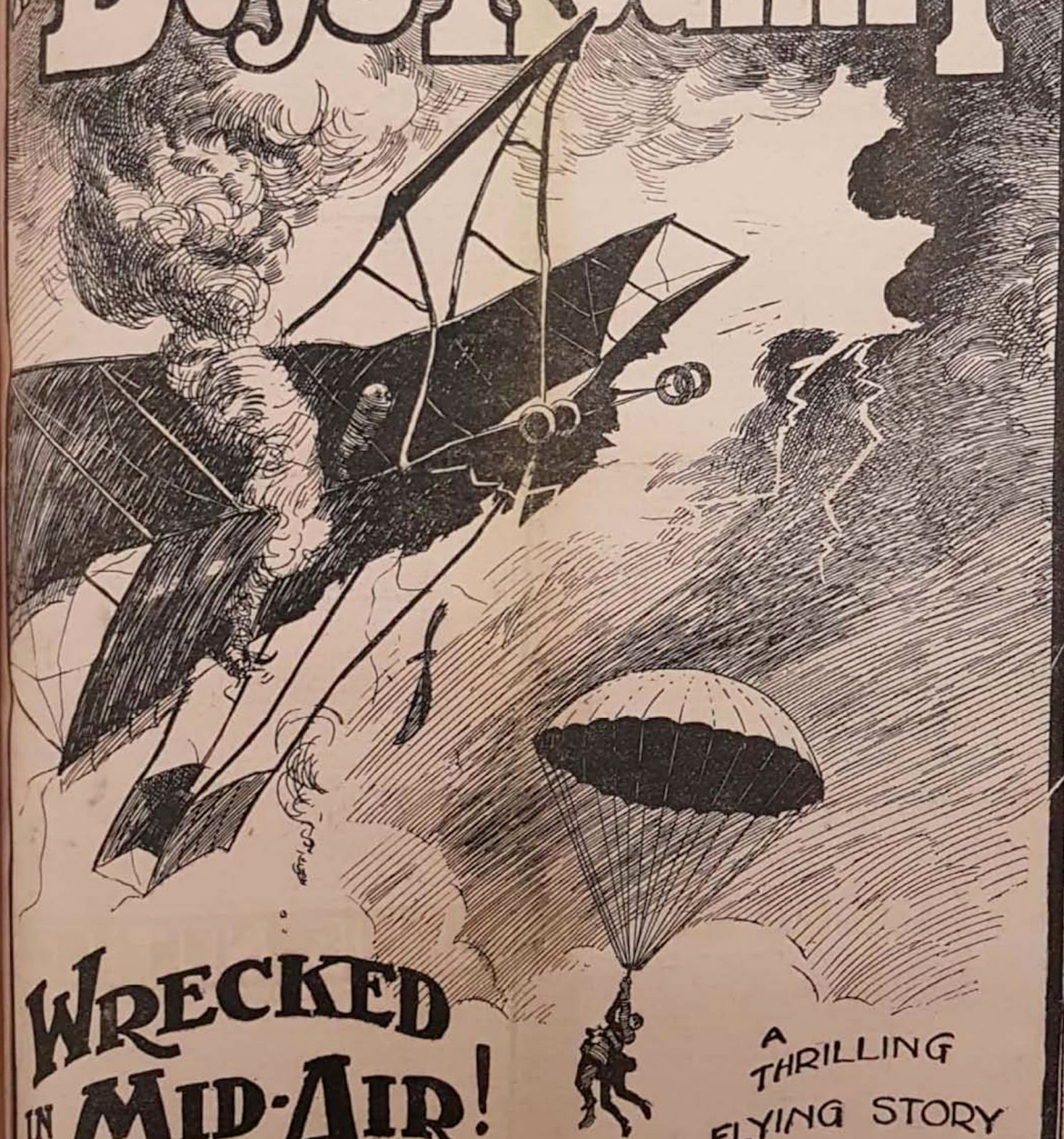


THE GREAT SATURDAY SPORTS PAPER!

The Boys' Realm 1[¢]



**WRECKED
IN
MID-AIR!**

**A
THRILLING
FLYING STORY**

no longer. I have tholved the thing. In a short time the work will be ringing with the faint cry of my exploit."

"Come off the grass," was the scornful reply. "I'm fed up with your silly muck's game. I'm going to punch your head, by way of a start-off, and then I'm going to Lecky, and tell him everything. I wish I'd gone to him first of all. I don't suppose I shall ever find my engine again now."

"If that's your will," said Poddles dramatically, raising his hand. "I'll be back by Thant Jante, Thant Napoleon, and Lord Kitebester that I have tholved the mystery. Eee the clock strikes twelve to-day the motor will be at home."

At that moment Murphy thrust his head into the study. "If it's takin' part in the great race ye're after enterin', Bub, darlint, ye'd better be makin' thracks for the boats," he yelled. "Come on, Poddles, ye spalpeen. This is Clifflor's out I'm after thinkin'."

Russell bolted like the wind, Murphy hard at his heels. "By Jove, and I smuth the Noble!" spluttered Poddles. "Before the race starts."

"Come on, Poddles, ye spalpeen. Fighting Mac, Drake, and Russell were making the best of their way towards the boats when they were somewhat surprised by hearing Poddles gasp out:

"I thay, Noble, I want a word with you. I smuth tell you something. The thirthar's going to be from the landing-stage, isn't it?" "Yes," said Jack, in some surprise. "But what's up, Poddles? You seem jolly excited about something."

"So'd you be if you knew what I do," replied Poddles. "That's what I'm here for. I bet you'll open your eyes a bit wide when you know everything. Let the others walk on, and then to me, and I'll already pluck the story that Poddles had to left Jack Noble speechless with amazement and indignation."

"Well, if that don't beat everything," he muttered fiercely. "I gave Clifflor credit for being a pretty good backboard, but this last scheme of his fairly takes the biscuit. So that was why he was so keen we should start from the landing-stage, and that one of his own gang should shove us off. This is your show, Poddles, my son. You've been a trick over it, and I shan't forget it. You're sure you haven't made any mistake, and that things'll pan out as you think?"

"Thure, quite thertain thure," responded Poddles. "It'll be a fine wipe in the eye for Clifflor."

"Well, mum's the word then," said Jack grimly. "It'll be a smack for Master Clifflor with a vengeance."

The boys reached the boathouse to find a goodly company waiting their arrival. Clifflor and his crew had already taken their place in their boat. Noble's craft lay alongside the landing-stage, while Lawson minor was in his place on the coxswain's seat. Jackson, one of Clifflor's friends, stood beside the boat.

"Hallo, Clifflor!" cried Noble. "So you're ready?" "Yes," replied Clifflor, with a grin. "Take your places, you chaps; Jackson'll shove you off."

"Thanks," replied Noble coolly. "Poddles'll do that for us." He noted with satisfaction that Clifflor looked rather glum at this. However, Mac quietly pushed Jackson to one side, Noble peeled, and took his place at stroke, Fighting Mac went three, Drake two, and Russell bow.

Poddles bent down, and thrust his hand below the boat. A faint whirring sound followed his manoeuvre. "Well, what's that?" muttered Mac. "Wait and see," whispered Jack.

A couple of stake boats had been stationed in the river, occupied by two boys, whose duty it was to hold the stern of each craft preparatory to the starting of the race. Clifflor and the spectators were somewhat surprised to notice that Noble's boat evinced an altogether inexplicable desire to move forward as the signal was given.

"What's the record, so much so that Poddles, whose business it had a fine opportunity of defrauding the Customs officials of their just and rightful dues."

The powers that be have recognised the truth of this fact, and so, when an International Congress was held at Paris a little while ago, the question of the prevention of aerial smuggling was one which occupied a certain deal of attention. The result of the deliberations of the congress makes it almost likely that definite airways between different countries will have to be laid down, and that aeroplanes crossing the frontiers of

when he did manage to catch hold of the racing four, he was already taken their place in their boat. Noble's craft lay alongside the landing-stage, while Lawson minor was in his place on the coxswain's seat. Jackson, one of Clifflor's friends, stood beside the boat.

"Current" must be hethed strong," he gasped. "Thith jolly old thip wants to run away."

"That's all right," said Jack, with a grin. "Hold on to her, kid. We shan't be long now."

"Are you chaps ready?" cried the starter. "Yes," said Noble. Clifflor nodded. "Come forward all. Are you ready?" Row!

The two boats leapt forward like greyhounds released from the leash, Clifflor striking off at a tremendous rate of speed, though Noble took things much more leisurely. Even then it was remarked that Noble's boat forced rapidly ahead. In the first few strokes the Third champions took the lead. The spectators yelled with delight.

"Go it, Clifflor, you do some work, you ows!" "This is a race, not a blessed procession!" Clifflor and his men bent with frenzy to their work, making their frail craft simply race through the water, though it must be admitted that there was a good deal of splash about their strokes.

By the time the race was half over Noble's



How to Hold a Struggling Person in the Water. (See "The Importance of Swimming" on page 116).

crew was at least ten lengths ahead, and, despite Clifflor's most frenzied endeavours, the gap between the two boats only increased with every stroke. And the extraordinary thing about the whole affair was that Noble and his men were merely paddling. Their craft shot forward at a prodigious rate without any undue exertion from the oarsmen.

"The boat's bewitched," purred Fighting Mac. "I believe she'd go if we were to stop rowing altogether."

"He'll try," laughed Noble. He lifted his blade from the water. The rest followed suit. The boat shot gaily forward, notwithstanding.

"This licks cock-fighting!" chuckled Drake. "What's come to the old hooker?" "You'll be able to ask Clifflor later on," said Jack. "Snakes, but we'll have him on toast later on! Jumping jellfish, if they're not trying to make holes in the bank! Look, you chaps, look!" And he pointed excitedly in the direction of the rearward boat.

Clifflor had speedily realised that his schemes for winning the race had gone very much awry.

Despite his most frantic efforts, to say nothing of the work put in by the rest of the crew, Noble and his merry men forged further and further ahead. Half-way down the course Clifflor resolved to throw up the sponge, but to do so in such a manner as would make it

any country will have to do so only between certain prescribed limits. Every aircraft upon an international voyage will have to approach frontiers at a certain spot, and descend for inspection by Customs officials. Failure to adhere to this law, which will be a very rigid one, will bring upon the offender very heavy penalties.

Another important question which arose at the conference in question was that of spilling out the land. It is apparent to all that it will be dead easy for the occupants of aerial craft to hover about fortifications and the like and make detailed plans of the such strategic positions. Therefore, air vessels must be forbidden to approach within a certain radius of such fortifications.

The question of the identification of aircraft

appear that the battle had been lost through no fault of his own.

As he came forward for one of his strokes he hissed to young Fender in the coxswain's seat.

"Steer for the side! Pull your right string!" And Fender, at a loss to understand the meaning of the command, yet well aware of the consequences that might follow his non-compliance with the order, obeyed.

There could, of course, be only one result for such a manoeuvre. The boat sped for the bank at full speed. A moment later it had crashed into the yielding mud, with the result that all the oarsmen were flung violently backward, while the bow turned a graceful somersault, and alighted in six inches of muddy fluid.

Clifflor, being more or less prepared for the shock, was the first to recover himself. Sitting up, he yelled at the dazed Fender:

"You silly young ass! What did you want to do that for? You've lost us the race. Just as we were gaining on the others you must needs go and chuck the whole show away. We've got no more idea of steering a racing-boat than you have of working an aeroplane! I'll flay you for this when we get back, see if I don't!"

"But you told me to do it, Clifflor!" expostulated the indignant cox. "You told me to pull my right string!" "Told you to do it—told you to do it!" howled Clifflor, apparently in a perfect paroxysm of indignant wrath. "Great Caesar's ghost, listen to the silly young ass! Did you hear what he said just now? He actually has the sauce to say I told him to charge the bank! Does he think we're in a battleship? Why, we were going up on 'em hand over fist!"

By this time a considerable crowd of boys had assembled on the bank, and greeted this announcement with jeers.

"Go and boil your face, Clifflor!" shouted one of them. "Decora, but you were gaining on the scenery, entirely!" came the reply to Murphy.

"Take your licking like a sportsman, Clifflor!" shouted another. Bow clambered back into his seat, dripping and dirty. The boat was backed out of the bank, and the defeated crew made the best of its way back to the boathouse.

Noble's crew had won handsomely. There was no doubt about that. Neither could Clifflor congratulate himself that he had headed the last of the business yet. The day of reckoning was still to come. It was indeed a discomfited and rather quiet race made the best of its way back to the school.

THE 5TH CHAPTER. Clifflor Pays the Piper.

OMEGA said Clifflor sulkily. The doing of it was pushed open; there entered Jack Noble, Fighting Mac, Russell, Valence, Murphy, Drake, and last, but not least, Poddles.

Clifflor, Bayne, Marker, and Prince, the occupants of the study, exchanged furtive glances.

"Hallo!" said Clifflor. "What do you chaps want?" "I can't soon tell you, you skunk!" replied Jack excitedly. "We want to know why you stole Russell's motor-engine."

"What d'ye mean?" blustered Clifflor. "Step forward, Poddles," said Fighting Mac. "I can't let a skunk like you!" "Russell came to me," said Noble eagerly, "and told me he'd lost his motor-engine. I said I'd find it for him. Two nights ago I tracked Clifflor, Marker, and Bayne down to the stern of Noble's boat. It is a jolly cute motor, an electric one, and very light, heard Clifflor they he'd got the idea of fixing the engine into a motor-boat, so it had a there, and when the race was tharted I reverte the motor. Thith would mean that Noble and his thcrew would have to pull ngainst the motor. Jackthon wath to thirt the motor with a little lever. But it didn't do it, it tharted the motor, and I thaw to it that it didn't reverte the motor, and his thcrew wath helping Noble and his thcrew. Thath' why they went th quickly. They'd

was also discussed. Just as every motor-car has a number attached to it, so every ship is given a name, and carries papers which prove who and what she is, so all aerial craft will undoubtedly have to carry some distinguishing mark or number, as well as documents to make clear that she is all she appears to be.

Another important point which had to be discussed by the congress was that of the ownership of the air. How will a landowner of the air immediately define rights concerning his property, and keep a record of them from trespassing? Has such an owner any right to say whether an aerial vessel shall or shall not fly above his land? These are matters which must surely be definitely settled.

It is quite a debatable point whether anyone has a right to fly across property belonging to someone else without first obtaining leave. His property right up to the sky. At present anyone who wished to do so could probably get an injunction to prevent a flying-man from crossing the land he owned.

have won anyhow, and they did it that that it thuse."

"We only," said Clifflor, with a sullenly. "Did it for a lark, and I've owned up afterwarde."

"Well, always were a bit of a joke to get up with the middle. You can play lanky-panky at it bodily. You can't motor-engine. I don't see how you can try and think out something else on your own. I think the whole thing out on your own."

"Yes," answered Clifflor, in a low voice. "Well, by right," went on Clifflor, ought to report the thing to Law. I reckon him deal with it. I reckon that's all right. But I vote to manage the whole show. What's your notion, Clifflor? Would you be Lecky to know?"

"My notion is that you're a lot better and towards!" snarled Clifflor, "Just because a fellow tries hard to do you get your wool out. It was only a joke. I tell you!"

"Right!" said Jack, with a grin. "I treat it as a joke, and I've got a grin for a funny jape myself. You say you're the only one with brains, Clifflor, son, I'll promise you with brains, Clifflor!"

Clifflor looked around him, and his expression was that of a man, and he obvious that he could count on no one from his own followers. They were even too anxious to save their own skins.

"What d'ye mean?" he said. "I tell you it was only a joke!" "What d'ye mean, my laddie," put in Fighting Mac. "We're as fond of amusement as you seem to coincide, you ken."

"You stole Russell's prize motor," said Jack quietly. "You challenged" "wath you never meaning to run straight? So me in one minute of the night, and fixed the motor in our boat; I reckon that's all right. You make us lose; you thought you'd be at work the wheeze without being spotted. Now you have the sauce to say you only stole it for a joke, and that we've conspired to make you lose. But that's what you've done. But that's what you've done. One of those chaps that can't play the game and I don't see why we should make our bones about it. We're going to get you from him, you like to go to the Head's sneak, or make a row with Lecky, you ran. Are you're going to have that ducking, wath you like it or no?"

"Don't you think that Clifflor may be tired?" said Fighting Mac drily. "It's long wath to the river, ye ken?" "You'd never dare throw me in the net!" said Clifflor excitedly. "I'll report you to Lecky for cowardice and bullying!"

There are others who could do a bit of reporting, if it came to that, put in Head. "How about your sneaking my motor out of playing your dirty tricks on Noble? Strike me you'd be grinning on the worst side of your phisog if you tried an sneaking game!"

"You didn't let me first to intercept him!" "I'm not sure that the pond on the other side of the playing-field wouldn't be big enough to hold Master Clifflor. What d'ye laddie, shall we carry him there?"

A chorus of approval greeted this suggestion. Clifflor, however, by a stroke of finding himself cornered, offered a strong assistance, though he was speedily overruled and carried kicking and yelling from the study.

Despite all his struggles, Clifflor was borne through the schoolhouse, across the playing-field, and into the playing-field.

A few minutes later the spectacle of Clifflor being hurled into the muddy waters of the horse-pond, while a crowd of spectators who witnessed his misadventure, formed a scene that was without parallel in the history of the school. Yet it cannot be said that the punishment was an unmerited one.

As Fighting Mac put it: "The fellow wanted to have it, he'll know better next time. But I hate me doots."

THE END. (Another spanking Jack Noble year next week)

THE RULES OF THE AIR.

Laws Which Airmen Will Have to Obey.

A WEEK or two back there appeared in THE BOYS' REALM a complete flying strip entitled "The Regulators of the Air," in which that clever author, Mr. A. S. Hardy, showed that now that the conquest of the air was an accomplished fact, and aerial smuggling had a fine opportunity of defrauding the Customs officials of their just and rightful dues.

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"Prince of the Circus," by Sidney Drew, Starts Next Week. Tell All Your Chums.

THE END.