudding by, caught sight of Elmer crouching in the scrub and out of sheer wanton devilry loosed his gun at him. The bullet splintered a rock at his side.

Thirsting to hit back, the tenderfoot pulled out his own gun and aimed at the next rider who came careering along. The shot crashed out and the horse came down on its neck, hurling the rider with stunning violence on top of Elmer. The raider was on his feet in an instant. As he sprang back, tugging out his gun, the boy saw that the scarf was torn from his face—and recognised the livid features of Red Jake!

"Gosh! The Roarer boys!" he gasped aloud.

Jake's answer was to lift his gun and draw a bead on the boy's heart. But, before he could press trigger, one of the other riders, sweeping by on a black horse, grabbed Elmer up by one hand as if he had been a child and swung him on to the pommel of his saddle. Red Jake's gun boomed and the bullet whined through empty air.

Elmer's first instinct was to struggle, but a grip of steel held him down across the saddle. "Lie

still, kid!" whispered a familiar voice. "I'm the Dandy Cowboy!"

Elmer was too astounded even to ask what Rex Remington was doing in that lawless company. He found himself being carried helplessly along amidst the terrified steers towards the mountains, and they were soon thudding in a solid phalanx towards the Pueblo Pass.

Suddenly the Dandy Cowboy tightened his grip and Firefiend, responding to the pressure, darted on ahead. The swift stallion soon outpaced the other horses, and led the herd towards the pass. In a few minutes they were clattering into the ravine, a hundred yards ahead of the rest. Rex drew rein beneath the sheer walls, shadowy with their excavated recesses.

"Shin up thar, kid," he snapped, waving his hand towards one of the precipitous niche stairways hewn out of the limestone. "Hide yuhself. I've got some more work to do!"

The thunder of the herd was coming nearer and nearer and Elmer did not need a second bidding to make himself scarce. With a hasty word of thanks to his rescuer, he clambered up the rough steps and darted into one of the numerous caves which catacombed the cliff.

For a moment he skulked in the gloom; then, curiosity overcoming his fear, he peered cautiously out. He saw the pass full of plunging steers and rearing horses, and recognised Rex holding Firefiend beneath the opposite wall to let the stampede go by.

Then an astonishing thing happened. The Phantom of the Pueblo, now riding in the rear, turned his luminous face towards Rex.

Suddenly his hand went up and his six-gun spoke with a detonation that reverberated above the thunderous din that filled the narrow ravine. Horrified, Elmer saw the Dandy Cowboy stiffen in the saddle and pitch to the ground.

In another minute the mob of men, horses and bullocks had disappeared round the bend.

All thoughts of danger forgotten, Elmer slithered down the niche stairway and anxiously bent over the stricken man.

To his unspeakable relief the Dandy Cowboy grinned up at him. "It's only my shoulder, kid!" he muttered huskily. "Just my luck—when I was on the track of the Phantom, too! He must've recognised me." He staggered to his feet, gritting his teeth with the pain. "See here. Jump on Firefiend and bring the boys back. I guess it's time for the showdown!"

"You must come too!" Elmer gasped out.

"Nope." Rex shook his head. "I'd rather stay and face the Phantom than get lynched back in Border City. I'll hide in the pueblo till yuh come back."

The Bar-Eight Boys Jailed.

THE Bar-Eight Boys had not gone back on their word. When Elmer Dance rode furiously into Border City—a deserted huddle of shacks asleep beneath the moon—he thundered for some time in vain on the door of Clancy's Bar.

At last Clancy's white face appeared at an upper window. "Phwat are ye after wantin' at this time o' night?" he demanded angrily.

"The Bar-Eight Boys!" replied the tenderfoot breathlessly.

"Then ye can look for 'em in jail!" returned the Irish imkeeper. "When the rustlers lit that beacon an' they all dashed out to ride the range Sheriff Wicklow arrested the whole outfit and clapped 'em in prison!"

"What!" Elmer could hardly believe his ears. "It was I who lit that beacon—as a distress signal!"

"Then ye'll foind yerself in jug, too, an' I shouldn't wonder!" retorted Clancy. "Red Jake toid the Sheriff 'twas the signal for the Bar-Eight Boys to rustle his cattle!" He slammed down the window. Elmer was at his wit's end. With the Sheriff's cattle rustled, the Dandy Cowboy lying wounded in the pueblo and the Bar-Eight Boys in jail, he was baffled. He puzzled interminably over the problem while unsaddling Firefiend in a deserted barn, and at last decided to confront Wicklow in the morning. Then he threw himself down in the hay beside the black stallion and slept the sleep of exhaustion.

Sheriff Wicklow, striding up to his office soon after dawn, found the pale-faced tenderfoot pacing anxiously outside with Rex's horse. He bent his brows. "What does this mean, Dance?" he snapped. "Why are yuh hyar—and whar's my cattle?"

"Kustled, Sheriff!" burst out Elmer. "They were stampeded last night by the Phantom of the Pueblo—and the Roarer boys!"

"Eh?" Sheriff Wicklow started violently. "My cattle—the Roarer boys? Hyar! Come in th' office!" He almost pushed Elmer in before him and then whipped out his guns. "Now spill the noos, kid!"

Elmer blurted out the story, which somehow sounded unconvincing, if not incredible, in the cold light of dawn.

"Huh, so that's yore yarn, is it?" snorted the sheriff, with chill suspicion. "Waal, d'yuh know what I think? I think yuh're a rustler yoreself, in league with the Phantom. This is the second time yuh hev lorst my cattle, and Red Jake—"

As if the words had conjured him up, the Roarer in question appeared at the door behind him. "Mentionin' me, Sheriff?" he asked.

Wicklow swung round. "Yep. This guy says yuh and yore pardners are the Phantom's followers. What d'you say tuh that?"

Red Jake threw back his head with a hoarse laugh. "I never left the ranch las' night, Sheriff," he declared brazenly. "Ef I was yuh I'd pitch this hyar young whelp inter jail with the rest of his pals o' the Bar-Eight outfit!"

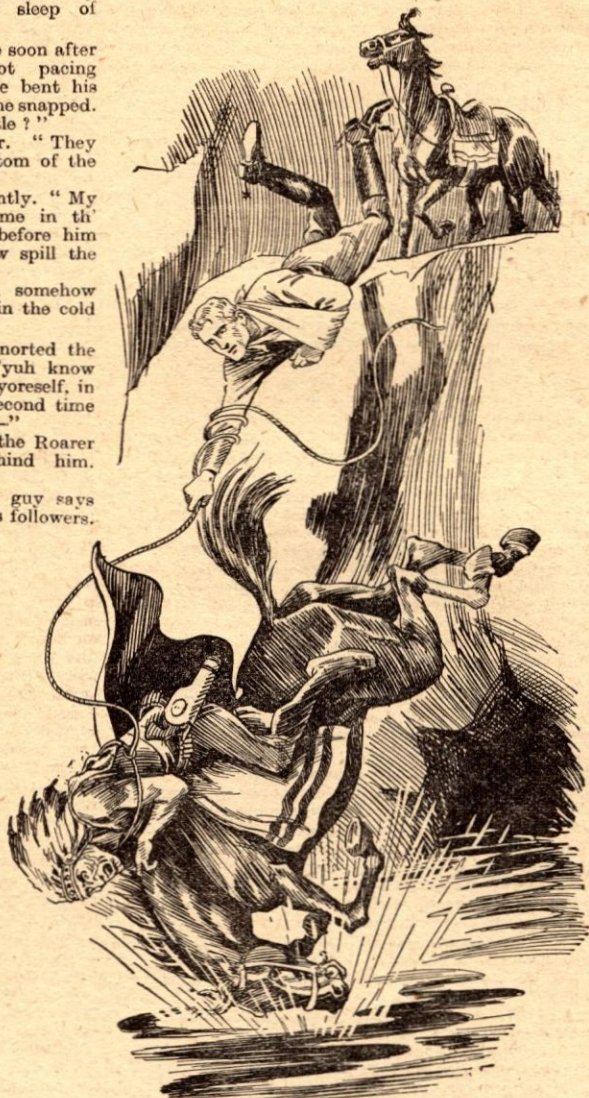
At those words the tenderfoot realised that he was trapped between a rogue and a fool. Remembering the Dandy Cowboy's prompt action on a similar occasion, he resolved to take the law into his own hands. Suddenly snatching up a heavy chair he swung it over his head and smashed it down on the sheriff's guns. There was a shattering explosion as they belched their leaden contents into the floor.

Jake was expecting something of the sort, and his Colts seemed to jump from the holsters into his hands. But Elmer did not wait. Impossible to reach the door! So swerving to avoid the raking hail of bullets, which thudded into the wall, he made a dive for the passage. In a flash he was racing up a flight of stairs. Jake's guns filled the little shack with thunder as he blazed away at the fugitive, peppering the stairs with bullet-holes. Elmer, bursting into an upper room, heard the two men rattling up the steps after him.

He hastily flung up a window and gazed down at the street. Firefiend was standing tethered to the wall immediately below him. Running figures, attracted

by the outbreak of shooting, were converging on the office from all directions.

Praying for some of the Dandy Cowboy's skill, Elmer Dance flung a leg over the sill and dropped down. It was a creditable leap for a tenderfoot. He landed square on the saddle, and, though the horse reared, he did not lose his seat. The next moment he had bounded away on the black stallion, knocking a couple of startled cowboys flying, and



GOT YUH, HOMBRE!—The dropping weight of man and horse plucked Rex clean from the saddle.

ducking his head to avoid the volleys which followed him from the window he had just vacated.

Elmer did not trouble to look back as Firefiend fairly skimmed through the little main street. He had a confused impression of men recoiling from the flashing hoofs of his mount, and once a revolver rapped out and his hat was carried away. But, as soon as Firefiend, feeling the sun-baked turf of the prairie under him, opened out into his free galloping stride, he cast an anxious glance back over his shoulder.

Sheriff Wicklow and Red Jake were following, whipping up their wiry brones, and banging away with their Colts. But no one else in Border City cared to join in a pursuit which might lead them to the lair of the Phantom of the Pueblos!

Elmer turned Firefiend's head in the direction of the pass, knowing that he could escape among its many catacombs, but the stallion was spent after his exertions of the previous day, and seemed unable to shake off the pursuers. Just as he was making up his mind to abandon Firefiend and run for shelter a shrill whistle rang out.

Immediately, Firefiend took charge of affairs, and, with an eager whinney, charged straight into the pass and at one of the niche stairways. Almost before Elmer realised what had happened the gallant stallion, closing up like a Chinese lantern, escalated the sheer cliff with the speed and force of a thunderbolt. His hoofs rang on the stone steps, striking out sparks; sure-footed as a mule, he struggled on to a wide terrace outside one of the caves—and a hand came out of the darkness and clutched the bridle.

At the same time Wicklow and Jake rattled into the gorge. The Roarer uttered a bellow of rage, and then, rashly seeking to emulate Firefiend's feat, rode his horse at the steps. Driven on by whip and spur, the stocky beast actually mounted half-way. Then its hoofs skidded on the slippery stone, its head came curving down between its knees, and man and beast rolled over and over down the precipitous cliff in a smother of dust and stones. They landed with a sickening crash at the bottom. Red Jake was smashed and flattened beneath his horse, which rose, unhurt, and stood trembling.

Sheriff Wicklow was so horrified that he pulled his horse up on its hind legs. A shot rang out from the ledge above and his hat spun from his head. He waited for no more. Wrenching his kicking horse round, he rode out of the Pueblo Pass as if pursued by a demon!

Elmer found himself being led into a roomy cave by Rex Remington, whose arm was in a sling. "Say, are yuh a tenderfoot?" grinned the Dandy Cowboy, as the boy dismounted. "I guess yuh passed yore test; sitting Fleafiend up those steps!"

"Do you think so?" cried Elmer eagerly. "Then the range is mine! All the land from the Pueblo Pass to Border City belongs to me!" Seeing the cowboy's puzzled stare, he went on: "My pop has buckets of money, and he promised to buy me these pastures if I could stand the life, and there was no trouble on the range. Roarer Soames knew that I wouldn't let it out to him and his roarers, and he tried to scare me. Then I had another set-back when you killed him. It looked as if I were going to be the landlord of a rough-house!"

"I didn't kill Roarer," said Rex gravely. "Yuh oughter know I'm straight by now, kid. I've been hidin' away hyar, trying to catch out the Phantom, since my flight. He's got a hide-out himself somewhere; we rent opposite flats in the pueblo, as it were! I can't tell who he is, but ef I kin show his face to the sheriff, maybe the range will be quiet enough for yore pop to risk his dollars! What happened to the boys?"

Elmer hurriedly told him, and as he listened to the story the Dandy Cowboy's face darkened.

"Jailed, eh?" he muttered. "Waal, kid, yuh know I'm not a rustler, but yuh are going to see me break the law to-day!"

"What do you mean, Rex?"

"Follow me," snapped the Dandy Cowboy, and he rode Firefiend out of the cave. Elmer saw the horse sliding down the steps on its haunches. He followed to find Rex holding Jake's pony, which was now quietly cropping a pine shoot. "Jump on this gee," said the Dandy Cowboy. "I'm going to teach yuh how to stampede cattle!"

The Fall of the Phantom.

SHERIFF WICKLOW was leaning against the barred window of an adobe shack which was used as the local jail. He had had a shock in Pueblo Pass, and he was now taking it out of the Bar-Eight boys, herded together like cattle in the little prison.

"I've sent to Denver for the judge," he was sneering. "I guess yuh boys will spend the rest o' yore nat'ral in jail! And I'm gonna ask fer troops to dig yore boss, the Phantom of the Pueblo, outa thet hile-out of his'n!" He turned and swept his arm towards the distant mountains, and as he did so his jaw dropped and he stiffened.

A cloud of dust approaching Border City over the prairie slowly resolved itself before his eyes into a herd of galloping cattle.

"Gosh! is it a stampede?" he muttered. Leaving the imprisoned punchers in perplexity, he hurried away—to join a little group already gazing in bewilderment at the herd. The ground vibrated with the din of its approach. Before long the listeners could pick out the crackle of revolver shots above the uproar, and then some one pointed out two mounted figures, shooting wildly in the air, hanging on the flank of the herd.

"Quick! hosses!" yelled the sheriff. "They'll be in the city!" Instantly a rush was made for the stables. Border City was almost empty, but the few punchers knocking around were prepared to do their best to stem the stampede.

They were too late. Before foot could be put into the stirrup, the maddened cattle burst upon the little cowtown and were pouring in a lowing mass through the narrow street. At the first appearance of the maddened beasts Sheriff Wicklow, throwing responsibility to the winds, took cover in Clancy's Bar. He peered out through an upper window and saw, to his unutterable amazement, the Dandy Cowboy and Elmer Dance urging the steers on with a continuous fusillade of shots. The few mounted punchers who gallantly sought to turn the stampede were swept along in the wild rush. Riderless ponies, escaping while their owners were trying to hop into the saddle, joined the mad throng. Border City had never witnessed such a scene of confusion. The dust almost obliterated it.

"To the jail! Drive 'em to the jail!" Rex was shouting.

One of the struggling punchers caught a glimpse of the branding mark on a steer's side. "Why, they're the Bar-Eight herd!" he gasped.

"Sure!" retorted Rex, sweeping past him. "They've stampeded! An' only the Bar-Eight boys can round 'em up! Burst open the jail!"

Mad as the suggestion was, it found a response in the hearts of many of the listeners. They were cowboys first and foremost, and they could feel for the boys shut up in prison while their herd was escaping. They did not guess that it was Rex who

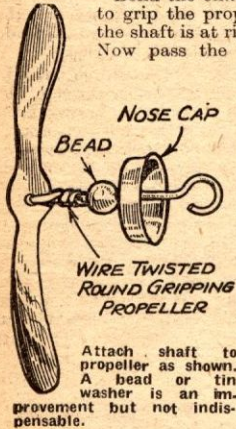
(Continued on page 12.)

HOW TO COMPLETE OUR FREE GIFT MONOPLANE.

With the Elastic Motor, Propeller Shaft, and Steel Retaining Pin given this week your 'Plane will be ready to take the Air. Full Flying Hints Below.

THE envelope given in this week's issue contains the elastic, the retaining pin, and the propeller shaft. Instructions given in the two previous issues (which contained the cardboard parts for the flying model monoplane, and the propeller and nose-cap respectively) explained how to assemble the model and how to bend the propeller.

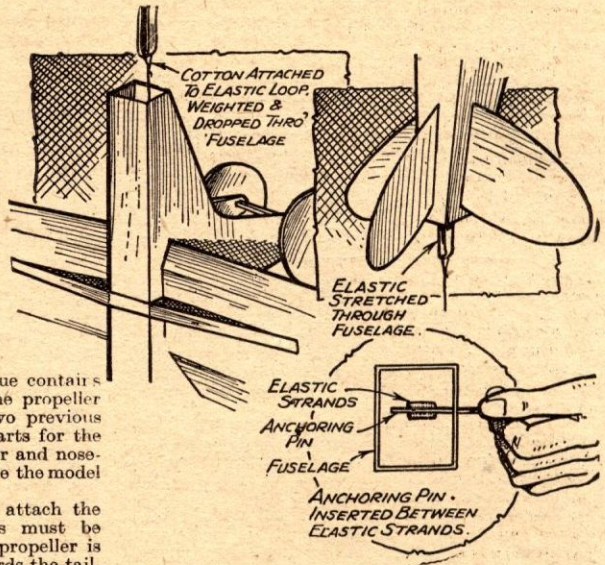
The first thing to do this week is to attach the propeller shaft to the propeller. This must be attached in such a way that when the propeller is revolving it drives a column of air towards the tail. The propeller has to draw the model forward, so you will easily see that it can only be attached in one direction. If you study the diagrams given last week this should not occasion you any difficulty. Hook the parallel part of the shaft into the hole in the centre of the propeller and with a pair of pliers twist the over-lapping end round the main portion of the shaft so that it makes a nice neat spiral. Do not leave the end of the spiral projecting or the propeller will run irregularly.



The elastic should be lubricated with soft soap or glycerine, so that the strands slide easily over one another. Ordinary soap, whilst not so good, will do.

You now have to pass the elastic into the fuselage and push the retaining pin through the sides of the fuselage in the holes previously made just beneath the tail, the pin thus securing the strands of elastic.

An excellent method of doing this is to pass a loop of string through the three strands and to thread this through the fuselage; pull on the ends of the



string, and whilst doing this push the retaining pin into position.

Another method is to pass the three strands of elastic inside the fuselage and to pass a button-hook through from the tail-end, engaging the strands in that way.

We are now ready for a trial flight. Make quite certain that you wind the propeller in the correct direction. Give it fifty turns to start with, and launch it gently into the air (against the wind, not with it), when it should climb and fly for about twenty-five feet. If everything is in order increase the turns on the second flight to seventy-five turns, and at each subsequent flight increase the turns until the full number—two-hundred and fifty—is reached.

It may be, however, that on your first flight the model dives, in which case you must bend the tail-flaps up a little more. Similarly, if the model tends to ascend nose first, or fly in a series of swoops, you must bend the tail-flap down a little, not more than 1/16th-of-an-inch at a time. Needless to say, both tail-flaps must be bent up an equal amount.

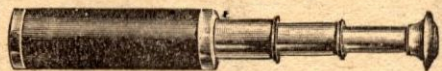
If the model tends to swerve sharply to the right, bend the rudder in the opposite direction, and vice versa. Should the model appear to be under-powered, take off the elastic and remake it into a skein of four strands.

The mainplane and tail must, of course, be absolutely in line with one another; each wing must be bowed up an equal amount, and the camber must be the same on both sides, otherwise the model will fly erratically.

If the model fails to fly straight after you have adjusted the rudder, it is a sign that you have not bent the propeller enough. Similarly, if the propeller tends to run down too quickly, this indicates that you have bent it too much. The diagrams indicate some of the faults and their remedies. Should you not be able to obtain satisfactory results from your model, drop a note to the Editor.

Cheers, chaps! Another grand working model on the way. Get ready for the B.M. SPEEDBOAT.

30 inch TELESCOPE 3/-



SPECIAL OFFER OF TELESCOPES for Sightseeing, Hiking, Scouting, etc. Extended Length 30ins. (closed 11ins.). Gives clear vision over long distances. Fitted with 3 Powerful Lenses, 5 Brass-bound Telescopic Joints and Brass Dust Caps, 3/-, postage 3d. Carrying Case 1/- extra. Also Compasses 1/6. Field Glasses 5/-, Post 3d. (Colonial 9d.). **A. HERBERTS** (Dept. B 35), 41, Welham Road, Streatham, London, S.W.16.

THE PHANTOM OF THE PUEBLO

(Continued from page 10.)

had stamped them! Forgetting the reputation of the speaker, they allowed their ponies to follow the cattle towards the little adobe jail. Not a hand was lifted against him as the Dandy Cowboy drove his horse against the wooden door.

"Stand away, boys!" he bellowed. "I'm shooting!" His gun crashed out, and the lock was blown asunder. The door swung inwards on its hinges under Firefiend's charge. A crowd of strained and puzzled faces peered out.

"You're free, boys!" shouted the Dandy Cowboy. "Come on out and mount anything!"

With shouts of delight the Bar-Eight boys poured out of their prison. Some were lucky enough to catch fleeing ponies, but those who were not vaulted on the backs of the plunging steers. In a few minutes the herd was streaming out at the other end of Border City to an accompaniment of cowboy yells and flourished Stetsons.

The next two hours were spent in rounding up the herd and driving them towards the Border Range, where they normally grazed. The Border City 'punchers' who had joined in the work paid no heed to the fact that their leader was a wanted man.

At length the steers settled down in their usual pastures, and the little group of sweating cowboys gathered round Rex Remington. Sitting astride Firefiend, and puffing coolly at his usual cheroot, he surveyed his helpers.

"Say, boys," he said quietly, "I'm grateful to yuh for helping me. And I'll tell yuh here an' now that I'm not the Phantom of the Pueblo."

Suddenly he broke off. Elmer had plucked his sleeve, and, gazing out across the rolling plain, he saw a small band of horsemen debouching from the Pueblo Pass. Rex stiffened in the saddle as he saw that they were led by a white-faced Indian on a black horse!

"Speak of the devil!" he ejaculated. "See here, boys. There's the Phantom! I guess he thinks my lads are all safe in jail, and so he's gonna help himself to my cattle. Let's hide in the scrub and wait for 'em. I've a hunch we can square accounts!"

He flung off his horse and led it down into a hollow screened by chaparral scrub. The others, suddenly tense with excitement, followed his lead, and the whole outfit concealed itself in the dip while the mysterious riders approached.

Rex's suspicion was correct. The raiders knew nothing of the recent stampede, and the release of the Bar-Eight boys. Seeing the cattle apparently untended on the range they thought this was a perfect chance for some unhindered rustling. They came loping along to their doom.

The Phantom of the Pueblos was turning in the saddle to give a command to his followers, when a crash like thunder shook the scrub and the hollow was lit by a sheet of livid flame!

The volley was deadly in its effect. Each cowboy

had marked his man, and when the smoke cleared away only one rider among the rustlers remained on his horse. The others had been knocked out of their saddles like so many shot rabbits, and, while their startled mounts reared and bucked round the scene of the ambush, the wounded victims writhed on the ground. They were not killed—for the Dandy Cowboy had given express orders to his boys to aim at leg or arm—but before they could regain their feet a dozen lariats flashed in the air and a dozen men ran out on them with levelled six-guns!

One man alone remained untouched. This was the Phantom of the Pueblo. Rex had insisted on reserving him for himself.

At the roar of the volley and the sight of his boys dropping round him like leaves in an autumn gust, the leader of the rustlers kicked his heels into his horse's sides and plucked madly at the reins. His ghastly white face, smeared with phosphorescent paint, was stamped with panic. The next moment he was racing over the prairie towards the Pueblo Pass.

Leaving the Roarer boys—for such the captives proved to be—in the hands of his pals, Rex leapt on to Firefiend and gave chase.

The Phantom was mounted on a wiry mustang, but Firefiend gradually began to overhaul him. Nevertheless, the fugitive had gained such a start that he was the first to thunder into the Pueblo Pass. Rex burst into the ravine to see his quarry, mercilessly lashing his mount, vanishing round the bend.

Whispering in Firefiend's ear, he took the corner at an angle which would have unseated a less experienced rider—just in time to glimpse the Phantom diving from sight into the Gorge of the Gods. It recalled the escape and death-leap of Roarer Soames, and Rex gritted his teeth at the memory. "I won't let th' same thing happen twice!" he muttered, unhooking his lariat as he followed down the narrow defile.

Yet it seemed as if nothing could prevent it. There was the abrupt drop ahead—and the Phantom of the Pueblo was riding straight for the dazzling blue sky between the gap in the shining cliff-walls. He turned his livid, horrible face back for one instant as if to jeer at his pursuer. But even as he took off on the apparently suicidal leap the lasso snaked away from Rex's hand like a thing of life—and the noose fell neatly round the fugitive's shoulders.

The Dandy Cowboy had one arm in a sling, and to make the cast he was compelled to release the reins. Nevertheless, at his muttered command the intelligent animal he rode stopped dead in its tracks and Rex's knees sank into the saddle in a powerful grip to resist the wrench that was coming.

It came—as the fleeing horse was poised above the chasm—but the Phantom had hurled himself forward the moment he felt the rope bite into his arms. As a result, it was not he who left the saddle, but the Dandy Cowboy.

The dropping weight of man and horse plucked Rex clean out of the saddle like a cork drawn from a bottle. Clutching the tautened rope with one hand, he sailed through the air in a parabola and plunged over the precipice after his quarry!

For a moment that seemed like an eternity he felt himself rushing through space—down, down! Then the River of Sacrifice, flowing red with the sandstone deposit, hit him *smack!* as hard as a wooden board. He sank into a roaring chasm of waters.

He came to the surface to feel an eager tug at his legs, so powerful that for a moment he thought he was in the grip of the Phantom. Then he realised that it was the pull of the current. Unable to fight against its irresistible urgency, he was swept

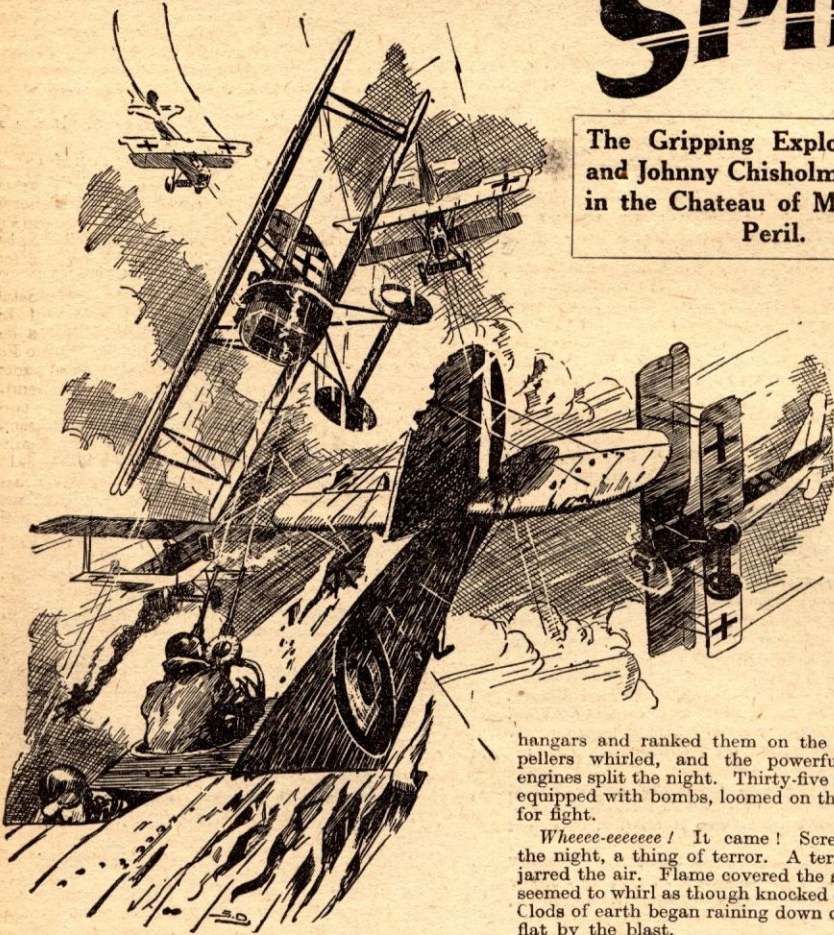
(Continued on page 2.)

ACES BURN THE CLOUDS! Great War-time Flying Series, Chums.

SKY HIGH SPIES

Crammed with THRILLS in the Air.

The Gripping Exploits of Ian and Johnny Chisholm, Air Aces, in the Chateau of Mystery and Peril.



The Doomed Patrol.

GUNS thundered up at the front. The flashes were continuous, like rings of fire erupting from the earth. But at the Chateau Noir—the chateau of secrets—miles behind the German line, the daddy of them all, a twelve-inch naval gun, was recoiling from its thunderous blast. And it was coming down on the Red Devils' 'drome, behind the Allied lines.

That was a direct challenge.

Eccc-eeeeee! A mighty H.E. shell came arcing through the sky. The scream of it dropped to a moan. When it hit, the flame of it flashed high into the sky, and the earth trembled.

Major Drissol, O.C. of the famous Red Devils' Squadron, stood rigid on the tarmac, his ears throbbing with the blast. That shell had hit nearer to the field than any of the others. And the next would fall still closer.

The field hummed with activity. Mechanics rolled the outfit's 'planes from the

hangars and ranked them on the deadline. Propellers whirled, and the powerful humming of engines split the night. Thirty-five fighting 'planes, equipped with bombs, loomed on the turf, prepared for fight.

Wheeee-eeeeee! It came! Screaming through the night, a thing of terror. A terrible concussion jarred the air. Flame covered the sky. The world seemed to whirl as though knocked out of its orbit. Clods of earth began raining down on men knocked flat by the blast.

Major Drissol, running frantically, made his voice a trumpet on the night.

"Take off! Clear out. Leave this base. Bomb that confounded chateau to blazes. Take off, I tell you!"

From the barracks the pilots came running, throwing their helmets on to their heads and adjusting goggles. They raced for their 'planes, and lifted themselves in. Deadly looking bombs hung from the racks beneath the fuselage.

They were going to raze the chateau of secrets to the ground.

Major Drissol's 'plane rushed down the track of light, and lifted. Ship after ship followed

him, exhaust pipes spitting red. The dark seemed to be filled with 'planes, whirling like leaves, the danger of collision imminent. But they all roared, spiralling high into the sky without mishap, and formed in a tight echelon behind Major Drissol.

The field with its great crater made by the falling shell disappeared. The whole squadron stormed through the moonlit arch, pointing straight for Germany.

To smash the chateau of secrets.

"WE'VE got to stop them!" cried Johnny.

In the sanatorium, which was situated a mile behind the flying-field of the Red Devils, he had heard the roar of the guns, the infernal concussion of the exploding shells. They had roused him.

Big, blond Ian, sitting still by his bedside, told him what was happening. A German naval gun had come down on their 'drome, and was finding the range.

"Major Drissol's going to bomb that damned chateau—smash it," said Ian grimly. "You all right now, Johnny? . . . I'm going, must be with the chaps. . . ."

"Listen," entreated the white-faced young flight leader. Rapidly he explained, while he got out of bed, and clambered into his uniform. He was desperate, tense. Nothing could stay him from going into action.

"Don't you see—don't you see, it's a trap? They'll fly into that ray Professor Fulke is using to protect the chateau. It cuts out the mags—crashes 'em. The whole squadron will be lost. We've got to stop them."

Ian for once was shaken. His clean-cut face was set.

"I believe you're right, fellow," he gritted. "But what can we do?"

"The secret safeguard against the ray! I took it off a Hun I brought down!" panted Johnny, as he struggled into his flying teddy bears. "It's in the motor of the wrecked Spad—don't say it's smashed up."

"We'll see," gritted the big, blond skyman.

Side by side they rushed out into the night, the breeze sending a chill through their fibres. A great drone travelled high up in the starlit heavens. It was the Red Devils' squadron flying to doom.

Previously the mechanics had dragged the wreck of the Spad to one of the hangars behind the 'drome. They had gone over it, but had found nothing. Johnny, opening the flame-rusted, bent housing now with trembling fingers, gave a joyful exclamation:

"It's here, on the mag—unharm'd."

It was merely a sensitive circular disc. Yet it took and absorbed the shock of von Fulke's powerful electro-ray. Johnny unscrewed it hastily, and held it up.

"Easy to transfer that to my two-seater Bristol," said Ian quietly, as he surveyed it. "Don't know what it is—but we're going to chance it. Come on, fellow. Let's go."

In one of the hangars near by was Squadron-Leader Ian's Bristol two-seater. It did not take them long to screw the strange device over the magnet, fuel the 'plane and wheel her out. In a few moments the gaunt bird-shape was spluttering and yammering, prop flashing over, its nose pointed for the front.

The two pilots climbed in. The engine's voice changed to a smooth roar of power as Ian jazzed controls, the Bristol shook, the grass stood up on end.

Ian raised his arm, and the mechanics pulled away the chocks, ducking under the wings.

Hroooooom! The Bristol tore through the dark, hammering fiery thunder. It was up, howling to the heights in a sweeping corkscrow.

It was simply burning up space. Johnny studied his brother's face, linned in the glow of the hooded light of the dashboard. Lean, bronzed and powerful, it was stamped with an expression of stark purpose. Yes, the big blond skyman realised the peril to the Red Devils' squadron. Somehow he would turn back that great wedge of 'planes, scrambling like geese towards the coverts of the killers.

Suddenly Johnny stiffened. The tenseness brooding in his face became clamped. "Look, Ian!" he shrieked, throwing out an arm into the tearing slipstream.

Off to their left, and a thousand feet above them, arched a V-shaped wedge of ten fighting 'planes. They groaned and droned in a power picnic, destroying space at a wild velocity as they came down over the *Forêt de Car*.

But it was not Major Drissol's squadron. It was a flight of French Nieuports.

The whole formation was roaring down for the first attack, to sweep over the chateau, crack their iron eggs with thunderous flashes on their objective, and on!

Then probably Major Drissol's squadron would come roaring in from another angle.

Madly the big, blond skyman nosed down for more speed—to get ahead of the Nieuports. The wind was like a wall against them as they tore down-sky. Then Ian tugged back the stick to his safety-belt, and they went up, up in a screaming zoom.

Over on its back the Bristol whipped at stalling point. As they whirled out of it, the big blond skyman, threw up his Vervey pistol and fired a green star that lit thundering shapes of ships in formation to the left.

He signalled violently for retreat. Too late—

Johnny's cockpit was suddenly filled with an intolerable glare, as if a sickly sun came and sat in the seat with him. The purple ray! The ghastly purple searchlight had them in its beam—the Bristol and the whole flight of Nieuports dived when Johnny opened his eyes and looked around, his blood ran cold with the most ghastly horror he had ever known.

Up in the starlit heights the ships of the French patrol were pitching, heeling over. Some of the planes were turning over on their backs. Others were hurtling for the earth in tight spins. The whole patrol was a ragged mass of yawing, plunging 'planes. Plunging to doom.

Through the curtain of blackness on the left roared rushing shapes, with black crosses on the tops of their wings. They were the Fokkers, come to finish off any of the powerless French 'planes that might still be staggering about in the sky. But there was only the Bristol, now roaring around madly to escape a sky-trap.

From the ground came the rending crashes of bombs, flame flashes from the forest. In a few moments it was all over. The French patrol had never reached the chateau of secrets. Fires lit the forest, leaping redly hungrily from the doomed 'planes. Then they died.

Night wrapped its cloak round the chateau and held it as if in the secrecy of the tomb.

In Enemy Lines.

"GONE!" gasped Ian. "Wiped out! Ye gods— and Major Drissol's squadron will follow."

Madly he banked around. The black bats were all around him. Spitting red. Johnny in the back seat was turning the Lewis gun on its scarf mounting.

A black enemy 'plane came at him with a *whishing* rush, audible through the massed roar of Mercedes all around. Bullets *thucked* around Johnny, like

hail—a miracle none touched him. Crouched down he stuck to his madly leaping Lewis.

Brrrrt! Brrrrrrrrt! Spat!

"Ha!" Johnny cried savagely. His boyish face limned in the terrific bright glow, swept by the bellow of hot air and smoke twisted fiercely. A kill!

But it could not last. Ian was flashing the Bristol about with wings cocked at all angles. Frantically he was seeking a way of escape. Going to blast his way through! The black bats were winged around now, coming in from all sides. The Bristol's wings were lacework, struts splintered; a flying wire twanged as it snapped. Going to be shot to pieces in the sky?

Blazes—no! The big, blond skyman whirled, threw forward on the stick.

Hrooom! With the wind like a mighty sea,

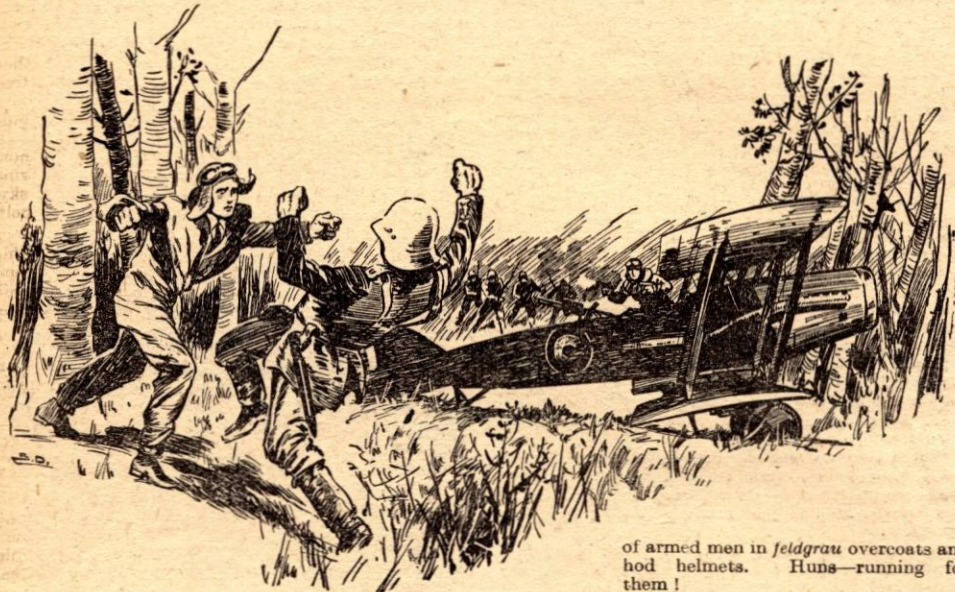
A pancake! Undercarriage and wings gave with a rending smash. Like a wounded bull the Bristol spurted upwards, struck, bounced again, and then, breaking up, slid forward into a hole full of stinking water.

Both Ian and Johnny, who had slipped their safety belts, were flung clear into bog-like mud.

As they scrambled up, dazed but uninjured, Johnny's first thought was for the safety device on the magneto. He staggered towards the wrecked plane, opened the engine housing, and in a few seconds had unscrewed the strange disc.

"Ian, old chap; we got out of that, but—"

His blurting voice stopped. Blue eyes flickering their danger signal, the young flight leader whipped out his Colt, thrust it forward. It was an action Ian instantly copied, as the trees poured forth a crowd



A FRIEND IN DISGUISE.—"Skipper! For the luvva Mike!" Ian who had aligned his gun on the German for a shot that would have killed paused in amazement. For the voice was that of Sergeant Tornado Wills.

drowning them, they poured down the sky in a sheer crash dive.

Ian slewed his head, but could see no pursuing Fokkers. They lacked the nerve for that hideous power dive.

Ian turned to his controls desperately. The earth was coming up—the sinister tangle of the forest. And now he knew he could not pull out with those flapping, ragged wings; the ship would break up. Gad! She was going to crash. . . .

Then a miracle happened. On the ground a green flare burst out, lighting the whole forest with a ghastly hue and illumining an open space to the left. Space to land—even though they crashed. Ian gave her rudder, and she yawed around.

He held the stick steady, cut the switch, and like a mighty flung lance the plane swished across the tops of the trees—and struck.

of armed men in *feldgrau* overcoats and hod helmets. Huns—running for them!

"*Vorwaerts!*" roared a voice in German. "Seize them!"

German Mausers belched flame and bullets, and Ian and Johnny crouched behind the wrecked ships, pumping shot after shot into the racing throng.

Brang! Brang! Brang! Brang! The charge faltered under the deadly fire of the crouching British airmen.

"*Skipper—fer th' luvva Mike!*" It was a faint cry, wild with entreaty, yet it made Ian put up his smoking gun, his teeth clicking together, a glow of amazement in his fierce blue eyes.

Johnny was not a whit less shaken by surprise. That cry in a familiar voice had come from a giant of a German in military greatcoat and coal-scuttle helmet, who had led the charge at them—the same German who had hoarsely shouted *Vorwaerts!*

In a mad, pounding run he had forged in advance of his fellows. Ian had just aligned his Colt on him; a shot at point-blank range that must have killed. How glad he was now that he had held his hand so long.

For that cry of entreaty had come from Tornado Wills—Flight-Sergeant Wills, their inseparable sky comrade!

How came the big flight sergeant to be leading

these Bosches in the forest of fear? Ian did not ponder overlong on the question. He deliberately shot past his disguised charging non-com, and in a moment more they met with a realistic impact.

"Pretend to fight, skipper—back, into the trees!" panted the big sky sergeant.

They reeled backwards into the dark shadows of the trees behind, as if fighting desperately. The mad scuffle between the two powerful men, with Johnny standing tigerishly by, his revolver flaming, as if he were trying to get in a death shot on the German, appeared to awe the others, who halted, staring.

And in a few seconds the reeling combat passed behind the belt of trees.

"In the name of nine missing cylinders!" gasped Ian as they halted and faced one another. "What—"

"Fer th' luvva Mike, change clobber with those two Bosches, skipper!" panted the big sky sergeant, pointing to two senseless Germans lying on the ground.

He himself darted to the bole of a tree, his gun flaming at the Huns, keeping them at bay. But it did not take Ian and Johnny long to jump to the situation—or to get some action. In frantic haste they donned the *feldgrau* overcoats and Bosche helmets, substituting instead the leather coveralls and flying teddy-bears on the senseless Huns.

In Enemy Hands.

IN a moment or two the rushing Germans were met by a strange sight. For out of the cover of the dark belt of trees, Ian, Johnny, and Sky Sergeant Tornado Wills appeared, covered in the long *feldgrau* coat and hod helmets of the Huns—and supporting between them the two senseless Germans in their own flying overalls and teddy-bears!

It was a bold and desperate ruse; but would it bear the fruit of success?

Johnny's heart beat to a mad tune as he recognised the Hun officer approaching at the head of the ground troops.

It was Baron von Fulke, the German ace of aces. His Fokker 'plane, marked with the Maltese crosses of Germany, stood in the clearing near by, and it was evident he had just made a landing from the night sky.

He was in a towering rage, his gross, blond face utterly distorted beneath the ghoulish black flying helmet and goggles. "*Allmachtig!* Who lit that green flare to show these *verdammte* fliers a landing?" he shouted.

"They dropped it from the 'plane, *Herr Oberst!*" shouted Tornado Wills in German. "But *Teufel!* We got them; we made them prisoners!"

Under his breath, to Ian, he added: "Let them drop face down in the mud, skipper. I shaved off their moustaches, but we don't want this Boche officer to recognise them yet awhile."

As they were loosed, both prisoners dropped senseless in the heavy, bog-like mud, burying their faces in it. Johnny felt a tense, hot excitement and fear as they were lifted up. The faces of the two men were now utterly begrimed and unrecognisable. But would the daring ruse succeed?

Baron von Fulke strode up and peered at them, thrusting his monocle in his eye. It was utterly dark down there in the depths of the woods, but it was evident he had seen enough and was disappointed. He muttered ragefully.

"It is not the Kapitän Chisholm and his ace brother, *Teufel!* But how came they to escape the ray?"

Gruffly he ordered the prisoners to be taken to a hut near-by in the woods and searched. Johnny felt his nerves drawing taut as bowstrings. They

had little time to act; the masquerade would be discovered when the flying clothes of those two Huns were removed.

It became evident, however, that the Baron did not intend to wait for a further report upon the prisoners. He shouted guttural orders in German, and the ground troops lined up before him, some score or so. Ian, Johnny, and Flight Sergeant Wills shuffled into places in the line-up, thanking the Fates for the darkness that covered them, yet fully aware that others of the Huns in the ranks were eyeing them askance. They knew they were not their comrades.

Untrained in emergency, however, they did not challenge the strangers in their midst.

The ace flier was speaking. "You are men of the machine-gun corps," he grated harshly. "In another five minutes you will proceed to your nests in the tree-tops. But—"

He paused, and a smile, half scowl, utterly malevolent, lit up his gross features.

"In another few minutes we are expecting a big squadron of British 'planes to come over the forest," he proceeded. "They will be armed with bombs to rain on the Chateau Noir, but never will they reach it. We have extended the range of the ray. As they reach the edge of the forest coming in, this Armada will be rendered powerless by the ray. But our gallant fliers will harass them, cut off escape."

Johnny clenched his hands by his side tightly as he stood there in the ranks. The Baron had paused and was smiling, with that evil glint in his eyes. But Johnny began to perceive the diabolical plot.

"The British will glide over the forest, firing their machine-guns ineffectually, frantically searching for landing. And my friend," purred the sinister Baron, "you will direct your machine-gun fire, not to bring them down, but to goad them on, make them keep their heavy noses up. Ach—yes, till they find landing in the grounds of the chateau. Then we shall have them our prisoners."

Johnny almost gasped. He guessed what the cunning enemy ace would do with those 'planes. Use them as decoys. He would send them out with German fliers, loaded with bombs, to drop on important Allied strategic points.

"To your posts then, my children," growled Baron von Fulke. "And let there be no mistake. Shoot down no 'plane unless it menaces."

And then—the amazing audacity of it!—Flight-Sergeant Tornado Wills stepped out in front of the ranks, and in hoarse German shouted orders. He had evidently taken the place of some non-commissioned officer whom he had knocked out, and his face was decorated by a fierce *Kaiserliche* moustache.

Johnny wondered how that mad masquerade carried through, until he learned afterwards that the non-com. was an old pre-war acquaintance of Tornado's, whose every gesture and tone the Sky Sergeant knew. It was sheerest chance that Tornado had come upon this German here in the forest of fear—but it was a chance that served him well.

The Jerries turned away sharply, and filed through the woods at running pace, Johnny and Ian with them.

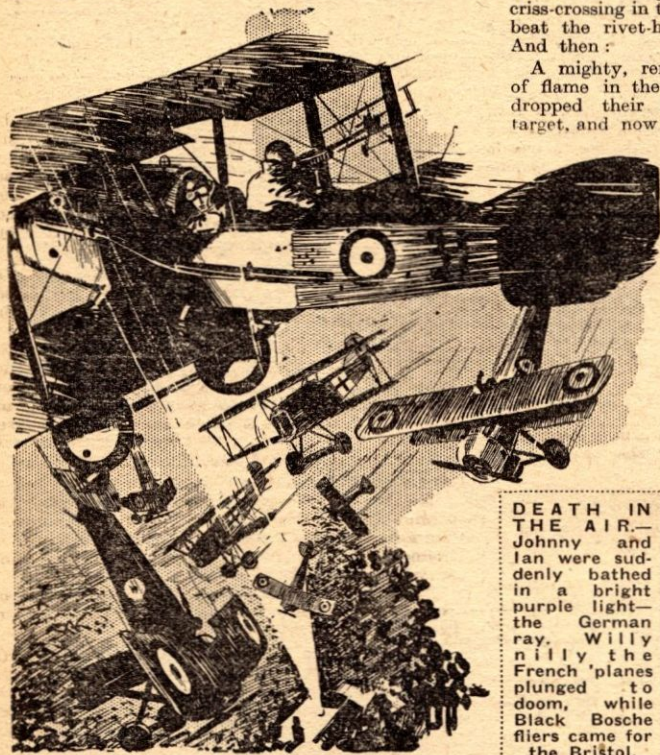
Blackest mystery shrouded the woods. Where the starlight shone through, it reflected stagnant pools of water like baleful green eyes, stunted trees leaning like drunken sentries of some spectral army; and everywhere was barbed wire, glinting cruelly in the weird half-light. Barbed wire!

Suddenly the foremost of the Huns stopped at a rough wooden ladder, leading upwards into the trees. In swift single file they mounted, on to a

eat walk or planking running through the trees above the barbed wire.

Johnny and Ian followed in the file, nerves tense. Suddenly Johnny had a feeling of overwhelming horror as he looked upwards. In the branches of the tree he saw a wrecked Camel, bearing the red-white-and-blue tricolour. In another was the remains of an Allied Spad. Wrecked 'planes brought down by the ghastly purple ray!

A guttural order caused Johnny and Ian in the rear to halt. Flight Sergeant Tornado Wills, acting his part to perfection, pointed to a nest among the branches of a tree, and the two stepped along the side-plank into it.



It was a machine-gunner's nest. There were two wicked Maxims, their bristling muzzles pointed to the dark sky.

"Gosh! If they start a shoot on our fellows with these—" panted Johnny.

"Hssh! We're going to stop 'em," gritted the big blond skyman. "Hallo—what's that?" he added in a sharp undertone.

Shouts—an outcry. Running feet pounding along the plank causeway lashed between the trees. A hoarse voice, full of desperate fear:

"Herr Oberst! Herr Oberst! There are spies in our midst—spies from the sky. They came down in the aeroplane and took the places of Hans Graelin and der Unteroffizier Grifinpoje. Somewhere they are amongst us."

Thr Baron von Fulke could be heard bellowing in startled rage. "Parade all men out on the planking. Line them past me for inspection."

A soldier came into Ian and Johnny's machine-gun nest with a bayonet gleaming. "Out, you!"

Johnny gripped himself against the tense excitement that ran through him like a flame as they lined out on the planking. For suddenly like a ghastly evil eye a red glow appeared to the left, changing to purple that spread a broad beam. And then the chateau was lit up by vivid lightning.

The silence that followed was tense for a moment or two. Through it beat a soft hum, rising gradually, the flat swish of wires. Staring up into the sky they could see the great flotilla of British 'planes—powerless now, with their engines dead—harried by the Huns. Golden spurts of machine-gun tracer bullets criss-crossing in the sky. Through the engine drone beat the rivet-hammer clamour of machine-guns. And then:

A mighty, rending crash, and an uprising wall of flame in the forest. In desperation they had dropped their bombs far from their intended target, and now were trying to glide for landings.

The mighty shock that made the boarding tremble gave Ian an idea.

"Down, fellow," he whispered fiercely, and suited the action to the words, himself clutching at the edge of the planking, and dropping down, hanging there in space. Johnny, as soon as he saw it, copied his example. The Baron von Fulke was coming along the planking with a powerful flashlamp, switching its white flare into the face of each soldier while he savagely wrenched each man's helmet away in turn.

He actually passed over the spot where Ian and Johnny clung on opposite sides of the planking. Both their helmets had gone, and fair-haired, set-faced they looked mutely at one another while above the next man was inspected by the savage flying Baron.

Would this man give them away?

No! He was speechless with dread and terror. Harassed and browbeaten, crowded like rats into trenches in the ground to fight and die, many of these men had lost all individuality, all power of thought and speech.

"Back! Get searchlights. Comb the forest!" screamed the

Baron, when he realised his inspection had proved abortive.

In pounding single file the Huns re-crossed the planking, over the heads of Johnny and Ian, who clung desperately to the edges. And at last all had passed overhead, including the Baron Rittmeister von Fulke himself.

When they were safely in the distance, Johnny and Ian clambered painfully up on the dim catwalk. In a few strides they had rejoined Flight Sergeant Tornado Wills.

"Well, we got out of that," gritted Ian. "Now for the chateau—and to put that infernal ray out of action!"

The Red Devils' final thrilling exploits next week, chums. You'll be gripped, held tense by every line of this last thunderous war flying tale.

DEATH IN THE AIR.—Johnny and Ian were suddenly bathed in a bright purple light—the German ray. Willy nilly the French 'planes plunged to doom, while Black Bosche fliers came for the Bristol.

THE JESTERS' REALM

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



First Hiker: There's only one thing I hate about hiking!

Second Hiker: What's that?

First Hiker: The milestones are too far apart!

(Cricket bat to DAVID GIBSON, 7, Cleveland Road, Stoke, Coventry, Warwickshire.)

ACHIEVEMENT.

NEW LODGER (at seaside boarding-house): Have you been doing well this holiday season?

PROPRIETOR: Not badly. Last month we had some people from Aberdeen!

NEW LODGER: Oh, well done! It's very seldom they're had.

(Fountain pen to THOMAS DODD, "The Hollies," Blakslaw, Newcastle Rd., near Nantwich, Ches.)

N(H)AY!

JIMMY (seeing a haystack for the first time): What kind of a house is that?

JARGE (his country friend): That's not a house; that's hay!

JIMMY: Garn, you can't fool me! Hay don't grow in a lump like that!

(Fountain pen to H. HARVEY, 8, Reservoir Road, Brockley, S.E.4.)

EYE, EYE!

TEACHER: Jimmy, what is hand-painting?

JIMMY: A black eye!

(Fountain pen to F. WILKES, 47, Eaton House, Battersea, S.W.11.)

ENLIGHTENING.

BOY (watching plane skywriting): Gosh, Bill, there's a wireless message that's caught on fire!

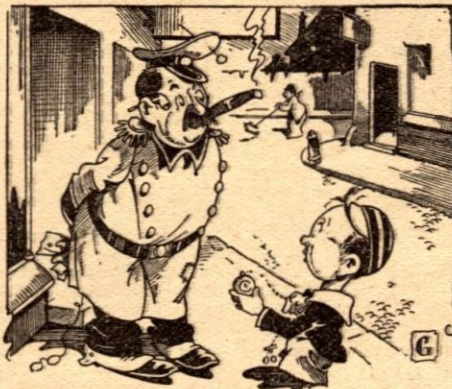
(Fountain pen to PETER WARNER, 17, Gray St., Northampton.)

A POSER.

FATHER: Come, Jimmy, even if you hurt yourself a bit, you shouldn't cry.

JIMMY: What's crying for then?

(Fountain pen to CECCHINO RUFFONI, 50, Angell Road, Brixton, S.W.9.)



Boy: Please, sir, is this a second-hand store?

Commissionaire: Yes, my boy!

Boy: Then can I have a second hand for my watch?

(Cricket bat to KENNETH HATTON, 32, Ashton Street, Prest, Lancashire.)

WANTED—A REWARD.

OLD GENTLEMAN: You're an honest boy, but the money I lost was a ten shilling note—not ten separate shillings!

BOY: I know, sir; but the last time I found a note, the man had no change to give me a reward! (Fountain pen to ARTHUR QUINN, 144, Raglan Street, St. Helens, Lancashire.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine, 5/8/33.

TIME, PLEASE.

LONG-WINDED LECTURER: If I have talked too long, it's because I haven't my watch with me, and there's no clock in this hall.

VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: There's a calendar behind you!

(Fountain pen to SYDNEY DAWSON, 41, Ferrand Road, Shipley, Yorkshire.)

THE RIGHT JOB.

BOY: I called to see if you were needing an office-boy.

MANAGER: I do nearly all the work myself, thank you.

BOY: That would suit me fine, sir!

(Fountain pen to A. WALDEN, The Grange, Stourton Cournde, Blandford, Dorset.)

ALL ROUND.

ART TEACHER: Tommy, how is it that you can draw circles so well?

TOMMY: Well, sir, I score for our cricket team!

(Fountain pen to A. BROGDEN, 25, Upland Grove, Harehills, Leeds.8)

HEN PECK—SKYWRITER! Hen Has a Perfectly Black Time at Puddlesea—but it doesn't all End in Smoke!



**A Chortling Complete
Tale Featuring Our
Comical Sky Riding Fun
Star.**

Sandy's Message.

"SKYWRITING?" said Farmer Hick to Henry Peck, "an' what be that, lad?"
"Un be one o' these here modern methods o' advertis'n," answered Hen Peck. "You has a thing what throws out a lot o' smoke at the back o' t'airplane, an' then you goes up in t'air an' dive an' swiggle about, leave'n behind a trail o' smoke what spells words see? Oi reckon there be a mint o' money to be made by the seaside advertis'n loike that?"

"Hey, tha's a bright lad!" said Farmer Hick proudly. "You go roight ahead an' do what 'ee loike. T'owd farm ain't never bin so prosperous since you chucked workin' on 'un!"

The last remark might sound like a backhanded compliment, but Farmer Hick didn't mean it as such. You see, quite recently Hen Peck had been the farmer's boy, until he had constructed a home-made aeroplane, which, by some miracle, he had managed to get off the ground and win a comical flying competition. With the prize-money he had paid off Farmer Hick's mortgage and purchased himself a second-hand, standard machine, proposing to cease his vocation as a farmer's boy and make money out of flying, with the farm as his headquarters. So far he had not been without success, and he looked forward confidently to making a goodly sum for himself and Farmer Hick out of this latest "skywriting" stunt.

So, a little while after Hen Peck had announced his intentions to Farmer Hick, a rather elderly, though quite reliable, 'plane might have been seen taking off from Farmer Hick's meadow. The homely looking, smoke-emitting apparatus underneath her fuselage gave the 'plane a rather droll

appearance due to Hen having constructed it from a disused dustbin and a tin stovepipe.

Hen circled once round the meadow waving to his boss and then, climbing to a safe height, opened up the smoke emitter, and dived and looped about his course until the single word *Hen* hovered in a shaky trail of smoke in the sky. Farmer Hick cheered admiringly as Hen's machine set off towards the seaside town of Puddlesea where he intended to exhibit his skill as a skywriter before the swarming holiday crowds.

He made good progress to the prosperous seaside resort of Puddlesea, and presently landed at the town's aerodrome, left his machine, and took a tramcar into the thick of the town.

Just about two hours after leaving Farmer Hick, Hen marched boldly into the offices of the Puddlesea and District Advertising Agency, announced himself as Hen Peck, the skilled skywriter, and demanded work. And just about two hours and one minute after leaving Farmer Hick, Hen Peck left the offices of the Puddlesea and District Advt. Agency more or less on his neck, with a large irate, general manager in the rear, expressing his sentiments in the following well-chosen words:

"I s'pose business isn't bad enough as it is, huh? without you flying chaps butting in and trying to pinch what there is of it away from us! Skywriting indeed! Why, we can't even get any billposting for ourselves—let alone skywriting for out-o'-work airmen! Get back among the sparrows where you belong!"

The office door slammed mightily and the irate gent disappeared from view. Hen Peck sat up and blinked.

"Funny! Oi thought Advertis'n, Agencies was

agencies what wanted to advertise! Oi seem to have made 'un quite cross!"

"S'marrer here?" said a voice with a decidedly Scotch flavour. "Ken there's bin a wee drap o' trouble?"

Hen turned about face to see a gaunt, though neatly dressed man standing over him.

"Oh, t'ain't nuth'n, sir," grinned Hen, scrambling to his feet hurriedly. "Oi muster annoyed 'em an' they chucked me out o' t'office. Y'see Oi'm a sky-writer. 'Oi goes up in t'air in me airyplane an' wroites adverts, loike, int' sky."

"I ken! I ken!" said the scotchman excitedly. "I'm McFlint of McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills. I was have'n a wee bit holiday in Puddlessea when it occurred to me what a waste it were all them hundreds and hundreds of people walk'n on yon promenade an' not a single advert for McFlint's Pills. So I came along to the advert agency to see if they could do me smeth'n cheap—but now I've met you, ye ken! Why, it's a murracle! Ye'r charge mon? What's ye'r charge?"

"Well," said Hen Peck, calculating quickly. "Oi'll wroite th'advert int' sky for thee for a coupla pun." "Splendid, mon!" said McFlint. "Great! Here, I'll write a wee bit advert for ye at once."

The Scotsman busied himself writing something on a leaf of his notebook as Hen was speaking. When he had finished, he tore out the leaf, folded it and handed it to our rustic airman.

"There ye are," said Scotty. "You write that in the sky. I'll be watchin' on yon promenade s'afternoon an' I'll meet ye at the aerodrome when ye come doon an' pay ye with pleasur!"

Long after he had left his first client, it occurred to Hen to look at the draft advert.

He unfolded the scrap of paper and gave an involuntary start, then with eyes wide with amazement, he read:

Take McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills if you wish to enjoy your holiday to the full. Wake up in the morning full of vigour and vitality. Defy that tired, lax feeling, that is robbing you of enjoyment, McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills. No drugs used in the composition of this excellent stimulant. Of all chemists, price one shilling per box, or direct from the sole manufacturers, McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills Limited, Perfection Laboratories, Pephampton-on-the-Mint, near Rattlebury, Hants, price one shilling and twopence, post free. McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills will keep you fit!

"Gosh ding!" gasped Hen Peck in a husky voice and almost on the point of collapsing. Oi'm glad that Scotchman hadn't a roll of wallpaper handy!"

Smoked Out!

AS the amateur airman journeyed on the tramcar to the aerodrome he was busy working out some abstruse problems in mathematics. Roughly speaking he discovered he would have to fly eighty-nine and three-quarter miles to write McFlint's advertisement—that wasn't counting the enormous amount of turning back he would have to do to cross the "T's" and dot the "i's!" And, long before he could finish, the opening sentence would have faded into the atmosphere!

But Hen Peck was a dogged youth, and once he had made a promise it never occurred to him not to keep it.

When he arrived at the aerodrome he had his petrol tank filled to the last drop and loaded up the homely dustbin, that was his smoke producer, until it was chock-full of the powdery chemical that formed into smoke when the special valve in the stovepipe was opened. He pinned his lengthy advertisement on the instrument-board and, with

the engine well warmed up, took off. He soared well up until the sea-front became visible with its swarming hordes of holiday-makers, banked round and came roaring along the coast towards the thickest part of the crowd.

"Better attract attention fust," he mused. "Else 'un might not watch!"

Hen throttled down to a comfortable cruising speed and pushed "t'airyplane's" nose down. Fifty feet or so above the crowd, he flattened out and opened up the throttle again with a roar that could not fail to attract attention.

Suddenly the top of a flagstaff on the promenade loomed into view. Hen had not noticed this before. His undercarriage was inches away from it when Hen Peck threw the machine into a vertical bank recklessly. There was a sudden jolt, but Hen breathed a sigh of relief as he righted the machine, and found it was apparently undamaged.

As he flew on merrily over the heads of the crowd, however, a chorus of angry roars and shouts struck on his ears.

"Funny! Seem cross about summat!"

Hen Peck turned in the cockpit and looked behind him, and then his helmet nearly shot off his head with surprise. Where but a second before had been a crowd clothed in the whitest of white flannels, in blazers of gorgeous hues, stood a mob of angry people coated from head to foot in black soot.

At first Hen thought it must be an army of nigger-minstrels escaped from the local music-hall. But suddenly he saw the real trouble! His smoke-container was wide open and shooting clouds and clouds of dirty black smoke out behind, sweeping the crowds along the front like a sooty hose-pipe!

"Gosh ding!" gulped Hen, and he dragged frantically at the control wire in the cockpit.

It came away loose in his hand and the smoke continued to ooze out at the back of the machine in thick black clouds. The wire had come adrift, and the smoke valve was wide open! Unnoticed by Hen, the tail of the 'plane had shaved the top of the flagstaff which had snapped the wire, dragging open the valve at the same moment!

Instinctively, Hen pulled up the nose of the machine and gained height, turning into a banking-climb towards the sea. He looked along the sea-front. Right along the beach from the flagstaff to the point when he had turned, was a long trail of blackness swarming with an angry mob of sweep-like humanity.

He turned out to sea and soon was too far away to hear the threatening roar that followed him, though the long streak of blackness was still conspicuous.

"Here's a mess!" groaned Hen. "How's Oi goin' to put un' roight?"

It was impossible to get at the smoke-container for it was right underneath the fuselage. To try and land would be to sweep the aerodrome and every part of the town he passed over with blackness. There was only one thing to do, then; to keep up over the sea until the smoke-producing apparatus was empty! And that would take hours, for Hen had filled it full to the brim before taking off!

*Sky Daze!

IT seemed hours to Hen Peck that he flew on over the sea, while the smoke poured from his rear unabated. Long ago he had lost sight of Puddlessea and the coast, and before him stretched only the straight horizon of the ocean.

"Oh, Lor!" moaned Hen, "if Oi goes on much longer, Oi'll finish up in Americay or summat or at t'North Pole! Why don't yon dinged smoke stop so's Oi can turn back!"

Another dreary half-hour slipped by and then to Hen's joy the smoke began to slacken down visibly. He was about to turn in his machine and endeavour to try and find his way back when he became conscious of the thunderous rhythmic roar of many powerful 'planes somewhere near him.

He turned. Behind him were seven or eight powerful machines, bearing the familiar bull's-eye sign of the R.A.F., flying in arrow-head formation immediately in his rear. They were overtaking him swiftly.

"Gosh!" Hen told himself. "Better git outer their way. Almost atop on me!"

He pulled back his stick to gain height and get above them and looked back. To his amazement the leading 'plane pointed up its nose and followed him, the rest of the machines following suit. Hen pushed his stick forward hastily, thinking he must have unwittingly anticipated a move they were about to take, but as his nose went down he was astonished to see the service machines copy him. They were following him!

They were not exactly following him, as he discovered a moment later—but they were actually chasing him! Suddenly the leading 'plane roared

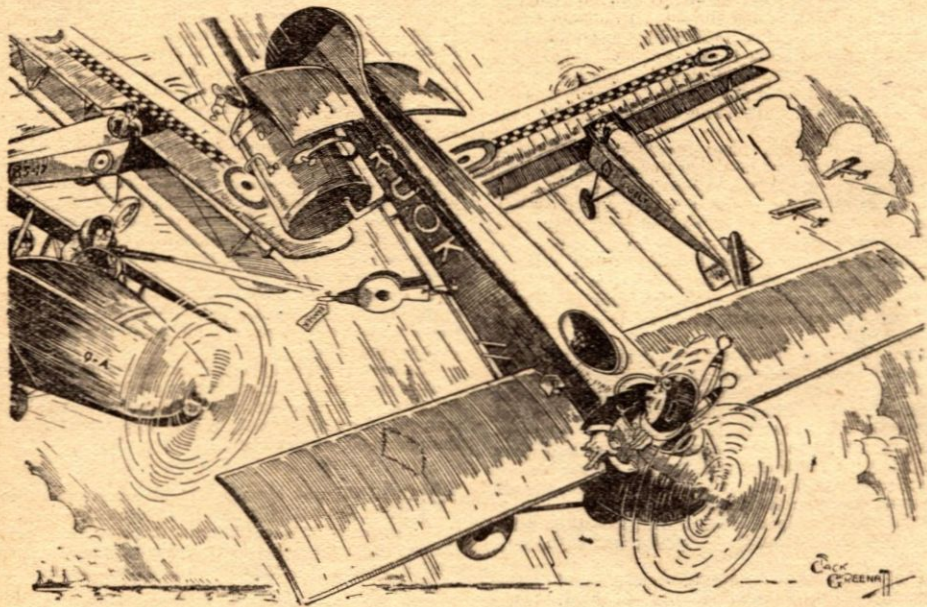
"Gosh ding!" screamed Hen, doing frantic things with his controls, for a collision seemed imminent any second. "There's a war on!"

But his cries were lost in the roaring of engines and the crashing of guns. What Hen was doing with his 'plane, he hardly knew. His blind instincts had full control of the machine. First he would take a headlong dive to try and get below his attackers, loop above them as they surged down after him, their guns spitting fire, or make t'airplane fairly stand on her tail as he dragged her up by main force to avoid a head-on collision with some vicious machine hurtling towards him. It was like a nightmare.

At last, by some fluke, a clear space opened ahead of him. Hen dragged open the throttle and shot through, bunking from those savage war-birds with every ounce of speed he could get out of his 'plane. In a second they were hot on his trail, but by some miracle Hen managed to keep the lead.

But they stuck to him like leeches. He dived and darted back and forth madly as they hurtled along, but he could not shake them off his trail. And all the time that ominous rattle of Lewis-gun fire haunted him in the rear.

How Hen Peck escaped being hit, he didn't know.



"PLANE CRAZY I—Hen Peck got the shock of his life when those R.A.F. fliers opened fire on him.

past him, banked round almost under his very landing wheels, and then came the "rat-tat-tat-tat" of a machine-gun!

Hen gave a mixed yell of astonishment and alarm, pulled up the nose of his machine almost to stalling point, trying to avoid the 'plane swerving about him. A second machine thundered over his head, her guns barking down at him terrifyingly, another opened fire on is tail, and then the next instant Hen Peck found himself amidst a veritable swarm of machines, diving, zooming, looping about him in all directions, all their guns blazing away at him at once.

For the guns seemed to blaze away at him the whole time. Ever and anon a machine would get above him and swoop down at a terrifying rate as though to smash him bodily; its guns spitting fire venomously, and then, as Hen shut his eyes in preparation for what seemed an inevitable collision, there would come a thunderous *wooooooom!* and he would open them to see the attacking machine swirling away from him and another one above him about to repeat the *manœuvre!*

Hen was almost on the verge of nervous collapse when his heart leapt with a faint flutter of hope.

Below him was a ship—an aircraft-carrier as he could see by her peculiar build and the wide landing platform facing up towards him! If he could only land on her and get away from these terrible war-planes that tormented him!

Hen swooped down-wind and watched the approaching landing platform apparently rushing up towards him. He throttled down and prepared to make the hazardous landing.

Bump! Bump! Bump! His wheels were on the deck; before him he could see men in aircraft uniform running this way and that to get out of his way and yelling frantic things at him which he couldn't catch. But Hen was too busy to take much notice of them.

He dragged back the stick. His tail-skid bumped down on the landing deck and the machine commenced to buck alarmingly back and forth. Hen expected any minute to tip over on his nose, but "t'airyplane" kept her wheels, and the bucking had the desired effect of checking the headlong career of the machine across the deck. At last, to Hen's relief she dragged to a full stop.

Men came running towards him from all quarters and fired abuse and questions at him, until presently an officer pushed his way to the fore, and demanded: "Where did you get your orders to land here?"

"Oi give 'em to meself," gasped Hen Peck. "Oi bin chased and fired at by a lot o' mad airmen Oi have, and Oi'd a' landed on a rowing boat if there hadn't been nought else, Oi was that desprit!"

"Dash it all!" said the officer. "Aren't you one of the men from number three squadron? Who the blazes are you then?"

"Oi'm Hen Peck, the skywriter," said Hen. "Oi've come from Puddlesea!" and then commenced to tell his sorry tale of the skywriting apparatus that went wrong and how he had got lost at sea. Meanwhile, the machines that had chased him were circling round the aircraft-carrier and landing one at a time in the rear. By the time he had finished telling the laughing officer his adventures, the whole squadron was landed on the deck and the pilots climbing out and hurrying over to see what it was all about.

"I'm afraid you've blundered into the midst of our manoeuvres," chuckled the officer. "You see we're Number Ten Interceptor Squadron and we're having a mock war with Number Three. We got intelligence that they were sending out a reconnaissance 'plane to spy on our position and they were using an ordinary civil-type machine so as not to arouse suspicion. I'm afraid our boys must have mistaken you for their machine!"

"Ding me!" gulped Hen. "An' does they allus shoot loike that when they's pretendin' to have a battle?"

"That's nothing to be windy about," laughed the commander of the flight who had joined them. "Our guns are only loaded with blank, but I must say the way you handled your machine was worthy of any man in the service!"

"Well," said the Commanding Officer, "I'm awfully sorry you've had such a hair-raising time. Anything we can do to help you?"

"No, sir," answered Hen. "Ceptin' pr'aps gimme a bearin' back to Puddlesea. I gotter get back and do my skywrite'n after I've mended my smoke tank."

"Skywriting?" said the flight-officer with interest. "What are you going to write?"

Han Peck showed him McFlint's advertisement. The flight-officer stared at it in amazement.

"Why! You'll never be able to write all that!"

"Oi don't think Oi will, but Oi took on t'job an' Oi gotter try!"

The flight-officer looked thoughtful. Presently he drew his commander aside and they commenced to discuss something earnestly.

"Well," grinned the Commander at last, "do it at your own risk. I know nothing about it at all officially, you see?"

"Thank you, sir," said the flight-officer, smiling. "I'm sure we shall enjoy the stunt." And then he turned to Hen Peck and added: "Get ready to lead the flight back to Puddlesea. We're coming with you to help you do your skywriting with the smoke-screen apparatus on our 'planes!"

"Gosh ding!" choked Hen Peck.

* * * * *

LATE that afternoon, the holiday-makers at Puddlesea had the unexpected pleasure of witnessing a sort of aerial pageant. From over the sea a squadron of powerful service machines loomed into view, headed by a somewhat battered-looking civil 'plane which luckily was not recognised as the soot-emanating craft of earlier that day. When the machines were clearly visible from the front they dispersed from their triangle formation and took up a flying position, one machine above the other with a space of a hundred feet or so between them.

But there were more wonders in store. Suddenly the old civil machine took a short dive, which seemed to be a signal. At once each machine began to emit from its tail a thin thread of black smoke, for they all carried smoke-screen apparatus choked down to leave a slender trail behind them. Another signal dive from the civil machine—and then the crowd yelled with amazement and admiration.

Each machine commenced to scrawl huge letters in the sky, looping and writhing and twisting about astonishingly like so many gnats. There were fifteen machines altogether, and each one was writing a line of its own. The spectacle, as the aeroplanes darted back and forth about their courses, sometimes so close to each other that the onlookers held their breath, was almost unbelievable. At a signal from the civil machine, the smoke was shut off, and there, clearly in the sky, written in mountainous letters, was the complete advertisement for McFlint's Perfection Peppermint Pills!

The crowd cheered themselves hoarse as they read that "that tired lax feeling was robbing them of enjoyment!" The service machines formed up into triangle formation and after dipping a salute, thundered off towards the sea.

* * * * *

MCFLINT was already at the aerodrome when Hen landed, for he had recklessly banded saxepon on a taxi in order to get there quickly. He was almost dancing with glee when Hen stepped, grinning, from the cockpit and asked him how he liked it.

"Marvellous, mon! Marvellous, I didna ken ye had all them aeroplanes worrrking forr you as weel! Best bit of advertisin' McFlint's have evorr had! I won't deny it!"

Hen Peck smiled with delight.

"Allus try to do the job proper, mister. Oi do that. But it would a' bin purty hard without the help of them other fellows!"

"Here's yer money, mon. An' I'll admit ye've earned it. One poond nineteen and tenpence!"

"Two pun, Oi think 'ee said, Mister McFlint, didn't 'ee?"

"Arr, laddie, but ye forgott to dot one o' the i's—so I've deducted twopence! Hey! What's up? Bring warrer somebody—he's fainted!"

Get Ready for More Laughs and Thrills next week with the Bad Luck Cowboy in "Smiler Cooks the Goose!"

THE OKAY TRIO! Okay Brooks, Prince of the Pigmies; Umpalonga, the Great Zulu and Senz the Jap Chap in Big Thrills Below!

WARRIORS OF THE CRATER



Like a Bullet from a Gun the Boulder crashed out of the Crater—Full on the Ant-fighting Foes.

A Gripping Scene from this
SPLENDID Complete Yarn of the
Jungle.

"O MY son and moon, yon jackal is scared out of his wretched skin."

Umpalonga, the giant Zulu, boomed the words. A broad grin split his ebony face as he watched the wizened pigmy who was careering wildly towards them, a great fear in his eyes.

"Gosh, it's Belemi!" Okay Brooks exclaimed. "Better halt, and see what's up!"

The English youngster brought the long column of pigmies to a halt with a wave of his hand. The Little Men were glad of a rest. Brooks was leading them through the African jungle to find territory in which they could live in peace and quiet.

Brooks's brows came together in a frown, as he watched Belemi's zig-zagging approach.

"I only hope the little fool hasn't caused some trouble with the Shimongos," he muttered.

"In that case, O my father and mother, Umpalonga will indeed knock in his head with his club," the Zulu boomed.

As he spoke Umpalonga's face took on an even happier look. The prospect of a scrap always made the big black beam. And if, as Okay half-feared already, it was the People of the Crater Belemi was frightened of, then a great fight it would be and Umpalonga's club, nothing less than a polo stick bound with copper-wire to strengthen it, would have much work to do.

For the big black considered the Shimongos worthy foes. A great nation of them there was, big men, fiery as the country of craters and volcanoes in which they dwelt. For that reason Okay had been at some pains to keep on the best of terms with the Shimongos. He wanted a peaceful passage through this country.

Okay waited with frowning anxiety as Belemi,

the only one of the pigmies who would not have laid down his life in the Britisher's service, came panting up.

"They will kill me!" Belemi moaned, through chattering teeth, in the pigmy tongue. "The People!"

While Umpalonga watched with scorn on his lips, and Senz, the little Jap, stood by as impassive as a statue, Belemi poured out his tale. What he heard made the furrow deepen between Okay's tanned brows.

It seemed that Belemi had fallen behind when the band, two thousand strong of pigmy men, women and children, had safely passed through the Shimongo impis, thanks to Okay's diplomacy, for a few tawdry beads had been a treasure to N'soko, their chief. Belemi had been tired and rested. Then, when he had set off again, he had come upon a baby rhino, and it was dead.

"A white rhino?" Okay gasped, steel in his voice. He knew what this meant.

"A white baby rhino, O Great One," Belemi answered, quailing before Okay's look. "It was dead when Belemi found it. But the Shimongo warrior did not think so. He thought that Belemi had killed it!"

Okay knew that the worst had happened. For white rhinos were treated as gods by the Shimongos. It meant death to anybody who killed one.

"So a Shimongo saw you," said Okay. "You fool! The whole tribe of them will be following us."

"Hearken!" Umpalonga suddenly said, and Belemi shivered anew for he had heard the sound. It was a deep rumbling noise that came across the tree-tops like tumbling waves on a rocky shore.

"It is the war cry of the Shimongos," Umpalonga

said, with vivid simplicity. "They come! It will be a great fight!"

But Okay knew there must not be a fight. He decided to send the pigmies on in front to safety while he and Umpalonga and Senz met the People of the Crater. They must explain.

He gave a quick command. The Little Men, to whom something of the anxiety he felt had been communicated, got to their feet with their loads. In ones and twos and threes they set off through the jungle.



THE RHINO RIDERS.—Like a jungle tank the rhino charged among the Shimongos. Umpalonga's polo stick did great work.

Belemi made to go with them.

"Come back, you!" Okay clipped. "You're coming with us!"

"No, no!" Belemi whimpered. "The People will kill me!"

Belemi was certain of that. For what he had kept from Okay was that he had deliberately clubbed the white rhino's baby. He had done it because he hated the whiteman who was leading the tribe out of their troubles. But for Brooks, he, Belemi, would be the chief, for was he not the cousin of the dead chief? It was to cause the white man trouble, perhaps death, that Belemi had in his blind hate, killed the animal. Belemi began to run in panic after the tail-end of the tribe wending through the trees.

"Come back, dog!" boomed Umpalonga, before either Okay or Senz could move. And with a single stride the big black hooked his polo-stick between the running pigmy's legs and down he crashed.

"Run away again and, by my knuckles, Umpalonga will give thee a sleeping draught from his club!"

the Zulu warned. "We are ready, O my sun and moon!"

Okay wasted no more time. He detailed Senz, the wiry little Jap to look after Belemi and see that he came along, and then, with himself and Umpalonga leading the way, they set off back along the narrow jungle trail.

They had not proceeded far, however, when something came suddenly from the direction of the volcano—a thick, white blanket that descended and enveloped them. There was a hot sulphury smell about it which brought a clammy sweat to Okay's body as they stumbled along through it.

"Where's Senz and Belemi?" Okay demanded suddenly, and tried to pierce the gloom behind him, but it was useless. "Senz!" he shouted. "Senz!"

There was no reply. Senz had become separated and with him Belemi.

"What's to be done, Umpalonga?" Okay asked. "We'll have to find them. If the Shimongos get them first it'll be all up with them!"

"If the Shimongos harm Senz then will Umpalonga break many of their heads," the Zulu said grimly, for there was a deep attachment between the yellow-skinned Jap and the darkie. "But we must wait. It would not do to fall into an animal pit in this mist!"

With what patience he could muster, Okay waited, while all around the shriek of birds, the buzz of insects, and the chattering of monkeys, went on as usual. He judged that half-an-hour had passed when suddenly the mist lifted. It was like a blanket being suddenly rolled back, and they saw the sun and the waving jungle greenery. The column of grey moved on.

"Now we will pick up the trail!" Umpalonga said, nosing round like an animal. At length a grunt told Okay he had found something!

"See!" the Zulu said, pointing to the ground. "Senz kept to Belemi. Their tracks run together. And here the Shimongos captured them. Come—follow!"

Eyes on the ground, the Zulu set off at a jog-trot, a pace which Okay had his work cut out to maintain. The trail led out of the thick jungle growth, out into the open, into long elephant grass, right up the slopes of the sleeping volcano.

Right to the top of the slope Umpalonga led. Here he pulled up short and something in the way he stood caused Okay to catch his breath.

Without a word the Zulu beckoned Okay to his side. The Britisher gazed down into the crater, a great cup-shaped valley half-a-mile across. It was down in the centre he saw that which Umpalonga pointed to.

It was a great fifteen-foot figure. A freak of nature formed from solidified lava to the resemblance of a grinning gargoyle. An ugly thing.

But the ugliest part was that to it were fastened two men—Senz and Belemi. Even from that distance it was seen that the wretched pigmy was shivering and whimpering, whereas Senz kept his face impassive.

Behind them on the ridges in the crater formation were grouped the Shimongos—a devilish, gibbering excited throng. They were watching, anticipating, waiting . . . for what?

Cornered at the Sacrifice.

UMPALONGA sniffed. He had the keen scent of the young buck. He pointed suddenly.

"Yonder, O my master, is honey," he said. "There, above the head of Senz. There is something terrible afoot. Truly—"

And then he broke off, stiffened. Okay, too, had heard the sound. Nothing more than a faint rustle it was, but they heard it and in it found danger. They swung round. In that moment three score leering Shimongo warriors armed to the teeth with spears and knobkerries stood up out of the long elephant grass around them, hemming them in.

Okay glanced around. Not a chance of breaking through did he see. He glanced upwards, too. They had stood beneath the limb of a straggly tree which found precarious rooting on the slopes of the volcano. That, too, seemed to offer no help.

"Well, Ebony!" Okay muttered with grim cheerfulness. "Looks like you're going to get all the fighting you want. Best of luck!"

"Umpalonga will send many Shimongo dogs to

The Shimongos understood the Zulu's taunts. Their anger flamed. Okay cocked his rifle ready for their rush. He meant to sell his life dearly. They stood back to back beneath the tree.

Then the rush came. Okay's rifle cracked. The leading warrior clutched his chest where a neat hole had been bored, leapt into the air, then crumpled untidily. He was dead before he reached the ground. The rest pressed in.

Umpalonga hit the first of them. As mallet-head struck bullet head the Shimongo's face registered surprise that the Zulu should have reached out so soon. Bullet-head cracked like a squashed chocolate box. Umpalonga accounted for another on the return swing. Three forms lay still on the ground.

And now they were at it hammer and tongs.

The air was hideous with Shimongo cries, thudding blows, and above all the boom of Umpalonga's voice. No odds were able to detract from the Zulu's sheer joy in the fight.

But it was a losing battle they fought. Already Okay's shirt was torn to shreds, while streaks of red flowing down Umpalonga's black body showed where the Zulu's novel club had failed to parry a spear thrust.

Okay's eyes were misting. Only the cheery voice of his black pal kept him going. And then—suddenly—the pressure slackened.



Okay didn't understand why.

The Shimongos fell back, staring.

To his ears came a squealing grunt and the heavy thud of hoofs. Of course! A rhino, that was what it was, but the knowledge conveyed no understanding to the Britisher's dulled brain.

The sea of Shimongo faces danced before his eyes a moment, then cleared.

Perfectly fit, he recovered quickly. He shook himself like a dog. The rhino's grunts and the heavy thud of its hoofs pressed closer on him. He turned his head and saw it.

Head down, little half-blind eyes glinting with sheer mad hate, it charged forward straight at him like a jungle tank, a vengeful mother seeking revenge for the death of its young. And its revenge was directed against a human-being—any human-being. Quick as a flash it came to Okay the reason the Shimongos had fallen back. They had left their ju-ju to wreak vengeance herself.

Then the instinct for self-preservation awoke Okay to action. Even so, it seemed he had left it too late.

"Grab, O sun and moon!" boomed the voice of Umpalonga, from a limb of the tree above.

The Zulu had leapt upwards at the first awareness

THE TORTURE OF THE ANTS.—The army of giant ants swarmed towards the gargoyle-like figure—eating everything in their path. And to the Shimongo's god two human figures were tied. Senz and Belemi!

the land of their fathers!" the Zulu answered. "And do thou, my father and mother, shoot straight that the Little One (he meant the Jap) will know we avenged him well!"

At last the contracting circle of warriors checked, as a leopard will before it springs. In another moment the Shimongos would hurl themselves forward.

"Come, Shimongo dogs!" Umpalonga boomed, his legs planted wide, his big, strong hands gripping his terrible club. "Or is it that the stomach is frozen inside ye? Come and feel the weight of Umpalonga's club. Many heads will it break to-day!"

of danger, gripped the limb and curled himself on to it like a performing acrobat.

Now he held his polo-stick down before Okay's face.

The charging white rhino was almost upon Okay when he gripped the mallet-head. Next moment he was hauled upwards. The soles of his shoes scraped upon the leathery back of the animal as it charged on. Okay had missed death by a fraction.

Then—*thud!* Carried onward by its blind, revenge-lusting charge the rhino's head crashed against the tree like a thunderbolt, shaking it to its foundations.

It shook Umpalonga from his hold. He had had no time to make good his grip. Down he crashed, and with him Okay Brooks.

They fell upon the rhino's shuddering back—and there they stayed. For, suddenly as things had happened, Umpalonga had the presence of mind to see that only upon the rhino's back were they safe.

"Hold thou on, my father and mother!" he roared, gripping Okay tight. "It will freeze the blood in these Shimongo dogs' bones to see us ride their god!"

Despite his position Okay could have laughed outright. The whole thing was so ludicrous. Two men riding a hate-maddened rhino that was a menace to life and limb. Yet in its very ludicrousness lay their salvation.

The rhino shook itself, as though to clear its stunned brain. It hardly felt the two on its back. Then it saw the gaping Shimongos and charged for them.

They did not run. Surprise, horror, and awe had them gripped. The jungle tank crashed four of them over like ninepins, trampling them dead in its wild stampede. Umpalonga, using his polo-stick and grinning hugely, swept two more down with a single swish.

And then they were through and charging on through the long elephant grass.

Now another problem presented itself. How to get this creature of hate to stop, so that they could dismount? To try to leap off would have been folly equal to flinging oneself from a window of the Flying Scotsman.

Yet it had to be done . . . somehow. With the passage of each second they were being carried further and further from Senz and Belemi, tied like sacrifices to the lava figure down there in the centre of the crater.

Okay told Umpalonga this as they hurtled along. The Zulu's black face split in a grin.

"It shall be done!" he said. "The club of Umpalonga shall do it!"

He waited until they were within a few yards of a thick-growing mimosa thorn and then he pushed his club before and between the rhino's thick short legs.

The effect was instantaneous. It was like a high-powered car skidding over. The rhino rolled over, head over heels, catapulting Okay and the Zulu twelve feet over its head into the mimosa bush. Umpalonga had judged it to a nicety.

"Great is Umpalonga!" he boasted, rather breathlessly. "Has my father and mother got a headache?"

"I'm not sure yet whether I've got a head at all," Okay answered, with a wry grin. "Every bone in my body feels like toothache. Oosh! Hullo, old mother rhino seems in a bigger paddy than ever!"

The white rhinoceros picked herself up, squealing madly and charged away into the jungle. That was the last they saw of the ju-ju of the People of the Crater!

"Poor brute!" Okay murmured. "It can't understand. And it saved our lives, no doubt about that."

"But it was a great fight, O my master!" Umpalonga grinned. "No greater fight hath Umpalonga had! A pity it was stopped!"

"You bloodthirsty old heathen!" Okay couldn't help saying. "I don't suppose you'll ever have had your fill of fighting. And, by all the signs, there'll be plenty more to-day. Come on, let's see what's happening to Senz and Belemi."

The Mountain of Fire.

THEY pushed up the side of the volcano again, traversing the side of a stream—a hot, steaming, sizzling stream of boiling lava which issued from a fissure near the crest.

Sweating, panting, they reached the top and looked down inside. They were behind the gathered Shimongos now. Beyond them Okay could see the grinning gargoyle with Senz and Belemi tied securely to it. And beyond that . . . something else!

Not even Umpalonga could find anything to say at the sight of them—they held his loquacious tongue dumb.

It was a spectacle to catch the breath. An army of giant ants coming forth, rank on rank. And, as though obeying the command of a single general, they were swarming over the solid lava formation down the slope towards the gargoyle-like figure, eating up everything in their paths. And to that figure two men were tied!

Then it came to Okay and his big black pal in the same flash of understanding what the meaning of it was.

The gathered Shimongos were waiting for just this. The honey above the heads of Senz and Belemi was explained. It had been placed there to bring the ants forth.

Voracious eaters as they were, they would swarm for it, up the gargoyle. And before they reached the honey they would pass over the bodies of the little Jap and the pigmy. It would be a living death.

In spite of the broiling heat Okay shivered. There was a tenseness about Umpalonga, too, which bespoke his emotions. And then Okay snapped out of the horrified coma into which he had been plunged.

"Horrible!" he breathed. "Horrible!" Then: "Quick, Umpalonga, we've got to do something!"

He looked round. His brain, and in fact all his senses, seemed to have been electrified. He saw and measured little things of which before he had not been aware. He saw, just below them, another fissure, inside the crater, one similar to that from which the ants had swarmed, and like the one they had passed from which the lava, like a natural safety-valve, was flowing.

Okay knew something of the structure of craters. He knew that if the fissure behind was choked the molten lava would find another way out. And perhaps that way would be through the dead fissure between him and the Shimongos. He hoped so, at least . . .

He spoke quickly to Umpalonga. The black seemed to understand. His eyes rolled round until they fixed on a giant boulder of solid lava and there they stopped. A moment later the black, with long pantherish stride, had hurried over to it. He heaved his broad shoulder against it, but it did not move. He grunted.

Then from his loin-cloth he eased his polo-stick. He prised the mallet-head beneath the boulder, and heaved once more. There was the sound of cracking, straining muscles, the glisten of beaded sweat on the Zulu's black body. And then the boulder moved . . . an inch . . . another . . . and then it was rolling.

Straight and true it went heaving down the outside

(Continued on page 28.)

CRICKET HINTS BY AN EXPERT.



BE A FIRST-CLASS CRICKETER!

In the fifth chat in this series our expert tells you more about bowling.

If You Want to Know Anything about Cricket Drop a Line to the Editor.

THE LEG BREAK.

A LEG BREAK is known to every boy—and feared by most. It is the ball which, on pitching, turns from leg to off. It is bowled by spinning the ball from right to left, in an anti-clockwise direction.

To bowl a leg break the ball should be held in very much the same way as for an off break. The difference is that the first finger is nearer the thumb, and is the only one on top of the ball, as you can see in the illustration. The second is farther down the right side of the ball.

The spin is produced by the first or second knuckle—whichever suits you better—of the second finger and the third finger. If you remember, your hand is cut away *under* the ball for an off break, but the reverse movement is required for a leg break. Your hand should be turned over the top, so that the ball comes out of the back of your hand.

You will find that plenty of wrist work is necessary for this break, and at first you will probably not get the ball to turn. This is because the movement is against the natural action of the muscles.

A right-hand bowler naturally tends to make the cut-away movement of the off break with every bowl. A left-hander, on the other hand, is inclined to make the reverse movement, and thus he normally bowls a leg break.

When you first attempt to bowl leg breaks, your length and accuracy will go all to pieces. Even after plenty of practise you will still be somewhat erratic. But once you learn to bowl a good leg break with average consistency and accuracy, your bag of wickets for the season will be almost doubled. For a leg break, when bowled properly, is one of the most difficult balls to play.

As you know, every batsman has what is called a "blind spot"—he sometimes completely loses sight of the ball for a moment when it reaches a certain spot in the air. This usually occurs when the ball is pitched about the leg stump—one of the best places to bowl a leg break. Once the ball enters the batsman's "blind spot" he is almost certain to lose his wicket.

THE YORKER.

A VERY useful ball you should learn to bowl whenever you wish, is the yorker. This is the bowl which pitches on the "popping crease"—the batting crease. It requires no spin, but is, none the less, fairly difficult to bowl to order. Pitched too short or too full, the ball is sure to be smacked to the boundary.

It is a nasty ball to send down to the batsman when he first comes in and is not judging the ball properly. He is inclined to think that it is a half volley, in which case he will try to hit it, unless he is very cautious indeed, with the almost certain result that his wicket is shattered.

The yorker is also very effective against a batsman who is well set and is beginning to hit out. If the ball is well fought it will in all probability deceive the batsman.

FLIGHTING.

FLIGHTING is a very useful method of disguising a simple straightforward bowl. It is exploited most successfully by a slow bowler.

To fight the ball, you toss it up so that the batsman thinks it is going to be a full-pitched bowl or a short one, while all the time it is a good-length bowl.

To make it appear to be a full-pitched ball, you must lob it slightly higher into the air than you do usually.

If it is to be a well-pitched bowl, then it must be bowled slightly slower. In the same way the seemingly short bowl should have a lower trajectory and be somewhat faster than ordinarily.

This variation of pace should be exploited by all kinds of bowlers. A fast merchant especially will make the batsman hit up catches by occasionally sending down a much slower ball. *But your action and delivery must be exactly the same as usual.* Otherwise the batsman will notice the difference in pace and will have time to play the ball properly.



WARRIORS OF THE CRATER*(Continued from page 26.)*

slope of the crater. A projecting ridge caught and lifted it as though flung by a giant hand up into the air. It dropped plumb into the live fissure, splashing the molten lava all ways.

But it stuck there, completely blocking the opening. The stream of lava ceased to flow downward.

"Good man!" Okay clipped. "Now, either that boulder will be flung out by the lava underneath, or the lava will flow out of this other fissure into the crater."

They looked down. A wild, frenzied wave of excitement had the Shimongos in its grip. The ants were less than fifty feet from the two bound men. They would reach them in seconds only. The primitive blood-lust was roused in the breasts of the People of the Crater. They were wild with the thought of the diabolical sport to come. They did not see what was sweeping down behind them.

But Okay saw and knew relief. As he had hoped, the lava, bottled by Umpalonga's boulder, had found the fissure on the inside of the crater an outlet. Now it flowed downward in a widening stream. In moments only the Shimongos would be cut off from the rear, with only one way of escape, from being boiled alive—and there the ants were.

The Shimongos were too interested in the spectacle before them to notice. Sitting back on their shields or their haunches they watched the march of the giant ants toward their prey. And then suddenly the rear-most warrior let out a terrified yowl! The boiling lava had burned his bare feet!

A growl from those in front to be quiet and let them enjoy their sport did not stop him yowling, nor those nearest him from taking up the cry as their feet burned. In five seconds a milling mass of natives were pressing forward to escape. Panic took hold of the People of the Crater.

Down through the centuries it had come that a fire dwelt in the earth beneath their feet. Some day it would breathe forth destruction again, so the Wise Ones said. They thought that day had come now. This was the Great Fire's first warning. And they stampeded to avoid destruction!

They cared not that the ants lay ahead. Ahead

lay safety and they rushed, a howling, screaming mob, that way.

Umpalonga chuckled.

"Great are thou, O my Sun and Moon!" he boomed. "And great is the anguish of the Shimongos . . . But how to save the little one who is the friend of Umpalonga?"

"Wait and see!" Okay clipped, a light of triumph dancing in his keen, grey eyes. "I've an idea that boulder won't hold back the lava much longer and then it'll stop flowing down into the crater. We'll have to get Senz and Belembi free then before the Shimongos smell a rat."

It happened as Okay expected. Suddenly there was a sound as of a bottle being uncorked, just behind them, but a thousand times louder. As they turned their gaze the great boulder shot up out of the fissure, curling right over their heads and down the slope inside the crater.

Like a prancing fury it shot down and up the opposite slope among the ant-fighting natives. At least a score were flattened to the ground never to rise again before it stopped, but its purpose had been served. Nothing on earth now would convince the Shimongos that the volcano was not once more returning to life.

And now that the flow of lava had ceased Okay and Umpalonga picked their way downward. Belembi, cowardly wretch that he was, had fainted. Umpalonga tugged him free and slung his senseless form negligently across his shoulders.

Okay cut free the Jap whose face still showed no sign of emotion and after a brisk chaffing of his limbs he was ready to move. "I knew you would come," he told Okay simply. "Now I am ready!"

And, with Umpalonga carrying the senseless form of the pigmy, they turned their backs upon the shambles of men and giant ants in the Crater of Doom. They went swiftly on the trail of the Little Men.

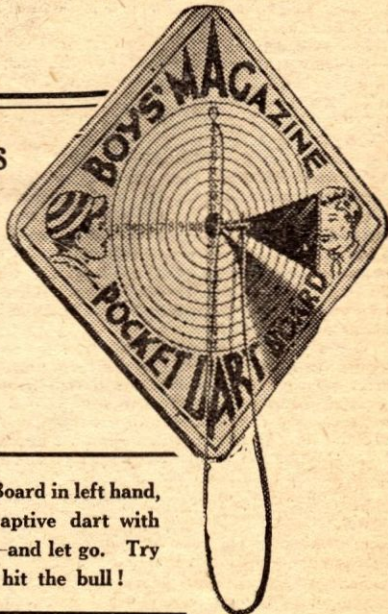
If you like *Jungle Tales* you'll enjoy the exploits of the *Jungle Detective* which appear next week. And look out for great gift news, chums.

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Hold Board in left hand, pull captive dart with right—and let go. Try to hit the bull!

GIGANTIC NEW EPIC OF THE AIR! Mystery and Daring in the Clouds.

The S.O.S. Squadron!

You'll Enjoy Every Word of This
Wondrous Flying Yarn, Chums.
By HAMILTON SMITH



FINISHED! Driven from the R.A.F.! Life seemed very hard to Jimmy Hart, the young airman, whose skill and daring had earned for him the nickname "Ace."

He had been smashed from the skies by a mysterious scarlet machine, and for the loss of his plane he had been cashiered. Then when he was in the bluest fit of despair he was visited by a mysterious stranger—Captain Vane, who had got down to business at once.

"Have you any idea as to why you were attacked and by whom?" he asked.

"No, unfortunately, I haven't," replied Jimmy.

"Then I will tell you! It was a man named Zinberg."

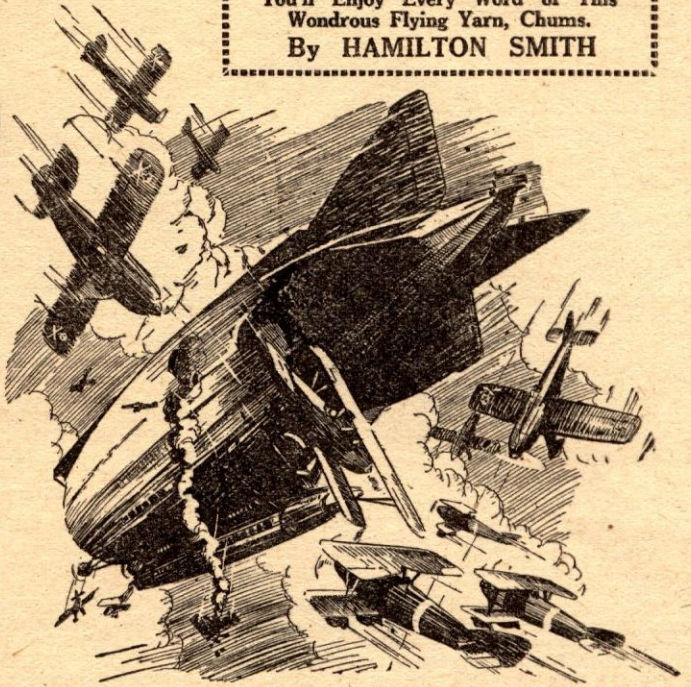
Jimmy started. He had met Zinberg once at Baghdad, when on service there. "He must have thought that you had learned his secret—a secret that threatens to wipe the white races from the earth," Vane told Jimmy. "With his wealth and power, he is the master-mind behind this fearful plot. Yet all his devilish cunning would be useless without the support of the Secret Council of Five, who rule supreme in the mystic land of Tibet.

"I and a handful of men have formed what is known as the S.O.S. Squadron," Captain Vane went on, "to fight a lone and desperate battle against these evil forces. Will you join us?"

"I'm with you, sir," Jimmy cried eagerly.

In a giant airship, hovering twenty thousand feet above the North Sea, Jimmy met his future comrades, Wolfe, Kerdin, von Elk, and others, tried men all. The dirigible took them to a secret base in the mountains of Tibet. Jimmy, with Vane, Wolfe and Fawcus, was soon picked to assist in blowing up one of Zinberg's ammunition trains in Russia.

Fawcus was killed in an attack by eight of Zinberg's machines, but six enemy planes were brought



down. The trio had perforce to land at one of their depots to refuel.

While resting there they were attacked by some of Zinberg's soldiers. Vane and Wolfe got clear, but Jimmy was knocked unconscious and captured. When he came round he was lashed to a chair in the depot, and Nickolay, the Russian who guarded the place, was standing above him.

"So Mr. Hart, we meet again," he drawled.

"Zinberg!" gasped Jimmy.

"Yes," smiled the other. "And now you are going to tell me where Vane's base is." With a fiendish grin he stretched out his hand and drew a red-hot iron bar from the stove.

JIMMY HART wetted his dry lips with the tip of his tongue.

"I refuse to tell you!" he answered, striving to keep his voice steady.

Zinberg smiled, a devilish sinister smile. The red-hot iron came nearer to the helpless boy's eyes.

"You have one last chance, Mr. Hart, before I burn your eyes from their sockets," purred Zinberg.

Where is this secret base where Vane houses his airship and from which he operates?"

"I won't tell you!" burst out Jimmy hoarsely.

He tried to close his eyes to shut out the sight of that dreadful iron. But he could not. The thing fascinated him. In another moment it would be pressed against his eyes, and in awful, searing agony he would know the tortures of the damned.

"Think, Mr. Hart," purred Zinberg. Steadily the burning iron moved closer and closer. "To know agony which will shrivel your very soul—to feel the iron burning into the sockets of your eyes—into your very brain—and then to be a maimed, blinded and useless thing—"

With the frenzy of despair, Jimmy writhed and struggled in his bonds, but they had been tied by expert hands and the soldiers still had him in their grip.

Rough and brutal men though they were, more than one of them could not repress a shudder as with diabolical enjoyment Zinberg taunted the boy the while the iron moved steadily forward.

"There, Mr. Hart," smiled Zinberg, pausing at last, "you can feel the burning heat of it now, can you not? No, don't faint. That would spoil everything. I am going to count three. When I have done so the iron will be pressing lightly against the ball of your eye. That will loosen your tongue, I do not doubt. One—two—"

Bang! The sudden bark of a heavy automatic cut in on Zinberg's words, the red-hot iron bar clattered from his hand to the floor, and with a choking rattle in his throat, he spun round to crash heavily face first to the floor.

"Up with your hands—everyone of you!" rasped a harsh voice, and as Jimmy focused his eyes in amaze on the doorway, he saw standing there the leather-clad forms of Captain Vane and Wolfe, both with levelled automatics in their hands.

"I'll hold them, Wolfe!" rapped Vane, as the hands of the soldiers crept upwards. "You get their guns!"

Obediently the grim-faced Wolfe stepped forward, and whilst the soldiers stood motionless, covered by Vane's automatic, he collected the rifles with their fixed bayonets and bundled the whole lot outside into the night.

That done, he crossed to where Jimmy Hart was sitting, and opening his clasp-knife he commenced to saw at the boy's bonds.

"Steady, lad!" he said coolly. "We'll soon have you out of this!"

A moment later the ropes fell away, and with a quick glance at the huddled and motionless form of Zinberg, Wolfe helped Jimmy towards the door.

"We are going now!" Vane's voice rang harshly through the hut. "If any of you attempts to follow us you do so at your peril!"

With that he, Wolfe, and Jimmy were gone, slamming shut the door behind them and running desperately through the darkness.

"Our machines are hidden near here," panted Vane as they broke through the dark shadow of the timber. "When we realised the soldiers had got you, we took off to lull them into a sense of security. We merely got height, though, and returned with engines cut out!"

"If we had not taken off," grunted Wolfe, "we'd have been shot down. But I'm glad I got back in time to give that cursed traitor, Nikolay, what was coming to him."

"That wasn't Nikolay," replied Jimmy. "It was Zinberg!"

Before he could explain further, a shot rang out behind them and another and another.

"You have no time to get your machine," panted

Vane. "Your engine must be icy cold. Get into the rear cockpit of mine. Here we are!"

The two black fighting monoplanes loomed up through the darkness, and as Jimmy scrambled aboard Vane's two-seater, the other switched on and leapt for the propeller.

The warm engine picked up at once with a shattering roar, drowning the crackle of the rifles, and next moment the two machines were tearing forward through the darkness to soar up into the night.

Below them Jimmy's monoplane blazed furiously, for braving a ragged volley from the soldiers' rifles, Wolfe had dashed to the machine and fired a Verey cartridge into the forward cockpit, setting the airplane on fire so that it should not fall into the enemy's hands.

It was far out in the lonely and desolate wastes of the Gobi Desert that the two machines came gliding to earth an hour later.

Stiffly vacating the cockpits, Captain Vane and Wolfe listened to what Jimmy had to tell them about the cunning of Zinberg in hanging Nikolay and taking the man's place.

"Well, the scoundrel's dead now," said Vane. "That bullet of Wolfe's got him through the head. We'll wreck the ammunition train as we originally intended, then turn our attention to wiping out the Council of Five!"

They conversed a little while longer, then wearily stretching themselves out beneath the machine, were sound asleep almost at once.

DAWN saw them in the air again and towards mid-morning the two black monoplanes landed near the bridge which Vane was going to blow up that night in order to wreck the ammunition train.

As Vane had said, the bridge spanned a dried-up water-course, and after taxi-ing their machines into the shadow of a timber belt some little distance away, he and his two companions made camp near the bridge.

They soon selected the best position to place the high explosive, but afternoon was merging into dusk before all was ready.

"According to Prendergast's wireless message," said Vane, glancing at his wrist-watch, "the ammunition train is due in less than ten minutes—"

He broke off as from away towards the west came the drone of powerful air engines. Rapidly the noise grew in volume, then from out of the dusk appeared two scarlet fighting scouts, flying low and coming up at a terrific speed.

"Ye gods!" shouted Vane, wheeling on Wolfe. "It's two of Zinberg's machines!"

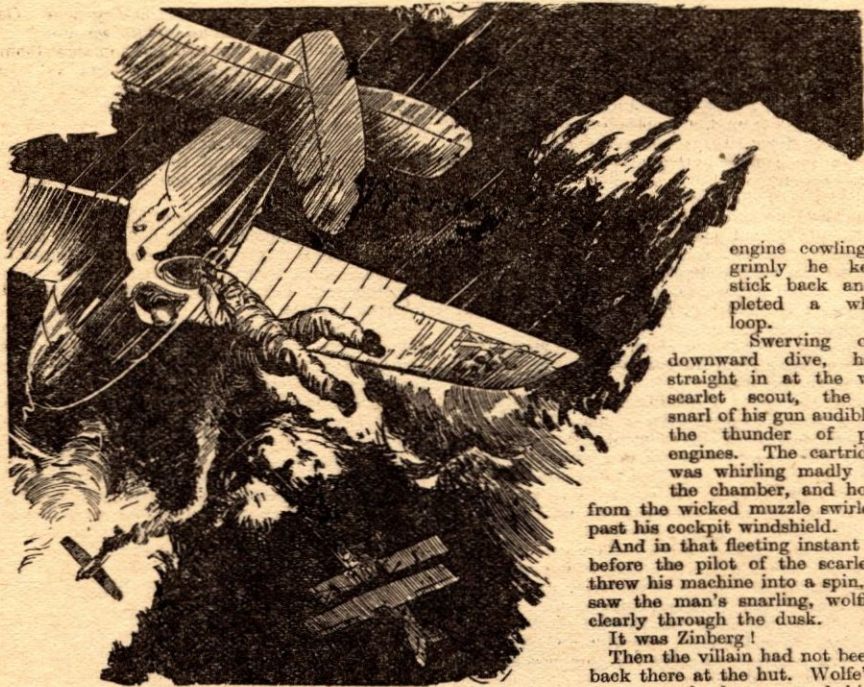
Even as he spoke the two scouts thundered overhead, then wheeling with noses down, their synchronised guns blazed into lurid life and bullets spattered the ground near where Vane was crouched by the fring push which connected the explosives under the bridge.

"Take off and fight them!" yelled Vane, but already the grim-faced Wolfe was running madly for his machine with Jimmy at his heels.

Vane had found cover in a narrow gully where he was lying full length under an out cropping of rock. It was impossible for him to take off as the ammunition train was due any minute now, and unless their scheme to blow up the train was to be frustrated, he had to remain on the ground to wreck the bridge.

Wolfe's engine picked up with a shattering roar and as he swung himself up into the forward cockpit Jimmy scrambled up into the rear one.

Next instant the black monoplane was tearing forward through the dusk to take the air in a steep



HUNG OVER DOOM!—Jimmy hung suspended in space, clutching the swivel gun. And below him came Zinberg to shoot him down.

upward climb. Realising that to attempt to out-climb the two scarlet scouts was hopeless, Wolfe whipped forward his control stick at three hundred feet and went roaring earthwards again.

Then back came the stick and the black monoplane went soaring up and up in a wild zoom. At the very top of the loop Wolfe whipped the stick across and rolled. Then forward went the stick again and with guns stabbing lurid flame through the dusk he and Jimmy roared down on the nearest scarlet scout.

The leather-clad pilot wheeled to meet him, pulling a sharp wing turn. But one thought was uppermost in Wolfe's mind and that was before he could have any chance of emerging from the fight alive he must even the odds against him.

He saw his opportunity in that split second in which the scarlet scout pulled its wing turn, and his blazing gun raked the empty machine from engine cowling to tail-plane.

The leather-clad pilot leapt to his feet, his face convulsed with pain and terror, his gloved hands clawing at his blood-stained flying jacket. Then he crashed forward over the controls and as his machine fell away into the death spin, Wolfe yanked back his stick and went swooping upwards in a zoom.

But like a scarlet meteor the other scout was already hurtling in at him with savage gun aflame. Its pilot had glimpsed his comrade's death dive and his face was wolfish in its passion. His comrade would be avenged before this fight was over.

Wolfe's dashboard shattered into riven wood and splintered glass, and bullets ricocheted off his

engine cowling. But grimly he kept his stick back and completed a whirlwind loop.

Swerving on the downward dive, he tore straight in at the wheeling scarlet scout, the vicious snarl of his gun audible above the thunder of powerful engines. The cartridge belt was whirling madly through the chamber, and hot flame from the wicked muzzle swirled back past his cockpit windshield.

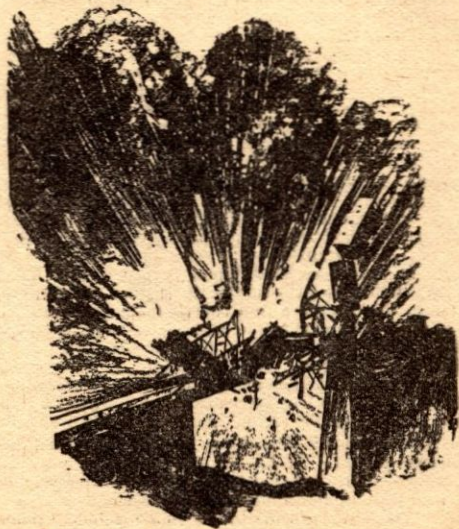
And in that fleeting instant of time before the pilot of the scarlet scout threw his machine into a spin, Jimmy saw the man's snarling, wolfish face clearly through the dusk.

It was Zinberg!

Then the villain had not been killed back there at the hut. Wolfe's bullet must merely have seared his scalp, knocking him momentarily unconscious.

No time to speculate on that just now. Zinberg had thrown his machine into a spin from which he emerged with a sudden roar of high-powered engine to go tearing earthwards in a screaming dive.

Above the roar of his engine sounded the shriek of wind through flying wires and struts, then back came his control stick and the scout soared up in a wild and almost perpendicular zoom.



Wolfe followed grimly and relentlessly, Jimmy's Lewis gun in the rear cockpit stabbing crimson through the deepening dusk. But already Zinberg had rolled and was tearing down on the black monoplane, intent on finishing off the fight.

By expert piloting Wolfe pulled clear of the deadly stream of bullets from the scout's synchronised gun, and whipping forward his control stick, he went earthwards in a thundering nose dive, swerving madly as he went.

Crouched over his controls, his cruel and bearded lips agrin, Zinberg followed. In his heart was wild exultation, for he had got the measure of these two British swine, and he knew it.

But from the muzzle of Jimmy's gun in the rear cockpit blood-red flame was splitting the dusk with livid tongue and suddenly, his face contorted with pain, Zinberg sagged drunkenly in his seat.

He had been hit in the shoulder, and as one nerveless hand fell away from the control stick, he gripped the stick with the other.

Sick with the agony of his wound he had only one thought now—to escape. Below him, Wolfe had already whipped back his control stick and was soaring up and up into the dusk in a whirlwind loop.

He would come out of that loop to scream down on Zinberg with gun aflame. Zinberg knew it, and as he swung his machine away towards the west he took one scared and hasty glance upwards.

Next instant with a great bellow of triumph which was drowned in the thunder of his engine, he swung his machine again and was boring up through the dusk towards the black monoplanes.

For the worst had happened to Wolfe and Jimmy. Right at the top of the loop, when the undercarriage wheels were pointing up into the greyness above, Wolfe's throttle had jammed.

The first intimation Jimmy had had of the disaster was when centrifugal force had begun to slacken and he had found himself frantically gripping his gun mounting to keep himself from hurtling head-first out of the cockpit.

Bitterly he blamed himself in that first dreadful moment for not having strapped on the safety belt. But there was no time to think of that now. Indeed there was no time to think of anything except saving himself. As the machine thundered on upside down, Jimmy hung suspended in space, his hands frantically gripping the swivel gun above him.

To add to his peril Zinberg's scarlet scout was coming up at him with gun aflame. He could see Zinberg's face alight with evil triumph.

On the ground below Vane had seen the boy's peril. But he was powerless to do anything, for even Jimmy swung there in space, the ammunition train was thundering towards the bridge, crimson smoke swirling from her stack to mingle with the ruddy glow of her illuminated engine cab.

On roared the train—one thousand tons of high explosive thundering through the night. She had almost reached the bridge now. Another hundred yards—fifty yards—

"Got you!" snapped Vane.

With that he pressed the firing push. And as he did so there came a dull reverberating roar audible above the thunder of the aero engines overhead, and the bridge dissolved in a crimson sheet of leaping flame and hurtling, burning debris.

Almost in that same instant of time the ammunition train seemed to leap outwards and downwards into the blazing conflagration of the wrecked bridge.

Simultaneously Vane flung himself flat on his face on the ground. As he did so there came a terrific and deafening roar, the dusk was riven by a terrible sheet of livid flame and the ground quivered and trembled as though in the throes of an earthquake.

Stunned and appalled by the roaring thunder of the explosion, Vane was almost torn from the ground by a furious blast of hot and acrid air which scorched like the breath of some gigantic furnace.

That same blast of air, sweeping upwards, caught the machines of Zinberg and Wolfe, whirling them like leaves before the gale.

Jimmy was almost snatched from his gun, but grimly he held on, and the haggard-faced Wolfe, juggling frantically with the throttle, managed to release it.

Almost instantly the roar of his engine died away, the nose of the machine dropped, and as the monoplane swooped down out of the loop, Jimmy braced himself. Then with a jerk which nearly wrenched his arms from out of their sockets, he flopped back into the cockpit.

Wolfe took one swift glance round to make sure that Jimmy was all right. Then forward went his control-stick and with synchronised gun ablaze he roared in at Zinberg.

But Zinberg had already got his reeling machine under control, and whipping round, he thundered away into the deepening dusk.

His scarlet scout was faster than the black monoplane, and realising the futility of pursuit, Wolfe wearily closed down his throttle and went gliding down to land near where Vane was standing staring along the valley which was now one vast stretch of burning wood and blazing wreckage.

For The Treasure Of Polkar Kio.

REALISING the possibility of Zinberg returning with reinforcements, Vane decided to get off as soon as Wolfe's machine had been overhauled, and within the hour the two monoplanes were winging their way back towards their far distant base amongst the lonely hills of Tibet.

Shortly after dawn they landed to refuel at one of Vane's secret depots, and after a brief sleep they took the air again and reached the base at nightfall.

After a much-needed wash and brush-up and a thrice-welcome meal, Vane lost no time in calling a meeting of his pilots.

"The next move, gentlemen," he said solemnly, "is the most serious of all. We must locate the monastery where the Council of Five are hiding and bomb them and the place to smithereens. That will wipe out the leaders of this war movement and the whole thing will peter out like a damp squib. In the meantime, however, in order to carry on we've got to get some more money."

Jimmy looked at him. More than once the boy had wondered where the money came from to run the great airship and to buy ammunition and fuel for the fighting airplanes.

Vane smiled grimly, noting that glance.

"An organisation like this of ours costs money," he explained, "and we get that money from the treasure vaults of the monasteries of these black-robed priests of Tibet."

"You mean," said Jimmy in amaze, "that you obtain your funds by raiding the very men whom you are fighting?"

"Exactly!" laughed Vane. "And to-morrow, after we have had a day's rest, it is my intention to raid the monastery of Polkar Kio! I will take with me one pilot, and that Tomo servant of mine who knows the country well."

"But Polkar Kio is the most zealously guarded monastery in the whole of Tibet," protested von Elk, "and strange and terrible tales are told of the black magic and sorcery which takes place within its walls."

"And why is it the most zealously guarded?"

took up Vane quickly. "It is because there is treasure there beyond the wildest dreams of man. A successful raid on the treasure vaults of Polkar Kio will supply us with funds sufficient for months."

"Yes, that's all right," said the scar-faced Kerdin slowly, "but if they get you, chief, those carrion crows of priests will show no mercy!"

"I know that, Kerdin," said Vane gravely. "But

dead and no voice is ever raised save in the chant of spells and curses."

"It sounds a pleasant place," commented Vane grimly. "Could you take me to it, Telyak?"

"Yes, master."

"Then we leave for there to-morrow night," said Vane, rising. "You will come with me, Jimmy, for von Elk and Kerdin are still on the sick list and I am leaving Wolfe here in charge of the base."

The Temple of Terror.

WITH a deep-throated roar of powerful engines the two black monoplanes tore across the crater floor. Tails came up, and as the pilots inched back their sticks, the fast little fighters went boring up into the sunset sky. Jimmy and Vane were taking the air on the journey to the sinister monastery of Polkar Kio.

In the rear cockpit of Vane's machine crouched the swarthy Tomo, shivering as much with fear and apprehension as with cold.

For it was madness, this raid on the treasure vaults of Polkar Kio. Did not the restless spirits of the dead walk within those black and age-old walls; and were not the litanies chanted by the voices of a ghostly choir?

Black magic and dread sorcery held sway in Polkar Kio, as every pilgrim knew. And the priests who guarded that vile shrine of Buddha were armed beneath their black and sombre robes.

Few ever ventured near grey Polkar Kio; none ever gained admittance. Yet these two Englishmen were not only going to attempt to gain entry, but were going to rob the very treasure vaults which lay hidden within that lair of evil.

They would never live to return. Dusk had long since deepened into night when the two machines came gliding down out of the blackness to land on a rocky and wind swept plateau.

"The monastery lies in the valley down there," said the Tomo, pointing down through the darkness when he, Vane, and Jimmy had walked to the edge of the plateau. "A path leads down into the valley.

"It brings you out under the very walls of Polkar Kio, master," he said. "But those robes will not gain you admittance, for no wandering Lamas nor holy pilgrims are ever welcome there."

"I know that, Telyak," nodded Vane. "But I rely on gaining admittance by a more subtle method than a plea for lodgings for the night. Now get you back to the machines and keep guard there until we return!"

Obediently the Tomo moved away and Vane and Jimmy took the rugged path which led downwards to the valley.

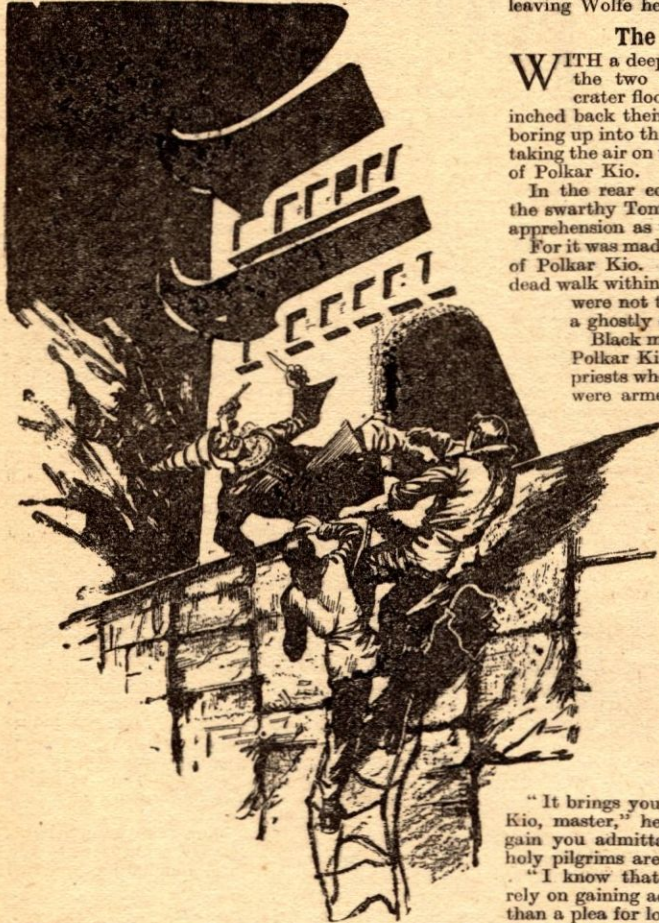
There was no moon and they had almost to feel their way along the blackness of the valley bottom. Then suddenly Vane halted, his hand on Jimmy's arm. Before them in the darkness loomed a dense black shadow.

"It is the outer wall of the monastery," whispered Vane.

Moving forward to the wall he produced from a pocket inside his robes a light rope ladder of the finest manilla with a rubber-covered hook of thin, tempered steel at one end.

A twist of his wrist sent the hooked end of the

(Continued on page 36.)



THE GUN GOES OFF!—The evil monk had severed one strand of the rope ladder when Jimmy acted. He whipped out his heavy service revolver and flung it unerringly at the killer.

it is a risk I must take, for our funds simply must be replenished."

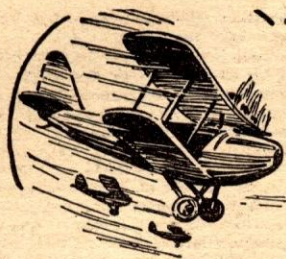
With that he sent for his Tibetan servant, and when the squat and swarthy Tomo appeared in the cave, Vane asked:

"Telyak, what do you know of Polkar Kio?"

The Tomo shuddered.

"Master," he replied in a low voice, "it is a monastery of strange shadows and lost souls. In a valley in the hills it stands hidden from the eyes of men. Within its walls are raised the spirits of the

CRASHING FINALE OF THIS GREAT CIRCUS TALE.



DOOM TO THE FLYING CIRCUS

By

H. WEDGWOOD BELFIELD.

Storm at Sunset!

DURING the hours that followed Dick's hopes were at a low ebb. Not once was he given a chance of making a getaway, not for a single second was he unguarded by the sinister red-garbed Avengers, and every passing moment made the impending doom more certain.

With despair in his heart he watched the shaft of sunlight creep across the floor, growing more and more horizontal as the sun dipped towards the west. The stifling heat of the day passed, and through the window came a busy murmur as the city awoke from its mid-day siesta.

Evening now—a tint of gold in the mellow light and the Red Avenger reappeared, with two of his masked servants striding at his heels.

With his slant eyes dancing in triumphant mockery, he faced Dick.

"The time has arrived, foreign devil," he purred. "See, these my servants will escort ye to the *mueddin's* tower. Others are lying in wait for your accused master to seize him on his way hither. The Scared Hand cannot fail."

He hissed a command in sibilant Chinese, and instantly the two Chinks sprang to Dick's side. A knife snicked across the ropes that held him to the pillar; a hand on his shoulder spun him round, his legs free, but his wrists still tied behind his back; the knife pressed into his back. Then he was propelled towards a door which, opening, revealed a steep, spiral staircase—the ascent to the *mueddin's* tower.

"Mount!" snapped the Avenger.

Dick had no choice but to obey. One of the Chinks was at his side as he started to climb, the other but a couple of steps below. Hsuan's laughter, high-pitched and terrific, followed them as they ascended into the tower—up and up, and round and round, with Dick cudgelling his brains for a plan that, even at this eleventh hour, would defeat the Avenger's evil schemes.

But, for once, his brain seemed numbed. They climbed higher, past slit-like windows in the wall. Through them he caught a glimpse of the mosque courtyard far below, packed with a crowd of devout, white-robed Arabs.

He shuddered to think that, in a few minutes, that crowd would be shrieking frenziedly for his blood—that, unconscious instruments of the Scared Hand's vengeance, they would be putting the Flying Circus and all within it to fire and the sword. . . .

Higher still! They emerged on to the roof of the tower, where a narrow, rail platform overlooked the courtyard. With the knife still digging into his back, Dick saw the sun seeming to hang like a great ball over the roofs of the city.

It was the colour of blood—and soon those narrow streets below would be running with blood!

That thought awoke Dick's dulled senses at last—

jerked them into furious thought. There was but one way out of it—to die there and then, beneath the Avengers' knives, before the Arabs' passions were roused by the sight of him. At least that would save the Flying Circus and his pals. . . .

He whirled savagely, and then—sheer amazement held him rooted to the spot, even though the knife of one of his masked captors was pressing over his heart.

For, as he turned, he saw the hands of the second Avenger shoot out—saw them fasten, like the jaws of a vice, around his companion's throat—saw a lifted knee drive into the astonished man's back, bringing him in a writhing heap to the floor. Then, before Dick could make a sound, one masked man was on top of the other, banging his head relentlessly against the paving stones and choking the life out of him with ever-tightening fingers.

The struggle was over in a space of seconds. One man lay limp and sprawling, the other came with a bound to his feet.

As he did so, his hand lifted and whipped aside the mask covering his face.

Dick gasped incredulously.

"Don!"

"Sure." The circus flying star slashed Dick's wrists free.

"X swooped round and got wind of the Avenger's little stunt. Then we pinched one of the Chinks and borrowed his togs—and I'm here. Feel up to have a last smack at Hsuan?"

Dick's eyes snapped.

"Try me," he nodded.

"Guess this is the show-down," ran on Don. "Help shove this rat out of sight, before the *mueddin* comes along." Together they dragged the unconscious man into an embrasure, and then flattened themselves against the wall as they heard footsteps ascending the stairs. "Here he comes!"

A venerable, white-haired Arab ascended laboriously to the platform. He was the *mueddin*—the man who would have died under the Avenger's knife but for Don's reckless deception. Without a glance for the hidden pals, he faced the courtyard, his bleared eyes on the setting sun.

Don tugged gently at Dick's arm.

"Come on! We've got to be in time for the last act."

Silently they sped down the stairs. They were half-way down when they heard the thin, musical chant of the *mueddin* from the minaret.

"*Allahu akhbar! Great is Allah!*"

"The moment of doom! But nothing save a volleying response from the packed crowd of Arabs answered it. . . .

IN the hall of the mosque the Red Avenger awaited the moment of his triumph. Every approach to that hall was guarded, for even among the Arabs the Scared Hand had its adherents—men who, in their frenzied hatred of Westerners, were even willing

to link themselves with such yellow scum as the Avengers. Those men had their instructions, and Hsuan had no fear that he would be involved in the slaughter that would overwhelm the Flying Circus.

Seated upon a high-backed chair, he waited impatiently, his long, lean fingers nervously caressing the carved woodwork of its arms—ears strained to catch the first wolfish howl that would tell of the success of his enterprise.

Then suddenly he tensed, jerking himself forward in his chair.

Muffled yet still distinct, the *mueddin's* cry drifted into the room, and at the sound of it the Avenger's eyes narrowed to deadly slits, his lips writhed in inaudible curses. His orders had been that the *mueddin* was to die before he uttered his sunset call—that his body was to be flung from the minaret. Somebody had blundered, but—

Hsuan waited tensely. Still he expected to hear

to pieces before my eyes. By the gods, he has lived too long! After him!"

He led the way himself. But, before he had taken three paces, there came a startling interruption.

One of the doors, which he had fancied so securely guarded, burst open. Men appeared on the threshold. The Avenger, whirling with an oath, recognised them at a glance and knew that he had slipped up badly. The whole personnel of the Flying Circus seemed to be there—Hannibal Sangster, Jerry the clown, Leo, Atlas and a score of others. With them were a dozen Arabs—the aged Inam of the mosque, the governor and Cadi of El Kantora, some native police. Most of them carried guns, and



IT'S DEATH IF DICK MISSES HIS JUMP!—"Shoot me if you dare!" snarled the Avenger, raising the fatal phial on high. Through the doorway came a flying figure.

those age-old words choked off in a death-scream—to hear the frenzied howls of the worshippers.

But neither came.

With a bitter oath he heaved himself out of the chair and ran to a slatted window overlooking the courtyard.

His first glance showed him a thousand heads bowed in prayer—and that was enough.

Eyes ablaze with fury, he hurled himself back into the room and faced his startled followers. His scheme had gone amiss. How—where?—he could not tell. But his thoughts flew to the boy acrobat he had sent to his death on the tower. Dick had tricked him before; he might—though the Avenger failed to see how it could have happened—have tricked him again.

Raising a shaking hand, he pointed to the door leading into the tower.

"After him!" he snarled. "Let the dog be pulled

they outnumbered the Avengers in the room by six to one.

Sangster stepped forward.

"Stand where you are, you yellow curs!" he snapped. "The game's up, Hsuan! We got to hear of your double-crossing scheme to set us and the Arabs at each other's throats. But it isn't coming off. Dr. Fu's safe in the town gaol, and that gang you sent to waylay me is on its way to join him—and you're going to take the same walk right now. Stick up your hands!"

The Avenger's face twisted devilishly. Beaten—yes, he knew it now! But—there was a chance. At least, in his defeat, he could strike a crushing blow at his enemies.

His hand dipped to his breast and dived into a fold of his red robe. It reappeared, gripping a tiny metal phial.

His eyes blazed.

"Listen, foreign devils!" he howled. "Ye know what this contains. It is death—the death that will sweep the world." His laughter rang mad and high. "Shoot me, if ye dare. The phial is brittle; it will break like glass; a million germs of death will be released. Shoot! Nay, ye are afraid. See! Ye shall have the phial—and Death!"

He swung it high. Sangster and the men behind him checked. They feared that phial more than they would have feared a bomb. Death by disease... silent... horrible...

They stared in horrid fascination as the Red Avenger made to hurl it among them.

And then through that doorway which the Avenger had opened came a flying figure.

It was Dick Derring.

Clean upon the Chink's shoulders he landed, and one hand caught the man's raised wrist, while the other twisted the deadly phial from his fingers. Then, with a sudden thrust of his knees, he sent the Avenger reeling to the floor and leapt clean across him to Sangster's side.

"Now—get him!"

But Hsuan was quick. With the speed of a snake he twisted over, regained his feet and, in a lithe bound, leapt to the window-sill, smashing the fretted window with a single, frenzied blow of his fist. He had sprung into the courtyard, full among the kneeling worshippers, before a weapon could be drawn upon him.

"After him!" shrieked Sangster.

They reached the window, looked into the courtyard, and saw the end of it all. A lithe figure in red was being dragged down by the Arabs amid yells of "Infidel!" There was a flash of steel, a high, sobbing cry, and Hsuan had gone to join his illustrious ancestor, Chang the Terrible!

THERE was a crowd at that night's performance of the Flying Circus such as the Big Tent had never housed before—for the story of its fight with the Red Terror and the Silent Death had gone round the town like a whirlwind.

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The S.O.S. SQUADRON!

(Continued from page 33.)

ladder snaking up in to the darkness; then came a faint thud as the hook struck the top of the wall.

A strong, tentative pull showed that the hook had fastened on top of the wall and at a word from Vane, Jimmy commenced the ascent.

He was halfway up the ladder when suddenly he paused, his hands tight clenched on the rope rungs. His eyes had by this time become attuned to the darkness, and seated astride the top of the wall he could make out the black and grotesque form of a hooded monk.

The man was sawing silently and swiftly at the ropes of the ladder, and before Jimmy could recover from his first astonishment one of the ropes parted and the ladder sagged.

The boy had only a split instant in which to act, for the monk was already saving at the remaining rope. To have dropped the monk with a bullet would not have been difficult, but the sound of the shot would certainly give the alarm and rouse the monastery.

There was only one thing to do, and Jimmy did it. Whipping his heavy automatic from the pocket inside his robes he hurled it up at the hooded figure, aiming at the white blur of the man's face.

The gun took the monk full on the temple and with a hoarse cry he swayed backwards on the wall, to vanish from view on the other side.

The first step inside the Temple of Terror! But how will Vane and Jimmy fare against the full power of the priestly plotters? You must not miss next week's exciting chapters of this fine flying yarn.