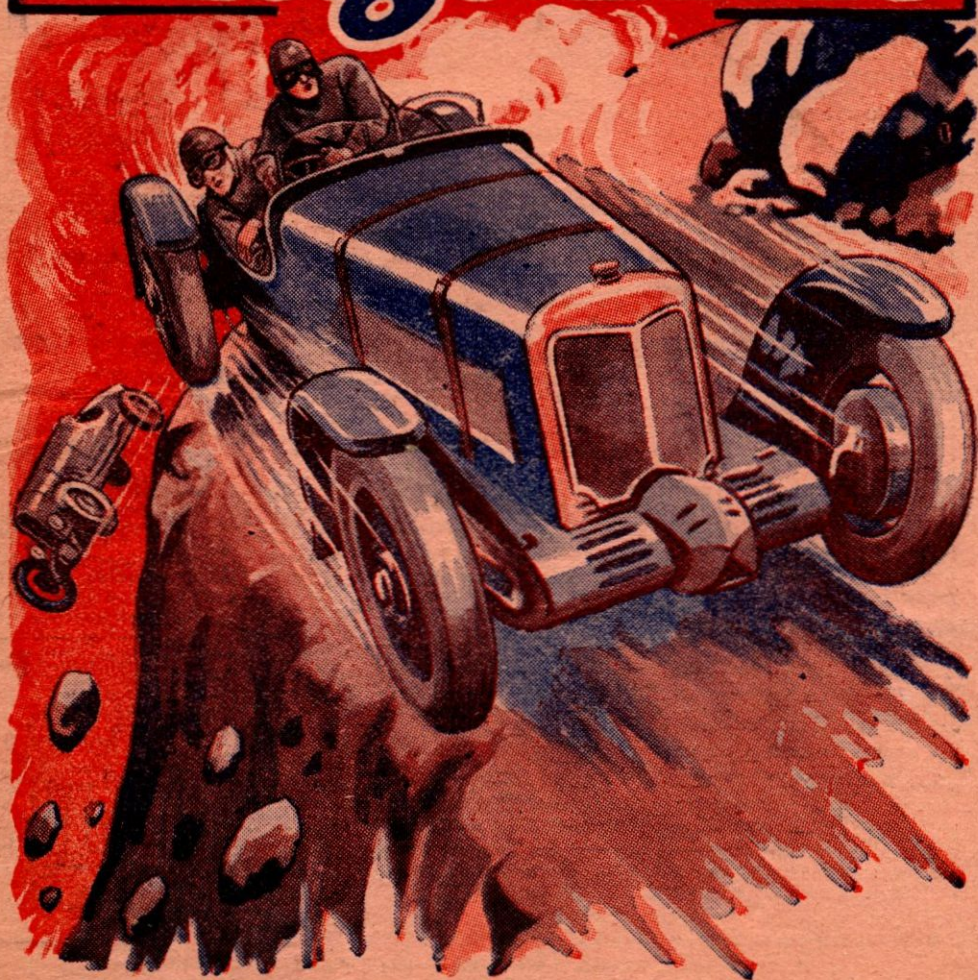


THE FOUR-WHEELED BULLET! APPEARS WITHIN

# Boys' 2D Magazine

EVERY SATURDAY



HOW TO MAKE AN ELECTRIC ENGINE FOR A FEW PENCE: INSIDE

VOL. XXIII—No. 607—October 21, 1933

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# OUR HANDYMAN'S PRIZE PAGE



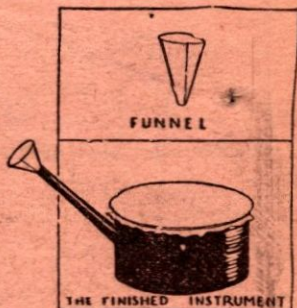
A Gold-nibbed Fountain Pen is awarded to the sender of every article printed on this page. If you have made a working model or gadget of interest to us all, describe it in as few words as possible and send to the Editor. Rough diagrams to explain it should also be sent.

## PICTURES FROM YOUR VOICE—

Plenty of fun can be obtained from this ingenious instrument. You will require a small tin saucepan with an open handle, a piece of a toy balloon large enough to stretch tightly over the top of the saucepan, and a circular piece of paper, six or seven inches in diameter, from which to make a funnel.

Bore a hole in the saucepan where the handle joins it, so that the handle is really a tube into the pan. Stretch the balloon rubber over the saucepan and secure it in the same way that covers are tied on jam pots. Make a funnel from the circular piece of paper and insert it in the end of the saucepan handle. A thin layer of fine sand sprinkled on the rubber and your model is complete.

To make a picture from your voice, sing a note steadily and continuously into the funnel. You will find that the sand will take on a beautiful design, which will vary according to the pitch of the note you sing.



## A WORKING MODEL TANK—

A cotton reel, a stout elastic band, a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slice of candle and two pieces of wood about a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch square by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ins. and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch respectively are all the parts necessary for this model.

Round both rims of the cotton reel, make  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cuts, as in the figure 1. About  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from one end of the longer piece of wood make a shallow groove that will take the width of your elastic band. Make a similar cut in the centre of the second piece of wood (see figure 3).

Remove the wick from the candle and enlarge the hole slightly. Double the elastic and thread it through the cotton reel, but before pulling it tight hook the two loops on the smaller piece of wood. Draw the other two tight through the reel and pass them through the hole in the candle. Now slip the loops over the longer piece of wood, so that they fit into the groove and grip firmly (see figure 2).

To work the model, give the long piece of wood about fifty turns and put it on the table. If it has been made properly it will climb over such things as corks, matchboxes, books, etc.

## A SIMPLE BAROMETER.—

To make this reliable barometer, a large glass jam-jar and a globular bottle, with

a fairly long neck, are all that you need. Place the bottle upside down in the jar so that the bulging sides rest on the collar of the jar. The end of the bottle neck must be at least three inches from the bottom of the jar. Inside the jar there must be some water. The exact amount will vary with the weather, but it should be arranged so that on a wet, stormy day the water just reaches the neck of the bottle.

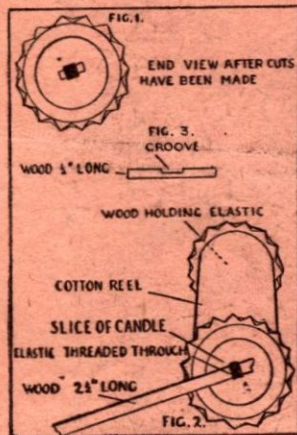
The readings of your barometer will be as follows:

- 1.—No water in the neck—Stormy and wet.
- 2.—A little water in the neck—Change.
- 3.—More water in the neck—Fine and dry.
- 4.—Water tending to rise—Weather improving.
- 5.—Water tending to fall—Unsettled.

Gold-nibbed Fountain Pens have been awarded to:

J. Skeffington, Market Square, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, Ireland;  
 Frank Hill, 217, Fawcett Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants;  
 F. W. Shears, 38, Southern Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex;

for the articles printed above.



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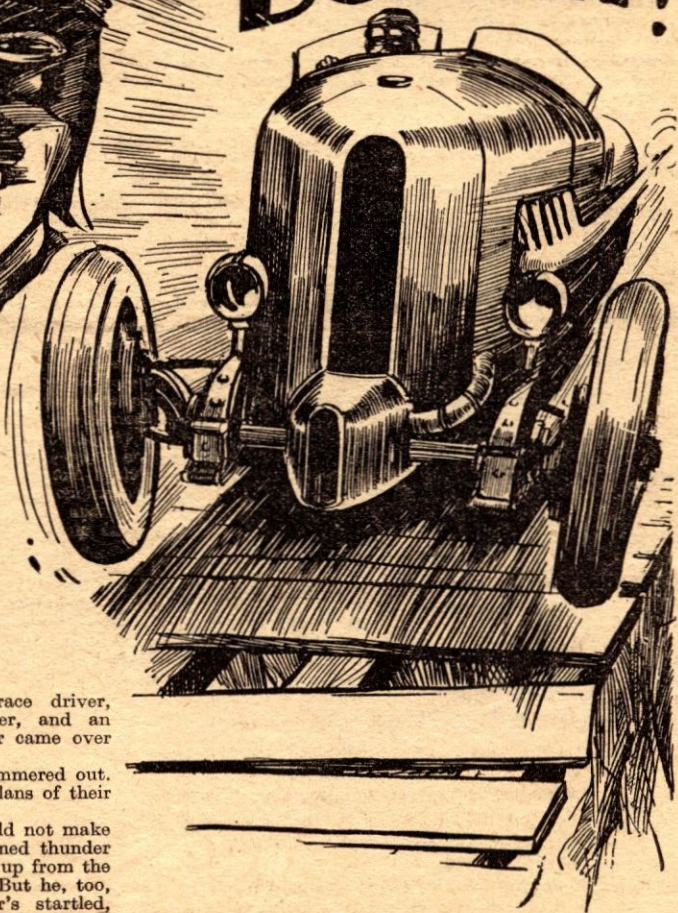




**Laughing, Reckless,  
Devil-May-Care  
The DEATH DICER  
in the  
BLACK MASK  
comes to Thrill and  
Fascinate YOU!**

**WHIZZ! BRRRR! THAT'S BLACK BULLET—  
BUSTING RECORDS AND BAD 'UNS WATCH  
ITS SMOKE.**

# The **FOUR 'WHEELED BULLET!**



**JACK STORMER** seemed a Funk. **THE DEATH DICER** was the Most Daring Demon who Ever Drove a Race Car. Yet **BOTH WERE THE SAME FELLOW!** Read How in the Chapters of Accidents Below!

### Speed Crash.

**L**AP STORMER, crack race driver, looked over his shoulder, and an expression almost of fear came over his hard, speed-lined face.

"Here they come," he hammered out. "They say I've stolen the plans of their new engine, eh?"

Jack Stormer, his son, could not make out the words for the sustained thunder of racing cars that was flung up from the concrete oval racing track. But he, too, turned round at his father's startled, fearful look.

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



His dad had only recently given up his job as race driver and consulting engineer to the powerful Steiger Motor Corporation. And he had started out on his own.

Jack knew there had been some trouble. There had been an interview with Adolf Steiger, the hard, white-faced, calculating head of the powerful firm. Adolf Steiger had accused the veteran race driver of stealing the firm's secrets.

Jack saw three low, black cars coming up the track in bottom gear. They were the Steiger racing team, and at their wheels were Mario Lanz, the Italian ace, and his two team mates. Were they on the track only for a practice spin?

There was an uncanny tension about Lap Stormer as he turned, hunched over his great, notched steering-wheel and let out his engine. The result was electrifying. The big black car went away with a rush and a roar.

"They'll try to stop me getting back to the pit safely," he gritted.

The speed frightened young Jack Stormer. The car his dad was driving was an experimental one, highly supercharged. Too much power for the cylinder heads . . . they might blow out.

There was another car which Lap Stormer was keeping to spring on his rivals in the great race. It contained the perfection of all that was designed and built into this experimental machine. And he called it *Black Bullet*.

Other cars were on the track, practising for the race. Some of them were going all out. But suddenly it seemed as if only one car were actually moving.

Lap Stormer suddenly exposed the great black lean, vicious-looking experiment he was driving. His face harsh and set with fear, he showed the Steiger machines his heels.

"Dad, this car's dangerous!" Jack, white of face, gasped the words, and fear suddenly tore a great hole in his heart.

Jack Stormer was a stalwart young fellow of eighteen or so, with very steady eyes and a strong chin. He had become his dad's mechanic and helper since Lap Stormer had left the powerful Steiger people. But he was not really used to speed.

They were on the lip of the banking. The outer wheels spun on the very edge. The lean-faced veteran swung the wheel, and the world seemed to turn upside-down as the black racer tore out of a fierce skid, swooping down arrow-swift, mighty to the straight.

"Listen, lad; I want you with me, in readiness," Lap Stormer cried through the thunder of loosed engines. "You'll carry on, if anything happens. You're not frightened of speed, lad?"

"No fear!" Jack cried quickly. "Let 'er rip!"

Yet his throat seemed to close, and all his stomach seemed to fall away as the big black car sliced along the straight, to crash through the open gates to the mountain climb.

The concrete track was built at the base of a mighty mountain peak in the Derbyshire district. It was a new and unique course. The Mountain Spiral track it was called. The spectators could see from below all the racing of the perilous mountain ledges, and thus the thrills of track and mountain racing were combined.

Straking upwards with a mighty roar, Lap Stormer looked back. He saw the three Steiger cars flashing up behind. Mario Lanz, the Italian ace, was the flying figure in the leading car. He was a demon racer, without nerves—or conscience. It was rumoured the Steiger team had killed more than one fine driver on the track who had threatened their prestige.

Dimly Jack sensed that his dad was all out to race the Steigers over the mountain passes and to swoop down to the track and the safety of his own pit.

They stormed a great mountain shoulder and shot round it, the huge car juddering with a numbing, wild vibration. Jack ached to the jolts. The scream of the stressed engine and the whine of the super-charger were lost in the hollow, icy-cold whirl of air that seemed to be trying to suck him down into the depths of the abyss. A great, fearful panic tore white-hot through him.

And then they came round to the downward switchback, and the world seemed to the lad one mighty drop. His dad changed to top with never a clash of gears, and the juddering, leaping car seemed to leap anew. Skidded—leapt on. Lap Stormer was fighting with the great notched steering-wheel.

Suddenly there was the fierce scream of brakes, and mighty invisible hands seemed to seize the car, deaden her and slew her right round as she shot at a solid wall of rock. They were taking a sharp corner. But Jack Stormer was seized with a deadly sickness as the car lurched round. For a moment he completely lost his head.

"Dad, stop—stop!" he shouted. "We're going over!"

And then he did the maddest thing. With frantic hands he tried to reach over and seize the wheel, the brake lever, to stop the howling machine. In his frenzy of fear the lad was strong. They came round that corner in a fierce, slashing skid—slashed broadside—slid down the mountain track with tyres screeching. Horrors! They were going to plunge over the brink into the abyss two thousand feet below!

Too late, young Jack Stormer realised his mad folly—realised that he ought to have trusted his dad to see him through . . .

With all his strength the veteran ace dragged on the wheel. He pulled the plunging monster from the very lip of the abyss, and felt the car canting, slithering. It shot for the rocky inside of the ledge.

One glimpse young Jack Stormer had of the sunlit sky. Then his ears were filled with an appalling, rending roar. There was a tremendous shock. Without the slightest warning a terrific blow descended on the back of his skull. A blaze of stars flashed before his eyes. Then utter blackness and he was falling, falling into a sea of night.

Ten thousand pairs of eyes below saw the two figures, doll-like and inhuman, flying through the air away from the car. One figure they saw hurtle over the edge into the abyss. And then the monstrous black car followed.

A full minute later there was a faint crash, and from the car far below a great sheet of roaring flame leapt upwards.

Jack Stormer came to his senses in pain. By some miracle he had escaped death. Then a flood of cold, stark horror invaded his whole being, as he realised what he had done. He crawled to the edge of the ledge where he saw the fierce tyre skids of the doomed car, and with anguished eyes peered down at the burning wreck far beneath.

"Dad, I've killed you!" he groaned. "Just because I couldn't stand speed!"

A sob broke loose in his throat. In those moments of dire understanding of the tragedy he had brought about, the lad seemed to age perceptibly. What should he do now—what could he do?

A prey to the blackest despair and terror, he looked around him wildly—and then with a real start, he saw something white pinned to the front of his oil-blackened overalls.

A piece of paper!



His brain numbed with horror, he vacantly detached it and saw that there was a scrawled line of writing. At first his wits refused to take in the words, but suddenly he became keenly alert—tensed to a sense of mad mystery.

The message was from his father. Lap Stormer must have written it and pinned it on before the crash.

*Jack—You've got to speed from now on. The Steiger people say I've stolen the plans of their hush-hush car. Get the real "Black Bullet" and win the five-hundred-mile race. It's in the old deserted house. at Marple.*

*Good-bye and good luck to you. I'm crashing at Tor corner. Clear my name—and speed.*

Your DAD.

Young Jack Stormer made a clutch at his reeling senses. This was Tor corner. What did it all mean?

### Crooks of the Track.

JACK STORMER was not long in discovering what lay behind the tragedy. And it only added fuel to his anger and his determination to find out the true facts of the case. For when a passing car conveyed him down to the track, young Jack Stormer was confronted in his own pit by the great Adolf Steiger, head of the powerful Steiger Motor Corporation. And behind him loomed Mario Lanz, his swarthy Italian driver, with mocking smiling face, and his two team mates, De Valda and Cazotti, both coal-eyed, burly Italian drivers.

Adolf Steiger himself was white-faced, expressionless, very immaculately dressed, with little black pearl studs in his shirt and jewelled hands. A cruel, cold face, lit by stone-grey eyes, and a thin-lipped mouth.

"Mr. Stormer," he said. "We tried to stop your father taking out that experimental car, for it contained our new hush-hush engine. We have a signed confession from your father that he built it from our plans. He had no right to use it and claim the engine as his own. No wonder he chose—well, the way out he did!"

Jack Stormer turned and raked him with his flashing eyes.

"I don't believe you," he said in a concentrated, choked tone. "My dad worked for years on his engine. He wouldn't hand it over to you. That's why you plotted . . ." He almost choked, but forced speech again. "If it's true—let me see dad's confession."

A sheaf of papers were handed to him. They were blue prints—plans, he saw, of a car's engine. And written on the plans themselves in his dad's writing, signed by him, were a few words that seemed

to strike up and hit Jack Stormer like hammer blows between the eyes.

*I built my car from these plans. But it is not my engine. These plans are the property of the Steiger Motor Corporation.*

*I am sorry to say this makes me out a thief.*

LEOPOLD (LAP) STORMER.

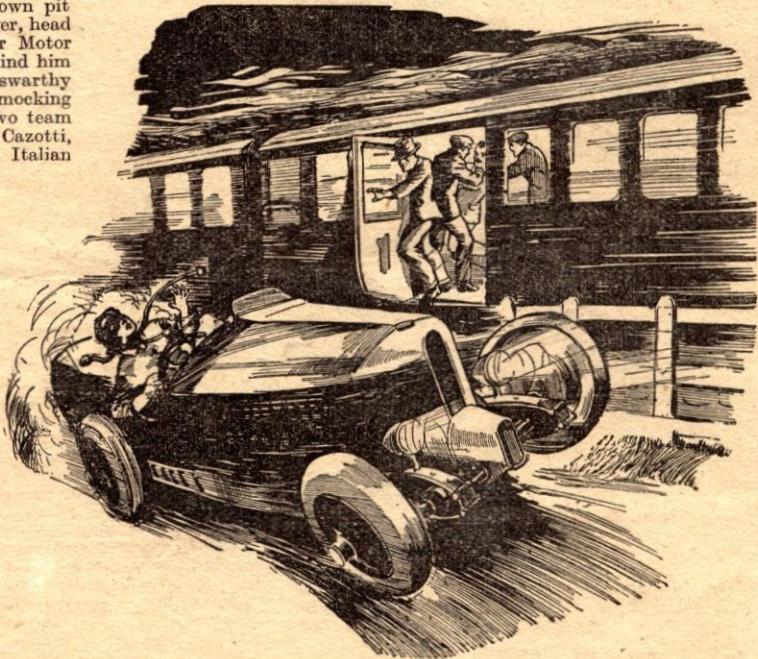
Jack Stormer froze. His face, hard set and lean, was a picture of tragedy. His dad a thief! No—no—never!

Then suddenly, illumination came to him, and he almost allowed a contemptuous smile to creep to his lips as he met Adolf Steiger's glinting grey eyes.

Of course! Those were the plans of his dad's experimental car, the one he had driven to a crash. The lad had known all along that it was a dangerous machine, the supercharged power was too much for her engine.

But his dad had improved on the supercharger and the engine. And the finished product was embodied in his real hush-hush car—the *Black Bullet*, hidden away in a secret garage in their house at Marple.

No doubt they had heard rumours of Lap Stormer's



**CHOKED OFF.**—The carriage door suddenly whipped open and one of the crooks appeared. He whirled something round his head, let it go, and the three ropes of a bolas wrapped round Jack Stormer's throat.

wonderful engine. And somehow they had trapped him—forced him to sign this confession. But it was written on the dud plans!

And now, it was up to him to bring forth the real *Black Bullet*, to win the great five-hundred-mile race in a week's time, and so clear his dad's name. He was very white-faced and quiet as he handed back the dud plans.

"It seems you win," he jerked out. "The car's



smashed up—and dad's out of the race, anyhow. It meant a lot to him," he faltered.

That was true! The famous Mannister Motor Company were looking for a new engine to put into their well-known sports model car, and they had practically promised Lap Stormer a contract, on profit-sharing basis, if he won the gruelling five-hundred-mile race.

"Yes," said Adolf Steiger softly, malignantly; "your dad's out of the race. And it is certain you will not drive, Mr. Stormer—even if you have another car. Thousands saw your state of funk, saw you wrestling with your father in the car."

Jack Stormer started, trembled. It was extremely unlikely that he would be allowed to drive the *Black Bullet*. He would be warned off the track as a dangerous driver.

"And besides," went on Steiger softly, still with his cruel smile. "Here come the police to interview you. It is quite likely, I think, that there will be a charge of manslaughter."

The young racer turned like a haired animal. Yes; it was quite true. Across the oval of the track an inspector and two policemen were coming towards him. He must escape, he told himself desperately.

That which followed was entirely without preliminary or warning.

With a harsh, spanging thunder, a long, lean racing car came shooting along the track, pulling up with jarring brakes. A shrill, boyish voice cried out excitedly:

"Come on, Jack; they're after you!"

In a swift, startled glance the young racing motorist recognised the freckled, boyish-looking driver in overalls and cap back to front. It was Joe, his dad's young mechanic. The freckled kid must have waited and bided his time to snatch him out of a nasty hole.

Instantly the young racing motorist's body springs were released. "Good boy, Joe!" he cried as he sprang.

He knocked two of the Italian drivers flying as they sprang at him, and scrambling over the side he wriggled himself down into the seat beside the freckled mechanic.

There was a clash of gears through the deep blurb of the engine, a revving roar, and the racing monster was loosed.

### The Masked Mystery Man.

"WE'VE got to get to Marple, Joe," Jack Stormer cried, tingling with a reckless excitement. "To get dad's racing wonder, the *Black Bullet*. Shoot off the track, through those gates."

"Okay by me," yelped the freckled mechanic, excitedly as he made for the great iron gates.

"The car's in a secret garage under the house," the young race driver jerked out. "It's a wonder, Joe—*Black Bullet*! But I shall be barred from driving it in the big race," he ended with something like a groan. "They'll say I'm a dangerous driver—and I'm an outlaw, wanted by the police."

To his astonishment the freckled lad thrust something into his hand. It was a black domino mask.

"Wear that," he said hurriedly. "There's a racer called the Masked Death Dicer going to drive in the big five-hundred-mile race. He qualified by doing the course afore you came down to join your dad last week, Master Jack. He drove a black car round the track, and his name's entered for the race just as the Masked Death Dicer. No one knows who he is."

"Gosh!" gasped Jack. "And d'you know?"

"He was your dad," said the freckled lad, grimly.

"He knew some trouble was coming off. So he qualified for you to race as the Death Dicer."

"You're right," marvelled Jack, as he slipped the black mask on. "Righto," he said grimly. "They'll see some of the Death Dicer's dust. Gimme that wheel, Joe. I'm going to drive. Hallo—"

He broke off. From out of the gates behind came a shaking, black Steiger racer. And at the wheel was a masked driver! He wore neither helmet nor cap, but a jet black mask that seemed to split his face in two.

"Two Masked Death Dicers!" gasped Jack. "What does it all mean?"

The black car was coming down the long road after them with a roar like thunder. "Gosh! I believe he's making for Marple to get *Black Bullet*!" gasped Jack.

It was a race! It was not going to let that impostor in the black mask get to the house first. With an ear-shattering roar he sent the car travelling down the long road.

And after her like an avenging monster tore the black Steiger, with the masked man crouched in the shaking cockpit, peering out.

In one long howling rush the car, with Jack Stormer at the wheel ate up that stretch, flame spurting from the fat copper exhaust pipe, accompanied by a sound as of a quick-firing battery in action.

"Sit tight!" shouted Jack, as he sighted a turn in the road.

The bend of the road came at them like a solid wall. Joe clung to the side of the car, fighting for breath.

At the very last moment Jack Stormer trod down savagely on the footbrake. Round swished the monster, sending up dust and stones from spinning wheels in a terrifying slide. But changing down, and stamping on the gas, the lad who couldn't speed sent the car round the bend in a wild rushing skid, fighting the wheel.

Some skid! Two hundred yards she swerved in a cloud of dust, before the driver had her tearing on, steady, with an ear-splitting howl.

Yet Joe looking back saw that the masked man in the howling, shaking black car was gaining. The young mechanic patted Jack's back sharply.

It meant that the car behind was thundering a challenge pretty near. Jack Stormer crouched at the wheel, and all but pushed the accelerator pedal through the floorboard in his effort to open the throttle wider.

At the head of a cloud of dust the young racer tore at a country bridge, an ancient, stone bridge, not meant for motor traffic.

There was a mad whine, a noise like massed machine-guns, and the black car with the Masked Death Dicer at the wheel was alongside.

Jack Stormer saw the danger, yet he kept his foot down. "If he wants to crash—" he gritted.

The masked driver's nerve gave way, however. He eased foot on the accelerator, and reaching out, notched his handbrake a little. Jack hit the bridge with a fendish roar and lifted over it in a mad leap . . . crashing down . . . and roaring on.

Hurting up the rises—crashing down the hills—Jack Stormer could not shake off the shadow that seemed to be dogging him like a loping wolf. They were on the top of a hill, and down below standing isolated in its own grounds was the house they had once occupied at Marple.

Whroom! Like a javelin hurled from the hand of a giant the black car slashed alongside Jack's racer. Bonnet to bonnet the rivals tore down the hill, hubcaps almost touching.

The slightest contact on the narrow road would spell disaster. Jack's heart was in his mouth. And



then it came—a grating, clashing contact of the wheels.

Jack shouted. His car was in a fierce, unmanageable skid. But worse befell the black racer, for one of its tyres burst with a report like a bomb. And in a harsh roaring dive it leapt for a low hedge at the side of the road.

As they tore on Jack saw the monster overturn with wheels spinning, and a figure flung amongst some ungathered hay in the field. Who was the mysterious masked driver, who had lost the race ?

### Lap Stormer's Secret.

"WE'VE no time to worry about him now," jerked Jack Stormer, as he roared through the iron gates and up the drive to the house.

"Come on, Joe."

They forced their way into the empty, deserted house through a window, and were mounting the uncarpeted stairs when both stopped, listening to a roaring in the sky.

An aeroplane ! They looked out of a window, and saw that the plane had landed in a field adjacent, and was running to a stop.

As three men climbed out, Jack Stormer drew in his breath sharply. "Do you recognise the pilot ?" he said, gripping the young mechanic's arm. "It's Mario Lanz, the Italian race driver—and, yes, with him are Adolf Steiger himself and Cazotti, his other driver !"

But who was the Masked Death Dicer, the mystery driver ? That was what Jack Stormer wanted to know. And his question was soon answered in a startling fashion. For as they crouched on the upper landing of the dark, deserted house, the front door was opened, and the three villains came in, bearing between them the hurt driver of the Steiger car.

Peering down, Jack gave a gasp and all his blood seemed to run cold.

For the mask had slipped from the other driver's face, and even in the dim twilight the lad instantly recognised him. "Dad !" he gasped.

It was Lap Stormer ! His dad alive after all, and he had pursued him to the house ! Why ? He was quickly enlightened !

"We got on to your wheeze, Lap Stormer," Adolf Steiger grated. "You'd fixed up a net beneath that cliff side, and you managed to drop that son of yours nicely with a braking skid, and then jump over the mountain track into the net. You had another car hidden in a cave so that you could disappear, eh ? And then you heard us saying that we knew where *Black Bullet* was hidden, that we'd wormed it out of your son, Jack. We wanted you to overhear that, you fool !"

Lap Stormer only groaned. He realised that the game was going against him.

"You didn't realise that the other masked driver was your son though, eh ?" hissed Adolf Steiger. "We've got you both trapped in this house."

"Has he ?" grated the youngster up on the landing. His blood was afire, as quickly he opened a door and pushed Joe, his mechanic into a bare room. From a nail hanging on the wall he took down a queer-looking key, and fitted it into a slot in the floor.

Before Joe's wide-opened eyes an astonishing thing happened in that room. For the floor slowly opened inwards, revealing a great cavity, and far below was a great cellar in the very bowels of the house.



MO'-BIKE MADNESS.—Wildly Jack Stormer drove down the stairs, smashing through the crooks, who scattered, screaming with terror.

"Dad's secret garage for *Black Bullet*, his hush-hush car," whispered Jack Stormer. "Look !"

He turned on a switch in the room, and electric lights illumined the car, *Black Bullet*. A streamlined beauty ; something gaunt about her, telling of unleashed power. And beside that monster of the speed track stood a motor-bike.

"I want you to go down the rope ladder, and fix that bike on to the ladder so that I can draw it up," whispered Jack. "I'm going to stop these brutes torturing dad."

"Righto," whispered the freckled lad, and in a moment more he was descending the long rope ladder that hung from under the trap-door into the cellar. Leaving him to it Jack Stormer, trembling with excitement, slipped to the door to listen.

"You've got me, Adolf Steiger," came his father's weak tones. "I signed that bogus confession because—well, you know the reason. You put a traitor in the workshops who was spying on me. When I realised it, I tried to get away with my plans in a car. I was wounded in the dark by your motor-cyclists. And I climbed up the crazy, deserted chimney shaft near the race track to hide the plans there. But one of your gang, Garroti, got on to me, and followed me. We fought there in the dark on the swaying chimney top—ugh ! And—well, I killed Garroti, sent him tumbling."

He shuddered at the memory of that terrible night. Jack listened, his eyes startled in his brown face.



"I dragged his body some distance away," went on Lap Stormer. "Then got in my car and left him—and left the plans. You found the dead body, but you never imagined the real plans were hidden in the chimney. They're there still."

Adolf Steiger laughed loudly as the halting confession came to an end.

"So the real plans are in the chimney shaft," he exclaimed exultantly. "You've played a desperate game of wits with us, Lap Stormer—and you've lost. Now to find the car in this house, and get the plans."

Another groan from Lap Stormer that tore at his son's heart.

"You thought you'd killed a man, eh, Lap? and it's unnerved you!" went on Adolf Steiger, jeeringly. "Well, let me tell you Garroti was only unconscious, and he's in the Letchworth Hospital now. You lost your nerve, and you wanted your son to carry on and win the race. But lemme tell you Jack Stormer is a dud racer—he doesn't like speed."

"Oh, don't I, you thug?" gritted Jack up on the landing; "I'll show you!"

He darted into the room again, tingling for action. By this time Joe, the freckled mechanic, had affixed the motor-cycle below securely to the long rope ladder, and had climbed up again. Between them the two lads hauled up the motor-cycle.

"You go down and start *Black Bullet* up," Jack whispered. "I'm going to stop these villains."

From below came a poignant scream that tore at Jack Stormer's nerves.

"I'll tell you. Don't hurt Jack—don't make him pay. In the room upstairs . . . there's a key. Fit it into the slot. You'll find the car beneath."

"The kid's upstairs!" came Steiger's voice, harshly. "Quick! Get him! He's at the car!"

Jack got astride the motor-cycle on the landing, as they came rushing up the stairs. He gritted his teeth, his heart aflame. With a single stabbing gesture he trod on the kick-starter.

*Whoom!* The engine barked with a startling burst of power. Utterly reckless, Jack let in the clutch and swooped along the landing at the motor conspirators.

Down the flight of stairs he swept like a thunder-bolt, and the three villains scattered with piercing shrieks of terror. With a crash Jack landed in the hallway and skidded wildly. He saw his dad lying on the ground under the stairway as the machine skated round, and for a moment of wild horror he thought he was going to crash into him.

Frantically he wrenched at the handlebars and shot for the open doorway. It was the only way to avoid a disastrous crash. As he swooped out into the keen evening air, he flung off the buckled bike and saw it go shooting into the bushes of the undergrowth.

Springing up tigerishly, the lad turned and made for the door, his fists balled, his eyes wild.

*Bang!* The door was slammed in his face.

### A Race Against Time.

THE young race driver stopped dead in his tracks. His face harsh and set. By that simple expedient the scoundrels had cut him off. They'd get Joe his pal, down there in the garage—sure to. He had made a false move in swooping down on that motor-bike. Now he had got to think—and think quickly.

This house was miles from any other habitation, and an assault upon it, alone and unaided, would obviously be futile. But then the youngster thought of the car in which he had arrived here. He would soon reach some place from which he could telephone the police. He hated leaving his dad—and Joe. But he knew it was the best move.

His heart kicking in his throat, the lad pounded

for the car. He climbed into the racer, and stubbed the self-starter. The car was, luckily, equipped for road tests at night, and had headlamps besides a starter. It was lucky, for the night was drawing on fast and getting darker.

The lad got into gear, and loosed the thundering, shaking machine in a rush down the road. By sheerest chance, he happened to look round. And a cry was torn from his raw throat at what he saw.

The three villains were rushing out on to the field, carrying Lap Stormer between them. Their intention was plain—to escape before the arrival of the police, and moreover to get to that chimney shaft. They were taking Lap Stormer as compulsory guide.

"By thunder, I've got to stop them!" the lad gritted. And seeing an open gateway to the field, he flung the roaring car through it, and hurtled across the grass towards the aeroplane.

But the aeroplane's propeller was already wind-milling. In an effort to stop it, Jack Stormer drove straight at the tail. But Mario Lanz, the Italian pilot, saw his object, and the plane commenced to move like a racehorse over the grass.

*Crash!* The car scathed the tail of the moving plane. But the pilot got it right, and it surged onward.

Skimming, roaring, the plane lifted into the sky. The young race-driver, reckless now beyond all caution, tore off the field as it slanted up into the darkness.

"I've got to keep on its track," he gritted. "I'll make for the chimney shaft. I've got to get there first and stop them getting those plans."

It was a wild night chase across country. Jack drove like one inspired. His right foot pressed relentlessly down on the accelerator. He crouched, juggling with the big vibrating wheel.

He pulled her skidding round a great curve in the road, and a dark battalion of trees seemed to bar his path. He smashed at the trees—but somehow the car was tearing on, the roar of her echoing over the countryside.

And then, seeing a lighted telephone kiosk, he braked up the car and jumped out. In a few moments he was in touch with the local police station, and the police gave him startling news.

The plane had been forced down. Evidently Jack had done some damage when he had crashed into the tail surface, for, according to the police, the occupants were lucky to make a safe landing.

But the next intelligence startled Jack. Pretending that they had a sick man with them, who had to be rushed to hospital, the villains had boarded an express train which would take them to Derby. They were still racing for the chimney shaft!

"I've got to get there first," muttered the lad feverishly.

Once more he was hurtling through the night behind the shaking, notched wheel. Wind currents hit him like the buffets of a giant. The whole cockpit shook and trembled as Jack braked to the turns, and the lighted racing car went round with a skid and a swoosh.

Suddenly a cry was torn from Jack's throat. The express! The railway ran level with the road. And the express train, like a demon of unrest, came smashing through the night.

"Got to race it!" shouted Jack deliriously. If he could get to the signal box, which he knew was at the level-crossing some five miles ahead, he could get the red light set against the train—stop it.

But could he do it? High thunder was flung to the dark vault of the heavens, a wild luminescence was tossed against the countryside as the train came on. It was gaining! The golden frieze of its



windows was moving level with the surging leaping car.

And then, like the parting of a curtain to a fearful stage drama, a carriage door was flung open. The road was very near to the embankment—only a few yards between. As the gaunt car tore along with ghost fires shattering from her exhausts, Jack saw his dad inside the carriage, fighting for his very life, it seemed.

He did not hear his dad shout to him frantically: "Jack—go to it! Speed, son!"

Next moment he knew why that door had been opened. There was a sudden movement of one of the men in the railway carriage; he had thrown something!

Jack did not know it then, but the man had thrown heavily metal-weighted ropes. The bolts! With a thrumming, snapping *whirr* the long ropes, weighted at their three ends, twined round the boy's shoulders and throat.

Jack gave a great start, a great cry. The racing car roared away furiously as his imprisoned hands were snatched from the wheel. Almost out of control—going to crash!

### Flirting with Death.

"BLAZES!" shouted Jack Stormer. In that moment of supreme peril he put in all he knew to prevent the car piling up in a crash.

He stood on the footbrake, and somehow got his pinioned arm to the hand lever, notching it back to its farthest extent.

There was a mad hissing of tyres, stabbing jolt of the whole car in a screen of dust. But the racer pulled up with stern swinging round wildly, and stopped broadside in the road.

But the express tore on, his dad, not knowing what had happened to Jack, let a groan escape his lips.

"He can't speed!"

Jack in the road, however, was still full of fight. "I've got to get free!" he thought furiously. And suddenly an idea hit him. The red-hot exhaust pipe!

He bent over, and the hot metal of the exhaust manifold seared the rope round his arms hissing. In a moment or two he was free.

He had been putting in some seconds of fast thinking. "Gosh! There must be a short cut to that chimney stack—another way!" he gritted. "I'll get there first even yet."

His hunch proved dazzlingly correct. The short cut saved him. Another ten minutes of furious driving, and he alighted from the racer in a deserted field, and was standing at the foot of a huge chimney stack, which seemed to reach up into the darkness without end.

"Got to go up there and get those plans," he breathed tensely. "If they come upon me—well, it's the finish."

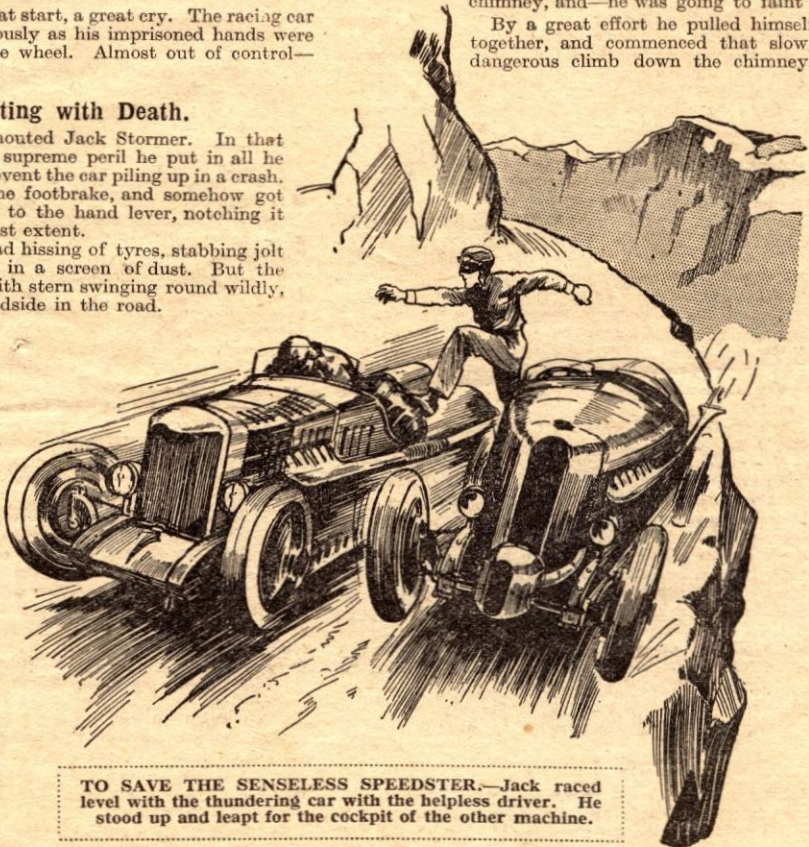
He did not hesitate. He put his foot on the ladder of rusty iron which was fixed by clamps the entire length of the chimney.

Up and up Jack Stormer climbed. He did not look down—he dared not. Every rung he climbed now was nerve-racking to the boy, and gradually as his imagination began to work a nameless terror took hold of him.

But at last he was pulling his body over the cornice. Feeling sick, he groped down the dark hole of the shaft, and his hand found a black deed box tucked away in a niche. The plans of the hush-hush car!

Then suddenly he fancied that the chimney swayed and moved in the wind. A feeling of stark terror followed by dizziness swept over the boy. He was two hundred feet above the earth on a rocking chimney, and—he was going to faint!

By a great effort he pulled himself together, and commenced that slow, dangerous climb down the chimney.



TO SAVE THE SENSELESS SPEEDSTER.—Jack raced level with the thundering car with the helpless driver. He stood up and leapt for the cockpit of the other machine.

At last with a great feeling of thankfulness Jack Stormer put his foot on solid ground.

Suddenly he heard harsh, discordant voices, and darted away like a wary trout from the shadow of the fisherman. It was Steiger, and his rascally race drivers.

Vainly the lad peered through the darkness, but could see no sign of his dad. Disappointed, he crept



away to where he had left his car behind the pottery sheds.

As he was pushing the machine to a safe distance before starting up its thunderous engine, there suddenly roared out a stentorian explosion, and the very ground seemed to shake. The conspirators had blown up the chimney. Jack grinned tensely as he roared away into the night. Small reward would come to their search of the ruins. He had the plans.

### Treachery on the Track.

THE great day! The day of the five hundred miles race at the Spiral Mountain track. Jack Stormer stood at the replenishment pits at the foot of the track, and faced his dad, who looked pale, wan and yet stern as he stood by *Black Bullet*, which he was to race in the big event. He had been in hospital a week, and had refused to see his son.

"I'm driving *Black Bullet*—for Adolf Steiger," he said, with despair creeping in his tone. "They've got me—got me to rights. After the race I'll sign over the patents to them—for they've got the plans. Son—you didn't come through. You didn't speed like I said!"

His tone was accusing. Jack was stricken to the quick. This was the first time he had seen his dad—and now this!

Suddenly he stiffened as a race driver, with an implacable face, detached himself from the group round the line of gaunt, stream-lined racers. It was Mario Lanz, the Italian. And behind him was Adolf Steiger.

"Lap Stormer is racing *Black Bullet*, for the Steiger Motor Corporation." It was Steiger's suave, taunting voice. "He's got to, because he's entered as the driver. We've got the plans, Jack Stormer."

"You're wrong—dead wrong!" Jack panted. "I've got the plans of *Black Bullet* and I've left them in the care of the race officials here. Dad can race his own car under his own name. He will race—and win!"

An expression of stupefied fury crossed the face of Adolf Steiger.

"You've got the plans—you've deposited them with the race officials?" he snarled.

It was Jack's moment of complete triumph. Cut short, however, by the crash of the maroon that warned the race drivers to get ready for the start. Jack Stormer saw Adolf Steiger drag Mario Lanz away, furiously talking to him in a low tone. And he suspected even now a plot against his dad.

Jack caught up with Lap Stormer, and gripped his dad's arm.

"Dad, let me ride with you," he said eagerly. "I'll take the wheel at two hundred and fifty miles, and finish the race."

But his dad seemed to be under some hypnotic influence. "Jack," he said tonelessly. "You can't speed."

The dad clenched his hands as his father turned away. He had been entered for the race, and had arranged to drive another car, with Joe as his mechanic. Suddenly his mind was made up.

He adjusted the black mask over his face. Once more he was the Death Dicer, whose speed trials had thrilled the public all the week.

"We're racing together, you and I, Joe," he said tensely. "But we want dad to win with *Black Bullet*—and we're going to watch those Steigers!"

He crammed himself into his cockpit. Time to go! Jack took out the clutch and moved the lever into bottom gear. Then the flag dropped, and they were off with a roar like thunder, a thick cloud of smoke belching from their exhausts.

From the first Lap Stormer went away in front,

driving *Black Bullet* like the master hand he was. And the cavalcade of twelve cars came after, howling devilishly. One hundred laps of the concrete saucer track had to be covered before the cars were signalled on to the mountain trail.

But *Black Bullet* flung the laps behind as though she could go on for ever. Lap Stormer knew his car—knew his game. To crack the others up.

The cars tore round the track again and again. *Black Bullet* had a lead of three laps, and was trying to increase it, with ten more laps of the track to go.

But now the struggle was becoming tense. The strain on the engine was telling. The Moonbeam had limped to the pits with valve trouble. The blue Milano was signalling for a mechanic—something wrong with her condenser. The two Steigers were droning after *Black Bullet*, keeping up their lap time. There was a bunch of competitors just after these three—English, French, German, Italian, and . . . Jack Stormer in his car.

It was really an experimental *Black Bullet*—built to earlier plans. Jack knew it was faulty, knew it would blow out under pressure. But he never hesitated. He'd keep with his dad—he'd speed!

The crowd yelled as they saw him accelerate. The Death Dicer was coming to the front. Like lightning, the masked lad at the wheel passed the bunch, passed his dad in *Black Bullet*, picking up time.

Now the gates were flung open and *Black Bullet* was signalled to take the mountain track, with the Death Dicer to come after, and then the two Steigers as they finished their laps.

With the crowd yelling and delirious the *Black Bullet* flashed out of the saucer track on to the mountain road.

Like a shell just fired from a gun *Black Bullet* stormed the heights. Now he was flinging the car at Tor Corner for the downward swoop. That dangerous corner! Veteran though he was, even Lap Stormer had to brake to the rock-hemmed bend with the sheer drop on their right.

And as they made that awful turn with the brakes gripping the car, Lap Stormer's treacherous mechanic—a man in the pay of the enemy—carried out Adolf Steiger's instructions.

With a crash, he brought a heavy spanner hard down on the veteran driver's skull, and gathering all his nerve he jumped out.

Even as the traitor flung himself against the rock wall another car came tearing round the curve with a howling battle cry of exhaust. It was the Death Dicer, holding the low-slung monster to the mountain track with gritted teeth. But as he saw ahead another car out of control, crashing and leaping down the mountain track, with an unconscious driver at the wheel, Jack Stormer braked up with a hoarse cry.

"Out! Get out, Joe! Get that fiend. Heavens—that's dad!"

As Joe scrambled out, the Death Dicer loosed the car again. Like an angry mountain cougar leaping for the kill it crashed down the dizzy slope—came level with *Black Bullet*.

As they tore, bonnet to bonnet, down that mountain track, Jack Stormer stood up in his rocking car, and gave the wheel a wrench to the left. Then he jumped, and caught at the side of his dad's car.

In a moment he was scrambling into the empty place by Lap Stormer's side. A moment more, and he was leaning over, fighting with the wheel. He saw his own car plunge over the side of the track as he applied the screeching brakes to *Black Bullet*.

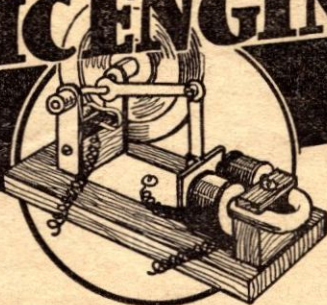
Desperately the lad fought out of a fierce skid, and slashed round the next sharp bend with only an inch to spare.

(Continued on page 12.)



IF YOU MADE THE ELECTRO-MAGNET

Here's An **ELECTRIC ENGINE** You Can Make



ANY fellows who made our electro-magnet will be glad of a design for a working model based on it. Here's one, a saucy little engine which will buzz at a great speed, and keep it up for a long spell. Tin, wood, and a bit of stiff wire for a crankshaft make up the whole outfit.

Cutting out the parts is largely a matter of following the diagrams, which show the shape of every part, exactly *half their proper size*. A good idea is to draw them out on the sheet of tin; they can then be cut out, with no guesswork, with an old pair of scissors. Draw them out just double the size in the diagram.

The crankshaft is a piece of straight wire about  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. You'll want the pliers to bend the "throw" nicely. Don't make this bend more than  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch. Get a rounded stick of wood (an inch cut from a curtain stick) and bore a hole through it with a red-hot skewer. This is to fix the flywheel, but don't put it on until you've got the crankshaft in its bearings.

A shorter piece of the same stick will be wanted for the other end.

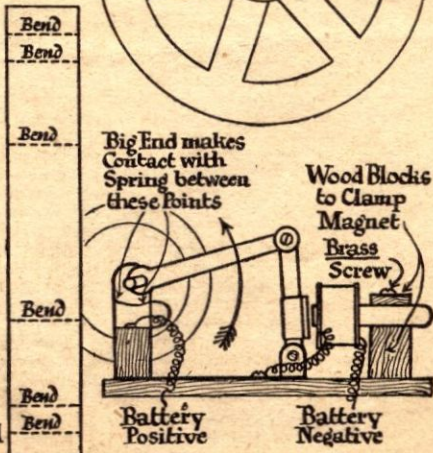
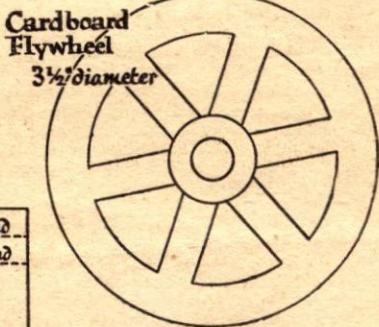
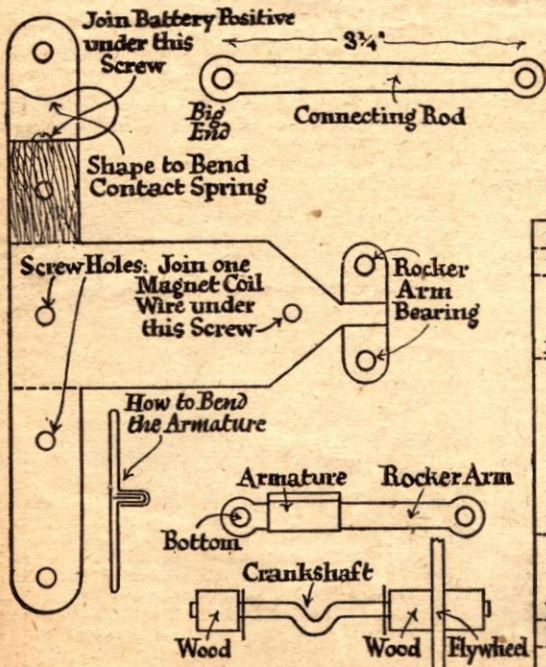
The armature—that's the part attracted by the magnet poles—is simply a strip of tin  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide folded as shown and clipped round the rocker arm, tightly, with the pliers.

Support the magnet on a wooden block and clamp it firmly with a screw—nails are bad things on this sort of job. The contact spring is the most fiddly part, as it has to pass

the current on at the right moment, and cut it off just before the armature reaches its nearest point to the magnet poles. It mustn't touch them, but it can be as near as you can get it. Clamping the magnet with a screw makes it easy to adjust for this. Bend the spring so that it follows the path of the big end of the connecting rod, pretty much as we have shown it. The thinnest metal you can find will not be too thin for this job, so long as it has a good "come-back." It mustn't be a brake at all.

Electric connections are clearly shown, and as soon as you've got them hooked up, a push at the cardboard flywheel in the direction shown, and she's off! A thousand revs. a minute, easily! Try it.

Linking up the working parts is best done with the very handy little screws and nuts made for putting together Meccano models.





## THE FOUR WHEELED BULLET!

(Continued from page 10.)

His dad raised his head.

"Son, you've got it—got nerve," he said faintly. "Go to it—show 'em your speed. *Black Bullet* can win the race."

Jack Stormer, teeth gritted, settled at the wheel and drove as he had never driven before. And how! He went round that mountain circuit again and again with the precision of a thundering express swerving on the points. *Black Bullet*, its metal heated through and through, was giving of its best now. The Steigers were signalled to go all out. But they could not live with *Black Bullet*.

The car with Jack Stormer at the wheel, broke the lap record for the mountain circuit. And it broke all time records as it thundered down at last into the finishing straight. The winner!

When all the excitement was over a detective with two policemen appeared on the track. But this time it was to arrest Adolf Steiger and Mario Lanz for their part in a gigantic conspiracy, which, however, had failed owing to Jack Stormer's speed.

## BUSTING UP THE BLACK HAND

(Continued from page 36.)

"Chuck 'em down the chimney!" cried Pumfret, excitedly.

"Yah! Wow! Leggo, you little beasts—Garoooooooooh!"

Tommy Rhodes and his companions were hoisted on the chimney stack, and shoved one by one into the black, noisome depths.

In the "mystic chamber" below, the Black Hand Brothers were astounded at this new manifestation from the chimney. But, recognising Tommy Rhodes and Co. as they came sprawling into the fireplace, they uttered eager yells and "went for" their rivals without more ado.

"Earlswood worms!" howled the Noble Arch, making a dive for Tommy Rhodes. "Squash 'em! Spifflicate 'em!"

Within the space of a few minutes, a wild and whirling conflict was taking place. A milling scrum of combatants knocked over the "altar," and out went the light. Mr. Cattermole, groping his way towards the door, found his legs entangled with the whirling combatants, and he went down with a dismal yell.

At last Wellesley & Co. of the Sixth came along and opened the door. Everyone gazed within the refectory, and gasps of amazement arose.

The first figure to emerge was Mr. Cattermole, his gown torn, his mortar-board jammed over one eye, and his scholastic person smothered in soot. He was followed by a company of black-robed figures, whose hooded gowns were torn to shreds, disclosing the touselled, sooty heads and shoulders of Johnny Gee & Co. of the Remove. Behind them, a party of soot-smothered and badly battered youths appeared. They were Tommy Rhodes & Co. of Earlswood.

A schoolboy figure came dashing down the School House steps and across the quadrangle. It was Dick Bannister—freed from the Punishment Room, by the Head's command! Noble Arch Johnny Gee grinned at his chum.

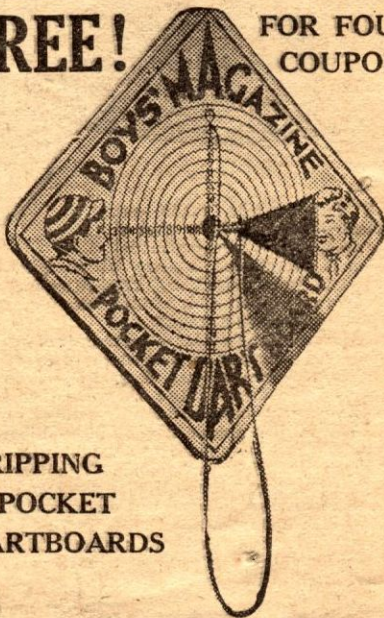
"The game's up, Dick," he said. "But never mind—we've got at the truth of things, and all's well that ends well!"

**A**N hour later, a troop of grinning Removites emerged from the Head's study. They still bore traces of soot in their hair and round their

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ears. But the erstwhile members of the Black Hand Brotherhood were ineffably cheerful.

Dr. Holroyd had held a searching inquiry into the whole affair and Johnny Gee & Co. in consideration of their noble efforts, had been let off soot free. Davenport and Cadman & Co. were caned severely for their dishonourable conduct. Remington of the Sixth was given a severe talking-to, and his face was quite crimson when he came out of the Head's study. But Remington was lucky to have escaped so lightly.

The greatest story scoop ever appears in the Mag. next week, chums. KING KONG, the mighty Jungle Giant from a Lost Island. Don't miss this stupendous yarn based on the film.



# THE CORSAIR RAIDERS!

ANOTHER GRIPPING  
COMPLETE EXPLOIT

## CAUGHT IN THE CORSAIR'S CAGE



### The Castaway.

"MORE prisoners!" said Val Tregellis between his teeth. "More slaves for the Corsairs' murdering galleys!"

The sturdy British lad was standing on a crude platform, wedged securely between two great stalactites high in the roof of a rock cavern. From this lofty eyrie he could gaze out through holes and crevices in the rock.

Within the cavern all was gloom; but through the spynole Val could see the sparkling, sunlit waters of the Mediterranean. Not a mile distant, a proud ship was gliding past. Now, alas, the dreaded crescent of the Corsairs fluttered at her masthead,

Out to Sweep the Rats of the Mediterranean from the Seas! Val and his strangely assorted comrades have Another Exciting Brush with Nasir-ed-Din. You'll enjoy these New type Pirate Tales, chums!

and the decks were swarming with brown-skinned Moors. Escorting her, were two great galleys, the slaves working hard at the enormous yellow oars.

Those vessels took little heed of White Rock Island—for, indeed, it seemed to be a barren, deserted rock. Little did the Corsairs realise that a secret cavern existed there, and that the cavern formed the hiding-place of the desperate slaves, who, under the leadership of Val Tregellis, had stolen the speedy galliot of Nasir-ed-Din, the Corsair chief.

Val lowered himself to the floor of the cavern—where, some little distance away, gurgled the black waters of a deep pool. Riding there, at anchor, was the captured galliot.

Rough, uncouth men were at work in the cavern, many of them preparing the midday meal. Ex-slaves all of them—sturdy Britons who had pledged themselves to Val Tregellis. They were the Corsair Raiders, and it was their avowed object to attack the enemy on every possible occasion, to give succour to the enemy's victims.

One man, more genteel than the rest—a fine, well-built gentleman—approached Val, and he did not fail to see the grim, determined light in the lad's eyes.

"It's awful, dad!" said Val. "Nasir-ed-Din has made another capture; there's a fine British ship sailing by, escorted by galleys. And we're helpless here—we can do nothing."

Sir William Tregellis, a rich merchant from India, shrugged his shoulders.

"In those waters, son, the Corsairs are all-powerful," he said. "They rob and pillage and kill—"

"Ay, you're right, dad!" interrupted Val, his eyes gleaming. "The Corsairs have been all-powerful until now. But there's a change coming! We, here, are but the beginning of a mighty force. At present we've got to lurk in hiding, but we shall grow, and we shall gain strength—we shall command ships and men—and then, in the open, we can drive these pirates off the sea. To-night we shall strike our first blow against Nasir-ed-Din."

"Ay, ay!" went up a shout from the men. "Well said, lad!"



NIGHT fell, black and velvety. From the seaweed-covered entrance of the cavern crept the black-and-gold raider galliot. Soon, she was clear of the little bay, and gliding out across the open sea, the men pulling easily at the great oars.

Val had decided on a bold course. He would creep close in to Terek-el-Bey in the hope of catching the Corsair guards unprepared—for after their recent capture they were certain to be carousing—and Val had dreams of capturing another vessel—perhaps complete with slaves.

Nearer and nearer to the mainland crept the galliot. The coast, hereabouts, was barren—wide stretches of desolate sand, with no sign of a tree, and scarce any rocks. Farther along lay the sheltered bay in which the Corsair chief's ships lay at anchor. Here, too, was the fortress, and Nasir-ed-Din's palace.

"Easy, men—easy!" said Val suddenly. "Do ye see something afloat over yonder, dad?" he added, pointing to starboard.

"Your eyes are sharper than mine—. But yes!" said Sir William, leaning over the bulwarks. "Ye're right, Val! 'Tis nought but an overturned boat, however, floating idly—"

"List!" urged Val.

At his signal the men ceased work; there was no longer the creak of the oars. From across the calm water, vague and pitiful, came a cry.

"Help! Help!"

"Stab my gizzard!" came a growl from Tyburn Tim. "'Tis an English voice, Cap'n!"

"The poor wretch is lying athwart the boat's keel," said Val, staring steadily through his telescope. "Ay, another victim of the Corsairs!"

He gave the order to proceed, and the men pulled with a will. Val swept the sea with his glass, but there was not a vessel of any kind within sight. Beyond the capsized boat, the shore, showing white in the moonshine, was empty.

Suddenly, Val and his father staggered, and as they recovered their balance, a soft, grating noise came to their ears.

"Od's life!" ejaculated Sir William. "We're aground!"

"Yet we're all of two miles from the shore," said Val, in wonder. "'Tis a sandbank. Pull astern, men! 'Twill go ill with us if the tide should be on the ebb."

The men worked frantically, and soon the galliot was free, floating easily in deeper water. Meanwhile, further cries came from the solitary figure on the upturned boat.

"Dad, will ye take command?" asked Val, as he quickly stripped off his jacket. "'Tis but a short swim to the boat. Tim—Paddy—Leatherface! Ye'll come with me."

"Ay, Cap'n!" growled the trio.

They plunged into the sea—after Val had taken another careful look at the shore, and at the sea in all directions. They soon found that there was scarcely sufficient depth of water for swimming; so they took to wading, and thus they came on the capsized boat, which, at close quarters, proved to be badly stove-in on one side.

"Who comes?" asked a feeble voice. "Speak! Are ye friend or foe?"

"Friend," said Val promptly.

"Then back—back for your lives!" screamed the tattered figure, suddenly sitting bolt upright on the boat's keel, and waving his arms. "'Tis a trap! At the point of the dagger I was forced to . . . Ugggggh!"

The man's utterance ended in a horrible gurgle, and he slithered into the sea to sink like a stone.

In the same second an extraordinary thing hap-

pened. The boat was suddenly flung upwards and backwards.

"Seize the infidels!" shouted a voice. "Allah is generous to-night!"

Val and his comrades found themselves fighting against an overwhelming force of ruthless Corsairs.

## A Rope of Death.

THE surprise was complete. For lurking beneath the boat were a score of Nasir-ed-Din's men!

Like wolves they fell upon their victims. Tyburn Tim and Paddy O'Button bellowed furiously as they resisted the attack. From out to sea came answering shouts. Sir William, on the galliot's poop, gave orders to the men, and the vessel came forward.

"Back—back!" Val managed to yell. "'Tis death for all if ye come forward and go aground."

His father realised it in the same second; for a great galley, with oars flashing in the moonlight, had appeared from beyond a neighbouring headland, and was now sweeping out to sea. This, then, was the full object of the trap—to lure the galliot on to the sandbank. Aground, she would be helpless, and at the mercy of the larger enemy vessel.

Val and his comrades were seized after a short fight. The odds were too heavy, and the Corsairs were careful to take the Britons alive. Death would be a welcome relief for them before Nasir-ed-Din had finished with them.

The galliot, owing to its superior speed, vanished into the darkness of the night. The enemy galley, knowing full well that it could never overtake the fugitive, soon turned back. The captives were taken aboard and at a word of command, the oars dipped, and the galley swept towards Terek-el-Bey.

NASIR-ED-DIN, Chief of the Corsairs, gazed malevolently upon the four captives. They stood in a tiled apartment of his palace, where lamps glowed, and soldiers stood in formidable rows.

"So! Thy liberty has been but short-lived, O sons of mongrels!" said the Corsair Chief, stroking his short, stubby beard, and drawing his great, silken-clad form to its full height. "I, Nasir-ed-Din, Basha of Terek-el-Bey, am the chosen instrument to execute the wrath of Islam! Death shall come to ye within the hour—and in such a way that your infidel blood will turn to water with fear!"

His eyes were glittering like a snake's, as he turned away.

"Remove them!" he commanded, addressing an officer. "Thou hast thy orders! Attend to them!"

"Thy will, O Illustrious One, shall be obeyed," said the officer humbly.

Soldiers sprang to attention; they formed a guard round the prisoners, who were marched out of the fortress, and then through the dirty, evil-smelling streets of the native town. Corsairs were running to and from the seashore, where great flares were burning, and obviously preparations on a big scale were afoot.

Val and his comrades were taken out of the town, along a winding, rocky path—until at length they stood on the very edge of a steep cliff.

Val took his surroundings in at a glance. There was a deep cove here, with cliffs on every hand. A black rock, jutting out from the sea, was visible in the very centre of the cove, and men could be seen, in the moonlight, working at something on that little rock.

Not that Val and his comrades had much time to look round. Tyburn Tim was taken first, and his bonds were cut from him. Then he was thrust by the Corsairs into a great wooden cage which stood on the cliff edge. Paddy O'Button was similarly dealt with



—then Leatherface. Finally, Val had his bonds cut, and as the last rope fell he staggered drunkenly, as if overcome with dizziness. He collided violently against one of the Corsairs.

"Thou accursed son of a diseased hyæna!" snarled the Moor.

*Crash!* He drove his fist into Val's face, and the lad, staggering, fell headlong into the cage. The door was closed, and great locks were secured. It was a massive thing, this cage, square in construction, and large enough to hold a dozen men. The wooden bars were of great thickness, and no man could hope to break free.

"Stab my vitals!" growled Tyburn Tim. "What's the game, mateys? Are they going to topple us into the sea, and drown us like rats in a trap?"

Even as he was speaking the cage shifted along the ground, and lurched violently, and a moment later it was suspended in mid-air, clear of the cliff. Then Val Tregellis understood. There was a great wooden beam, stretching out over the roof. Men, working at

the suspended cage! Death would be slow—horrible—a vile torture.

Approaching the fire as near as possible, was Nasir-ed-Din's new galliot—a magnificent craft, agleam with gold paint, the oars flashing with gold, too. Each of those oars was manned by slaves—Britons, every one—men who had been captured but recently.

"See, infidel fools!" jeered Nasir-ed-Din from the poop. "Those who escape me—those who oppose my will—meet with a like fate!"

### The Basha Bamboozled.

**SILENT**, with set features, the four prisoners waited in the cage. Already, they could feel the dread heat from the great fire. When the cage was swung to the fatal spot, the flames would lick round, and . . .

With a sudden, sobbing cry, Val fell forward, and crouched on the floor bars. His shoulders heaved. Tyburn Tim, Paddy and Leatherface glanced at one another in dismay.

"Who's to blame the poor lad?" muttered



**CORSAIRCUNNING**—Val and his comrades waded towards the stranded man in the boat. Suddenly the boat was flung aside, to disclose a horde of Corsairs, who fell upon them.

a great, crude winch, were swinging the beam slowly out over the waves. Suddenly, flames leapt up from the rock, in the centre of the cove, below. Like lightning the flames spread, growing in intensity, leaping up for fifty or sixty feet. Men had jumped from the rock, and were now swimming towards a magnificent galliot which had come out from the shore.

"It's not drowned we'll be, begob!" muttered Paddy O'Button.

The cage, swinging and creaking on the beam, would pass immediately over the fire on the jagged rock. The flames were now roaring up with incredible ferocity.

Now the captives understood why their bonds had been removed. Nasir-ed-Din and his Corsairs desired entertainment! They wanted to see their victims dancing with agony as the death flames curled about

Leatherface. "There's times when a man's nerve deserts him—"

"Stab me! Mebbe ye're right, but 'tis unlike the Cap'n to hoist the white flag," said Tyburn Tim gruffly, as he went down on one knee, and placed a hand on Val's heaving shoulder. "Come, lad! Keep a stiff upper lip—"

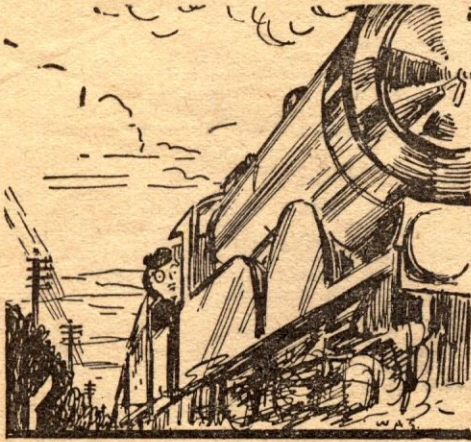
"Hold thy peace!" came a whisper from Val.

"S'death!" ejaculated Tyburn Tim. "Is that a knife ye have there, Cap'n?"

"Ay, and so sharp that it's making good progress with this wooden bar," replied Val, as he hacked away cunningly, so making his movements that he appeared to be sobbing with fear. "Get ye gone, Tim, thou dolt! I see a chance for us yet."

"Then, split my windpipe, ye can see a deal more than I!" retorted Tyburn Tim. "Tell me, lad—"





When the gradient is steep  
And to schedule he must keep  
Says the driver.

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

how did ye get the knife? We were stripped of everything—”

“Ay, but did ye not see me fall against the Corsair as I was being thrust into the cage?” asked Val, still hacking away at the bar. “’Twas easy. As the fellow staggered, so I took a dagger from his belt, and I concealed it whilst he struck me in the face.”

As he spoke, the sturdy lad rose to his feet. Seconds were getting precious. The heat was becoming stifling. Soon, the cage would be right over the flames.

“See!” said Val tensely.

His companions stared. The one bar was hacked so much that a hefty kick would completely sever it. With that bar missing, there would be sufficient room for the prisoners to squeeze through.

“But what odds?” asked Leatherface. “Think ye we shall get free? We drop into the sea, yes, but in full sight of the enemy, and we shall soon be retaken—”

“Am I so addle-brained?” put in Val. “Wait, my comrades! *This* is my plan!”

He took a quick glance below—he looked at the terrible flames which were leaping up so near at hand. Then, like a monkey, he leapt at the wall of the cage, and crouched near the roof, one hand out-thrust.

Thus he was able to reach, with the knife-blade, the great cable which held the cage to the beam. Val had seen that the cage had stopped for a moment—just a pause of a second or so. It was his opportunity.

*Slash-slash-slash!* The keen blade of the knife cut through the rope strands.

“Get ready, men!” panted Val. “When we drop—”

He got no further, for the weakened rope suddenly

snapped with a mighty *twang*. Like a stone the cage fell; and as it did so a tremendous outcry arose from the thousands of spectators. It was a cry of surprise, of rage, of disappointment. Yet there was no note of alarm.

“By the beard of Allah!” boomed Nasir-ed-Din, in a fine fury. “What’s this? The dogs who fixed the rope shall pay with their lives for this blunder!”

*Splaaaaaaash!* The cage struck the water not ten yards from the galliot’s side; there was a great deal of foam, and then the cage, with its human freight, vanished beneath the surface.

“A thousand curses!” snarled the Corsair Chief. “The infidels, then, die by drowning—not by the flame!”

He believed, like most of the other Corsairs, that the rope had broken; he believed that his victims were now drowning like rats. But he was wrong.

As the cage fell, so Tyburn Tim had clutched grimly at the weakened bar. Once below the surface, he exerted all his terrific strength. The bar snapped like a carrot, and Tim himself squeezed his way through.

Tyburn Tim clung to the outer side, his hand ready. The head and shoulders of one of his comrades came thrusting through the opening; Tim helped. A second one was out. Then came Leatherface, and, finally, Val Tregellis. By this time the cage had struck the sea bed.

Almost in the same moment the four shot upwards to the surface. They broke water, and Val gave a gasp of triumph. They were near the galliot—and Nasir-ed-Din and his men were all leaning over the rail on the other side—where the cage had fallen. It was a chance in a thousand.

“Come!” hissed Val.

The others understood. With swift strokes they reached the galliot’s side—watched by the slaves. In a moment, Val was aboard, his comrades swarming after him. Like panthers they leapt up the poop ladder.

“How now, Mighty Nasir!” shouted Val mockingly.

The Basha spun round, but before he could draw his sword, before he could utter a sound, Val’s fist went crashing into his face. Nasir-ed-Din uttered a wild cry of agony, and he went toppling over the poop rail, to plunge into the sea.

Almost in the same second, Nasir’s officers shared a like fate. There was only a handful on the poop, here, and there was not another vessel near. Nasir-ed-Din had brought his galliot out so that he could view the torture to the fullest advantage. By so doing he had courted disaster.

“Men—men!” shouted Val, leaping to the ladder, and gazing down upon the slaves. “Your oars! Pull as you’ve never pulled before! ’Tis our chance of liberty—and yours!”

A second call was unnecessary. The slaves saw, clearly enough, that this was their opportunity. They pulled at the oars with every ounce of their strength.

And while the Corsair boats came out from the shore to rescue Nasir-ed-Din, confusion reigned. Two galleys, farther away, left their anchorage, but in their haste, they collided, and much time was lost. Meanwhile, the Basha’s new galliot, with Val Tregellis in command, raced out past the headland—out to the open sea, to vanish into the night.

It was another victory for the Corsair Raiders; not only had they escaped with their own lives, but they had freed more slaves, and had captured another enemy ship!

Look out for an entirely new yarn of fun and thrills in the air with the British War-Birds next week. You’ll enjoy every word of “Sandbag Patrol.”



Take a "Shot" at a B.M. Football with your Jokes.



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.

**Tramp:** Now didn't I tell you those two always go together?  
(Football to SPENCER HALE, 76, Church Street, Edgware Road, N.W.8.)

#### UNFORTUNATE.

**SANDY:** So ye didna go awa' for a holiday this year, Mac?

**MAC:** No, Sandy. The MacGregors wrote an' invited me to their place, an' I'd like to have gone, but they forgot to enclose a stamped envelope for a reply.

(Fountain pen to A. J. LOWNE, 51, Castle Rd., Grays, Essex.)

#### LOOKS.

**JIM:** Did you see the conductor look at me as though I had not paid my fare?

**BOB:** What did you do?

**JIM:** Looked at him as if I had!

(Fountain pen to EDMUND STEWART, 17, New York Street, Clifford Street, C.-on-M., Manchester, 13.)

#### PRETTY TOUGH!

**NAVY** (finishing work for the day): This is a hard world.

**HIS MATE:** Yes, that's what I think, every time I put my pick into it!

(Fountain pen to J. D. CAMPBELL, 23, West Park Road, Newport, Monmouthshire.)

#### NOT HAIRLESS.

**TED:** Your father's completely bald, isn't he, Tom?

**TOM:** Yes, I'm the only heir he has left!

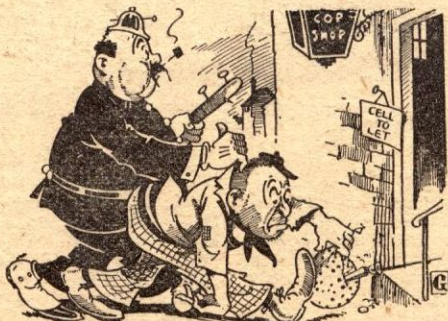
(Fountain pen to A. CHAPMAN, Claremont, Tremont Road, Llan-drindod Wells, Radnor.)

#### TWO'S COMPANY.

**WEALTHY INDIVIDUAL** (held up by footpad): How dare you! I'm a K.C.!

**FOOTPAD:** Shake! I'm a Casey, me-self!

(Fountain pen to J. MEL-LING, 35, Pedders Lane, S.S., Blackpool, Lancs.)



**Arrested Burglar:** Just my luck! Yesterday I paid fourpence for a haircut!

(Football to DERRICK COWLING, High Street, Laughton, near Sheffield, Yorks.)

#### BURNT.

"Where's the fire-eater?"

"He's unable to act to-day."

"Ill?"

"No, he put the lighted end of his cigarette in his mouth by mistake."

(Fountain pen to R. PRATT, c/o. Marringdean Cottage, Billingshurst, Sussex.)

#### JOKE COUPON.

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

Boys' Magazine, 21/10/33.

#### A REAL PAL!

**OLD GENT:** You seem rather fond of your dog, my boy.

**BILLY:** Rather! He's just chewed up the slipper Pa spansks me with!

(Fountain pen to J. EDGE, 19, Byron Street, Buxton, Derbyshire.)

#### MIXED.

"Are these buns to-day's, please?" asked little Murphy, in the baker's shop, "because Mither says yesterday's weren't!"

(Fountain pen to DENNIS BLAMIRE, 21, High Pl. Place, Southport, Lancs.)

#### REALLY!

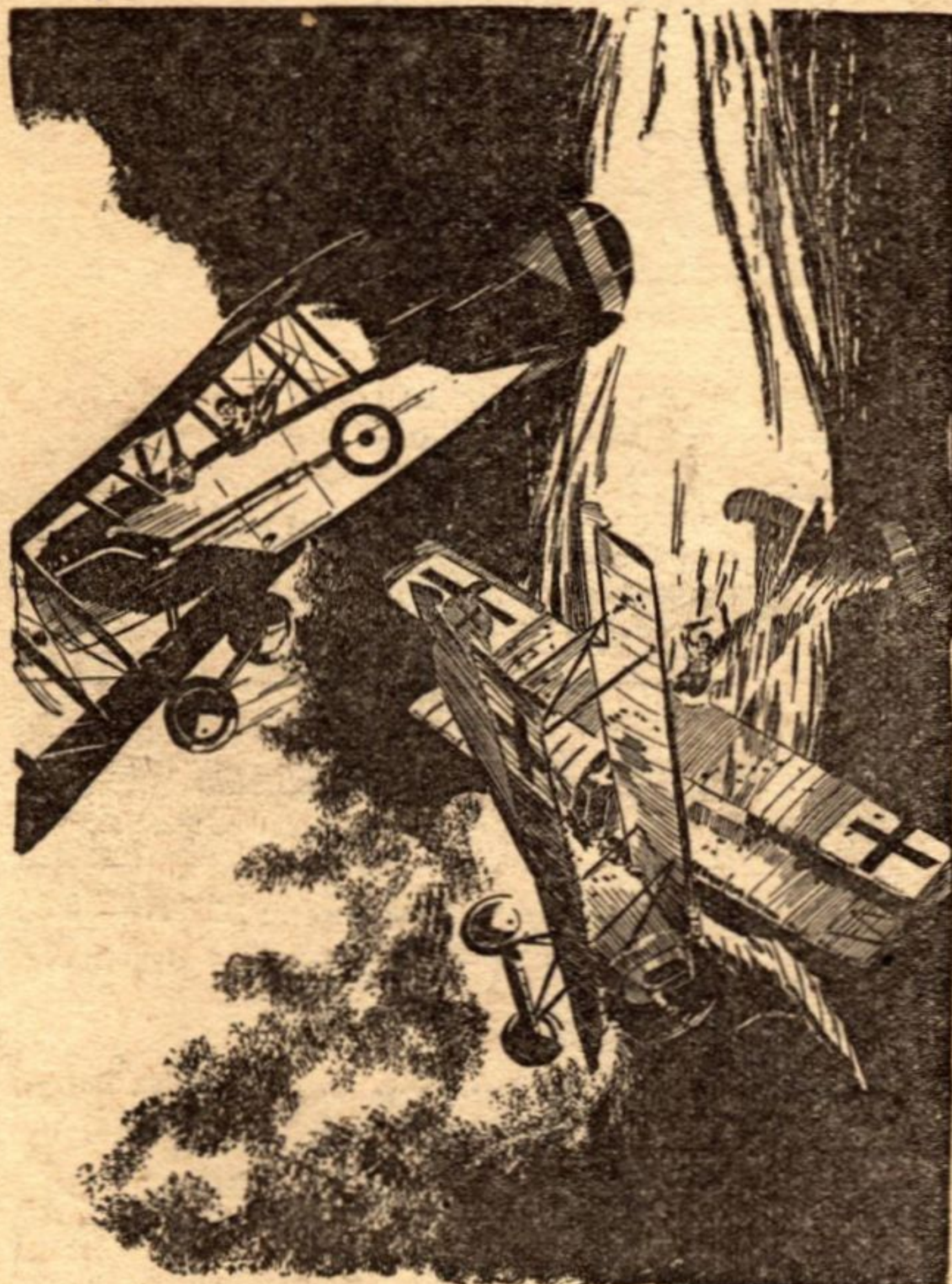
**GENT:** You've never heard of the Ten Commandments, my boy! What's your name?

**YOUNGSTER:** Moses, sir!  
(Fountain pen to FRANK BYFORD, 26, Queen St., Rugeley, Staffs.)



## OUR MIGHTY WAR FLYING SERIES

# The Death Curtain in the CLOUDS!



## SKY-HIGH THRILLS AGAIN THIS WEEK

### The Suicide Squadron.

AT their ceiling of fifteen thousand feet six Spad pursuit 'planes, led by Squadron-Leader Ian Chisholm, of the famous Red Devils, droned to and fro. They were waiting to give combat to any German machines that tried to penetrate over into Allied air territory.

The Germans had driven a pocket in the Marne at Chateau Noir, and only thirty miles behind lay Paris. The green-grey masses of the Vaterland were ready to be launched in a shock onslaught on the weakened sector, to drive a wedge through that would lead to Paris, and an early end to the war.

But the enemy had learned that the British were bringing up heavy reinforcements of troops, guns and ammunition to stem the advance. They were sending over their crack air Staffeln on reconnaissance. And Squadron-Leader Ian with his faithful six veterans of the Red Devils, had orders to fight a stubborn rearguard action—not to let a single Bosche 'plane get through.

He wondered anxiously how Flight-Commander Johnny Chisholm, his brother, of the same air squadron, was getting on. He little guessed that the step formation was broken up; that B Flight was smashed, and that C Flight had dived to its rescue, perforce letting a whole flight of German 'planes wing above their heads for Allied territory.

Droning backwards and forwards in the bitter cold upper strata, Ian gazed anxiously down through the white turrets and towers of the clouds, and suddenly he gave a gasp.

"Ye gods! Just look at 'em." He stared down aghast at a black V formation with a stem behind it like a living ace of spades, tearing below the cumulus with full throttle for Allied territory.

It was sheer suicide for Ian to lead his six sky-fighters against those fifteen or sixteen Fokkers. Yet orders were orders.

He fixed on the stem of the black spade formation, composed of four enemy ships. They were flying somewhat lower than the rest. Immediately he waggled his wings, and a roaring like the din of a thousand battles filled the air as the British fighters dropped their noses and went meteoring down through the clouds.

A mad few moments, and the flight dropped out of the cloud on the tail of the German formation. Ian saw a grey 'plane, with two helmeted heads staring up—the German observer wrenching at his gun. And without a moment's hesitation he pressed his gun trips, and felt the fabric of his wings vibrating to the clattering stutter of the gun. Like a film flicker he saw the pilot collapse,

saw the 'plane lurch, drop its nose and then disappear. One Hun!

He lifted immediately, and out of the corner of his goggles he saw a Fokker wriggling across the sky like a great black fish. Suddenly it spouted a geyser of flame and went rolling down-sky like a barrel.

"Perhaps that'll stop 'em—perhaps the rest'll turn and fight," thought Ian desperately.

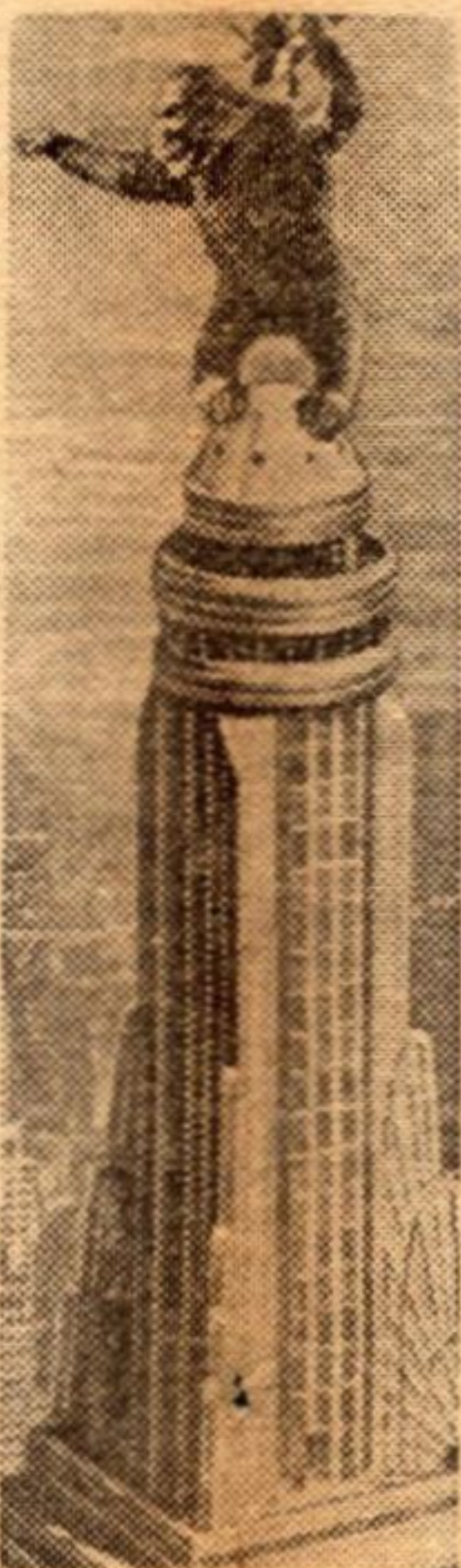
Yes; some of them were darting around. But still a formidable V shape was arrowing on at full speed into Allied territory.

Then suddenly Ian saw a flame-spouting Fokker swooping down on his own tail, and he felt a jarring crash as the slugs ate into his empennage. He pushed

CHUMS—  
A GIGANTIC  
TREAT  
NEXT WEEK

Get Ready for

# KING KONG



THE EIGHTH  
WONDER OF  
THE WORLD  
IS HERE ON  
SATURDAY

stick to the right, kicked rudder and side-slipped—fell five hundred feet on one wing, with the chance of losing control. But he banked around all right with the German off the target and zoomed up into a friendly cloud.

"Wonder how the rest of the patrol got on," he muttered. "I only saw two Bosches go down."

He headed out of the cloud, to see the rest of his patrol as they ducked, spun and banked in mortal combat with four Fokkers. Two Fokkers reeled and fell even as he watched. And then he saw three Spads and a Bristol, which he guessed was Johnny's flashing up from below. The two remaining Fokkers turned and dived away. But they could not elude the relentless fate that pursued them. One limped down for a landing with its engine dead, and the other suddenly burst into flames and speared earthwards shedding embers.

"Not too bad!" muttered Ian. "Now we've got to stop the rest coming back."

### A Diabolical Plan.

IAN felt suddenly cheered and elated as he recognised Johnny in the Bristol that came rocking to take formation on his right. The kid brother was all right!

Yet the youngster's face was a grim mask behind the goggles and helmet he wore, his lips thinned. He was thinking of the Jerry spy's boot with the secret papers in it.

He signalled to Squadron-Leader Ian that he wished to get into communication with him. And then did it in his own way. Zooming sheer up, he went into a tight loop, came over, barrel-rolled, and was flying on his back for a few moments immediately above Ian.

Then, judging it to a nicety, he threw the boot, weighted with a heavy spanner, down into Ian's cockpit. The older flier stared at it in amazement . . . and then came to examine it. Tied to the boot was a message from Johnny.

*Papers inside from the spy. Something in code—and a map of Paris. Important, I think.* JOHNNY.

His brother nodded as he roared back into formation again. He had no time to look at it now. For he saw the long V of Fokkers returning home, teetering madly with their speed.

Ian glanced to either side and saw that his grim, helmeted, faithful sky-fighters were ready and braced for the shock of the encounter. At his signal they formed a single straight line of cocaded 'planes.

With startling swiftness the tiny racing enemy 'planes grew bigger. Their pronged wheels standing out beneath. The gap rapidly narrowed. The roar of Mercedes beat against that of Hissos. Through his sights with miraculous clarity, Ian saw a cannon-ball head, and his gun started hammering.

The Fokker ahead seemed to shudder a little. It nosed down, disappeared roaring. The next three minutes remained forever in Ian's mind as a mad jumble of pictures, never to be forgotten. On every side were grey 'planes spouting white tracer bullets, grey 'planes that rushed up and at the

last moment split-essed away. Ian had fixed on one 'plane bearing a Kommandant's pennant. He knew it for that of Von Koffner, of the Imperial Blues—a wily old German sky wolf.

A deadly time the old veteran gave him! Every feint, every move and rush Von Koffner anticipated and matched with another. And then suddenly the British squadron leader got a burst square in the Bosche's tank. With a wild whooming the Fokker nosed down into a cloud, black smoke streaming from its cowl.

Ian saw Von Koffner desperately trying to throw himself out. Then quickly he whirled the 'plane around as a German roared overhead, almost touching him with its landing-wheels.

Another machine came roaring down upon the escaping German, a Bristol two-seater. And in the cockpit sat Johnny Chisholm, crouched forward, teeth set in his helmeted face.

But the Bristol's wings were in tatters. The exhausts gouted oily smoke, since the plugs were fouled. A flying wire was flapping loose, and the wings quivered and shuddered as if to break off.

All this Ian saw in a flash. Then suddenly there



FLYING BOOTY.—Judging it to a nicety, Johnny threw the weighted boot, containing the German plans, down into Ian's cockpit.



was a hollow crash like the breaking of a vial of wrath, and two 'planes came tumbling down from the clouds, locked together in a holocaust of fire. Ian heard screams of terror. He opened his throttle and dived out of the way as the fiery mass hissed down upon him, shedding burning canvas and embers.

They were two German 'planes, marked with the Maltese crosses. Somehow, Ian guessed that that was the end of the fight.

Then four Allied ships came flashing up from below, and two came pouring down out of the clouds. The oil-splashed, awesome looking pilots jockeyed around. And Lieutenant Southey of C Flight gestured eloquently.

Every German 'plane was down, except one. All save the one Fokker upon whose tail Johnny was roaring like an avenging god. And instinctively, the remnants of the Red Devils' squadron turned to see how that mad chase was faring.

The Fokker zig-zagged, wriggled like a winged eel as the Bristol two-seater stabbed after him, with pencils of tracer smoke etching out from the gun. He was gradually being forced down. Then suddenly Ian, watching from upstairs, clenched his hands, and a groan escaped through his set lips.

"Gad! His gun belts are empty!"

It was true. A cry tore from Johnny's raw throat. In a lifting surge he came atop the Bosche and settled with wheels reaching down like claws of an eagle but four feet above his head. He should not escape—no—not if they crashed together.

The Bosche, realising what had happened, dropped his nose and went down, but Johnny rode down with him in the blasting dive. The German looked up, signalled frantically, and then as the German tried to backslide—to zoom up, and at the last moment thought better of it—there came the collision.

**CR-RASH!** To Johnny, the shock of collision came like the brain-searing crack of a four-point-nine shrapnel burst under his wings. Instinctively, his numbed fingers struggled with the stubborn clasp of his safety belt—and the steel tongue came free. He did not know it, but he was hurled violently from the cockpit.

His head crashed somewhere, and a thousand lights flashed before his eyes. Then he was falling, falling into a sea of night.

He came to his senses to hear the harsh roar of flames, and to see three fierce-eyed, infuriated German staff officers standing over him. They talked in German, in savage, fierce gutturals.

Johnny felt himself jerked roughly to his feet. Held on either side by a burly German non-com, the young British warbird found himself staring at a man in military uniform whose grey-seamed face, with its aggressive, upturned moustache, he instantly recognised.

It was none other than the Kaiser Wilhelm II., the Emperor of Germany himself!

"Eisen und Blut!" he ground out. "So! This is the Oberleutnant Chisholm—this lad?"

Johnny brought up in a snapping salute that would have done credit to any stiff-necked Jerry.

"Your Majesty is correct. Yet I would remind the All Highest that I have but done my duty to my country.

"Bah! Country! You will rejoice in your country when you learn what we are going to do with you," ground out the All Highest. "Listen. Our spyflier Kummel has brought us plans of the air defences round Paris and London, and we had intended a great raid of those two cities by our glorious Zeppelins to raze those two cities to ruins. It was to synchronise with the great smash-through

of our armies on the ground. But it will take place nevertheless—to-night!"

Johnny felt his heart hammering furiously at his throat. Devotedly, Johnny hoped, that Ian would be able fully to decode those papers in Kummel's boot. The young skydiver realised that this was Germany's last desperate throw.

"And you"—the Kaiser hurled at him with sudden venom—"are going to sail over these cities in the leading Zeppelin. You with several other distinguished prisoners, including a field-marshal. The great Kapitän Kummel himself was to have commanded the Zeppelin. He will do. He will return, you see."

A diabolical plan. Such a plan as could only have originated in the warped brain of a baffled, defeated war lord. As he was led away, sick and dazed, Johnny racked his brain for some way to avert the terrible catastrophe that threatened.

### Spy Work.

**KAPITAN HEINRICH KUMMEL**, of the German Imperial Air Force—and the Fatherland's master spy—paced to and fro like a caged tiger, as indeed he was. He was in a prison camp behind the Allied lines!

He was thinking of that flying-boot he had lost. It was the *verdammte* fortunes of war—but *Himmel*, it was terrible. Germany's spy system was revealed in those papers—the names and identities of spies behind the Allied lines. Not only that, but the plan—the great plan!—to bomb Paris and London by Zeppelins was laid out in code.

Suddenly Kummel whirled. His monocle flashed malignantly as the iron door of the cage rattled open, and an armed squad of British soldiers entered, bringing the evening meal for the German prisoners.

The next moment, however, he gave a real start as he intercepted a secret signal from a burly soldier. It was a secret sign in the German spy system, and as he came closer bearing a steaming plate of food, the man said in a low voice, in German:

"I am Herr K.33 from the Wilhelmstrasse."

"So! *Das ist sehr gut!*" exclaimed the spyflier in a low, exultant tone. "Have you any news for me?"

The answer came in cautious tones. "The Wilhelmstrasse has arranged your escape, Herr Kapitän. The British intend to interrogate you further to-night, and you will be taken by car to the Red Devils' 'drome for that purpose. But on the way—well, things can happen, even with a military escort, *nicht wahr?*"

Herr Kummel squared his shoulders. Into his eyes leapt the old look of bold insolence.

As the secret agent, Herr K. 33 had so sagely prophesied, things did happen on that car ride that took the prisoner from base to the Nth Pursuit 'drome.

Major Drissol himself drove the car, and the prisoner's escort proved to be Herr K.33 himself. In low tones that mysterious individual gave the spyflier his instructions from the Wilhelmstrasse, while unlocking his handcuffs.

Then from the rear seat Kapitän Kummel of the German Imperial Air Force suddenly leapt upon Major Drissol.

### The Spyflier's Escape.

**R**OUND a rough deal table in the ill-lighted operations office of the Nth Pursuit 'drome several important British staff officers sat waiting tensely. And amongst them was Squadron-leader Ian Chisholm, skipper of the famous Red Devils.

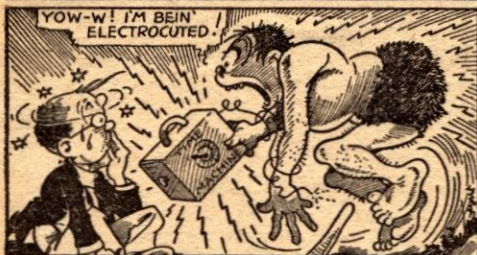
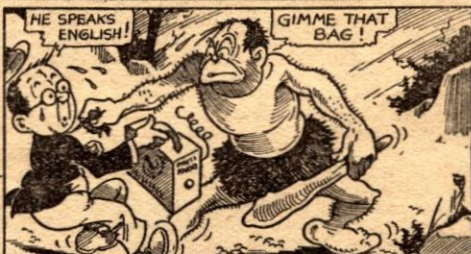
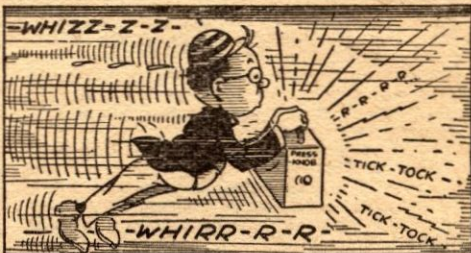
The door opened and Major Drissol, for whom they were waiting, at last came in, saluting stiffly.



## THE SENTENCE OF THE TIME MACHINE.



## ARTLESS ALGY'S BUST-UP BRAINWAVES!



"Gentlemen," his familiar terse voice was unusually brusque and he seemed disturbed. "We have little time to waste. The Zeppelins will be over Paris to-night—unless we stop them."

He seated himself and glanced towards the door through which he had come, and his voice rose in a brusque command. "Bring in the prisoner!"

There was a sharp intake of breaths from the Allied officers round the table as the door opened, and three stalwart non coms with the red bands of Military Police on their arms dragged in their prisoner, squirming and writhing amongst them.

For the prisoner was bound hand and foot and gagged! His body was bound around with ropes like a mummy's. Yet in spite of it he struggled.

In answer to the startled glances of the Allied staff officers, Major Drissol explained curtly.

"Captain Kummel was so ill-advised as to attempt to escape," he barked, "—this was a necessary precaution. Now, gentlemen, urgent intelligence brings us here, eh?" he proceeded in his brusque tones.

Squadron-leader Ian Chisholm at once rose to his feet, a portfolio of papers in his hand.

"You are right, Major," he said his voice ringing. "The spy's papers are here, decoded. They give the names of German spy agents behind the Allied lines, all of whom have been arrested—except one, Herr K.33. And they reveal a deep-laid plot to defeat the aerial defences of Paris and London in order that Zeppelins may get through. We now know that these enemy agents have affixed warning lights to the balloon aprons around Paris and London. Those lights will flash to-night, and the Zeppelins will be able to lift over the obstacles."

The balloon aprons were an amazing device for the defences of London and Paris. They consisted of huge chain metal curtains suspended in the air by balloons at approximately the Zeppelin's cruising height.

Major Drissol leapt to his feet. A hoarse exclamation hissed through his set teeth.

"You have found that out!" he almost snarled.



Then he pulled himself together and went on quietly: "We have but a short hour in which to formulate plans for the defence of Paris and London. And our task is made more difficult because of the fact that important Allied prisoners of war are being carried aboard one of the Zeppelins."

"I did not say that," exclaimed the big blond skyman, rather sharply.

"No, no. But it is known between ourselves," said Major Drissol, hurriedly. "No attempt must be made to bring that Zeppelin down, of course. But I am going to show you how to defeat these raiding Zeppelins. If you will kindly grant me a few moments . . ."

As he said this he made for the door, agitation and haste in his manner. It closed behind him.

"It's working," said Squadron-leader Ian at last. His voice was very tense.

At that the man who had called himself Herr K.33 stepped forward, and without a word set to work to release the prisoner's bonds. As the gag which had partially concealed his face came off, the prisoner struggled up with an exclamation—and it was Major Drissol himself.

"Confound it, Sergeant Wills, you needn't have helped Kummel to bind me so tightly!" he exclaimed, loud irritably. And then with a low laugh. "We've fooled him, gentlemen. Captain Kummel is escaping—not knowing that the British Secret Service have connived at his escape."

The man who had called himself Herr K.33 removed his disguise, which consisted of a false nose and military toothbrush moustache—and revealed the grinning homely features of Flight-Sergeant Tornado Wills.

"We sure fooled him all right," he said. "I told him that there was a captured Hannover two-seater in Hangar B, and that it would be warmed up for flight, ready for him. And so there is. He'll get away all right."

"And I've got to put a jerk into it," put in Squadron-Leader Ian in a sharp voice. "Give me that false nose and moustache and your tunic, Tornado. As Herr K.33 he won't suspect me, and as his accomplice I'll fly in the rear cockpit. Flight-Sergeant Tornado Wills will follow me into the air, to help if necessary."

"Off with you then—and good luck!" cried the senior officer present in his deep voice. And as Ian in his disguise made for the door all stood up stiffly to attention.

### The Air Armada.

SWIFTLY Ian made his way to B hangar and, aware of a mad drumming of his pulses, he parted the canvas flap and slipped inside.

Within was a breathless silence—crawling darkness. Then the faintest possible sound, like the swishing of snakes. Ian stiffened as he felt the hard jolt of a Luger barrel in his chest.

"Handes hoch!" hissed a fury-laden voice. "Mein Kapitän, it is I—Herr K. 33," answered Ian in a whisper. "I must escape with you. I am under suspicion." And the next moment a flashlamp shone in his face. The spyfler seemed satisfied with his swift scrutiny, for he flashed it off again.

"It is good you came," he growled angrily. "Something is wrong with the engine of this verdammte Hannover."

The disguised ace soon had the defect right with the engine, and pushing the plane out of the hangar, they pulled the propeller. The warm engine broke into life immediately, and the two scrambled into the cockpit of the Hannover.

As they did so there came the sounds of shouts, pounding feet. The alarm was evidently raised.


Von Kummel with a crazed snarling laugh opened out throttle, and the Hannover tore over the tarmac.

Up and up. Bat-flying now through the stubborn jungle of the night. A ticklish business. And then the Hannover was lost in a great world of dampness; the clouds!

And then the groan of her engine was suddenly drowned by a mighty roar. And Squadron-leader Ian saw the Zeppelins.

He gasped at the sight of those four mighty elliptical shapes moving with ponderous majesty through the endless dome of black sky. Flying dreadnoughts! Yes; they were magnificent—terrible. Those monsters—they were roaring through the skies to rain death and destruction on the finest cities of the world.

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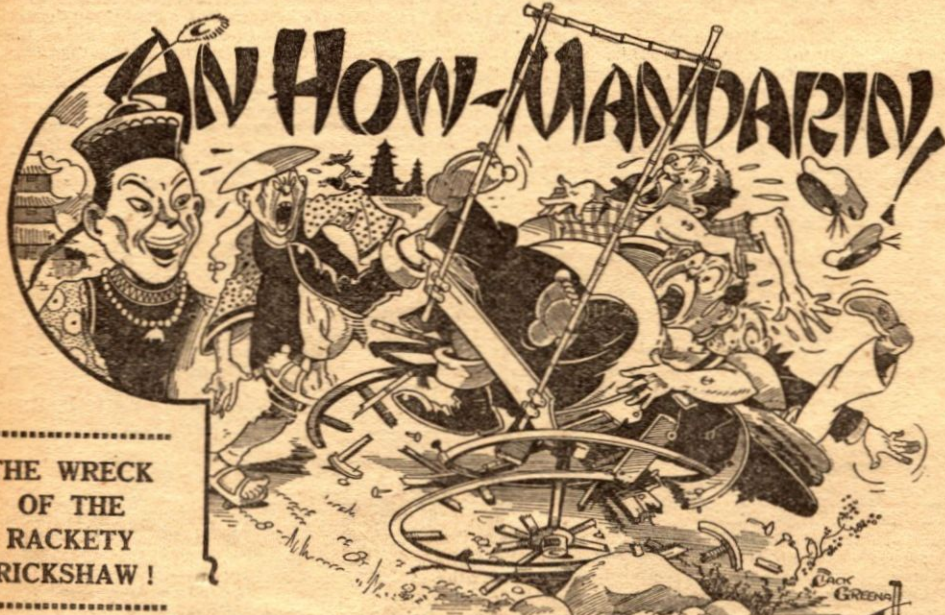
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THE CREW OF THE  
HAPPY HADDOCK  
IN CHINA!

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LAUGHS IN EVERY  
LINE OF THIS NEW  
FUN SERIES.



THE WRECK  
OF THE  
RACKETY  
RICKSHAW!

### A Bust Up.

THE docks of the Chinese seaport town of Hwat'tse Onhia were crowded with eager orientals that day. For the new Mandarin of the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles was due to arrive, and the citizens of Hwat'tse Onhia were anxious to see if he resembled the late Yuno How, his grandfather. Nobody had seen An How, to whom the title of Mandarin had now descended. Long ago he had gone away to sea on an English ship, and this was the first time he had returned to his paternal city.

Certainly, though, the eager spectators did not expect their new Mandarin to arrive in such a ramshackle vessel as presently slid into the harbour and tied up against the quayside. The *Happy Haddock*, English tramp steamer, seemed no sort of ship in which to convey An How, Mandarin of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles, to his inheritance. But An How, before the honour of the title came to him, had worked humbly as a cook on that vessel, and he had brought all his shipmates along with him to share his good fortune.

"Sink the ole lugger!" said Slim Small, the fattest of the said shipmates, as the whole crew leaned over the rail and watched the seething crowd. "They're giving you a right rousing welcome!"

"China-boy likee Hon'able House of How very much, yes-sir," said the new Mandarin, in his quaint way. "My family topside good fellas!"

"Looks like it," said Fat Burns, the slender seaman. "Wonder if that Ju Choo guy is about. You best be careful, An."

Back in England, on the very day that An How had received news of his inheritance, there had been an attempt to kidnap him instigated by one Ju Choo

the next in order of succession for the Mandarinship, and An had only been saved from a sticky death by the resource of his shipmates. As Fat Burns pointed out, then, there was need to be careful.

Barely had Duthey Jud, the Swedish bos'n, and Mister Hettup, the mate of the *Haddock*, slid the gangways into place, than a procession of Chinamen trooped on to the deck of the old steamer. They were led by a tall, important-looking person in long robes and with the rat-tail moustache favoured by the Chinese ruling classes, and, their hands tucked into their voluminous sleeves, they all bowed with respect to An How.

The tall Chinese spoke to An in his native tongue, and the new Mandarin translated for the benefit of his European shipmates. He was Li Ha, he said, a sort of Grand Vizier to the Mandarin, who had been managing the estate until An How should arrive.

An How bowed in return and then the whole crew of *Happy Haddock*, including Cap'n Keelson himself, followed suit.

"Stap me!" said the skipper. "I'm beginnin' to feel real chinky, I am. Next thing you know we'll all be sproutin' pigtails!"

Li Ha led An How down the gangway on to the quay where two arrangements like sedan chairs waited to convey them to the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles. An stepped into one, followed by Li Ha, and two coolies picked up the chair and carried it away.

All the rest of the *Happy Haddock's* crew, naturally enough, tried to cram themselves into the second vehicle simultaneously. The result was that they all jammed in the doorway and started to tell each other off in the picturesque terms of the sea.



"Yah! You lop-eared landerabs!" hooted the skipper. "Stap me! This here's for me!"

"Gerroff me head!" yelled a voice from below. "Somebody's standin' on it!"

"Harf a mo', I got me leg wedged!"

"Stap me!" Came out of it—the whole lubberly lot on you!" said the skipper, yanking the struggling *Haddockites* out of the chair. "Give's a hand, Hettup. We'll settle this in order of superiority. It'll only hold three. That means that the skipper, the mate and the bos'n rides. Clear out of it you others—you'll hafter walk!"

Pip, Slim, and Fat were pushed aside as the skipper directed, and Dutchy and the two officers climbed in, waved them a saucy adieu, and directed the coolies to take up the chair.

"Of all the cheek!" said Pip. "Superiority they calls it! Never heard the like!"

The three remaining *Haddockites* stuck their hands in their pockets and trooped after the procession, muttering uncomplimentary remarks about the skipper giving himself such airs. But they were already some distance behind, and when, presently, they turned into the narrow, confused streets of the Chinese city, they lost track of it altogether.

"That's gone an' torn it!" said Fat. "How're we gonna find that there Palace—"

"Harf a mo', what's them things? You can hire 'em cancher?"

"It's a rickshaw. P'raps we could take one and go straight to the Bluebottle place, eh? Gotny money?"

"Fourence," replied Fat.

"That's all right. Fourence is a lot o' money in China. Hi, boy! Givee sailorman topside ride alleight alleight!"

A coolie ran up with his rickshaw, grinning all over his flat face. The vehicle didn't look too safe, but the three of them climbed in and perched themselves precariously on the high seat.

"Steppea on gas!" instructed Pip, and the rickshaw started off on its rickety way.

One of the wheels seemed indifferently secured to the axle, but the Chink between the shafts didn't bother at all about the peculiar lurching gait of his vehicle.

"Coo! D'you think this here's safe!" said Slim, after they had staggered a few hundred yards. "It's got square wheels or summat!"

"It's started creaking now! Look out! It's——"

*Crash! Bump! Thud!* The wheels of the rickshaw suddenly crumbled up beneath them in a knock-kneed fashion, and the three *Haddockites* struck the earth with three separate and distinct wallops, to find themselves seated among the remains of the collapsed rickshaw.

The coolie turned round and exploded into such a torrent of Chinese, that the three shipmates forgot their injuries. They stared up at him, marvelling at the swift functioning of his larynx.

"Sink the ole lugger! Is he offul cross?"

"Velly solly!" said Pip. "Apologisee smashee rickshaw. Is China Boy topside angly!"

*Ho-hi otse kiang pu lihang ch-kau tritsze-pou tsing lo-hi kweitcheng!*" said Chink-boy.

"That," murmured Pip, "must mean yes!"

Fat Burns took the fourence out of his pocket and presented it to the excited coolie. The Chink gave a hysterical shriek and flung it on the ground. Then he began making violent gestures indicating that fourence was not enough to pay for his broken rickshaw. When Fat conveyed by signs that they had no more, the coolie looked as though he were on the verge of an apoplectic fit. A crowd of rickshaw boys and miscellaneous Chinks began to gather round, and when they heard what the trouble was they glared menacingly at the Europeans.

"I don't like the look of this bunch!" gulped Fat Burns. "They look as though they might get nasty!"

"Let's bunk!" said Pip, with an uneasy glance round.

Acting on this good advice, the three of them suddenly dived through the mob and rushed down the narrow Chinese street at full pelt. They heard a howl of rage behind them and then they looked back to see a crowd of angry citizens of Hwat'tse Onhia racing after them.

"Down here!" gasped Pip, turning into a side street, no bigger than an alley. "If they collar us—they'll pound us to mincemeat!"

The other two rushed after the nimble cabin-boy. Pip scampered a yard or two along the alley and then darted down another turning to the left, followed by his panting shipmates. They found themselves in an open square with a pagoda-like building in the centre.

"Dodge in here!" called Fat Burns. "It looks nice and dark. Might give 'em the slip!"

The three *Haddockites* plunged into the pagoda and crouched down into a dark corner. A second later the crowd went hurtling by, yelling for their blood. They went straight past the pagoda and on into the narrow street which opened off the square.

Pip breathed a sigh of relief.

"That's another sticky mess we've escaped. Better stay here a bit until they give up the chase."

"What sort of a place is this," said Fat Burns. "There's an idol or something over there."

They looked in the direction he was pointing. At the far end of the big, dark hall an idol was cunningly placed so that a slender beam of light from the roof strongly illuminated it. It was an idol with a pointed head-dress, sitting cross-legged—like a Buddha—but with eight pairs of arms disposed at differing angles from its body.

"Must be some sort of a temple," said Slim. "Hope nobody catches us here, 'cos they're a bit funny about Whites going into their——"

"Shshsh!" hissed Pip. "I can hear somebody coming."

They drew back hastily into the shadows as they heard steps outside. Presently two Chinese, chatting in their own tongue, passed them and went on into the temple. At last they stopped at the foot of the idol, and one of the men, who seemed to be some sort of priest, nodded to the other and chuckled. The other man had his back to the *Haddockites* and was looking at the idol, but at last he turned round.

"Why," whispered Pip. "That's that Li Ha bloke that went with An How."

"That's him all right," said Fat. "What are they doing?"

The priest had gone behind the idol and was adjusting some mechanical part. Suddenly the three sailors gave a start. The idol was shaking its head as though saying "No," while the central pair of arms turned their thumbs downwards towards the floor. Then the priest reappeared with a ghastly looking knife and made a sort of ceremonial jab at a long table in front of the altar. Li Ha grinned as though satisfied, and then took from his pocket a purse and handed it to the priest.

"Rehearsing for some sort of sacrifice," whispered Pip. "The priest works the gadget in the idol which is supposed to signify he is to slaughter the poor goat—or whatever it is."

"Mebbe," said Fat in an undertone. "But what's that Li Ha bloke want to pay the priest for? That bird's up to no good."

"Well, it ain't no business of ours," said Slim. "Come on. Let's get out while the going's good. That here idol gives me the creeps!"



They thought the advice of Slim good and crept quietly from the temple. A little searching put them on the road to the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles, which they reached without further trouble.

They entered the luxurious palace to find Cap'n Keelson, Dutchy, and the mate, squatting on the floor with their boots off and eating chop suey with chop-sticks at a low flat table.

"Hello," said the Cap'n. "Where you boys bin? Up to no good I'll warrant. Sidown an' have an old-laid egg. An How says there 'as bin buried in the garden for a thousand years—that's how they like 'em here!"

"Not me, sir," said Fat, pulling a wry face. "Gimme some o' that stuff. Where's An How, Cap'n?"

"You mean his Illustrious Excellency the Mandarin of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles? He's gone to put

"That's him. He has all them arms to signify he has a hand in everything like."

"We must warn An How!" cried Pip. "He can't go through with this!"

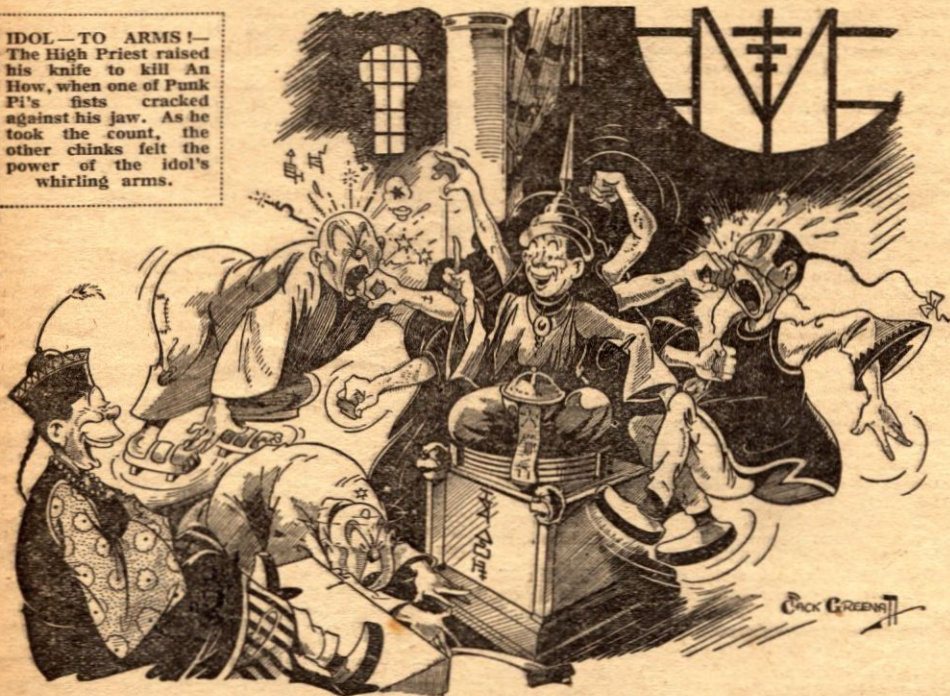
"He must do," the Cap'n replied. "The people won't recognise him as the Mandarin if he don't!"

"I don't like the look of this!" said Pip, scowling at the idol. "It looks as though that Ju Choo, An's rival, is up to his little—Gosh! That's an idea! We'll let An go through with it, but as regards ole Punk Pi himself—well, here boys, gather round, an' I'll tell you my wheeze."

### The Living Idol.

THE Temple of Punk Pi reverberated to the monotonous chanting of a thousand devout Chinese. In the gloom of the temple they stood with bowed heads, singing the praises of the Great

**IDOL—TO ARMS!**—  
The High Priest raised his knife to kill An How, when one of Punk Pi's fists cracked against his jaw. As he took the count, the other chinks felt the power of the idol's whirling arms.



on his best pants for the initiation ceremony. He has to go to the Temple of Punk Pi and lie on the sacrificial table before the altar, an' if ole Punk Pi approves of him he nods his head. If he don't, he shakes his head an' turns his thumbs down, an' a guy with a knife comes forward an' slits An How's throat. 'Course they never do that part of it now. Ole Punk Pi always nods, An How says!"

"Good lord!" said Pip, suddenly remembering the interesting rehearsal they had seen in the temple "But, Cap'n, if the idol was to shake its head they'd kill An wouldn't they?"

"Oh yes, they'd have to—'cos the people believe ole Punk Pi must be obeyed."

"Is that Punk Pi over there?" demanded Pip, suddenly serious.

The Cap'n turned and looked at a smaller image of the idol at the end of the room.

Punk Pi, the God of Hwat'tse Onhia. For twice a thousand years Punk Pi had stolidly sat there, sanctioning the new Mandarins or having those whom the great God could foresee would fail in their responsibility, dispatched to their ancestors with the aid of the High Priest's knife. Thus he had sat at the beginning of all things and thus he would sit till the end of time.

So thought the Chinese worshippers, anyhow. If they had not all had their heads bowed, however, they might have noticed that Punk Pi had human qualities even as they, for one of his eight arms suddenly descended and scratched his face at the side.

Somewhere from behind him a voice said, "Stoppit, you fool! They'll notice!"

"Cou'dn't help it!" replied Punk Pi to the



unknown voice. "There was a fly walking across my face an' it tickled."

"I wanna sneeze," said another mysterious voice. "Gag him!" gasped Punk Pi. "He'll give the show away!"

There was a muffled grunt from somewhere in the rear, and Punk Pi, for an instant looked as though he were practising a spot of all-in wrestling with himself. Presently, however, the arms sorted themselves out and assumed their normal spidery aspect, without any of the worshippers noticing the phenomenon.

Close inspection of friend Punk would have revealed a very seaman-like anchor tattooed on one of his arms. The arms too, varied slightly and some had whiskers on 'em. But this was not noticeable in the gloom. Closer inspection would have revealed, too, that Punk's inscrutable frontispiece now bore a striking resemblance to Christopher Charlmagne Pipeweede.

For the boys of the *Haddock* had shifted the real Punk Pi, heavy as he was, and Pip had managed to rig himself up something like the idol. The others had contrived to place themselves behind Pip so that they made up the requisite number of arms, and cover the rest of their persons with a black cloth.

"Watch out now," murmured Punk Pi, twisting his mouth in a lop-sided attitude. "Here comes An How."

The chanting became louder, and the crowds of Chinese made an avenue in their midst. Then slowly appeared the High Priest of Punk Pi followed by An How in splendid robes and at some distance, Li Ha and two other priests. Slowly the procession made its way to the altar, the High Priest mumbling Chinese at intervals, at which the worshippers stopped singing to call monosyllabic replies.

An How bowed before Punk Pi, and Pip nearly threw a fit in case the late cook of the *Happy Haddock* should look up and recognise him, and give the game away. But all went well. An How lay down on the sacrificial table before the altar. Still with bowed heads, not looking at the alleged idol at all, the priests disposed themselves round the table. Li Ha remained a respectful distance away.

Suddenly there was dead silence. The High Priest shouted some passionate words in Chinese, and Pip guessed that he was invoking the Great God Punk Pi to say whether An How should become the Mandarin or die. At the same moment one of the other priests began fiddling round the back as though looking for the idol's mechanism.

Pip nodded his head violently. The High Priest looked startled, spoke some hurried words in an undertone to the priest looking for the mechanism. The man replied in whispers.

The High Priest repeated his invocation in a loud voice. Pip again nodded. The High Priest made agitated signals to the other priest, and then before Pip was ready for the move his head was grasped in the priest's hands and waggled from side to side.

"Ow!" gurgled Pip. "Wassagame, you big——" Suddenly the priest who had grabbed him let out a wild howl. A couple of Punk Pi's spare arms suddenly grabbed him round the neck as in a Rugby tackle and a third arm was punching him lustily on the nose.

The High Priest gave a sudden shout of astonishment and rage, and sprang forward, the great sacrificial knife in his hand. He raised it aloft above An How, intending to strike.

Then one of Punk Pi's arms suddenly shot out and caught the High Priest under the jaw. He grunted, dropped the knife, and flopped out for the count. Li Ha and the two priests rushed forward to wrestle with Punk Pi, and from then on the idol took on the aspect of an octopus that had puristic ambitions.

Biff! Wham! Thud! Whoo! All Punk Pi's

eight arms were lamming out in all possible directions like the piston rods of a locomotive.

There was a shout of amazement from the worshippers and An How sat up on the sacrificial table in wonder! He saw the great Punk Pi going at it hammer and tongs! The High Priest and another were well knocked out on either side of the idol, and Li Ha and the other priest were wrestling helplessly in Punk Pi's many arms!

"Quick, An!" gasped Punk Pi. "Draw the curtains over the altar or something. It's us—the boys of the *Haddock*!"

An How gasped in speechless wonder for a second. Then he seemed to realise Pip's words. He sprang to the side of the altar and drew across a great black curtain, decorated with a silver dragon, cutting off the view of the worshippers.

The doings behind the curtain now became violent. Punk Pi disintegrated and resolved himself into four individuals—Pip himself, Slim, Dutchy, and Fat.

"Help us to secure these birds!" gasped Pip. "An then we must get the idol back before the other chaps rumble anything!"

Five minutes of perspiring work and Li Ha, the priest, and the High Priest and his underling who had been k.o'd were secured with ropes which the *Haddockites* had brought with them before preparing their little surprise. Then another few minutes of strenuous work and they had the real Punk Pi back on his pedestal.

"We'll skip with these bozes out of the back way," said Fat Burns, "an' we'll hold 'em prisoners till you decide what to do with them! We'll leave you to explain to your subjects as best you can!"

An How had hardly got over his first surprise, when the *Haddockites* dragged their prisoners out by the back door of the Temple of Punk Pi. They left the new Mandarin of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles to try and kid his subjects that Punk Pi had suddenly manifested himself in the idol and taken physical action against An How's enemies.

And it worked! When An How drew back the curtain, revealing only himself and the great inscrutable Punk Pi sitting there as solid as ever, the worshippers, as one man, grovelled on the floor of the temple.

Meanwhile the *Haddockites* dumped their prisoners in the private dungeons of the Palace of the Seven Thousand Bluebottles, to await the judgment of the new Mandarin they had plotted against, and it did not take much of their persuasive sort of questioning to discover that Li Ha was Ju Choo himself.

This is not the end of Ju Choo's Celestial scheming! Look out for further amusing adventures of the jolly tars of the "*Happy Haddock*" in China next week.

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## NEXT WEEK'S BIG TREAT.

## KING KONG

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Chums, you are booked for the treat of your lives. Next week King Kong, the Eighth Wonder of the World, comes to "Boys' Magazine." The staggering, breath-stopping exploits of this Fifty-Foot Monster in the jungle and New York appear for the first time in a boys' paper. Further details of this Gigantic Story Scoop below.

MY DEAR CHUMS,

Whether you have seen that great film, King Kong, at your local cinema yet or not, you will be enthralled by the breathless story of his adventures, which I have secured for next week. By special arrangement with Radio Pictures Ltd., the exploits of Kong will appear in a boys' journal for the first time. In addition to spectacle pictures, the exciting and ingenious way in which the film was made, will also be revealed.

Chaps, I know you will agree with me when I say this is the chance of a lifetime for every boy to possess, a permanent record of the greatest film ever produced, so I want every one of you to blazon the great news of

#### Our Kong Souvenir Number

to all your chums, so that they, too, can obtain a copy for themselves. Such a treat is a rare occurrence—so make the most of it. Assuming that most of you have already seen the film, I will not waste space here with a résumé of the story, but I can say this—if anything, the breathless chapters, written by a famous boys' author specially for the *Mag.*, are even more real and thrilling than the picturisation on the silver screen.

Now sit tight for this immense feature next week!

Another big scoop! Nothing less than a yarn by the greatest author of flying stories in the world to-day. I refer, of course, to Mr. Arch Whitehouse, whose brilliant sky tales are eagerly devoured by immense numbers of readers, both in England and America. I have persuaded Mr. Whitehouse to do a whole series for my readers, and the first yarn will definitely appear in the *Mag.* next week. It is entitled:

#### Sandbag Patrol,

and if you don't find yourselves laughing and thrilled in turns by the exploits of Second-Lieutenant Ward Clemens—well, I'll not believe it. Mr. Whitehouse is an old war-time flier himself, so he knows what he is writing about.

#### Corsair Craft

is the title of another ripping yarn in our great new-type pirate series. Nasir-ed-Din makes a big bid to get Val and his gallant comrades into his clutches, but the crafty old Moor has a tough handful in the Corsair Raiders. How they eel out of his carefully laid trap and turn the tables on the plotter with the upturned slipper toes, is as amusing as it is thrilling.

More laughs are provided by those inimitable sailor men of the *Happy Haddock*. Still in China,



they have a hair-raising time during a Chinese festival, known as the Feast of the Dragon. On one day in the year the Chinese of An How's village release the biggest criminal from the local clink. But his freedom is short-lived, for at the height of the ceremony he is "eaten" by a huge, model dragon and quietly strangled! Ju Choo, An How's arch enemy, is also released from the local lock-up, and he plots to feed the ex-cook of the *Haddock* to the dragon instead of the criminal! In

#### Dragon Get Your Chink!

you are told the execrably funny story of how the crew of the *Happy Haddock* chip in to turn the tables on the plotter.

More of the exploits of Ian and Johnny Chisholm of the Red Devils Air Squadron also, chums. Look for the title:

#### Fighting the Flying Dreadnoughts

for further big thrills with these old favourites. The Football Corner also hits the high spots. Here is a footer story that's different—written as only John Hunter can write.

I wanted to tell you more about the

#### Great Free Gifts

I am planning for my loyal readers, but space will not permit. Next week, however, I hope to have everything cut and dried. So look out for a huge surprise on the page of

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.



THE SOCCER TALE OF THE CENTURY FEATURING A WIZARD WITH BOTH FEET!



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Sanders in these Gripping Chapters

by JOHN HUNTER.

**S**EVENTEEN-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.

They returned home from their match against Manchester City to find a parcel addressed to Billy. Wonderingly, the boy opened it, disclosing a wooden box.

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

## Fear of the Unknown.

**T**HE cobra was in a state of fury. It had been shut up in the box and half suffocated for a considerable time, and it was anxious and eager to deal death to the first living thing it encountered.

It was a specially selected cobra—a hamadryad from the Rajah's breeding ground—and it would hunt down its intended victim as no other living snake would; it can outpace a horse, and it attains great length for a poisonous snake.

This chap was about three feet long, which meant that he was not big as hamadryads go.

The great head came out like speckled lightning, and Billy, with a cry, leapt backwards. Only a goalkeeper of international ability or a trained boxer could have jumped so fast, and the speed of it saved Billy's life. For the gaping and hideous jaws missed by a fraction of an inch, and death shaved Billy without touching him.

Yet even then disaster would have descended upon him but for Sammy, who was gifted for thinking and acting swiftly in an emergency.

Sammy got two great hands round the cobra's neck just below its hood, and he clung and squeezed with all his ferocious strength.

The whiplike thing came lashing out of the box and struck round his arm, constricting terribly, striving desperately to get free that the head might strike.

Sammy clung, the veins in his temples standing out, perspiration streaming down his cheeks, his encircled arm strained and twisted under the fierce constriction of the snake.

But he held on. He held the spotted death as in a vice, and gradually he found the strength of its grip of him relaxing.

Billy rushed to the fireplace and picked up the poker. They got the thing's head down to the ground



and Billy beat at it. A minute later only a quivering, battered mass stretched across the floor, and both of them stood, leaning on the table, their throats dry, their breathing that of men who have run a great distance with fear at their heels.

Even then it did not seem that the snake could be dead. Even then there was something so deadly and evil about it that they could hardly touch it. They got it back into the box and they refastened the box.

"The police, eh?" said Sammy. They had swallowed some water and were somewhat recovered.

Billy's face set. "No. . . . This must have come from the Rajah. It's the sort of thing he'd do. I'm going to put a jerk into him and see how he likes it."

He got a sheet of plain paper and on it he printed:

To H.I.H.—The Rajah of Kilshahistan. With the compliments and fraternal greetings of  
The Brotherhood of the Bear.

They put the sheet of paper in with the snake, and they wrapped it all up carefully and posted it off straight away.

"Now," said Billy quietly, "we shall see what we shall see."

The Rajah duly received the parcel. It was opened by a slave of no account, a person whose life would not matter if the parcel happened to contain anything deadly. This individual showed snake and letter to Ali Khat, who considered it his duty to submit the same to his master.

The Rajah was enraged. To him was brought the messenger who had delivered the snake to the boys' lodging. This man was able to prove delivery.

The Rajah thereupon became moody and thoughtful. To Ali Khat he said: "Somebody got in ahead of those boys and took the box." He again read the message Billy had printed on the paper. Then he let the paper slide from his hand to the floor.

Ali Khat got the definite impression that the Rajah was suddenly afraid.

## Steel's Sensational Return.

IT was no longer possible to keep from the public the fact of Steel's disappearance. The Branston people expected him either to play for the Rovers or to read an explanation of his absence, for he was far better than young Harraway.

So at last Mr. Trant came out into the open and confessed that so far as was known, Steel had been abducted for a reason Mr. Trant could not guess. Having done this, Mr. Trant issued an urgent appeal for Steel's return, and all the football world took a hand in seeking him, aided by the papers.

Things stood thus when the Rovers

played Wanterley Invicta in another round of the Cup Competition.

The Invicta were a powerful Midland combination, and they had cleverly leavened a team of young and enthusiastic players with old League men. Also there was included in their ranks a Scottish International who had had some transfer fee trouble and was playing out of his class, though for high wages, until the trouble was settled.

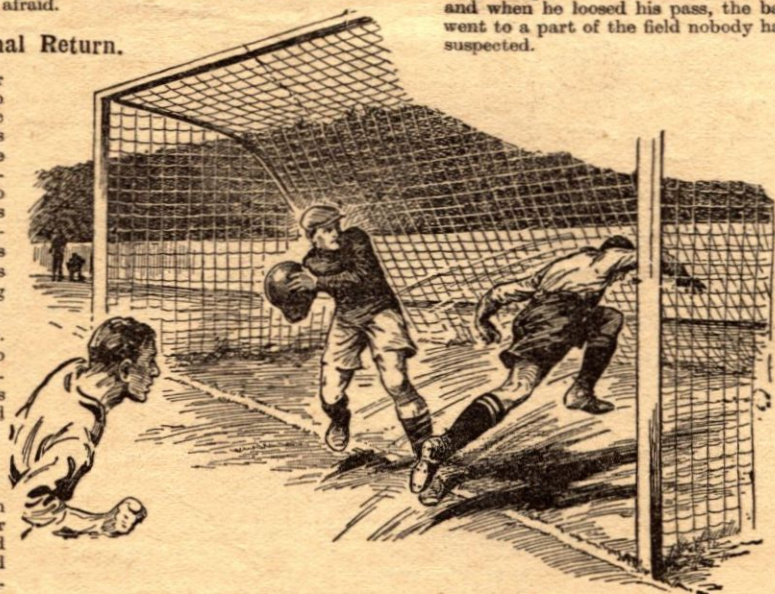
This particular man was perhaps the most brilliant centre-half of his day. A price of ten thousand pounds was on his head. Though he played for a team outside the Big League, he would be Scotland's automatic choice when the internationals came on. Naturally, he had seen the Invicta through from victory to victory, and a duel between him and Sammy was something to go a mile or two to watch.

The game took place on the Rovers' ground, and half-an-hour before the kick-off the gates were closed. Young Harraway again figured at outside left for the Rovers, and it was hoped that the lad would have gained more confidence and put up a better show than before.

Brains and brawn constituted the slogan of the Invicta. They had a lot of big and hefty young fellows, who kicked and rushed and feared nothing, one or two old League heads, and their famous Scot in the middle. They were a dangerous lot.

Invicta won the toss and Sammy kicked off. Andrews, on the right, tried to get away, but a big young half-back who stood not on ceremony promptly bundled him over the chalk. That set the note for the match—fierce and relentless, quite fair, but decidedly robust.

Throw-in and the Scottish centre-half secured. He was a beautiful player. He held on just long enough and not a second too long, and when he loosed his pass, the ball went to a part of the field nobody had suspected.



THE CHARGING CENTRE.—Billy jumped and saved. As he landed, he side-stepped and let the rushing centre-forward into the back of the net.



Away went the Invicta's boring, powerful forward line, with its old and canny inside right lying slightly back to pick up stray and half-kicked clearances.

Tom Holloway stopped it. His vast experience and gift for positioning stood him in good stead against raw and bustling players. He did not appear to run. He seemed to be just where the ball happened to be. It is the hall-mark of the really great player.

He suddenly nipped in, took the ball off the toes of the centre-forward and sent it down the field in a long, slanting kick, which found the feet of Harraway over on the left. It was the clearance of a crack as opposed to the booting away of a tyro.

Harraway fumbled slightly in taking the ball, but recovered in time to slip round the half who tried to cover him. He had a run through open, and instead of holding the chalk, he cut in. It was a piece of initiative hardly expected of so young a player, and for the moment it threw the Invicta off their balance.

Harraway was storming for goal. He saw a big back bearing down on him. Sammy was up with him and Harraway should have slipped the ball sideways to the most dangerous goalgetter in Britain; but he got wild about the head.

He tried to keep on. He tried to beat the back. And he found himself spinning sideways, shocked from crown to toe by a heavy charge, and he heard the thud of the leather as the back got it away just in time to avoid Sammy's rush.

Invicta once more on the attack. None of the short passing business, no frills, no dainty work, no plans worked out ahead. Just plain slinging it from wing to wing and every man in the forward line throwing every ounce he had into the business.

A corner was forced. It was taken from the right, and the winger put it over beautifully—just about a yard from the bar, and slanting a foot above head height, ready to be flicked into the net at cannon-ball speed.

Billy saw heads leaping before him. He had marked the ball from the moment it left the winger's boot. He was up above the heads, fists clenched and close together. He took the ball just right and it ricocheted away, while the crowd yelled excitedly. Varney, who had come back to help, trapped it down and walked it out of the penalty area, quite coolly and easily.

Varney tried to draw the Scottish centre-half, but that player was not having any. He was out to stop Sammy, and he had not the least intention of leaving that individual a clear field and a straight run down the middle.

He covered his mid-field and his left wing cleverly, and the right was the only thing open to Varney, who put Andrews away with a pass along the carpet like a billiards shot.

Andrews was hustled by the back. They ran shoulder to shoulder down the line, fighting a ding-dong battle, which Andrews won on the corner flag; then he suddenly got his foot round the ball and sent it inside while he himself went over the line on to his back.

Sammy took the ball in his stride. There was a swift movement just behind him. The ball was hooked from his toes by a clever, precise foot which did not leg him up, but missed his ankle by a fraction of an inch, and a loud shout proclaimed that he had been neatly robbed when about to shoot.

The centre-half was opening up the game once more. He tried his right wing, but the long and leggy Rance had that covered, intercepted the pass, and put through to Harraway.

The boy was a little shaken. He knew that if he had not lost his head a few minutes earlier the Rovers would have been one up. Some of his confidence had evaporated. True, he gathered the ball all right, but

he dallied with it and the half-back smashed his chances and again set the Invicta's right wing down the field.

A regular supporter of the Rovers said to Mr. Trant: "You ought to have Steel out there." Mr. Trant nodded. That was perfectly true. Steel would have made the opposing half look cheap.

Invicta's right wing were coming down strongly. They beat Taffley by a split second in a quick inside pass that had the back floundering. The pivot took it on the run and slammed it for goal.

Billy jumped. He got his hands to it under the bar and pulled it down. Landing on his feet, he caught the ball as it dropped, side-stepped like a boxer, let the still rushing centre-forward into the back of the net, and cleared. It was breath-taking in its speed.

The crowd stood up to it.

Now the Rovers were going down once more. Lacey, at inside left, worked a cunning dribble through to his wing, and Harraway ran inside as his partner flicked his hand towards him.

Lacey took it down well. He was clever and very cool and looked deliberate, so that sometimes impatient crowds yelled to him to "Get on with it!" But they were crowds which did not understand football, and wanted only sensation. Lacey was a class player. There are not many about.

With the back cleverly covering the way down the chalk and also ready to pounce if he moved inside, Lacey drew him another foot and slid it through to Harraway. It must be realised that these moves all took place during the time essential to the snapping of a finger and thumb, though they take time in the telling; also that they were the result of deliberate football strategy. In fact, a really clever team, like, say, Aston Villa or Arsenal, are always worth watching not from the larger standpoint of goal getting, but from the standpoint of the student of detail. Watch every man's feet, and the position every man takes up as the ball moves, and the "inside" of football is revealed to you. But you can see these things when only the best are on view.

Harraway tried to take the inside pass; but the occasion was too much for him once more. He muffed it hopelessly, though it was a model of its kind.

A dangerous movement frittered away without anybody in the defence performing with particular brilliance. The Scot robbed Harraway as easily as he might have robbed a blind man, and the Invicta machine started forward again.

Somebody in the crowd got impatient with Harraway, and yelled "Wake up, dopey!" Barracking is a cruel thing. It should never be indulged in. Usually the barrackers are people who have never kicked a ball in their lives, and don't understand the game.

The raucous person who addressed Harraway as "Dopey," raised a storm. Taffley jumped in with one of his cat-like clearances, and the ball came down the Rovers' left wing.

Harraway went for it. The same man yelled: "Mind it don't hurt you!" The boy hesitated. The half had him, ball and all. Harraway was on the ground and the ball was being weaved up the field. Harraway was white and shaken when he picked himself up.

In the stand Mr. Trant's neighbour once more remarked that they wanted Steel back, and Mr. Trant, watching the left wing, now a broken reed on which the Rovers dare not lean, realised how true this was.

Invicta were storming against the Rovers' penalty area. Tom Holloway effected a partial clearance, which was snapped up by the centre-half, who



squared it out to his left instead of dropping it again into the goalmouth.

The winger saw the chance. He bored inwards and loosed one of those rising, oblique shots which are the terror of all 'keepers—crossing just about head height and lifting all the way from the boot to the net.

It was a snorter. Billy somehow got his fingertips to it. It was deflected, hit the post and went away to the right. The crowd cheered lustily, but its cheers stopped as the right-winger took the ball on his chest, dropped it at his feet and chopped it inwards as Taffley rushed him.

It came along the carpet. A boot let out at it. Inside right of Invicta, the oldest player in their line, and the cleverest. Billy tried to stop a shot which was placed as truly as a billiards shot; but no 'keeper in the world could have reached it.

Invicta one up. Half-time whistle going. And all because Harraway hesitated and changed attack into futile defence.

The teams went off the field, and Sammy went with his arm across Harraway's shoulders, talking to the boy, who would keep saying he was letting the team down badly.

In the dressing-room, Gunson, the skipper, and Holloway talked to Harraway. He was not letting the team down. All he had to do was to try and think he was still playing in the

but the man opposed to him was never flurried by them, and usually checked them.

Yet it was Sammy who got the equaliser, and this was the manner of it. Varney and Lacey had fallen back a little, temporarily playing the famous W plan.

With Gunson, they did a clever bit of approach work, and it was Lacey who suddenly bored into the middle, the ball held to his toes as though tied there by string.

Centre-half challenged him. He was forced to do so, for Lacey was too dangerous a man to be allowed



RETURNED WITH THANKS.—The parachute drifted down right on to the pitch. Play was stopped and it was seen that there was a limp figure tied to the parachute. It was Steel, the missing footballer!

junior team of which he had been the bright particular star, and he would be all right. Harraway nodded hopefully.

They came out for the second session. It was plain that during the interval the little gang of malcontents who were fed up with Harraway had had a talk together, for they started shouting at the boy directly he touched the ball.

He had a good chance on the left which shouting caused him to muff. Invicta broke through as a result, and only a diving save by Billy, which put the ball round the post, prevented further disaster.

All this time, the centre-half had held Sammy tightly. Sammy could make no headway against a man who was his master at every point of the game save shooting. The Scot was uncannily cool. He always seemed to have plenty of time in which to work, and plenty of space in which to move.

Now and again Sammy tried one of his bull rushes,

much progress unimpeded. Instantly Sammy ran into Lacey's place at inside-left.

The Scot, too late, realised what was happening. Lacey flicked the ball to Sammy and Sammy was off.

The back tried to stop him, but the back was out of his weight and his class. He was left. The 'keeper flung himself at a ball which snored along the ground as though it would shear off the tops of the blades of grass beneath it.

One all, and the winner to be fought for!

The goal had put new life into the Rovers. They broke up the kick-off of the Invicta and Varney got Andrews away. Andrews stormed down the line, was beaten near the flag, and a throw-in was given to the Rovers. Murch took it and got it well into mid-field. Sammy snapped it up, swung round and let fly.



It was a marvellous effort. He had about a foot of goal to shoot at, and half a second in which to do the shooting; and he was twenty-five yards out. Yet the ball, travelling at a tremendous pace, swerving very slightly, found that foot of goal and crashed into it with the speed of a cannon-shot.

The Rovers were all over Sammy. They hugged him and patted his shoulders, and dragged him up the field to the middle. The crowd was shouting itself hoarse. The home team had taken the lead with not very long left for play, and the game looked theirs all over.

Yet the match was far from won; and, indeed, was not won that afternoon.

Invicta tried a storming attack right away from the kick-off, and it was balked half-way between the middle line and the Rovers' goal.

A big aeroplane came up from the distance and zoomed across the ground.

The minutes were flying, and it was on time, when from the plane a parachute dropped. It spread as it fell and took the air, so that it floated direct down towards the ground. A man hung from it, and he lolled curiously.

The play went on, the Invicta smashing goalwards for all they were worth, until it was seen that, beyond all doubt, the parachute must land clean on the pitch.

Play ceased, and all the players watched the parachute. It fell almost perpendicularly, for there was not the slightest of breezes to carry it in any direction. It landed near the Rovers' goalmouth, dragged a foot or two, and spread its vast stretch of fabric right across the ground.

Everybody rushed to it. Tied below its spread was the motionless figure of a man. The man was Steel. Pinned to his chest was a little note.

*We find from the newspapers that you want your outside left back. Here he is.*

*The Brotherhood of the Bear.*

Steel was unconscious, and a doctor called in declared that he was under the influence of a drug he could not diagnose. The game was abandoned. A specialist was sent for; but he could not name the narcotic which held Steel in its grip.

The footballer was removed to hospital, and there he lay, motionless, speechless. The Brotherhood of the Bear had finished with him.

Meanwhile, the Rovers had to replay a game they had already won.

### Kidnapper's Trick.

THE return of Steel upset Sammy and Billy. Medical examination had disclosed the fact that the man would certainly not die, though how long he would lie in a coma was uncertain.

Billy said to Sammy: "What worries me, also, is this mysterious dark figure who fitted in and saved us from the burning houseboat. Where does he come in? Is he my Uncle Tom, and, if so, what's his game?"

Sammy shook his head and looked solemn. He said slowly: "That Rajah fellow seemed to know a lot about the Brotherhood of the Bear. He said your uncle was the Great Bear. They're all mixed up together it seems to me."

Billy agreed with this, yet neither of them hit upon the simple solution to the problem.

It is probable that they never would have discovered that secret, and that, in fact, they might have been left out of the game from then on, but for the desire of a certain person to make a great discovery.

The affair took place on the Sunday night following the abandoned Invicta match, which had been the sensation of that Saturday's football. Sammy and

Billy had been for a walk which had taken them outside Branston.

A car was coming down the road. It was a big, closed machine, and it was travelling at nominal speed. Its headlamps lit the whole road up, and the lads drew into the hedge to let it pass.

At that moment, out of the hedge stepped a man. The car had just passed the boys, and it seemed to them as though the man stepped straight into the bonnet of the car.

They heard him scream. There was a screeching of brakes, but the car slid on. The man was left lying face downwards in the roadway.

Instantly Sammy and Billy ran to him. The car had come to a standstill some yards further on, and its driver was obviously about to reverse. Meanwhile, Billy and Sammy bent over the prostrate man.

He lay without moving, and Billy said: "Be careful how you try and move him, Sammy. If he's got any broken bones you might do a lot of damage."

The car had reversed by this time and ran alongside them. They were carefully lifting the motionless man, and concentrated on their task.

They heard a voice. It said, very pleasantly and quietly: "Straighten yourselves and put your hands up. All right, Pete!"

The "injured" man instantly got up. The boys, at the upright, found themselves looking into the muzzles of two automatic pistols. They were held by two men who stood by the car's side. Sammy and Billy realised they had fallen for a very old bandit trick—an injured man in the roadway, all their attention concentrated on him, so that they were easy victims.

The speaker said: "You'd better submit to being bound without trying to get away. We're absolutely determined to stand no nonsense of any kind."

Though his manner was easy, there was a certain deadliness behind it which impelled obedience. When Pete produced a length of cord and proceeded to lash them up, neither Sammy nor Billy attempted any resistance.

They were put into the car, and heavy bandages were drawn across their eyes. The machine started off at high speed, and continued to travel for a great distance, without once checking its pace.

During this journey Billy had time to think, and a significant, and, as it afterwards turned out, tremendous fact revealed itself to him.

How did these men know of this long Sunday walk of theirs, and how were they able to time the whole affair so cleverly?

It was a question fraught with sinister possibilities which, for the time being, Billy could not perceive.

For somebody had betrayed them!

At long last the car ran to a standstill, and the two of them were led from it, forced to walk obediently at the muzzle of pistols.

Their stumbling feet were guided down slippery steps. They were told to step and stand steady. They did so.

Whatever they stepped on gave beneath them, and rolled heavily to the contact of their feet, and they knew instantly what it was.

They were in a boat, and, a second later the vessel's engine started, and the craft surged forward, meeting heavy waves in a second or two, so that they knew they were putting to sea.

And still Billy failed to realise that they had been betrayed, and failed to guess, therefore, who might have betrayed them.

Who has betrayed the two lads? Is it the man in the Rovers that Billy is looking for? Don't miss the thrills and Mystery in next week's scintillating chapters.



*More High Jinks with  
the Joyous Juniors*

**The St. Giddy's  
Secret Society**

*Ructions for the Rotters  
When the Head Returns*



### The Brotherhood Strikes.

**H**ERBERT REMINGTON of the Sixth was making his way down to the village that evening when, by the cross-roads in the lane, he heard a sudden scuffle of feet. Before he quite realised what was happening, he found himself surrounded by dark, mysterious forms in black robes and cowls.

"Hold him, Brothers!" grated a deep voice from one of the black-robed marauders. "Herbert Remington, the hour of vengeance is nigh!"

"You young rascals, you can't play these larks on me, and—*Oh! Yarroooogh!*"

Remington went down before the black-robed brothers' onrush. Before he had time to yell out, a gag was thrust into his mouth and tied there. His hands were yanked behind his back and secured with ropes. Then he was blindfolded and hustled into the wood.

Back at St. Giddy's, Davenport was in his study, alone, when the door was opened suddenly and mysterious black-robed figures came in, their black hands raised with forefingers pointed at him.

"Wh-what's the game?" demanded the dandy of the Remove, jumping to his feet. "If this is a joke—"

"You will soon learn, Davenport, that it is far from a joke!" was the stern reply from one of the cowed figures. "The Black Hand Brotherhood have come to take you to the seat of judgment. Seize him!"

The Brothers made a sudden swoop, and brought him crashing to the floor. It was the work of a few moments to tie up Davenport, and lead him, gurgling, from the room.

Later, George Cadman of the Remove came out of Mr. Tattersall's study, after half-an-hour's extra "toot" for slacking in the Form room that afternoon, and he was in one of the vilest moods. He kicked open his study door—and immediately he was seized in many hands, whilst an all-enveloping cloth was whisked down over his head and secured there. Cadman fought and struggled with tigerish rage, realising now that the mysterious secret society had sprung a trap for him. A rope was cast around him, and he was secured.

He had a vague feeling of being carried along corridors, then up some stairs and then he was bumped to a halt. He heard three mysterious taps, followed by two short ones. Then came a sound as of a board being moved, and a deep voice was heard:

"Who knocks?"

"'Tis the Noble Arch and worthy Brothers of the Black Hand, bringing the third victim to our Hall of Justice!" replied another guttural voice.

"What is the magic password?"

"*Diabolical!*" hissed the voice of the Noble Arch.

"Enter, Noble Arch and worthy brothers."

Cadman started to struggle again as he felt himself whirled off his feet and lifted on high. He had a queer sensation of being hauled upward through a narrow aperture, then he was borne onward, he knew



not whither. Actually, he was being taken across the roof of School House, to the old refectory.

"Halt!" came a sudden gruff command.

The Black Hand Brothers halted still holding their prisoner.

"Let our victim be lowered into the Pit of Darkness!"

The secret society members had drawn up beside the large, wide chimney that led downward into the refectory hall below. Cadman, still nicely smothered in the black cloth, was fastened to a rope passed under his armpits, and the Brothers then solemnly lowered him down the chimney.

The Remove bully bawled out in terror beneath his shroud. Being unable to see, his imagination was running wildly riot. He visualised a deep and noisome pit, in which his enemies were lowering him—perhaps to perish!

He hit the bottom with a bump, and felt himself grabbed by human hands, which dragged him to his feet and relieved him of the rope. Then he was led forward.

"Halt!" commanded a stern voice. "Remove the cloth from the prisoner!"

The cloth was dragged off Cadman's head, and he blinked about him in wild horror. A blue flame splashed the intense gloom of the long, narrow chamber with a low raftered ceiling.

Black-robed figures stood at attention on either side of him. The blue fire burned upon a kind of altar, at which stood the grim, immobile form of the Most Noble Arch, distinguished by a star affixed to the breast of his black robe. Near by was a long, low form on which two bound and gagged figures lay, face downwards, their feet secured by heavy iron chains and each weighted by means of a large iron ball—just like prisoners of olden time!

"Secure the prisoners across the Torture Table," commanded the Noble Arch, sternly.

Cadman staggered back with a yell as a set of chains, complete with iron ball, were dragged along. But there was no escape for him! The chains were fastened round his ankles and he was dumped face downwards across the long wooden form beside the other two, whom he now saw were Remington of the Sixth and Davenport.

"Good!" said the Noble Arch. "Is Brother Bannister here?"

"Not yet, Most Noble!" replied one of the Brothers gruffly.

"Perhaps our worthy Brother has been detained," observed the Most Noble Arch. "We will not delay the proceedings, however. Let us chant our Deadly Dirge!"

### Runaway Trapped.

MEANWHILE, Dick Bannister was making his way to join the Brotherhood in their secret lodge. Watching his opportunity, he clambered over the school wall, and dropped softly on to the flagstones of the cloisters. Then, proceeding with the utmost caution, Dick scuttled onward beneath the ancient arches, to the rear of School House, and started to climb up the ivy.

It was a long and dangerous climb to the roof, but Dick managed it without mishap. He was drawing himself over the parapet, when all at once his heart gave a leap and he blinked before him in amazement.

A number of figures were creeping towards a black-robed form, mounting guard over the trap-door! They were boys, wearing Earlswood school caps. Tommy Rhodes & Co.!

The Worthy Tyler of the Black Hand Brotherhood little dreamed the danger that lurked behind him! Before Dick had time to shout a warning, the Earls-

wood boys were upon the black-robed Tyler. Next moment, Tommy Rhodes & Co. were piling all over him, and there was a wild struggle.

"Got him!" shrieked the Earlswood leader, as the captive subsided at last. "That's Number One of the giddy Black Hand brigade. Undo the head-piece, and let's see who it is—Why, if it isn't old Dixon!"

"You—you rotters!" spluttered Dixon of the Remove. "What's the game—hey?"

"Oh, we're just chipping in on this secret society business!" grinned Tommy Rhodes. "This is where the Black Hand Bogie-Boys get it well and truly in the neck!"

Dixon was tied up in the black robe, and deposited behind a near-by chimney stack. Tommy Rhodes and Co. gathered round the trap-door in the roof, chuckling softly, while Dick Bannister blinked in horror at this unexpected development.

Three sharp taps sounded on the underside of the trap-door, followed by two short raps.

"Who goes there?" demanded Tommy Rhodes.

"Brother Potter, with the sacks of soot for the Torture Ceremony!" came the reply from below.

"Give the magic password, Brother Potter!" said Tommy Rhodes gruffly.

"Diabolical!"

"Good!" said the bogus Tyler, lifting the trap-door. "Kimmup, Brother Potter!"

A black-hooded head appeared through the trap-door, and the newcomer was instantly seized upon by the Earlswood boys. Brother Potter gave a howl but within a very short time he was a prisoner, with Dixon.

Bob Nutter and Girling clambered down through the trap-door, and hauled up two large-sized sacks of soot. Tommy Rhodes & Co. chortled.

"Ripping!" said the hero of Earlswood. "We'll turn the Black Hand Brotherhood into the All-Black Brotherhood with this little lot! One of us will have to go down that chimney, and spy out the land."

Dick Bannister gasped with alarm as he heard these words, and decided on a desperate move. He started to climb down the ivy once more.

But alas! He was crouching on the ledge above the quadrangle, when he heard an angry shout in tones that were only too well-known!

"Bannister! Good heavens! Audacious rascal!"

It was Mr. Cattermole! He came dashing along to the School House well, with Burgess and Bond of the Sixth running up from under the elm trees, at Catty's call.

"Bannister, will you obey me?" yelled Catty, glaring upwards. "I command you to come down and surrender immediately!"

"Rats!" shouted back the fugitive, and he started to scuttle along the narrow ledge. He saw a window open, and he dived recklessly within.

The room beyond happened to be Herr Kramer's study. The fat little German master was seated in his armchair, smoking his meerschau pipe and reading a copy of his favourite newspaper from the Fatherland. He received the shock of his life when a wild figure leaped in through the window, and fell plump into the middle of his newspaper!

"Ach! Himmel! Mein Gott, vat is—"

"Oh, jeminy!" gasped Dick, jumping up. "I—I say, sir, I'm awfully sorry! Ow! Can't stop now, and—"

"Poy! Gum pack!" roared Herr Kramer, scrambling to his feet and making a grab at Dick as that worthy sprang towards the door. "Do you hear me, poy? Gum pack!"

But Dick Bannister ripped open the door and dashed away. Excited cries and the sounds of swiftly



moving feet came to his ears, however, from other parts of the School House. The alarm was raised!

Three running figures appeared round a corner in the corridor, as Dick reached the top of the stairs. They were Mr. Cattermole, and the two prefects Burgess and Bond. Dick looked desperately down the stairs. The ponderous form of Sergeant Rumble came into view below.

"Stop him, Rumble!" screamed Mr. Cattermole. "Do not let him escape!"

Dick gave a wild look, then he leaped on to the bannisters and slid swiftly downwards! Sergeant Rumble reached out a horny hand to grab him, but Dick's foot caught him in his ample waistcoat, and the Sergeant sat down on the stairs with a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dick, as he leaped off the bannisters at the bottom. "Catch me if you can, old dears!"

Mr. Cattermole and the prefects gave infuriated yells, and dashed down the stairs in pursuit. The prostrate form of Sergeant Rumble impeded their progress, however, and by the time they reached the bottom, Dick was gone!

He ran along to the washhouse, and leaped out of the window. He scudded swiftly across to the big arched door of the refectory. Come what may, Johnny Gee & Co. must be warned!

*Bang! Bang! Bang!* Dick started to bang on the door, but the chanting went on. The lodge was being held at the farther end of the refectory, and the Brothers could not hear, above the sounds of their chanting.

There was no time for Dick to try further to gain their attention. Swift footsteps scounded on the flagstones, and Mr. Cattermole came into view.

"Bannister, stop!" he screeched.

Dick bolted away from the refectory door, and made for the elm trees. He passed Pumfret & Co., of the Third, who were disporting themselves in the open air, and he gasped out urgently to them as he dashed past:

"Up on the refectory roof—quick! Those Earlswood rotters are there! Catch 'em, before—"

Dick's voice broke off as he spurted for the gates. But alas! Just as Dick was on his last lap, the station cab came rumbling into the gateway, completely barring his progress!

There was a swift rush of footsteps, Burgess and Bond leaped at Dick, and heavy hands grabbed him by the scruff of the neck whirling him backward.

Mr. Cattermole came up, breathless, his narrow features suffused with triumph.

"Got him, sir!" gasped Burgess. "The little sweep can't get away now!"

A startled exclamation sounded in the gateway. A tall, venerable-looking gentleman in silk hat and frock coat had descended from the cab. It was Dr. Holroyd!

"Bless my soul! What is the meaning of this, Mr. Cattermole?" cried the Head, striding forward.

"Bannister has been apprehended, sir," gasped Mr. Cattermole, gleefully. "The young rascal was released by his friends from the Punishment Room, and has been at large for three days."

Dr. Holroyd's brow was very stern. "What has Bannister done?" he asked.

"I caught him, sir, red-handed at my desk at midnight, abstracting the Craven Examination papers!" replied the Housemaster with a vindictive look at the captive. "He was attired in a black

robe, the dress adopted by a ridiculous and dangerous secret society, which I have reason to believe is being carried on by certain boys of the Remove!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Head, and he turned to the prefects. "Take Bannister away, and lock him in the Punishment Room. This is a most serious affair, Mr. Cattermole. A secret society, indeed!"

"Yes—they have been perpetrating all manner of outrages, sir!" grated Mr. Cattermole. "I have twice been the victim of their ruffianly attacks! But come, sir—I suspect they are holding a meeting in the refectory."

Dr. Holroyd looked astounded. "In the refectory! But, my dear sir, that room is locked up—"

But Mr. Cattermole had already started towards



**RUMBLE TAKES A TUMBLE.**—The porter reached out a horny hand to grab Dick Bannister as he whizzed past. Dick's foot shot out, however, and sent him staggering backwards.

the refectory and the Head, greatly wondering, followed. By this time a crowd had gathered in the quadrangle, and they saw Mr. Cattermole bending down outside the large oak door, listening eagerly at the keyhole.

"It is as I thought, sir!" he gasped eagerly, straightening up. "The young rascals are in there! I can hear their voices! We have caught them!"

Dr. Holroyd listened, after commanding silence from the crowd buzzing in the quadrangle around. He set his lips hard, and nodded.



"You are right, Mr. Cattermole. Kindly fetch the key to this door, and we will investigate this matter!"

### Dark Doings.

**W**ITHIN the "mystic temple" of the Black Hand Brotherhood, the Torture Ceremony was in progress.

"So you remain obstinate and defiant, in the face of our awful threats?" growled the Most Noble Arch in sinister tones. "We shall see whether the Black Hand Brothers can bend you to their will! Knight of the Black Rod, forward!"

A grim figure, carrying a formidable-looking weapon, stepped forward. That weapon was the Black Rod, and it looked like a cricket stump, painted black.

The Most Noble Arch pointed to George Cadman. "Knight of the Black Rod, do your duty!"

*Whack! Whack! Whack!* The Black Rod rose and fell in a series of mighty swipes on Cadman's writhing form, eliciting from him fiendish howls. At length, he could stand it no longer.

"*Ooogh! Stop! I—I'll—you-ow!—confess!*"

The Knight of the Black Rod stood back.

"Where is the paper that was stolen from my study?" grated the Most Noble Arch.

"It's—*grooch!*—in my pocket!" snarled Cadman.

On the command from the Noble Arch, two worthy brothers stepped forward and searched Cadman. The stolen exam paper at last came to light, and the Noble Arch looked at it, his eyes gleaming.

"Good!" he said. "This, Cadman, as you know, is the copy of the Craven Exam paper which Davenport stole, in order to cheat at the exam. The Black Hand Brotherhood became aware of this, and secured this paper from Davenport. To avoid a scandal, and at the same time to frustrate Davenport, the Brotherhood decided that the rest of the exam papers must be stolen and destroyed. It fell to Brother Bannister to undertake that task. He did so, and was caught by Mr. Cattermole, but being a loyal Brother of the Black Hand, he remained silent. Things have reached such a pitch, that full confessions from you three are necessary. You confess, Cadman, do you not, that you obtained this paper from Davenport, who had taken it from its hiding place in my study?"

"Yes!" muttered Cadman thickly.

Davenport's eyes burned upon the bully.

"You hound, Cadman!" he hissed. "Why don't you confess everything? Why don't you tell that it was you and your pals Snell, Meeke and Lucas who dressed up in black robes and attacked Mr. Cattermole in the quadrangle?"

The Noble Arch gave a gasp.

"Is that so, Cadman?" he demanded. "My hat! Now we're getting at the truth of things. You, Cadman, and your three confederates will be dealt with later. Now, Davenport. You must write out a confession that you stole that exam paper, intending to cheat—"

"I won't!" snarled Davenport. "As for you, Cadman, just you wait till I'm free—"

"Yah!" snorted Cadman, with a baleful look at the dandy. "They might as well know the whole truth. You got that paper from Remington. Being a prefect, he had access to the question sheets, and you bribed him to get a paper for you—"

"It's a lie!" shouted Remington, struggling wildly.

"I—I lost the examination paper. It was dropped by accident, and Davenport picked it up and stuck to it. I deny that Davenport paid me for it!"

"Whether you found it, Davenport, or whether

you paid Remington to obtain it for you, makes no difference!" said the Noble Arch in grim tone. "The fact remains that you had that paper, Davenport, and you kept it dark, whereby one of our worthy Brothers has been placed in jeopardy. You and Remington and Cadman will now be forced to write out full confessions and send them on to Mr. Cattermole. Knight of the Black Rod, forward!"

*Whack! Whack! Whack!* The Black Hand Brothers did not hear the key grating in the lock of the refectory door. Suddenly, the door was flung open, admitting a tall, austere figure, and the Black Hand Brotherhood gave gasps of amazement.

It was the Head!

"Stop!" he thundered. "Release your victims this moment!"

The black-robed figures fell back before the grim, awe-inspiring figure of the Head. Mr. Cattermole came rushing in behind him, agog with eagerness.

"The rascals are discovered, sir!" he screeched.

"You will have them all flogged, Dr. Holroyd!"

"Indeed no, Mr. Cattermole!" replied the Head.

"I have been listening outside this door, sir, whilst you went away for the key, and I have heard the whole truth of this matter. Bannister's innocence has been proved beyond a doubt!"

"Wha-a-a-at!" stuttered Catty.

Dr. Holroyd stepped up to the Noble Arch, and took from him the paper that had been abstracted from Cadman's pocket.

"This, Mr. Cattermole, is a copy of the Craven Exam paper, bearing notes on the margin in Davenport's handwriting!" he said. "Remington, Davenport, Cadman! Follow me!"

The three captives thus addressed had been released from their ropes, but the Black Hand Brothers were not so successful with the chains. Those old-fashioned gyves had been "borrowed" from the school museum. Rusted with age, the locks had jammed!

At last, Dr. Holroyd made an impatient gesture.

"Do not waste any further time. Remington, Cadman, and Davenport, follow me as you are!"

*Clank! Clank!* The three prisoners shuffled after the Head, dragging their chains and the heavy iron balls behind them!

Mr. Cattermole slammed the door and turned fiercely to the Black Hand Brotherhood.

"Rascals!" he hooted. "Remove those ridiculous disguises at once, and—"

*Swooooooooooooooosh!* An avalanche of soot swept downward, and came out of the fireplace in a huge cloud. Choking gurgles and amazed yells came from the Black Hand Brothers and Mr. Cattermole.

"Yerroogh! Yah! Wh-wh-what the dickens—"

Up on the roof, Tommy Rhodes & Co. chortled as they emptied the sacks of soot down the chimney.

"Ha, ha, ha! How's that for a dirty deed, chaps? We'll give those Black Hand duffers something to get on with! Now—Oh, my hat! Look out!"

"Earlwood rotters!" screeched a voice suddenly, from behind. "Go for 'em!"

Tommy Rhodes & Co. turned in dismay, to see a horde of St. Giddy's fags, led by Pumret of the Third, dashing to the attack across the roof! Dick Bannister's hastily uttered warning had been acted upon!

With shrill yells, the fags hurled themselves upon the astounded Earlwood marauders, who went down on the leads, fighting wildly. Tommy Rhodes & Co. were simply overwhelmed by the suffling fags!

(Continued on page 12.)