

THE CORSAIR RAIDERS BRAND NEW THRILLS INSIDE

Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



HOBBIES, SPORTS, STORIES, FREE GIFTS FOR BOYS—WITHIN

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OUR "HOW TO MAKE" PAGE. MORE HINTS TO BOY HANDYMEN.

This Week Our Expert Shows You How to Make Your Own Electric Power.

An ELECTRIC BATTERY of Your Own

Special Note. A Whole Series of Electric Models and Gadgets are to be Described by our Expert Each Week. These include an Electric Motor ; a Telegraph Set ; Wireless, etc. The cell described below will Provide a Power Unit for all these.

YOU can't get very far with electrical experiments unless you've got a battery well able to turn out a decent current and keep it up for a bit. The little dry batteries used for flashlamps are all very well in their way, but they soon run down with an electro-magnet, and a few minutes' run with a small motor will finish them. You won't be allowed to bag the wireless accumulator too often, unless you're lucky, either.

Here's a proper battery which will give a good current at $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 volts, and with a short rest is as good as ever again. It's the type known as the bichromatic battery, and we have made it in two cells, hooked together.

You'll want two glass jam-jars, two-pound size. These should have an opening at the top $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across, and a depth of

5 inches. Also four pieces of battery carbon and two zinc rods are wanted from the local electrician's. Fellows living in a big town can generally root out some junk-barrow in a street-market, where these parts can be picked

A "crocodile" clip from the wireless shop should be hooked on to the wire from one of the zincs—it doesn't matter which. Its clipping jaws are then set on the screwed rod joining the carbons of the other cell.

Now for the electrolyte. You should get the chemist to make it for you—a pint and a half of solution made up to this prescription:

Chromic acid, 3 ozs.
Chlorate of potash, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.
Water, 1 pint.

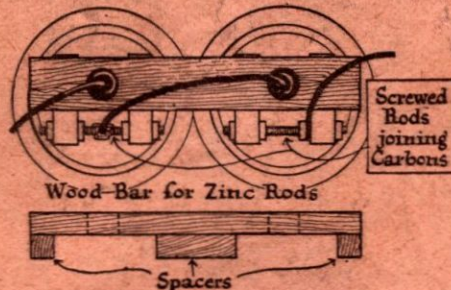
Add slowly $1\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. sulphuric acid.

Pour half this mixture in each cell and they are ready for use.

When you don't want to use the battery, unhook the "crocodile" clip and draw the bar, with the zincs, clear of the solution.

Don't let any of this drop on the tablecloth!

The wire from the zinc is negative, and that from the carbon positive.

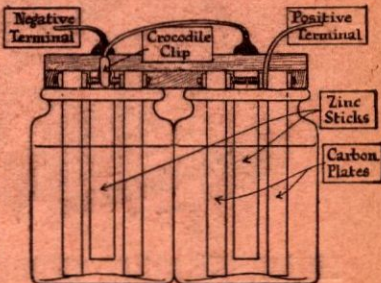


up for a few pence. The zinc rods can be the sort used in electric-bell batteries; they will have a copper wire all ready fixed, and should be about half-an-inch diameter.

Put the jars side by side, touching. Lay across the tops a piece of wood, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick and 1 inch wide, long enough to rest comfortably on the rims of the jars. Holes must be bored centrally, so that the zincs fit tightly in them and hang down into the middle of the jars. Melt some wax on to the wood, and that's that.

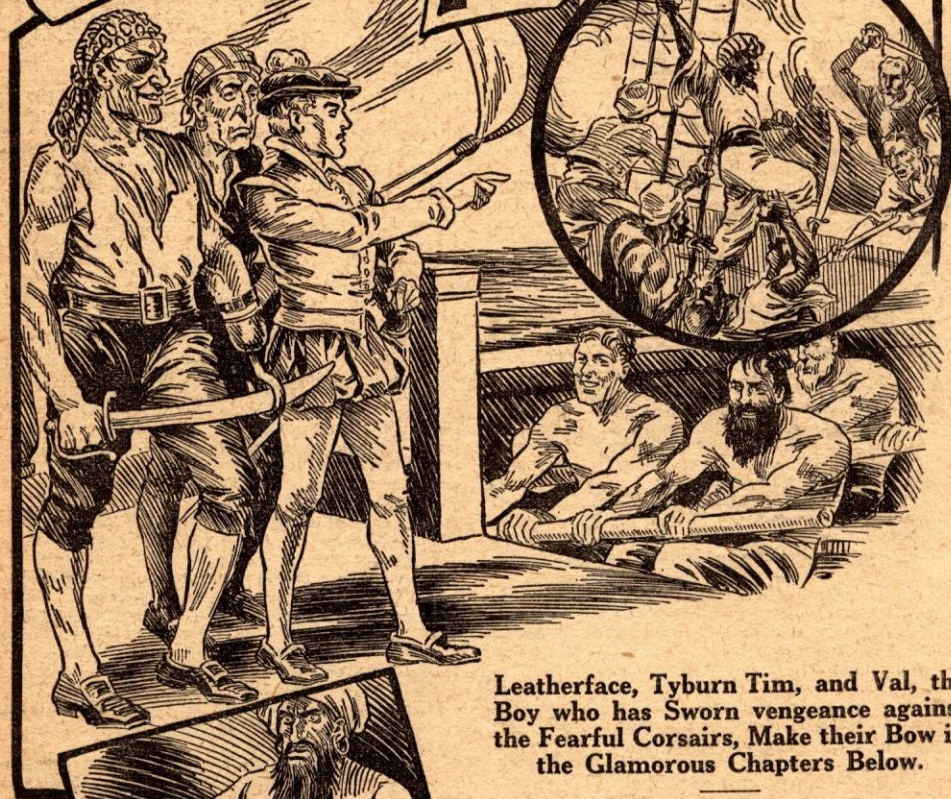
The carbons must be cut with a saw so they are $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick and 6 inches long. Quite easy to cut, though they are brittle. In one corner of each you'll have to bore a small hole. If you have a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch drill, use that, but a little patience with the small blade of a penknife will do it just as well.

You'll now want two screwed rods, 2 inches long, and eight nuts, four to each rod. If you're a Meccano fellow, that's easy, otherwise it will cost you about 3d. at the wireless stores. Join the carbon plates with these screws through the holes you've made. (See the diagram.) Then stand them in the jars and leave them there for good. The bar, with zincs, is now put on so that the rods are nicely spaced between the carbons. But they must not touch. To make sure of this, it's as well to do a bit of carpentry on their supporting wood bar, as shown. This will make sure that they always stand clear.



FREEBOOTERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN MAIN! The Thrill of the Year in this Magnificent New Long Complete Epic Tale Below, Boys!

THE CORSAIR RAIDERS



Leatherface, Tyburn Tim, and Val, the Boy who has Sworn vengeance against the Fearful Corsairs, Make their Bow in the Glamorous Chapters Below.

Galleys of Death!

"NOT a great many days now, son, ere we see the white cliffs of old England," said Sir William Tregellis, his eyes sparkling with anticipation. "Od's life! 'Tis a day I have long looked forward to! No doubt ye are thrilled at the prospect—eh?"

Val Tregellis, nearly sixteen, nearly as tall as his well-built father, gazed across the rolling waters of the Atlantic towards the coast of Africa, which was in full view. England, for him, was a dream; as a mere baby he had gone out to Bombay, which Sir

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

William had for many years made the headquarters of his trade between India and England. He had decided to return to his homeland and had set sail with his son on the good ship *Swan*.

"Thrilled!" echoed Val, his own eyes reflecting the sparkle in his father's. "The days are too long, dad! I can hardly wait! Is England anything like yonder coast?"

He pointed to the hazy shore, and Sir William shook his head, smiling.

"Faith, lad, there's no coast in the world like England's!" he replied, with pride. "When ye see— By Heaven's light! Look, Val! Corsair galleys, as I live!"

Val jumped. For the last two days they had been passing through the region where Nasir-ed-Din, the most terrible of all the Corsairs, preyed upon the honest ships of the High Seas.

As though from nowhere, the two pirate vessels had appeared. They were enormous masted galleys, each of fifty oars—and these latter, gleaming yellow in the hot sunshine, stood out from each vessel like the pinions of some gigantic bird.

Val saw the armoured poops of the galleys a-swarm with turbaned corsairs, their weapons gleaming and ginting. More of the dark-skinned desperadoes were astride the cross-trees; the ratlines on each side of the galleys were black with men who elung there. The great oars were dipping and swinging, and the attacking vessels were approaching at disconcerting speed.

"Get below, lad!" exclaimed Sir William, his voice harsh with anxiety as he swung round upon his son. "Seek a safe hiding-place—"

"Nay, that I will not!" protested Val. "Would ye make a coward of me?"

"Stay here, and 'tis like enough that these accursed pirates will make a corpse of ye!" retorted his father. "Do as I bid, lad! Ye're no hardened fighter."

But he spoke half-heartedly, for, in all truth, he was proud to see the fiery glint in Val's eyes; and as he drew his own sword from its scabbard he pretended not to see the boy's action as he swung a heavy iron belaying-pin from its rack.

The Corsair attack was unexpected, and the British ship was flung into sudden confusion. The captain made an attempt to put her about, and with sails flapping idly as her helm went over, many precious minutes were wasted.

The leading galley was already at hand, her grappling irons firmly secured to the *Swan's* port quarter. Up the British vessel's sides swarmed the half-naked Moors. At the same moment the second galley was grappling firmly to the starboard side.

Sir William rushed to lend his men the support of his presence—and his sword. That mighty weapon whirled in an arc of destruction among his yelling foes, sending one after another reeling to the deck.

But suddenly disaster came. A mighty Moor in the vestments of a Corsair chief took Sir William's sword on the great blade of his scimitar, and the Englishman's weapon broke at the haft. Thus disarmed, he was at the mercy of his foe. Grinning like a fiend, the fellow swung his sword in a stroke that, had it landed, must have sent Sir William's head whirling to join the shambles at his feet.

Help came from an unexpected quarter, however. A youthful figure swung down from the ratlines. It was Val, clutching his iron bar with which he had already done deadly execution. Before the Moor's scimitar could reach its mark, the iron bar crashed against it—knocking it from the Corsair's grasp.

"By Allah! I'll—"

Val's victim finished the sentence in Hades, for again the bar had swung . . .

Sir William's cry of triumph as his late foe crashed

down with a split skull, however, swiftly changed to a shout of horror. For one of the Corsair arrows, speeding on its grim mission, had struck the youngster a slanting blow on the head, and he dropped from the rigging to lie inert at his father's feet. With a groan, Sir William dropped on one knee, for he believed that Val was slain. But a moment's examination proved that the wound was trifling, although blood was flowing freely.

Amid the chaos of the fight, Sir William lifted Val in his arms and stumbled blindly into the open doorway of a near-by deck-house. There were casks and tea-chests . . . some scraps of sea-stained tarpaulin flinging Val down behind the casks, Sir William covered him with the tarpaulin and then, sword in hand, went out to take his interrupted part in the fight.

The sturdy officers and men of the *Swan* were still battling gamely against their pitiless assailants. But the Corsairs, reckless of life, eager to slay in the name of Allah, swept the decks.

"'Tis butchery, nothing less," muttered Sir William.

Though he knew full well that the Britons were outnumbered by more than fifteen to one, he resolved to sell his life dearly. His sword dealt death, right and left; his muscles were like whiplcord, his blade a quivering tongue of destruction. But it could not last, and soon, hemmed in, he was on the point of falling before the scimitars of three blood-spattered Corsairs who leapt upon him.

"Hold, fools!" bellowed a harsh voice in the language of Islam. "By Allah! Would ye kill a man who will secure us much ransom? Back, ye dirt!"

The speaker was a Corsair of high rank, and Sir William, instead of dying, was quickly disarmed and made prisoner. About him, men were being slain in cold blood.

The *Swan* was in the hands of the Corsairs now, for the fight was over. A man, running aloft, had hacked down the British standard, and soon a thunderous roar arose as the green crescent floated out into the wind. At the same time a black and gold galliot—a vessel smaller and speedier than the galleys—came alongside.

"Nasir-ed-Din!" went up a tumultuous chorus.

The Corsairs greeted their great leader, as this ruthless vulture of the sea came aboard. He was a man of enormous size, this Nasir-ed-Din, his brown face lined with evil, his chin adorned with a great black beard, forked in the centre. On his head rested a snowy-white turban, and over his white shirt he wore a long azure tunic of sheer silk, woven along its edges with arabesques in gold.

"So! By the grace of Allah we again win!" he exclaimed, his eyes glinting greedily. "A likely prize, my good Asad."

Asad, who was the captain of the first galley, vowed that the prize was rich indeed, since her holds were laden with silks and spices and other valuable cargo from India. Furthermore, there were several passengers, men of quality, who had been taken captive. These unfortunates were huddled about the mainmast, weaponless, surrounded by their cruel guards.

Nasir-ed-Din strode forward, and his hawk-like eyes dwelt upon the Britons. He halted as he came opposite Sir William Tregellis.

"Who is this unbelieving infidel?" he demanded.

"I am Sir William Tregellis," replied Sir William himself, in the same fluent language as the corsair chief. "For this outrage against the British flag thou shalt suffer full punishment."

Nasir-ed-Din contemptuously snapped his fingers.

"That much I care for England, thou son of a

baboon!" he retorted. "Thou art well-nourished and healthy, I perceive. In the slave market at Algiers thou wilt sell for good gold. Below with him, men!"

Sir William was roughly seized and thrown with the others into the for'ard hold of the captured vessel. As he went his thoughts were with his injured son, lying helpless and unconscious in the deckhouse.

But not so helpless . . . Val Tregellis had seen and heard all that had passed within the last five minutes or so.

A mad thought came to him that he might be able to creep out unobserved and effect his father's rescue. But this thought only aggravated his feeling of helplessness. Even supposing, by a miracle, he rescued his father from the hold, how could they then escape from the ship?

The dusk had nearly deepened into night when Val crept to the door of the deckhouse. A Corsair, naked to the waist, was passing at the moment, and this man paused as a hail came up to him from somewhere beyond the bulwarks.

"Patience, thou ill-favoured one!" he called jeeringly. "Attend to thy slaves, or, by the head of Allah, the great Nasir will call thee to account."

"But I am alone, O thou goat!" came the distant reply. "Whilst thou and thy smelly friends partake of wine, I needs must linger here. Send me a relief, and make it speedy."

"I take no orders from thee, O father of fifteen dogs!" retorted the man on the deck, with a mocking laugh.

He passed on, and Val felt his heart thudding. Who was this man beyond the bulwarks, who was alone and who needed relief? With a quick move, the lad ran across the deck and leaned over.

"Faith! 'Tis the Corsair chief's own galliot," breathed Val.

One glance showed that only one boatswain had been left in charge of the oarsmen. Even in the gloom, Val could see that these slaves were no ordinary men. They were whites, each of extraordinary brawn and strength, since Nasir-ed-Din's galliot must of necessity be faster than other craft.

To think, with Val Tregellis, was to act. He swung himself overside and dropped.

Thud! He landed on the galliot's poop, face to face with the surprised Moorish boatswain. *Crash!* Val's fist smashed its way like an iron hammer into the Corsair's face, and the man went sprawling.

Val the Valiant.

IN a moment Val was on him—knees in stomach, hands pressed to the enemy's throat.

"Silence, thou pig's tripe!" whispered Val, using the picturesque terms of Islam. "Thy keys! Surrender them, or—"

"By Allah! An infidel! An infidel!" gurgled the fallen man. "For this, thou dirt, the mighty Nasir will flay thee alive!"

He sought to shout, but Val dealt swiftly with him. *Crash!* He half-lifted the Corsair, and sent him smashing back on the deck, his head striking the planking with such force that he became utterly limp.

"Stab me!" came a muttered comment, in English, from one of the slaves who were chained to the oars. "What's amiss? The niggers is fightin' amongst themselves."

"What matter?" growled another voice. "Like as not we'll be the sufferers—curse all sons of Algiers." Val's heart leapt, and he stared eagerly through the gloom towards the slaves.

"Hist! Are ye all British, then?" he whispered. "I am British, too, and maybe I can be of service."

"Rot my innards!" came the first voice. "Did ye hear, mates? Who are ye, stranger?"



THE CAVE OF SKELETONS.—Slowly the freed slaves brought the galliot through the rock tunnel into a vast cave, containing the grisly remains of human habitation.

Val did not reply. He had found the boatswain's keys—dangling from his wide leather belt. With a wrench, Val had them free, and he turned again to the men.

"'Tis a slim chance we have, but, faith, we'll try!" he whispered. "When I give the word, pull as ye've never pulled before."

"Ay!" came a subdued chorus.

Leaping up the gangway, Val threw off the grappling hooks which held the galliot to the ship's side. Above, on the *Swan's* deck, the Corsairs were still celebrating their victory, and none gave a thought to the pirate chief's galliot.

"Now—away!" exclaimed Val, tensely.

The galliot, already drifting, was free of the vessel's side, so that the slaves could bring the great oars into full play. They dipped into the shimmering water, and the power behind the strokes was tremendous. The galliot moved rapidly.

"Fool, and father of fools!" The words came from a Corsair who had looked overside. "What madness is this? Nasir himself approaches, and—"

He broke off with a gasp of alarm. This man was an officer, and he had realised, abruptly, that something was gravely amiss. Confusion broke out aboard the *Swan*.

Flights of arrows went soaring out into the night, and although one or two of them fell, rattling, against the galliot's sides, they did no mischief.

Val and his new comrades had the galliot entirely to themselves, for Val had flung the unconscious boatswain overside. With the keys in his possession, Val now went from oar to oar, unlocking the cruel manacles of the British slaves.

"They are after us!" he shouted, so that all could hear. "Let there be no slackening, men."

The one hope of escape lay in the open sea. The farther they got from the African coast, the better. It was a grim, desperate struggle. For a full hour the Corsairs made headway, their powerful vessel creeping nearer and nearer, for Nasir-ed-Din had ordered many of his men to the oars. Then, at last, the superior strength and staying power of the fugitives began to tell. The galliot drew away, farther and farther into the darkening night.

Suddenly, a new sound smote the lad's ears. He was standing in the bow, and from ahead came the dull, rumbling crash of breakers.

"Stab my liver!" ejaculated a gruff voice. "'Tis White Rock Island, or I'm a slab-sided son of a jellyfish!"

"But there are no islands hereabouts," said Val.

"'Tis but a barren rock, waterless, without so much as a blade of grass growing on its parched sides," said the other. "Many's the time, stab me, we've sheltered in the cove, awhile a likely ship has run herself into the trap."

"Is it possible to seek shelter now?" asked Val quickly. "You men need rest, and with dawn not far distant, we lie in danger."

"Ye're a quick-thinking lad," said the man approvingly. "Mebbe 'tis the best way. And 'tis me who can show ye a likely ruse. Tyburn Tim was never one to neglect the use of his one eye."

Val looked at his companion in the deep gloom. He saw a man of enormous brawn. The muscles stood out on his shoulders like deformities, his legs were more bowed than any that Val had ever seen. He possessed only one eye, and instead of a left-hand he owned a wicked-looking iron hook. A formidable rascal, indeed!

"Take the tiller," ordered Val decisively. "You shall be our guide—and take us into this hiding-place."

Presently, under the guidance of Tyburn Tim, the vessel slewed round into a narrow cove.

"Avast, mateys!" boomed Tyburn Tim. "Take it easy, now! Let her ride as she is!" He turned to Val and added: "There's a mort of seaweed back here, and it hangs like a fringe over the rocks. Behind that mask we can lie snug and cool until night comes again."

The man was not talking without his book. When the galliot grew close, Val himself could see the great masses of weed which clung to the overhanging rocks, near the water's edge.

Gradually, the vessel was edged into that screening tangle, and the men, pulling hard at the oars, at last forced her through. Val expected her to go aground, or to come up against a solid wall of rock. The galliot shot into utter blackness, however, her hull at length free from the hindering creepers and weeds.

"Easy, men!" shouted Val. "See! We're in! The weeds are falling back, screening us. As I live, we're saved!"

"Ay, thanks to thy wit, lad," said Tyburn Tim, as he placed a huge, horny hand on Val's shoulder. "Here we can lie snug and safe—and mebbe the coming day will bring us hope."

That mighty man faltered on the last words, and Val heard a sudden slumping thud. He groped downwards, and found Tyburn Tim sprawling on the deck, as dead to the world as though a dagger had pierced his heart. Exhaustion, utter and absolute, had overtaken him at the moment of learning that they were safe. It was the same with the other slaves. Sprawling over their oars, in every imaginable attitude, they slept.

Comrades of Vengeance.

VAL felt no need of sleep; he had done nothing to exhaust his energies, and his mind was feverishly active.

There were forty men with Val—forty slaves, whose punishment for this revolt would be torture and death. They were without food, almost without clothing, and the outlook was black. What could they expect on the morrow?

Val sat down on the poop steps, and it seemed to him, all in a moment, that daylight had come. He must have slept—and for some hours, too. For now, awakening with a sudden start, he stared round in bewilderment. The galliot was lit up by a weird, unnatural, greenish light.

"Faith!" muttered Val, starting up. "What's this?"

Very little light was penetrating the weed-screen—just a tiny twink here and there. It was close at hand, astern, as Val had expected. In advance of the craft there was a long, wide tunnel, filled with

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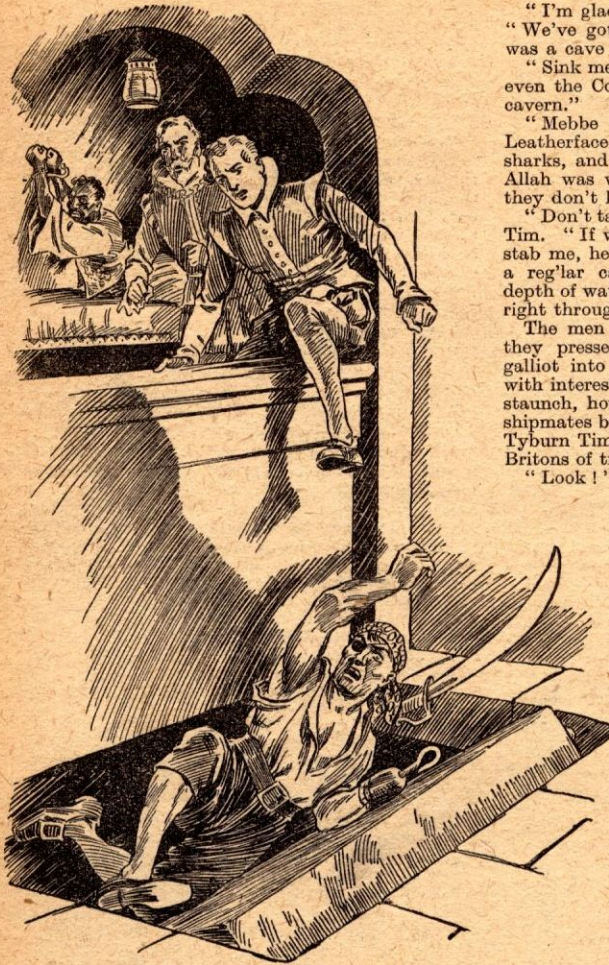
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Boys' Magazine, 14/10/33.



SPILLED BY THE SILL.—Tyburn Tim climbed out of the window and as his feet touched the ground a trap-door opened below him. Though bound, Nasr-ed-Din had sprung the trap.

strange light—and, beyond, a wider space, where the roof arched loftily.

"Sink me for a dod-sizzled baboon!" exclaimed a rough but friendly voice. "I don't wonder ye're staring, Cap'n. 'Tis a strange enough sight, stab me!"

It was Tyburn Tim, and he was not the only galley-slave awake. There were two others, and they came climbing painfully, with aching limbs, to the poop. One was a huge, hairy giant, with a thick-tangled black beard; and the other was lean and long-faced, with a leanness, however, which was a mixture of leather and whipcord.

"Och, now, and 'tis a quare business," said the man with the black beard. "Here's meself goes to sleep in ordinary darkness, and, begob, I awake to find myself in the parlour of the devil himself—bad cess to him!"

"I'm glad you men are awake," said Val eagerly. "We've got to look into this. Did ye know there was a cave here, Tim?"

"Sink me if I did!" retorted Tyburn Tim. "Not even the Corsairs themselves know anything of this cavern."

"Mebbe they don't—and mebbe they do," said Leatherface, with a gloomy shrug. "There was sharks, and there was serpents—but them scum of Allah was worse than both! There's mighty little they don't know!"

"Don't take no heed of old Gloomy!" said Tyburn Tim. "If we was within sight of the Kentish shore, stab me, he'd be a-grumblin'! See, matesys, there's a reg'lar cavern back yonder—ay, and sufficient depth of water, by the looks of it, to carry the booker right through."

The men were eager, and with renewed strength they pressed against the rocky sides, easing the galliot into the rock channel. Val regarded them with interest, and soon he was to know them for the staunch, honest fellows they were. They had been shipmates before their capture, and were inseparable. Tyburn Tim, Paddy O'Button, and Leatherface were Britons of tried and trusty measure—men of the sea.

"Look!" shouted Val exultantly.

The galliot had entered the inner cavern of the barren rock. It was, perhaps, fifty yards across, with a high, jagged, irregular-shaped roof, from which stalactites depended. Filtering between some of these came illusive shafts of light—providing the whole cavern with its unnatural radiance. But, most startling of all, the rocks, on the further side, shelved gently, forming a kind of beach. Higher up, the rocks were level, with narrow cave entrances and tunnels. Standing there, on the flat rock, numbers of rotting casks and many copper cooking utensils, green with age, were to be seen.

"Begorra! An' it's not the only inhabitants we are!" exclaimed Paddy O'Button, in some alarm.

"Nay, 'tis many a long year since the previous tenants lived here," said Val. "See! It has been deserted for ages—and there lies the evidence."

He pointed to two grisly human skeletons which were propped grotesquely against the rock wall, the whitened bones showing clearly through the tattered remnants of clothing which still elung to them.

Without another word Val plunged into the water and swam to the rocky shore. The others followed—and the sounds they made aroused the rest of that desperate, motley crew. Soon, they were all ashore, shouting, gesticulating.

Discoveries were made. . . . At the narrow, deeper end of the cavern there was a tiny bubbling pool—a natural spring of fresh water which had its source, far, far below. Val found it possible to climb the stalactites in some places, and by worming his way upwards he could reach slit-like holes which gave him a commanding view of the sea.

When he climbed to another hole, on the opposite side, he received a stunning shock. Not a mile distant cruised the *Swan* herself, escorted by the two Corsair galleys. And beyond, clearly visible in the distance, lay a low, sandy shore—the coast of Africa!

"But 'tis impossible," protested Val, when he had told his comrades of what he had seen. "Last night we made for the open sea——"

"Ay, so we thought," interrupted Tyburn Tim. "But 'tis easy enough, Cap'n, to make circles on a dark night, without stars or compass to guide ye. Stab me, but that storm, coming as it did, put us wrong. That much I knew as soon as we sighted White Rock Island—for this same rock is but a short five miles from the fortress of Terek-el-Bey, Nasir-ed-Din's headquarters, where he's probably heading now with his captives."

Val's eyes were glowing.

"And it lies but five miles distant!" he exclaimed. "Men, men! Are ye game for an adventure? To-night, when darkness falls, what say ye to a raid on these accursed Corsairs? If we succeed, let this be the first of many. Let us band ourselves together into a comradeship with one aim—vengeance on the Moors!"

"Well said, lad!" shouted the men. "We become the Comrades of Vengeance! Death to the Corsairs!"

They shouted and cheered their young leader.

None thought of the problems which lay ahead. To live, to fight, they must have food and weapons. At present, they had neither. But the ready wit of Val Tregellis was even then considering those problems—and he knew that everything would depend upon the result of to-night's grim adventure.

* * * * *

IT was pitchy black when the galliot slipped noiselessly through the weed-screen into the sheltered cove. The sea was calm, and the vessel slid like a ghost ship through the waters. She carried a curious cargo.

"Three men I shall want with me," said Val, in an eager whisper. "Ten others must hold themselves ready for immediate action. The rest will wait with the galliot—to guard her, and to give warning in case of surprise."

Like a spectral ship, the captured galliot swept across the miles of sea to the coast. From the shore came one or two twinkling lights. The fortress of Terek-el-Bey lay just behind the sandy beach—and, beyond, a squalid, straggling town.

Tyburn Tim was giving directions, and Val, at the helm, obeyed implicitly. At length, as they neared the coast, where the surf broke musically on the sands, they saw the squat outlines of the stone-built fortress. Skillfully handled, the galliot grounded on the beach, and the men, leaping out, dragged her clear.

Not a second was lost. Every man, thanks to Val's foresight, knew his job. Working hard about the galliot, they dragged forth her strange cargo. Seaweed! Masses of rank seaweed which had been found drifting in the cove. It was now festooned over the vessel so that she was quickly and effectively disguised.

"Come!" whispered Val, tensely.

His three companions were the Inseparables—Tyburn Tim, Paddy, and Leatherface. They reached a high, crudely built wall, and for such agile men it was an easy task to leap to the summit and swarm over.

The Rack of Death!

VAL, contrary to the expectations of his comrades, did not make for the fortress itself, but for a smaller building, more elaborate in design, which stood apart. Palms and aromatic scented bushes partially screened it.

But Val knew what he was doing; he knew the desperate nature of this enterprise, and success could only be gained by strategy combined with stark

audacity. Therefore, he was making for the private quarters of Nasir-ed-Din, the Corsair Chief.

"Caution, comrades!" he whispered, as a low growl came from Tyburn Tim. "What's amiss with ye?"

"'Tis nought," muttered Tyburn Tim. "But I vow this bush is of a plaguey affectionate nature!"

He, like the others, had been pushing his way through the screening fringe of tropical shrubs; one, indeed, was exuding such a quantity of sticky gum that Tyburn Tim had become quite attached to it. Val was quick to see the possibilities of this, and he broke off two stumpy branches, from the ends of which gum flowed readily.

"Hist!" warned Paddy O'Button, suddenly checking.

They were through the bushes now and in the starlight they beheld the arched doorway leading to the Corsair chief's quarters. Lounging there were two guards.

"Let me go forward, cap'n," urged Tyburn Tim. "With one hand I can silence the two dogs!"

"I doubt it not, good friend—but 'twould be a mistake," replied Val. "We must enter by such means that the guards will be unaware of our presence. Come!"

Crouching low, he went forward, keeping to the screen of the foliage. Like shadows, the others followed. Thus, the daring invaders reached the rear of Nasir-ed-Din's dwelling. Here glowed a quaint circular window, the iron grille of which was standing half-open.

"Wait!" whispered Val.

He crept on alone, his feet making no sound on the stone flagging beneath the window. Cautiously, he raised himself above the deep curved sill, and peered



The Moorish archers loosed their arrows at the bound captives, aiming to wound without killing.

within. He found himself looking into the Corsair chief's apartment, where costly silks draped the walls, and lights glowed softly. It was difficult to see all, for the window itself was in a recess, and silken tapestries were half-drawn.

There were three men in the chamber—Nasir-ed-Din himself, Asad, the captain of the leading galley, and another. The latter, richly robed in semi-military style, was, no doubt, the commandant of the fortress.

"When dawn breaks you will go forth again in search," the Corsair chief was saying. "By Allah!

These infidel vermin cannot have gone far, and I need the use of my galliot."

"But, Illustrious One——" protested Asad.

"Enough!" interrupted the Corsair chief. "Get ye gone—and come not to me again with tales of failure."

To Val's joy, the two richly clothed Moors passed out through a deeply arched doorway; and the door itself was provided with great inner bolts. Nasir-ed-Din, now alone, lay back luxuriously amongst a nest of silken cushions. Val's eyes gleamed like points of fire. It was an opportunity that might never again occur.

"Come—and make not a sound," he whispered to his eager companions.

With a clean leap he was through the window; his feet scarcely touched the divan, and the next moment he flung himself with pantherish agility upon his enemy. Nasir caught one glimpse of the attacking figure, and he opened his mouth to shout. But not a sound escaped him, for a cushion, caught up by Val in a flash, smothered his head. The next moment Val was upon him, and the pair were struggling desperately. Then came Tyburn Tim and the others, and they threw themselves into the fight.

"The door," whispered Val. "Secure the bolts, Paddy!"

The Irishman sprang to obey, and they were made secure from interruption. As Tyburn Tim and Leatherface held the prisoner down, Val whipped up Nasir's discarded scimitar and held the deadly edge close to the Moor's throat.

"Let one sound escape thy evil mouth, and Allah will welcome his own!" whispered Val.

"By the beard of the prophet!" gasped the

Corsair chief. "Ye are the accursed infidel slaves who escaped from the captured ship! Ay, men from my own galliot, too!"

"Truly said, thou hyena's half-brother," retorted Val. "I am glad to meet ye face to face. For thou and I are to be enemies to the death."

"What seekest thou here?" breathed Nasir, his eyes burning with hatred and fear.

"Thou wilt soon learn," retorted Val.

He signalled to Tyburn Tim, and, quickly, Nasir-ed-Din was held tightly by the three desperate men; a cushion was kept over his mouth, so that the Corsair could make no outcry.

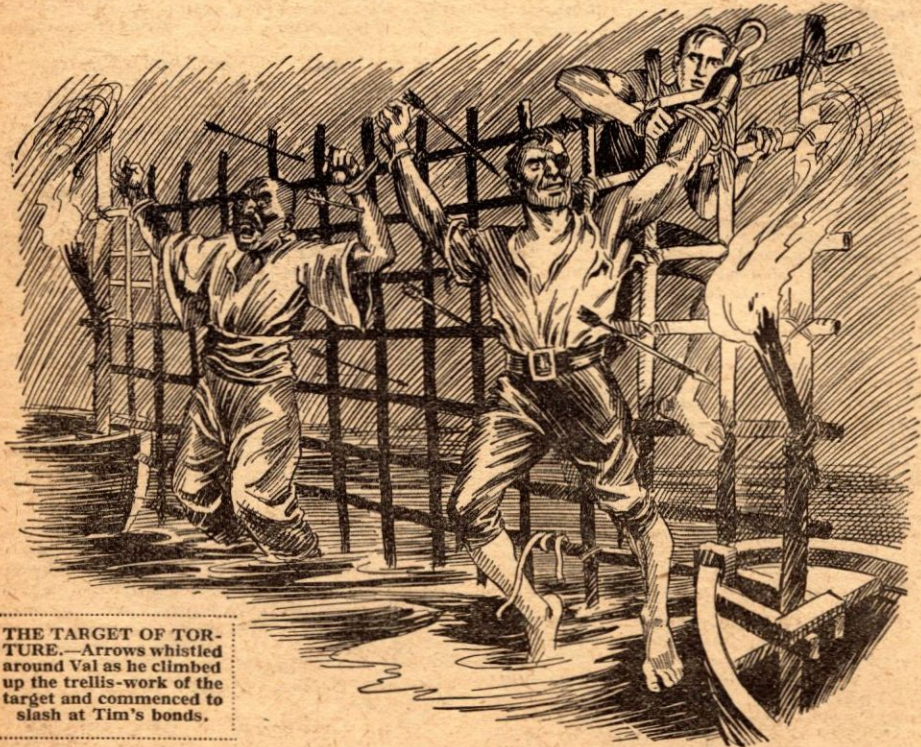
"Wait!" murmured Val.

With a quick movement, he smeared his chin and upper lip with the sticky gum which exuded from the twigs he had broken. Then, while Tyburn Tim grasped the Corsair Chief from behind, holding his iron hook round the captive's throat, Val slashed rapidly with the scimitar. And off came Nasir-ed-Din's proud beard! His moustache, too! It was the insult of insults.

"Now!" breathed Val. "Take him behind the curtains and hold him silent. Make not one move, or like enough we're lost."

Deftly, Val had stuck the severed whiskers to his own chin. They adhered roughly, and he proceeded to secure the moustache. When Val had donned Nasir's rich robe and turban, and had seated himself in the shadows, he made a very passable imitation of the Corsair Chief. The rest would depend upon his own skill.

Clang-clang! He struck a big brass gong—but not until the door had been unbolted. Almost at once there came the sound of running footsteps. The



THE TARGET OF TORTURE.—Arrows whistled around Val as he climbed up the trellis-work of the target and commenced to slash at Tim's bonds.

guards entered—and they saw before them a figure, lounging on the cushions in the shadow, which deceived them completely. They stood just within the doorway—as Val had anticipated. And when Val spoke, his voice was an uncannily clever replica of Nasir's.

"Get ye to the cells, and bring me the person of the infidel scum, Sir William Tregellis," he commanded, with an imperious wave of his hand. "Bring him here without delay."

"We obey, O Mighty Chief!" muttered one of the guards, startled by the curt tone of his supposed lord.

Both guards retired, and Val Tregellis took a deep breath. Would this audacious plan succeed? The wait seemed interminable; yet, actually, it was only a few minutes.

Footsteps sounded again, and Val felt his heart thudding hard. The door opened, and four greasy looking guards marched in with Sir William Tregellis in their midst. The latter was heavily roped, but there was no sign of fear on his face—although he did not doubt that he had been brought here to receive his sentence of death.

Accompanying the party was an officer who now stood at attention, and the gaze he fixed upon Val was full of surprise and inquiry.

"We bring thee the infidel dog as you have commanded, O Light of the Sun," he said deferentially. "Yet it was your order, at sunset, that he should be kept in solitary confinement—"

"Prattling-tongued fool!" broke in Val. "Thinkest thou I need to hear thy ass's voice? Must I seek thy permission before I change my mind? Go! Leave the prisoner with me."

"Guard him well!" said the officer to his men.

"Nay, imbecile!" said Val harshly. "Take thy men with thee."

The officer looked at his supposed Chief sharply.

"But, O Mighty One, this man is desperate—"

"Get ye gone!" thundered Val. "Speak another word, animal, and I'll have that dolt's head off thy shoulders!"

The officer said no more. He retreated hastily with his men. Tyburn Tim and the other desperate intruders had listened and marvelled. Val's daring was staggering.

As the door closed on the Moors, Val himself leapt forward and thrust home the bolts. Sir William watched him in amazement—for the supposed Corsair Chief had flung aside his robe, revealing a familiar suit of honest homespun.

"Dad!" whispered Val, pulling at his beard and moustache.

"As Heaven's my life!" gasped Sir William.

"Val! My boy—my son! What miracle is this?"

"No miracle, dad—but the result of desperate work," replied Val, his voice charged with the triumph which filled his being. "But speak not so loudly, or even yet we may be lost. Tim! Paddy!"

The bewildered Sir William looked on dazedly whilst Val's comrades came from their place of concealment. Quickly, Sir William's bonds were removed, and these very ropes were used to secure Nasir-ed-Din.

"Come, dad," said Val breathlessly. "As we arrived, so shall we depart—like shadows. Do you follow Tim there!"

He indicated his companion who was at the window, and Sir William needed no further explanation. Success seemed assured, for the trick had been worked without the suspicions of the guard being aroused. Now, however, disaster, swift and appalling, followed.

Tim lowered himself from the window, but as his feet struck the stone-flagged path, a great square of

the stones gave way—and he went shooting down to an abyss of blackness. Val, who was close behind, was just in time to see the disaster—and to prevent himself from falling into the same trap.

Val had seen Tim disappear but little did he realise that Nasir-ed-Din had thus turned the tables. For the Corsair Chief knew of a metal hook which protruded from the wall at the head of the divan. A quick wriggle had enabled him to get his bound arms over the hook—and a pull had done the rest.

"Tim!" shouted Val, in horror.

"Go, Cap'n," came the voice of Tyburn Tim faintly, as though from the bowels of the earth. "I am in the cells from where your father was taken not ten minutes ago! The bars have locked themselves and there is no escape."

"Split me, boy, there's trouble brewing," growled Leatherface. "List ye to the voices of the heathens!"

It was true. An alarm of some sort must have sounded. Thunderous blows were being rained upon the outer side of Nasir-ed-Din's chamber. Men were shouting; others were scurrying across from the fortress buildings. To stay would mean disaster.

"Quick—we must go!" cried Val. "Follow me!"

As they ran down the beach they beheld men labouring under heavy burdens. These men were coming up from a different direction. For a moment, Val's heart leapt with triumph. The others had succeeded in their mission—they had raided the fortress stores, and had obtained sacks of grain, cases of sugar, and other foodstuffs so vital to their enterprise. Already the booty was being dumped aboard the galliot.

"To your oars!" Val shouted.

The Corsairs came rushing down the beach; arrows hissed into the sea. But with machine-like precision, the ex-slaves leapt to their places. Afloat, the galliot rode out upon the breakers, and never before had those mighty oars dipped with such power. The vessel fairly streaked out to sea.

But when Nasir-ed-Din was found and released, he raved with blind fury.

"A curse on the infidels," he thundered. "By Allah! Some of ye shall have your worthless heads removed for this!"

He raved and ranted, and then a snake's light came into his eyes.

"This dog, we have trapped, shall die fitly," he vowed. "Let my greatest galley be prepared. By Allah! Let, too, the commandant of the fortress be placed under arrest. He shall suffer the same fate as this accursed infidel—and thus pay the penalty for his neglect."

Other orders he gave; two smaller boats were taken out to sea, and moored some distance from the shore. Between them was stretched a kind of trellis-work target, a rock of death itself. Bound helplessly to the trellis, spreadeagled, were Tyburn Tim and the doomed commandant. Flaring torches were propped in the boats, so that the human target was luridly illuminated.

The great galley, with Nasir-ed-Din aboard, took up its position farther out to sea. Close about were two smaller galleys, alive with archers.

"Aim not to kill!" commanded Nasir, as he gave instructions to his archers. "Let thy arrows pierce the outstretched limbs of these carrion. So! To the men who secure non-fatal hits I will give ten pieces of gold. Let the dogs suffer."

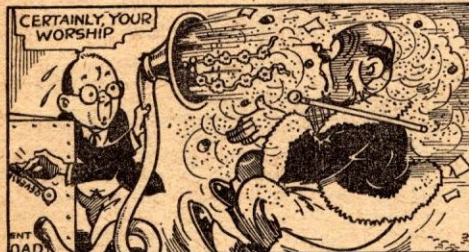
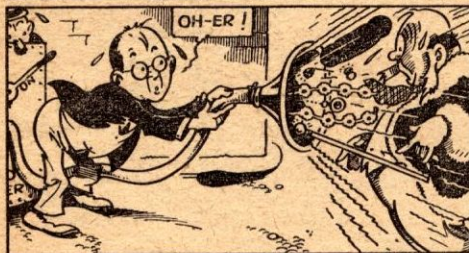
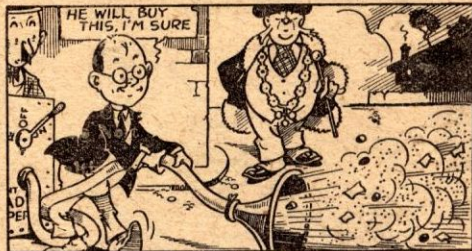
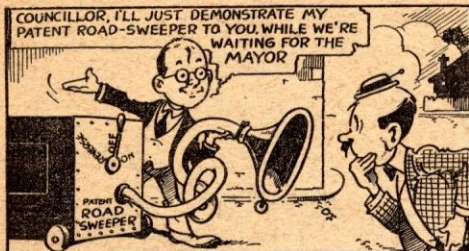
"LADS, there's a chance!" said Val Tregellis exultantly.

The galliot, as black as the night, had hove-to over a mile from the shore. Val, confident of his superior speed, had desired to see what steps the enemy was taking.

THE REVERSE OF A CLEAN SWEEP.



ARTLESS ALGY'S BUST-UP BRAINWAVES!



"Turn about, men!" he commanded. "Tyburn Tim can yet be saved."

Soon, the galliot was hissing through the water, approaching unseen, a mere black blur in the night. Again, Val gave his instructions. Having done so, he quietly slipped out of his clothing, and like a pale spectre he dived into the sea. Between his teeth he gripped a dagger.

With powerful strokes, he swam towards the human target, so directing his course that he would reach the target's rear.

At last, Val reached his objective. Drawing his breath in deep, he sprang into action. Arrows hissed about him, some thudding against the bamboo-like trellis struts. He climbed with the agility of a monkey.

"When you fall, Tim, swim swiftly to starboard," whispered Val.

"S'life!" came a gasp from Tyburn Tim. "Is't really you, lad? Are ye human, or are ye a ghost?"
Slash! Slash! Val's blade severed the ropes which bound the other's feet. With great presence of mind,

the ex-galley slave crooked his heels into the trellis. The next moment his hands were released in like manner.

"Drop!" yelled Val.

A flight of arrows passed over their heads as they sliced into the water. They struck out, side by side; and even at that distance the infuriated voice of Nasir-ed-Din could be heard above the general tumult.

But Val the Valiant and his rescued comrade had gained a good start. The galliot, too, ever watchful, had swung in to meet the swimmers. Eager hands dragged them aboard.

It was Val who gave the order, and the great oars dipped. Away went the galliot—out into the night, leaving pursuit far behind. And thus the Corsair Raiders came into being; and their adventures against the grim Corsairs were to be many and stirring.

Look out for another splendid old-time tale of the Corsair Raiders next week, telling of their amazing vengeance quest on the Mediterranean Main.

THE MANDARIN OF THE SEVEN THOUSAND BLUEBOTTLES! Proud as a Peke, An How Shares A Chunk of Good News with his Shipmates.



The First Laughter-filled Fun Tale in a Great New Comic Series Telling How the Comical Ship's Cook of the Happy Haddock Becomes a Chinese Mandarin!

Mandarin How.

"PLENTY big mandalin," said An How, the Chinese cook of that ancient tramp steamer, the *Happy Haddock*. "Big noise, yessir!"

An puffed out his chest and strutted back and forth across the deck before his puzzled shipmates. Pip, the cabin boy, Seaman Small, Seaman Burns, and Dutchy, the bosun, were all staring at a long screed in Chinese with which An How had emerged from the ship's galley to display proudly to them.

"Sink the ole lugger!" murmured "Slim" Small, who was really the stoutest of the lot. "So we're gonna have two moosical implements aboard this here hulk!"

"No savvy musical instlument," said An, looking as puzzled as they at the remark. "Me mandalin—big noise!"

"Well, if you learn to play it proper," said Fat Burns, "I'll mebbe accompany you on me trombone sometimes—though I don't like them tinkly stringed instruments much, I must say."

"No savvy!" shouted An How, getting wild at the misunderstanding. "Me mandalin—not mandalin! Letter say An How inherit Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles in Plovince of Hwat'tse Onhia in China. Glandpa Yuno How pass away—go ancestors—me mandalin!"

"Cor!" said Pip brilliantly. "He means Mandarin—not *mandoline*! This here Chinky letter says he's bin left an estate in China!"

An How nodded his head violently and grinned from ear to ear. The whole crew of the battered old tramp steamer stared wonderingly at their cook.

"Golly!" said Dutchy Jud, who was the first to find his voice. "Vhat you gonna do mit yourselves now, Chinky?"

"Me go China claim inheritance belong me, yessir! Me Hon'able Illustrious Excellency An How, Mandalin of Seven Thousand Bluebottles of Hwat'tse Onhia—velly lich fella, velly wise fella. Me invite you all come China along of me. Be my guests velly much—stay longer as you like. I sail to China in *Haddock*—I already tell skipper—he savvy very pleased also!"

"Well, sink the old lugger!" said Slim. "I reckon that's real decent of you, your honour."

The *Haddock*, as usual, had been standing idle in the docks of a big English port waiting for a cargo to turn up, the skipper getting daily more worried, for his ship was an old vessel, and to find work for her was getting increasingly difficult. An How's unexpected windfall came now like a gift from the skies.

An How went below and re-emerged presently in a silk topper and carrying an ancient umbrella. An How had peculiar notions about shore-going clothes. He believed the topper to be the badge of Western respectability, and always wore one when he went ashore, with his pigtail dangling down behind. He had similar notions about the umbrella. The general effect was rather droll, because, among other things, An How had the inveterate Chinese habit of wearing his shirt tails on the outside.

"Me go bleak good news fiends in Chinatown," An said, explaining his shore-going clothes. "Solly long—back soon."

The crew of the *Haddock* bowed the new mandarin to the gangway and watched him trot off towards the Chinese quarter of the seaport town.

The delighted *Haddockites* thought no more about An's absence until nightfall came and he had not yet returned to the ship. Then they began to get a little anxious, for it was unlike An How to make prolonged visits ashore.

"He's late," Fat Burns was first to remark. "You don't think he's changed his mind and left us flat, do you?"

"Not him," said Pip. "Besides, he hasn't got any money till he gets to China."

"Sink the ole lugger," commented Slim. "I don't feel easy, though. S'pose somebody's laid him out an—"

"Half-a-mo'," interrupted Pip. "Here's a Chink kid coming up the gangway. Mebbe he's got some news."

Pip's guess was correct. The small slant-eyed boy walked up to them and inquired: "Hon'able clew, *Haddock*?" On receiving an affirmative answer, he thrust a grubby note into Pip's hand and then bunked back down the gangway as fast as he could go.

"Hey! Wait a minute! What—"

"Never mind him. What's the note say?"

The crew gathered eagerly round Pip as he unfolded the note.

Honourable Crew, Haddock (it said),—Ten thousand and one pardons for the much troubling of you. Your humble cook, An How, now exalted, desires to be not such a nuisance, but he has unfortunately been kidnapped on his way home. He was seized in arrears from behind and is imprisoned somewhere he does not know, but that it is an opium den, because the stuff smells all over itself. Please help if it is not of a great trouble and you are busy. Your miserable correspondent writes this on a scrap of paper in his prison and hopes to convey it en route of a small boy below of the window on the street. Get him to guide you here.

One million apologies for the trouble! AN HOW.

"Gosh!" cried Pip. "Stop that kid before—"

"It vass no good. He goes mit himself," replied Dutchy, staring through the night at the deserted dockside.

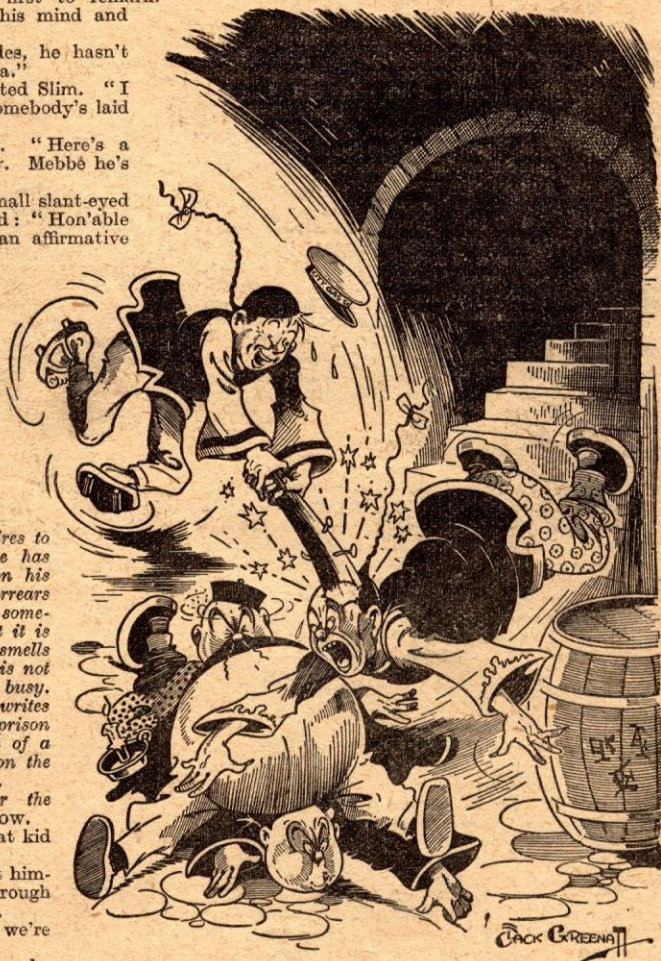
"Sink the ole lugger—then we're dished! If—"

"Bigosh, we're not! He says he knows he's a prisoner in an opium den somewhere. We've gotta find it—an' the way to do it is to disguise as Chinese an' pretend we're lookin' for opium. Come on! An How 'as a whole lot of Chink clothes in his berth!"

The Dope Den.

BARELY half-an-hour later, four strange figures might have been seen slinking through the gloom of dockland towards the Chinese colony—four figures "disguised" in a variety of ways to resemble

Chinamen. All four had pigtails dangling at the rear, but an observant onlooker might have detected a strange resemblance in those pigtails to common hempen rope used aboard ship. All wore their shirts in the Chinese fashion aforesaid, but apart from that their costume varied according to the yield of An How's wardrobe. Dutchy and Fat had improvised conical coolie hats from stiff brown paper, Pip wore a skull cap, while Slim Small had found a circular pork-pie hat of the Mandarin type. Slim also sported



GIVING 'EM THE PIP.—A Chink thrust his head in the cellar and Pip's club descended on his head. The man subsided senseless to the floor. A second and a third were laid out with equal despatch.

a rat-tail moustache, which, somehow, didn't seem to blend with his ginger chin-whiskers, and a long Oriental coat.

"Chinky-wink tonky-tong. Tinky-tong. Junk-jong," sang Fat Burns sootily. "Chinky-wink, jink-jung, tigg-y-tack tig—"

"Shurrup, you chump! Whatcha makin' that din for?"

"That's a bit o' Chinese music to get the atmosphere," answered Fat indignantly.

"Well, you better get that atmosphere quick. We look as though we're in Chinatown now."

They had turned a corner into a narrow dark street bordered by shops that bore signs in Chinese. A wizened old Chink was sitting on a soap box having an evening smoke outside his laundry.

Pip pushed his way forward and made a how-de-do gesture to the old Oriental.

"Chop suey," said Pip genially, under the impression that this was Chinese for "Good evening." "Opium smokee velly good China boy—my word yes! China boy likee smokee da ope!"

The old Chink stared and then grinned.

"Yeah? Guess you guys has come to the wrong joint. I no sella da ope here, big boy. Scram, you goofy bohunks, 'fore I call the bulls."

The surprised boys of the *Haddock* took the American Chinaman's advice and beat it.

In single file and in a stooping attitude they trotted on further into the maze of dark, narrow streets of the Chinese quarter. Finally, Pip stopped and repeated his request more secretly to a young Chink, leaning up against a lamp-post smoking a cigarette. After repeating his question two or three times Pip had the satisfaction of seeing the Chinese merely shake his head and thereafter he ignored them.

"S'no use," said Pip, as they gave it up and trotted on. "There's too many of us. Tell you what, I'll go off somewhere on my own and make a few more inquiries. You wait here while I see what I can do."

They were standing in a dark, gloomy alleyway, lit by a single feeble street lamp. Pip trotted out of the alley before his shipmates could protest and left them to wait for his return from his solitary investigation.

"That there boy," said Slim Small, "is always bossin' it over his superiors. Sink the old lugger!"

"Shahsh!" interrupted Fat suddenly. "There's somebody coming down the alley from the other direction. Talk Chinese."

"Mah Jong?" asked Slim, taking the hint.

"Chop suey," answered Fat in loud voice.

Before Fat could say any more a dark, slinking figure loomed out of the darkness and hissed the single word "Dope?"

The three *Haddockites* fell silent with surprise, then Fat had the presence of mind to nod violently.

"Fyu Choo," murmured the stranger in the sibilant tones of the Oriental, "expects you. Come."

They followed him silently down the dark alley and presently they turned into a wider street. The man guided them across the road to what appeared to be the warehouse of a Chinese merchant.

He tapped mysteriously on a small side door. The door opened and a yellow face was thrust out inquiringly.

"They come," said the guide.

The other Chinaman nodded and let them pass into the interior.

Strange to say, the entry of his three shipmates into the warehouse was witnessed by Pip. He had wandered into that by-road by an entirely different route, and was flabbergasted when he saw his three pals slink cautiously across the road in the rear of the genuine Chink.

Meanwhile, Slim, Fat, and Dutchy found themselves in a long, ill-lit passage. The man who had opened the door sat himself down on a box beside it—that evidently being his permanent post.

"Wait," said the guide. He vanished down the passage, leaving the three seamen staring sheepishly

at one another. Presently their Chinese guide reappeared.

"His Excellency Fyu Choo will see you," he announced.

He held back the curtains while the *Haddockites* trotted in with bowed heads.

They found themselves in a thickly carpeted room, brightly lit by gas lamps, and decorated with real Oriental splendour. In front of a huge brass idol sat a crafty-looking Chinese, wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, which contrasted strangely with his Oriental costume. He was squatting on a kind of dais, puffing at a long Chinese pipe.

"Fyu Choo welcomes you," he said in English, with the very slightest trace of an accent. "Hand me over the opium supplies you have brought with you and I will pay you for it."

"Opium supplies! We ain't got none, guv. We was lookin' for it ourselves."

"You are spies!" yelled Fyu Choo with sudden savage fury. "But no spy who enters here ever leaves—alive!"

Fyu Choo seized a gong-striker and beat on a great gong at his side. Instantly four hefty Chinese attendants seemed to spring from nowhere.

"Seize the white dogs!" snarled Fyu Choo.

The four big Chinks threw themselves bodily on the three boys of the *Haddock*, who were soon overpowered and one by one were swiftly bound with Oriental cunning.

"Take the English dogs to the basement," hissed Fyu Choo.

The unfortunate *Haddockites* were hustled from the room, along dark passages and at last dumped in a kind of basement, with only one tiny, thick glass window near the ceiling.

The three of them were flung to the cold concrete floor and Fyu Choo leered cunningly down at them.

"No doubt you thought you could rescue An, son of the detestable house of How. But he shall die this night with you, and the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles shall pass to the noble house of Choo—my brother Ju shall become mandarin. Bring him!"

Two of Fyu Choo's men hurried to obey their master's orders. They reappeared presently, holding An How, who still wore his respectable topper.

"Sink the ole lugger!" moaned Slim. "Then we struck the right spot after all!"

They had indeed found An's prison purely by accident. The place was an opium den run by Fyu Choo, and Fyu had a brother, Ju Choo, living in Hwat'tse Onhia in China. Brother Ju, it appeared—for Fyu Choo was good enough to explain it tauntingly to his prisoners—had written to brother Fyu, proposing that he should quietly do away with the rightful heir to the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles, while he was still in England, so that Ju Choo himself could collar the property and make himself mandarin, sharing the spoil, as it were, with Brother Fyu. Fyu had thought it a good idea.

"I propose," said he to the quaking seamen, "to indulge you with a nice long lingering death by suffocation. There is very little air gets into this basement—and what there is will soon be stopped. I will then turn on this gas-jet and you will go to join your ancestors with grace and dignity!"

A Ghastly Experience.

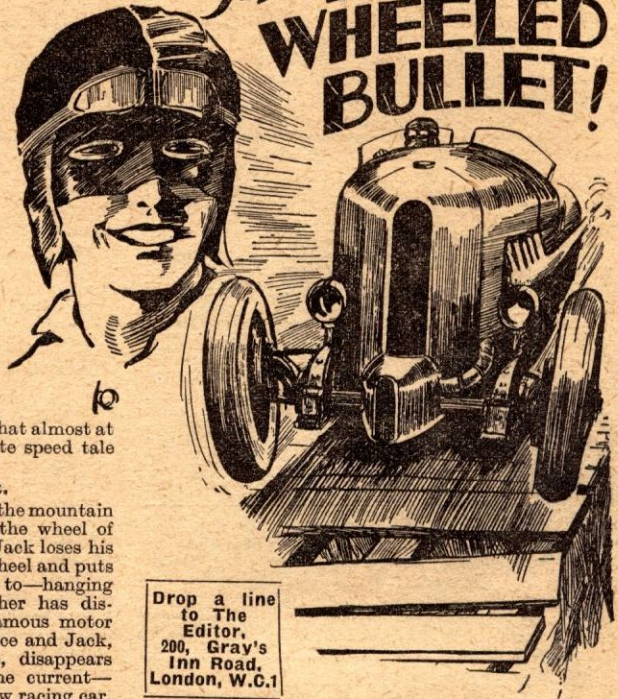
BUT the brothers Choo had not reckoned with the gallant Christopher Charlemagne Pipweede, cabin-boy of the good ship *Happy Haddock*. When he saw his shipmates disappear into that gloomy warehouse, Pip had immediately started a systematic tour of inspection. He snooped round

(Continued on page 16.)

YOUR EDITOR'S CORNER

The FOUR WHEELED BULLET!

A Treat of a Tale, too Good to Miss. Get Ready for THE DEATH DICER and His Giant Racing Car, Next Week, Chaps!



MY DEAR CHUMS,

With a whizz and a bang a great new story star comes to the old B.M. next week. Here's his portrait together with his monster bus, Black Bullet. A mystery rider of the smoke and metal track, the masked Death Dicer thrills the whole of the motor racing world with his daring deeds. Who is he? Well, you are told that almost at the beginning of this grand long complete speed tale entitled

The Four-wheeled Bullet.

Young Jack Stormer is hurtling along the mountain track with his father, Lap Stormer, at the wheel of their giant racing car, when apparently Jack loses his nerve, clutches the tape-bound steering wheel and puts the racer into a skid. When Jack comes to—hanging over the edge of a precipice—his father has disappeared. It seems a cert that the famous motor ace has gone to death down that precipice and Jack, ashamed of his momentary cowardice, disappears also. About this time rumours become current—Lap Stormer has stolen the plans of a new racing car. Hence his disappearance.

And there is no one to give the lie to these dastardly accusations. No one, did I say? But wait! Out of the blue a new speedman comes like a thunderbolt to capture records right and left. The Death Dicer! Masked, swathed in black racing leathers, this mystery man sets the whole of the race tracks talking. Yes, it is none other than Jack Stormer come to prove his father's innocence. Of his daring deeds on road and race-track, the torrent of terror and plotting unleashed against him, and his final triumph you will read for yourselves in the tense and deeply thrilling chapters of this unique yarn next week.

I've just been answering a bunch of letters from my chums, received this morning. Thanks again, chaps, for all the fine things you say about our paper. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your congratulations on my efforts to give you the best that storyland can offer. But, well, I'm just proud and glad to know such a loyal band of chums. I'm planning even bigger things for you for the future. Last week I gave you the last number of the Thrill Library—and even now I am maturing something BIG to take its place. Exactly what form it will take I cannot divulge at this stage. But watch the *Mag.* closely for further news.

Now just a few hints for those fellows who have saved all the numbers of the Thrill Library and are ready to bind them into one volume. You should carefully trim each page to within an inch of the dotted borders. Now place them all together and with a thin Bradawl bore a dozen holes at equal distance along the binding edge. Through these thread strong twine, pulling tight and knotting at

Drop a line to The Editor, 200, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1

each end. To make the job firmer you can soak the bound side of your volume with glue. When dry it is ready for the backing—two pieces of cardboard for front and back fastened to the volume with three or four strips of strong brown paper. Take a look at an ordinary library book to see how this is done. Finally, you should cover the cardboard at front with a neat design worked on glossy white paper.

Wow! My space is running out and I've simply tons to talk with you about yet. There's that great scoop, the series of yarns featuring the Corsair Raiders, the opening yarn in which appears to-day. If you look under the title of

Caught in the Corsairs' Cage,

which appears next week, you will find something to your advantage, as the legal gentlemen have it!

Then there's more of the exploits of Ian and Johnny Chisholm, the dashing war aces, and the spectacular end of the Secret Society at St. Giddy's.

Like the doings of the crew of the *Happy Haddock*? This week's yarn is only an appetiser for the chortling things to come. In "An How—Mandarin!" next week, you will journey with the good ship *Haddock* to China, where An How invites his old shipmates to share the hospitality of his new estate. Hospitality! Phew! You should meet the eight-armed idol of the Pagoda to taste it.

I must close down now—but I haven't told you quite all of the good things in store for you. Next week there will be a wonderful surprise announcement on this page. Don't miss it.

Your sincere friend,
THE EDITOR.



THE "BRITANNIA" AIR PISTOL.
A British Produced Weapon upholding all the traditions of BRITISH WORKMANSHIP. Positively the most accurate MACHINE-MADE Pistol ever produced at the price. Beautifully finished. Shoots with great force and penetration, being made entirely of BEST STEEL. It will wear for ever. Unrivalled for In and Outdoor use. Target and Rat Shooting. Price, Gun Blued, 8/6 each. With supply of Darts Plated 9/- and Slugs.
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A WINDFALL—AN HOW.

(Continued from page 14.)

the building until he detected a little window of plate glass close to the ground and quite obviously lighting some cellar or basement.

He dropped flat on his stomach and peered through the dirty glass into the dimly lit room below. Suddenly he let out a low cry of astonishment. There were his four shipmates—An How and all!—trussed up like lettuces, and above them stood a nasty looking Chink, talking to them in manner that was decidedly unfriendly. Pip watched intently. He saw the Chinese cease talking, then after a final sneer, turn the gas-jet full on and leave the room, shutting the door securely behind him.

"Gosh!" cried Pip, springing to his feet. "He's gonna asphyxination 'em all!"

The cabin boy dashed down the street haphazard. He had to find somebody to help him at once. Somebody to send for the police while he—*Biff!* Pip collided violently with somebody coming round the corner.

"Ere, young feller—you be careful who you're a-shovin' of!"

Pip found himself in the arms of a burly person in a peaked cap.

"Sorry—" he gasped. "I—" Pip's eyes suddenly glued themselves on the badge of the man's cap. It said: "City Gas Supply!"

"Gosh!" yelled Pip as a flash of hope came to him. "You gotta help me—run for the police an' lend me your hat! And he gasped out what was happening in the basement of the warehouse. Before the gasman could reply Pip snatched off his hat and clapping it upon his own head ran towards the side-door entrance to the opium den.

He halted in front of the door and rapped on it authoritatively. After a little while it opened and the yellow face of the doorkeeper appeared.

"Called about the gas-meter," said Pip.

The Chink looked at him suspiciously, and then, noticing his cap, shrugged his shoulders. He knew nothing about Fyu Choo's little asphyxiation games as he had been at the door all the time, and he led Pip along the passage.

At the door of a cellar he stopped. "Gas-meter in here," he muttered, and returned to his post.

Pip entered the cellar, striking a match to find his way. The place was full of rubbish and he had no difficulty in finding a piece of wood stout enough for a club. Then he went to the gasfittings, discovered the main tap and turned it off suddenly.

He could tell by the series of startled cries in Chinese from all over the building, that besides saving his chums from suffocation, he had also plunged the whole place in darkness. Pip chuckled, gripped his improvised cudgel firmly and stood just within the door of the cellar to await eventualities.

And he had not long to wait. A Chink, with a candle, came to investigate why the gas had so suddenly failed. As he thrust his head into the cellar Pip's weapon descended sharply on it. The Chink gave a half-choked cry and fell forward on his candle, putting it out instantly. Pip shifted the inert form from the door and took up his position again.

Presently came a second Chink with a second candle to see what had happened to the first one. He was treated in the same summary manner. A third arrived—things happened swiftly to him also.

Came a fourth. His skull required two wallops, but Pip didn't mind that. The doorkeeper came and he was disposed of.

"Only thing about this," Pip told himself cheerfully, "it don't half make a chap's arm ache. Hello—this must be his nibs!"

Some rude remarks in Chinese were heard approaching. As Pip guessed, it was Fyu Choo himself coming to see what had happened to his staff.

Wham! Went Pip's bearing-apparatus, and the illustrious Fyu Choo dropped limply on top of the pile of laid-out Chinks.

"And I expect that's the police," Pip said as he stepped over the pile of slumbering sons of the Orient. "They always knock like that."

Somebody, indeed was hammering lustily at the door of the warehouse. Pip groped his way down the dark passage and opened the door. A crowd of blue-uniformed figures surged in.

"You'll find your prisoners in a heap at the door of the cellar," grinned Pip, "an' I expect you'll find plenty of evidence in the shape of opium all over the shop."

As the policemen moved off Pip handed the gasman, who had brought the police, his hat back.

"Thanks for the loan of it," he said. "S'cuse me—I must go and see how my pals are getting on."

Pip descended to the basement. He found the captured *Haddockites* very little the worse for wear, for Pip had acted so promptly that the gas had had no time to have any ill-effects.

As Pip released his comrades one by one they told him of Fyu Choo's scheme to put An How out of the way.

"Gosh!" said Pip. "Then it means we ain't finished with the Choo boys yet. We gotta get the skipper to sail for China right away!"

TROUBLE always goes with money—as the merry crew of the *Happy Haddock* find to their cost in next week's fun yarn entitled "An How—Mandarin."

You can get a good "kick" out of a B.M. Football.

THE JESTER'S REALM



Waiter (frantically): For goodness' sake, sir, knock that fly off my nose!
(Football to RONALD JONES, 39, Church Street, Rogestone, near Newport, Mon.)

A DIFFERENCE.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Do you want a large or small picture?

SITTER: A small one!

PHOTOGRAPHER: Then close your mouth, please.
(Fountain pen to ROBERT I. KING, The Bakery, Abury, near Guildford, Surrey.)

NO GIVE!

An old gentleman dropped his stick in a Glasgow street, and had great difficulty in bending to pick it up.

"Have you lumbago?" queried a young passer-by.
"No, sir," returned the old gentleman. "It's my braces. I bought them in Aberdeen, and they won't give!"

(Fountain pen to PETER POATE, "The Bungalow," Beach Road, Dovercourt, Essex.)

QUITS!

WILLIE: Father, Tommy Smith punched my nose.

FATHER: Didn't you give him one back?

WILLIE: Yes—before he punched me!

(Fountain pen to SAMUEL WOOD, Ackers Lane, Carrington, near Manchester.)

SPORTING.

"Ernest," said the master, "tell me what you know about the Mongolian race."

"I wasn't there," explained Ernest, hastily. "I went to the football match."

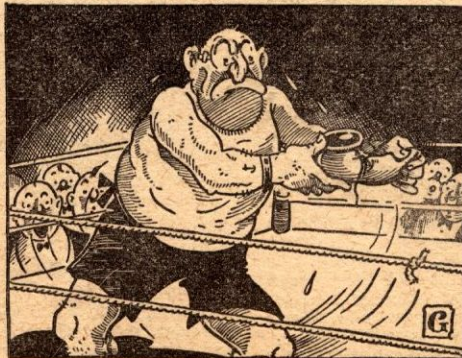
(Fountain pen to RONALD STEVENS, 43, Dove St., Kingsdown, Bristol, 2.)

WELL FED.

UNCLE: Do you know what to eat and what to avoid, Tommy?

TOMMY: Yes, Uncle. Eat all you can and avoid bursting!

(Fountain pen to WILLIAM SHAW, 12, Mourne St., Belfast, N.I.)



All-in Wrestler: Crikey! Where did 'e go?

(Football to S. CARLEDGE, 10, Oak Street, St. Luke's, Southport.)

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.

BAD 'ABIT!

The school teacher was explaining miracles.

"Tommy," he said. "If a man fell from the top of a skyscraper and was unhurt, and then climbed up and did it again without injuring himself, what would you call it?"

"Bad 'abit, sir," said Tommy.

(Fountain pen to JOHN O'DONNELL, 20, Brook Street, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand.)

JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine, 14/10/33.

NOT POP'S.

JIMMY (to shopkeeper): Seven pounds of dog biscuits, please!

SHOPKEEPER: Who are they for; your father?

JIMMY: No, the dog!

(Fountain pen to KENNETH SOUTHAM, The Bungalow, Carterton, Oxford.)

WHAT NECKS-T!

GENT: Why don't you look round for some work?

TRAMP: Can't lady! I've got such a stiff neck!

(Fountain pen to L. A. GRENON, Glen House, Platt Lane, Rusholme, Manchester, 14.)

SOME JOB!

BOSS: Sandy, why are you late this morning.

SANDY (mournfully): I squeezed my toothpaste too hard and it took me half-an-hour to get it back into the tube.

(Fountain pen to MICHAEL DEMAREST, Boleyn, Great Chesterford, Essex.)

A THUNDERBOLT FALLS On the WESTERN FRONT!

Vivid, Awe-inspiring, Thrilling! A Tale of Drama and Rivalry in the Air to Hold Every Reader Spellbound.

A Desperate Ruse.

CRACK! Crack! On the early morning air came the spiteful bark of rifles in quick succession. Soldiers in German *feldgrau* and hod helmets were pounding down the rutted road from a farmhouse behind the German lines after two escaping figures.

The fugitives were British officers. One of them, Squadron-Leader Ian Chisholm, air commander of the famous Red Devils, had been standing before a Jerry firing squad but a few minutes before.

"Run for it, Ian!" rapped out his brother, Flight-Lieutenant Johnny Chisholm, who, despite his youthful appearance, ranked as one of the foremost war flying aces in the R.A.F.

Johnny had swooped down in a fearful death dive from the skies and had crashed his 'plane, risking death to save his brother.

A hand grenade hurled at the firing squad had done the business, and Johnny's surprised onslaught looked like being completely successful, for on the road beside the farmhouse stood a powerful German staff car.

Ian, running at top bent down the rutted road through the farm fields, was dodging like a hare. He had got hold of important plans relating to the new Pfalz 'planes that the Germans were building and putting into the air at a rapid pace. And he was all out to get them back to British headquarters.

A German military chauffeur sat stiffly at the wheel of the magnificent staff car. He must have heard the sounds of pursuit—the exploding bomb, the wild shots—but like the trained machine he was, he kept his eyes straight ahead, until the very last moment.

Ian hurled himself at the chauffeur like a living tornado, and the chauffeur at last took alarm. Snatching a Luger automatic from the seat beside him he turned. But it was like matching a bludgeon against a rapier in the hands of a master.

Too late! In a blur of speed Ian flashed across a precise right hook which connected just half-an-inch above the point of the driver's jaw.

Without a cry the man's hands went out and he fell face forward across the driving seat. The big blond skyman was dragging him out, when Johnny came rushing up, his face taut.

He had been looking at the sky where a 'plane's high drone had changed to a savage roar as it dived. That 'plane was a German Pfalz.

It was piloted by Kapitan Kummel, the German ace and spyflier. He must have seen through his field-glasses that things had gone wrong, and now he was coming down in a sheer power dive from the heights.

"Quick!" hissed Johnny; "he'll get us with the machine-guns in a minute."

Quick as a flash Ian was in the driving-seat of the German staff car with Johnny by his side.

The remnants of the firing party were fast arriving

within effective range. Shots *spanged* viciously against the body of the car, but Ian had already stubbed the self-starter and was in gear. He let the car go in a rushing slide.

Swiftly it gathered speed, with no more sound than a breath of soft wind. But sound came from above and Johnny looked up.

"She's diving—she'll smash us!" he said, his words coming like so many shots.

Ian's blue eyes were blazing with a half-laughing, half-hard light. He had got to make the Pfalz miss. And he was listening to the dive. As the roar came almost overhead, the British skyman stood on the gas.

The trees on either side that had been streaking backwards as though a giant hand had snatched them, were lost. Every thing became a blur.

Br-ra-ra-raraang! Through the high thunder of Mercedes engine came the rivet hammer clamour of machine-guns.

Looking back, Johnny saw the shining arc of the propeller, madly quivering pinions of the Pfalz—and behind those wings the black ball of Kummel's helmet, his teeth a white line in his smoke-blackened face, his eyes glowing like a jungle cat's.

There was a mad spatter of hard lead against the road. In a sheer surge of power the Pfalz lifted,



near as I like it, fellow," he said. "But he won't come again. His belts are empty after the sky duel with you."

Of course! Johnny relaxed a little as it struck home that the German ace must have exhausted his ammunition.

"We're making for the German flying-field, fellow," Ian went on. "I heard those Heinie staff officers give orders to adjust a new propeller on the Bristol in place of the one that was smashed. Can you guess what's on their minds?"

Johnny started, and his eyes contracted with a fierce light.

"You think that spy, Kummel, is going to have another shot at bluffing our fellows to follow him into a death trap?" he asked, tensely.

"You've hit it," gritted Ian. "He'll be making for the flying-field, too. Here's hoping we get there first."

Johnny thought of the spy's cunning—and gritted his teeth. Masquerading as a British flight officer, he had gained command of the famous Red Devils and had tried to wing them into a trap over masked German batteries.

Johnny and Ian had downed him. But the grim duel was not by any means finished yet. The Nth Pursuit Squadron—the famous Red Devils—patrolling that sector had a big job on hand. Their orders were not to let a single Boshche 'plane get over the British lines to scout out the big concentration of troops coming up to the line.

And if that Bristol two-seater got into the sky again, with the ace spyflier at the controls—and themselves helpless behind the German lines, unable to get into the air—well, Johnny dared not think of the consequences.

A race to the flying field, was it? Johnny gritted his teeth as he saw the Pfalz going across the sky with a roll like thunder. But he had to come down for a landing. Ian would beat him to it. The blond flier sent the big car hurtling along the road like a thrown javelin.

"Johnny, fellow, will you climb over that occasional seat, and see if you can find some sort of gun. We're in for a hot spot, I'm thinking," Ian said tensely.

"Right y'are." Johnny's heart hammered in his throat at the thought of rushing on to that enemy 'drome—raiding it.

went over tightly and came down again, wires and struts screaming.

Brrat-a-tat-a-tat! This time the Pfalz lifted over the car sliding along the road; it dipped, and its nose sneezed twin blobs of fire. A swirl of lead clattered like hailstones to the side of the racing car. Then the spiteful clamour was silent, and the Pfalz showed the two Britishers its landing wheels as it lifted for the heights with a sullen roar.

Ian flashed his brother a smile. "That was as

**BIG
BUNCH OF
SURPRISES
COMING!**

Watch
the Editor's
Chat.

"Joy! I've found something, Ian!" Johnny suddenly cried breathlessly.

He jerked erect in the rear portion of the tourer, and cuddled in his arms was a squat, black sinister-looking Spandau.

"Not too bad," cried Ian with laughing, reckless eyes.

And then the German flying-field loomed before them. Ian stood off the accelerator and applied the brakes, and the big car slid to a smooth standstill. As they scrambled out, the Pfalz pequed sharply downward for a landing.

But their perils were intensified now. For Kapitän Kummel came wriggling down the sky in a mad fish-tail, to kill speed. His landing showed his superb airmanship, for he bumped once evenly, squatted, jounced and trundled across the field for fifty yards, and then pulling the stick back, dug the tail skid into the ground to pull to a quick stop.

His warm motor was idling as he jumped out. His



HOT LEAD FOR THE HEINIES.—Johnny halted and snapped round. The squat gun cuddled in his arms belched hot lead at the charging Germans, mowing them down.

"Come on," hissed Ian, running on to the field. "We've got to have that Bristol and get up into the air."

The Spy's Ruse.

THEY were conspicuous enough as they rushed on to the field, for Squadron-Leader Ian was in British officer's uniform, with the three stars of a captain on his shoulders, and a row of decoration ribbons under his silver wings. And Johnny, though in flying clothes, looked the typical fair-haired young Britisher.

Instantly, in a solid phalanx, a score or more of armed Jerry soldiers came rushing at them. Lugers and rifles were levelled to send a rain of death.

"They've asked for it," said Ian, in an undertone. "You've got to use that gun, fellow."

Johnny snapped to a halt, upright, with feet planted apart. And the squat, ugly thing cuddled in his arms was whirled around.

Brat-tat-tat-tat! The machine-gun spoke with livid, flaming tongue and madly stuttering voice. Bullets swirled from it as if from a hose. For a few seconds the crowd of Jerry soldiers seemed to be struck to statues. Then as if pushed by some giant invisible arm they commenced falling.

"Come on, Ian—make it, for pity's sake!" cried Johnny with a near sob in his throat. "I can't—mow any more of 'em down."

They had perceived the familiar outlines of the Bristol two-seater within one of the camouflaged hangars that girded the flying-field. In a few pounding strides they reached it and hastened inside.

face was convulsed like a demon's. His voice rising like the savage screech of an animal's, he called for ammo pans for his guns. But the men on the field only stared at him stupidly.

"He's coming in after us!" rapped Johnny suddenly. "Watch out!"

To give Kummel his due, he was a brave man. Perceiving that by the time fresh ammunition was fetched from the operations hut and he had time to rise and rake that hangar with bullets, his quarry would be away in the Bristol, he abandoned that idea, and charged madly with his Luger levelled upon the hangar.

It was dim within, and Ian and Johnny could not properly be seen by the great gaunt shape of the Bristol biplane. As he slid in on the other side of the wing span, the spy's Luger cracked spitefully. And there was no preliminary to that which followed.

From above, it came swishing down, a great canvas underlay that covered the 'planes in winter. Johnny jumped aside like a cat as it fell, but Ian was enveloped in its heavy folds, and so was Kummel, who dived under the 'plane fuselage and closed with Ian desperately.

The two of them writhed and struggled under the canvas, locked together like two great, grim cats.

"All right, Johnny," shouted Ian's voice. "I've got him. Start that 'plane up."

Johnny had switched on the ignition, and now going round to the propeller he pulled it through, and the engine suddenly gave voice with giant pistol bark.

"You all right, Ian?" Directly he had shouted the question, Johnny breathed with relief as he saw Ian's familiar khaki tunic on the figure that emerged victor from that deadly fight under the hangar covering. But he was somewhat surprised to see his brother had got hold of Kummel's black helmet and goggles, and was wearing both.

"Quick! Let's go!" he hissed through the engine roar, as he mounted the stirrup.

Johnny turned to his controls, opening out slowly at first to a thunderous roar, till the wheels spurned the chocks, and the fighter plane came slashing out of the hangar.

He made a long, thundering take-off, gathering power, skimming just above the ground with a clean roar, ere he finally pulled back the stick, and sent the Bristol roaring up with all her horses pulling in a magnificent climb.

Johnny eased in the cockpit. It was good to be flying again—with Ian! They'd made their getaway.

As these thoughts flitted through his head, Johnny turned to gaze casually at his instrument board. Suddenly he jerked stiff in every muscle and stared in fearful fascination at the floating compass which projected from the instrument board.

Its glass-covered, black face made an almost perfect mirror, and the young R.A.F. pilot saw a reflection of his companion in the rear cockpit, calmly donning the black leather flying coat of Captain Kummel of the German Imperial Air Force. Now he was taking off his goggles, wiping them. And the dark saturnine face of Kummel himself was revealed!

Then Ian was lying senseless down there in the hangar. Johnny made a clutch at his reeling brain. A second later he saw the spy's right hand and arm come up. And in his hand was the Luger!

Calling Kummel's Bluff.

JOHNNY put in three seconds of fast thinking. He was in one of the hottest spots of his war flying career. Was the spy going to shoot him from behind in cold blood?

Then the young daredevil ace took a grip on himself. Slowly he turned his head, and evinced no surprise at staring into the muzzle of that menacingly steady gun. With a tight grin he raised his gauntleted hand in a sort of mocking salute to superior force.

The Kaiser's ace showed his teeth in a bitter smile. He was not deceived. He shouted, and since Johnny had throttled his motor to loafing speed, his words reached the young ace's helmeted ears.

"You'll join your squadron over the lines, and fly as I direct you, or I'll shoot you where you sit."

A spark seemed to fire a mine in Johnny's brain. Fly to the spy's orders! Not he—with the most critical moments of the war at hand.

Again the Kaiser's spy shouted: "Will you fly as I order, or shall I fire?"

Johnny made up his mind. Better far to die. Slowly, steadily, he shook his head; then, as if utterly contemptuous of the German ace with the gun, he turned back to his controls. Suddenly he was working on a wild hunch.

The two cockpits were separated by the three-foot gas-tank. In his mirror Johnny watched the image of Kummel, and saw the spy ace reverse the gun in his hand so that he held it to strike with the butt. Johnny had been right in his guess. That Luger automatic was empty!

Von Kummel leaned over from the observer's pit

and struck with the speed of lightning. But Johnny was watching for it. As the gun swept through the air the young skyfighter quickly bent all the way forward and to one side. The gun thudded against the rear cowling, just grazing his back.

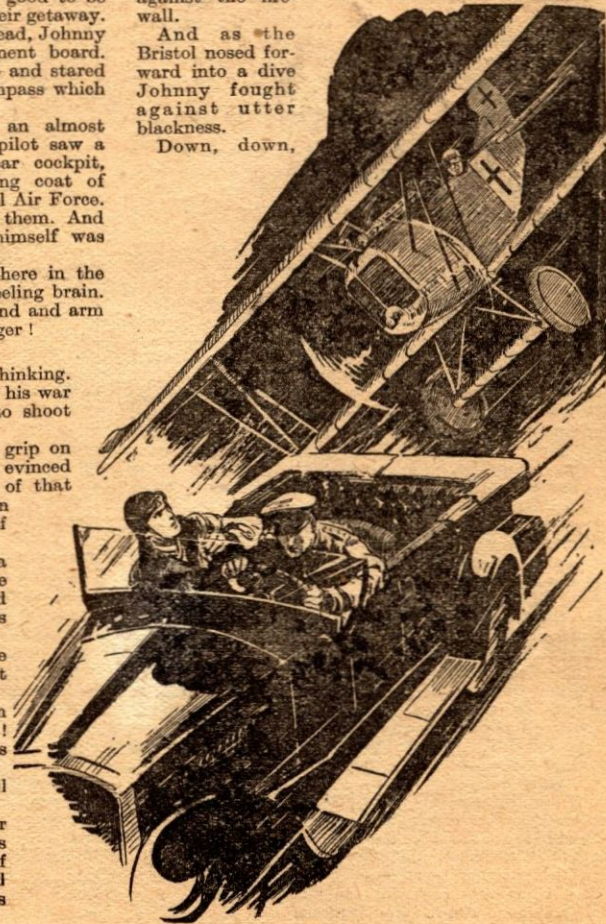
Missed! Johnny's whole body tensed. A wild plan had formed in his brain.

He opened throttle, and the whispering wires and struts changed tune as the plane tore forward with thunderous power. In the mirror he saw the spy half resting on the gas tank with gun raised for another blow. And this time he would not miss. The spy's arm moved down swiftly.


Johnny ducked, but he knew that the blow would land. He prayed for a glancing blow. But it seemed to descend on the back of his skull with terrific force. A thousand lights flashed before him, as numbed and sick he fell forward on the stick, pushing it against the fire-wall.

And as the Bristol nosed forward into a dive Johnny fought against utter blackness.

Down, down,



SHOT FROM THE SKY.—"She's diving," yelled Johnny. The Pfalz roared low over the speeding car and bullets whistled past the two aces.



TELESCOPIC PERISCOPE
Enables you to see over heads of crowds and round corners. Forms endless fun. WANTED AT FOOTBALL MATCHES, SPORTS, PROCESSIONS, ETC. SPECIALLY USEFUL TO SCOUTS for concealed observations. It closes up to 9in., and extends about a foot. Price **1'6** Post Free.

Wm. PENN (DEPT. P.S.) 682, Holloway Road, LONDON, N.19.

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with every strut and spar shaking, the engine's hoarse whroom shattering miles of sky silence. The tail writhed as the Bristol fighter ripped down a mile through the sky. And Johnny waited in an agony of apprehension.

Would Kummel, in an endeavour to save his life, do what he anticipated?

The spy throttled down, and there was silence save for the *plonk plonk* of the turning engine, and the banshee wail of wires and struts. But the Bristol was in a sheer nosedive now, and the speed hardly decreased.

In utter desperation the spy did what Johnny hoped he would. He snapped loose his safety belt, and leaning right forward over the gas tank, seized Johnny's shoulders to pull him away from the stick.

Directly he felt the touch Johnny woke to furious life. Turning he uncorked a terrific right hand smash that sent the spy's head rocketing backwards. It was the final gong for Kummel.

Johnny turned to the controls, almost frantic. Now to pull the howling Bristol out of its crash dive!

Even as he turned, however, the Bristol two-seater swished over wildly in the beginning of a fast spin. Johnny felt the cold leap of fear. Desperately the young ace worked at the controls; tried every trick he knew. It was hopeless!

And then he saw it. And something like a sob of gladness was wrenched from his raw throat.

A ship was coming down the invisible racing rapids of the sky to dive under him—a Bristol two-seater. Ian! Instinctively Johnny knew his brother was in that plane. He must have escaped from the German 'drome and got up in the air in the other Bristol that had landed on the field.

The Bristol fell upon Johnny with a sound like the crash of thunder. A great backwash of air hit him as Ian darted under and up in a clean arc. Suddenly Johnny's ship stopped spinning and snapped out into level flight as he threw over with stick and rudder. Then he was roaring in the sky again with vibrating wings.

Swept by speechless admiration he watched the other Bristol as it went up in a great corkscrew climb. Squadron-Leader Ian was going to his rendezvous with the other ships of the squadron.

Johnny remembered sharply that the spy Kummel was in his rear cockpit. He glanced round. Yes, he was still there, lying huddled up, unconscious. The young British ace determined to get rid of him before joining the fighting in the clouds.

He dived towards the churned earth of No Man's Land, looking for some place to dump the Kaiser's ace behind the lines. He marked a big "shoot" with great shell craters filled with stagnant water staring up at him like huge baleful eyes. He zoomed, flopped

over on his back, and made the 'plane writhe, ere he nosed down out of it. But the spy had not dropped out of the rear cockpit.

"Must have got his feet jammed under the walking beam," Johnny gritted.

It was a nuisance. For he was short on petrol. But anyhow the best move was to land and hand over the spy to the authorities, he decided.

With a roll like thunder Johnny went hedge-hopping for the Red Devils' front-line flying-field.

Soon he saw it, and banked around to alight as gracefully as a gull. He scrambled out quickly as Major Drissol himself and other staff officers came running out of the Operations Office.

"I've got Kummel, the German ace, here," he said breathlessly.

There were fervent exclamations of gladness. These staff officers were from G.H.Q. itself. They had learned from Flight-Sergeant Tornado Wills of the staggering plot of the bogus Major Rush and this spy, who had called himself Lieutenant Cummings.

"You've done splendidly, my boy," said Major Drissol, his eyes shining pools of light. "I'll see that you and Squadron-Leader Chisholm are recommended for this. Why, you've averted ruin—disaster."

"The Bosches haven't succeeded in getting over the British lines yet then?" said Johnny quickly.

"They haven't made their great attempt yet," answered Major Drissol. "But our fellows report overwhelming numbers of enemy formations patrolling their own air. And no doubt they're getting ready to strike."

"I must get into the air then," said Johnny quickly. "Will someone help me lift this fellow out of the rear pit?"

The Kaiser's ace, Kapitan Kummel, was still slumped unconscious in the observer's cockpit of the Bristol. And as several non-coms proceeded to haul him out, they discovered that Johnny's surmise was right. His right boot was twisted and wedged between the walking beam, and to haul him out they had to tug his foot from the high, fleecy-lined flying-boot, leaving it in the pit.

While his tank was being refilled, Johnny took up the flying-boot idly. A memento of his capture of Kummel! Then suddenly a hunch worked in him, and brought a surge of uncontrollable excitement. He looked inside the boot, and then examined under the insole. Just as he had guessed—there were papers there.

Taking them out with shaking hands, the young pilot examined them. There was a map of Paris from the air, and another paper containing a great deal of German script, which was evidently in code for Johnny could make nothing of it.

"What if it should be—a plan to raid Paris?" he hazarded, aware of a wild drumming of his pulses.

He had made up his mind to hand them over to Major Drissol when there came a drone in the sky. Seven 'planes in formation scattered, dropped their noses and came swooping down one after another for a landing. It was B Flight of the Red Devils squadron coming in for a refuel.

Johnny immediately made up his mind that the spy plans would keep. He was going up with the flight. His every nerve was tingling and alert as he swarmed into his cockpit. The eight ships were in a line. Exhausts roared deafeningly on all sides and a cloud of dust obscured the hangars. Johnny pulled his own throttle open, and his motor's lungs let out thunder as he tore at the head of the rest of the ships storming over the field.

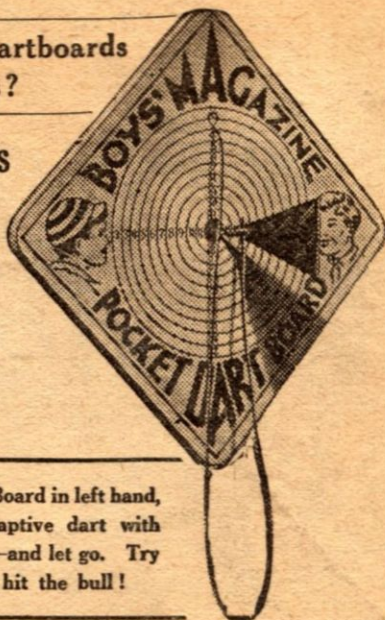
Up and up, he corkscrewed into the heights. The rendezvous was thirteen thousand feet. And the climb seemed interminable. But then tension gripped the young skyrider again as he saw the

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roads behind the British lines crowded to capacity with endless lines of A.S.C. painted trucks, battery upon battery of camouflaged light and heavy field guns, then convoy after convoy of supply and ammunition trains and grey lines of marching Tommies. The reinforcements were coming up to the line, to stem the German tide of advance.

"We've got to keep the Bosches out," grunted Johnny.

At thirteen thousand feet the other ships fell into tight V formation behind Johnny. And slowly the flight dived across the British lines.

Suddenly Johnny saw far ahead a scattering of specks against the azure sky. Air veteran that he was, he knew what they meant. C Flight, under Captain Southey, had swooped down to give battle to five dark 'planes bearing the black crosses of Germany.

As Johnny and his flight opened throttle and thundered through the heights, they saw Southey and his five 'planes dive upon the enemy. Immediately the five Germans turned tail and fled for home territory.

Johnny suddenly groaned aloud. He saw that Captain Southey and his flight were hotly pursuing. They were flying into a trap!

Suddenly the five Germans turned with disconcerting suddenness, and came back at the startled Britishers their machine-guns hammering. Sick at heart Johnny watched. The fight—at first equal—had scarce begun when out of the glowing path of the sun seven Fokkers came swooping down.

They dropped in perfect position on the tails of C Flight. Johnny's eyes flamed behind his goggles as he saw three of six Red Devils go spearing down to earth at the first fire, riddled and in flames.

Captain Southey, realising the trap, was fighting like a madman. He tore round and round upon a Fokker until he got it in his sights, then pounced as it tried to dive and sent it down. Then with desperate energy he turned upon the mass of pursuers.

"Got to dive on 'em," grunted Johnny, realising that the eleven would try to penetrate the British lines. Where was Ian? Johnny hoped that he was away back with A Flight, holding the rear air lines.

He signalled. But as he plunged downward he would have given much to have known.

Down, down sped the avenging Spads, hungry to fight. Having the advantage of superior altitude Johnny's Red Devils did exactly as the Fokkers had done. Dive—dive—pounce and kill.

Four Germans fell in that onslaught, dropping like thunderbolts from the sky in disastrous flaming spins. And then Johnny's ships shot upside-down, zoomed over, emitting high-pitched, reverberating shrieks as they split-ared in every direction.

The dog fight was on. And it went in favour of Johnny's coo, trained veterans. Three more Germans quickly dropped like flaming thunderbolts on the Western Front. The rest were turning to flee, when Johnny, chancing to look upwards, beheld a sight that froze the blood in his veins. There far up in the blue sky was a gigantic enemy formation tearing for Allied territory at top speed.

"Ye gods!" groaned Johnny. "Let's hope Ian's holding the fort—otherwise they'll get across and spot our concentration of troops."

The German 'planes have broken through the first line! Will Ian be able to stop them from getting through? Air thrills galore when the Red Devils go all out to smash the spy flier.

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THE SOCCER TALE OF THE CENTURY. FEATURING A WIZARD WITH BOTH FEET! Meet Sammy Gantry, of Branston Rovers, Below.



THE FOOTBALL CARNERA

THE BOY WHO
JOINED A FOOTBALL
TEAM TO FIND A CROOK.

Read of the Strange Quest of Billy Sanders in these Gripping Chapters
by JOHN HUNTER.

SEVENTEEEN-STONE of bone and muscle, a kick like a cannon-shot, and the speed of an express! That was Sammy Gantry, who was to become known to thousands of fans as the Football Carnera.

A story of strange and evil mystery brought Sammy and his orphan chum, Billy Sanders, to the ranks of Branston Rovers. For Billy sought one man among the Rovers—a man who held the key to the greatest mystery of modern times.

And this was the manner of it. On a night of dark and sinister deeds Billy returned to his uncle's house to find that his uncle, Tom Sanders, one of the greatest gem-setters in England, had disappeared. And a quarter-of-a-million pounds' worth of emeralds, belonging to the Rajah of Kilshahnistan, that the jeweller had had stored in his vaults, were also missing.

The finger of suspicion pointed to Uncle Tom Sanders. Billy knew better, however, for he had found on his uncle's desk a strange note in his uncle's handwriting.

"Billy, for you alone. Branston Rovers. Somebody there. Find him."

Billy's suspicions fell on the outside-left, Steel. Ere he could confirm them, however, the footballer was kidnapped by a mysterious, black-cowled man.

And unexpectedly a new menace threatened. The loss of his emeralds had hurt the Rajah's pride. He decided to be revenged and he could only do that by killing Sammy and Billy, who were connected with Tom Sanders.

The two footballers visited London to learn what they could of the Brotherhood of the Black Bear. After looking over newspaper files they strolled into the Temple Gardens.

The Rajah's men came on them there suddenly. Round the throat of each was whipped a silken cord that tightened and blotted out the sunshine. The senseless lads were tossed into a car and it drove off, taking them to the Execution Sword of Kilshahnistan.

The Rajah's Rage.

SAMMY and Billy sat and looked at one another. The throats of both of them ached and were dry. Round their necks was a thin red mark which only the passage of days would eradicate.

They were, they perceived, in a cellar. It was quite a small cellar, and once had been used for the storage of wines, for the old bins still stood around them, empty.

"I don't like this," said Billy softly. "Sammy, I've got an idea that we might never live to get out of here. I don't know who's done it, or why he's done it; but it's dangerous."

Sammy grunted. "If I could get hold of the fellow who put that necktie round my throat I'd knock him for a goal." He fingered his neck tenderly. "Nearly strangled me, he did."

They stayed there a long time. They did not know that that day dipped into night, and that night time gave way to dawn ere they were sent for.

The lads were ultimately brought before the Rajah of Kilshahnistan at about eleven o'clock in the morning. He had been out of his silken bed, bathed in perfumed water and shaved, about an hour before. He was picking over fresh fruits and sweetmeats, and his eyes were heavy and angry. He had, in fact, a liver. Many men had died because the Rajah sometimes had a liver.

He addressed them in that English which has been called Oxford, for the Rajah had been educated at a British university.

"Which of you is Sanders?" he asked.

"I am," replied Billy. "I don't know who you

are, but I think you ought to be warned that the police . . ."

The Rajah's eyes flickered towards Ali Khat. Ali nodded to Mahmet Singh, and that gigantic Chief of Executioners struck Billy across the face with a thin cane.

The cheetah yawned and stretched down by the Nubian's side like some great dog.

Billy stuttered and spluttered. The cane had drawn blood. Sammy strained forward, but four hands held him.

"That was a pretty plucky thing to do, anyhow," cried Billy.

The Rajah's eyes were slumberous with slow fire, when he spoke once more to Billy. "Where is your uncle?" he demanded.

"I don't know," said Billy, bitterly. "Dead perhaps."

The Rajah smiled. "That of course is a downright

Billy stared at him. "I don't understand," he said.

The Rajah smiled. It was a fat smile, creased with evil.

"You're lying again. It is impossible that you should be unaware of the fact that your uncle was he whom they call the Great Bear—the chief of the Order."

The voluptuous easternised room seemed to turn before Billy's eyes on a gigantic axis. He simply stood and gaped.

"How—how do you know?" he gasped.

The Rajah smiled. "One day you shall learn. Meanwhile I'm asking you a plain question. Where is this man?"

"I don't know," said Billy.

Once again the Rajah's eyes flickered; this time towards the giant Nubian. At the signal the huge black jerked loose the chain on his wrist and the cheetah came snarling to its feet.

So cunningly had the beast been trained that, with one slash of its terrible forepaw it could just take the skin off a man's face or tear his features out of all semblance of a face. The instant it was released the great cat leapt straight as an arrow at Billy, its powerful, steel-sheathed paw raised to strike.



CHEATING THE CHEETAH.
—The spotted fury leaped straight at Billy. Suddenly there was a commotion behind the boy, and Sammy charged the cheetah in full flight.

lie. Such a man does not easily die. You probably regard your uncle as a benevolent and rather elderly gentleman. I, who knew him well, know that he was a very bold adventurer, a man ready to take great risks anywhere and everywhere."

Billy let these words soak in. He realised that, like most boys of his age, he was inclined to look on his uncle as a man who might, æons ago, have been a lad like himself. Billy knew his uncle had travelled a lot, and now he guessed that what the Rajah had said was true.

The Rajah's next words startled Billy.

"I am tired of the Brotherhood of the Bear. It has robbed me. It has threatened me. It demands great sums of money from me. I want to know where your uncle is."

But the Rajah had reckoned without Sammy. As the animal launched itself into the air Sammy put all his enormous strength into one mighty heave, that wrenched his hands free of his captors' hold. Swifter than light he jumped—and his shoulder took the cheetah in full flight.

The brute's razor-edged claws sliced within an inch of Billy's nose—then it was scrabbling on the floor, snarling, savage. Ere it could scramble to its feet, however, the Nubian had seized its chain, keeping it in check, while Sammy's four guards once more secured the big footballer.

"Hold it!" snapped the Rajah. Then he spoke Kilshah to Ali Khat.

"You will have these two liars conducted round

the Garden of the Beasts. You will indicate to them what might befall them if their tongues remain twisted into their cheeks. Then you will bring them back to me and the talk will be resumed. Let there be music."

Ali Khat clapped his hands, and the music drifted into the room on silken feet. He gave a curt order and Mahmet Singh and his people dragged the boys backwards. They were not allowed to turn their backs on the Rajah of Kilshahnistan.

Garden of Beasts.

THERE were four hundred acres of parkland round the vast old mansion. These four hundred acres, in the days of the extinct ducal family, had been ringed by ordinary English hedges. Now a mighty wall had been built about them.

The wall was ten feet high. It was watched at all points by men. That eastern seclusion which was a heritage of the Rajah had been imported into Britain.

The boys, walking out down the dropping terraces of lawn and flowerbeds and marble steps, were as remote from help from English sources as they might have been in Kilshahnistan itself. They were conducted to that place which was called the Garden of the Beasts.

In all, it was a hundred acres in extent, and the Rajah's private zoo was somewhat unique.

In his collection were three Bengal tigers. They had been born in Kilshahnistan and in captivity, but they were far from tame. They had been taught to be man-eaters, and each of them was a sleek mass of steel-wire sinew, yellow and black striped death.

They roamed their own enclosure, behind high bars, and Mahmet Singh stopped the boys and indicated them.

He said pleasantly: "If you are thrown in there they will fight over you. I have seen them. It is very entertaining. But come."

There were all manners of beasts, each kind in its own enclosure—cheetahs, jaguars, panthers, buffalo—these latter with a wide tract of land through which a stream ran.

And there was a gorilla. He was in a vast cage-like structure in which two trees grew. The cage had been built round the trees. He saw the boys and he seized the bars of his cage and dragged at them; then stood on his legs and thumped his chest and loosed that cry which, in the African forests, sends even the lion slinking away.

Mahmet Singh observed casually: "We do not feed him too often. It annoys him. I have seen him play with a man as he might play with a toy. He is most unpeaceful. We shall see the snakes."

Both Sammy and Billy, by this time, were thoroughly scared. It is no use trying to deny it. They had looked on the wildest of life. They had seen beasts ready and anxious to rend them. And they knew that at a word from the gross lump of brown fatness lounging in the mansion behind them they would be hurled to the tigers or the gorilla to make sport for his sated eyes.

They came to the place of the snakes. An acre of ground had been cleared flat, save for one large tree. Beneath this tree, quite motionless, stood a gigantic grey shape, which, at a call from Mahmet Singh, lumbered forward.

It was an immense Indian elephant. He ran free in this acre of ground above the pit of the snakes.

Mahmet Singh indicated him. "He is called Shah. He is fairly docile, but when he grows annoyed he would wreck things. If I stuck this knife into him, for instance . . ."

He exhibited a curved Eastern dagger and held it in his hand.

Shah stood over them now, towering, grey and immense, slowly waving his trunk from side to side.

"One tread from his foot, eh?" chuckled Mahmet Singh. "And you would be flattened, my friends. But come."

He strolled past Shah. The great elephant swerved a little to one side. They came to the edge of the place of the snakes.

It has already been described. In various parts of its sanded bottom were little groups of rockery, and in the shadows of these rocks the snakes lay, or sunned themselves as they wished.

How many there were the boys never knew. Mahmet Singh pointed various of them out—the hamadryad, the cobra, the krait . . . all deadly, sinuous, evil.

"I think," said Mahmet Singh softly to Billy, "that you had best talk to my master, eh? The place of the snakes is unhealthy. It is death, sure and certain. . ."

They were turning away when Sammy acted with the sudden precision with which he got goals on a soccer field.

He wrenched his arms free from the hands that held them, hands which had slacked slightly owing to his inertia, and he started in.

Mahmet Singh whirled round with a snarl, his knife raised. Billy was struggling with the men who held him.

One of Sammy's massive fists took Mahmet Singh under the jaw and knocked him back against the low wall above the place of snakes. The man nearly toppled over. He clutched the wall with both hands to save himself, shrieking with terror.

His knife fell and Sammy had it in a trice in his left hand. Another man, coming in with a slim silken cord in his hands, took a blow on the nose that permanently wrecked that organ. And Sammy was bolting.

Billy yelled: "Don't worry about me, Sammy. Get away!"

Of the five men Mahmet Singh had brought with him, two now held Billy, a third, like Mahmet himself, was on the ground, part worn, and the other two were after Sammy.

But Sammy beat them to it. He reached Shah and he jabbed him with the knife. The great elephant loosed a cry, and started forward. Sammy jumped, clutching one of the immense ears as he did so, and pulling himself up.

It was a tremendous effort, and it landed him clean across the shoulders of Shah.

Shah rolled like a liner in a big sea. He trumpeted fiercely and angrily, and he just went on headlong.

He got one of the two men who chased Sammy and he threw him to the ground with a sweep of his trunk that knocked all life from the man, as a giant's bludgeon might have knocked it. Then Shah streaked for the wide, open spaces, with Sammy helplessly aboard him.

He reached the gates of the enclosure. They were, of course, shut, and up to that moment it had not entered the Shah's head to try and open them; but now he had just one idea, and that was to open them without delay.

The front of an elephant's head consists mainly of bone, and that bone will turn aside a high-speed nickel-headed bullet. The Shah tested the bone out against the gate.

He hit the gate like an express locomotive gone mad. Sammy, clinging on for dear life, the knife long since dropped, and both hands necessary to retain his seat, jolted up in the air and came down with a bang on the crinkly fat neck of the Shah.

The gate wilted, caved slightly. The Shah trum-

ped, pulled himself together, drew back and let it have another one.

That second blow gave the gate the k.o. It split in halves and the Shah was through!

But he did not go for the wilds of the English countryside! He saw the erstwhile ducal mansion, and now the Rajah's palace, ahead of him, and he seemed to think it was fit for elephant heroes to live in.

He went straight for the palace. He chose not the ways of paths and steps. He went across flower-

beds and lawns, swinging his trunk wildly, trumpeting like fury. He was, in fact, still in a rage, and an elephant in a rage is non-stop death.

The Rajah of Kilshahnistan had just made up his mind to toss Billy to the snakes and have Sammy's head cut off on the floor of the great ballroom, when Shah presented Sammy in person.

The elephant came through the mighty line of windows all out. The Rajah might be a powerful person in Kilshahnistan, but when he fronted up to the Shah he was just a horribly fat man in fear of his life.

The Nubian tried to run. The cheetah, crouching, snarled and laughed itself forward. The chain dragged the Nubian with it. The cheetah got a grip of the Shah just below the shoulder and hung like a monstrous, vicious cat.

The Shah struck sideways, and the big Nubian, whose massive hands could have killed even Sammy, went writhing floorwards, his spine cracked like a stick.

The cheetah dropped off and the Shah, trumpeting in a perfectly dreadful fashion, snatched it up and threw it against the far wall.

The Shah went through that magnificent room like the head-end of a tornado. He trod the fountain underfoot. He tossed cushions and divans all ways, like leaves in a gale. He killed outright a man who tried to slash at him with a big curved sword. Methodically, he got on with the job of wrecking the place until . . . he found the sweetmeats.

His big trunk dabbed at a golden plate and lifted. It curved mouthwards. The Shah almost literally smacked his mighty lips. He suddenly ceased to be a very annoyed elephant and became a vast, pleased baby.

Sammy's heart stood still. While the Shah was raging round, smashing things, Sammy was perfectly safe; but once the Shah got quietened down and decided to eat sweetmeats, then Sammy's life hung by the proverbial thread.

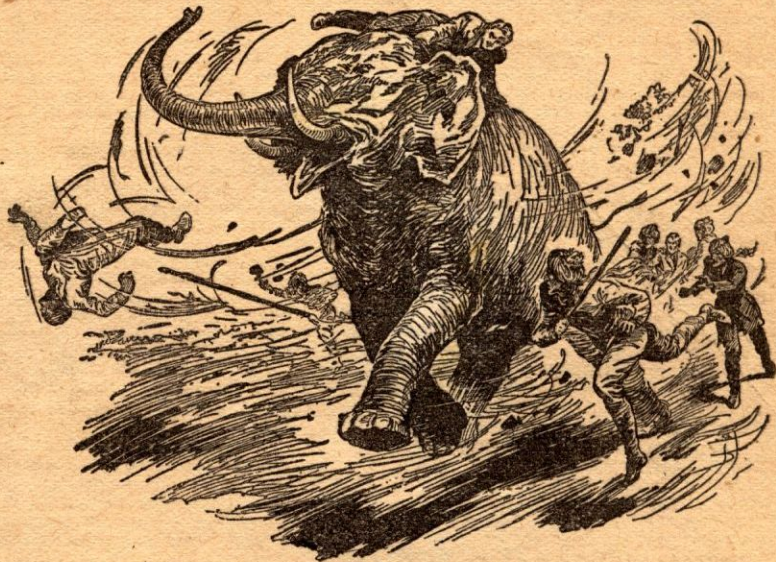
The Rajah saw his chance. He sidled to a door and shrieked orders. Sammy did not know what he said, but he guessed it was most unpleasant. The

palace, of course, was stirring, men were running. Some carried guns, others lances. The lances were a mistake, for in Sammy they had a resourceful person to deal with.

Sammy's capture—the Rajah had ordered him to be taken alive—and the death of the Shah were absolute certainties as those men entered, but for one thing.

The supply of sweetmeats was exhausted!

A man was taking careful aim with an elephant gun, when the Shah, impatiently searching for



A THREE-TON TORNADO.—Sammy scrambled on to the maddened elephant's back, as the brute charged. With a flick of its trunk, it swept one of the Indians out of its way.

sweetmeats, tossed a heavy cushion sideways and hit the man in the face. He went over as he pulled the trigger.

The great gun boomed and startled the Shah out of his life. He lumbered wallwards. Sammy saw a lance poised. He stooped, sliding down the massive grey side, clinging to one large ear, and he got a mighty hand round the lance shaft and jerked it from the brown fingers that held it.

Sammy now had a lance and he dug it into the Shah. He did not dig it viciously, for he had taken a great liking to his mountainous ally. He just dug it hard enough to remind the Shah that there was a war on, and that he, the Shah, was ninety per cent of the war in question.

The Shah trumpeted. He just loosed one shrill sound and he waded in once more. He wiped two riflemen off the floor and then bolted for the windows. Doing this, he passed the Rajah, once again terrified and flattened against the wall.

Sammy dropped the lance and did his famous sliding act down the Shah's side, with one ear as mooring place, and he snatched at the Rajah's robes. His massive fingers held. The Shah carried on. Sammy struggled upwards, exerting all his great strength for the effort.

By the time the Shah was outside and charging down the terraces, the Rajah was up alongside Sammy, struggling ineffectually, nearly insane with

fright. The Shah went straight on. He crossed lawns and flower-beds and everything else with delightful impartiality. He came to the eastern gates of the outer wall. They were made of wood.

The wall watchers saw him and raised shrill screams. Then the Shah's cast iron frontispiece hit the gates and the ways of the world were free to him.

Out he went, trumpeted madly, but now there was a joyous sort of lilt in his trumpeting. He was beginning to enjoy himself.

He went on steadily, crossing three fields and flattening sections of three hedges. Nobody tried to chase him, for chasing the Shah was curiously perilous. Besides, like all elephants, he could really move, once he made up his mind to do a bit of sprinting.

He would probably have ended up on the coast, for he didn't seem at all tired, but that he got thirsty and reached a stream. Standing knee deep in it he swallowed enough of it to cover the rainfall for the next week, and then playfully squirted the rest all over himself and his riders, who instantly fell off.

There on the bank they talked, while the Shah, enjoying the water, took no notice of them.

The Rajah stuttered: "For this you shall pay. As for your friend . . ."

Sammy smiled. The Rajah perceived a deep and awful menace in the smile.

"My friend goes free now," he said. He added, as the Rajah tried to splutter more threats: "If he doesn't, I'll hold your head under that water till you're nearly drowned. Then I'll pull you out and ask you again; and if you refuse, your head goes under once more. And so on . . ."

The Rajah's brows knit; then cleared slightly. "You are a man of honour," he suggested.

"I try to be," said Sammy.

"Right. Then we bargain. Your friend against my life and your silence. That is it, eh? I let him go, and you say nothing. It might be . . . er . . . diplomatic."

Sammy dared not argue. Minutes were flying. Billy might be dead by now, for all he knew. He nodded. They left the Shah where he was, and they walked until they came to a small village, where the Rajah's appearance excited some slight comment.

The Rajah got through on the telephone. Billy was to be brought to the instrument. He came, and Sammy's heart beat high as he heard his voice. Sammy told him exactly where to meet him, and the Rajah gave Ali Khat the necessary instructions.

The Rajah stayed with Sammy until Billy went in sight; then he said viciously: "This, I shall never forget. The elephant will be dead ere morning, and you shall not long survive him."

Sammy's smile was very wide and large. "I'll bet he's not," he said. "The Shah belongs to me from now on. He's a good chap and I like him."

The Rajah trudged off, shorn of glory and power for the time being, and the boys went in search of the Shah. They found him under a tree surveying the world with gentle melancholy. It took a number of men to argue him into a vast barn, and there he was left until Sammy could find proper accommodation for him at an open air zoo; which, let it be recorded, he duly did.

But the vengeance of the Rajah brooded in waiting.

Hooded Death.

SAMMY felt forced to keep his word regarding the Rajah of Kilshahnistan, though it might have been better for a lot of people if he had broken it.

Both Billy and Sammy were very careful for the next week, and if the Rajah's emissaries were on their trail they certainly made no effort to strike.

* As for the Brotherhood of the Bear, it appeared to have lapsed into a coma. Life flowed on smoothly to the next match which was against Manchester City.

The Manchester team was a curious one. It had run into the Cup Final the previous year, playing fast and clever football, but at Wembley it had failed completely against Everton, and had shown but little sign of the consistent brilliance which had carried it to the ultimate stage of the great national competition.

Indeed, it was a team which, one week might beat anybody and another might lose to anybody. On this particular Saturday it was top of its form.

The Rovers visited the Manchester ground and found it full, for lots of people in Britain wanted to see Sammy shoot goals, even though those goals were scored against their own side.

On this particular day, the Mancunians were slightly disappointed in one sense, but tremendously bucked in another.

The game was fought hard from start to finish, with the outside left of Manchester on top of his form, which meant that he was good enough for England.

Manchester scored first, a clinking goal that was the result of a fine piece of work on the left, a striking run through and a snorting shot that went past Billy like a shell.

They held that lead till half-time, and they held Sammy till half-time—as close as in a vice. Try as he would, he could not get going. Passes to him were snapped up. When he secured he was tackled and smothered. By the half-time whistle he was all at sea.

The second half was fought at a very great pace, and the Manchester men clung to their slender lead until about five minutes from the end. It looked as though the home team must take the points, when Varney, at inside right, pulled out the cleverest bit of work of the afternoon for the Rovers.

He drew the defence wingwards, and he slipped Sammy through. It was the only bit of real Sammy the crowd saw that afternoon—the heavy lunge forward, the amazing speed for so big a fellow, and the unstoppable, net wrecking shot that finished it up and took one point for the Rovers.

They went back to Bransford well satisfied with themselves, for the City had beaten some good teams that season, and Billy and Sammy went to their lodgings. It was then late; the town was dark and deserted. In the little sitting-room they rented, they turned on the light and saw a parcel lying on the table.

It was addressed to Billy, and written below the address was: *By hand. From the unknown friend. The things you seek.*

Billy gasped: "It's the emeralds! That fellow who got us out of the burning houseboat! I say! I wonder if he is my uncle. He would want to get back the stones."

Sammy said nothing. He balanced his suitcase in his hand and grunted.

"We'll soon see," said Billy, and, taking out his penknife he severed the cord that bound the parcel and tore back the paper. Inside was a wooden box with a lid on it.

The lid lifted, and as it did so there showed in the light the wicked, hooded head of the cobra who was the bringer of the Rajah of Kilshahnistan's vengeance!

Death by Post! Can Billy and Sammy save themselves from the snake's deadly fangs? Starting developments in next week's thrilling chapters of this grand

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THE FISTICAL JUNIOR'S FEUD! Accused of Purloining the Craven Exam papers, Cheery Dick Bannister Wages a Feud with the Irate Housemaster of St. Giddy's. Fun. Drama. Excitement.

Catty Routed.

JOHNNY GEE, the cheery captain of the Remove at St. Giddy's, awoke with a yawn and sat up in bed. It was morning, and the bright early sunshine was streaming in at the tall windows of the dormitory. Johnny consulted his watch, and he gave vent to an astonished exclamation.

"Great pip! Half-past seven! I say, has anyone heard the rising bell?"

"Begad, no, old chappie!" came from Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith's bed.

"Rumble must have overslept himself this morning!" exclaimed Johnny Gee. "Show a leg, there, you slackers! It's past time to get up!"

One bed in the Remove dormitory remained undisturbed—an empty bed that had not been slept in for two nights. That bed belonged to Dick Bannister. Dick, having "cut loose" at St. Giddy's, after being released from the Punishment Room by members of the Black Hand Brotherhood, was still at large.

Johnny Gee & Co. looked through the dormitory window into the sunny quadrangle and they wondered where Dick was now. They had neither seen nor heard anything of their chum since the exciting incidents of yesterday, when the Black Hand Brother-

hood had come perilously close to discovery by Mr. Cattermole, down in their secret lodge in the school crypt.

Gazing downward from the dormitory window, they saw the tall, spare form of Mr. Cattermole come down the School House steps and stride across to the porter's lodge by the gates.

Mr. Ernest James Cattermole looked more sour-grained and irascible than ever this morning, and things boded ill for Sergeant Rumble. Catty, in fact, had been up with the lark this morning. The recent lively happenings at St. Giddy's were weighing heavily upon him, and he wanted to have matters well in hand by the time Dr. Holroyd returned to the school from a short visit to London.

Not a sound disturbed the morning stillness in Sergeant Rumble's domain, when Catty reached it. The housemaster gave a snort, and rapped loudly on the door.

A sleepy yawn sounded within the little bedroom: The slumberer in the single bed bestirred himself and sat up—and had Mr. Cattermole been looking through the blind, he would have received a decided shock.

A fair, curly head came up from under the bed-clothes and a boyish voice said sleepily: "Yaw-aw-aw!"

Dick Bannister—for it was he who occupied Sergeant Rumble's bed—stared round him in startled wonderment.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Mr. Cattermole was beating a rapid tattoo on the door, and his sharp, acid voice was wafted into the bedroom.

"Rumble! How dare you lie in bed when you should be up, attending to your duties! Arise this instant!"

"Oh, scissors! Catty!" Dick Bannister gasped. "What a silly ass I was to oversleep!"

Dick seemed to be in a cleft stick! He had already spent one night in the school vaults, but last night had turned out wet. So, at about midnight, Dick had nipped over the wall and come back into St. Giddy's. All the doors and windows in School House had been locked—by Catty's order—so the runaway had had to connive a means of obtaining a bed. After due consideration, he had decided to take Sergeant Rumble's.

It was a nice, cosy bed, and as Dick was tired after his many activities, he had slept soundly. Rather too soundly, in fact.

"Hurry up, Rumble!" snorted Mr. Cattermole outside.

"Right-o, sir!" called back Dick Bannister, gruffly, imitating the porter's voice.

He picked up his clothes, but they were still soaking wet from the drenching of the night before. He could not possibly wear them! Neither could he stay in Rumble's lodge. The situation called for some desperate measure, and Dick decided on a daring course.

Sergeant Rumble's uniform was lying on a chair beside the bed. Dick hastily drew on the gold-braided trousers and the heavy boots and put on the long coat with its brass buttons and braided shoulder-straps. The trousers were rather baggy, and he had to hitch them up as high as possible round his midriff.

Then Dick quietly opened a little back window and commenced to squeeze himself through. But his luck was out! Catty had grown impatient of waiting and had decided to find out what was delaying "Rumble." Followed by a large number of boys, he walked round the lodge to look through the back window.

Dick was half-in and half-out when Catty turned the corner. The housemaster halted in astonishment, then he let out an enraged yell.

"Bannister! Stop! Bless my soul, the audacious young rascal! Remington—Slade—Burgess! Stop him! Do not let Bannister escape!"

The prefects thus addressed rushed forward. With a desperate wriggle, however, Dick squeezed through the window, dropped to the ground and bolted. Straight for the gates he raced, but to his dismay saw Cadman & Co. running across to cut him off. Dick turned swiftly and made a bee-line for the House-keeper's block.

A desperate resolve had entered his head. Dick saw the village grocer's box-tricycle drawn up by the Matron's door. Mr. Snooks' assistant was on his early-morning rounds, and had called at St. Giddy's for orders.

Dick rushed up to the tricycle, leaped into the saddle and, with the braided topper pushed well down over his ears, he started to pedal off at a furious rate.

"Stop!" screamed Mr. Cattermole, dashing up. "Bannister—benighted youth! Surrender to me this instant, or—Oh, good heavens!—Yah!"

Catty leaped out of the way just in time! The trike whizzed by him, and Dick Bannister sent up a merry roar of defiance.

"Ha, ha, ha! Try me and stop one! So-long, chaps!"

Waving a fond farewell to his chortling chums, Dick bent to the pedals and fairly made that tricycle fly, scattering all his would-be captors before him. He turned as he sped through the gateway, and shouted back in stentorian tones:

"If you want to know where Rumble is, look in the stables! Ta-ta!"

Gritting his teeth with rage, Mr. Cattermole led the way across to the stables. Johnny Gee & Co. and a whole host of hilarious juniors followed.

Mr. Cattermole unfastened the bolt that secured the stable door, and opened it. Immediately, a yell of laughter arose from the boys of St. Giddy's.

There was Sergeant Rumble cosily ensconced in a brand new pile of straw in the centre stall, slumbering peacefully and quite undisturbed by the racket outside. Mr. Cattermole, however, strode into the stall and, reaching down, he seized Rumble by the shoulder and shook him violently.

"Groooogh! Yaw-aw! Whassermarrer?" grunted the porter.

"Rumble! Fool! Dolt!" hooted Mr. Cattermole. "You permit yourself to be victimised by a mere boy, and sleep here calmly as though nothing had happened!"

Sergeant Rumble sat up and pushing back his nightcap, scratched his head.

"My heve!" he exclaimed. "'Ow on earth—Ho! Hi remember, sir! That young rip Bannister—I 'eard someone prowl' round my lodge at midnight, so hup Hi gets and 'as a look, and there was Master Bannister standin' in the parlour as large as life. Afore I could do anything, 'e come for me an' shoved a blanket over me 'ead."

Mr. Cattermole snorted, but Rumble went on.

"Master Bannister, 'e gets me all tied up like, an then 'e puts-slippers on me feet, an' marches me hout! 'Sorry, Rumble,' 'e says, 'but Hi must 'ave a bed to sleep in to-night, and Hi've decided to be a cuckoo in yore nest. You can go hinter the stables—it's safer there for you than for me! So 'ere I lands, sir."

"Bah!" snorted Mr. Cattermole angrily. "It is eight o'clock, Rumble, and you should be about your duties!"

"My heve!" said Sergeant Rumble. "Hover-slept, 'ave I? That's because Hi 'ad no alarm clock, Orl right—Hi'll be right along!"

Sergeant Rumble arose from the straw in his night-shirt, and in the absence of any other clothing, he had perforce to walk from the stables to his own little lodge in that scanty attire.

The juniors were still laughing over Dick's merry escapade when they assembled in the common-room to collect their letters. There was one for Cadman, addressed to him from Merivale, in a strange hand. Wonderingly, he opened it, and the grin vanished from his face. A look of blank dismay—and something akin to alarm—took its place.

The envelope contained a sheet of paper that bore the large imprint of a black hand in the centre—a hand with its forefinger pointed directly at Cadman as he looked at it. And underneath was scrawled these words:

Beware! Ere sunset you shall meet your fate!

—The Brotherhood of the Black Hand!

Cadman looked quickly across at Cecil Davenport. All the colour had drained from the Remove dandy's face, leaving it as white as chalk. There, before him on a letter he had just opened, was the accusing black hand with its cryptic message underneath:

This is the last warning! To-day we strike! Beware!

—The Brotherhood of the Black Hand!

They heard a low gasp behind them and turning, they saw Herbert Remington staring at a sheet of paper that he had just taken from the envelope.

There, too, was the tell-tale black hand, the insignia and warning of the secret society that had already taken a drastic vengeance on Remington for his misdeeds.

Remington shot a swift glance at Davenport.

"You—you've got one, as well!" he exclaimed. Prefect and senior though he was, Remington's

reaction to this strange communication was one of uneasy dread and foreboding.

"What utter rot, Remington!" snapped Davenport. "It's only a joke, of course!"

As Cadman, Davenport, and Remington left the hall, looking greatly disturbed, the eyes of Johnny Gee & Co. followed after them. And sundry meaning nods were passed between the heroes of the Remove.

Monkey Tricks.

AS soon as the bell rang and school dismissed, Johnny Gee & Co. sallied forth from St. Giddy's and made their way along the Merivale Lane.

A pair of sharp, eagle eyes saw them leave the school. Mr. Cattermole was watching from his study window, and he lost no time in hurrying downstairs. He strode through the gates into the Merivale Lane; he saw the five schoolboy figures turn into the wood and disappear.

Catty's eyes gleamed. Johnny Gee & Co. undoubtedly were going to meet Dick Bannister.

The Joyous Juniors, meanwhile, had taken a devious route through the wood, and after traversing many paths and by-paths, they reached a point close to the Merivale Lane, having come back on their tracks.

There was a movement in the trees, and Dick Bannister appeared to view. He gave his chums a cheery grin.

"Hallo, chaps! How's things at St. Giddy's? Has anything come out—I mean, about the secret society?"

"No, not yet," replied Johnny Gee. "But Catty's not the only one who's on to us. Someone broke into our study while we were in the crypt yesterday, and pinched that exam paper—the one Davenport had."

Dick Bannister gave a whistle.

"Whew! If that paper is destroyed, bang go my chances of getting off," he exclaimed. "Do you think Davenport got it back?"

"I don't know," replied the Remove skipper, knitting his brows. "Cadman is in this, as well. He and Davenport were caught scrapping in our room, and I've been watching points. It's my belief, Cadman sneaked the paper from Davenport, in which case the rotter is probably hanging on to it. Anyway, Remington, Davenport, and Cadman have been sent warnings, and this evening the Black Hand strikes! The Brotherhood meets this evening at seven—in the old School House refectory! The room's been locked up since last winter, and the key's hidden. No one would dream of looking there."

"Quite so, Johnny," agreed Dick. "But if the key's hidden, how on earth are we to get in?"
 "Down the chimney!" whispered Johnny Gee. "I've got it all planned out. The tyle will be the trapdoor leading to the roof from the upper corridor,

From there the Brothers will reach the lodge room via the chimney."

Suddenly, a low murmur of warning came from Snowball. The little nigger's keen ears had detected a stealthy movement in the trees.

"Golly, golly! Dere am someone snoopin' around here, boys!"

Johnny Gee & Co. looked round in alarm. They then espied a form approaching through the wood. It was the form of Mr. Ernest James Cattermole. But they did not see the other prowler, hiding in the thick undergrowth near by. Frank Girling, of Earlswood, lay very low in his place of concealment, scarcely daring to breathe. He was one of the scouts sent out by the redoubtable Tommy Rhodes, the leader of the Earlswood juniors, to follow the movements of the St. Giddy's boys.

Johnny Gee & Co. promptly scuttled away into the trees, and this afforded the hidden Earlswood junior an opportunity to make a bolt for it.

All of a sudden, Dick Bannister found the tangled undergrowth give way beneath him, and ere he could save himself, he went plunging into a deep gully, the top of which had been obscured by the brambles. A gasp of pain escaped his lips as he tried to rise. His ankle had received a nasty twist, and every movement was an agony.

He heard Mr. Cattermole coming, and lay very still. When the Housemaster had passed by, Dick climbed slowly and painfully to the top of the gully



THE APE'S JAPE.—"Get out, you brute! Shoo! Shoo!" cried Mr. Cattermole. But Pimpo resented being disturbed and lashed out with the birch. Catty jumped back with a yell, lost his balance and fell into a pool of ink.

and looked about him. Sounds of cautious movements caused Dick to turn. Johnny Gee & Co. came creeping out of their hiding places.

"Better run for it, Dick, as fast as you can!" whispered Johnny Gee. "Catty's—"

"I—I can't!" gasped Dick. "Ow! My foot—I've sprained it!"

His chums gazed at him in dismay.

"Catty will be through here in a few minutes!" Johnny Gee exclaimed. "We must side-track him

somehow, and give you a chance to take it easy, Dick. Hallo! Who's this coming?"

Two strange figures had appeared round the bend in the Merivale Lane. One was a fat, swarthy Italian of the itinerant showman class, carrying a hand organ. His companion was a large ape, dressed in rather comical human clothes, and wheeling along a bicycle beside its master.

"Begad!" gasped Lord Reggie Pelham-Smith. "I say, it's that jolly old street show we saw in Merivale yesterday, old chappies! The Italian Johnny plays the organ, while the merry old ape rides the bike, doin' tricks an' all that."

Johnny Gee's eyes gleamed.

"My hat!" he murmured. "If only we could bribe that Italian to let us use his ape to trick old Cattermole—to make him think it's Dick. Come on, let's try!"

Johnny Gee and Lord Reggie climbed down the bank and walked out into the road, accosting the Italian showman as he came along. Certain coin of the realm passed between Johnny Gee and the Italian, and that seemed to have quite a magical effect. The son of sunny Italy led his ape into the trees at the side of the road, and a swift transformation was effected.

"You can follow later, and round up the monkey, signor!" grinned Johnny Gee. "Now, just get your monkey going on the bike?"

"Si—si!" chuckled the Italian, and he led the ape down the bank and back into the road, where the bicycle lay. The grinning ape mounted, and started to ride off along the lane, in the direction of St. Giddy's, and at the same time, Dick Bannister, hidden amongst the trees, gave a shout:

"Cheerio, signor! Thanks for the loan of the bike! See you later!"

Ting-a-ling! Pimpo the ape was ringing the bicycle bell merrily as he rode off. The head and shoulders of Mr. Cattermole bobbed up immediately behind the bushes, and the Housemaster's eyes almost started from his head when he saw a form in Etons riding along the lane on a bicycle.

"Stop, Bannister! Do you hear me?" he hooted. "Come back at once!"

But the cyclist rode onward without the slightest regard for Mr. Cattermole's ravings.

Catty gave an almost unbelieving gasp when he saw the cyclist swoop up to the gates of St. Giddy's and drive straight in! The housemaster ran onward into the quadrangle, where a great deal of excitement was taking place.

The spectacle of an ape dressed as a junior of St. Giddy's and riding a bicycle round the school quadrangle was certainly something out of the ordinary!

Mr. Cattermole drew to a breathless halt, and glared across the quadrangle. The strain of his exertions was beginning to tell. Then he spotted Cadman & Co., and he bawled out to them:

"Cadman! Snell! Lucas! Seize that rascal on the bicycle, and bring him to my study at once!"

"Oh, crumbs! Certainly, sir!" gasped Cadman, and he hurried away with his cronies.

On the football field Pimpo was giving a display of trick cycling that fairly convulsed his schoolboy audience. There were loud cries of dissent when Cadman pushed his way roughly through the crowd and, grasping Pimpo, yanked that astonished creature off the saddle.

"Can't help it—Cattermole wants him in his study!" chuckled Cadman. "Kim on, you brute!"

Pimpo suffered himself to be led away by Cadman, and a chortling crowd followed the ape indoors. Cadman took Pimpo upstairs to Mr. Cattermole's

study, and left him ensconced in the Housemaster's favourite armchair.

Mr. Cattermole was not long in making his appearance. He flung open the door of his study, and strode within. Then he stood stock still, and gazed before him like a man in a dream.

There, seated at his desk, was Pimpo the ape. He had been turning over Mr. Cattermole's books and papers, and the room was in a ghastly mess. Pimpo, too, had picked up a bottle of ink, withdrawn the cork, only to throw away the bottle in disgust.

Pimpo picked up the birch lying by Mr. Cattermole's desk and swished it, about with ape-like abandon, when the housemaster looked in.

"Gug-g-g-good heavens!" cried Mr. Cattermole, in horror. "Get out of that chair, you brute—Shoo! Shoo! Oh, my goodness—Yarooooooh!"

Swipe! Pimpo resented being disturbed, and he started to lash out with the birch as Mr. Cattermole made a rush at him. Catty jumped back with a yell, lost his balance and sat down with a terrific squelch in the puddle of ink.

Leaving Mr. Cattermole, Pimpo took a leap for the window, raised the sash and away he went, climbing down the ivy with all the agility of his species.

Meanwhile, down at the pantry window, nefarious work was in progress.

Fatty Slocum with Leslie Meeke as a confederate was raiding the pantry of pies, cakes, tarts, and other "cookies."

Meeke had already taken a fine assortment of cakes and pies from Fatty, when he saw a huge ape bearing down on him. Leslie Meeke gave one wild look of terror at Pimpo, and fled precipitately.

Fatty Slocum, his plump body wedged in the pantry window did not hear Meeke go. He continued his fell work.

"Here you are, Meeke!" he said. "Careful how you take this rabbit-pie—it's a beauty!"

A pair of hands eagerly seized the rabbit-pie. Pimpo squatted down, and started to demolish pies and tarts with great gusto.

"Grough!" said Fatty, withdrawing himself at last and taking a deep breath. "There's a big plum pudding on a lower shelf, but I can't reach it. Why, you—you greedy rotter, Meeke! What do you mean by wolfing our tuck?"

Fatty gave an indignant roar as, looking downward, he saw a schoolboy figure busy making short work of the "swag." He let go of the window-sill, dropped to the ground, and made a blind rush at his supposed confederate, plump fists lashing out ferociously.

"Yah! Greedy pig! Leggo that pie—Oh! Ooooo-er! Gug-g-good lor!"

Fatty almost jumped out of his skin when he saw that ape. Pimpo closed with Fatty, jabbering angrily, and the pair struggled together, the ape's powerful arms locked round Slocum's plump body.

Fatty's yells quickly attracted a crowd and roars of laughter arose. In the midst of the excitement, a large, swarthy Italian came rushing excitedly through the gates.

"Ma monk!" wailed the Italian, dismally. "*Sapristi!* You fighta ma monk and makea heem all excite!"

Johnny Gee & Co. yelled. They dragged Fatty away from Pimpo, who on seeing his master made a bolt for his bicycle and rode off at top speed.

As for Mr. Cattermole, he was almost frantic when he realised how artfully Dick Bannister had tricked him again. St. Giddy's laughed loud and long over the affair and agreed that Dick Bannister was giving the irascible housemaster a run for his money.

Dick Bannister still at large! Yet how can the Brotherhood of the Black Hand bowl out Davenport? Look out for startling developments in next week's ripping yarn entitled "Busting up the Black Hand."

Triumphant Return of
the Tin-Can Trojans.

EERIE COMPLETE
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Challenge of Captain Quirke.



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IT'S A WOW
OF A YARN
CHAPS!

A Challenge.

"SHOOT, Argus!"

The football arena known as the Crater, the home of the famous Welham Wanderers, was packed, and the enthusiastic crowds were cheering their favourites. Once again the Miracle Boys were "doing their stuff."

Argus, the lightning-flash centre-forward, had just accepted the leather from Ajax, the skipper and centre-half. With rare skill he leapt goalwards, leaving two of the defenders standing, and shot.

"Goooooall! Hurrah!"

A long, lifting roar broke from the crowd as the ball rattled the rigging at the back of the goal, having beaten the goalie all ends up. The Trojans were winning two goals to nil.

"No wonder they call 'em the Miracle Boys!" exclaimed an enthusiastic supporter in the stand, as he glanced at his neighbour—a tall, swarthy man. "That Argus is a regular knock-out, isn't he?"

"He's good," admitted the other, almost grudgingly.

The enthusiast, scenting a supporter of Portstown United, the visitors, said no more. And the swarthy man was glad. He was gazing at Argus, as the teams lined up, with a peculiarly rapt attention.

"Impossible!" he muttered, incredulously.

The game restarted, and soon the packed terraces were again yelling encouragement. For the Trojans were veritable wizards of football. With the mighty Ajax controlling the game as a general controls his army, the Trojans played football with machine-like

precision. Repeatedly, they swept up the field, their formation miraculous, defeating the Portstown defence by sheer football skill.

But the swarthy stranger gave no attention to the game in general. He was concentrating upon Argus.

"May I borrow your binoculars?" asked the stranger abruptly.

He almost snatched the glasses from his neighbour's hand, and he levelled them at Argus, focusing them on the lad's cheery, honest face.

"Great Heaven!" ejaculated the stranger.

His dark, bronzed complexion had changed; he looked a sickly green, consternation and fear filled his cold, evil eyes. Abruptly, he thrust the glasses back into their owner's hand, and rose to his feet. By the time he had made his exit from the stand, however, he had managed to regain some of his control.

"Who are these infernal boys, anyway?" he demanded, addressing a refined, elderly gentleman who was standing near by. "What's the idea of calling them by these ridiculous names?"

He pointed to the programme, where the Miracle Boys' names were printed—Eos, the goalkeeper; Boreas and Euras, the backs; Nike and Dike, the outside-left and the outside-right; Perseus, Argus, Ajax, and the others. Certainly, such names were uncommon.

"If you must know, sir, the 'infernal boys' are my wards," said the elderly gentleman, with a smile. "I adopted them all as babies, named them after

mythical Greek gods, and brought them up. They are a credit to me, eh?"

The stranger controlled himself with difficulty.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said hastily. "You are Lord Welham, then, the guardian of these brilliantly clever boys?"

The peer smiled at the other's change of tone and altered viewpoint.

"Yes, I am Lord Welham," he admitted. "I have been criticised for allowing my wards to adopt football as a profession; but they are enthusiastic and eager—"

"I wonder if they'll be enthusiastic enough to accept a novel challenge," interrupted the stranger. "Perhaps I should issue the challenge to you, sir? I am Captain Graham Quirke, and you may have heard of me in connection with the 'Conjuring Cannibals'?"

"Indeed, no," said Lord Welham, in wonder.

"Such is fame!" sighed Captain Quirke, with a wry grimace. "I rather prided myself that my publicity efforts in Welham Town had given everybody a full knowledge of my presence. Let me explain, sir. The 'Conjuring Cannibals' are twelve Australian Aborigines, selected by myself from one of the wildest tribes in the heart of the Queensland Hinterland. I taught them conjuring and acrobatics, and I am presenting them in England at all the biggest theatres."

"I see," nodded Lord Welham, without much interest. "Certainly, an unusual entertainment, Captain Quirke. I take it that the 'cannibal' element is purely imaginary?"

"On the contrary, every one of my troupe is a real, honest-to-goodness cannibal," said Captain Quirke. "There is no fake about it, Lord Welham. And my cannibals are very brilliant exponents of soccer, the only game I persevered with. I think a big game against your boys at this arena, say on Wednesday afternoon, will prove a great attraction. The entire proceeds, of course, to go to charity."

"And you to reap the full benefit of all the publicity, eh?" smiled Lord Welham. He was thoughtful for some moments, as he continued to watch the game. "If you will come to me to-morrow, I will let you know my decision, and we can go into details."

Captain Quirke left the arena satisfied that the "novelty game" was as good as fixed. And there was an evil, sinister light in his shifty eyes.

* * * * *

"WELL, brothers, what about it?" grinned Ajax in the dressing-room, after the match. "Our guardian has left it to us. Shall we play the giddy cannibals, or not?"

"What the Chief says is good enough for us," replied Eos. "The match is bound to attract a big crowd, and the Welham Hospital can do with the funds. It's a go!"

"Rather!" cut in Perseus happily. "I say, what a lark! Playing a team of giddy man-eating niggers!"

The Mysterious Corrobboree.

IN the private sitting-room at his hotel, Captain Graham Quirke paced up and down in an ugly, dangerous mood. There was a murderous glint in his eyes, and he muttered savagely to himself.

"Ten thousand curses!" he gritted. "Without question, it's the boy. Bill to the life—the same chin, the same brow, the same eyes! That kid, Argus, is Bill's missing son."

It was a staggering discovery—for the "Bill" the man referred to was none other than Sir William Quirke, the Captain's brother. Sir William was one of the most famous of explorers, and had received his knighthood for his brilliant work at the Poles.

Now he lay on his deathbed, this courageous adventurer.

And Captain Graham Quirke was his next of kin—his heir. The wily captain, as crooked an adventurer as ever lived, was touring his "Cannibals" as a means of earning a livelihood until he should inherit the noble estates and fortune of his brother.

Like a bombshell he had recognised Argus, the supposed orphan whom Lord Welham had adopted fifteen years ago. At that time Sir William Quirke then a poor man, had been leading a polar expedition, and during his prolonged absence his wife had died. When he returned he learned that his baby had been adopted by some friends in the North. Another tragedy had followed, for these friends had been killed in an accident, and the baby passed on to others. The returned explorer had never traced his child.

But Captain Quirke was certain that Argus was the missing boy—and, incidentally, the rightful heir to Sir William's fortune.

"By heaven!" muttered Quirke. "I'll never let that infernal boy rob me of the inheritance. There is a way. . . . Yes, it can be done easily, and my savage blacks can take the blame."

It was not until after the evening performance at the local theatre when he had taken the "Conjuring" Cannibals' home, that Captain Quirke carried out the first part of his plan. It was impossible to secure hotel accommodation or apartments for his savage troupe, and he therefore took them about the country in motor caravans, making camp outside each town he visited.

To-night he granted them a much longed-for privilege. Mahroo Jim, the Chief of the tribe, was the head man of the troupe, and the only cannibal, in fact, who understood English. Mahroo was an enormous gorilla-like black, over six feet in height, with a hideous animal face. A gleaming ring dangled from his flattened nose, and other rings depended from the lobes of his ears.

"Mahroo, to-night you have big treat," said Captain Quirke, in a whisper, as he stood with the chief in the camp. "Much darkness; much woods. You hold corrobboree and dance much."

"Boss no joke?" asked Mahroo Jim, his wicked eyes glinting with sudden fire. "We make corrobboree in woods, yes? Me want corrobboree other times. Boss say no."

"But this time boss say yes," said the Captain.

Those few words were enough. Mahroo Jim went to his savage tribesmen and talked to them in their own chattering, clicking tongue. They could not guess that their "boss" was planning to use them as a means to a dastardly end.

* * * * *

THE Miracle Boys were in high good humour as they sat down to a late supper in the great dining hall of Welham Priors that night. It had been a good day, and they were all amused by the prospect of the forthcoming match against the "Cannibal Footballers."

"It ought to be a great game, Chief," said Ajax smilingly. "It's a good idea of Captain Quirke's—especially as the hospital will get a good bit out of it. Let's hope these cannibals don't run amok during the game and make a meal out of one of us."

"I dare say they are as harmless as babies," grinned Argus. "Captain Quirke tamed them himself—"

He broke off, for at that moment Ajax leapt to his feet with a startled cry. He was pointing to a great mirror which hung at the opposite end of the oak-panelled room. It was in deep shadow, but reflected in the glass was a window which was hidden from the supper-party by an angle of the wall. At the window,

clearly reflected in the mirror, was a flat, hideous, repulsive face.

"Great Scott! What is it?" asked Eos, spinning round.

He and Argus were just in time to see the face as it vanished. Others, too, had leapt from the table, and they went rushing up some broad stairs to the window in the angle. Ajax was the first to fling the casement wide, in time to see a great, half-naked figure leap to the ground and bolt like a hare into the undergrowth of the garden.

None of the "Orphans," however, saw the figure which had first leapt for cover—the figure of Captain Quirke. Knowing the boys to be at supper, he had brought Mahroo Jim to the window, and had there pointed out Argus. Mahroo had nodded his great head in understanding—although, as yet, he

flung his arms about. Then, in the aboriginals' own language, he wrought the mischief.

"The boy, Argus—Argus!" he chanted. "Within the living body of Argus dwells the evil spirit of Raatua!"

"Argus—Argus!" chanted the blacks. "Kill—kill—kill!"

Captain Quirke inflamed them more and more, dinning into their simple, savage minds, that the evil spirit of Raatua must be destroyed. Well he knew that Raatua was the feared "hoodoo" of this tribe.

"GREAT Scott!" whispered Eos, in an awed voice.

"Where are we?" asked Argus. "In a quiet dell of Derbyshire, or in the wilds of Borneo?"



THE BOOT BLADE.—The cannibal chief appeared to miskick the ball, and his foot shot straight for Argus' heart. And from the toe protruded a deadly knife. With a yell Ajax leaped at the native's leg.

did not know why that particular boy had been shown to him.

But later, he learned . . .

In the heart of the dense woods, which lay at the back of Welham Priors estate, a strange and terrifying orgy took place. A lonelier spot could not be imagined. It was in a clearing, surrounded by dense trees, and at the bottom of a grassy hollow. There was no road or footpath for a mile in any direction—no house, no cottage.

A bonfire was burning ruddily, and in the flickering, eerie light, a dozen giant "black fellows" were dancing and working themselves up into a state of savage frenzy which was terrifying to behold. Captain Quirke, watching, gloated with satisfaction.

At last, when the incantations were at their height, Quirke leapt amongst the giant blacks. For some moments he acted like a madman, raving and wildly

These savages are real wild men—the genuine article!"

"They're Captain Quirke's Cannibal Conjurers," said Ajax, his voice troubled. "Not a doubt of it, brothers. Why did one of them come and stare in our window?"

The three inseparable chums of the "Orphans"—Ajax, Argus, and Eos—had not gone to sleep with the rest, when they had all retired for the night. It had been Ajax's idea to follow the trail left in the long autumn grass. All the boys were expert in scoutcraft, and that trail had been easy.

They were now crouching at the edge of the clearing, watching the weird, fantastic capers of the frenzied savages. They had arrived—as luck would

have it—just too late to see Captain Quirke go in among the aboriginals; so it seemed to them the blacks were holding this war-dance on their own.

"Argus—Argus!" came the chanted drone. "Kill—kill! Kill Raatua!"

The boys looked at one another strangely.

"Did you hear that?" whispered Ajax. "They're chanting your name, Argus! What does it mean?"

"Let's get away from here," muttered Eos. "It's—it's horrible! Hadn't we better call off that game? I feel scared."

But Ajax's jaw jutted obstinately.

"No!" he said grimly. "We'll carry on—but we'll keep our weather eyes open!"

The Kick of Death!

"COME ON, the Orphans—show the blackies what you're made of!"

"Don't be scared by their size!"

These, and similar good-natured shouts, greeted the Miracle Boys as they ran on to the field for the big charity match. The grandstand and the terraces were packed as though for a Cup-tie.

"Come on, the Giants!"

The "Team of Cannibals" was greeted half derisively. Yet they looked formidable enough. Great, lumbering giants of men, big-limbed, big-boned, with massive shoulders and unusually large feet.

"Hurrah! They're off!"

The whistle had shrilled, and it became evident, in the first few minutes, that the "cannibals" were quite skilful in the arts of football. There was no wild rushing, no scrambling or bunching. The blacks kept their positions well, passing the leather with accuracy and terrific force.

Almost at the start, the aboriginal left back, sent the ball swinging right down the field well over the heads of the Trojans, to the very foot of the black outside left. The wing man, a towering giant, went loping up the touchline with the leather in good control. He centred, but over-kicked, and Boreas got his head to it and cleared skilfully.

"These blamed niggers ought to kick well, seein' the size of their feet!" yelled one of the spectators. "Crikey! Look at that centre-half! I'll bet he's wearin' number twenties!"

A yell of laughter went up; but the statement was hardly an exaggeration. For Mahroo Jim, who was the pivot in question, possessed the most enormous boots ever seen on a football field.

"Look! There goes Argus!" went up a roar.

The crowd was treated to an exhibition of delightful football. The leather had been passed to Ajax, who, holding it long enough to draw the opposing centre-half, sent the ball forward to Argus. The centre-forward streaked goalwards in his own inimitable style. He left the two backs staring helplessly.

Argus shot, and the crowd roared. It was a brilliant low kick, and the ball whizzed past the cannibal goalie and rammed its way right home into the rear of the net.

"Goal!"

"That's the way to show these blackies, boys!"

That goal had a strange effect—which made the crooked Captain Quirke hug himself with evil glee. It was Argus who had scored the goal—and, without a doubt, the Aboriginals believed that the evil spirit within Argus had been at work.

There was a difference in the game from the restart. The cannibals made no attempt to play accurately.

Many of them deliberately left their positions in order to charge at the nimble Argus—apparently with the intention of hindering his play. But Argus was in great form to-day, and easily avoided these attacks.

As a result of the altered tactics of the visitors, the Orphans sliced through their defence with machine-like precision. They ran up the field, controlling the ball in their own inimitable way. From the wing came the leather, Argus was on it with a jump, and he took the shot—low, wicked, a winner all the way.

"Goal!"

When the game restarted, the tension was electric. Even the spectators began to sense it. The Aboriginals, ugly enough at the best of times, looked uglier now.

Off went the players; now the Aboriginals bunched. Some of them encircled Argus as he attempted to get into position to receive the ball from one of the other Trojans. Ajax turned sick with fear. He saw Mahroo Jim kick. The leather had come, but the Cannibal Chief appeared to miskick, and his great foot, shooting out, went straight for Argus' heart.

Protruding from the toe of his enormous boot there was a long, gleaming knife-blade!

The ever watchful Ajax was ready—but only in the nick of time. He did not charge in the usual way. He leapt into the air like a spring-heeled Jack, hurtling clean over the heads of three of his fellow players.

His two feet smashed against Mahroo Jim's leg as the knife was on the point of fulfilling its deadly mission. Ajax and the savage went rolling over and over.

"It's murder!" gasped Ajax, as he sprang up. "Look at this brute's boot!"

Then his jaw dropped. The knife was no longer visible! Ajax blinked. Had his fevered imagination got the better of him?

"Never mind the game!" Ajax shouted. "This way, brothers!"

They obeyed on the instant. And to the amazement of referee, linesmen, and spectators, the Miracle Boys went charging off the field of play—straight towards the grandstand. They leapt upon Captain Quirke before he could realise their intentions.

"You fiend!" panted Ajax. "It was you who tried to kill Argus! It was you who planned it all!"

And the crook crumpled up. In his panic he babbled out a few words—and Lord Welham was within hearing. In that mad moment, Captain Quirke had made a reference to his "nephew!"

Immediately afterwards he tried to bluff. But then Mahroo Jim was brought in, babbling of Raatua. His boots were wrenched off, and the cunning device of the hidden spring knife was disclosed.

"Boss, him tell me!" said Mahroo Jim.

Much as Captain Quirke denied the charge, the truth of the black's simple statement was apparent.

Thus, the game was never finished. Lord Welham made instant inquiries, and he got in touch with Sir William Quirke's lawyers, who established the fact, beyond all question, that Argus was the son of the knight. On his deathbed, Sir William begged Lord Welham to continue his guardianship.

So the Trojans did not lose one of their number, after all.

"The Four Wheel Bullet" smashes its way into the Mag. next week. Don't miss this cyclonic yarn of intrigue and mystery on the motor-racing track.