

OUR FREE WORKING MODEL SPEEDBOAT, BOYS!

# Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



MEET THE BIG SWAMP BATSMAN INSIDE!

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ESB



## THE LAGOON OF LOST SHIPS

(Continued from page 32.)

They saw the slight, dapper figure of the Spanish crook through the windows of the wheel-house. Lithe Indians ran about the polished decks of the gunboat, which drew back into the cover of an overhanging tree not twenty feet opposite. Concealed in that natural ambush, she commanded a view of the dark tunnel through which the steamer had disappeared the previous day, and where the *Scavenger* would presently emerge.

"It's an ambush!" exclaimed Scar. "He's lying in wait for the launch."

The situation appeared desperate. But all at once a steely gleam came into Scar's eyes. "I've got an idea!" he said. "Are you fellows prepared to risk your lives in a surprise attack? If we could board the gunboat we might overpower the soundrels!"

The other two instantly agreed to the daring plan he unfolded. It involved the risk of being seen, for they had to climb the deckhouse, but the mist on the waters was in their favour.

Their preparations were soon made. Selecting the longest, stoutest lianas, which were suspended from a tree overhanging the steamer, they drew them to the farthest edge of the deck-house to get a good take-off.

At a whispered word from Scar, all three drove their feet against the rail and swung themselves into space with a powerful thrust. The first intimation of an attack that Marajo received was the crash of the wheel-house window as a pair of boots came smashing through it in a shower of glass. The next moment Captain Scar landed in a staggering heap at his feet!

At the same time Ben Ballast rolled on to the deck; while Jacinto shot into the midst of a crowd of startled Indians.

Instantly all was confusion on board the gunboat. Scar regained his feet in a twinkling and snapping out: "Hands up!" levelled his revolver. But Marajo had already disappeared through the door as if he had seen an apparition.

At that moment the pointed bows of the *Scavenger* emerged from the gap in the mangroves. The Indian gunner, his attention divided between the arrival of the launch and the sudden, inexplicable commotion aft, was about to touch off the gun when a violent blow stretched him out unconscious. Ben, having rolled across the deck like a football, had risen to his feet and struck down the man in almost one movement.

Then the air was rent with the yells of the Indians, the crackle of Scar's revolver and a hearty cheer from the crew of the *Scavenger*, who rapidly grasped the situation.

Scar, bursting out with the smoking revolver in his hand, saw the one-eyed Spaniard leap from the after deck to the branch of a tree. For a moment he thought the soundrel had escaped. Then he glimpsed him again among the tangled foliage, and raised his revolver. But something stayed his hand.

A shrill, agonised scream tore the air, and Don Marajo relinquished his grip and fell like a stone, his head in a cloud of stinging ants. A green column shot up as he met the water and disappeared beneath the surface. But not for long. The lagoon

## THE EDITOR'S CORNER

MORE MAGNIFICENT WORKING MODELS TO BE GIVEN AWAY!

Editorial Address:  
200, Gray's Inn Rd.,  
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**M**Y DEAR CHUMS,

This week you will be able to put the finishing touches to your Working Model Speedboats. Look dandy, don't they? You'll be the envy of all those who were unfortunate enough to miss this great gift.

Now for another big slice of news. Nothing less than a whole series of splendid working models is to be given away inside forthcoming numbers of the old "B.M." There's an Auto-Gyro; various models, complete with a real clockwork motor; an aerial railway, etc., etc. Each of these will be complete with all working mechanism, and only need glue and scissors to assemble them. They'll be great fun for the shortening days of autumn. So get ready for full particulars of these gifts—to be given inside every copy of the "B.M." very shortly.

King Cricket, who has been a very popular monarch during this extra sunny season, takes his last curtain next week with a crash of applause—and Football once more comes into his own. And I happen to know, chaps, that the great winter game is going to boom big this year. You'll get thrills galore when your town team battles with the rest for Cup and League honours. But, better still, you'll enjoy it if you play yourselves. To assist you I am arranging with a famous international to write you a series of hints and lore on football that will help you to improve your game.

Meanwhile, there's a big treat in store for footer fans. Next week the *Mag.* kicks off the season with an entirely new, long complete tale of breathless adventure and mystery on the green arena, entitled, *THE RIDDLE OF THE ROVERS!* The Rovers' ground has been left them by an eccentric old sportsman, but there is a clause in the will that they must win the first match of the season! How plotters plan to prevent this, and the whirlwind dramatic events that follow when the Sporting 'Tec takes a hand, will hold you spellbound.

Other prime favourites who will thrill you with their exploits in next Saturday's All-Star Number are *The Crew of The Happy Haddock* as the Navy of Nodola; *The Taxi 'Tec* in his last duel with Wolfgang; *Dick Fortune of the Films* in his greatest thrill film yet; *The Science Sleuth*; the *S.O.S. Squadron*, and another long thriller in the Thrill Library entitled *The Yellow Serpent*, a story of peril and drama in mysterious China.

Look out for special gift news next week.

THE EDITOR.

quaked with the heave of a colossal body cleaving through its deeps, and Marajo arose from the seething element, gripped in the coils of the anaconda.

The stricken lord of the lagoon had been cruising round half-submerged, thirsting for revenge, and had darted on the wretched Spaniard. Before a shot could be fired or a boat lowered, the victim was dragged beneath the waters, where he had sent so many innocent men to their death.

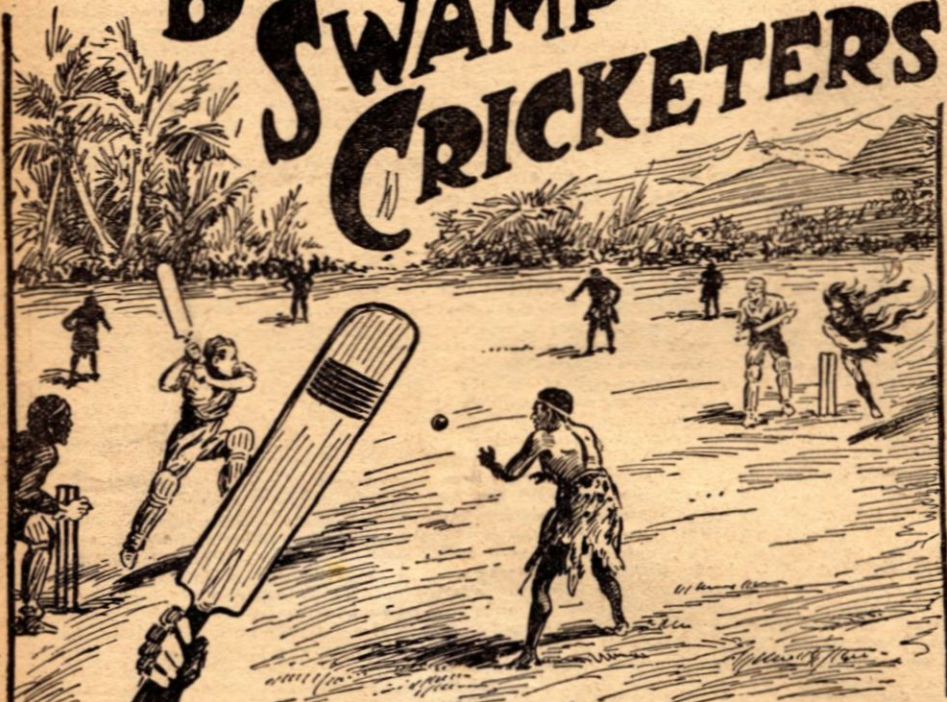
Captain Scar stooped and picked up a small, shining object from the deck of the gunboat. "A memento of my most curious voyage!" he murmured, dropping a monocle into his pocket.

The Science Sentinel returns next week in another ripping Sleuth and Scientific yarn. Look out for more Grand Gifts from the Editor soon, chums.



CRICKET—AND ADVENTURE IN THE WILDS! Meet Slogger Sleighley, the Demon Dude Cricketer and his Comical Batman, Hawkins.

# The BIG SWAMP CRICKETERS



**Drama, Excitement, Fun and Thrills to Enthrall Every Boy Sportsman.**

### The Missing Team.

"OH, I say!" drawled the Hon. Slogger Sleighley in a disappointed tone.

He was really roused; almost annoyed, in fact. He blinked reproachfully as he stood at the rail of the beautiful white steam-yacht which ploughed steadily on its way up river, leaving in her wake a bubbling, surging trail of white foam.

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley had expected to be met at La Roque, the isolated plantation on the Orinoco river. He had expected several people to meet him, in fact; the eleven members of his cricket team, which was on tour.

But on the long plantation wharf, he could distinguish no such familiar figures as "Tub" Watkins, his rotund but famous wicketkeeper, "Slim" Harrigan, the six-foot-three fast bowler, who sent a

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



cricket ball down like a thunderbolt. None of these could he distinguish.

In fact, no one was there, save a number of curious black natives and dogs, who thronged down to the water's edge to see the beautiful yacht steaming in to the wharf.

"I sent the wire from Buenos Aires, m'lord, for the gentlemen to meet you," said a prim and proper voice immediately behind the elegant touring cricketer.

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley slightly turned his sleek, well-brushed fair head.

"Oh, that's all right, Hawkins," he drawled graciously. "Give me my cricket bat, y'know; I must think about this."

His "man" handed the cricket bat over with slightly upraised brows. Spite of the dazzling sunshine and heat, Henry Hawkins, who was a big man, always dressed in butler's clothes. He prided himself on being a perfect gentleman's man.

As a matter of fact, he had been a pug in his day, and he had rather battered features, and stiff, short-grey hair. He was devoted to the Hon. Slogger, and never would realise that that elegant, lackadaisical young man was, in reality, perfectly able to look after himself.

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley leant on his cricket bat—he carried a cricket bat about with him as other people carry a cane—and surveyed the wooded heights. Just a little way ahead he could see the tamarind trees and the gorgeous tropical flowers thronging to the river's edge. But no sign of his friends.

The Honourable Slogger Sleighley had considerable wealth and leisure, and but one great interest in life—that was cricket. He toured everywhere where cricket was to be played, taking part in matches with some weird and strange teams at times.

He had heard, indeed, that up the swift-rushing, almost unmapped Orinoco was a strange tribe of incredibly fierce natives who played cricket in the civilised white man's manner, with bat and ball and stumps. The Hon. Slogger Sleighley wanted to meet that tribe.

He had wired the members of his team to go on to La Roque, and he would follow. Slogger was certainly surprised to find that they were not there to meet him.

"By Jove, y'know," he drawled as he sauntered down the gangway planking, "I've half a mind to sack 'em all, y'know—play a one-man team."

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley paid all expenses, and was not usually exacting in return. But his ire was roused now.

As he stepped off the gangway, and the steamship turned about, he leaned on his cricket bat. "Absolutely rotten!" he said dismally.

Hawkins stood behind with his cricket bat, silent and erect.

Suddenly, however, he uttered a cry of warning. "Look out, m'lord!"

Slogger's jaw jutted, his blue eyes blazed, and he no longer looked asleep. For there came sudden fiendish howls, and through the orange-grove at the top of the hill burst dozens of black figures.

"Savages!" rapped the young cricketer. "My bag, Henry."

"Yes, m'lord," said his faithful valet primly, and, bending down, he laid open at his feet his green cricket bag.

The Hon. Slogger needed nothing else to stop the savages coming on. The arrows were beginning to fall fast around them, and with their shields held before them, some of them brandishing spears, the savages rushed upon the slim young Englishman.

Slogger took a red cricket ball from the bag, tossed it up in the air, and swung his bat at it.

*Crack!* He truly opened his shoulders at that one. It flew like a miniature cannon ball, and took one hideously painted befeathered savage full in the face.

He screamed, and crashed over on to his back, his nose smashed and bleeding.

The young cricketer didn't stop to apologise. He had a dozen or so perfectly good cricket balls in his bag, and he let fly one after another at the savages with them.

*Crack! Crack! Crack!* Not a miss in the whole "big shoot" of cricket balls. Slogger had not earned his nickname at cricket for nothing. The balls crashed against shields and faces of the warriors, knocking them over like ninepins.

The fierce and sudden fusillade was devastating in its effect on the savages, causing them to pause in sudden awful fear.

Then from somewhere a voice screeched out encouragement. On they came to close quarters.

Henry Hawkins, who was a famous fighter, doubled his fists and danced in, ducking spear-thrusts, and dealing out mayhem to left and right.

"By Jove, the beggars haven't washed much, y'know!" Slogger exclaimed, with a sniff of disgust. And proceeded to lay about him with all his might, playing a variety of strokes with that bat. He played forward—and the savages played back with considerable precipitancy. Howling like dervishes, they scattered for the shelter of the dense foliage and Slogger stopped short, breathing hard, but with a grin on his face.

"Now," he questioned. "What's it all about? These blackamoors running about the country putting people off their grub, b'Jove!"

### The Mystery of the Plantation.

HIS question did not go unanswered. They saw the white figure of a man hurrying along the jungle path towards them. It was Señor de Comas himself, the coffee-planter and owner of the plantation. He seemed queerly affected, a sickly pallor appearing under his heavy, swarthy skin.

Slogger guessed at once that it was the South American planter who was to have been their host at La Roque.

"Señor," said the coffee-planter, in great agitation. "I don't know how to thank you. I—but how did you do eet? How turn them away?"

He stopped. He seemed in fear, but his eyes were like burning marbles in his dark, swarthy face.

There was a silence. "*Caramba!*" he suddenly burst out. "What was that?"

As if it were emanating from the very atmosphere there was wafted to their ears the sound of weird, low music. A dismal dirge it sounded. Slogger stiffened, though he was in pretty good shape for anything. Even Henry Hawkins, his man, peered round, a queer uneasiness on his homely features.

"The witch doctor of La Guayana!" hissed the planter fearfully. "He is lurking there. He has come himself since his warriors have failed to kill you. What—what does his music bring, the red pipes—?"

Suddenly the plantations were filled with noise—the sounds of shouts and clanging, the barking of dogs. The black men working on the plantations—who had scattered at sight of the savages—were now running wildly through the orange groves, making a great hullabaloo.

Slogger's mind groped wildly after the truth. Something was wrong—but what? Suddenly his man, Henry Hawkins, shouted and pointed.

"Look! m'lord! A swarm of deadly insects."

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley woke up with a start



then, to see a swarm of black insects coming over the river, lowering, settling like a great fog-belt over the plantations and the orange groves.

A glance at Señor de Comas showed that worthy muttering fearfully, and rubbing his skinny dark hands, while his eyes rolled.

"You chumps!" the Hon. Slogger Sleighley said with a short laugh. "That cloud—it's locusts—locusts. Nothing dangerous about 'em, but they'll eat up the whole plantation if the señor isn't careful."

He rushed away, and became busy with his perspiring man. He had heard before of locusts being summoned by native reed music. There was some evil influence at work.

Slogger had the plantation hands dragging up grass and green stuff, making smoke fires to drive the locusts off the precious orange groves, and the young coffee sprigs. Smoke arose everywhere and soon black, perspiring figures were darting through the clouds of it.

Slogger and his man hastened to the gardens, where, without a moment's notice, a cloud of locusts, had dropped on the plants and trees. With an old

mahogany tree, overtopping any other tree in that part, and from whose height he could get a good view of the broad, swiftly-flowing Orinoco. And what he saw from that vantage point made him grit his teeth, while his jaw jutted.

"So, Señor Comas, treachery, eh?" he breathed.

Out on the broad shining river were five war canoes, their warriors paddling up-river as hard as they could pull. It was obvious they were the savages who had raided the plantation; more than obvious to the Hon. Slogger Sleighley when he saw Señor de Comas standing on the bank, gesticulating to them.

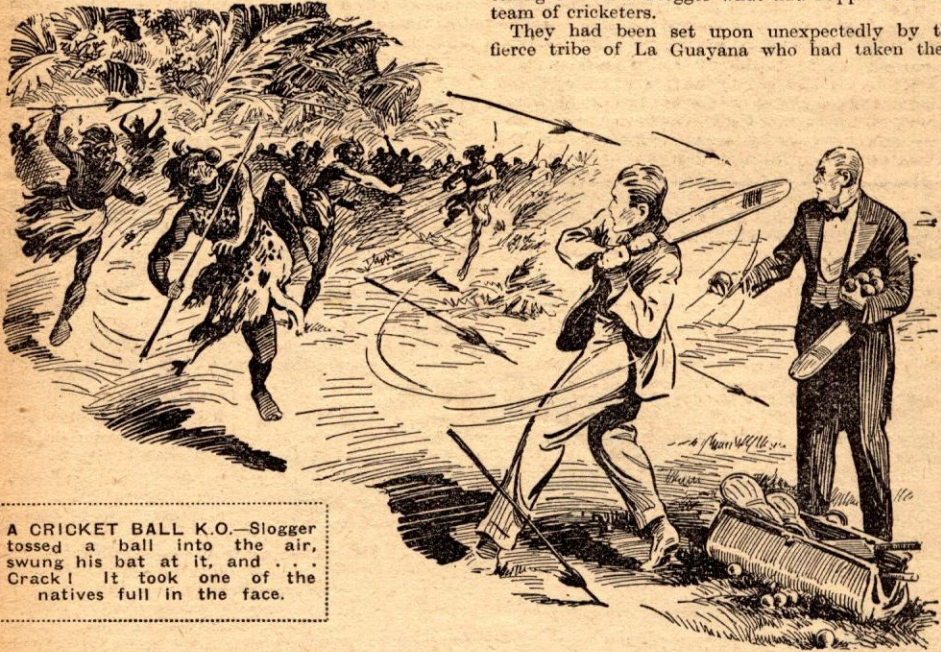
He was behind that raid that had been unsuccessful. For some reason he didn't want the Hon. Slogger Sleighley around the plantation.

But why? That was what Slogger meant to find out!

"SEÑOR, they were all carried away as prisoners in the war canoes of the fierce La Guayana tribe!"

The Hon. Slogger Sleighley pursed his lips. The señor had returned to the plantation, and was now telling the Hon. Slogger what had happened to his team of cricketers.

They had been set upon unexpectedly by the fierce tribe of La Guayana who had taken them



A CRICKET BALL K.O.—Slogger tossed a ball into the air, swung his bat at it, and . . . Crack! It took one of the natives full in the face.

biscuit tin and his cricket bat he commenced to make an indescribable din. So did Henry Hawkins as he beat at a coal scuttle with a stump. The locusts—like grasshoppers—refused to budge at first. They were eating with avidity. But then the mad jazz concert, joined by others, rose to such a pitch that the cloud of locusts took fright, and rose in a great blinding cloud, swirling round the heads of the din-makers.

But through all the excitement the Hon. Slogger Sleighley remembered that he hadn't seen Señor de Comas lending any aid in saving his crops. What was the deadly mystery on the plantation?

"The Señor de Comas is, if I judge rightly, two-faced," grinned Slogger, and laying down his beloved cricket bat, he commenced to shin up a huge

back over the Big Cataracts to the mysterious land where they lived. It was a bit steep because the Hon. Slogger did not believe that his tough bunch of boys would give in without a pretty severe struggle. There'd be some dead savages lying about.

"Unless," thought Slogger savagely, "they'd been drugged by this snaky polecat of a Señor Comas."

"I suppose you know that we came along to play these beggars at cricket," he said laconically.

Señor de Comas' heavy brows shot up in startled amusement.

"But señor, that is absurd. You are of the English county cricket—your men also. You do not play against unlettered savages."

"You seem to know a lot about me," said the Hon. Slogger with a queer glint in his eyes. "Perhaps



you also know my reason for touring the world, instead of devoting myself to county cricket, as I might have done."

Señor de Comas smiled; he showed his yellow teeth in a ghastly half moon. But fear twitched about his eyes.

"I will not deny it," he said softly, with very little trace of an accent. "You are searching for your twin brother. A few minutes older than you, he is therefore the heir to the title and estates."

The Hon. Slogger nodded. His twin brother and he had been great pals. Nigel had played cricket for his county, and was an even finer cricketer than Slogger. Then the war had come. Nigel had survived it, and won distinction as an officer in a famous regiment. But it had given him the craving for adventure, and he had travelled to the far outposts of the world.

In the meantime their father had died, and Nigel had become heir to the title and estates. He was now Lord Sleightley—if he still lived! A rumour had come through, however, that he had been forced, a fugitive, into the hot shadowed mists of the unknown Amazon.

Slogger simply would not believe that he was dead. He refused to take the title and estates, but was roaming the world in search of his twin brother.

Knowing Lord Sleightley's ruling passion was cricket, Slogger had got together a team, and had sought out cricketers in the far corners of the world—always in the hope of finding his twin.

And now the swarthy-faced Señor de Comas had a shock for him.

stumbled across a tribe of savages. Apparently this tribe had been docile enough, for the chief had come to Lord Sleightley and offered him an exceedingly valuable ruby—in exchange for a few knick-knacks such as a knife and hatchet. But apparently the ruby was a stone revered by the fierce tribe of La Guayana, and he had no right to offer it.

"But there, the chief who bartered the ruby was 'sleepy-sleepy,' or something," said Señor de Comas with his oily smile. "I figured it out afterwards that the tribe sent him away to die, meaning to get the ruby off his body later."

"I see. There was trouble about it," said Slogger, gently.

"Well, to be frank, Lord Sleightley took the ruby by force from the savage. And that caused the trouble. Before we had gone far we were set upon by the fierce La Guayanas."

"I see. I understand that the tribe of La Guayana prize a white man's head even above rubies," said Slogger, still very gently. He was contemplating de Comas with hard, speculative eyes.

The South American's eyes flared with fear. "That I do not know," he said.

There was a silence, the great tropical silence that fills the imagination and sometimes drives men mad. Henry Hawkins, behind Slogger was scowling.

"And what happened?" put in Slogger at last.

"Well, picture two white men against five hundred or so howling, painted savages. What could we do? We were quickly overpowered, and our fate came. We were trussed up with fibre ropes, placed in a canoe and shot down over the Great Cataracts."

"And how did you manage to escape?" said Slogger, pointedly.

De Comas showed yellow teeth in a smile and spread out his hands.

"Well, the canoe capsized, and I was swirled to the bank. I saw Lord Sleightley being carried along, half-drowned, over the Cataracts—and I couldn't lift a finger to help him. I saw him go over, while I was struggling amongst the thick weed—and so, of course, he died."

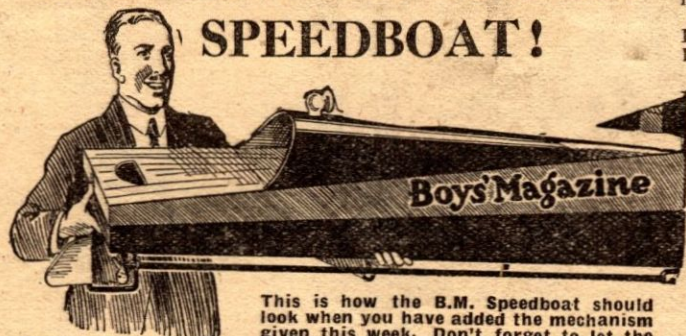
There was a tense pause when he had finished, and he lit a cigarette with a hand that trembled.

"I see," said Slogger slowly at last. "You got away. And now the tribe of La Guayana have raided the plantation and carried away my team. Well, jolly old sir, you're going to conduct me in a canoe up river and we're going to find those jolly old savages, and get my fellows back, if they're alive. Understand?"

De Comas started violently, and commenced to protest. He dared not go up-river—he was already in fear of his life. For some time he protested vehemently. Until Slogger at last gently suggested that he should go down to Angostura, and put the matter in the hands of the Federal Authorities. At this de Comas showed even greater fear, though he tried to conceal it. And, at last, reluctantly he gave in.

Ten minutes later, laden with rifles and baggage, they were escorting the reluctant de Comas down to the river, weaving through gorgeously flowering tamarind trees, scattering the lazy Indian Dogs, until pushing through the jungle belt they came down to the golden beach.

## OUR RIPPING MODEL SPEEDBOAT!



Editor know how she goes chums—and get ready for another working model FREE.

"Lord Sleightley and I were partners on this plantation," he said with a crooked smile. "I saw him die in the interior of this cursed country."

And he jerked his thumb in the direction of the broad, shining Orinoco river, beyond which lay the Big Cataracts and beyond that a mighty unknown land of forest and swamp inhabited by fierce tribes.

The Hon. Slogger's aristocratic face paled slightly as this news of his brother's death was flung at him. His blue eyes hardened, even as he stroked his fair hair in that lackadaisical way of his.

"Oh, I say," he murmured. "You'd better spin the yarn. What!"

It was a tale of wild adventure that Señor de Comas told. Lord Sleightley and Señor de Comas had been prospecting along the Orinoco when they had

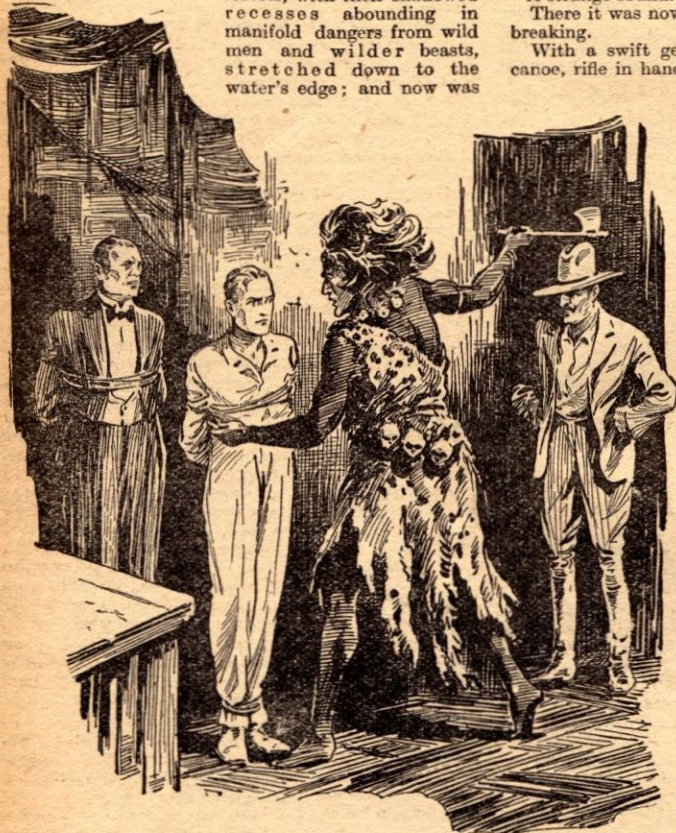


They piled their baggage into the canoe and settling in the thwarts commenced paddling against the river currents, plunging into the unknown on the trail of hostile savages.

### The Guayanas:

"WHAT'S that?" exclaimed Slogger suddenly, his nerves taut.

He jerked erect in the canoe. In a week they had travelled up-river for a hundred miles. All around was untrodden country. Impenetrable forests, with their shadowed recesses abounding in manifold dangers from wild men and wilder beasts, stretched down to the water's edge; and now was



THE WITCH-DOCTOR'S WILES.—The enraged witch-doctor swung up his hatchet to strike Slogger. Then, deftly, he slipped a knife under the lad's armpit. What did it mean, Slogger wondered?

the intense stillness of night. Slogger could see nothing but dense blackness, and the river itself stretching broad and glittering under the dim starlight.

But it was something he had heard that had aroused the young cricketer. Weird, soft music, played on a reed pipe, from somewhere close at hand.

And—the mysterious Señor de Comas was not in the canoe!

Slogger had agreed with his man, Henry Hawkins

that they should take turns to watch de Comas day and night; that one should keep awake, while the other slept. It was easier agreed upon than carried out, however. The toil of paddling during the day made them both intensely tired. To-night they had both slept.

"Hallo! Who's that?" cried Slogger sharply again.

It was de Comas, creeping back to the canoe. There was a grin on his oily face, and he looked evil incarnate in the darkness.

"I thought I heard a sound," he whispered. "A strange sound. But it can't be."

There it was now—a sound. A sound as of a twig breaking.

With a swift gesture Slogger jumped out of the canoe, rifle in hand, and reaching towards the camp fire, picked up a small blazing log and threw it. It described a weird moving arc of light—and Slogger laughed with a queer catch in his voice at what he saw.

"Hawkins! Wake up!" he cried. And like a hideous echo to his words came the sudden howl of the savages in the darkness.

His man, Hawkins, was up and by his side in a minute, with cricket bat and rifle. They levelled their weapons at the paint-bedaubed figures of the savages with their long spears, rushing at them from the undergrowth. But only the click of the hammers answered them as they pressed trigger.

"Sold, by gosh!" ejaculated Slogger, turning upon de Comas. In an instant he guessed that the treacherous planter had removed the ammunition from their rifles while they slept, and had set the savages upon them.

De Comas was smiling, his twisted smile. He had a revolver in his hand, and now he brought it up and aligned it on Slogger and his man.

"Put up your hands, please," he said. "To shoot you would be against my polite desires."

With a howl of rage Henry Hawkins suddenly ducked low and dived for the traitor's legs. De Comas went over, with the huge bulk of Slogger's man on top of him. And though it all but knocked the sense out of the villain, the two swiftly found themselves faced with the menace of the savages.

"My cricket bat. Let's have it, Hawkins—"

Slogger choked off the words as a six-foot savage leapt at him with spear uplifted. He got his head up against the black's waist, his arms locked about his knees, and toppled him backwards. But from then on the fight was hopeless, for a dozen savages fell upon him, pinning him to the ground.

Henry Hawkins was down under half-a-dozen writhing blacks, driving his fists at the howling shapes that pressed on him. But he was silenced at last with a savage blow from a club.

Then began the hideous march through the reeking



forest tangle, to the savages' canoes by the river side. Strange, deep canoes they were, turned up at prow and stern. There was a long journey, until at last to the ears of the two lying in the bottom of one of the canoes came the deep roar of rushing waters.

The Great Cataracts!

With deep sweeps of the paddles the savages sent their canoes along. They were leaving the main stream, and now a monstrosly swift current whirled them through a passage made by towering masses of rock on either hand. In a line the three canoes of the savages shot like meteors.

Inky black waters all around. And no light from the stars even. Then it was no longer black water,

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but hissing white, foaming. They were not going over the Great Cataract itself, for that was sheerly impossible. But they were reaching the land of the fierce Guayanas by some secret roundabout route, and now were shooting rapids that were in themselves terrible and dangerous enough.

*Crash—bump—smash!* A series of mighty falls in which the three canoes jumped sheer out of the water, to hurtle through the air—and then to land once again in the frothing, hurtling rapids. Then hurtling on—on.

Half-an-hour passed like an eternity of nightmare, the scenery flashing past as one sees it in an express train. Now the high rocky walls of the canyon had vanished, and to the right a faint moon was showing over the jungle tree-tops.

They landed, and once more were borne through the jungle. They came at last to a native village of dome-shaped grass huts in a swampy clearing. Slogger and his man, still conscious, but racked with pain, were half-dragged, half-pushed amongst the grass huts to a great temple built of bamboo, and cunningly designed to look like an immense crocodile with gaping jaws. Into its shadowed interior they were dragged, bound hand and foot with fibre rope, then thrown unceremoniously to the floor and left.

Slogger leaned over towards his man.

"The devil-house," he whispered. "We're for it, what?"

"I very much fear so, m'lord," said Henry Hawkins grimly.

Slogger laughed lazily.

"But I wished we'd pushed that oily blighter's face in—De Comas, y'know," he went on, his face becoming grim. "You know what I think his game is? He betrays white men to these savages, no doubt at the price of a ruby a head. He's got all our team, and he got my brother. And, somehow, I'm going to settle accounts with him before I go out."

"Very well, m'lord," said Henry Hawkins grimly. "If you will command me, I shall be only too glad to be of assistance."

## The Wily Witch Doctor.

THEY were left in peace for many hours. And they slept fitfully. But at last they knew they were to be visited, for a tremor running through the building told of someone coming up the ladder of the devil house.

The hanging bead curtains were parted, and two figures became silhouetted against the doorway. The one in front, a black figure with gigantic head dress of nodding parrot's plumes, caused Slogger to start and frame a voiceless whisper.

"The witch doctor of the tribe!"

And the man behind him was Señor de Comas. They were attended by other native figures, standing in the doorway as they advanced.

De Comas looked from Slogger to his man as they struggled up against the wall of the devil hut, bound as they were, and a horrid, evil smile lit the treacherous South American's face.

"Come and look," he whispered.

The witch doctor—a splendid figure of a black, different from the wizened little creatures usually associated with the witch doctor's office in a tribe—came over the bamboo floor with a sinuous, gliding movement and looked in the faces of the two prisoners.

Slogger was astonished, for he was an extremely handsome type of black savage, magnificent in his full panoply of a witch doctor.

"There you are," de Comas said shrilly with a high-pitched, mirthless chuckle. "Two more white men for your devil tortures—and now you will give me the rubies!"

He pointed to a leather bag which hung round the witch doctor's neck.

The savage took it off and opened it. In his hand flashed a dozen or more marvellous, blood red rubies.

He shook his head, however, and he, too, spoke in the language of the Creole, the most common perhaps of the South American dialects.

"Is this the white man who showed my tribe much magic with the ball and sticks?" he asked, pointing to the Hon. Slogger Sleightley.

"That is the man. He escaped, and I have brought him back."

Slogger's heart leapt. For, like many twins, his brother and he bore a marked resemblance to one another. The conversation could only mean one thing. His brother had been a prisoner of the tribe. He had taught them to play cricket. *But he had escaped!* The tribe wanted him back.

And now Señor de Comas, to gain those rubies, was trying to pass Slogger off as his brother.

"Yes, it is the same," said the witch-doctor, after peering again into Slogger's face. "There is much meat here"—he pinched Slogger's arm. "That head! I shall cure it myself to hang on a pole outside my hut."

Slogger hammered out three vibrant words in the native dialect, but they meant: "Go to blazes!"

Instantly, the witch-doctor's black face changed. It became ablaze with anger. He snatched the short, sharp hatchet from his girdle and in a swift movement closed upon Slogger with arm uplifted, as if to deal him the death blow.

Slogger stood erect to receive it, and almost prayed for it. It would save him terrible torture.

But the next moment a little voice of amazement whispered to him. For the savage held himself in check in time and surreptitiously slipped a sharp knife under Slogger's arm, and left it there, its thin black haft protruding from Slogger's armpit—quite invisible in the gloom. The witch-doctor had given him a knife! What for?

It was amazing—incredible. But Slogger knew



what he would do with it. He would use it to cut their bonds, to make a bid for escape if the opportunity presented itself.

"I will not kill—yet," growled the witch-doctor. "First we shall see whether you are as skilful with the ball and sticks as I am."

The witch-doctor pushed de Cornas towards the door, and the planter, scowling heavily, had perforce to go.

"Well, what do you know about that?" gasped Slogger when they had gone. "That ferocious-looking witch-doctor is friendly, I should say. Hallo—"

He broke off short as there came a tremendous outcry from without, where they could see great camp-fires, their flames leaping to the sky in a blaze of red. The savages were yelling and shouting and running everywhere.

"Spot of bother," said Slogger. And for once he grinned outright. "Jolly good for us. The chaps have vanished! The whole of our cricket team. Those blacks had 'em all tied up ready for the sacrificial ceremony—and now, dash it, they're gone—vanished completely! That's what I make of it!"

Indeed, the shouts of the incensed and mystified natives outside proved that he was right.

Steps stormed the ladder running up to the frame



devil-house, and the witch-doctor, attended by many furious savages, burst in through the bead curtains.

"It is their *tagati* that have made the white men vanish—their magic," shouted the witch doctor furiously, pointing at the two bound prisoners. "But I am greater than they—my magic is more powerful than theirs, and I will smelt them out. Bring them out to the cooking ovens."

Slogger at least felt his heart beating madly. A dozen mop-headed savages burst into the hut, and seizing the two commenced to bundle them out. They were half pushed, half dragged through the maze of huts and trees in a clearing.

There to Slogger's amazement, stood cricket stumps, properly paced apart on a stretch of tanned turf that bore no mean comparison to a first-class cricket pitch.

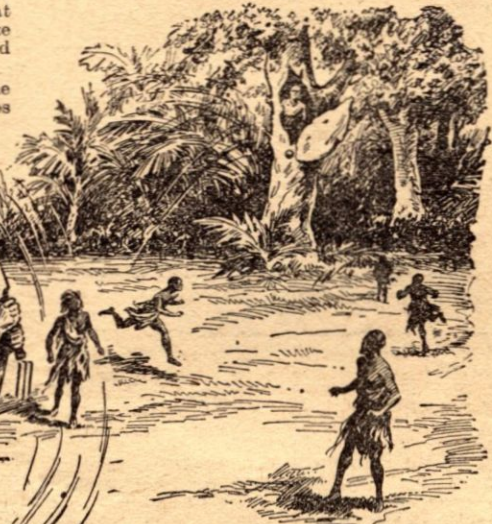
There was a bag on the ground, too, from which the handles of cricket bats protruded and soiled

pads. Lord Sleightley, though a captive, had certainly left his mark upon this fierce tribe of befeathered savages of the Amazon forest.

There the blacks were gathered in a huge half-circle, their spears lifted from the ground and their faces horribly painted.

As soon as they saw the prisoners they raised a fiendish shout, and made a motion to escort them to the camp fires in the further clearing, where doubtless their ghastly cannibalistic cookery was carried out. But a stentorian voice arrested them.

"Hold! First I will show these magic-makers



A SIX HIT SECRET.—The ball soared high in the air. Crack! It struck a tree and dislodged a huge piece of bark to reveal the bound form of one of the kidnapped cricketers.

how small is their magic with bat and ball. When I knock down their sticks, which will be quickly, we will take them to the cooking ovens."

A shout of acclaim greeted this decision. Strange that the game of cricket should have gained so strong a hold on these savages.

Now certain of the tribe whom the chief selected proceeded to take the field, and Slogger and Henry Hawkins, somewhat in a daze, found themselves walking to the wickets with bats in their hands.

Slogger, while he took guard, was staring very hard at the witch doctor. Then he patted the crease and settled to play the first ball of this strange game. What was this powerful-looking black up to? That he had some deep purpose in what he was doing Slogger was convinced.

### A Fantastic Cricket Match.

SLOGGER gripped his willow determinedly as the powerful black prepared to run up to the crease. He threw a taunting challenge in the native dialect.

"If we make a hundred, not out, will our lives be spared?"

"Hau! Even so—if you can do that," shouted



back the witch-doctor derisively. And so that strange amazing game of cricket commenced.

Slogger stared as the black took his run, and with a powerful overarm bowled the first ball of the over. This was first-class bowling. The ball was of good length, very fast, with an ugly break to leg. Slogger, however, managed to meet it with a mighty hook, which sent it away past square leg. The batsmen crossed the pitch twice before it was thrown in.

The next ball produced a single. It was tense, unerving play, for the mass of black spectators howled their heads off, barracking the two batsmen. The bowling and the fielding were good; there was no doubt of that. Slogger began to fear for his man, Hawkins, who now had to face the bowling.

The grim Hawkins, however, proved equal to the occasion. Along came a red-hot sizzler, so fast that the ball could only be seen as a red blur.

*Clack!* Hawkins cut it through the slips beautifully, but they only managed to run one. The next one looked like a loose ball the way Slogger treated it. He opened his shoulders in a straight drive that sent it to the boundary.

And now another bowler came at the other end, a slow spin bowler, full of amazing craft and wiles. Slogger's taciturn manservant was not in difficulties for long, however. He managed to cut away the fourth ball, and the batsmen exchanged ends.

All bowling was alike to Slogger as he quickly proved. In swift succession four boundaries followed. The strength behind the Hon. Slogger's drives was amazing, and the crowd of savages began to grow impatient and shout ominously.

Within twenty minutes Slogger had scored forty-eight runs, and was hitting mightily at every ball. He saw a strained look on the witch-doctor's face. The savages were howling at him. It was clear that they would invade the pitch any moment, and carry off their victims to the torture and eventually the cooking ovens. Slogger knew what a terrible death would be theirs, but he still had the witch-doctor's knife. He meant to put up a deadly fight.

And now there was something like desperation in the witch-doctor's face as he gripped the leather and prepared to take his long fast run.

Slogger, with partially raised bat, prepared to receive the ball after his usual fashion. But down it came in a blur of speed, and in the thin slice of a second he knew it had almost got him beaten. He played back—a purely defensive stroke.

*Click!* The witch-doctor was running in, swift as a greyhound, to try to get the short catch. He just failed.

But as he straightened up his face was desperately strained.

A voice spoke to Slogger—in English. "For the love of Mike, Slogger old man, let yourself be bowled out!"

Slogger staggered and almost fell in his amazement as he realised that that voice belonged to the witch doctor.

But not only was it the witch-doctor's voice; it was his brother Nigel's! The witch-doctor was his brother, in disguise. What did it all mean?

In a daze Slogger prepared to take the next ball. So staggered was he, that he forgot all about his brother's injunction, and jumping out like a panther at the ball, he swiped it with all his strength.

*Crack!* It was the mightiest drive of his career. While one counted seconds it travelled towards the belt of trees, and then with a sharp *clack* it hit one of them.

The result was simply amazing. A piece of false bark placed over a great hollow in the tree, was smashed inwards, and there was revealed within the

hollow the figure of "Tub" Watkins, one of the missing cricket eleven.

They had escaped—into a hollow tree! And at sight of that revelation the savages raised fearful howls of rage, and commenced to race for the hollow tree hurling their spears as they came on.

"Run for it, Slogger!" cried the witch-doctor. "Keep 'em back! We've got to escape through that hollow tree! Oh, you duffer, not to allow yourself to be bowled middle stump! As the stump goes back it operates a lever that opens a secret door underground, to let the team through. Run! Keep 'em off!"

In a flash Slogger realised how his brother had been working all this time on their side. He must have helped the cricketers of the eleven to escape into the hollow tree, but evidently had been interrupted before he could release the door underground. So he had challenged his own brother to this strange game of cricket, to save him and to allow him an opportunity for a dash with his man to the hollow tree.

Slogger and his man Hawkins put in some valiant work with their cricket bats, using them as clubs, while Lord Sleighley with one swift, deadly accurate throw knocked the centre stump at the far end backwards. Then with the mob howling at their heels, they raced for the hollow tree.

One after another, they swiftly climbed through, and dropped down under the ground. Lord Sleighley had mined a passage underground from that hollow tree, and they crept through it under the boardings that he had erected to keep the earthworks up.

"Good job of work this, eh, boys?" He chuckled as he came after. "It's taken me all of the two years since I've been Ju-Ju man of this tribe. And never had a chance to escape yet. But I'm glad I waited till you came along, otherwise you'd have been in the soup, eh! That hound De Comas!"

"You're right! I meant to push his face in," agreed Slogger in a stifled voice as they crept along the underground passage.

"He didn't recognise me," went on Lord Sleighley. "He thought he'd killed me two years ago. But I blacked up, put little sticks in my nose to broaden it—and came back with some conjuring tricks and fireworks and things. So because of my magic they made me witch-doctor. Ah! Look! They're coming after us!"

It was true! The savages had got into the hollow tree, and were creeping along the tunnel after the cricketers. And leading them was the treacherous South American, Señor de Comas.

With a grim laugh, the pseudo witch doctor turned, and raised his hand to a switch overhead.

"All right!" he shouted, "if you will have it!"

He pulled the lever. There was a rumble and a dull reverberating crash. The lever had released the boards holding up the earthworks, and De Comas and many of the savages were buried alive further down the tunnel.

\* \* \* \* \*

"ALL's well that ends well," said Lord Sleighley some days later when the big swamp cricketers were safely back in their hotel in Angostura. "It's a wild world in places, isn't it, boys, and men do some mad things for these"—he exhibited the marvellous blood-red rubies. "I think I'll come home, play cricket for the old county and settle down for a bit—if you don't mind, Slogger."

"Not at all, my lord," grinned Slogger in delight.

The Footer Season starts next week, chaps, and Falcon Swift kicks off in a grand Football and Detective yarn that beats the band for thrills and surprises.



Complete Your "B.M." Speedboats To-day.


# OUR FREE SPEEDBOATS TAKE THE WATER!

With the Speedboat Parts Presented this Week  
you can Complete Your Dandy Working Models.

THE two previous issues of *Boys' Magazine* contained the hull, propeller, and elastic motor for our working model speedboat. If you are a new reader, therefore, you should write at once to the Editor for the parts you have missed, enclosing 3¢ in stamps.

The envelope inside this week's issue contains (1) the propeller shaft, (2) the combined flagmast and front hook, (3) the plated rudder, (4) a short straight piece of wire, (5) a longer straight piece of wire.

First turn your attention to fixing the propeller shaft to the propeller, which you received last week and which will have already bent to shape. The propeller shaft has a hook at one end, and the other end is turned back parallel. Push this short parallel end through the centre hole from the front of the propeller, which you will remember has the bulge on it. Then pass

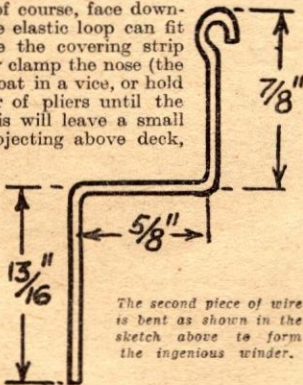


How the propeller shaft is fastened to the propeller. The end is passed through the central hole of the propeller, and turned back through the second hole. The end is then twisted neatly round the shaft.

the end through the second hole and twist it round the main part of the shaft to form a neat spiral (which will act as a washer). Wind the wire in a clockwise direction. A little final adjusting so that the propeller runs truly may be necessary.

The next part to fix is the flagmast and front hook. This is the straight piece of wire with a hook formed on one end. Have ready the pennant and the front covering strip. Place the straight part of the mast over the front edge of the boat, with the hook pointing downwards and level with the bottom (the hook must, of course, face downwards, so that the elastic loop can fit into it), then glue the covering strip over it. You may clamp the nose (the cutwater) of the boat in a vice, or hold it firmly in a pair of pliers until the glue has set. This will leave a small piece of wire projecting above deck, and the pennant must be glued round this, folding the white part (the tab) round the wire and securing with glue.

Now take the longer of the two wires and form the propeller and rudder housing to the shape shown



in the dimensional diagram, which is almost self-explanatory. Start from the rudder end and form each bend successively.

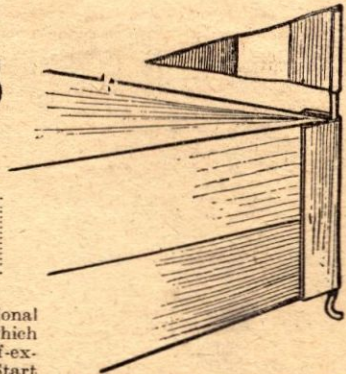
The eye forming the propeller bearing can easily be made by pulling the wire round a small nail.

When complete, this housing clips on to the stern of the boat and provides a snug little mechanism which cannot get out of order. Attach the rudder on it round the rearmost part of the wire. This operation will leave you with the short piece of wire: bend this to the form shown in the diagram, and you have an ingenious little winder which will considerably speed up the operation of winding the electric motor.

You may now proceed to waterproof the boat, either by rubbing with a candle or by varnishing.

The operation over, pass the propeller shaft through the bearing hole, attach the elastic to the two hooks, and make quite sure that the wire housing is fixed in the centre of the stern. Place some vaseline on the propeller bearing, and you are ready for a trial run.

To wind the elastic, slip the front loop off its hook on to the hook of the winder and, holding the boat in the left hand, whilst the first finger and thumb of the left hand grip the straight part of the winder, proceed to wind the elastic one hundred times for the trial run. Later the number of turns may be increased up to 350. Make sure that you wind the elastic in a clock-wise direction, otherwise your boat will go backwards! During the winding operation the rudder should be turned towards the propeller to prevent it from unwinding. After winding the elastic, slip the loop off the winder back on to the hook on the flag mast, and place the boat on the water. Set the rudder straight, keeping a finger on the propeller for a moment, and then release the boat. It will speed away in a most realistic manner.



The method of fitting the combined front hook and mast to the speedboat. The front covering strip holds the mast in place.

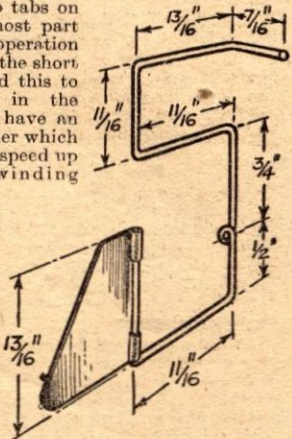


Diagram showing how the longer piece of wire given this week is bent to form the rudder housing. Start from the rudder end, and form each bend successively. The eye forming the propeller bearing can be easily made by pulling the wire round a nail.



# The JESTER'S REALM



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

**Workman:** Mighty mean man I'm working for.

**His Posh Pal:** What's the matter?

**Workman:** He's taken the legs off the wheelbarrow so that I can't set it down and rest!

(Cricket bat to D. KELLY, 16, Beckenshaw Gardens, Banstead Lane, Woodmansterne, Surrey.)

## NO SWIMMER.

**JOHNNIE:** Why don't you come and have a swim, Dick?

**DICK:** I can't. You see, father says I mustn't go into the water until I can swim.

(Fountain pen to PETER HARDIE, Talaton, Borth-y-Gest, Portmadoc, Wales.)

## HARVEST TIME.

**TEACHER:** Now, Tommy, what is the proper time to gather apples?

**TOMMY:** Please, sir, when the dog is tied up and the farmer has gone to market!

(Fountain pen to JOHN SCOTT, Hospital, B.G.O., Woodford Bridge, Essex.)

## SPEECHLESS.

**BILL:** Does your watch tell the time?

**NICK:** No, I have to look at it!

(Fountain pen to FRANK RICHARDS, 179, New-foundland Rd., St. Paul's, Bristol.)

## MUCH WORSE.

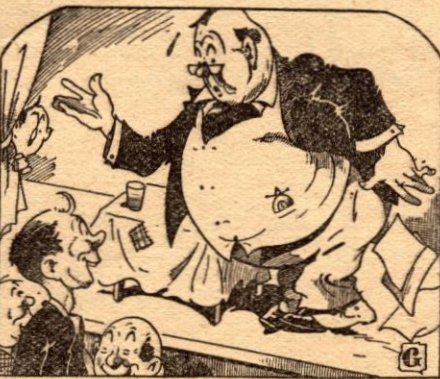
**JIMMY:** Did you have the measles worse than Tommy?

**BILL:** Yes, I had them in the school holidays!  
(Fountain pen to S. O'FARRELL, 10, Puketaki Street, Greymouth, West Coast, New Zealand.)

## SPORTY.

**SMALL BOY (to garage proprietor):** I say, be a sport, mister, and give us a gallon of petrol. Our school's on fire!

(Fountain pen to L. DAWSON, 1, Shuttle St., Tyldesley, Near Manchester.)



**Stout Explorer (lecturing):** There is nothing in the world I have not seen in the last three years.

**Voice from Audience:** Hey, gov'nor! You've forgotten your feet.

(Cricket bat to A. MOSLEY, 6, Buxton Road, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex.)

## ONLY A DROP.

"You must keep your mouth shut when you're in the swimming pool," said the swimming instructor, "or you'll swallow a mouthful of water."

"Well," replied the fearless beginner, "there's plenty more."  
(Fountain pen to P. NIXON, The Poplars, Hayton, Carlisle, Cumberland.)

## JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine, 2/9/33.

## NOT "HAUL" OF IT.

**HOUSEHOLDER (to burglar):** Now then put all that stuff back on the sideboard!

**BURGLAR:** 'Alf a mo', governor, 'alf of it belongs to yer next door neighbour!  
(Fountain pen to S. PEAD, 19, Longlands Road, Sidcup, Kent.)

## FALSE.

**SCHOOLMASTER:** Tell me, BROWN, what do we call the last teeth that come to a human being?

**BROWN:** False ones, sir!

(Fountain pen to N. DAWSON, 1, Oak Terrace, Summit, Littleboro', Lancs.)

## SURE.

**POLICEMAN (to recruit):** That would you do if you wanted to disperse a crowd?

**PUZZLED RECRUIT:** Er-er, pass the hat round, on.  
(Fountain pen to LESLIE PARSONS, 93, Marlborough Road, Upper Holloway, N.19.)



THE BUCCANEERS OF THE HAPPY HADDOCK! Uproarious Doings when Our Saucy Seadogs Sail Under the Jolly Roger!



### Screen Screams.

**B**UT I tell you, Mister Schwankstein, these men know nothing about film acting. They're sailormen. What you need is an experienced film actor like me to take the part of the pirate skipper at least. Anybody can take the minor part you assigned to me in the film—but the pirate chief, now—"

"See here, Bilger," said Schwankstein, the film producer, "I haven't shipped you all the way to this cock-eyed country to be told my business. You're cast in the steward's rôle on the yacht, and if you don't like it you can chuck in the job. I want the pirates to look like pirates—an' that's why I engaged real sailors for the job! I'm tellin' you that's flat—don't worry me again, I'm a busy man!"

Mr. Schwankstein turned and continued on his way along the waterfront of Proptocletlaxl (Cactus-on-Sea). Launcelot Bilger glared after him, his perfect film-face distorted by a scowl.

The truth was that Launcelot Bilger was not the star of the film they were about to make, and Launcelot was wild about it. While making another film in the South Sea Islands, Schwankstein had come in contact with the crew of a certain tramp steamer, the *Happy Haddock*, and they had assisted him to make a comic film that had pleased him. Thereupon Schwankstein determined to try them in a more serious effort.

And here they were "on location" in the tiny central American state of Nodoia which stands on the Gulf of Tehuantepec. As the picture they were making was a sea picture, they had chosen the only port of the little country, Proptocletlaxl. Schwankstein was on his way to the Proptocletlaxl Harbour where

Yo! Ho! Ho! Ha! Ha! Ha! How the  
Film Pirates of the Happy Haddock Became  
the Navy of Nodoia.

the crew of the *Happy Haddock* waited for their final instructions.

The *Happy Haddock* was the only ship in the sunny little harbour, so Schwankstein had no difficulty in locating it. He

strode up the gangway and was met at the top by Cap'n Keelson, skipper and owner of the battered old vessel. The crew were also on deck in full force.

Pip, the cabin boy, wore a large cutlass nearly as big as himself. Slim Small, the fat member of the crew, had a belt full of pistols and daggers, and wore a hat decorated with a skull-and-crossbones design. Fat Burns, the slim seaman, had a patch over one eye and a spotted handkerchief bound round his head; Dutchy Jud, the bos'n, An How, the cook, and even Mister Hettup, mate of the ship, and the skipper himself sported similar piratical decorations.

"Props have come, I see," said Schwankstein. "That's swell, boys. Now let's have a look round the ship an' see everything's okay."

The entire crew of the ship conducted the film producer to the bows, where a fearsome brass cannon had been mounted, giving the old tramp steamer a decidedly warlike appearance.

"Dandy!" commented Schwankstein. "An' I see you've got the Jolly Roger flag already to hoist at the masthead. Everything else ready as I instructed."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Cap'n Keelson.

Nobody noticed Launcelot Bilger come up on the gangway as the skipper and Schwankstein were talking. He had followed the producer to the ship with the intention of telling Cap'n Keelson what he thought of him, but when he saw that nobody aboard had noticed him he dodged behind the foredeck-house and listened to the conversation.

"Now, boys," said Schwankstein to the crew



generally. "I'll just repeat what you've got to do to make sure. There's no cameras or talkie apparatus on this ship. All the shots for the film will be taken long-distance or from the other ship which you are supposed to attack. This other ship is a smart white yacht, as you know, and will start from its anchorage round the bluff there"—he pointed to a long promontory jutting out to sea about a mile from the harbour—"in half-an-hour's time. When she gets well out to sea you go after her and blow off her funnel with your cannon. Then you board the ship, pirate fashion. A fierce battle ensues, and then you start in to plunder the ship, making the passengers on the yacht walk the plank as we rehearsed. Remember, you're supposed to be a desperate band of modern pirates under a crazy skipper, and I want you to act real. You get me, boys?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered the *Happy Haddockites* in chorus.

Cap'n Keelson escorted Schwankstein to the gangway and assured him all would be well.

The *Happy Haddock* was working entirely independently in this film, and it had occurred to Launcelot, who had heard everything, that he might be the means, when Schwankstein was well away from the scene, of making Cap'n Keelson commit some ridiculous blunder.

But that means did not reveal itself to him until some fifteen minutes later when he sighted a beautiful white yacht far out to sea, and standing in for Proplectaxl. It was quite obviously too sumptuous for the yacht in the film.

Launcelot Bilger shook a native who was dozing under his big straw sombrero on the waterfront.

"What's that ship?" demanded Launcelot, pointing at the vessel.

The native divested himself of some irrelevant remarks in Spanish, then he gave the information required.

"Heem millionaire sheep belong Cyrus Gulp—ye-ee! Ver' reech *hombre*, Cyrus Gulp. Heem like Nodoia ver' much. Coom here lot in beeg yacht, sefor. Thank ver' much!"

After which the voice of that sleepy son of Latin America relapsed into a snore. But Launcelot Bilger knew all he wanted. This was his chance!

He turned and hurried back to the harbour. The boys of the *Happy Haddock* were busy rehearsing piracy when he arrived. He singled out Cap'n Keelson.

"Oh, Keelson," he said, with an officious air. "Mr. Schwankstein sent me with a message for you. There's been a mistake over the time the yacht was due to start and it's already out to sea"—Launcelot Bilger pointed to the yacht in the offing. "There it is. He orders you to attack it right away—as everything is ready!"

"That's fine," said the Cap'n. "Stand by there! We're casting off!"

Bilger grinned to himself, and he had barely got ashore when the gangway slid up behind him, and the *Haddock's* engines began to chug.

"Hooray!" roared Fat Burns, brandishing a cutlass. "On me hearties! We'll hang every mother's son from the yardarm—we will an' all! Fifteen men on a dead man's chest—"

"Yo-oh and a bottle of rum!" roared the rest in chorus.

### Playful Pirates.

CAP'N KEELSON stood on the bridge watching the yacht as the old tramp steamer rolled towards it.

"Can't see no cameras nor nuthin' on her decks," he said.

"Course not, Cap'n," replied Pip the cabin-boy,

who seemed to have appointed himself second-pirate-chief-in-command without consulting anybody about it. "They'll have 'em all hid away somewhere, like they always do."

"There's a posh-lookin' cove in white ducks on the bridge watchin' us through binoculars," said Cap'n Keelson, still gazing through his telescope. "Seems a bit het-up like!"

"That'll be Hector Golightly, the handsome young hero," commented Pip. "Better start actin' proper now, Cap'n. Must be in range of the cameras!"

Pip set the example by thrusting his cutlass between his teeth, leapt down from the bridge and strutted round the deck, bawling abuse at everybody in sight. Fat Burns, stripped to the waist, was vigorously ramming powder into the gun forward. Slim assisted, trying to look as fierce as his round, cheery countenance would allow. Dutchy and An How were busily engaged preparing planks and grappling hooks for the boarding party.

The handsome yacht was almost within hailing distance now. Cap'n Keelson dropped his telescope and grasped the engine-room telegraph; the *Haddock* reduced speed and swung round head-on to the yacht so that the gun at the bows could come into play.

Pip, taking full charge of the situation as usual, sprang forward behind the gun and gave a good imitation of fiendish laughter. He brandished his cutlass in the air and yelled "Fire! Blow the keel off them, me hearties! Hee! Hee! Hee! Hee! The devil fish shall sup well this night! Tremble, ye scum! Tremble before Black Percival the scourge of the Seven Seas!"

*Brrrrrrrr!* The old cannon went off a little unexpectedly, and the recoil of it blew Slim and Fat off their feet. Pip sat down with undignified emphasis and his two shipmates landed on top of him in a heap.

They sorted themselves out and scrambled up, and when the clouds of sulphurous smoke lifted they saw the yacht ahead of them with a great dent in its once unblemished funnel. The people on deck were rushing about yelling in surprise and confusion.

"Sink the ole lugger! They don't half act good! They look as though they was really scared!"

Cap'n Keelson's voice was heard bawling from the bridge:

"Keep it up! We gotta blow the funnel off!"

Fat sprang back to the gun and reloaded as fast as he could. Pip recovered his poise and continued his bloodthirsty speechifying and sword brandishing.

*Boom!* went the gun again, followed by a rending crash as the yacht's bridge was carried away. Wild yells of terror floated back to them from the yacht.

"Missed the funnel altogether that time," said Slim, enjoying the war immensely so far. "Quick about it, Fat. Shove another ball in!"

The *Haddock* was almost alongside now, and Cap'n Keelson brought the old ship round so that it steamed along beside the yacht—their sides almost touching.

Fat and Slim—Pip was still too busy orating to do anything—swung the cannon round and touched it off. The ball struck the funnel of the yacht with a resounding *clank*. The whole yacht seemed to shudder as the funnel came crashing down amidst the wildly yelling people on deck.

"Let's have another shot for luck. Sink the ole lugger! I enjoy bein' a pirate!"

At the fore-end of the yacht a number of white-uniformed sailors were frantically trying to launch a lifeboat and get away. Fat hastily reloaded, swung round the gun with Slim's assistance and touched off another booming shot. It struck the lifeboat fairly in the centre and splintered it like matchwood.

Cap'n Keelson's voice was heard bawling orders from the bridge.

"Cease fire, below there! Git ready to board her!"



Dutchy and An How had been busy with their grappling hooks while the bombardment was in progress and the two vessels were clamped firmly side to side. Planks were being slid across the bulwarks of the vessels, even as Slim, Fat and Pip sprang away from the old cannon, eager to take part in the more spectacular part of the performance.

Pip, of course, was first to spring on to the nearest plank, and he started to hold forth once again.

"Black Percival——"

*Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!* The raucous bark of a Lewis gun abruptly cut off Black Percy's remarks. A shower of bullets whapped and whined past Pip. He jumped from his perch hastily.

"They're shootin' back!"

"Blank cartridges I 'speak!" said Slim optimistically leaping on to the plank that Pip has just vacated.

*Rat-tat-tat!* Slim's pirate head-gear left his head suddenly. Slim jumped swiftly back, and picked up his hat. It was riddled with bullet holes.

"Funny sort o' blanks!" he said in a somewhat faltering tone. "Sink the ole lugger, they are that!"

Across on the deck of the yacht the man in the white ducks they had seen on the bridge was crouching behind a Lewis gun—a savage expression on his face. Every time they showed their heads, the gun spat forth a hail of lead, and made them duck promptly.

Meanwhile Dutchy Jud and the Chinese cook, An How, had been busy. They had got another plank over the bows of the yacht and had crossed over. They were met by a crowd of the yacht's sailors on the other side, but Dutchy and An, supported by the comforting thought that it was only a picture fight after all, threw themselves into the enemy's midst with such courage that they forced them to fall back.

Dutchy swung an old rifle and felled the yacht sailors with the butt of it like so many straws. He might have been one of his viking ancestors, so valiantly did he fight. Presently he stood within a ring of seamen, most of them groaning and tenderly fingering various sized bumps and bruises and one, at least, laid out entirely.

An How had followed Dutchy across the plank, brandishing a murderous-looking chopper. But fortunately An had spotted the alleged Hector Golightly and his machine-gun and realised he was holding the pirates at bay at the other end of the ship.

He dashed in the rear of the machine-gunner, and then smote him a mighty one with the flat of his hatchet. Hector Golightly gave a wild yell and leapt up, caught one glimpse of the fierce looking chink and his chopper and bunked for another part of the ship as fast as he could.

An How waved his chopper and cheered in Chinese, while Pip again sprang boldly on to the boarding plank.

"Onwards, brave followers of Black Perc——"

"Kimorf!" said Fat grabbing Pip by the seat of the pants and dragging him off the plank. "Let's git on with the washin'."

One by one they dashed across on to the yacht. Pip was last to come, still spouting. Dutchy Jud had by now knocked all the fight out of the yacht's crew, and Slim, Fat and An How soon ran Hector Golightly to earth, trying to launch the sole remaining boat.

Hector was dragged roughly across the deck to the feet of Cap'n Keelson who had come aboard in the meantime, leaving the *Haddock* in the mate's charge.

"Here be the white-livered dog!" said Pip. "What shall be done with the carrion?"

"The plank!" roared the pseudo pirates in chorus. "Make him walk the plank!"



S—HANKY PANKY.—With a boat hook Pip fished the pseudo pirates' victim from the sea and hung him by his belt to the ship's anchor.

Hector Golightly let out a piercing shriek of terror and went white with horror.


"Step me!" Cap'n Keelson told himself in an undertone. "That bloke's a right wunnerful actor! He looks really scared stiff!"

Then he continued in a loud tone, which he imagined was being recorded on a sound film somewhere—

"The plank it shall be then!"

"Hooray!" yelled Pip. "Huz ah for the Jolly Roger!"





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Dutchy and Slim had already rigged up a plank over the sea in true pirate fashion. Hector, helpless almost with terror, was blindfolded and his hands bound behind him. They lifted him and stood him upright on the plank.

Cap'n Keelson gave a signal. The pirates commenced chanting "Yo-ho! Yo-ho! The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea!" in solemn rhythm and started to prod their unhappy victim with their cutlasses and guns. Falteringly he was forced along the plank.

The *Haddockites* watched his groping foot reach out and try to take another step at the very brink. Over he went, turned a complete somersault, shrieking wildly, then—*splash!*—he disappeared beneath the waves.

"Oooosh! Spluuushsh! Omigoosh!" spluttered the pirates' victim. "Help! Save me! I didn't mean any harm! I—gluggle-bubblubble!"

He went down for the second time.

"Stap me!" said Cap'n Keelson. "This picture's goin' a bit too far with its realism—ain't nobody goin' to pull him out or something?"

"Shsh!" said Pip. "Don't spoil the picture, Cap'n. 'Spect they forgot to make arrangements about gettin' him out—I'd better see to it!"

Pip removed himself a little way from the plank to dodge, as he believed, the camera. He took up a bathhook, and as the unfortunate gentleman of the yacht came up for the third time, Pip skillfully hooked him by the shirt and swished him through the water to the bows of the yacht, and then hauled him up and deftly hung him, by his belt, to one of the prongs of the anchor. Then he rejoined his fellow pirates.

"Come!" he said in his stage voice. "We will carouse! That scum having been dealt with!"

"Eh? Carouse? What's that?"

"Why," whispered Pip. "Muck about like! Plunder an' that!"

So for twenty minutes or so they caroused, and they gave a strikingly realistic imitation of a looting orgy. They smashed everything within sight, danced and sang and amused themselves, bullying the cowering group of sailors at the fore end of the boat. Then Cap'n Keelson gave the order and they returned to the *Happy Haddock*.

Presently they steamed back to port, leaving the once beautiful yacht a mere heap of wreckage, with a draggled-looking figurehead hanging at the oarheads from one prong of the anchor.

They had hardly hauled up into Proptetlaxl Harbour than Mr. Schwankstein, the film producer, came striding up the gangway, his face purple with rage and his eyes almost popping out of their sockets.

"You prize bohunks! You feeble-minded, goofy brained haywire bicks! You attacked the wrong ship! Our yacht—with all the cameras aboard—ain't left her anchorage yet! That was Cyrus Gulp's yacht—the millionaire!"

"Wh-a-a-t! Stap me!"

"Gosh!" gulped Pip. "Was that the millionaire we made walk the plank?"

"You're all fired!" bawled Schwankstein, shouting down their exclamations of horror and amazement. "I ain't got no use for blunderin' yahoos what can't

tell film actin' from reality! An' I ain't gonna be responsible for the damage you done, neither! That's all I gotta say!"

But the crew of the *Happy Haddock* were too spellbound to say anything.

ABOUT an hour after the unfortunates on the yacht had been rescued, and Cap'n Keelson was trying to decide whether to bunk for it or try and explain, a body of field-marshals marched up the gangway. At least they looked like field-marshals by their uniforms, but really they were only Nodoian police.

When Cap'n Keelson discovered this he resigned himself to his fate.

"It's no good, boys," he told the crew. "We gotta give ourselves up an' go along quiet."

So the whole crew of the *Happy Haddock* were marched off between a line of police to a long flat-roofed building which was Proptetlaxl's police station, customs office, municipal hall, and everything else that happened to be needed in Nodoia's only port.

They were lined up before a dark-skinned gentleman with whiskers half-a-yard long and in a uniform that made the ordinary police-men's, splendid as they were, look as though they had been purchased at the penny bazaar.

"I spik Ingleesh," said the duke-like gent. "I telegraf the President of Nodoia and tell hem off your grett deed to suppress the revolution!"

"The which?" gulped Cap'n Keelson.

"The revolution. The Americano, Cyrus Gulp, work hand in foot with Pedro Miraflores to overthrow the present Government of Nodoia and make heemself President. But for your grett deeds in attackin' Cyrus Gulp's yacht the revolution he would have been come—yes, *señor!* We discover his ship is full of guns—he iss no millionaire not at all. Gulp and his crew are in prison!"

"Gosh!" said Pip. "He means that that yacht we attacked was a gun-runner!"

"Yes! I haff said I telegraf the President. He iss very grateful for your grett deeds in suppressing the revolution. He wish to repay you by making the *Happy Haddock* the Nodoian Navy. How you say?"

"Stap me! I accept, Colonel. I do that!"

"Señor Admiral-of-the-fleet Keelson, I salute you!"

Our Gay Salts of the *Happy Haddock* in some revolutionary happenings as the Nodoian Navy in next week's rollicking fun yarn entitled *NAVY BLUES*.

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An  
Exciting  
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# SEEING IN THE DARK

## WONDERS of NOCTOVISION



"GOT everything, Jack?"  
"O.K. Bill, all the lot, we'd better be moving."

The scene is the innermost private room of a well-known Bond Street jewellers, the room where only the very choicest stones can be seen. Ordinarily even customers are not invited to enter it, but our two friends have made their way in as the result of two days concentrated effort in tunnelling from outside.

It is one o'clock on Monday morning, and time they got away. What a marvellous haul of stuff! If only it can be quietly got rid of, they can throw up the game for the rest of their lives.

"I say, Jack, you didn't close the door, did you? It's shut, anyway."

"Course I didn't shut it, what d'you take me for?"

Well, all the time our friends have been at work, in pitch darkness, with only a fraction of a second's flash from a torch every few moments, they have been watched by the proprietor of the shop. He hasn't got excited at all, but of course he's rung up the police, who are even now surrounding the shop. The whole scene has been shown on his television screen, just as if it had been lit with flood-lights.

As soon as the thieves had passed the threshold of the room, the old dodge of the selenium cell had switched on the alarm at the proprietor's home. It had set in motion the Noctovisor, and also an

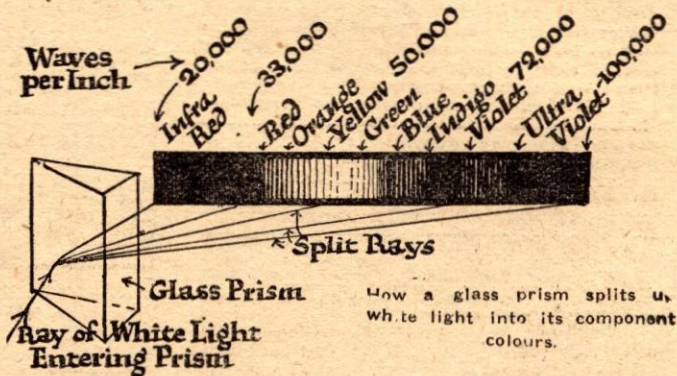
ingenious arrangement which softly dropped a steel screen in the door opening. This screen told our Bill and Jack that, as to the getaway, there was nothing doing.

"Seeing in the Dark." That's the latest television wonder, and this is how it is done. Have a look at the article on television—"Eyes of the Ether"—published in *Boys' Mag.*, No. 594, as that tells you about some of the work of the Noctovisor. The apparatus is pretty much the same as the Telesvisor.

First of all, a little elementary physics, not dull stuff, really, not this part of it, at all events. If you pass a thin ray of light through a triangular glass prism, you will find that a screen, placed at a distance, will have a beautiful band of colours cast upon it. These colours are the components of white light, and are seen in exactly the same order in the rainbow. This order runs thus, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. See the diagram.

Of course, the different colours blend into each other so that we get all sorts of others in between, but we're not concerned with the coloured part in the middle. What happens at either end?

Some people can see further into the dark parts at the ends, so there is something there. Photographic plates show that at the violet end there is





quite a considerable extension, and the rays of "chemical light" at this end are called "ultra-violet" rays.

The photographic plate in ordinary use won't show anything on the left of the green in the colour band—or spectrum—to give it its proper name. Yellow, orange, and red aren't recorded at all.

Now we can dye the photographic plate, and at once we find that there is a long series of rays, invisible to the eye, beyond the red end. To these rays the name "infra-red" has been applied. In many ways they are even more interesting than the ultra-violet rays, and it is by their use that our two jewel cracksmen have been watched without their knowledge.

Animals, or some of them, cats and rodents especially, have the power to command these rays; we know that they are able to see quite well in the dark. This may be due to some colouring of the "retina," or screen, at the back of their eyes on which the light is focused.

In order to produce infra-red rays for the purpose of television, we have a powerful arc-lamp, in the case of our jewel store, a perfectly silent one. Now here's the funny part, instead of using light from it, we use the dark! Put a thin ebonite sheet between the lamp and the objects you want to see, and you have all the infra-red rays you can do with!

Certainly it isn't quite as simple as this, but that's the principle. Imagine this infra-red "light" in the form of a ray. Pass it through the scanning disc of your television—here's where you'll want No. 594 of the *Mag.*—and as soon as this ray strikes something it is reflected back to the marvellous little photo-cells. In the ten thousandth part of a second the potassium metal at the back of the cells responds and sends its message to the amplifier. All this time your eyes see nothing, but the infra-red rays can!

All the time these two fellows have been silently rifling the jeweller's safe, the ray directed by the scanning disc we told you about, has been working on them. They have known nothing about it, simply because they couldn't see it, much less feel anything.

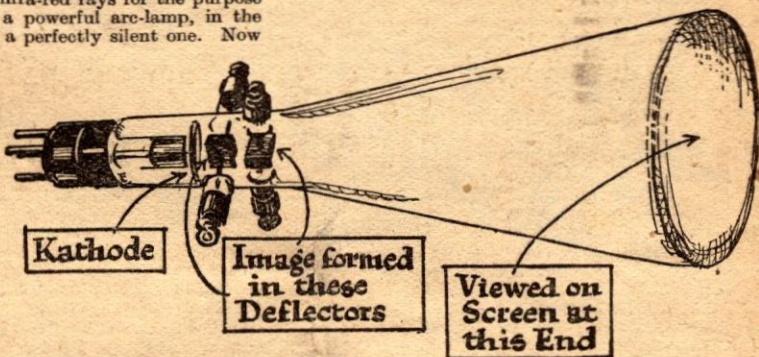
Instead of the wireless though, the amplified impulses from the photo-cells pass along ordinary telephone lines to the jeweller's bedside table. An alarm bell rings, he leaps up in bed, switches on the television—one of these canny new ones—it's already tuned, and then—with a pitying sort of smile—

watches his marvellous collection of the world's choicest precious stones being rifled!

He knows that the men are safely trapped and can't possibly get away till they are released from outside, so if he wishes he need not at once 'phone for the police.

By the way, the new type of television we spoke of just now, is the kathode ray sort, recently invented by an amateur experimenter. Its great advantage is that it needs no scanning disc, nor synchronised motor. You just see the image in what looks like the bottom end of a long, conical glass flask. It is certainly a great advance on the older type.

These rays can penetrate fog and mist with ease, so it would seem that we have unlimited fields to work in, quite apart from working in the dark. The lighthouse, with its tremendous light power, will have an ebonite shield to cut off the visible light when the foggy weather is about. Every ship will have its noctovisor eyes to see the infra-red rays



The latest kind of television—The Kathode Ray type.

from the warning beacon, and record what it sees on the captain's bridge.

A more terrible thing will be in the form of a weapon of defence in time of war. Infra-red ray screens will be put up to encircle cities which must be protected from hostile aircraft. Directly a bombing plane enters the screen, it is recorded, and a searchlight put right on him and kept there till he is destroyed.

Instead of barbed wire defences, in front of trenches on the battlefield, invisible infra-red rays will do the job. Walk into those rays, be the night as black as pitch, and you're done!

Even Mr. J. L. Baird, wizard as he is at television, says he cannot see the limits of the possibilities. How then can we?

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*Out to Smash Safarli and his Gunmen of the Sea, Les and Cloudy, with a C.I.D. Man—the Undertaker—Capture Safarli and Force him to Lead them to the Gangsters' Thames-side Lair. But Safarli Upsets the Police Boat and makes his Getaway. Now Read What Happens Next.*

### The Raiders' Ruse.

LES, Cloudy, and the Undertaker struggled in a group in the dark water.

"Swim for your lives!" the detective gasped.

He struck out for mid-stream, the two lads following after as hard as they could.

Something whizzed past Cloudy's ear and ripped into the water; but there was no report. The gunmen were using silencers on their automatics now.

A long string of barges, being towed by a tug, was creeping along the middle of the river.

"Grab hold of one of them and climb aboard," the Undertaker panted by Cloudy's side.

They reached the barges a moment later, caught hold of dangling ropes, and hung on to rest, allowing themselves to be towed through the water. Cloudy dashed the water out of his eyes and stared back towards the wharf.

"What happened to the launch?" he gasped to the Undertaker.

"They dropped a net over it and dragged it under the piles," the detective growled. "Gee jumping whizz! To think I fell for a thing like that! When we touch ground again, Cloudy, you'll oblige me by giving me a good slug under the jaw. But in the meantime . . ."

He broke off short. Somebody was moving about on the barge to which they were clinging. Then they heard a voice begin to talk on the barge—an American voice.

"I guess I was mistaken," the voice said. "Had an idea I felt her give a queer lurch just now."

"Perhaps the Big Boss sunk the launch," another voice suggested. "That would set up an eddy or two."

"Give me dry land," the first voice grunted. "I'm no seagull. Sailing about on these things sure gives me the jimmies."

"Let's get up forrard again. We'll be in the centre of London soon."

Two pairs of footsteps crossed the long plank deck of the barge and died into silence.

"Cloudy," the Undertaker breathed. "Perhaps you won't have to give me a slug under the jaw after all. It looks as if we've only got to walk in to see what it's all about. Let's take a look."

He went hand over hand up the short rope, reached the gunwale of the barge, and drew himself over. The boys saw his crouching figure pause while he looked carefully from side to side; then he reached down an enormous hand and helped them up one after the other.

"Don't stand," he warned, as they scrambled on to the deck. "We don't want them all to know that the three bears have come aboard."

They crouched in the shelter of the gunwale and peered forward through the darkness. There seemed to be eight or nine barges in the string. They had boarded the second from the end, and on each of the others they could see dark figures moving.

"Watch your step," the Undertaker growled in an undertone. "We'll take a look in the cabin. If there's anybody aboard, that's where he'll be."

With bodies bent almost double, they crept to the stern. The hatchway leading down to the cabin and the interior of the barge showed a glow of light.

"I'm going below," the Undertaker said. "As soon as I do, block the hatch with your bodies. We want to keep this as private as possible."

For a big man he had the agility of a monkey. He went down the steep ladder like a streak of lightning and with the silence of a cat. Cloudy and Les pressed their soaking bodies against the lighted opening, and listened.



They heard a muffled thud, a brief scuffle. Then the Undertaker was leaping up the steps again.

"Come inside, boys!"

He had put the light in a position in the cabin which did not allow it to shine outside. It was a tiny cabin, not much bigger than a large cupboard; and most of it was filled by the sprawling form of Mike, the sailor, whom Cloudy could remember feelingly from the *Western Duchess*. But Mike had accepted one of the Undertaker's celebrated left swings, and it would take him some time to sleep it off.

"Look here!" the Undertaker whispered excitedly. "Shells, by the living joss!"

At the back of the cabin was a door leading in the interior of the barge. The door was open, and the light of the lamp gleamed on a tall upright metal rack, a contrivance something after the style of a rack for wine-bottles. But there were no bottles here. Every compartment of the rack held a small high-explosive shell.

"By the five-toed ape!" the detective breathed at last. "And they could do it, too!"

"Do what?" Cloudy exclaimed.

"Hold the City of London to ransom!" the Undertaker said grimly. "Think of it! London waking up to-morrow to find quick-firing guns trained on the Houses of Parliament, the Bank—everywhere. Some of these barges will be slipped into the canals. The city could be surrounded."

"Gee, do you think that's Safari's scheme?" Les whispered.



The retreating gangsters turned to face the Undertaker and his gun.

"What else? And how are we going to stop him doing it? I expect every one of these barges is carrying a gun and a load of ammunition. If we blow 'em up, we'll send half London sky-high."

"And every moment we're getting nearer!" Cloudy said, with a tingle going down his backbone under his soaking clothes.

"It'll take 'em an hour or two to get these floating guns into position," the Undertaker said. "But we've got to think of something to squash this pretty scheme while all the barges are together. . . . See where we are, Cloudy. But for the love o' Mike don't let anybody see you."

Cloudy went up the ladder, poked his head into the open air, and surveyed the river-bank on either side.

"We're just passing Woolwich," he reported. "Then we'd better not blow 'em up here," the Undertaker remarked grimly. "Boys, we've got to take to the water again. We've got to get ashore and stop this lot somehow before they start making a battlefield of Charing Cross. . . . Come on."

He crept up the ladder again, the two lads at his heels. But suddenly, as his head came into the open air, the Undertaker stopped.

"Hold it a minute," he breathed. "Safari's just going aboard the next barge."

The lads waited, the blood racing through their pulses. They could hear the *chug-chug* of a muffled engine, and footsteps echoing on the deck of the adjoining barge. Then there was silence again, except for the distant puffing of the tug and the lap of the water against the sides of the barges.

"O.K.," said the Undertaker.

They crept out on deck. The Undertaker lifted a corner of a black tarpaulin, which covered most of the top of the barge, and stared beneath.

"Look!" he breathed.

The nebulous glimmer of starlight and distant river-lamps gleamed on the shining fittings of a quick-firing field-gun.

"Let's go," said the Undertaker. "Take the port side, and if you make a splash I'll see that my left keeps you supplied with headaches for the rest of the week."

Half-a-minute later all three of them had slipped silently into the water, and were striking out desperately for the bank.

### The Battle on the Barges.

AT a quarter-past midnight a violent giant of a man in sodden clothes, followed by two husky-looking lads as wet and bedraggled as he was, rushed through the gates of Saint Catherine's Dock, near the Tower.

"Hey, you!" yelled the dock policeman, leaping out of his sentry-box.

The Undertaker wheeled back and grinned.

"Well?" he asked viciously.

"Sorry, sir!" the constable exclaimed, and darted back into his sentry-box, where he wiped the perspiration from his face with a red handkerchief.

"Struth!" he muttered. "The Undertaker!"

The Undertaker barged into the lighted office of the Port of London Authority, open day and night. A man in uniform looked at him inquiringly.

"You've got a tug here with steam up," the Undertaker exclaimed. "I want it, and I want it quick."

The man in uniform looked him up and down. "Are you just crazy," he inquired, "or do you always behave like this?"

With a bellow, the Undertaker reached across the counter, grabbed the man by the collar, and dragged him over to the other side.

"Take me to that tug!" he roared. "I'm a detective-inspector from Scotland Yard, and I'm commandeering it—understand?" And he thrust the bewildered man in uniform outside the office.

"Run!" the Undertaker cried. "I'm in a hurry. You may have noticed it."

Quite sure that he was dealing with a raving lunatic, the man in uniform took to his heels, and scampered off alongside the dock basins. In less than a minute he had led them to the tug, lying alongside the wharf in the outer basin.

The Undertaker leapt aboard her.



"Where's the captain?"

"Here," said a dark figure, springing up from a seat on a box. "Who the devil are you?"

"Detective-Inspector Bury of Scotland Yard. I'm commandeering this tug. Get her out into the river—quick! We'll pick up a heap of men at the dock entrance. They're coming down now. Go on—jump to it! There's no time to waste."

"Where are your credentials?" the captain demanded.

The Undertaker took hold of him by the collar, and displayed a leg-of-mutton fist under his nose.

"There," said he. "I've been doing a bit of paddling, and my warrant card's at the bottom of the river. Either you take this tug out or I do."

"It's all right, skipper," growled a voice from the galley. "He's a 'tec all right. Look at 'is feet! Besides that, he's run me for smuggling four times already."

The Undertaker grinned cheerfully at the unshaven face of the man in the galley.

"Well, if it isn't my old pal Stinker Morris! Four times I've run you, have I? Well, I only need two more for game and set."

He wheeled round to the captain.

"Well?"

"Steam's up," the captain grunted. "I'll get her into the river in a couple o' minutes."

"Good. Turn her head down stream."

A whistle blew. Terrific activity burst out on the tug. Stokers tumbled out of their bunkers and shot

Inside three minutes the tug was creeping out of the dock. She stopped twenty yards outside the entrance, and a boat-load of men, who had been waiting for her, scrambled aboard over her low stern rail.

"Full speed ahead!" the Undertaker bellowed up to the bridge. "I'll join you in a moment."

Underfoot the engines began to throb and roar, and the powerful bull-nosed craft shot downstream, leaving a great white wake behind her.

The Undertaker assembled the men who had come aboard.

"All here?" he snapped. "Pearson—Wallis—Rumbold, each take a squad. I told you what I wanted you for over the 'phone. Keep out of sight till I give the word. Did you bring extra masks?"

"Yes, a case of 'em—here."

The Undertaker dived his huge paw into it, and brought forth a couple of gas-masks, which he handed to Cloudy and Les.

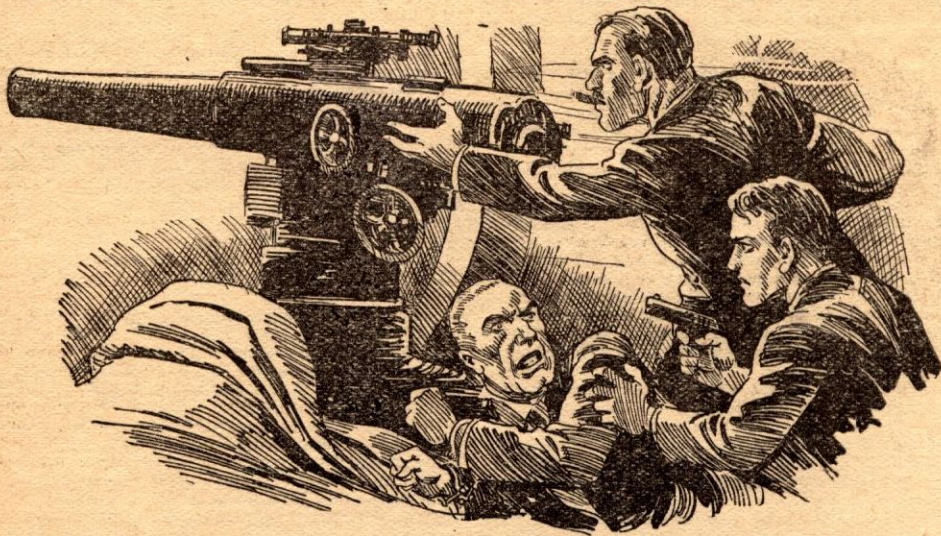
"Sling these round your necks, but don't put 'em on yet. We may not need 'em! Les, take the rest and distribute them amongst the crew. Tell 'em the same thing."

"Ay, ay, Undertaker," replied Les.

"Cloudy, come with me," snapped the Undertaker. With Cloudy close on his heels, the detective tramped up to the narrow bridge.

"They're in sight!" the Undertaker said excitedly.

"Listen, skipper. In a minute or two I'm going to take over the wheel."



THE LOOTERS TAMED.—The Undertaker swung the quick-firing gun to cover the gunmen, while Cloudy menaced Safarli with his automatic.

down towards the furnaces. The captain's mate, half-dressed, joined his superior on the cramped little bridge.

The Undertaker sat himself on a coil of rope and lit a cigarette.

"What are you going to do?" Cloudy inquired, in his most bored tone.

"Stop those barges."

"I know that. But how?" demanded Cloudy patiently.

"Ram their tug!"

"You're not!" said the skipper definitely. "I'm captain of this ship and I'm in charge of her."

"I seem to know your face," the Undertaker remarked genially. "Were you ever at Singapore?"

"Why—yes. Twelve years ago."

"Remember the *Ching Ling*—ten-thousand-ton cargo-boat with white officers and a Chinese crew?"

"Crew mutinied, killed the officers, and the captain put 'em out with a steam-hose!" the tug-master exclaimed. "Yes, I remember that all right. I brought the *Ching Ling* to Singapore."



"And I happen to have been the captain," said the Undertaker drily. "Now do I get that wheel?"

"You—the captain!" the tug-master breathed, and turned the Undertaker so that a lamp shone on his face. "Great Scott—so you are! Yes, sir, take the wheel if that's what you want to do. I put myself entirely under your orders."

"Thanks," the Undertaker answered, grinning.

He took over the wheel, and peered ahead through the darkness at the long line of lights on the string of barges.

"This boat of yours may get a plate or two started," he remarked. "But don't worry about that. There's enough money coming out of this job to-night to settle any damage and give you a bonus into the bargain. That string of barges, skipper, is packed tight with American gangsters, quick-firing guns, ammunition, bombs, sawn-off shot-guns, and all the other play-things they go in for."

"What?" exclaimed the skipper hoarsely, and his gnarled hand gripped tight on the rail.

"They're on their way to hold up London on a grand scale," the Undertaker told him. "And we're on our way to stop 'em. But don't you fret, skipper."

"But what are you going to do?"

"You'll see. Cloudy, give him that spare gas-mask, and put on your own."

In another minute every man on board had his gas-mask in place, and further talking was impossible.

From his place by the Undertaker's side, Cloudy watched the string of barges drawing nearer with the fussy little tug in the lead. But for them the river was empty of traffic, and a strange silence seemed to brood over it, broken only by the rumbling engines of the approaching tugs.

Amongst the litter on the deck behind him, Cloudy could see the dark shapes of the waiting men from Scotland Yard, crouching out of sight against the bulwarks. Now and then an automatic gleamed; and he noticed that some of the men were wearing bulky packs on their backs and were holding long, nozzled tubes. Poison gas!

The little tug sped down upon that fleet of death, her masked company looking like strange creatures from another world, with great shining discs of eyes, and a corrugated tube where the mouth should be.

The Undertaker touched the engine-room telegraph. Only twenty yards divided them from the enemy tug now, and he had been moving at half speed to make Safari and his gang imagine that what they saw coming towards them was nothing but an innocent tug.

But in answer to the touch on the telegraph the engines suddenly burst out into full roar again, and with a heave of his great shoulders, the Undertaker sent the wheel spinning.

The little tug swung round in a wide sweep, and then darted like a mad thing straight for the enemy tug's waist.

Shouts of alarm and warning leapt up from the other vessel. Her helmsman tried desperately to steer her out of the danger-line. But he hadn't a chance.

The attacker caught her amidships, carving a hole in her as swiftly and neatly as a knife going through cheese.

Cloudy was sent flying backwards, and by the time he got to his feet, half-stunned, the two tugs were swinging towards the bank, with the string of barges crowding round them.

In squads the men from Scotland Yard were leaping from one tug to the other, and streaming thence to the barges. The air was filled with yells and curses, the hiss of escaping steam, the gurgle of water, and the sort of throaty sigh made by the poison-gas leaving the containers.

Cloudy leapt over the rail to the enemy tug. He never believed in letting a fight go by unless he was in it, and his enthusiasm was gratified instantly.

A man with a firebar in his hands leapt across the chasm which had been ripped in the enemy tug's deck, and aimed a blow at Cloudy that would have smashed in his head like an egg-shell, had it got home.

But Cloudy ducked, caught the fellow round the knees, and sent him spinning into the water.

The enemy tug was sinking under his feet. He swung round, leapt for the nearest barge, and found himself in the thick of it.

Les and the Undertaker were there, crouched one on each side of the cabin hatch. The Undertaker held the nozzle of a gas-container in his hand, and, muffled by his gas-mask, came his bull-like roar:

"Come out o' there. If you don't, I'll smoke you like a side o' bacon."

Three automatics were flung up the ladder to the deck, followed almost at once by three savage-looking men, who emerged with their hands above their heads.

The Undertaker slipped handcuffs on them, and told Les to stop and keep them covered.

"You come with me!" the Undertaker roared at Cloudy through his gas-mask.

He led the way, running along the deck of the barge and leaping on to the next one.

By now the fight had become concentrated upon the final barge of the string, each of the other barges being in the hands of the Scotland Yard men, who were rounding up the surrendered prisoners.

The Undertaker made for the last barge. The fight was lit up by a score of powerful electric pocket-lamps, lying here and there and throwing their beams in all directions. Automatics were cracking with the rapidity of machine-guns, and here and there gangsters and detectives were locked together in vicious hand-to-hand struggles.

The Undertaker crouched in shelter behind the high rim of the hatch, and tore off his gas-mask.

"Can't hear myself think in this thing," he yelled to Cloudy, who had followed his example. "And the gas didn't work too well. Too much wind. . . . Keep down."

Bullets whizzed across them.

"I haven't seen Safari," the Undertaker growled. "If he's anywhere, he must be on this barge. Let's see if we can get below."

The fight was raging round and about the hatchway which led into the cabin; but the Undertaker left that spot alone. He reached up to the heavy tarpaulin above his head, and ripped a hole in it with his knife. He was making a cross-cut when the blade of the knife was shattered by a bullet fired from below, and with a grunt of pain he let his hand fall to his side.

"I wonder who did that?" he said softly. "I'm going to find out."

He leapt to his feet, and jumped down recklessly through the hole he had made in the tarpaulin. To Cloudy it looked like certain death to leap down there on top of the gunman; but that didn't stop him following the Undertaker.

He found the detective locked in a death-struggle with Safari. The scene was lit by an electric lamp hooked to the wall, and the two immense men, each a giant of humanity, were rolling from side to side on the barge bottom, battering at each other with clubbed automatics.

Cloudy flung himself to the Undertaker's assistance, got his elbow hooked under Safari's chin, and with a terrific jerk, dragged the big man up to his feet.

With a snarl, Safari spun round, sending Cloudy off his balance. The gangster aimed the automatic and pulled the trigger. But nothing happened; it was empty.

"Time you packed up, isn't it, Safari?" the



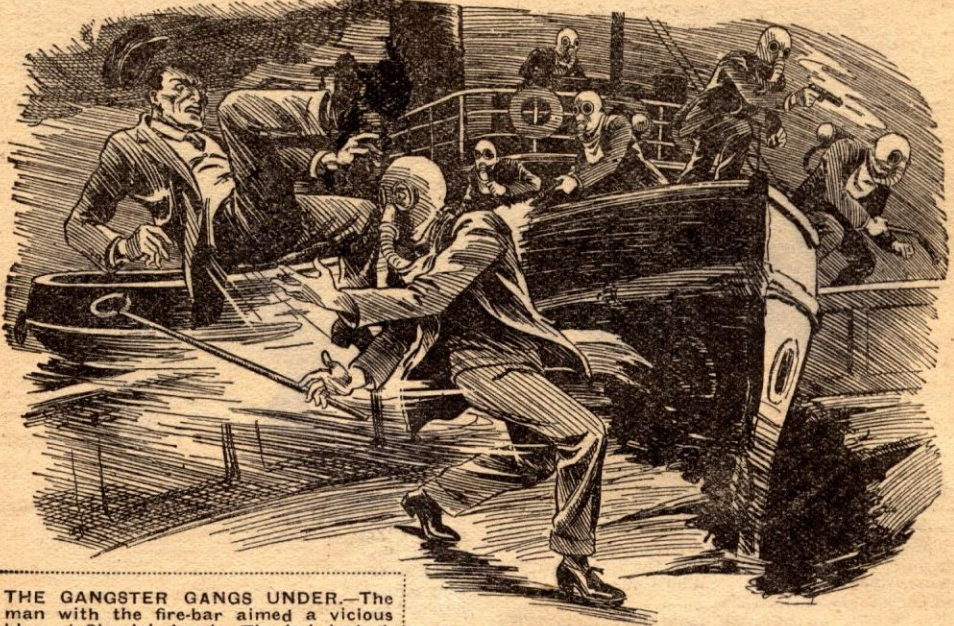
Undertaker panted, scrambling to his feet, and aiming a right at Safari's mouth that sent three of the gold teeth down his throat. The gangster doubled up like a carpenter's rule and collapsed in a heap, semi-conscious.

But Cloudy and the Undertaker were in a bad spot. They were unarmed—their automatics empty—and the fight was coming down through the cabin to the interior of the barge. The humped shoulders of the grimly battling gunmen were already visible through the cabin door.

"Look after Safari!" the Undertaker yelled.

"Feeling tired, boys?" the Undertaker inquired, grinning at them along the barrel of the field-gun. "Then stand quite still and rest yourselves. If I see as much as a flicker of an eyelid till I give the word, I'll pull this white cord and there'll be bits of you fellers plastered on warehouse walls from here to the Estuary."

The men glared into the open mouth of the field-gun. For an instant it looked as if they might take a chance and send a hail of bullets at Cloudy and the Undertaker. But the trigger-cord in the Undertaker's hand was as taut as a fishing line.



THE GANGSTER GANGS UNDER.—The man with the fire-bar aimed a vicious blow at Cloudy's head. The lad ducked, caught the fellow round the knees, and sent him spinning.

He flung a pair of handcuffs at Cloudy, who caught them deftly, and rushed to the corner in which the groaning Safari was lying.

Meanwhile the retreating gangsters had been forced back through the cabin into the hold. In a moment they would stream in, barricade the cabin door, and shoot upwards through the tarpaulin.

But the Undertaker had no wish to fall into their hands. He rushed to the field-gun clamped to the barge-floor, dragged the waterproof cover off it, snapped open the breech, grabbed a shell, and loaded it.

The actuating mechanism of the turntable spun under his hands. The short, narrow, vicious-looking barrel began swinging round towards that bank of heaving shoulders in the cabin doorway.

"Drag him over here, Cloudy!" he yelled.

With his hand on Safari's collar, Cloudy hauled the huge man towards the gun; and just as he reached it, the gangsters burst through the cabin into the hold and slammed the door behind them.

They turned, perspiring, bleeding, their eyes wild and bloodshot, their guns grasped in tense hands. There were eighteen or twenty of them—men who lived by the gun and knew that death was the price they would pay for failure now.

"I shouldn't shoot, boys, if I were you," he said grimly. "I've got this cord wound round my wrist. If I were to fall I'd set the gun off, and I'd hate to have you fellers extruded to the States in a tin box marked 'Cat's meat.'"

Not a man moved. Footsteps were rushing about on deck. A battering ram was at work on the door of the outer hatch.

"Suppose each man chucks his gun down in front of him," the Undertaker said mildly.

With a clatter of metal twenty automatics fell to the barge floor.

\* \* \* \* \*

"WELL, I think we can call it a night," said the Undertaker, as he and Cloudy and Les drove away from Scotland Yard in a taxi at three o'clock in the morning. "Twenty-seven of America's most notorious gangsters under lock and key, including Safari. Five dead, and eight more feeling very ill in hospital beds."

"And to think," said Les, looking out of the window at the silent streets, "that not one in a thousand of the people who live here will know anything about it till they read their papers in the morning."

Look out for another grand Screen yarn by John Hunter, next we k. Dick Fortune of the Films reels off thrills in plenty in this unusual yarn.



THE BOY SLEUTH WITH  
A WATER-PISTOL!

Another Gripping Exploit of the Taxi 'Tec—  
Complete and Full of Thrills!



## THE MYSTERY OF THE LUMINOUS MAN!

### House Of Mystery.

**B**UZZ-ZZ-ZZ! went the 'phone in the underground garage in the Euston Road, and Charlie Bilks looked up from his work on the ME 2 with a grin. "Yore turn to answer it, mate!" he said cheerily.

"Hullo!" Tiny Tom Hinton, the Taxi 'Tec, put the receiver to his ear. "Who's that? This is Hinton, private detective."

The answer he received made him tighten his grip on the instrument until his knuckles turned white. "Thank heavens!" exclaimed a faint voice at the other end. "This is Professor Jason speaking. My life has been threatened, and— Ah! Carthew! Help!" The words ended in a gasp and a groan.

The next moment another voice cut in. "Don't trouble to come, Tiny. You will be too late!" Then the line closed with a click!

Tiny leapt to his feet. Of Professor Jason, the famous and eccentric scientist, he knew only by hearsay. But the other voice—smooth, silky, mocking—was only too familiar. It belonged to Felix Wolfgang, the one-armed crook with whom he waged ceaseless war!

Without waiting to answer Smutty's questions, Tiny tried to put a call through to the local police station at Deadlington, only to find it was out of order. "They've been meddling with the line!" he muttered, and at once rang up the post office to send a telegram: "Go to Professor Jason, Deadlington, at once. Danger.—THE TAXI 'TEC."

Then he jumped into his old cab, telling Smutty to do the same. "We're going to spend a day in the country," he explained, as he drove the ME 2 out into the Euston Road.

While they were dashing out of town at breakneck speed he repeated the fragmentary 'phone message to the mystified Smutty.

Deadlington was a village in Surrey, off the main road, and with her highly tuned racing engine beneath her old bonnet, ME 2 did the journey in record time.

"I believe this is the road," muttered Tiny, as they swung round a bend. The next moment he had jammed on the brakes as an incredible sight met their eyes. From the gates of a house which inquiries had told them belonged to the great scientist, there suddenly emerged a figure which hardly seemed to belong to this earth. In the hot September sun beating down on the road, it glowed with shimmering light; and, though it had the shape of a man, it was of gigantic proportions. This effect of great size was caused by its blurred and hazy outline.

"Strike me pink!" gasped Smutty. "Whazzat? A daylight ghost?"

"Heaven knows!" rejoined Tiny, blinking at the luminous figure. "But I'm going to find out!"

But as the ME 2 shot forward again, a closed car backed out from a side turning—a door was flung open—and the glittering apparition sprang inside. Tiny accelerated at once. Before he could reach the spot, the strange car had vanished round a bend, carrying its unearthly passenger with it!

Tiny stopped the ME 2 outside the house. He was torn between two alternatives, but the urgency of that interrupted 'phone call prompted him to go to the Professor's aid first.

"See if you can overtake that car, Smutty!" he snapped, leaping out of the taxi. The mechanic took the wheel and drove off at full speed, while the Taxi 'Tec, drawing his water-pistol, ran up the gravel path to the front door. It was ajar, and as he pushed it hastily open, he was prepared for a number of things, but not for the amazing reception he received. The



moment his foot touched the mat inside the hall, the house rang and echoed with the strident notes of countless jarring bells. At the same time he was seized in a cruel, vice-like grip, and, struggling in vain to free himself, he saw that two immense metal feelers had slid from their sockets in the wall on either side to close round his arms!

Before he had time to call for help, there was a step on the stairs, and a bent, narrow-shouldered man came down, leaning on the bannisters.

"What do you want?" he rasped.

The Taxi 'Tec abandoned his futile strife with the mechanism that pinioned his arms. "I want my freedom first of all," he answered shortly, "and then I want to know if Professor Jason is safe."

"He is away," replied the man coolly. "You

of man—all lit up, like—prowling round here, but we never paid much attention to them fairy tales."

Tiny was about to mention the phantom figure he had seen, but, glancing at Carthew's furtive face, he changed his mind. "Well, that's funny!" he said, pretending to be puzzled. "I'm sure Mr. Carthew won't mind if we examine the house."

"Not at all," replied the butler, with a pale smile. "Follow me, gentlemen."

### Eyes In The Night!

THERE was nothing in the great old rambling house to arrest Tiny's attention until he found himself in the Professor's laboratory on the ground floor. It was a long, narrow room, furnished with an untidy desk, several cupboards, a huge green



NO WELCOME ON THE MAT.—The instant the Taxi 'Tec stepped on the mat alarm bells clanged all over the house, and he was seized by two immense metal feelers.

have walked into his patent burglar alarm." He made no movement to assist Tiny, who was about to protest when a third voice cut in.

"Here, what's all this?" A sergeant of police, followed by three constables, appeared in the hall. "Why, bless me, it's Mr. Hinton! Release him at once, Carthew."

The stooping man pressed a lever in the wall, and Tiny felt his metal bonds relax. The next moment he was free. "Carthew?" he repeated. "That was the name I heard over the telephone." He turned to the sergeant. "I see I've raced the telegram! Professor Jason rang me up to say he was in danger." He swung round on Carthew again. "Where is he?"

"I tell you he's away," the man growled. "I'm his butler, I ought to know. Somebody must have been fooling you."

Tiny's suspicions of the fellow at once returned. He turned again to the police. "Had you any reason to believe the Professor had an enemy?" he asked.

"Well, Mr. Hinton, old Jason's an eccentric cove, and nobody in Deadlington knows much about him," replied the sergeant, scratching his head. "I've heard stories in the village about a huge, shining sort

safe, and shelves loaded with test tubes, bottles and retorts.

While the police peered into the cupboards, Tiny tried the safe. It was locked.

"The Professor is the only man who understands the combination," volunteered Carthew, in answer to Tiny's questioning look. "He keeps the notes on his most important experiments there."

"Well, they are not of much interest to us," remarked the Taxi 'Tec carelessly, and he turned to the desk. In it he soon discovered a small diary, which—with the idea of learning something about Jason's life—he glanced through.

The jottings were of the briefest, but they gave a clue to the mystery. A few months back he had recorded: *Success at last! Have completed my invulnerable and invisible material. Must make a suit of it. A little later appeared this entry: Suit finished. Unfortunately it reflects the light. Then came the first hint of danger. Anonymous letter demanding my secret. Visit from one-armed man. Threatens death unless I yield formula. Shall I consult police? Decided to interview one-arm man.*



Those were the only references, but they told Tiny that Jason had invented some material which was invulnerable (probably to bullets) and, though invisible at night, shone by day. He had made a suit of it, and Tiny was by now convinced that the weird figure which he had seen in reality Professor Jason. But why had he fled in the car?

His meditations were interrupted by the sudden return of Smutty. The mechanic burst into the room to exclaim: "E got away, Tiny!"

The Taxi 'Tec put his finger to his lips, but Carthew gave an involuntary start that showed he had heard. Taking the mechanic aside, Tiny learnt that Smutty had lost sight of the car and its strange passenger after he had been held up by a train passing a level-crossing.

The Taxi 'Tec turned to the sergeant. "We are on the edge of some deep mystery," he said. "I think you should keep a close watch on the house, and await developments. It is too late for us to return, and I am sure Professor Jason would not object to our spending the night here during his absence."

As he said this, he caught a glimpse of Carthew's face in the mirror, and the sudden spasm of fear and hate that contorted it did not escape his eyes. But the butler recovered himself when Tiny asked to be shown up to a bedroom.

"I think you're making a mountain out of a mole-hill, sir," he said, as he led them upstairs. "The Professor is on holiday, and probably someone is having a joke with you."

"Probably," replied Tiny drily.

Once in the privacy of their room, the Taxi 'Tec turned quickly to Smutty. "We are not going to stay here," he whispered. "As soon as it's dark we shall take up our position in the lab. I have a feeling that Jason will return. Or perhaps we shall receive a visit from Wolfgang himself."

When night fell the police concealed themselves in the front garden. They were all provided with motor-bikes which were also laid out of sight beneath the hedges, while the ME 2 was hidden behind a shed. Carthew, still pretending to make light of the affair, retired—ostensibly to bed. Tiny and Smutty also sought their room, where they made up two dummy figures in the big double bed. Then they concealed themselves behind a curtain covering a recess in the passage outside, and waited.

A clock was striking midnight when Carthew crept down the passage in slippers. Peering out through the curtain, Tiny saw him open the bedroom door and peep inside. Then he closed the door, turned the key in the lock and hurried downstairs.

Tiny gripped Smutty's arm. "Got your gun?" he whispered. "I believe the fun is going to begin!"

They reached the bottom of the stairs to see the vague figure of the stooping butler disappear inside the lab. They followed him on padded feet. Moonlight gleamed fitfully through the window, against which Carthew was standing.

The butler flung up the pane; and Tiny, crouching behind the desk, dragged Smutty down beside him. After opening the window Carthew left the laboratory and passed them so closely that he almost brushed against Tiny.

Smutty stared at his pal. "Wot next?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Hush!" Tiny's finger was against his lips. "He opened that window to admit someone. Come on. We'll be ready."

He rose, and ensconced himself in the heavy window-curtains. Smutty took up his position on the other side. They stood there for several minutes, their hearts pounding.

Suddenly Smutty felt the hair stirring on his scalp. A pair of glowing eyes materialised in the black square of the window! Eyes without a body!

Even Tiny was shaken; but the next instant the moon struggled out of a blanket of clouds, and above and around the eyes appeared a faint, silvery light, vaguely outlining a human head.

Then an opaque form, touched with an unearthly glow where the moonbeams struck it, blundered in through the window, and the heavy tread of feet sounded on the floor.

Tiny slammed down the window with one hand and flashed on his electric torch with the other. "Who is that?" he snapped.

A cry of astonishment broke from Smutty. The light of the torch had conjured up a gigantic glowing form—a semi-human figure in which only the dark eyes were alive!

"The Taxi 'Tec!" snarled the well-known voice of Felix Wolfgang, and with a snort of fury the figure sprang at Tiny.

But Smutty acted even swifter—to save his young boss. Raising his heavy service revolver by the barrel he crashed the butt full on Wolfgang's shining head. Jason's invention, however, which completely covered the arch-crook like a glimmering sheath, was of a metallic quality, pliant yet invulnerable, and the weapon glanced off with a ringing sound. The next moment Wolfgang's fist shot out and crashed against the side of Smutty's head. The mechanic's gun went flying from his nerveless fingers. He fell—stunned!

Tiny immediately realised the futility of tackling a man clad in such impervious armour. He turned to the window to fling it open again and shout for the police. But Wolfgang was too quick for him. Bounding over Smutty's outstretched body, his single arm came down on the Taxi 'Tec's head like a thunderbolt.

Tiny sagged to the ground as if he had been plexed. A thousand lights danced before his eyes and then—darkness!

How long he lay unconscious he never knew. But when he opened his eyes again, his head was throbbing with pain and his limbs were numbed. His wrists and ankles were bound with thongs; his mouth was stuffed with a gag. Smutty lay motionless beside him, conscious, but in a similar plight.

He stared round the shadowy room, and in the feeble light of the moon he could see the faintly glowing form of Wolfgang bent over the desk, going through the drawers with methodical care. The crook butler was at his elbow.

"It's not here, Carthew!" the crook was muttering. "Where the blazes has he hidden it?"

"He never told me," replied the treacherous butler sulkily.

"A pity you hadn't the sense to find out!" snarled Wolfgang in sudden rage. "If you had any brains you would have warned me this precious armour shone in the light. What's the use of a cloak that is only invisible in the dark? The Taxi 'Tec saw me to-day, and it's a miracle I wasn't spotted when I came through the police just now!"

It was uncanny to hear that savage voice issuing from a body which was barely visible, and vanished entirely every time the moon was obscured by clouds. Tiny had a sensation of living in some fantastic dream.

"The formula might help," suggested Carthew. "I often heard him mutter that a different arrangement of the components might make the stuff entirely invisible."

"Yes, but where is the confounded formula?" growled Wolfgang in exasperation. "There's only one thing for it. We must open that safe again and force it from the man's own lips!"

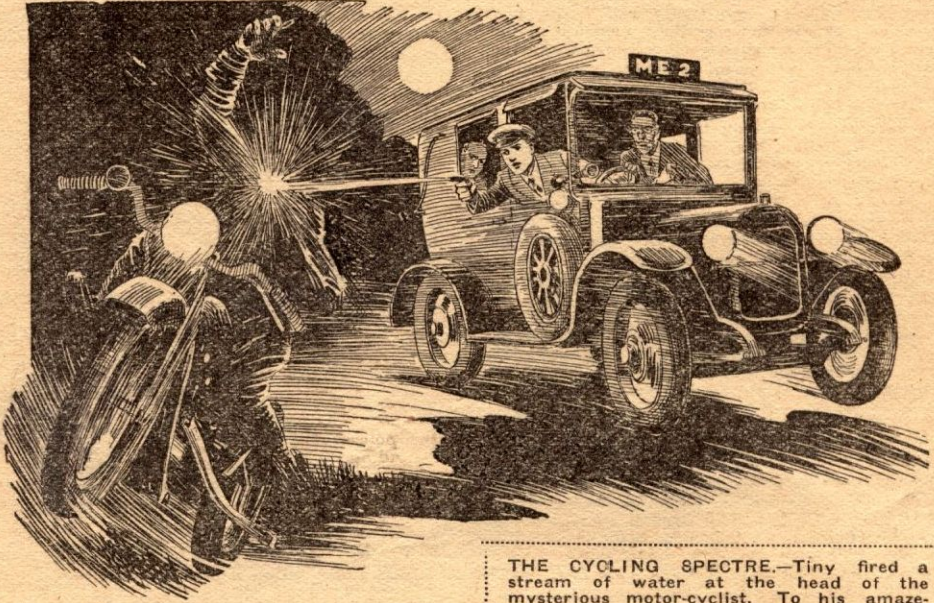


Tiny, watching through half-closed eyes, saw Carthew set to work on the secret combination of the enormous safe. When the massive door swung slowly outwards, Carthew put in his hand and dragged forth a man of middle-age, his grizzled beard almost concealed by a gag. It was a shock to realise that Professor Jason had been in the house all the time!

"Lucky for him the safe's not airtight," said Carthew with a callous chuckle, "or he'd be dead by now! He's been there since I gave him a bat over

A warning shout was heard from the garden. The police had seen him! Realising that it was too late to wreak his vengeance on the Taxi 'Tec, Wolfgang sprang clean through the window, shattering the glass into fragments. A policeman rushed towards him, only to stagger back beneath a crushing blow from his metallic fist.

"Shoot!" thundered the sergeant, emerging from behind a hedge. A revolver shot split the night, but the bullet glanced off the crook's armour. The next



THE CYCLING SPECTRE.—Tiny fired a stream of water at the head of the mysterious motor-cyclist. To his amazement the rider's head vanished.

the head this morning and you cleared off with the suit."

Wolfgang—now a luminous giant in the moonlight—stooped over the helpless victim. "Listen here, Jason!" he hissed. "I want the scientific formula for your stuff. Tell me where it's hidden, or this is the last breath you will draw!"

The scientist was silent for a moment after the gag was whisked away. Then he jerked his head towards a shelf loaded with weighty tomes. "You'll find the recipe in that old alchemist's *vade mecum*," he said calmly.

Wolfgang thrust the gag back into his prisoner's mouth, and, darting eagerly across the room, snatched down the book and extracted a sheet of yellow paper. A hasty examination satisfied him that it was what he sought.

"Come on, Carthew," he cried. "We'll get away in Tiny's taxi. You drive, and if any one questions you I'll imitate his voice and invent an excuse for leaving the house. They won't see me, and they'll think you're the Taxi 'Tec."

He leapt towards the window; but at that moment Tiny exerted every ounce of his strength and, bound though he was, jerked himself to his feet. He was immediately below an electric light switch. A snarl of rage broke from Wolfgang's lips as he saw the Taxi 'Tec strike it with his head. There was a *click*, and in an instant the laboratory was flooded with light!

Wolfgang had no time to conceal himself. His vast form was framed in the window as the garish light brought out the shimmering contours of his stolen suit.

moment he vanished as he darted into the sheltering gloom of the garden.

Carthew also made a dive for the window. He vaulted straight into the welcoming arms of one of the constables.

Meanwhile, Wolfgang had taken advantage of the confusion to make a bold move. Suddenly the sergeant, who was searching the darkness for him, saw one of the motor-bikes rise from the ground as if by magic, and heard the splutter of its engine. Even as he dashed forward with a bewildered shout, the machine roared down the garden path, apparently without a rider. The sergeant fired, but the cycle ripped out on to the open road and disappeared. Wolfgang had escaped!

While this was happening, the policeman who had succeeded in handcuffing Carthew clambered into the laboratory. Seeing the three captives, he at once released them and demanded in gruff amazement what had happened.

"I'll explain later!" rapped back the Taxi 'Tec, and went through the window as if shot from a catapult. He found the sergeant staring at the gate. "Which way did he go?" shouted Tiny urgently.

"He? All I saw was one of our own bikes departing by itself!" stammered the confused officer. He pointed a shaking finger down the road. "It went that way—without a rider!"

Tiny did not wait to explain. He rushed for the ME 2 and jumped for the driving seat at the same



moment that Smutty, panting heavily, clambered in beside him. As the old cab started forward with a deep roar, another figure sprang through the gloom and gained the running-board. It was Professor Jason.

"I'm in this, too!" he panted. "That scoundrel has stolen a suit which took me years to invent and months to make!"

In a few moments they were bowling through the deserted country lanes at a speed which hovered round a hundred miles an hour. And it was not long before they saw the apparently riderless motor-bike ahead. There was something uncanny in the way it seemed to steer itself along and take all the bumps and turns with ease; Wolfgang had switched the throttle controls to the right handlebar with the clutch—so he could manage the bike with ease.

Then Tiny switched on the headlights, flooding the road with radiance, and the phantom rider sprang magically to life—a fantastic, glimmering form perched on the swaying machine!

"We've got him!" muttered the Taxi 'Tec grimly. In a few moments the ME 2 was roaring along beside the bike. Wolfgang looked up, his venomous eyes glinting through the slits in his helmet.

Tiny ripped out his water-pistol, and, steering the cab with one hand, poured the contents of the little weapon into those murderous eyes. The effect was astounding. Wolfgang's luminous head jerked back and—vanished, as if blotted out by the stream of water. At the same time he relinquished his grip of the handle bars, the motor-bike swerved, mounted a grassy bank, and turned completely over with a crash!

As Tiny dragged on the hand-brake, he noticed with delight that the eastern sky was faintly dappled with light. The crook, leaping clear of the crashing bike, had disappeared in the gloom of a wood which skirted the road. But Tiny realised that he could not remain invisible for long now that the day was breaking.

"After him!" he shouted, leaping out of the cab.

A faint glimmer ahead led their steps through the shadowy trees.

But before they had penetrated far into its fastnesses, Jason suddenly gripped Tiny's arm and dragged him into the cover of a bush. "There he is!

Look out!" he whispered. And then added in a puzzled tone: "He's lost his head! What on earth can it mean? Can it be——" He broke off in bewilderment.

A faintly glowing form was seen standing beneath a towering beech. Its outline was growing more and more distinct in the gathering light—but there was still no head attached to the body.

The phantom figure did not move as the three split up and approached it.

Then, judging his distance to a nicety, Tiny leapt. His arms closed round the glistening form, which, contrary to his expectations, yielded limply to his grip and crumpled up like a bladder. Before Jason or Smutty could reach him, he had crashed to the ground, with the empty suit clasped in his arms!

He rose crestfallen. "Wolfgang's got away!" he announced. "Look, the suit is empty. He propped it up against this tree and cleared off!"

Professor Jason did not answer at once. He was on his knees, examining the luminous cloth. "What does that matter?" he cried at last. "By an accident you have solved the problem that has baffled me for months. It is only necessary to soak this material in water to render it entirely invisible. That's why the head disappeared."

"I'm afraid Wolfgang has got the last laugh, though," replied Tiny gloomily. "He's got the formula and can make a similar suit. He knows the secret now."

"That's where you're wrong," laughed the scientist. "There is no written formula for this material: I carry it in my head. What I gave to Wolfgang was an old-time alchemist's recipe for turning lead into gold, and he's welcome to that."

"Strike me pink!" exclaimed Smutty, grinning. "I wish I could see old Wolfgang's face when he reads it!" And all three joined in the laugh.

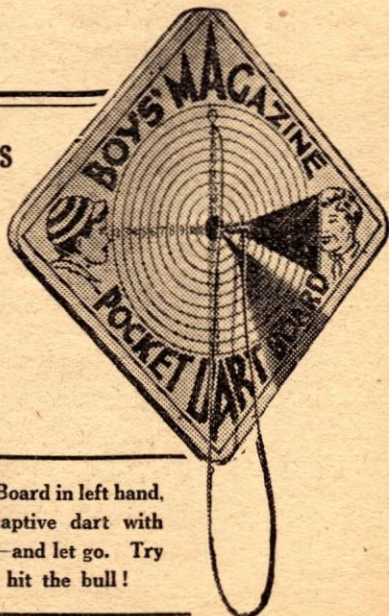
He who laughs last—Wolfgang is free once again, but the Taxi 'Tec is not yet beaten. Don't miss next week's ripping sleuth yarn of Tiny Tom Hinton.

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



**CAPTAIN SCAR OF THE SCAVENGER!** This Week the Deepsea Sleuth Solves Another Baffling Mystery of the Sea.

# The LAGOON OF LOST SHIPS



Thrills? You'll find them packed into this Smashing Complete Yarn featuring Captain Scar, Ben Ballast and the Secret Crew of the Scavenger.

## The Disappearing Steamer.

**D**AWN was breaking over the floods of the Upper Amazon as the *Scavenger* ploughed her way cautiously through the virgin forest.

The vessel had left the main stream of the mighty river. The flash and sparkle of rockets and the boom of a signal gun had guided her into the dim heart of the forest. Somewhere a steamer was in distress—but it seemed impossible to find her, at night, in that swampy labyrinth.

It was no accident that had brought Scar to these grim haunts of the alligator and anaconda. The Brazilian Government had invited him to investigate a series of wanton attacks on cargo steamers taking rubber from the remote plantations. The loss of all hands suggested that it was the work of the ruthless head-hunters who lured them in the interior; but the recent flooding of the market at Para with cheap rubber pointed to a more "civilised" agency.

"Ship ahead!"—the cry came suddenly from the look-out.

A steamer lay on her beam-ends among the trees, her nose buried in the mangroves. Festooned with creepers and hung about with lianas, she looked as if she were stranded in the forest; for the slimy water that rolled around her was hidden beneath a green canopy of weeds. And Scar's jaw hardened as he saw hordes of brown-skinned Indians scuttling about her decks.

"Man the gun!" he roared; and moved the handle of the telegraph to "Full speed." As the *Scavenger* churned up the water, the six-pounder on her forward

deck spoke with a voice that sent myriads of birds screaming into the air. A stout seaman came clattering up the companion steps, rubbing sleepy eyes, to see the terrified raiders on the steamer scattering for shelter.

"Shiver me timbers!" he gasped. "Ye woke me from me beauty-sleep, skipper! Wot's to do?"

"Work!" retorted Scar grimly. "See those rascals?" He pointed to the scurrying savages. Some were dropping overboard into canoes, others leaping wildly for land.

Suddenly the launch came to an abrupt stop, and Scar was sent lurching against the rail. A message came up from the engine-room: "The screw's fouled, sir! These darned weeds—!"

"Lower the starboard boat!" commanded Scar instantly. "There may be white men still on board."

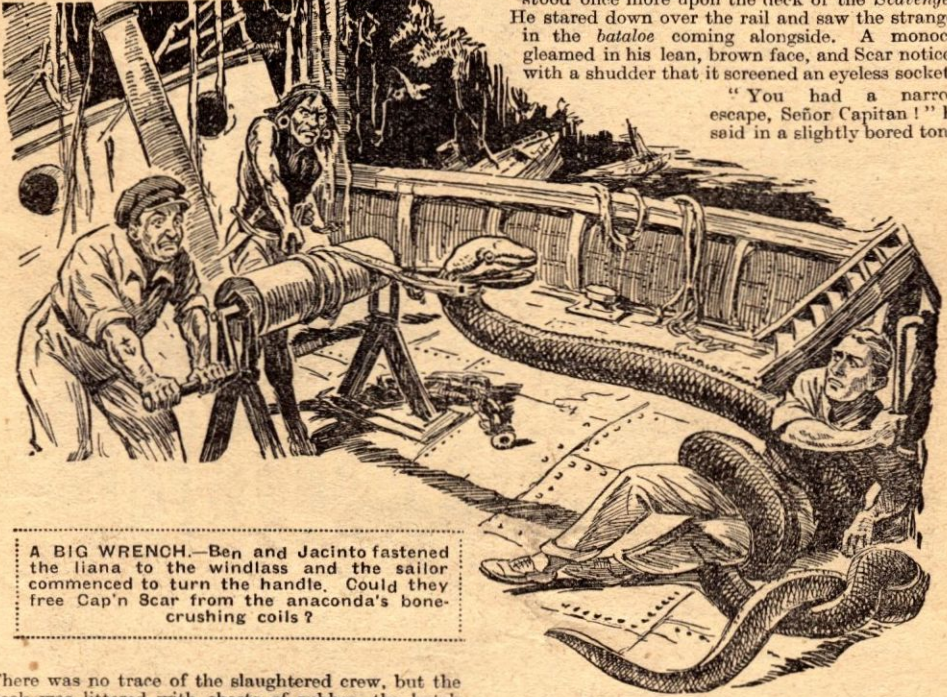
Once again the gun sent a shell whining through the air, to explode between two crowded canoes; and, by the time that the boat had put off from the *Scavenger*, not an Indian showed his head. But Scar knew the treacherous savages, and the boat's



crew swung their oars from under a tarpaulin shelter.

In a few moments the skipper was clambering stealthily up the sloping side of the steamer, Ben Ballast close on his heels.

"It looks as if they've done their work well!" he muttered, staring round the blood-stained deck.



A BIG WRENCH.—Ben and Jacinto fastened the liana to the windlass and the sailor commenced to turn the handle. Could they free Cap'n Scar from the anaconda's bone-crushing coils?

There was no trace of the slaughtered crew, but the deck was littered with chests of rubber, the hatch was open and the hold was half empty.

Scar stroked his cheek. "They were unloading the cargo!" he murmured. "Now what should a parcel of wild Indians want with rubber? And how on earth could they have towed the ship as far as this from the main river? I wonder——"

He broke off with an astonished cry. A sudden tremor had shaken the ship, and she was moving cumbrously forward, to the accompaniment of a deep, steady roar, as if to plunge clean through the solid wall of mangroves that clothed the bank. Yet her screw was not turning!

The next moment a strident voice rang out above the tumult. "Jump for it, amigos! She's going over the falls!"

Scar, slipping on the heaving deck, swung round to see a slight figure in white ducks standing in a *batloe*, or flat-bottomed canoe. A brown-skinned native with rings in his ears plied the paddle.

Calling to Ben to follow him, the skipper raced to the taffrail and was relieved to see that his boat had followed him. The waters were surging madly round the half-submerged stern of the steamer, and it was at considerable peril that he and Ben leapt into the boat, which was tossing about like a cork. They were only just in time. The crew, who had been strenuously resisting the pull of the stream, now tugged at their oars with renewed vigour. By the time that Scar and Ben had picked themselves up from the bottom of the boat the steamer had

disappeared as if swallowed up in the jungle. A terrific crash hinted at the fate that had overtaken her.

### The One-eyed Spaniard.

"It's strange that we didn't notice the pull of the falls before!" were Scar's first words, when he stood once more upon the deck of the *Scavenger*. He stared down over the rail and saw the stranger in the *batloe* coming alongside. A monocle gleamed in his lean, brown face, and Scar noticed with a shudder that it screened an eyeless socket.

"You had a narrow escape, Señor Capitan!" he said in a slightly bored tone.

"There is a series of dangerous falls in that hidden channel. We call them *pongos* in this part of the country."

"Who are you?" snapped Scar suspiciously.

"Don Miguel Exaltacion de Marajo, at your service, *señor!*" The one-eyed Spaniard made an elaborate bow, which held a hint of mockery: "Though of noble birth, I am only a poor rubber planter. I should be charmed to offer you the hospitality of my modest plantation, some three miles from here. I would advise you to seek what shelter I have to offer you. If you stay here your crew will probably share the fate of many others who have fallen to the *zarabatanas* (blow-guns) of the Indians, and your ship will follow that cargo-boat over the *pongos*."

Scar had his doubts as to this, but he thought it might be instructive to see the stranger's plantation. The screw had now been cleared of weeds, and in a few minutes the *Scavenger* was cautiously following the *batloe* through the maze of waters and weeds.

Progress was slow, but within an hour they reached the main river and Don Marajo's plantation. Leaving the launch anchored in midstream, Scar put off in the boat with Ben Ballast and joined the Spaniard on the shore.

"Do you find rubber a paying proposition?" he asked meaningly.

"I make a bare living from it, *señor,*" replied Marajo, as they strolled towards the bamboo house. "A steamer calls once a quarter and takes my wares



to Para. As soon as I have exhausted the trees here I shall move on." He halted beside one of the tall hevea trees which surrounded the house and indicated the empty cup at its base. "You see, they are beginning to fail. Jacinto, tap this tree."

His servant drew a long, curved knife and plunged it into the bark. Scar leant forward to watch the latex flow, and as he did so the tree shuddered as if in a storm and a crashing of its upper branches made him start instinctively back. A dark shape had dropped like a thunderbolt, and the next moment he was horrified to see Jacinto pinned to the ground beneath a crouching jaguar!

Marajo, used to the daily perils of jungle life, had already darted off. "Run, run!" he yelled warningly. "I'll get a gun!"

But neither Scar nor Ben was a man to abandon a fellow-creature in danger. Ben seized the jaguar round the neck and sought to drag it from its victim,



LAUNCHED FROM THE LIANAS.—The trio swung on to the gunboat through the deck-house, while Ben and Jacinto landed on the deck amidst the Indians.

a process which would have assuredly ended the days of the honest salt if it had not been for Scar's prompt action. As the great beast, growling thunderously, raised a threatening paw, the skipper whipped out his revolver and lodged a couple of bullets in its brain.

A muffled roar—a last spasmodic effort to rise—and the jaguar rolled over, stiff and lifeless!

Jacinto sprang to his feet, unharmed save for a few bruises. "You save me!" he gasped, in mingled gratitude and wonder. The next moment he was on his knees, kissing Scar's boot. "Jacinto your servant! He never forget, never, never!" he repeated passionately.

"Here, enough of that!" growled Marajo, who had returned at the sounds of the shots. "Get up, you annoy the señors with your senseless gibberish!" To Scar's amazement he aimed a savage kick at the native, who squirmed away.

He turred to Captain Scar: "Come in and drink a cup of maté with me. It is not often I have the pleasure of talking with civilised men."

The pleasure, however, was not mutual, and as soon as they could Captain Scar and Ben returned to the *Scavenger*.

"Marajo talks plausibly," he confided to Ben, "but there's something at the back of my mind which is worrying me. I can't understand the steamer vanishing like that! As soon as it is dark we are going along to investigate!"

### On the Roof of the Jungle.

NIGHT, falling with tropic suddenness, found Ben Ballast leaning over the side of the launch. Muffled sounds from the other side proclaimed that a boat was being lowered; this precaution had been made necessary by the one-eyed Spaniard, who had remained in a chair in his doorway watching the ship since his guests had left him.

Ben was keeping a sharp look out and suddenly his eyes became fixed. The glassy surface of the river was disturbed by a moving object which for one moment he took for the periscope of a submarine. Then he dismissed the idea. It was the top of a hollow bamboo tube, and Ben realised that someone was swimming towards the launch under water!

Silently he drew his knife and stepped back behind the shelter of a ventilator.

In a few moments there was a splash, then a dark head showed itself above the bulwarks. Ben waited until a lithe figure had

slithered on board before he dashed out with a cry of: "Stand!"

"No kill!" whispered a soft and urgent voice. "It's me—Jacinto." Ben's knife dropped to his side as Marajo's servant approached him, dripping wet and clasping a shortened *zarabatana*. "I breathe through him," he explained, proudly indicating the tube. "I swim under water so Don Marajo no see me. Where is the Señor Capitan?"

Ben had no need to call Scar. At the sound of voices the watchful skipper had joined them.

"You want to see big canoe? Him no go down pongos," said Jacinto. "That all one big lie. No pongos here."

"I guessed as much," replied Scar. "I am going to look for that 'big canoe'—in a boat."

"No go in boat!" cried Jacinto, earnestly. "Indians see you and shoot—so!" He blew through the blow-gun. Come on top of trees—like monkeys!"



The Indian waved his hand towards the leafy roof of the forest.

Scar exchanged a glance with Ben. "It's an idea!" he exclaimed. "I'll go with him, and if I'm not back by the morning you can bring the *Scavenger* to look for me."

In another few minutes he had dropped over the side of the launch with Jacinto and the two were swimming beneath the water towards the shore. The blow-pipe had been divided in half to serve them both. They crawled out of the river some way above Marajo's plantation, and Jacinto instructed his white friend in the art of tree-climbing. Being a sailor, he had little to learn.

When at last he struggled out on to the roof of the jungle, Scar was amazed at the vastness of that unexplored region. It was a limitless expanse of foliage beneath a canopy of creepers, humming with insects, alive with birds.

They scuttled like monkeys across the solid layers of vegetation, rousing flocks of sleeping birds and scattering hosts of moths and grasshoppers. It was hard-going, however, and several hours passed before Jacinto called a halt on the edge of a black abysmal chasm. Awed by the strangeness of the adventure, Scar peeped down and saw the masts of ships and the gleam of water a hundred feet below.

"Big canoe—plenty big canoe!" said the Indian, triumphantly. "Follow me!" Hanging to a stout liana, he launched himself into the void. Scar watched his cautious descent towards the creek which made this gap in the jungle roof. Then he too lowered himself through the dense foliage. At last he felt his feet strike something solid, and, relaxing his grip, found himself standing on the tilted deck of the missing steamer!

But this was not all. A low whistle broke from his lips as he gazed round on the secret lagoon enclosed by the forest walls. It resembled some vast, deserted dockyard, for on every side were the ruined hulls of steamers.

"Plenty big canoes!" said Jacinto, softly. "Don Marajo, him sink 'em all! Plenty bad man!"

### The Lord of the Lagoon.

"SO that's how he did it!" It was some hours later, and Scar had completed his investigations on board the steamer. He had discovered a huge rent below the water-line, obviously caused by a six-inch shell, and he had learnt from Jacinto that the one-eyed Spaniard ran a "plenty big canoe" with "plenty big blow-guns."

"It's time we were getting back," declared Scar. The short tropic night had passed, and the morning mist was already grey on the waters. Scar cast a last glance round the lagoon—and then his hand flew like lightning to his hip.

Don Miguel Exaltacion de Marajo had emerged from the mist like a wraith on the waters, not thirty feet away, in a *bataloe* propelled by four swarthy Indians.

"A pleasant morning, Señor Capitan!" said Marajo, suavely.

At the sound of that dreaded voice, Jacinto made a flying leap into the trees and began swarming up the creepers. Scar, deciding that the odds were against him, rushed across the deck to follow.

"Stop!" cried Marajo, suddenly savage. "One more step and you are a dead man!"

Scar, turning his head as he grabbed at a liana, saw two of the savages drop their paddles to raise long blow-guns to their lips. He hauled himself up into the trees with one hand and drew his gun with the other. The crack of the report drowned the sharp *pop! pop!* of the blow-guns, and an Indian toppled out of the canoe with a splash.

Two feathered darts, tipped with the fatal Urari poison, whanged past his head. One buried itself in what he thought at first was a liana, and as the thing swayed out towards him like a live thing he dropped his revolver and clutched it with both hands.

The next moment he had tumbled backwards on to the deck, vainly seeking to retain his grip on a "liana" that had sprung to sudden frenzied life. As ill-luck would have it, he had seized hold of an anaconda, the giant water-serpent of the Amazon.

Almost before he grasped what had happened, Scar was being crushed in the muscular coils of the monster. He felt his ribs cracking under the terrific pressure. And Marajo's jeering voice came to him as from a great distance:

"Adios, Señor Capitan! I will leave the anaconda to do my work for me! Golden dreams!"

Scar did not even hear the splash of paddles from the retreating *bataloe*. All his energies were concentrated on the deadly struggle from which he could not hope to emerge victorious. Then suddenly the pressure relaxed slightly, and the anaconda's darting head jerked violently backwards.

Jacinto, seeing Scar's peril, had dropped lightly back on to the steamer. With incredible speed he had slashed through a liana with his knife, twisted one end into a noose and slipped it round the reptile's neck, tugging with all his strength.

For a moment the menace of those gaping jaws was averted. But the leviathan shook its fettered head and Jacinto was almost dragged off his feet.

The tug-of-war that ensued could have ended in only one way, but at that moment there was a dramatic interruption. Another figure bounded on to the deck as if it had dropped from the sky. With a hearty British cheer Ben Ballast laid his brawny hands on the liana and added his weight to the task of dragging the anaconda away!

Even the combined efforts of the stout seaman and the sinewy native, however, were useless against the monster's thirty foot of rippling muscle. Then Scar, exerting every ounce of his diminishing strength, propped himself up on one elbow and gasped out: "The windlass! Try the windlass, Ben!"

Ben's quick brain grasped his meaning. In a flash he had twisted the end of the liana round the deck windlass and, knotting it, seized the handle in his powerful grip. A couple of rapid turns—and the kicking, plunging serpent was dragged across the deck. Scar shook himself free from the slackening coils and snatched up his revolver.

The crash of the report mingled with the thunder of the serpent's tail beating a frenzied tattoo on the deck. Next instant it had gathered itself into a ball and shot through the air like a whiplash uncoiling. It disappeared over the side of the vessel, landing on a *bataloe* moored to the steamer, and both serpent and boat sank from sight in a welter of foam.

"That's good-bye to Marajo's canoe!" muttered Ben, wiping the sweat from his brow. "Arter you'd gone I saw that one-eyed dago disappear, so I pinched one of his canoes to follow him."

"You got here in time to save me, Ben," replied Scar, quietly.

"Wot's to do now?" asked Ben, somewhat embarrassed. "The good old *Scavenger* will arrive in a couple shakes."

They had no time to discuss plans, however, for at that moment a sluggish wash surged against the side of the steamer, and the drone of a motor came to their ears. From a concealed channel in the opposite bank a long, low gunboat emerged, her guns gleaming in the morning sunlight.

"That's Marajo!" whispered Scar, ducking behind the bulwarks. "See! he's standing at the wheel!"

(Continued on page 2.)



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

# The S.O.S. Squadron!



**JIMMY HART**, smiling, fair-haired ace of the air, joined the S.O.S. Squadron, a bunch of daredevil fighters formed by Captain Vane to combat Zinberg in his dastardly plot to conquer the world. With the plotter was the Secret Council of

Five, rulers of the mystic land of Tibet, who were ready to launch against the white races the millions of yellow men they controlled.

Many times Zinberg tried to smash the S.O.S. Squadron from the skies, without success. Vane even had the audacity to rob one of Zinberg's bullion trains. Ere he had completed this task, however, Zinberg appeared with three flights of his scarlet scouts.

There followed a terrific air fight in which Zinberg was coming off second best until reinforcements arrived. Then Vane and Jimmy were shot down and were buried in the wreckage of their plane.



**BAULKED BY BOMBERS.**—Before Zinberg could carry out his devilish plan, a flight of Vane's black monoplanes flew overhead and loosed high explosive bombs on the enemy base.

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

By **HAMILTON SMITH**

## Death at Dawn.

WHEN next Jimmy opened his eyes it was to find himself lying on a low plank bed in a small stone cell which had a little barred window high in the wall.

Sitting up, he swung his feet to the floor. His head was aching intolerably, and just where he was he hadn't the slightest idea.

He remembered the crash and nothing more. Where was Vane? Had he lived through it or had he been killed when the machine had hit the ground and crumpled up?

A sudden heavy tread in the corridor outside cut in on Jimmy's thoughts. A key turned in the lock, and the heavy iron door swung open to admit Zinberg, accompanied by two soldiers wearing long, grey, belted great-coats and each carrying a rifle and fixed bayonet.

"Well, and how are you feeling now, my friend?" inquired Zinberg.

"Pretty rotten," answered Jimmy coolly, rising unsteadily to his feet.

"Ah, I am sorry to hear that," purred Zinberg. "I want you to be as fit as possible for to-morrow morning, so that you will appreciate the death I have in store for you."

"Oh," said Jimmy, glancing at the loaded revolver holster slung on the belt round Zinberg's waist. Then he demanded abruptly: "Where's Vane?"

"He is here in an adjoining cell."

"What is this place?" went on Jimmy, tensing.

"It is one of my military camps," began Zinberg. "I've had you brought here—a-ah!"

The words ended in a choking gurgle as Jimmy's left hand whipped out, gripping him by the throat, while his right flashed to the open flap of Zinberg's revolver holster.



The two soldiers leapt forward from the door, but in a trice Jimmy had sprung back, Zinberg's automatic levelled at them.

"Drop those rifles!" he graded.

The soldiers did not hesitate. Evidently under the impression that discretion was the better part of valour, they dropped their rifles with a clatter to the floor.

"Get him, you chicken-hearted fools!" choked Zinberg, his face livid.

"Why don't you try it yourself, Zinberg?" taunted Jimmy, edging towards the door, the gun in his hand waving from one to the other of the trio.

"Move a muscle, any of you, and I'll drill you!" Reaching the door, his hand closed on it, and next moment he had leapt out into the corridor, clanging shut the door behind him. In that same moment he caught a glimpse of a grey-coated soldier beside him with rifle upraised.

It was the sentry on duty outside the cell! Before Jimmy could wheel from the door, the rifle-butt smashed down with sickening force on his skull.

Jimmy knew nothing more of subsequent events until he awoke to find himself once more in his cell. The grey light of the coming dawn was filtering through the barred window, and the boy lay bitterly reviling the fate which had brought the sentry into the corridor to the door of the cell at the very moment that he was emerging.

There came then the tread of heavily booted feet in the corridor outside, a key turned in the lock, the bolts scraped back, the heavy iron door swung open and a grey-clad and swarthy-faced sergeant entered the cell followed by half-a-dozen soldiers.

"Come on!" he said roughly to Jimmy, and in the midst of his escort Jimmy was marched along the corridor to a room where Vane, guarded by a similar escort, was facing Zinberg at a paper-strewn table.

"Well," inquired Zinberg suavely, "and how are you now? I hope you have slept well, in spite of your disappointment in not escaping."

"Yes, splendidly, thanks!" responded Jimmy. "And you?"

"I am glad to hear it," smiled Zinberg. "I have decided not to be brutal to you two gentlemen. You're going to die, of course, both of you, but death will come quickly."

"Ah, I see," nodded Vane. "A firing-party, what?"

Zinberg shook his head.

"No," he replied, "it is not a firing-party. It is something else. Something quite original."

"How interesting," drawled Vane.

Then, with amazing swiftness, a startling change came over Zinberg. The fury which he had held at bay burst through the dam of his self-control, and, with eyes blazing, he leapt to his feet, sending his chair spinning back against the wall behind him.

"Curse you!" he roared, crashing clenched fist to the table. "I'll break your neck for you before I'm through. I'll pay you back, you hound, for all you've done to me." His voice rose, until he was almost shrieking. "I'll show you how terrible death can be if one so wishes it. Yes, and let me tell you this, Vane. I know where your base is now, and when I've finished with you and Hart, my machines will blow it and your airship to smithereens."

"And then the Council of Five will refrain from slaughtering you at the feet of Buddha, eh?" remarked Vane. "You must be feeling very relieved, Zinberg."

Zinberg's fury had spent itself and he was again master of himself.

"Perhaps," he snapped. "Your cursed activities have cost me millions of pounds and set my plans

for war back a full twelve months. But I've got you now and you're going to die. You're going to die in a way a man has never met his doom before. It was I who thought of this new way of killing, and I would rather try it on you, Vane, than on any other man I know."

He broke off as a grey-clad soldier entered the room and saluted.

"The machines are ready, sir," reported the soldier.

"And the men?" snapped Zinberg.

"Are all assembled and waiting, sir."

"Good!" nodded Zinberg, and, turning to the soldiers, he said: "Bring your prisoners along!"

With that he strode from the room, and in the midst of their guards Vane and Jimmy were marched in his wake along the corridor and out into the grey air of early morning.

Drawn up in front of the hangars were company upon company of grey-clad soldiers, all standing rigid and motionless, and dungaree-clad mechanics lounging about in groups. On the tarmac stood two scarlet fighting scooters and it was to these machines that Zinberg strode.

"Start up the engine!" he ordered the mechanics, indicating the nearest machine.

Obediently, one of the mechanics swung himself up to the cockpit and slumped down into the pilot's seat, while another gripped the propeller.

"Switch on!" he called. "Contact!"

"Contact!" echoed the mechanic at the propeller, and swung his weight on the blade.

There came one or two ineffectual gasps from the cold engine, then it picked up with a shattering roar, which deepened to a thundering, pulsating rhythm as the engine was run up to full revolutions.

Under closing throttle, the noise died away until the propeller was ticking quietly over.

"Keep her running," ordered Zinberg. "I want her warmed up."

The mechanic opened up the throttle again, and turning to Vane and Jimmy's escort, Zinberg rapped out an order. In response to the command, rough hands gripped Jimmy and held him tight, whilst Vane's arms were forced behind his back and his wrists lashed together.

"Switch off!" Zinberg ordered the mechanic in the plane.

In response to his command the propeller slowed down to a stop under dead engine, and a sudden deathly stillness settled over the aerodrome.

Smiling, Zinberg turned to Vane.

"Now," he said, "you're going to die!" And to the soldiers he added: "Tie him up!"

Helpless in his bonds and in the grasp of his escort, Vane was thrust forward towards the scout. A rope was whipped round his ankles, he was hoisted up and his guards proceeded to lash him to the propeller.

To Jimmy there came sudden, horrifying realisation as to how Vane was to die, and with a shout he hurled himself forward, fighting savagely to escape from his escort and rush to Vane's aid.

Desperate though his struggles were, they were absolutely futile, for he had no chance at all and a savage smash in the face from the clenched fist of Zinberg sent him reeling back.

"You seem in a hurry to get to the machines," snapped Zinberg. "Well, you won't have long to wait, for it's your turn next."

Turning away, he stepped forward to confront Vane who by this time had been securely lashed to the propeller.

"Well," he said harshly, "you understand now how you are to die!"

"I think I do," responded Vane steadily.



"Oh, you only think you do," snapped Zinberg. "Well, in case you don't know, I'll explain. I'm going to have that propeller started up with you tied to it and I'm going to have it run up to full revolutions. You will live just a few seconds, but those seconds will be a lifetime of unimaginable torture to



**SENSELESS IN SPACE.**—Zinberg roared in from the flank his guns belching lead. A bullet grazed Vane's head and he slumped senseless in his seat.

you. You will come to pieces—you will simply disintegrate into thin air."

"How interesting!" murmured Vane.

Zinberg stared at him.

"*Mein Geist!*" he exclaimed in wonder. Will nothing break your nerve, Vane? Well, I will now say good-bye to you. You have played a perilous game from the beginning and you have lost, as you were bound to do. Farewell, Captain Vane!"

"Cheerio!" retorted Vane.

Stepping back, Zinberg turned to the waiting mechanics.

"Start her up!" he ordered.

Watched by the soldiers drawn up on parade, by the mechanics, and by the white-faced and still struggling Jimmy, one of the mechanics swung himself up again into the cockpit, while four others stepped forward ready to swing the propeller with its human burden.

"Switch on!" called the mechanic in the cockpit, and in spite of himself his voice was unsteady.

"Switch on!" repeated the mechanic who had hold of the propeller.

"Contact!"

"Contact!" repeated the other and swung on the laden propeller.

The engine gave an ineffectual cough and the propeller swung violently back under heavy compression.

"Don't fool about!" snarled Zinberg. "Get her started, curse you!"

Again the mechanics prepared to swing on the propeller, but a sharp word from Zinberg halted them, immobile.

"Listen!" rapped Zinberg.

Faint and far away from somewhere high in the sky came the drone of powerful aero engines, deepening rapidly in volume. Every eye was turned towards the south from which direction the sound came, when suddenly Zinberg screamed:

"Blood and fury, look yonder!"

Jimmy, still in the grasp of his guards, let out a yell of triumph. For coming straight down on the hangars in a screaming dive were the black machines of the S.O.S. squadron.

"Get into your cockpits!" screamed Zinberg, swinging on his pilots. "Get to your machines, you fools! Meet them in the air!"

But there was no time for Zinberg's pilots to get to their machines and take the air, for already the S.O.S. squadron was on them.

Thundering earthwards at terrific speed, the black monoplanes flattened out and roared low over the hangars. As they did so there came a sudden reverberating roar and four hangars at the far end of the aerodrome dissolved in a great lurid sheet of blood-red flame and hurtling debris.

Another bomb and another hurtled down on the hangars and the aerodrome, spewing burning wreckage high into the air and making Zinberg's soldiers and mechanics scatter wildly in desperate search of cover.

Pulling a sharp wing turn, the formation overhead came hurtling down on the fleeing rabble and above the thunder of their engines sounded the spitting snarl of their synchronised guns.

Bullets spattered on the tarmac like hail, and screaming and yelling in fear and terror, Zinberg's pilots joined the panic-stricken rush for cover.

Jimmy's guards had deserted him, self-preservation apparently being their one and only thought; and left alone on the tarmac save for huddled, lifeless forms, Jimmy raced towards Vane.

"Get a knife," gasped Vane. "You'll never untie these ropes!"

Dashing to the nearest lifeless form, Jimmy went with frantic haste through the man's pockets. Fortunately he found a knife, and dashing back to the scarlet scout, he commenced to saw desperately at Vane's bonds.

Not entirely deaf to Zinberg's impassioned threats and curses, one soldier, braver than his fellows, ran on to the tarmac and levelled his rifle at Jimmy.

But before his finger could press on the trigger one of the black machines overhead roared down on him, lurid flame stabbing through its screaming screw, and with an awful, high-pitched shriek the



man flung up his arms and crashed to the ground, "All right, Jimmy!" panted Vane, as the last of his bonds parted and he dropped weakly to the ground. "Swing the propeller!"

Jimmy leapt to obey, and as Vane scrambled up into the pilot's seat, the engine burst into life with a shattering roar. Next instant as the scout began to trundle forward across the tarmac, Jimmy made a spring for the fuselage and half-scrambled and half-fell into the cockpit beside Vane.

"All right, lad?" asked Vane, and giving the scout open throttle, he took her tearing across the aerodrome to rise into the air in a steep upward climb.

**D**RIPPING their last remaining high-explosive bombs on the burning hangars and wrecked and riven huts, the S.O.S. squadron wheeled and fell into formation about Vane's scarlet scout.

But already on the ground below, Zinberg and those of his pilots who still lived, were rushing every available machine out of those hangars which had escaped the awful devastation of the raid.

Engines were started up, and with the livid-faced Zinberg in the lead, the scarlet scouts tore across the aerodrome to bore up into the air with engines thundering at full revolutions.

Swinging on the climb, they roared southwards in pursuit of Vane and the S.O.S. Squadron. Jimmy, squeezed in the single cockpit with Vane, saw them coming.

"They're faster than my machines!" shouted Vane, when Jimmy had drawn his attention to the scarlet scouts. "We must turn and fight!"

"But you won't stand a chance with me in the cockpit!" yelled Jimmy, his voice audible above the thunder of the engine.

"We'll have to risk that," replied Vane grimly. "No, you won't," responded Jimmy. "I'll get down on to the under-carriage! Give me three minutes before you fire the signal for battle!" And swinging himself out of the cockpit the young air ace stepped on to the wing of the scout.

For a moment he stood there, hanging on to the innermost strut, then inching his way towards the leading edge of the wing, he turned so that he was facing the tail of the machine, and kneeling down, slid his legs out into space.

Below him was the V-shaped strut of the under-carriage, and gripping the leading edge of the wing with his hands he wrapped his legs round the strut of the under-carriage.

Now came the most perilous moment of all. Letting go his grip on the wing, he slid down the strut, and with a gasp of relief, wrapped his arms round it.

It was a simple enough matter then for him to crouch in the V-formed by the struts. But to give him greater security, he undid the belt of his leather flying jacket and strapped himself to the strut.

Less than a minute later there floated from Vane's cockpit the flaring magnesium cartridge which was the signal to the S.O.S. squadron to turn and do battle with the scarlet scouts of Zinberg which were very close now.

At seventeen thousand feet above the plains of Mongolia, the black machines of the S.O.S. squadron and the scarlet scouts of Zinberg met in battle to the death.

Zinberg was already tearing at Vane with a whirlwind rush, firing as he came.

Vane's dashboard was riven as though by an

invisible axe. As he glanced wildly outboards he saw the inner starboard strut splinter, the white wood showing vividly beneath the varnish. Instinctively he threw his machine into a spin, and in that moment something like a red-hot iron seared his scalp.

Zinberg, wolfish and snarling, saw the leather-clad form of Vane lurch drunkenly forward across his controls. He released the pressure on the trigger of his synchronised gun, and, pushing the control stick forward, went earthwards in the wake of the red scout which, with Jimmy clinging desperately to the undercarriage, was spinning to destruction on the ground below.

But the dizziness caused by the bullet which had seared Vane's scalp was only momentary and the rush of cold air served to revive him. He was spinning but he had plenty of height yet. From behind his goggles as he lay sprawled across the controls he had a glimpse of Zinberg circling round him. His groping fingers closed on the throttle. Then, reaching out behind him, he hauled himself back into his seat and, kicking on rudder to counter-act and pull him out of the spin, he gave his bus full throttle.

With a thunderous roar of high-powered engine, the machine came swooping out of the spin, and turning on the climb, Vane tore straight in towards the circling Zinberg with synchronised gun aflame.

Zinberg banked wildly, but his lower port plane was riven a full eighteen inches and three flying wires were streaming loosely in the slipstream of his whirling propeller.

By superb and brilliant piloting he pulled clear of Vane's stream of bullets. Then wheeling, he whipped forward his control stick and thundered down on Vane who had fallen out of his climb into a tail slide.

Glancing over his shoulder, Vane saw Zinberg hurtling after him. He had one split second in which to act, before he was either shot through the back by a stream of bullets from Zinberg's gun, or had his tail planes and rudder control wires shot to ribbons.

He kicked on sharp rudder, pulling back the control stick. With a jerk which sent him sagging wildly against the side of the cockpit and which almost tore Jimmy from his hold, the machine whipped outwards in a whirlwind turn—and in that instant Zinberg thundered past.

It was Vane's chance, and he took it with the instinct of the fighting pilot. Back went the rudder bar and forward and across went the stick. Then full on Zinberg's tail he roared, his synchronised gun snarling a staccato accompaniment to the thunder of the powerful engine.

There was no question of a miss. The range was too short for that, and every steel-coated bullet from Vane's gun was whanging into the vitals of Zinberg's scarlet scout.

In a frenzy, Zinberg banked, his nose down. Vane's foot moved a fraction of an inch on the rudder-bar and his gun raked Zinberg's scarlet scout from engine cowling to tail plane.

But in that instant Wolfe roared down, thundering wing-tip to wing-tip with Vane and pointing frantically towards Vane's undercarriage.

Vane's heart missed a beat. Something had happened to Jimmy!

**What has happened to Jimmy on the undercarriage? Look out for thrills galore in next week's magnificent chapters of this air epic.**