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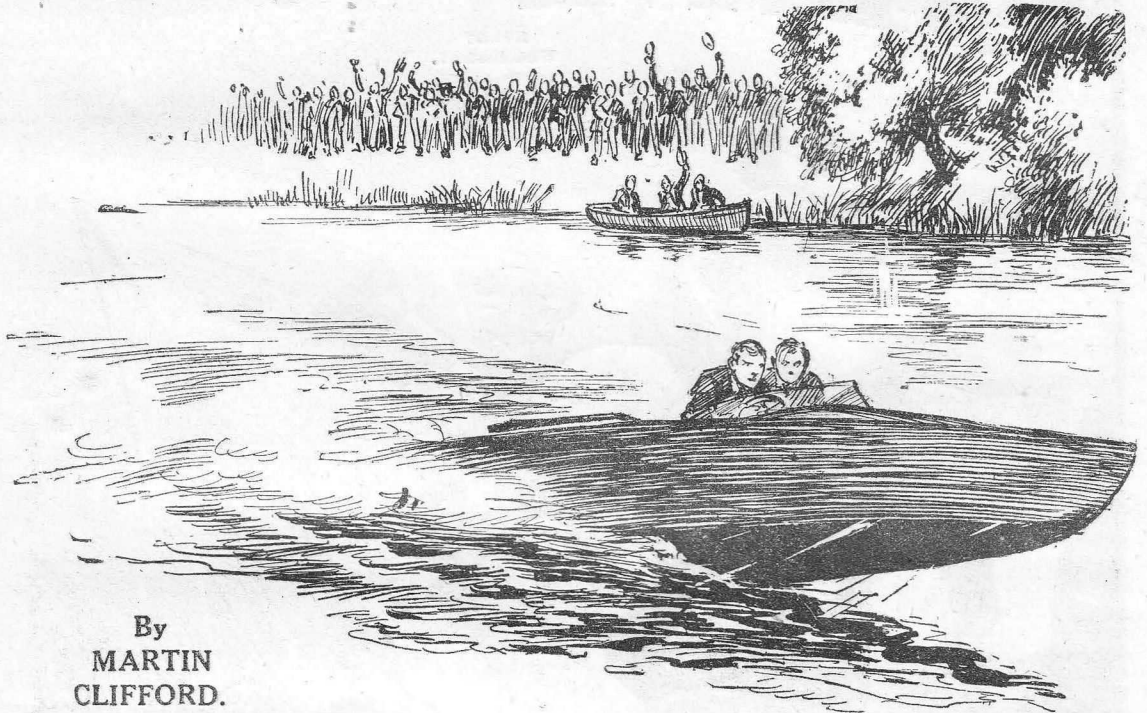
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EVERY  
WEDNESDAY.



SPEEDBOATS ON THE RYLL! GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY—

# SPEEDMEN of the RIVER!



By  
**MARTIN  
CLIFFORD.**

## CHAPTER 1. Speedy!

“WIPPIN’!”

“Top-hole!”

“In fact, hall-marked and stamped in every link,” remarked Monty Lowther. “Glyn, my boy, you’re a giddy marvel!”

“Glad you like it, you chaps,” said Bernard Glyn, the inventor of the Shell at St. Jim’s, looking, with something like pride in his face, over the gleaming bows of the Nulli Secundus—that being the name of the motor-boat in which he was standing. “Looks good, doesn’t she?”

“Quite a treat, deah boy!” said Arthur Augustus D’Arcy enthusiastically.

Bernard Glyn smiled.

“I’ve been itching to own a speedboat ever since Gay of the Grammar School won that Crossword Competition and bought one out of the proceeds. Now I’ve got it!”

“And you deserve it, old scout,” said Tom Merry cordially. “Not every fellow that could take an old tub and a motor-engine and make a giddy speedboat out of them!”

“Somethin’ in that, bai Jove!” remarked Arthur Augustus, regarding Glyn’s speedboat through his gleaming monocle with approval. “I weally doubt whethah I could have done bettah myself!”

“Go hon!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Don’t think I should have been able to manage it, anyway, without the help of Joe Sales here,” said Glyn, pointing to a youngish man who was putting a final polish to the metal controls of the boat. “Is she all serene, Joe?”

“Ay, ay, sir!” grinned Joe Sales, whose cheerful face the juniors recognised as being that of a boathouse assistant

from farther up the river. “An’ good enough to lick Segrave himself!”

“Good! Then we’ll give her a try-out,” said Glyn. “Who’s for a joy-ride? Don’t all speak at once!”

The juniors who had been watching him from the river bank didn’t! They acted at once, instead!

Quite a scrimmage for places developed in front of the Nulli Secundus. Tom Merry jostled Blake, Blake trod on D’Arcy’s natty patent shoes, and D’Arcy’s elbow somehow came into collision with Herries in the region popularly known as the “bread-basket.” Altogether the river bank over an area of a few square yards began, as Lowther put it, to assume the aspect of “rush-hour” on the Underground.

“Make way there, Herries! Ow!”

“Let a fellow pass, Blake! Yow!”

“Whoop! You’ve twodden on my toe again, you careless wottah!”

“Don’t tip the boat over, you idiots!” yelled Glyn, in alarm. “You can all have a run if you’ll wait your turn, but I didn’t design it to carry half the School House!”

“Quite twue, deah boy! If Blake will only stand back, I—”

“If only Gussy will step out of the way—” retorted Blake.

“If that ass Manners will just shift his carcass—” suggested Herries.

“You mean if that chump Herries will only go and bury himself—” said Manners warmly.

It began to look as if the Nulli Secundus was destined to

have a short life and a merry one, for if all who wanted to embark had actually embarked, she would undoubtedly have been totally submerged beneath the tide of humanity.

Bernard Glyn naturally objected, however, to his

**SCHOOLBOY ASSISTS SUSPECTED  
THIEF—THEN CAPTURES REAL ONE!**

## —AT THE WHEEL—AND DISASTER! AS USUAL!

latest and greatest invention meeting with such an inglorious end, and as he objected with the aid of a boathook, the Nulli Secundus was very soon saved.

Thud! Crack! Thud!

The boathook jabbed, smote, and jabbed again, and three invaders jumped away, yelling.

"Yaroooh!"

"Grooogh! Why, you silly ass—"

"Keepimoff! Whooop!"

"Now stand back and give her a chance!" roared Glyn, waving his boathook with great determination. "Just three of you can come on board for the first run, and to save further argument I'll name the three: Tom Merry, Blake, and Gussy!"

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

"Thanks, old bean!"

And the three chosen ones detached themselves from the crowd and got into the boat, while the rest, not without one or two murmurs, stood away.

with something like assurance, that Glyn's Nulli Secundus is going to be a success!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And there was universal agreement. In fact, Glyn's speedboat was not only going to be, it already was a tremendous and quite well-established success!

### CHAPTER 2.

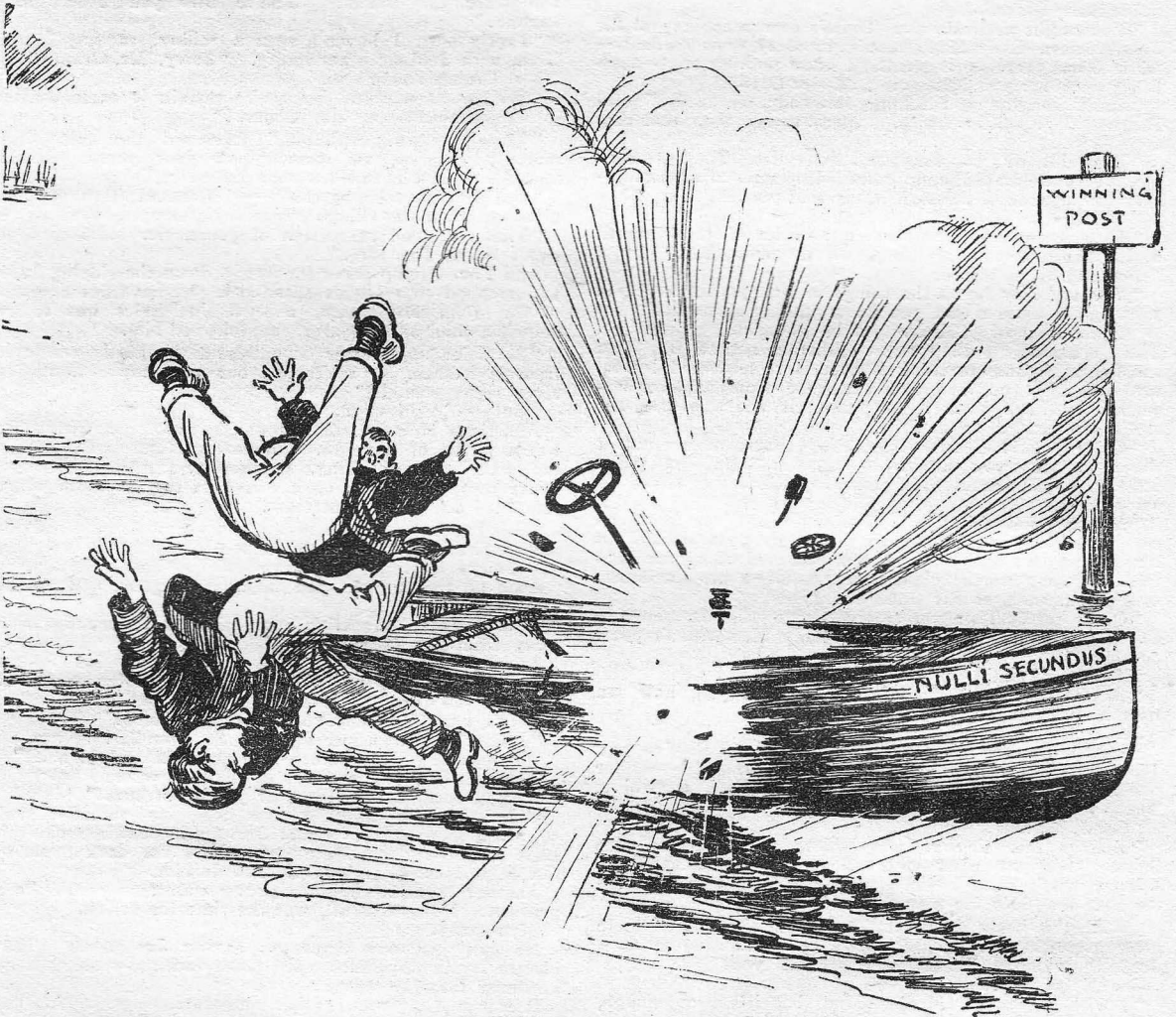
#### The Fugitive!

"MASTER GLYN!"

Bernard Glyn started.

It was after morning lessons on the following day, and the inventor of the Shell had snatched the brief interval before dinner to cycle down to the river and make an inspection of his latest mechanical pet.

Scarcely had he got into the speedboat before there was



"Now for it!" said Glyn, dropping down into his seat at the wheel. "Sit back and prepare for a few jumps when we get going!"

"All sewene, deah boy!"

Bernard Glyn pressed the self-starter, and with a splutter the engine started, and was almost instantly roaring away with ear-splitting intensity.

Glyn let in the clutch and opened the throttle, and a moment later the speedboat leaped to life and moved away from the bank.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" said Monty Lowther solemnly, half an hour later, when the last of the joy-riding parties had disembarked, and Glyn was preparing to moor his speedboat and return to St. Jim's, "I think we can say,

a rustle in the grass on the river bank, and a breathless, agitated voice had pronounced his name.

Glyn turned round and saw standing before him Joe Sales, the boathouse assistant who had helped him in the construction of the Nulli Secundus.

"Why, Joe, what's the matter? You've been running."

"Quick! I want to hide, an' you can help me, Master Glyn. They're after me!"

"They?"

"The policeman, Crump, from Rylcombe, an' Mr. Choate!" gasped the young waterman, with a quick, agitated glance over his shoulder. "Tell me you'll hide me in the boat, sir!"

"What the thump— Well, jump in, anyway, and get under this tarpaulin," said Bernard Glyn, greatly astonished. "But what on earth have you been doing, Joe?"

"Nothing, sir; I swear it wasn't me! But let me get under cover, an' I'll tell you. They're not in sight?"

"Nobody's in sight," answered Glyn, throwing the tarpaulin over the man's crouching figure. "Now explain!"

The boat-house assistant looked up from his hiding-place, his face drawn and his eyes quite wild.

"It's all so sudden, sir, I can hardly realise it; but it's true enough, worse luck. The police are after me for theft, an' it's not me; I swear it's not!"

"But what in the name of goodness—"

"I'll tell you quickly, Master Glyn. You know I had to go to Sir John Masterman's house up the river to-day to repair one of his boats?"

"I remember you telling me. What about it?"

"Well, I went there, sir; the rest is like a nightmare. I was crossing the lawn that leads from the house down to the riverside when it happened. Mr. Choate was the man—a guest of Sir John's; I've seen him on the river before—he came rushing up to me, with Sir John and Lady Masterman behind him an' nabbed me."

"Nabbed you? What for?"

Joe Sales choked.

"You might well ask, sir. There's been a robbery at Sir John's house—Lady Masterman's jewellery went suddenly—while I was there, so it seems. I know nothing of it—absolutely nothing; you believe me, Master Glyn?"

"Can't imagine you robbing anybody, certainly," said Bernard Glyn, with a frown. "Mean to say, then, that they accused you?"

"They did, sir; but that's not the worst. They searched me, too; and—and—it simply bowled me over at the time!—they found some of the stuff in my coat pocket!"

"What?"

"That was where it was, sir—quite a lot of it. A brooch and a bracelet—several things—all in my pocket!"

Bernard Glyn stared.

"You say they found the things in your pocket, and you want me to believe that you know nothing about it?"

"I do, sir; an' I know you're going to believe me. There's something dirty an' treacherous behind it. You see, when I came to think it over, I remembered leavin' my coat lyin' on the grass for some time while I was workin'. That's when it happened; it was then that the stuff was planted on me."

"Oh, my hat! You're suggesting that someone put it there so that you should be accused. But—but what possible object could that serve?" demanded Glyn, in amazement.

"A very good object, sir. The stuff that was found on me was cheap and unimportant, though good enough to convict me on; but the man that planted it on me kept the only thing worth keeping for himself—a pearl necklace worth thousands, so Sir John said!"

"Great pip! Then you're the victim of a frame-up to shield the fellow who has taken Lady Masterman's pearl necklace?"

"That's it, sir!"

"But if they don't find the necklace on you, how can they accuse you of taking it?"

Joe Sales laughed bitterly.

"That'll be easy enough, with the evidence they've got. I've put the necklace away somewhere for safety—under the river bank, in their grounds, somewhere, anywhere. That's what they'll say."

"Good heavens!"

"Believe me, sir—say you believe me!" begged Joe Sales. "It's just what you called it—a frame-up. An' I know who's done it—Vivian Choate, the man that led them to me—he's the man!"

"Well, this beats the band!" remarked Bernard Glyn, in utter astonishment. "Sure you're not imaginin' all this, Joe? Sure the sun hasn't been affectin' you?"

Joe Sales groaned.

"I wish it was so, Master Glyn; but it's true enough, worse luck! You believe what I've told you?"

The St. Jim's junior regarded the young waterman keenly for a second or two. Then he nodded.

"I believe you, Joe."

"Thank goodness, sir! An' you'll help me?"

Glyn bit his lip.

"I want to help you, Joe; you've been a good partner to me in rigging up this boat. But don't you think the best plan is to face things out and tell the truth?"

Joe Sales clenched his hands.

"I'd like to, sir; I would, really. But that man'll be one too many for me; I know he will. He's clever—tricky; you can see it in his eyes. I don't feel I'll beat

him once I'm in the hands of the police, an' I want to be free to get the proof of my innocence myself."

Bernard Glyn shook his head.

"I think you're wrong, Joe; but if that's what you feel like, well, I'll do it! What's that?"

"It's them, sir—I know it is!" said Joe Sales, in a hoarse whisper, crouching down under the tarpaulin. "Don't let them know I'm here!"

"All serene!"

An instant later there was a tramp of footsteps along the towpath and a rustling of grass as they descended from the stony path to the water's edge.

"Master Glyn!"

Bernard Glyn looked up and recognised P.-c Crump, the village constable from Rylcombe. Behind that portly representative of law and order in the district was a tall, dark stranger.

Glyn nodded to the village policeman.

"Hallo, Mr. Crump! Nice day!"

"Wery nice, sir. Might arsk if you've seen a young feller runnin' along the towpath jest now?"

"Can't say I have. Why?"

Mr. Crump looked serious.

"There's bin a robbery, Master Glyn—that's why. An' I'm after the robber. You're sure you 'aven't seen anyone?"

"Pretty sure I haven't seen a robber, anyway!" said Glyn, with deliberate ambiguity. "Sorry, Mr. Crump!"

Mr. Crump nodded.

"Which it's a pity. But we're certain 'e came in this direction, aren't we, Mr. Choate?"

"Quite certain, constable," answered the tall, dark man. "I suggest we commandeer your young friend's motor-boat and follow the man by water."

"But I'm afraid you can't—" Bernard Glyn was beginning, when the village constable interrupted him with:

"That's a good suggestion of yours, sir. Master Glyn won't mind, I'm sure."

And P.-c. Crump came cautiously down the sloping bank and stepped into Glyn's speedboat. Vivian Choate, guest of Sir John Masterman, and, if Joe Sales was to be believed, thief and perjurer, too, followed him.

"Start 'er up, Master Glyn!" said the portly constable from Rylcombe. "We'll find our man lower down the river right enough!"

"But—" said Glyn.

And there he stuck. The situation was too awkward for words to be of any use. Pursuers and pursued were on the same boat—touching, practically, for P.-c. Crump's heavy boot was resting on a corner of the tarpaulin which concealed Joe Sales from view!

With the forlorn hope in his heart that Crump and the enigmatic Mr. Choate would be too interested in the shore to observe anything suspicious in the boat itself, Glyn started up the engine, then engaged his gears and opened the throttle.

With a sharp, crackling roar, the Nulli Secundus shot away from the bank.

At the same moment, Glyn realised that his forlorn hope had already gone. Above the noise of the engine he heard a yell from Mr. Choate.

"He's here, by James! In the boat itself!"

"What?" came an incredulous shout from Mr. Crump.

"Here, man! Underneath the tarpaulin! Hold him!"

Then a thud and a shout in another voice:

"Stand back, both of you, or you'll get hurt!"

Glyn threw a hasty glance over his shoulder and caught a momentary view of Joe Sales standing with his back to the rudder while Crump and the dark guest of Sir John Masterman rushed towards him.

Another moment and the young waterman would be a prisoner. Now, it at all, was the time for action, Glyn acted.

He saw just one chance of saving Joe Sales. That chance lay in unbalancing the other two and sending them headlong into the water!

It was a dangerous, rather desperate, thing to do; but somehow Glyn found that all his sympathies were with the fugitive, and he felt he simply had to help him, whatever trouble followed.

With eyes fixed keenly ahead, Glyn bent over the wheel and suddenly wrenched it violently round in an almost complete circle.

The response was immediate. The Nulli Secundus, as though pinned down suddenly by the nose, shot round, quivering in every timber. Glyn himself, prepared as he was, had to cling with all his strength to the wheel to avoid being flung overboard.

Choate and Crump, unprepared and unanchored, so to speak, were helpless in that violent and unexpected change. Their bodies fairly flew out of the boat, to whirl through

Choate and Crump fairly flew out of the boat and finished up with a fearful splash near the bank!



the air for the space of a second and finish up with a fearful splash in the shallow water near the bank.

"Good for you, sir!" came a hoarse shout from the stern.

Glyn glanced back again, and smiled to see Joe Sales still standing where he had been before. Joe, more experienced on the water than either of Glyn's two victims, had successfully survived the ordeal.

"All serene, Joe?" called out the St. Jim's junior.

"Ay, ay, sir! Full speed ahead, now; they're both all right and scrambling out!"

"Good enough!"

And Bernard Glyn went ahead at full speed, not once slackening until he had reached the woods lower down the river. Here he drew into the shore and eventually came to a stop, and Joe Sales disembarked.

"Thank you, sir—thanks, a thousand times!" he exclaimed, as he stood on the bank. "You've been good to me to-day, Master Glyn!"

Glyn shrugged.

"Glad to be able to help you, Joe. But you can't go on hiding in these woods for ever, and I still think your best plan is to give yourself up and rely on the police finding out the truth."

Joe Sales shook his head.

"I feel different about it, sir. Perhaps you would, too, if you were wanted by the police for something you hadn't done."

"Perhaps so," admitted Glyn. "Anyway, whatever I feel about it, I can't leave you to starve in the woods, Joe. Make towards the lane later on, and I'll bring you some grub half-way through the afternoon. Au revoir!"

And, without waiting to listen to the fugitive's renewed thanks, Bernard Glyn steered away from the bank and roared off again.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Grundy's Little Way!

"MIND if I borrow your speedboat this afternoon?"

George Alfred Grundy asked that casual question of Glyn as the Shell trooped out from dinner that day.

Glyn jumped.

"What's that?"

"Mind if I borrow your speedboat this afternoon?" repeated Grundy calmly. "I want it, you see."

"Oh, you want it, do you?"

Grundy nodded.

"I'm going to take Wilkins and Gunn out for a trip down the river. I'll pay for the juice, of course."

"You will?" asked Bernard Glyn, with heavy sarcasm.

"Thanks, awfully!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, that's fixed, then," said Grundy, turning away. "Thanks!"

About half a second later he felt himself grasped by the scruff of the neck and jerked violently back.

"You silly ass!" roared Glyn, abandoning sarcasm.

Glyn, incidentally, was the one responsible for the grasping and jerking process.

Grundy let out a yelp.

"Ow! What do you think you're doing, blow you?"

"Grabbing the world's prize idiot at the moment!" snorted Glyn.

"Dashed if I know what you're all cackling at!" declared Grundy. "If you're going to be hoggish and want the thing for yourself every day, Glyn, then all I can say is, I don't like your attitude. Furthermore, I'm not going to stand for it!"

"Oh, my hat! Any good expecting this dummy to understand anything?" asked Glyn helplessly.

"No good whatever," laughed Tom Merry. "Only thing is to take out the boat yourself, and let him understand from concrete facts."

"Which is just what I'm going to do," said Glyn. "Buzz off, Grundy!"

Grundy glared.

"Then you don't intend to lend me the boat?"

"Now, I wonder how you found that out?" exclaimed Glyn, in pretended astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Right-ho, then!" said Grundy grimly. "You've said it. I can see how things stand now. And all I can say is—look out! That's all."

And Grundy tramped off, his rugged face quite stern and resolute.

A roar of laughter followed him.

Glyn went up to his study and temporarily forgot all about Grundy. The affair of Joe Sales' flight from capture was still fresh on his mind, and he had no time to bother about the great man of the Shell.

But Grundy did not forget Glyn. Grundy was not accustomed to being thwarted. The mere mention of Grundy wanting a thing ought always to have resulted in his getting it in Grundy's opinion. In the matter of having things his own way Grundy was Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and Mussolini rolled into one. So Grundy did not forget; instead, he brooded.

The result of his brooding was that half an hour later Wilkins and Gunn received a clarion call to action from their leader.

"Up you get, you slackers!" roared Grundy, barging into Study No. 3. "Follow me!"

"Where, old chap?" asked Wilkins.

"Up to the top box-room."

"What for, old man?" ventured Gunn.

"To lock up that silly ass, Glyn, for the rest of the afternoon. He's just gone up there, and I want you men to keep him busy while I change the door-key to the outside. Kim on!"

"But, old man—" objected Wilkins.

"We—we don't really want to lock Glyn up at all," murmured Gunn.

Grundy snorted disgustedly.

"Just what I might have expected from you two. Anyway, you're going to do it, whether you want to or not. I'll jolly well make you!"

Crack!

That sound followed immediately afterwards. It indicated a violent and painful collision between the respective heads of Wilkins and Gunn, directed by Grundy, and elicited an agonised yell from each of those unfortunate juniors.

"Whoooooop!"

"Yarooooooh!"

"Now follow me!" hooted Grundy.

And Wilkins and Gunn decided to do so, despite their objections.

Out into the Shell passage and up the stairs they went, in the wake of their grimly, determined leader.

At the top of the last flight of stairs, which led to several rooms, Grundy paused for a moment and pointed to an open door. Then, with a terrific glare at his two henchmen, intended, apparently, to convey a slight idea of the fearful things that would happen to them if they failed him, Grundy tramped into the box-room.

Bernard Glyn, who was sorting out some "junk" which he had previously deposited in the room, looked up with a frown.

"You again?"

"Little me," assented Grundy, permitting himself to be grimly humorous.

"If you've come to ask about that boat again—"

"I haven't."

"Well, that'll save you a waste of breath, anyway," grinned Bernard Glyn.

"I haven't come to ask about it," said Grundy. "I've just come to tell you I'm going to take it, that's all."

"What the thump—"

"I asked you for the loan of the boat in a perfectly polite way. In return you cheeked me. My reply to that is to take the boat without further argument—savvy?"

"Well, not exactly," said Bernard Glyn, standing upright and eyeing Wilkins and Gunn rather warily. "If you're thinking of taking the boat by force, there'll probably be about forty fellows around to help me prevent you."

Grundy laughed.

"Perhaps there will be. But I don't suppose they'll do anything. You see, you won't be there."

"Eh?"

"You won't be there!"

"Where on earth do you think I shall be, then?"

"Up here in this room, locked safe and sound, until we get back!" roared Grundy. "See the idea? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Collar him!" yelled Grundy.

Wilkins and Gunn didn't exactly rush to obey that call to duty. They didn't do anything at all for a moment, and probably would have ignored it altogether but for Bernard Glyn taking the offensive himself.

When Wilkins received Glyn's knuckles in his eye, and Gunn got a rattling blow on the point of his chin, however, Grundy's reluctant followers felt like retaliating, regardless of the merits of the case.

"Ow! My eye!" yelled Wilkins.

"My chin!" hooted Gunn. "Now give him one back, Wilky!"

"What-ho!"

And Wilkins and Gunn piled in with great good will after that, with the result that Bernard Glyn was very quickly lying on the floor of the box-room, with his two opponents sitting on his chest.

"Good!" remarked Grundy, when he turned round from the door. "Now, when I say 'Go!' jump up and rush out. I'll stand by the door ready to slam it after you get out. Ready?"

"All serene!"

"Then go!"

Wilkins and Gunn jumped up and made a leap for the door. Bernard Glyn was also on his feet within the next second or two, but Grundy was too quick for him.

Slam!

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The door closed, with Grundy & Co. on the other side of it, and a key clicked in the lock.

Bernard Glyn beat a savage tattoo on the panels of the door.

"Come back, you howling asses! Lemme out!"

"Not now, old chap. Later on, if you're good and don't kick up too much row!" grinned Grundy.

"You—you—I'll slaughter you! If you touch that boat—"

"We're going to!"

"You howling, shrieking idiot—"

"Rats!"

And with that ancient and classic monosyllable, George Alfred Grundy ended the argument, and led his somewhat breathless chums downstairs again.

## CHAPTER 4.

### Crash!

"WELL, here we are. And now for the fun!"

Grundy made that remark as he tramped down the towpath with the faithful Wilkins and Gunn and came in sight of the Nulli

Secundus.

Wilkins and Gunn looked at each other, then looked at Grundy. Somehow, the nearer they had got to the river the less entrancing had seemed the prospect of joy-riding in Glyn's speedboat with the leader of Study No. 3. Now that they had actually arrived, the prospect seemed the very reverse of entrancing.

"Ahem!" murmured Wilkins. "Grundy, old chap—"

"Well?" barked Grundy.

"Don't you think, perhaps, we'd better go for a walk instead?"

"What?"

"Not a bad suggestion of Wilky's," said Gunn, quite heartily. "Can't say I'm fearfully keen on carcering about on the river in hot weather like this!"

"You'd rather go for a walk along the broiling, dusty roads—eh?" snorted Grundy. "Well, you must be potty, Gunn, that's all."

"H'm! Apart from that, old man, a speedboat's a speedboat—" began Wilkins cautiously.

Grundy stared.

"I suppose it is, Wilkins. Fairly obvious, I should say. Did you imagine I thought a speedboat was an Atlantic liner, or a canoe, or something?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Wilkins, registering appropriate mirth. "No, old chap. But what I mean is, you haven't had much experience of such things, have you?"

"That's it, old man," supported Gunn. "It's not as if you've been piloting speedboats all your life."

"Well?" demanded Grundy grimly.

"Perhaps, under the circumstances, it would be better to postpone it till you've had a few lessons."

"Ah!" said Grundy, in a tone that conveyed worlds of meaning. "So that's it, is it? You doubt whether I can pilot the thing properly. I see!"

"Something in it, anyway."

"There's nothing in it," said Grundy sharply. "If you were talking about yourselves—yes. I dare say it would take you ages to get the hang of it. It does about anything with you two fellows. I've noticed it before!"

"Oh!"

"With me it's rather different. I've got a sort of natural aptitude for things like this. I have about most things, as a matter of fact. I must admit that I know very little about the game at present. But in ten minutes I shall know pretty well all there is to know!"

"Fat lot of use that will be when we're lying at the bottom of the river and the speedboat's in little pieces!" remarked Gunn pessimistically. "My suggestion—"

"Bother your suggestion! Push that hamper over, and don't gas so much!"

"But—"

"Going to pass that hamper or not?" hooted Grundy. "If you chaps are too scared to come, you can jolly well stop on the shore; but I'm going to take the hamper, anyway!"

"Oh!"

"H'm!"

A swift look of understanding passed between Wilkins and Gunn, and in the brief space of one second they had decided to accompany Grundy, after all. Grundy's decision regarding the hamper had put rather a different complexion on things.

"It's all right, old chap," said Wilkins soothingly. "We don't intend to desert you—do we, Gunny?"

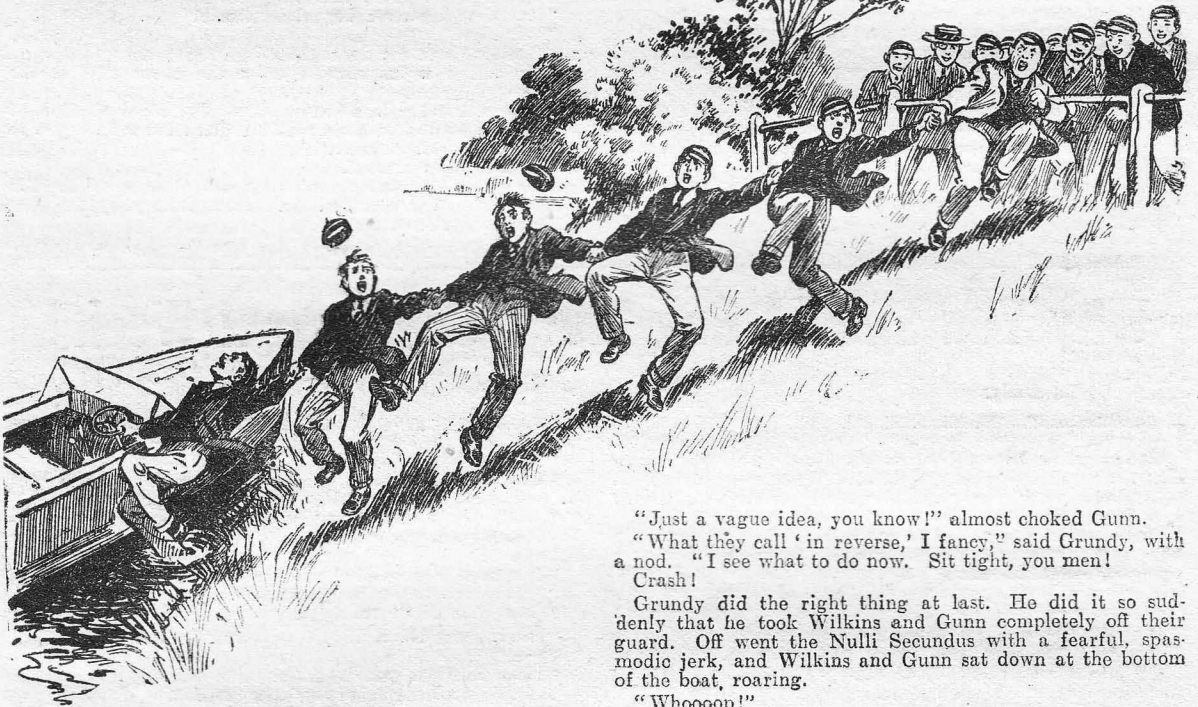
"Not likely. We'll come!"

"That's better. Now stop gassing and jump in," growled Grundy.

Wilkins and Gunn jumped in—or, rather, stepped in, being a little more careful in their habits than their leader. Grundy sat down at the wheel and eyed the controls. "Looks pretty simple," he remarked. "I suppose this is the steering-wheel."  
 "Unless it's the three-speed gear," said Wilkins, elaborately sarcastic, "or the propeller!"  
 Grundy frowned.  
 "Don't see how it can be either of those."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Why, you silly asses— Trying to be funny, Wilkins?"  
 "Nunno! Nothing of the kind," said Wilkins, hastily straightening his face again. "Go on, old chap."  
 Grundy gave the wheel a violent wrench, which was

"Push that lever back before we crash!" howled Gunn; and Grundy did so, just in time to avert a terrific crash with some boats moored to the other bank of the river.  
 "You—you—" gasped Wilkins, mopping his perspiring brow, and fixing a baleful glare on his cheerful and quite unperturbed leader.  
 Grundy frowned.  
 "Stop gassing, Wilkins. How can you expect me to pick up the idea while you keep on exercising your jaw behind me?"  
 "Oh dear!"  
 "I think I twig now," said Grundy. "We were going backwards then, I believe?"  
 "Oh, my hat! I have a faint idea we were!"

Figgins and his followers, in a line from the railings to the boat, were jumping about in a weird, spasmodic dance.



answered by a sharp, splitting sound from somewhere in the depths of the boat. Wilkins and Gunn looked a little alarmed at that somewhat sinister noise.  
 "That's it, all right," said Grundy. "It's the steering-wheel, just as I said."  
 "What was that funny noise?" asked Gunn. "Didn't quite like the sound of it myself."  
 "Nothing to be alarmed at. Wants a bit of oil, I expect," said Grundy airily.  
 Wilkins and Gunn devoutly hoped so. Neither of them knew enough about the construction of a speedboat to realise that the strands of the steering-cable, weakened already, though they were not aware of it, by the strain put on it a little earlier by Glyn, might be parting as a result of Grundy's roughshod methods.  
 "Now for it!" said Grundy. "Best thing to do is to try everything till I know what it's for. What's this, for instance?"  
 An ear-splitting roar answered the question for him. Grundy had pressed the self-starter.  
 Wilkins and Gunn got a little nearer to their leader.  
 "Steady on, old man! Don't do too much at once," advised Wilkins. "Don't you think we'd better push out into midstream before you try anything else? Be safer."  
 "I don't mind. Push her off, then."  
 Gunn seized a boathook and pushed off from the shore, and Glyn's speedboat, still roaring away merrily, floated out into midstream.  
 Then Grundy's hand descended on something else, and there was a wild yell from Wilkins and Gunn. For Grundy, in his innocence, had engaged the reverse pinions, and the Nulli Secundus had begun to speed backwards!  
 "Yooooop! You silly ass—"

"Just a vague idea, you know!" almost choked Gunn.  
 "What they call 'in reverse,' I fancy," said Grundy, with a nod. "I see what to do now. Sit tight, you men! Crash!"  
 Grundy did the right thing at last. He did it so suddenly that he took Wilkins and Gunn completely off their guard. Off went the Nulli Secundus with a fearful, spasmodic jerk, and Wilkins and Gunn sat down at the bottom of the boat, roaring.  
 "Whooooop!"  
 "Serves you right for not sitting tight, you silly asses!" hooted Grundy, above the din of the engine. "Now hold on, blow you!"  
 "Grooogh!"  
 Wilkins and Gunn, groaning, groped their respective ways to a seat and sat down rather dizzily.  
 The speed at which they found themselves to be careering along, when they were sufficiently conscious to notice their surroundings, increased their dizziness rather than lessened it. Having discovered how to accelerate, Grundy was going the whole hog. Grundy usually did go the whole hog, and as a rule it didn't matter much. This time, it most certainly did matter!  
 Wilkins and Gunn blinked at the whizzing trees and foaming spray, and fairly knocked at the knees.  
 "Grundy—" shrieked Wilkins.  
 "For goodness' sake—" bawled Gunn.  
 "Old man—"  
 "Old fellow—"  
 But Grundy carried on regardless. The great man of the Shell was far too busy to trouble about Wilkins and Gunn. He had always longed for thrills. Now he was getting them.  
 He was, had he known it, going to get more thrills than he wanted within a very short space of time. But Grundy was blissfully ignorant of what was in store for him. To a fellow with even an elementary knowledge of motor-boats that unusual noise which had followed his first twist of the wheel would have conveyed a warning that something  
 THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,167.

was radically wrong with the steering-cable. Grundy was not even aware that such things as steering-cables existed, so the matter naturally didn't trouble him in the slightest.

Up the shining waters of the Ryll thundered the Nulli Secundus, and while the course was straight, everything in the garden, so to speak, was lovely.

At the bend of the river, Grundy found that the steering-wheel was peculiarly unresponsive; but he somehow negotiated the bend. Then, as Glyn's speedboat turned into a straight course again, the juniors heard above the roar of the engine a loud snap.

"What was that?" shrieked Gunn.

Grundy waved his hand reassuringly.

"All serene. She's still going!"

"But——"

"Sit back! I'm going to swing right round in a minute!"

"You howling idiot——"

"Rats!"

They reached a broad part of the river, and Grundy saw his chance. In the shade of some willow trees on the right bank was a punt, occupied by Mr. Railton of the School House, and Dr. Holmes, headmaster of St. Jim's. The two gentlemen were probably discussing Sophocles and other ancient people of his kind. Grundy decided that he would show them something that would bring their thoughts back from ancient Greece to modern England with a jerk.

Their punt was on the right. So Grundy elected to turn to the left, speed round in almost a complete circle, and tear off down the river again, leaving Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton to marvel at the progress of science and the cleverness of George Alfred Grundy.

He bent over the wheel, and putting all the strength of his body into the movement, turned it violently round to the left.

Glyn put his head out of the window and made a megaphone of his hands.

"Hi, Baggy!"

Trimble, far below, jumped and looked up. He stared at the sight of Glyn.

"What's up?" he called out.

"I'm locked in. Grundy, you know. He's taken the key."

"He, he, he!" came Trimble's unmusical cachinnation from below.

"Look here, Baggy, run and bone Railton's duplicate and let me out, will you? There's no risk; Railton's on the river with the Head."

"He, he, he! I'll see; can't promise!"

And with that not altogether satisfactory answer, Trimble rolled off again.

Bernard Glyn waited impatiently.

After a lapse of five minutes, there was a sound of footsteps on the stairs, and Glyn brightened up considerably.

"That you, Baggy?" he called out, as the footsteps stopped outside the box-room.

"He, he, he! Yes, rather!"

"Got that duplicate key of Railton's?"

"What-ho!"

"Good! Open the door, then!"

Glyn heard a fat chuckle from the other side of the door.

"Dunno that I'm in a hurry, Glyn. For a pal of mine, of course, I'd do it like a shot. But I don't know that you've been a great pal of mine."

Bernard Glyn choked.

"You—you—I mean, don't talk rot, Baggy. I'm—I'm quite a pal of yours, really. In fact, awfully pally!"

Trimble chuckled again.

## Why You Should Buy The "GEM" Next Week!

(See page 10.)

The response he received to that movement was immediate, overwhelming surprise, and absolutely disastrous.

Instead of swinging gracefully round to the left, Glyn's speedboat spun round in precisely the opposite direction.

Unknown to the novice at the wheel, the steering-cable had snapped almost on the rudder, sending the latter swinging round the wrong way!

There was a wild yell from Wilkins and Gunn.

"Grundy——"

But Grundy was powerless to avert the disaster. He just closed his eyes and hoped for the best. And the Nulli Secundus, uncontrolled, roared forward straight for the centre of the Head's punt.

A terrific crashing sound rent the air as Glyn's speedboat tore clean through the frail punt, tearing it in half. Into the air shot two halves of the broken craft.

And into the air also shot Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton!

They flew up from their respective ends as though catapulted, descended side by side and collided with each other with a fearful concussion right on the prow of Glyn's speedboat!

CRASH!

### CHAPTER 5.

#### Denounced!

BANG, bang, bang!

Bernard Glyn's box-room prison reverberated with the sound of his pummelling and kicking on the door.

It had been reverberating for half an hour, but the only result so far was that Glyn's hands were sore and his shoes a good deal the worse for wear.

It was a fine afternoon and the House had practically emptied soon after dinner. The probability was that there was nobody left anywhere near the top part of the building, and Glyn began to see before him the dismal prospect of remaining locked up for the rest of the afternoon.

"Oh dear!" groaned Glyn.

He crossed over to the window and looked out across the playing-fields, alive with white-clad figures of cricketers, then on to the sunny quad beneath him.

There he spotted a podgy junior coming towards the House from the direction of the tuckshop. It was Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the Fourth at St. Jim's.

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"First I knew about it. But if you mean it——"

"Of course I mean it!" groaned Glyn, shaking his fist at the door. "I'm as pally as—as anything!"

"Well, that's what I call jolly good news. You see, as it happens, I'm just looking for a pal!"

"What?"

"I've been disappointed about a remittance I was expecting—from one of my titled relations, you know——"

"You silly ass!" roared Glyn.

"Look here, Glyn, if you're going to talk to me like that——"

"How much do you want, you fat criminal?"

Trimble, on his side of the door, sniffed.

"If that's how you put it, Glyn, I wouldn't dream of accepting a favour from you, and naturally, you could hardly expect me to do you a favour either, could you? Of course, if you'd really been as pally as you said you were——"

"You—you——"

"Then, in that case, I should have been delighted to accept a loan of five bob to tide me over the difficulty——"

"I'll give you five bob, blow you!"

"Sorry, but I can't accept it in that spirit," said Trimble firmly. "If you'll lend me five bob as a pal——"

"All right, then! And let me out quickly!"

"Well, of course, that's different!" said Trimble. "It's a real pleasure to help a pal. Half a jiffy!"

"Hurry up, you fat ass!"

A key grated in the keyhole; Trimble fumbled about for a few seconds. Then at last, to Glyn's relief, the door of the box-room swung open.

"There you are!" said Trimble. "Now, what about the five—— Yaroooooh!"

The Falstaff of the Fourth ended up with a wild yell as Bernard Glyn seized the opportunity of giving vent to his bottled-up feelings by falling on the fat junior, grabbing him by the hair, and banging his head against the lintel of the door.

"This is what happens to fat, blackmailing cads when they get their deserts!" remarked Bernard Glyn, deriving a little satisfaction from Baggy's agonised yells. "As I gave my word, I'll stand you the five bob; but I'll jolly well take it out of your hide! Run!"

Baggy Trimble ran, and Glyn ran after him, landing out with his foot at regular intervals of a few seconds as he did so.



"Yooooop! Whoop! Yaroooooh!" came a series of ear-splitting yells from the Falstaff.

"Take that—and that—and that!" was all that Glyn said in the same period.

Trimble took them. He had no option about it. He shot down flights of stairs and along deserted passages like a fat electric hare, yelling fondishly as he went. And not till the Hall was reached was Trimble given a respite.

There, however, Glyn desisted.

"That'll do, I think!" he remarked, rather breathlessly. "Here's your five bob, and if you buy tarts with it, I hope they'll make you ill!"

"Yah!"

Bernard Glyn then departed, going first to the tuckshop, where he made a number of purchases, and then to the bicycle-shed, from which he took his "jigger," and rode it down to the gates.

For a couple of hundred yards he "scorched"; then, drawing near the woods, he slowed down a little, and kept his eyes at the side of the road, looking for the fugitive waterman whom he had promised to meet.

He soon spotted him, waving his hand from a little clearing just off the road, and, after cautiously glancing round to make sure that he was not observed, Glyn dismounted and approached his unlucky protegee.

"Still at large, then, Joe?" he remarked, with a faint smile.

"So far, sir. I was just beginning to wonder whether you'd changed your mind about seeing me."

Glyn shook his head.

"I wouldn't let you down, though I must say I still think you're unwise. Here's some grub."

"Thank you, sir. You're very kind."

"Rats! And now, what's your next move?"

Joe Sales' lips set grimly.

"I'm going to watch that man Choate; that's my move. I'm convinced that he's the man that took that necklace of Lady Masterman, and I'm going to find him an' keep him under my eye till I can prove it."

"Good luck to you, then, old bean!"

"Don't worry about me any more, Master Glyn; you've done enough already, an' I can look after myself now," said Joe Sales. "I'm not resting, I can tell you, till I've cleared my name an' seen that man in the hands of the police. I'll do it, somehow."

"I hope you do, Joe. And now I'd better buzz off."

And, with a cordial handshake, Bernard Glyn wheeled his bike back to the road and pedalled off, leaving the "wanted" man to get back to the comparative safety of the inner parts of the woods.

His thoughts now returning to the Nulli Secundus, Glyn cycled rapidly down to the river. He left the road and proceeded along a footpath that led down to the river-bank.

Then, as he came in sight of the shimmering waters of the Ryll, he heard a familiar roar, and recognised the sound of the engine of the Nulli Secundus.

And after that a wild yell from the river.

It was the yell that Wilkins and Gunn uttered as Grundy attempted his grand, spectacular turn.

Glyn leaped off his bike and rushed down to the tow-path.

He was just in time to see his own speedboat tear through the water to the side, slice a frail-looking punt clean in half, and bury itself in the bank.

Crash!

"Yoooooop!"

"Oh, scissors!" gasped Glyn.

What had happened seemed almost too dreadful to contemplate for a moment.

The Nulli Secundus had smashed up, of all the craft on the river, the very punt in which the Head and Mr. Railton had been passing a quiet hour! Glyn fancied for a moment that it must have smashed up the Head and Mr. Railton, too, in the process.

It wasn't quite so bad as that. After a short, sharp flight in the air, Dr. Holmes and the Housemaster of the School House fell again, to alight side by side on the prow of the speedboat, their heads meeting with a terrific impact as they did so.

"Ow!" gasped Bernard Glyn, feeling almost as though his own head was involved.

"Yoooooo!" shouted the Head.

"Whoooooop!" howled Mr. Railton.

Such peculiar expressions of speech had rarely if ever before been heard from their magisterial lips. But Glyn had to admit to himself that the unusual departure was fully justified.

He rushed down to the scene of the accident to lend a helping hand. Other people were rushing up, too, for the noise of the collision had attracted attention all round. Juniors and seniors belonging to St. Jim's came running

along the towpath, and one or two boats began to move over towards the bank.

"Here you are, sir!" gasped Glyn, reaching out to assist the Head.

"Ow! Dear me! Oh! Oh dear!" murmured Dr. Holmes, accepting the proffered hand, and scrambling dizzily on to the shore. "That boy Grundy—"

"This way, sir!" yelled Tom Merry, who had been one of the first to arrive, putting one foot on the Nulli Secundus, and grabbing Mr. Railton by the arm.

"Thank you, Merry. Oh! Good gracious! I hardly know whether I am on my head or my heels! Oh!"

"No bones broken, sir?" inquired Bernard Glyn anxiously.

"Dear me! I think not; I hope not, indeed! But— Oh!"

"Oh! Dear me! Oh!" gasped the Head.

The Head and Mr. Railton seemed incapable, for the time being, of doing anything other than looking at each other and indulging in a chorus of "Oh's!" and "Dear me's!" While they recovered, Glyn jumped into the speedboat, grasped the half-paralysed Grundy by the ears, and jerked him out of the pilot's seat, then shut off the engine.

By that time the Head had recovered sufficiently to be able to remark:

"Dreadful! Disgraceful! Abominable!"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Grundy. "I'm sorry, sir—"

"Disgraceful behaviour, Grundy! Utterly disgraceful, I say! Is this motor-boat your property?"

"No, sir; it's mine," said Bernard Glyn, answering for Grundy. "It's not the boat that's at fault, I fancy; it's the driver!"

"Look here—" said Grundy feebly.

"Silence, Grundy!"

It was at that moment that a tall, dark man pushed his way through the buzzing crowd. His eyes were fixed on Glyn for some seconds, then they turned to the Head.

"Excuse me, sir. You are, I believe, the headmaster of St. James' School?"

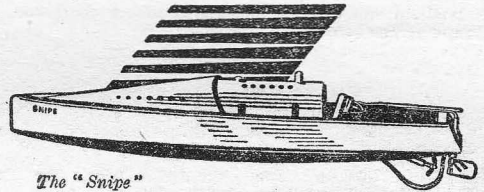
"That is so, sir. If you have business to discuss with me, I shall be obliged if you will postpone it to a more suitable occasion than the present," said the Head coldly.

"Now, Grundy—"

But the tall, dark gentleman insisted.

(Continued on next page.)

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"I am sorry if I seem to cause you annoyance, sir, but my business concerns the owner of the motor-boat which has just been the cause of your unfortunate mishap. My name is Choate—Vivian Choate."

"Yes, yes," said Dr. Holmes impatiently. "But I should prefer—"

"The matter upon which I wish to speak to you is one about which you are likely to hear from the police very shortly."

"The police?" echoed the Head, raising his eyebrows. Vivian Choate nodded.

"To put the facts in a nutshell, the owner of this motor-boat—Glyn is his name, I believe—assisted this morning in enabling a criminal to escape from justice."

"What!" exclaimed the Head, in shocked amazement.

"You are shocked, sir; that is natural. Perhaps, however, you would like now to take the earliest opportunity of hearing about the matter."

"I cannot credit it—it is utterly impossible—nevertheless, I certainly wish to hear your extraordinary allegations, my dear sir. Can you accompany me to the school now?"

"It will be a pleasure."

"Very well, sir. Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn! You will report to my study at six o'clock this evening."

"Ow! Yes, sir!"

"Glyn! You will take your motor-boat back to its mooring place, if that is practicable, and report to me immediately on your return to the school."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Come, Mr. Railton! Come, my dear sir!" said the Head.

And with a terrific look at the crowd, he led the way back to St. Jim's.

The crowd watched the trio until they were out of the range of hearing.

again overhauling his craft and arranging with one of the men attached to the school boathouse for its immediate repair.

After morning lessons on the following day he again visited the river to find the Nulli Secundus once again thoroughly seaworthy. Then, with the idea of preventing a repetition of such a disaster as Grundy's piratical raid had caused, he spent half-an-hour in fixing up round the controls a neat little arrangement of wires all connected with a central electric battery which he concealed under the pilot's seat.

Then, feeling that something attempted, something done had earned him whatever was forthcoming that day in the way of dinner, Glyn returned to St. Jim's.

Tom Merry and a crowd of School House juniors met him in the Hall. Tom was waving a sheet of paper in his hand and called across as Glyn came in.

"News for you, Glyn! We've had a challenge!"

"And you're going to give me a place in the Eleven?" asked Glyn, thinking of cricket. "Good egg! 'Bout time, too!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Sorry, old bean! It's not cricket this time."

"Then what the thump are you talking about?"

"Speedboat racing!"

Glyn looked interested.

"My hat! Then Gordon Gay—"

"You've hit it. Read this!"

Bernard Glyn took the proffered sheet of paper and glanced over it. As he read, he chuckled.

"Whereas a benighted member of the third-rate work-house known as St. Jim's has seen fit to emulate his superiors at Rylcombe Grammar School by appearing on the river in a speedboat, be it known that he is hereby

## Because "Broadside Cussy" is Packed With Thrills!

Next week's great yarn features Gussy on the Speedway.

Then their feelings at the amazing indignities to which Grundy had succeeded in subjecting the two masters found expression in one great spontaneous roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### CHAPTER 6.

#### Shocking!

NATURALLY there was trouble. Fortunately for Grundy & Co., the trouble gathered round the head of Bernard Glyn before it was their turn to interview the Head, and the enormity of their offence paled a little in comparison with Glyn's more permanently serious misdemeanour.

Dr. Holmes was almost at a loss to know what punishment was fit for a junior who had helped a "wanted" man to escape from the police. Such an unheard of transgression seemed altogether beyond excuse or explanation.

He questioned Glyn closely, and Glyn explained the reasons for his behaviour fully and frankly. The suggestion that the fugitive whom Glyn had helped was innocent rather took the Head aback. He could not, of course, accept it as an excuse, and insisted on the foolishness of the escapade, apart from the question of guilt. But Glyn's obvious sincerity did make a certain amount of difference to his attitude.

He had already, during his interview with the suspected Choate, spoken to the police on the phone and nipped in the bud any possibility of further official action, so what happened to Glyn now rested entirely with him.

What did happen eventually was a flogging for one. That was bad enough, of course, but Glyn realised that in all the circumstances he was lucky to have escaped the "sack" and he took his gruel with philosophical fortitude.

When the time came for Grundy & Co. to go on the carpet, they found that Dr. Holmes had almost forgotten the disaster on the Ryll, and they were agreeably surprised to get off with quite a light "swishing." As Monty Lowther remarked, it was an ill wind that blew nobody any good.

Glyn's great consolation lay in the fact that the Head had placed no ban on the speedboat. Within an hour of his painful interview with the Head he was on the river

challenged to a race from the boathouse to the island and back with a crew of 2 (two) for the Speed Championship of the Ryll.

"(signed) GORDON GAY.

"For and on behalf of the Junior Committee of Rylcombe Grammar School."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bernard Glyn, having perused that solemn challenge.

"Going to accept it, old bean?" asked Tom Merry.

Bernard Glyn's eyes gleamed.

"Like a bird! Mine's only a home-made affair, while Gordon Gay's is the genuine professional article, but I'll race him any day of the week; and jolly well beat him, too!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bwavo, deah boy!"

"Then I'm at liberty to write back and accept?"

"As soon as you like; and you can tell Gay with my compliments that the Nulli Secundus is going to walk it!"

"Good egg! Then that's fixed!"

"I say, you chaps—"

"Keep your hands on your purses!" called out Lowther. "Here's Trimble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Lowther!" said Trimble of the Fourth, with an indignant look. "I only came to tell you—"

"We've heard it before, old bean!"

"Heard what?"

"All about your remittance and the titled relations!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" howled Trimble. "I wasn't going to say anything about remittances, or my titled relations—"

"My hat! Who said the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! Jolly good mind not to tell you about Figgins and Glyn's speedboat now!"

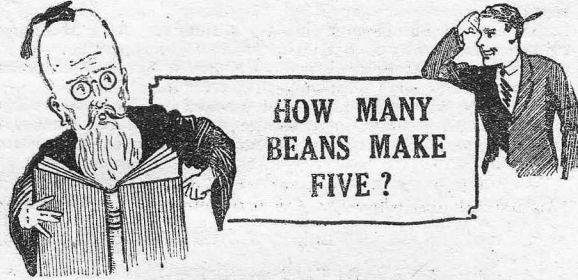
"What?" exclaimed Glyn sharply.

Trimble grinned a podgy grin.

"Thought that would fetch you! Look here, I'm a generous and forgiving sort of chap. If someone'll stand me a snack in the tuckshop after dinner, I'll tell you all about it—yarooooooh! Wharrer you doing, Glyn, you silly ass?"

(Continued on page 12.)

Can a Shark Whale? Stop that! This is no Plaice for Cod Questions!



OUR respected Editor, chums, has been put to a lot of trouble lately on account of his buzzer having broken down. In case you should not what a buzzer is, I will explain that it is an electrical contrivance, whereby he can summon his underlings to his sanctum. He presses a knob at his elbow, and the buzzer emits a noise like an expiring cow a few inches away from the ear of your hirsute friend—that's me. Whereupon the hirsute one—me—jumps from his chair and falls, feet over whiskers, into the aforesaid sanctum.

Well, as I say, this devilish contraption has gone wrong, and he has been compelled to open his door with his own lily-white hands and call me by name. He started off on Monday morning by calling out "Is Mr. Oracle there? Ask him if he would kindly mind coming in and seeing me for a few moments, thank you so much, sorry you've been trrrrroubled." But that phase of unaccustomed politeness soon passed—very soon, I assure you. By Wednesday he had cut out the colour-page stuff, and just bawled "Whiskers!" in a loud voice.

When I heard him shout "Whiskers!" on Wednesday morning I knew he had found a few teasing conundrums in the postbag, and was just itching to catch me guessing. I fell into the sanctum in my usual graceful manner, feet first.

"Ha, ha!" said the Editor. "I've been noticing for some time past, my lad, that you're paying far more attention to that hair of yours than to



His Master's Voice: "I hear you ca-a-a-alling me-e-e!"

your work. You've only got one hair on that fly-rink of yours, and it's causing more disturbance in the office than it's worth. Have it cut off at once."

"One moment, sir," I pleaded; "that hair, as you observe, is long and curly, and flows behind, like that of the greamy bard; the reason is, I am the

"Axe me another, that's easy," I said, thinking hard. I could see the Editor's gimlet eye was on me so I hurried up and began:

"The battle-axe dates from the era of bronze, and we copied the style from the Danes, though it wasn't in use by our armies at Mons, as the officers there fought with canes. But Robert the Bruce, so the story books say, in June thirteen hundred fourteen, cut Henry de Bohun in two right away, with a swipe that was clever and clean. This weapon, no doubt, was a terror to wield, and the damage it did was immense; it was safer, by far, to keep out of the field, and they did, if they had any sense. To prevent it from loss they would fix on the axe to their wrists with a padlock and chain, but it isn't explained how they carried their packs, or their gamps, when it came on to rain. When a king kicked the bucket they buried him quick, and the mourners all carried an axe, on the left, at reverse, and covered in black, you can take it from me, these are fax."

"That'll do," said the Editor, breaking in just as I was taking a deep breath. "I'll print that in the GEM as ordinary prose, it's not good enough to be divided up into lines, like real poetry. Just explain briefly for the benefit of a reader in Belfast, what zoning means."

"Zoning, sir, is a regulation governing the height and density of buildings in large cities. It operates in Germany, where it has procured spaciousness and uniformity in growing towns, and it is also applied in New York, where it governs the height of skyscrapers."

"What's the betel nut? G. Harris, down in Cornwall, asks."

"The betel nut is the fruit of the betel palm, but the betel leaf comes from another plant, called the betel vine, or pan. The betel palm grows in Malaya and the south of India, Ceylon, Siam, and the Philippine Islands."

"What does the tree look like?" snapped the Editor.

"It has a straight, slender, unbranched stem reaching sometimes fifty feet in height, and looks very graceful."

"Which is more than you'll ever do, my lad. D'you know any more?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "lots and lots. The betel fruit is the size of a small hen's egg, and inside the rind you find the jolly old betel nut, which is hard, and has a mottled grey and brown look about it. The Eastern races collect these betel nuts for the purpose of chewing them, not being able to procure any spearmint in those parts. D'you know, sir, it's been calculated that one-tenth of the human race chews betel nut?"

"Well, don't let me catch you at it," said the Editor. "Know any more?"

"Yes, sir. The betel nut fruit is prepared by boiling it, after which it is

GEM's pet poet, and I have rhymes beneath the shining lard."

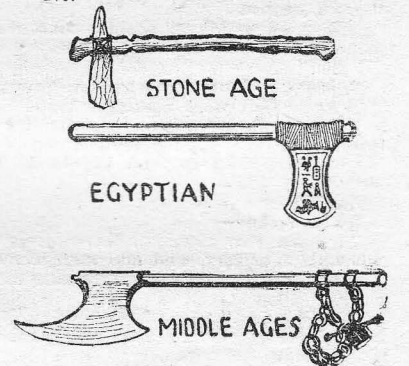
"Right-ho!" said the Editor. "If you're a poet, my lad, just answer this query in verse. If it doesn't rhyme, out you go. R. N., of Reigate, asks, 'Can your whisky wonder tell me the history of the battle-axe?' Now then, out with it."

cut up and dried in the sun. That makes it turn black. When the time comes to start chewing, the dried nut is wrapped in betel vine leaf, with a pellet of chunam—"

"What's chunam?" said the Editor. "Wait a minute," I said, not being perfectly certain how to describe it at the moment. "The nut is wrapped in the leaf, and when it's chewed, it produces a flow of saliva that is brick-red in colour, which stains the mouth and teeth. It stains the mouth red, but turns the teeth black. It is supposed, however, to have a beneficial effect on the digestion, besides strengthening the gums and sweetening the breath. Have you got all that down, sir?"

"A girl reader wants to know the ages of Tom Merry & Co."

"Sixteen." "And is there a Second Form at St. Jim's?" "No."



Axes used throughout the ages. Now "axe" me another!

"Stanley Jackman, of Balham, wants to know how fast a passenger train can safely travel round a curve of three chains radius."

"Between fifty and sixty miles an hour."

"Tell me what bhong is?" "What bhong is what?"

"A Felixstowe reader wants to know what bhong is, you hairy image!"

"I'm sorry, sir," I said, stroking the first seven feet of my whiskers thoughtfully, and assuming a learned expression, "but I'm asking, what bhong is what?"

"You don't know, you don't know," said the Editor, beginning to chortle. "You're sacked." He then rushed to the door and roared for the office boy, who fell head first over the Editor's feet, as he was listening at the key-hole, and dropped with a thud on the floor.

"Get up," roared the Editor, "and tell me what bhong is."

"What bhong, sir?" asked the O. B., rubbing himself, with a sad expression.

The Editor raised his boot, and then there was another bang, in the corridor, as the O. B. fell upon its surface.

"You're all sacked!" roared the Editor, throwing the letter down in his fury. I looked at the reader's letter, then I said:

"Why didn't you tell me it was bhong spelt with an H. Bhong is the name given to the leaves of the hemp plant, when they have been prepared for use as a narcotic drug. Bhong is smoked, sometimes with tobacco, and sometimes without, or it is made into an intoxicating drink by infusing in cold water."

"Very well, you can go," said the Editor. "And don't bang the door."

Ta-ta till next week.—ORACLE.  
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## Speedmen of the River I

(Continued from page 10.)

"Shaking a fat mountain of jelly!" answered Glyn, grimly. "I'm going on with it, too, until you tell me all about this bizney of Figgins and my speedboat. Like this!"

"Ow-wow-ow! Lemme gig-gig-gig-go, you rotter! Yoooop! All right; I'll tell you!"

"Just as well for you! Now, what is it?"

"Beast!" snorted Trimble. "Well, this is it: after dinner to-day, Figgins and his pals are going to make a raid on your speedboat, like Grundy did yesterday, and have a joy-ride in it. There!"

"That all?" asked Glyn, to the surprise of the School House crowd.

"Quite enough, I should think, Glyn!" remarked Tom Merry, with a frown. "It's a New House rag; they're doing it just to score over us."

"Yaas, wathah! I fancy, deah boys, that it's up to us to step in first an' be weady for the wottahs!"

"Oh, rather!"

Glyn smiled.

"No need to worry, chaps. Matter of fact, I've already done so!"

"Eh?"

"How the thump can you have prepared for them before you knew they were making a raid?" asked Jack Blake.

"I haven't prepared specially for the New House," grinned Glyn. "But I've fixed up a surprise packet for anyone who tries to start my boat, New House man or otherwise!"

"Oh!"

"You mean——"

"I mean I've wired all the controls and connected them up with a battery, and any man who goes anywhere near them is going to get a lot more than he bargains for."

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then Figgy is in for an electric shock—that it?" asked Jack Blake

"Just that—and something rather special in the way of shocks, too!" grinned Bernard Glyn. "I suggest we all trot along after dinner and hide in the bushes near the towpath. It ought to be worth watching."

"Good egg!"

"Wouldn't miss it for worlds!" chuckled Lowther. "Count us all in, Glynny!"

And most of the School House juniors did seem to be in it by the time dinner was over. Quite an army marched down to the river in twos and threes and took up positions of vantage behind the bushes near the towpath.

Five minutes after the last of them had taken cover a troop of New House juniors, six strong, appeared from the direction of the school. The concealed spectators recognised George Figgins, the lanky leader of the New House juniors, in front; and behind him came Kerr and Wynn, with Redfern, Lawrence, and French bringing up the rear.

"Bai Jove! Weminds one of lambs bein' led to the slaughtah, deah boys!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from his hiding-place. "I considah——"

"S-sh!"

"Weally, Blake! I was merely sayin' that I considah that——"

"Quiet, you ass!"

"Yaas, but I just wanted to remark——"

Herries, in the nick of time, had thrown his arms affectionately round the swell of the Fourth and placed his large size in hands over D'Arcy's mouth. And D'Arcy's remarks died away into an almost inaudible mumble.

Down to the river-bank went Figgins & Co., all innocent of the surprise that had been prepared for them.

The place where Glyn had last moored the Nulli Secundus sloped rather steeply down to the water, and the watchers saw Figgins & Co. hesitate at the top of the bank, a little undecided as to the best way to reach their destination.

"Better give me a hand down first, and I'll shift her up to a better spot," they heard Figgins say eventually. "Make a chain of it; Fatty can hold on to that iron rail at the top, and the rest link hands, with me at the bottom. All serene?"

"Anything for a quiet life!" came Kerr's reply. "Lucky there are no School House chaps about. I fancy this is where we're going to score!"

"What-ho!"

Peering round from the bushes that concealed them, the School House juniors saw Fatty Wynn curl his arm round the rail that stood for the protection of pedestrians at the top of the embankment and extend the other to Kerr and the rest, who then formed a chain with their hands.

Figgins, at the other end of the line, was lowered down till he reached the boat.

And then——

"Yarooooop!" rang out a sudden yell.

"Whooop! What the thump——"

"Something's gone wrong! Leggo, you ass!"

"I can't! Yooooop! It's electricity!"

"Oh, my hat! Ow-wow! Whooop!"

The School House contingent decided that the time had come when there was no harm in revealing themselves. They streamed out into the open and crowded round the top of the bank.

An extraordinary sight met their eyes.

Figgins and his followers, in a line extending from the rail which Wynn was grasping to the steering-wheel on which Figgins' hand was fixed, were jumping about in a weird, spasmodic dance quite unlike anything that the juniors ever remembered seeing before. Their expressions combined rage, pain, astonishment, and dismay in equal proportions, and their yells were loud and protracted.

"Yarooooogh!"

"Leggo that rail, Wynn, you idiot! Ow!"

"Whooop! I kik-kik-can't! Something's stopping me! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a yell from the School House juniors. They crowded round the unhappy line of electrified New House men, howling with mirth. And at the sound of that yell and the sight of their hereditary foe the New House raiders gave a simultaneous roar.

"School House cads!"

"Yarooooop!"

"It's a trap!" hooted Redfern. "A giddy School House trap—and we've fallen into it!"

"Oh crikey! Whooop!"

"Yooooop! Leggo, Figgy!"

"Leggo yourself; I can't! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and his followers shrieked; it was the funniest thing they had seen for many a long day; and, furthermore, a School House "score" to be remembered.

## THE ROARING ADVENTURES OF THE WIGGA WAGGA BOYS!



If you want a good laugh, follow the W.W. Boys every week.

"Oh dear!" gasped Tom Merry at last, wiping the tears of merriment from his eyes. "Can't let the poor chaps remain there for ever, I suppose. Can you switch off the current without getting mixed up in it, Glyn?"

"Easy!" grinned the inventor of the Shell. "Think they've had enough?"

"Yoooop! More than enough, you howling idiots!" hooted Figgins. "Switch it off before I go potty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Willing to admit now that School House is cock House?" asked Glyn.

"Ow! Yes! Anything you like! Groooogh!"

"Good enough! Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, they've admitted the truth at last!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And in consideration of the New House representatives having admitted the truth, Glyn jumped down into the boat and switched off the current.

After which Figgins & Co., looking more dead than alive, crawled back up the bank, while the School House contingent returned to St. Jim's to regale all and sundry with the screamingly funny story of the New House raid on Glyn's speedboat and the "shocking" end thereof!

CHAPTER 7.

Ready for the Fray!

"TRIMBLE!" said Bernard Glyn thoughtfully.

"Eh?"

"Trimble! Why not?"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther—the Terrible Three of St. Jim's—stared at Glyn.

They had dropped into Study No. 11 for a chat about the forthcoming race between the Nulli Secundus and Gordon Gay's speedboat, and had been discussing the problem of who was to make up the pair for Glyn's boat. Several names had been mentioned, but the Terrible Three had certainly not considered Trimble until Glyn mentioned him.

"Well, my hat!" said Lowther. "Trimble, you say? Trimble of the Fourth? I suppose this is some sort of leg-pull, Glyn?"

Glyn smiled.

"I'm dead serious. It's only just occurred to me, but Trimble is just the man for the job. You see, he's weighty."

"Oh!"

"I've never heard what he actually weighs, but it must be at least a ton—"

"Don't exaggerate, old bean!" urged Lowther. "Half a ton, if you like, but no more than that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trimble's the man, anyway. What I need is weight at the back to keep the front well out of water when I get going at speed. Trimble will supply it, you see."

"Well, he'll certainly do that," admitted Tom Merry. "On the other hand, he knows nothing whatever about motor-boat racing."

"I don't want him to know anything; I shall do all the work. Trimble will just have to sit back."

"And, of course, when you want to make your final burst of speed you can roll him out into the river more easily than anyone else," remarked Lowther, with a nod.

"Something in Trimble, after all, you men!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a crash on the outside of the door of Study No. 11 at that moment. The juniors looked round.

"Hallo, hallo! Earthquake or something?" asked Manners.

"Sounds more like Grundy to me," said Lowther.

And Grundy it was. The great George Alfred, elephantine in his movements as usual, barged into the study wearing a rather thoughtful look on his rugged face.

He bestowed a curt nod on the Terrible Three, then addressed Glyn.

"About that race—" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Lowther suddenly.

Grundy stared.

"What the thump are you laughing at?"

"I know the answer already, you see!" chortled Lowther.

"You're expecting us to say 'What race?' and then you're going to say, 'The human race.' That's it, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you howling idiot—think I'd be so soft as to say anything like that?" demanded Grundy, who was a little slow on the uptake. "Must be daft, Lowther; in fact, I've always thought so, anyway. Matter of fact, I was talking about this speedboat race between Glyn and the Grammar School chap."

"Go hon!"

"Fact!" said Grundy unsuspectingly. "I understand that each crew consists of two men, Glyn?"

"Right on the wicket, old bean!"

"Then I suppose as you own the boat you'll be one of the St. Jim's crew?"

"Well, I have been considering it in a vague kind of way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wish you chaps wouldn't cackle so much!" snorted Grundy crossly. "Well, what I came to see you about was the other member of the crew. I've decided to help you, Glyn."

"Oh, good! Jolly sportsmanlike of you not to put your name forward, Grundy!"

Grundy jumped.

"Eh? But that's just what I do want to do!"

"Thought you said you wanted to help me?" said Glyn.

"So I do."

"But the only way you can help me is by staying out of the boat, old chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy fixed a baleful glare on the humorous speed-merchant of the Shell.

"You silly dummy! Is that meant to be funny?"

"Not a bit of it. The most serious thing I've said to-day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose that means that you're turning my offer down?" roared Grundy.

"Fraid so. You see, speedboat-racing is hardly in your line, Grundy. You're probably first-rate at sailing model yachts in a pond—"

"M-m-model yachts?" stuttered the great man of the Shell.

"Or working a paddle-boat in a park lake—"

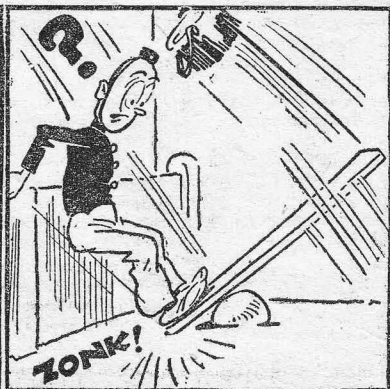
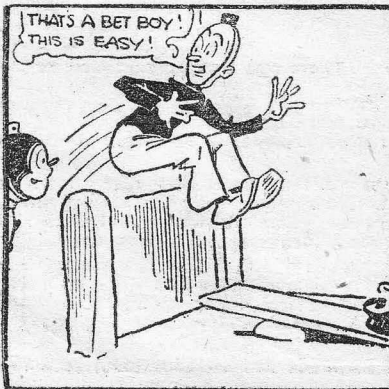
"P-p-paddle-boat?" shrieked Grundy.

"But speedboats are rather different. Chuck the idea, Grundy, and stick to the things you understand!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy stared at the hilarious juniors and clenched his big fists.

CAUGHT ON THE COME-BACK!



They're the LONGEST Laugh in the SHORTEST space.

"Why, you—you cheeky rotters! So that's it, is it? Cheeking me, by gum! This is the thanks I get for trying to do my best for the school! Dashed if I won't wallop the lot of you now; I'll show you!"

And Grundy, abandoning words for deeds, as he usually did at the finish, put up his fists and waded in.

The great man of the Shell apparently expected to "wallop" Glyn and his visitors without difficulty. Strange to relate, however, the "walloping" process didn't come off. Instead of "walloping" the inmates of Study No. 11, George Alfred Grundy had the mortification of being yanked off his feet, grasped gently but firmly by the feet and arms, and rushed out of the study.

After a rapid journey down the Shell passage, he felt himself deposited with a bump on the floor of his own study and then left to his own devices.

"Whooooop!" said Grundy.

And he was so surprised by the unexpected termination of his argument with Glyn and his visitors that he forgot to follow them out and renew the fray!

"So much for Grundy!" remarked Glyn, having closed the door on Study No. 3. "Now for Trimble!"

And he went downstairs with the Terrible Three in search of the Falstaff of the Fourth.

They found him in the Junior Common-room, trying to raise a loan from Digby of the Fourth and, by all appearances, not achieving much success in his object.

He abandoned Digby as Glyn and his colleagues entered the Common-room and rolled over to the newcomers wearing an ingratiating grin on his podgy face.

"I say, you chaps—"

"Hallo, hallo! Here's Baggy! Just the man we wanted to meet!" said Lowther.

"That's funny," remarked the Falstaff of the Fourth. "I was just looking for you men myself. I wanted to tell you I'm expecting—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can it, tubby!" urged Glyn. "Whatever you're expecting, we're not expecting to part up with any cash, any way."

"No fear!"

"Oh, really, Glyn—"

"Dry up and listen to me. Would you like a chance of coming with me in the speedboat when I race Gordon Gay?"

Trimble blinked.

"My hat! That's not a bad wheeze. You want me to pilot the boat for you, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Something wrong with your supposer, old fat bean!" grinned Glyn. "I want you as a makeweight, matter of fact."

"Why, you cheeky ass—"

"Like to come?" asked Glyn.

Trimble looked from Bernard Glyn to the Terrible Three.

"Well, of course, Glyn, old chap, if you've decided that you need my great nerve and strength and engineering knowledge—"

"I don't," said Glyn. "I need your weight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Well, if that's how you're going to put it, I shan't jolly well help you. Still, perhaps, after all, I might think about it. Look here, Glyn, one good turn deserves another. Suppose I say yes—"

"Good man! Thanks very much!"

"I haven't said it yet, you silly ass! But supposing I do consent to give you the benefit of my valuable assistance, it's only fair that you should do me a trifling favour in return, isn't it?"

"Depends on what you call a trifling favour!"

"I'll tell you then. It's a mere nothing—the sort of thing any decent chap would do to help a pal out. You see, I'm expecting a remittance—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"For a pound," said Trimble firmly, "by the next post. It should have come by the last, but there's been a slight delay. If you'd like to cash it in advance for me—"

"I shouldn't!"

"Then you can have it as soon as the postman's here with the next delivery. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing doing, I'm afraid!" said Bernard Glyn, with a shake of his head. "Now, about that speedboat race—"

Trimble sniffed.

"Under the circumstances, I couldn't think of helping you, Glyn. Look here, I'll be generous. Ten bob!"

"Nix!"

"Five. If you're too stingy to go to that, then you can jolly well do without me!"

"Thanks. Then I will. Come on, you men," said Glyn, turning to the door again. "We'll find someone else."

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Knowing Trimble's incurable vanity and love for the limelight, Glyn felt that that remark would be sufficient to "fetch" the Falstaff, cash consideration or not.

He was right. Before they had got anywhere near the door Trimble was after them, tugging at Glyn's sleeve.

"Hold on, blow you! I'll turn out. You don't deserve it, but I'm a self-sacrificing fellow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I'll do it. Rely on me!"

"Good egg!" grinned the inventor of the Shell. "That's fixed, then!"

"I say, Glyn, old chap, I shall have to go into special training, of course, and that will mean extra grub. What about standing me a snack down at the tuckshop, just as a sort of kick-off?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



There was a sharp explosion as the revolver

"Look here, you chaps—"

"Here's a bob!" grinned Glyn. "Catch!"

"Ow! Beast!" roared Trimble, as he caught it—on his little snub nose.

And "Beast!" was all the thanks that Bernard Glyn's generosity produced. After pronouncing the word, Trimble rolled straight off to the school tuckshop. And Glyn and the Terrible Three went their respective ways, chuckling.

There were only two days left before the race. Glyn spent every available minute of those two days in trying out his boat, and adjusting and tuning up his engine until he was satisfied that it was absolutely at concert pitch.

By the time he went to bed on the eve of the race the owner of the Nulli Secundus had attended to every detail that could possibly need attention, and was in all respects ready for the fray!

## CHAPTER 3.

## Car versus Speedboat!

**T**HE great day dawned, warm, sunny, and calm—an ideal day for the race.

There was an interval of about an hour and a half between dinner-time and the time of the race. Bernard Glyn utilised that time by going out for a spin on his bike alone.

He was, in point of fact, worried about Joe Sales. Since his meeting with the "wanted" waterman in the woods, he had seen nothing of him, and he knew for a fact that the police had so far been unsuccessful in their efforts to find their man.

Glyn was beginning to wonder whether some mishap had befallen Joe.

He cycled through some of the footpaths in the woods,



off, But Glyn had knocked it downwards!

keeping an eye out for any sign of Joe's presence. Then, emerging near the river at the other end of the woods, he pedalled down to the towpath in the direction of the grounds of Sir John Masterman's big riverside house.

Suddenly a shout rang out.

Glyn dismounted and paused, every nerve tingling. He recognised the voice at once. It was that of Joe Sales himself:

"Let me go, I tell you!"

Then came another voice—the cold, hard voice of Inspector Skeat, of Wayland:

"Hold him, Crump! Don't let him go this time!"

"Which I've got 'im, sir!"

"My hat!" muttered Glyn. "Poor old Joe Sales!"

He realised in a moment what must have happened. Joe Sales, bent on seeking out his accuser, Choate, and in

some way establishing his own innocence, had ventured too near Sir John Masterman's house, had then been observed, and had fallen right into the arms of the hastily-summoned police.

Glyn mounted his bike again, and pedalled towards the house. Before he had gone more than twenty yards he came across Joe Sales, still struggling with his captors near some bushes that had previously hidden all three from view.

There was a sharp click as Glyn turned round the bushes and an exclamation of relief from the Wayland inspector.

"He's handcuffed now. Not much use struggling any more, Sales!"

The young waterman uttered a groan.

"You've got me now, but I'm innocent, inspector—I swear it!"

"Then you've nothing to fear!" said Inspector Skeat dryly. "Hallo! Master Glyn, if I'm not mistaken?"

"My heye!" said P.-c. Crump, giving Glyn a distinctly unamiable look. "This is the young gent, sir, that pitched me an' the gentleman from the 'ouse into the river when we were after Sales the other day."

Inspector Skeat eyed Glyn with a suspicious eye.

"You seem to be asking for trouble, young man," he remarked. "I had a long talk with your headmaster over you after that affair. And now, just when we arrest this man Sales, you turn up again. What are you doing here?"

"I was looking for Sales, as a matter of fact, inspector," answered Glyn boldly.

Inspector Skeat jumped.

"You admit you were looking for Sales?" he asked sharply.

"I felt a bit worried about not hearing or seeing anything of him. Sales happens to be a friend of mine, you see, and I'm standing by him."

"Nonsense!"

"He hasn't done what he's accused of, anyway," said Glyn stoutly. "Has he told you that the things that were found in his coat were there without his knowledge?"

"Nonsense!"

"It's not nonsense!" declared Glyn hotly.

Then he stopped as he heard a deep, familiar voice behind him:

"Glyn!"

"Oh! The Head!"

All four turned round, to see Dr. Holmes standing near, his face grave and stern.

"Glyn! What is the meaning of this?"

Inspector Skeat stepped in.

"The meaning is, sir, that this intractable pupil of yours is again endeavouring to interfere in matters which do not concern him. The man whom you see handcuffed here is the 'wanted' man, whom Glyn helped to escape a day or two ago."

"Bless my soul! Glyn!"

"I've no regrets, sir," said Bernard Glyn doggedly.

"Sales is innocent; of that, I'm sure! All I wanted is for the inspector to take action against the man that Sales believes to be the thief."

"Do you presume, then, to dictate to the police as to how they shall carry out their duties?" demanded Dr. Holmes sternly. "Your behaviour is inexcusable, Glyn. I should have thought that the events of the other day would have brought you to your senses, but, apparently, that has not happened. There is but one step for me to take now; that step is to expel you!"

"Oh!" muttered Glyn, in sudden dismay.

"Don't do that, sir!" broke in Joe Sales wretchedly. "What he has done has been to try to help me, that's all. An' he's right; I can swear to you that he is. The man that stole Lady Masterman's necklace is Vivian Choate—"

"Goodness gracious! The gentleman whom I saw recently!" exclaimed the Head. "Surely, inspector, there is nothing in this extraordinary story?"

"Nothing whatever, sir!"

"You hear what the inspector says, Glyn?"

"I hear, sir; and I'm sorry I can't agree with him!"

"Glyn!"

"I believe that this man Choate is the thief," said Glyn steadily. "Also, I believe, as Sales believes, that he is leaving Sir John Masterman's house shortly to dispose of the necklace. I think it's up to Inspector Skeat to take action. What do you say, inspector?"

"I can only say that you're a very foolish lad!"

"Then if you won't take action, I will!" shouted Glyn. "Follow me, Joe!"

He was away instantly. As he left, Joe Sales, whom the two officers, thinking him safe in the grip of the handcuffs, had temporarily released, sprang after him, his handcuffed hands held out before him.

Without looking back, Glyn sprang into the saddle of his bike. Joe Sales was on the back step immediately afterwards.

Inspector Skeat uttered an angry shout.

"Stop! You young villain!"

"Glyn! Come back!" hooted the Head.

But Bernard Glyn had made up his mind, and the shouts fell on deaf ears. With Joe Sales clinging on to him with his handcuffed hands, he pedalled swiftly away towards the river, and the police and Dr. Holmes were soon out-distanced.

To get to the speedboat was Glyn's first thought. He made for the towpath and "scorched" down it towards the spot where the Nulli Secundus was moored.

Quite a number of St. Jim's fellows and juniors from Rylcombe Grammar School had already assembled in readiness for the race, and they stared at the spectacle of Glyn and his passenger.

"What the thump—"

"What's the big idea, Glyn?" asked Jack Blake. "My hat! You've got that fellow Sales at the back!"

"An' he's handcuffed!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove!"

"Great pip!"

Glyn dismounted, and his passenger ran through the curious juniors and leaped from the bank into the speedboat.

A moment later Glyn was beside him. Then, with an ear-splitting roar, the engine of the Nulli Secundus started off, and the speedboat glided out into midstream and with ever-increasing velocity roared away up the river.

They passed the Head and the two police officers in the first minute, and a couple of minutes later came in sight of Sir John Masterman's house.

Joe Sales uttered a sudden shout.

"There he goes! It's Choate just driving off!"

Bernard Glyn glanced up towards the front of the house and was just in time to see the dark face of Vivian Choate staring across from a big car, a startled expression in his eyes.

The car then turned the bend round the house, and a few seconds later was on the road which ran parallel with the river for several miles before turning off towards Abbotsford.

Bernard Glyn set his teeth.

"He's making for Abbotsford, and he knows we're after him. It's a race between his car and our boat."

"We must get him!" panted Joe Sales. "We've got to do it!"

"We're going to do it!" said Bernard Glyn. "I'll race him if I melt the engine to do it. Here goes!"

The race had begun!

## CHAPTER 9.

### Winning Through!

**B**ERNARD GLYN put all he knew into it.

The Nulli Secundus fairly streaked through the water, its prow a couple of feet out of the water and every timber quivering from the power that carried it onward.

A never-ending stream of spray raced through the air above the handcuffed man and his benefactor, and the roar of the engine was deafening.

"Faster!" shouted Joe Sales, whose eyes had not once left the car which was speeding along the road beside the river. "He's gaining on us!"

Bernard Glyn set his lips grimly and opened the throttle still farther, causing the speedboat to leap through the water with renewed speed.

It was obvious now that Vivian Choate was only too well aware that it was a race, for he was doing all that lay in his power to gain on the speedboat. On the road, however, he was subjected to interruptions which Glyn and his companion did not have to face. A farm wagon, for instance, lumbering along in the middle of the road, held him up for several minutes and enabled the speedboat to gain considerably. When he did get a clear course, however, he did not spare his engine, with the result that he was able to keep level with the boat.

Bernard Glyn saw that they were approaching the bridge where the road parted with the river. Beyond that point the speedboat would be of no use whatever, and Vivian Choate would be able to leave them behind and go on to his destination at his own pace without further fear.

That the man had something to fear Glyn felt certain from the savage scowl in his dark face. That Joe Sales was right in his conjecture that Choate carried the missing necklace with him seemed highly probable.

Somehow they must intercept him and prove it one way or the other. Glyn strained every nerve, not to mention every piece of metal in the engine, to reach the bridge first.

Lock was with him. A hundred yards from the bridge a slow-moving agricultural tractor turning off into a field held up the enemy's car for two valuable minutes.

In that brief space of time Glyn had reached the bridge and moored the speedboat. Joe Sales, meanwhile, his handcuffed hands still held before him, had jumped up the steep bank on to the road and was looking round for something with which to stop the progress of the car when it came along.

There was, as chance would have it, a pile of scaffold-poles stacked at the side of the road, left there after some repairing operations which had previously been in progress. With desperate haste, the young waterman seized one of the poles and dragged it across the entrance to the bridge, supporting it on some stone ridges about a foot above the ground.

It was an effective enough barrier, considering the limited time he had at his disposal. Joe Sales, satisfied, turned to face the oncoming car, just as Bernard Glyn came scrambling up the bank beside him.

"Managed it? My hat! You have, too!" exclaimed the St. Jim's junior, with a nod of approval at the horizontal scaffold-pole. "And now for Mr. Choate!"

No sooner had the words left his mouth than there was the sound of a motor-engine down the road. A moment later Vivian Choate came into view, driving furiously.

He drove full pelt up to the bridge, and for a moment the two watchers thought he was actually going to attempt to break through. If that was his plan his courage failed him at the last moment, for just before he reached the bridge there was a sharp grinding of brakes and his car skidded to a complete standstill within a yard of the barrier.

Choate jumped up from his seat, his face distorted with rage.

"You desperate young scoundrels! What have you done this for?"

"To stop you from getting through, Mr. Choate!" replied Joe Sales, advancing on the car. "I wanted to talk to you, an' I thought maybe you wouldn't stop unless I made you!"

The tall, dark man's eyes fell on Sales' handcuffed hands, and he started.

"You're handcuffed! Then the police got you?"

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"They did—for five minutes!" retorted Joe Sales. "When they get you, Mr. Choate, I fancy it'll be for a long time!" Choate spat out a furious oath.

"What are you talking about, you gaolbird?"

"Gaolbird yourself!" snapped back the waterman, reaching the car and leaning over the side of it. "An' you know what I'm talking about right enough. Where's that necklace?"

The man's face turned white—whether from passion or fear Glyn could not decide for the moment.

"Necklace? What are you talking about, fool?"

"The necklace that you stole from Lady Masterman!"

Choate broke into a torrent of oaths. Glyn came up on the other side of the car, frowning.

"That's enough of that!" he said curtly. "Bad language won't help matters. You're under suspicion so far as we're concerned—"

"Curse you! You are the meddling schoolboy who helped this common thief to escape the other day. I'll send you to prison with your precious friend before you're much older!"

"I'll risk that!" said Glyn coolly. "For the moment we're not much concerned with what happens later on. What we want to do now is find that necklace."

"Then you'd better ask your criminal acquaintance!" snarled Vivian Choate. "Doubtless he has it hidden away somewhere where it will be safe until he has served his sentence!"

Joe Sales, his eyes blazing, jumped into the car beside his persecutor.

"That's a lie! You know it's a lie—none knows it better than you!"

"Get out of my car!" ordered Choate, hoarse with rage. "Get out, or I'll kick you out, you scum!"

"Not before I've satisfied myself that you haven't got that necklace."

"Then I'll put you out!" shouted the suspected man.

His arm flashed out as he spoke, and there was a thud as his clenched fist landed with brutal force on Joe Sales' jaw.

Joe Sales reeled, almost toppling backwards into the road. Then, with an effort, he righted himself again and flew at his assailant.

Choate dodged and reached out for something lying on the seat. A moment later his hand was raised, and now it held something that glittered in the bright afternoon sunshine.

Glyn uttered a warning shout.

"Duck, Joe! It's a spanner!"

The waterman ducked, only just in time to avoid a savage blow to the head from the heavy metal tool. The next instant Glyn himself was in the car, tackling the unscrupulous enemy from the rear.

Joe Sales, manacled as he was, was hampered in his movements; but his fierce desire to vindicate his good name inspired him to mighty efforts. He flung himself at Vivian Choate again and again, heedless of the rain of brutal blows that the man aimed at him; and, but for Glyn's presence, the chances were that he would have come out of the fray very badly knocked about.

Glyn, however, stung to fury by the man's foul tactics, had himself begun to hit out with both hands, and under the combined attacks Choate's resistance weakened.

Cursing them, he tried to fight his way back to the wheel, possibly with the intention of turning round sharply enough to shake them off. But Sales was there to stop the move. Seizing the man by the throat, he forced him back again, while Glyn pinioned his arms from the rear, rendering him almost completely helpless.

"Now, Mr. Choate!" said Joe Sales.

"Release me, curse you! I'll get you penal servitude for this!" snarled Vivian Choate.

"Hold him, Master Glyn!" was Joe Sales' retort. "I'll go through his pockets, if you can keep his arms behind him."

"Let me go, you hoolligans!" shrieked the prisoner, struggling furiously. "It's a plot. You're going to 'plant' it on me to get out of the fix you're in!"

"My hat!" gasped Bernard Glyn. "Sounds a bit hopeful, Joe! Get busy, and I'll do my best to hold him. What's that coming up the road?"

"The police—in a car!" answered Sales, between his set teeth. "No time to lose now."

"Hurry, then!"

Vivian Choate uttered a yell.

"Help! Police! Help!"

There was an answering shout from the car that was tearing up the road towards the bridge.

Joe Sales, like a man possessed, plunged his bound hands into pocket after pocket, sending showers of papers and money scattering over the car.

The police car was upon them now. Even before it had pulled up, footsteps were pattering across the road, and, looking over his shoulder, Glyn saw Inspector Skeat and Police-constable Crump running towards Choate's car at full speed.

Then, at the very moment when the inspector jumped on, there was a yell of triumph from Joe Sales.

"Got it! I knew it!"

"The necklace?" roared Glyn.

"The missing necklace!" shouted the delighted Joe Sales, holding up a glittering string of jewels. "Now you can take him, inspector! Choate's the man, as I told you he was."

"What—what—" gasped Inspector Skeat.

"Hurrah!" yelled Glyn. "We've done it! Now what do you say about Joe Sales being guilty?"

Inspector Skeat got into the car, his face a study.

"The necklace!" he muttered. "But—but—do—"

"We found it on him, as Joe told you we should. Here's your man, Inspector Skeat!"

"It's a lie!" burst out Vivian Choate furiously. "They've 'planted' it on me. They're both in the swim over it. It's a frame-up, I tell you!"

Inspector Skeat frowned.

"A frame-up, Mr. Choate? You suggest that Master Glyn, the son of one of the best-known men in the district, is deliberately trying to send you to prison for someone else's crime?"

"I don't care whose son he is—"

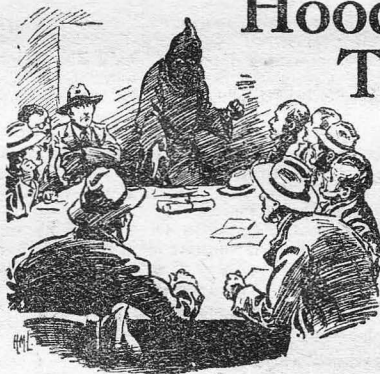
"It's a ridiculous suggestion!" snorted the inspector.

"You saw Sales find the necklace on this man, Master Glyn?"

"I tell you it was 'planted' on me!" roared Choate. "Sales had it on him all along!"

(Continued on next page.)

## Who is the Hooded Terror?



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Inspector Skeat smiled grimly.

"Very peculiar we didn't find it on him when we arrested him an hour ago," he remarked. "Looks to me, Choate, as if I've made a miscalculation for once in a way. You are my man, after all!"

Choate struggled to his feet without replying. There was a wild look in his eyes now, and Police-constable Crump, who was standing near the car on the other side, made a hurried move towards him.

Before he could reach the man, Choate, with a sudden movement, had pulled something out from his hip-pocket.

Joe Sales gave a shout.

"Look out! He's got a gun!"

"Stand back, everybody!" cried Choate harshly. "I'll shoot the first man who touches me now!"

"What—what—" gasped Inspector Skeat.

"I mean it! Stand back, curse you!"

With his free hand the man suddenly reached forward and snatched the necklace from Joe Sales' nerveless grasp. Then he smiled.

"Thank you! You were quite right, inspector. I am your man. Now that we've reached this stage there's no object in my denying it. But you're not going to get me; and you're not going to get the necklace. Stand back, I tell you! Get out of this car, all of you!"

The inspector and Joe Sales fell back under the threat of the deadly-looking weapon.

Then Glyn took a desperate chance. His hand had been stealthily straying to the spanner, which had dropped on to the seat. With a sharp, lightning-like movement he now grabbed it and smashed it on to Vivian Choate's hand.

Bang!

There was a flash and a sharp explosion as the revolver went off. But Glyn's blow had knocked it downwards, and the bullet buried itself in the floor of the car. Immediately afterwards Inspector Skeat was upon the crook. The revolver fell, and with it went Vivian Choate's last hope. In the space of a few seconds he was handcuffed and helpless.

"Got you!" said Inspector Skeat, with great satisfaction. "By gum! That was hot work, if you like! I fancy we shall find you've been in the hands of the police before when we get you to headquarters. Thank you for what you did, Master Glyn!"

"Jolly glad I was able to do it, inspector!" said Bernard Glyn. "Well, it's all over now!"

"An' my name's cleared, thank Heaven!" said Joe Sales. "What should I have done without you, Master Glyn?"

"Forget it, old bean!" said Glyn cheerfully. "I suppose you can take those bracelets off him now, inspector?"

"Only too pleased to do it, sir!" responded the inspector. "Looks to me, Sales, as if we've done you a very great injustice. I must ask you, however, to come to Wayland to see the thing through first. And you, Master Glyn—"

Bernard Glyn glanced at his watch.

"My hat! 'Fraid I shan't be able to come!" he exclaimed. "I'm due to meet a Grammar School chap in a speedboat race in five minutes; and I'm a 'twenty-minutes' journey from the starting-post!"

Inspector Skeat smiled.

"Then we'll leave you out of it. And I hope, Master Glyn, that you'll win!"

"Do my best!" grinned Glyn. "Good-bye, Joe! Good luck!"

"Good luck to you, too, sir! An' thank you, a thousand times!"

Two minutes later Bernard Glyn was once more speeding down the river.

## CHAPTER 10.

### A Glorious Finish.

"WHERE'S GLYN?"

"Why doesn't the silly ass turn up?"

"Ten minutes late, and no sign of him!" said

Tom Merry. "Looks as if the race is off."

Gordon Gay and Frank Monk, of the Grammar School, who composed the crew of Gordon Gay's speedboat, strolled up with Kildare, the St. Jim's captain. Kildare had agreed to officiate as judge, and he was looking rather grim.

"Seen Glyn, Merry?" he asked.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Not for quite a time, Kildare."

"There's an extraordinary yarn going the rounds that he went off with this man Sales whom the police have been hunting. Anything in it?"

Tom frowned.

"Well, there is, as a matter of fact. Even so, Glyn's not the man to let us down, whatever happens. I still think he'll turn up."

"Hallo, hallo! He's coming!" roared Lowther. "I can hear the engine!"

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"My hat! So he is!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a yell as the Nulli Secundus came into view round a bend of the river.

"Good old Glyn!"

"Knew he'd turn up!"

Bernard Glyn steered to the shore and shut off his engine, then jumped out, a little breathless.

"Sorry I'm late, Kildare; unavoidably detained!"

Kildare looked at the Shell junior a little curiously.

"I hear you've been indulging in rather an extraordinary escapade, Glyn; but that can wait till after the race. Are you ready?"

"Ready for anything."

"You too, Gay?"

"What-ho!"

"Then line up."

The Nulli Secundus, with Trimble in the stern and Glyn at the wheel, glided away from the bank to the centre of the river, and Gordon Gay's professionally-built craft, a slender, speedy-looking boat, lined up beside it.

Bang!

The starter's pistol had gone; even before the echo of it had died away, the two speedboats were off.

There was a roar of excited cheering from the spectators who crowded the banks of the Ryll.

"Come on, Glyn!"

"St. Jim's for ever!"

"Stick it, Gay!"

"Up, the Grammar School!"

Very quickly it was seen that neither of the contestants was to have a walk-over. For the first two hundred yards they were neck to neck, their engines droning in unison, and the white, foaming wakes they left behind them as straight and parallel as railway-lines.

Then Gordon Gay began to open out a little. His engine roared on a higher note, and little by little he drew away from his opponent until ten yards separated them.

Glyn gave the Grammar School leader his head. He was prepared to concede a length or two at this stage of the race, knowing the kind of response his craft could give him when he asked for a burst of speed.

So the Nulli Secundus was allowed to proceed at a fair racing speed, and Glyn promised himself the spurt of a lifetime after the island was reached and he had started the return journey.

Trimble, Glyn's fat and fatuous assistant, performed his task to perfection. With his enormous weight in the stern, the prow of the speedboat was lifted out of the water at just the angle that Glyn wanted it to be.

But Trimble wasn't happy about it. The knowledge that he was performing his task perfectly brought no comfort whatsoever, in fact, to Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

Trimble was terrified.

Glyn carried on, regardless, and Trimble had no option but to sit back and hold tight, his podgy face turning greener and greener as the race went on.

Round the island that marked the end of the first lap and the outward run thundered the two speedboats. Glyn was now twenty yards in arrears, but his muscles tightened and he crouched low over the wheel as he swept round for the return run.

Faintly above the din of the engine Glyn heard a cheer from the crowd that had gathered on the island.

"Go it, Glyn!"

"Don't let us down!"

Glyn smiled grimly. St. Jim's was not going to be let down if he knew it!

He opened out the throttle slowly—almost imperceptibly.

The Nulli Secundus answered with a quickening speed and a still louder roar.

Glyn saw the rival boat shooting along before him in a white cloud of spray, and could tell that Gordon Gay had reached his limit. The winning-post was drawing near now; the time had come for his final effort.

Glyn made it.

His eyes fixed on the winning-post and his hands firm on the quivering wheel, he "let her rip," and quickly found himself drawing nearer the Grammar School boat.

Ten yards between them! Then five; then a little less; then a little less than that!

On both banks the crowds were cheering in wild excitement.

"Go it, Gay!"

"Come on, Glyn!"

"Gay wins!"

"No; it's Glyn! Step on it, Glyn!"

There was a terrific roar of engines as the two speedboats raced side by side for a couple of seconds. Then the yelling crowds saw the Nulli Secundus simply leap away from Gay's boat, and the St. Jim's supporters went wild with delight.

"Glyn wins!"

"He's done it!"  
 "Left Gay standing!"  
 "Hurrah!"

There was no question about who had won. Glyn's final amazing spurt had taken him ten yards ahead of his rival, and he passed the post an easy winner.

But the strain on the engine had been too much. The terrific heat generated had inevitably affected the softer metals, and as the Nulli Secundus raced by the post, a sudden jarring crash from within the boat showed that something had gone wrong. Immediately after, there was a loud explosion. The stern dipped wildly, then went under.

And with a yell Glyn and his podgy passenger rolled over into the water.

Fortunately, help was at hand. Gay, who had shot beyond Glyn's boat, had now shut off his engine and was already turning back to the rescue. In a matter of seconds a saturated but smiling Glyn and a yelling Trimble were being hauled to safety.

Soon afterwards they landed, amid roars of cheering from St. Jim's men and Grammarians alike.

"Well done, Glyn!"

"And Baggy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you've won!" said Gordon Gay, with a rueful grin. "Can't say I begrudge you the victory, either; in fact, you deserve it. Here's my hand on it, anyway!"

"Hear, hear!"

Dr. Holmes, who had watched the end of the race, now came forward and added his congratulations.

"Well won, my boy!" he remarked. "It was a magnificent finish. You must return to the school at once and change your clothes; you, too, Trimble. And, by the way—"

"Yes, sir?" said Glyn, half guessing what was coming.

"I have just had a message from Inspector Skeat, and learned of the remarkable sequel to your fight with the man Sales this afternoon. It appears, Glyn, that you were right, after all, and that I have done you a grave injustice."

Glyn flushed.

"No need to mention it, sir; I'm only too glad, anyway, that things have turned out so well."

"It is fortunate indeed, Glyn. By way of consolation to you, I might say, and also to celebrate your victory, I have decided to grant the whole school an extra half-holiday—"

"Hurrah!" came a delighted roar from the St. Jim's men.

"And I shall also make mention of the matter publicly after prayers to-morrow morning so that no misunderstanding can continue to exist. And now, my boys, hurry off and get changed!"

Glyn and Trimble obeyed promptly, and, escorted by an enthusiastic crowd, hastened back to St. Jim's for a change of clothing, and afterwards, greatly to the delight of Glyn's podgy fellow-hero, for a tremendous "feed" in the Common-room.

With that feed the history of Glyn's speedboat ended. It had been a brief but decidedly exciting history. The Nulli Secundus had provided plenty of fun and thrills in its career, and had finished up in a blaze of glory. But now that it was a hopeless wreck at the bottom of the Ryll, a good many devotees of the river had to confess that they experienced a feeling of rather considerable relief.

THE END.

(There will be another ripping long complete story of Tom Merry and Co. in next week's GEM, entitled: "BROADSIDE GUSSY!" You'll feel like kicking yourself if you miss it!)

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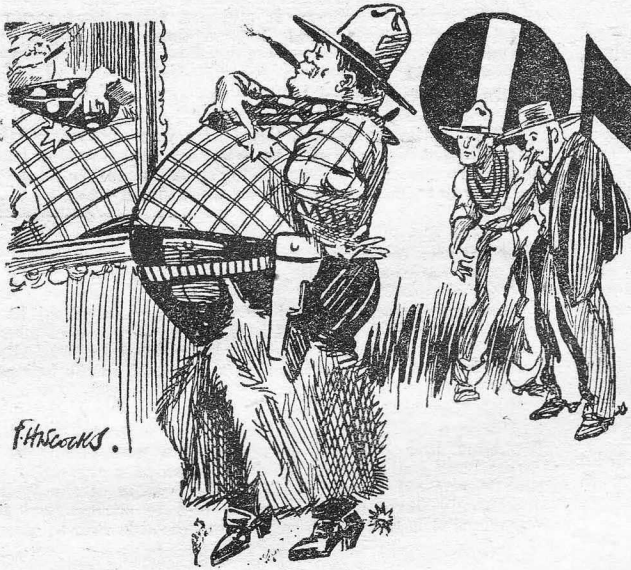
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## The Light-Hearted Story of a Heavy Man.



# ONE-TON WILLY

and his merry antics, as told  
by Johnny Carter, of  
Broken B Ranch.

This Week:

## "THE SHERIFF RESIGNS!"

### CHAPTER 1.

#### Wanted—A Wild West Hero!

**G**ATHER round, boys. It's Johnny Carter calling from Hammertoe Gulch, and, believe me, there's something to fill your ears and make 'em tingle. Maybe you all know how us boys have been trying for a long time to make a fat gent named Willy Wood, and nicknamed One-Ton because he weighed two, forget he ever was sheriff of our burg of Hammertoe. Maybe you all know also how it done come about that One-Ton ever put the silver star on his shirt.

Howsomever, gents, having let One-Ton call hisself our sheriff, it wasn't long before us waddies got plumb tired of him. His fat head swelled up, and he strutted about the place as though he owned the air; in addition to which we could see it was going to be a cinch for any real, dyed-in-the-wool bad man who ever come along to rustle our cattle, bust our bank, or any of them things.

Not only that, One-Ton had all the luck, and when a fat, born-tired bluffer goes through several assortments of trouble and manages to wriggle out with all the profit and glory, when other guys has done the real work and so forth—well, I axes you, gents, ain't it time to do something?

Us boys had had several tries to do something about it. There was yours truly, Johnny Carter, and Hank Smith who One-Ton had sworn in as his deputy so's he could do the dirty work, if any. And there was Long Lane and Red Ryan. More'n once we'd tried to comb One-Ton's hair, put a spoke in his wheel, call his bluff, cut his comb, take the rise out of him, and generally leave him gasping and howling for mercy, and wishing he wasn't sheriff no more, which same wish we was only too willing to gratify, like, if so be we got the chance.

But it don't matter what we done, One-Ton got the better of us, and had the last laugh, jest along of him being born lucky, until we was ready to turn bandits and eat our shooting-irons with envy and malice aforethought. We allows we can smash One-Ton at any time, but we can't smash his luck, and we is giving it up as a bad job and hoping for the worst, when Bookman Bill blows into town from way back down the Panhandle. This waddy is called Bookman Bill along of him always reading when he ain't doing nothing else.

"Howdye, boys?" says he. "And what's the best news hereabouts?"

"There ain't none!" growls Hank.

"Then let's hear the worst," says Bookman calmly.

So we tells him all about One-Ton and how we can't shift the fat hombre out of the sheriff's office. Bookman listens to all we've got to say, but he ain't very helpful. He allows it's purty hard on us honest cowpunchers to have sich a sheriff, but he figures there ain't a man living what can buck against another hombre's good luck.

And while we is talking this a-way, in walks One-Ton with his feet so heavy with importance there ain't a glass in that saloon but what rattles something awful. It's his usual custom to look in on us every evening to make plumb sure we is obeying the law and not starting any quick shooting shenanigans in them parts. He scowls round the

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place, he does, then takes a look-see at the newcomer. He gives one look out of his beady eyes, like shoe-buttons, then he cries out like he's done seen his long-lost buddy.

"Hogtie me!" he blaers. "Ef et ain't Bookman! Howdye, Bill?"

"Sure, I'm flourishing," says Bill. "How's yoreself, old timer? Looks like thet star on yore shirt sets off yore natcheral beauty!"

"You've said it," bleats One-Ton, in his squeaky voice, sticking out his chest. "There's two guys what have fell on their feet. I'm one of 'em, and you're the other, Bookman!"

"Mebbe so," says Bookman.

"As for these other ornery cow waddies," One-Ton goes on, meaning me and my buddies, "they won't ever have no luck along of 'em being so plumb ornery by natcher."

"Mebbe you're right, and mebbe you're not," says Red Ryan. "I'll allow I ain't so lucky—as some fat idjits I could name. And I'll allow as how books agrees with Bill. I done read some myself, about cowpunchers meeting up with purty girls and marrying into a fortune. S'pose you can't put me on to any good thing of that sort, Bill?"

"You can't take too much notice o' books, Red," says Bill. "In fact," he says, very solemn, "truth is plumb stranger than fiction. And it's funny you talking about rich girls, Red."

"How come?" axes Red.

"Why, ain't the outfit come this way yet?"

"What outfit?" we asks, all together.

"Sure," says Bookman. "I done heard of it way back on the Panhandle. I done heard of it at Blue Canyon, and they did tell me the lady was resting at Mesa City before heading in this direction. I went a long way round to take a look-see at the Lazy D outfit, and I figured she'd have passed here."

Long Lane leans on the table and scowls at Bookman.

"Cut out the geography, cowboy," he says. "What is this outfit you're blethering about?"

"Waal," drawls Bookman, "it's like this. There's a rich lady—I done heard she's rolling in dollar bills—and she's plumb smitten with the wild and woolly West, and the great open spaces where men air men. You get me?"

"Yeah," we allows we does.

"So this dame has an old-time outfit—an old stage-coach like they had in the days o' Colonel Cody, Buffalo Bill, and Sitting Bull—and she's hired two-three hombres, with their belts stuck full o' shooting-irons to ride with her. There's an old desert rat driving the six horses, and she's travelling that a-way over the mesa, boys, looking for thrills. And they do say when she comes across a Wild West hombre, with the grit of a cougar, quick on the draw, and all that, she's going to marry him and give him all her money."

One-Ton suddenly grabs Bookman by the arm.

"Did I hear you say that dame was coming this a-way?" he asks.

"Maybe she's out on the mesa now," said Bookman. "And they say she's carrying with her a box full o' diamonds and jewels, and wads o' notes enough to stuff a pillow."

"Say, the lady's eether got nerve," horns in Hank, "or she's plumb devoid o' sense."

"She's looking for her Wild West hero," says Bookman. "But, looking around, boys, I'll allow she won't find him here, along of none of you being handsome enough in the features."

"Speak f'r yoreself, cowboy!" bleats One-Ton.

But we don't worry none about him. We is busy axing Bookman Bill whether he's actually seen this rich lady, and if so, what she looks like. Bookman is likewise busy explaining he ain't seen her, nor has he met up with anyone who has, though he names several cowpunchers in the Blue Canyon district what has seen this old-time outfit moving over the mesa.

And while we is chatting back and forth in this manner One-Ton isn't joining in the chin-wag, which is plumb unusual for him. Then Red Ryan leaves off talking to stare, and he stares so hard we all have to turn round in our chairs and stare in the same direction.

And I'll be hogtied and branded for a first-year steer if there wasn't One-Ton with his hat off, brushing his hair down, and studying his fat face in a big looking-glass what isn't really big enough for the size of his countenance. And he brushes a speck of dust off'n his shirt. He wets his fat fingers and flattens out his eyebrows. He feels his jaws to make shure he's had a clean shave. He spits on his star of office and polishes it on his sleeve, and performs the same duty to the handles of his six-guns.

Then he cocks his fat head on one side and squints first at one boot, then at the other, and along of him not being satisfied, he stands on his left leg and rubs his right boot up the back of his left leg, after which he stands on his right leg and does the same for his left boot.

When he figures his dress is perfect, he looks at his hat and brushes it most particular, makes the dent in it all nice and even, he does, and puts it just so on his fat head. Then he tries to see himself in the said looking-glass, what is about two foot square. The bloated stiff finds it some job to get all his fat face in that bit o' glass, and he has to take it in sections, and the way he squinted at hisself, then stood back and squinted some more, then practised how to smile, I sure expected that glass to splinter into fragments.

Believe me, gents, the faces One-Ton pulled at hisself ought to've scared him into fits, but somehow it don't. He grins till his eyes is plumb hidden away in rolls of fat, and one end of his mouth is all twisted up over one ear. He tries to wink, but along of his muscles being handicapped w' fat, all that happens is one eyebrow jerks something violent, then wriggles like a worm what's trodden on at one end, if you get me.

Anyway, it don't matter what we think. One-Ton is plumb pleased with his own features, and he stands back away from the looking-glass, very nearly cooing like a love-sick pigeon. Then he steps nearer and makes out he's seen a little black spot on one side of his nose, which same he brushes off after he's stuck his fat finger in his mouth for to get the necessary moisture.

And when he reckons he's plumb perfect he sticks his thumbs in his belt and takes one last, long, lingering look at hisself, then starts for the door.

Long Lane rises to his feet, and believe me, Long Lane is so long when he starts rising from a chair that a-way there's no telling when the upward movement will end.

Howsoever, Long Lane rises from his chair looking lean and puzzled like he mostly does.

"Sheriff," he says, "whar you goin' all dolled up that a-way?"

"Long Lane," says One-Ton sneering, "I'm going to do some'at you have never done—some'at you never can do, and some'at you never will do ef you stays like you are now."

"Really?" says Long Lane. "And what may that be?"

"I'm going," says One-Ton, "to mind me own business, Mister Lane."

And with that shot he flings open the door and goes plomping out—I mean

jest that and nothing else. One-Ton never did walk or stride; he always was that heavy he could never do anything else but plomp with his feet.

But we is all plumb amazed because One-Ton generally hung about the saloon till someone offered to pay for his refreshment, and he'd gone out without so much as coughing. And Long Lane remains on his feet staring at the door. "I don't believe it!" he says. And Red Ryan ups and says he don't, either. Whereupon Hank punishes the table with his fist, smashing two glasses and upsetting one bottle.

"And I never did!" he roars. "That fat lizard is going out on the mesa to make a noise like Buffalo Bill," he says. "Waal," draws Clem, the brother of Hank, "let him!" Ef he'd been in the saddle as long as I have to-day, he'd wish for nothing better than an ordinary chair for to set in."

"That's not it," I says. "Ef there is a lady, rolling in money, and hankering after getting wed to a gallant cowpuncher, why should One-Ton be the only galoot from Hammertoe Gulch wid enough enterprise to be pleasant to the said dame?"

"There's even more in it than that, boys," says Bookman Bill. "Atween here and the Panhandle everyone knows that lady is going around with a box full of jewels and wads o' dollar bills, and there'll sure be bad men after her. One-Ton may reckon he's going a-courting, but he may run slap into trouble with hold-up men."

"Let him!" snaps Clem Smith.

"What for?" I says. "Ef that lady is attacked by badrits, One-Ton cain't save her along of him having no brains and less in courage. Seems like, boys, we can do no less but escort that lady into town to save her from the bad men of the mesa. In a job o' that sort," I says, "One-Ton is worse'n useless, and we'd better be handy in case we're needed."

"You done took them words out o' my mouth," says Red Ryan.

"But I thought of 'em first," says Long Lane.



One of them bricks hit the chief bandit on the dome, and One-Ton comes slithering down the side of the gully!

"And since I'm deputy sheriff," says Hank Smith, "I'll tote along with you boys jest to make the expedition sort o' official."

Well, gents, we all got up and brushed ourselves down, and put our hats on straight, and polished the butts of our six-shooters. Bookman Bill is grinning at Clem who is scowling at the floor like he wished he was coming with us, but he ain't got the nerve, having done his best to damp our ardour, as you might say.

Howsoever, we takes no notice of either of them gazabos, and struts out to our hosses which same is at the rail outside. We don't say nothing. We jest forks our cayuses and rides out o' town at a steady trot.

Ef we'd really been going out after bad men we'd ha' galloped along at a fierce pace. Even ef we'd ha' been going home, we'd ha' gone a deal faster than we did then, because us boys wasn't so all-fired fond of the mesa that we liked hanging about in them parts. But the fact of the matter was that there wasn't one of us what wanted to get all hot and perspiring and covered with dust when we hankered after meeting up with a lady who had a lot of money. You get me?

So, as I says, without a word we all falls into a steady trot and lets it go at that! The moon was shining, and it was pretty near as light as day, only a different sort o' light, and with deeper shadows. Us boys headed along the trail for Mesa City, but there was only us on that stretch o' country, unless you counts the rattlers, coyotes, and lizards.

We rides and we rides, but we sees nothing, hears nothing, and scents nothing—no hold up, no bad men, no rich ladies, and no sheriff of Hammertoe Gulch. It sure seems like there ain't a living soul atween us and Mesa City; but we don't rein in our hosses; we jest keeps on till we comes to where the mesa is strewn with great rocks, and the trail runs down atween them to a gulch.

Us boys don't say nothing for a long time, but every one of us is beginning to feel like Bookman Bill had been fooling us for some purpose best known to hisself. We all felt we were plumb foolish to go riding out on the mesa looking for a rich lady what didn't exist 'cept in a book, when, all of a sudden, Long Lane, who always sees things first because he's got the advantage of a long neck, hisses like a rattler, and reins in his cayuse, wagging a hand so's we'd do the same.

"Dirty work, boys! Look!" he whispers.

We is all thrilled right away, and we looks till our eyes seem to be sticking out of our heads. And what we sees is plumb mysterious. Ahead of us, on the trail amongst the rocks, is an old-time coach wid six horses harnessed to her. But the outfit is standing still, and there ain't a soul to be seen barring them hosses.

"We'd better charge down there," says Red Ryan, whipping out his gun.

"Charge, nothing!" snarls Hank. "We'll go slow and keep in the shadows of them rocks. Steady, now. I'm deputy sheriff, and I'm the gallant leader of this here expedition, and don't you boys try forgetting it."

"And we'll get shot down whilst you rescues the rich lady," said Long Lane. "Oh, yeah, you is clever, Hank!"

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"Besides," snaps Red Ryan, "if the said wealthy woman is to be rescued, I'm the guy who'll do it."

And without axing anybody's leave, he digs his spurs in his hoss flesh and goes careering down the trail like all the bogeys in Texas was hanging on his hoss' tail.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Wil'y One-Ton.

RIGHT away, then, we is all anxious to get to that coach first. We know that the guy who rescues the said lady, and makes her see what a grit-full hero he is, stands a chance of marrying a fortune, which ain't to be sneezed at none in these yer hard times.

Consequently, we all does the only thing there is to do. We gallops after Red Ryan, and we is so plumb close behind him we is nigh choked by his dust.

Sure, gents, it was a mad race that night, especially when you realises that we is expecting the bad men to open fire on us at any time from them rocks. It sure wouldn't have surprised me none if one of us didn't go down with a bullet-hole in his forehead.

But nothing happens. No guns bark, and no bullets whine. We races down amongst the rocks towards the gully and up to the coach. Hank has eased his horse a bit, and at the last minute he gets a bit more speed out of her and goes ahead to win by a length, but not an inch more'n that.

Afore his hoss can pull up he is out of the saddle and half sliding along in the dust of the trail. Then he leaves his hoss' neck and runs straight to the coach, by which time us other boys is plumb on the premises.

The door of the coach is wide open, and we see a shrouded figure of somebody on the seat inside, all slumped together and huddled up like he or she was dead. There was a shawl lying out on the top of the coach, so we reckons the rich lady is murdered.

Hanks gets into the coach, and the inside reeks of gunpowder. He gets his arms under the lady and lifts her out. She is plumb heavy, and Hank grunts and growls as he lifts her. Red Ryan goes to help, but Hanks snarls at him like a wild beast.

"Hands off, cowboy!" he snaps. "I'll see to this! Ain't I deputy sheriff? Jumping rattlers, but she's weighty!"

"Is she dead?" I axed, very concerned.

We gathers round, and we don't see much, because them bad men have thrown a travelling-rug over the body, covering the face, which sure looks bad. Hank holds the body in his arms, and Long Lane leans over and turns down the rug. Natcherally, we takes off our hats out of respect for the fallen, like, when that rug gets far enough for the moon to shine on a face!

And what a face! It was fat. The eyes were closed. The fat lips was trembling. In short, gents, it was the face of One-Ton Willy, and Hank was so plumb disgusted at nursing our fat sheriff like a baby, he dropped him.

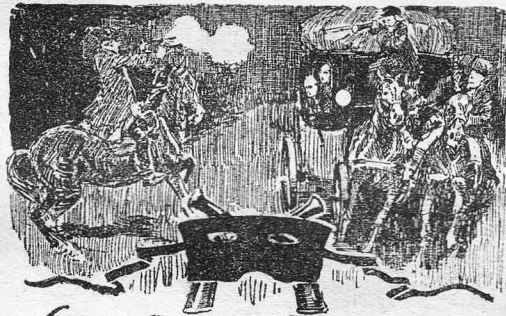
One-Ton went down—plop! And then his eyes opened and his mouth opened, and he caterwauled.

"Ow! Yow! You orkard cuss! Ow! I'm crippled for life!"

"Talk sense!" snarled Hank. "It'd take more'n a drop

# "STAND & DELIVER!"

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## Nick o' the Highway

Through the still night air comes the thunder of flying hoofs, sparks shooting from the road, as a big black horse approaches, going like the wind. Crouched low over the horse's back is a dim, tense figure wearing a long cloak and a black mask. It is Nick Cranley, highwayman, riding his horse Sultan as he's never ridden it before! For as he flashes on the louder roar of thudding hoofs and shouts is heard, and silhouetted horsemen appear on the skyline, hot in chase! They are the Bow Street Runners!

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Lane leans over and turns down the rug. Natcherally, we takes off our hats out of respect for the fallen, like, when that rug gets far enough for the moon to shine on a face!

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"Ow! Yow! You orkard cuss! Ow! I'm crippled for life!"

"Talk sense!" snarled Hank. "It'd take more'n a drop

like that to hurt a guy what grows his own cushions, you miser'ble fat perishar! What's happened? Where's the lady?"

"I d-don't know," says One-Ton, looking nervously down in the gully.

Hank flies at him and grabs his fat throat, and shakes him till his fat wobbles.

"Where's the lady, you yeller rat?" he blaers.

"How d-do I know?" stammers One-Ton. "Leggo me w-wind p-pipe!" Hank lets go and One-Ton clears his throat. "You is plumb hasty, Hank!" he moans. "I come along when them bandits was trying to make the lady tell whar she dumped her jewel-box. They saw me a-coming, and let fly with their guns. I figure one o' their bullets must ha' grazed me temple, for I sure went down and out, and I never woke up till you dropped me."

Hank glared at One-Ton, took a step nearer to him, then grabbing the back of his neck with one hand, brushed back the hair of the sheriff's forehead with the other hand. And that forehead was as unbroken as ever a forehead could be!

"Quitter!" snarls Hank. "You let them bandits capture the lady, and they'll torture her till she squeals where the sparklers are. Call yourself a sheriff, you wobbling lump o' fat!"

"Cut it out!" snaps Long Lane. "Why worry about him? Which way did they go?"

"Down in the g-gully," falters One-Ton.

"And how come you know that, seeing you was knocked silly as soon as you arrived?"

"Y-you d-don't understand," says One-Ton. "Them tracks t-tells m-me—"

We don't let him say any more along of us feeling rayther foolish at not having noticed them marks on the trail. And further, we is plumb disgusted at our sheriff what made out he'd been shot senseless rayther than go after bad men, and then stay in the coach while the said bad men tortured the lady down in the gully. I axes you, gents, wasn't it enough to raise the gorge of any decent hombre?

But we don't stay to argue. We leaps into our saddles and we leaves there in a hurry, galloping down into the gully mad enough to face every bad man who ever went gun fanning in the wild and woolly West.

The trail takes us slap down and down until there is only rocks up on either side of us, and it's a wonderful place for an ambush, only we're too mad to think about that. And suddenly—gee-whiz!—things sure began to happen. There are flashes of guns and the barking of guns from the rocks on both sides, and bullets start humming round, and a big man with a big voice yells at us.

"Better stop, boys," he says. "And keep yore hands up, or yore dead meat, every wan of you!"

Well, I axes you, gents, what would you've done? We couldn't see nobody, and that gully might have been alive with a hold-up gang, and life is sure sweet, too. So we reined in our hosses, and we sat there wid our hands held high.

Then one man stepped out on to the trail, covering us with his gun. Then another guy arrives and takes our hardware from us, after which yet another feller appears, and with him is a lady, though we can't see her face, along of her sombrero having sech a wide brim, and the moon turned her face into shadow, if you get me.

"Boys," sneers the first bandit, "we ain't aiming to do no killing ef we can git what we wants any other way; but you shore have come at an orkard time, jest when I can't entertain you. But maybe you kin help. Keep 'em covered, Bill," he says.

Then he steps up to the lady, and we see she's got her dainty hands tied behind her back. The sight makes our gorge rise some more, but we can't do nary a thing.

"Ma'am," says the bandit, "air you a-going to say whar you dumped that jewel-box? You done shied it outter the coach winder some'eres along this trail, and ef you says whar and we find it, you kin go free," he says. "Now, whar did you dump it?"

"I won't tell you!" says the lady.

"I could torture you!" says the bandit.

"Then I won't speak," says the lady. "Do yore wust, villain!"

"Shore, I will, ma'am!" says the bandit. "And this yere is what I'll do. Ef you don't speak I puts a bullet through one o' these hombres."

"No!" squeals the lady.

"Don't you worrit none!" snarls Hank. "Let him bump off the whole posse—we don't mind!"

"You speak fr yoreself!" snaps Long Lane. "I got some jobs o' work to do to-morrow," he says.

And I feels that way meself. Howsomever, the bandit goes up to Hank and puts his gun against his forehead.

"I counts ten," he says. "And ef you don't tell whar them jewels is, ma'am, this handsome hombre dies!"

"What can I do?" moans the lady. "What can I—"  
And then there's a squeaky voice from up high on the side of the gully.

"Drop yore guns, you skunks! I got a bead on you—all!"

Them bandits spin round, sudden like, and up high on a ledge is One-Ton, with a revolver in his fat fist.

"Save me!" squeals the lady.

But the chief bandit cusses some and lets fly wid his gun. That bullet went mighty close to One-Ton, and he leaps in the air, rayther surprised like. He comes down flop on the ledge again, and the pebbles fly. More'n that, gents, believe me, One-Ton weighs a whole heap, and that ledge ain't equal to the occasion. No, sir, it refuses to have any more to do with the affair, and it breaks off.

Jee-rusaleam, boys, One-Ton flung up his arms and staggered, but he can't do a thing. The ledge jest stopped being anything at all, and One-Ton began to come down. He slid, and he slid, and the more he slid the more he yelled. The stones flew. Great rocks came tumbling down, and little rocks flew out and down into the gully.

One of them bricks hit the chief bandit a nasty one on the dome, and his knees crumpled up beneath him. One-Ton is caterwauling and slithering down the side of the gully on his back, and coming so fast he's pretty nigh scorching. The bandits' horses stampered from amongst the rocks and set out for home without axing leave.

And along of everyone being plumb interested in One-Ton us boys spring into action, and we jump the other two bandits in order to take 'em alive. I gets my arms round one hombre's neck, and we has a regular up and a downer there on the trail, with rocks dropping all round us. That guy is fearful strong, but I hang on. Long Lane comes to help me, while Hank and Red Ryan tackle the other gent.

Meanwhile, One-Ton comes down on to the trail with a bump, and he lays there yowling and rubbing himself. Hank is struggling with a bandit, and we is all likewise occupied. Bandit No. 1 is on his feet again, having recovered from the smack awarded him by the rock. Hank howls at One-Ton.

"Look out, you fat idjit! Drill him!"

One-Ton don't hardly know what he means, but he guesses there's danger, so he don't want to stay. No, sir, he turns, and he runs like mad, and he runs slap into Bandit No. 1, hitting him all over with all of himself such a smack that the said bandit jest bounces off with the wind knocked plumb out of him.

And then me and the boys is too busy to worry about him. We is fighting the other two bandits, and we is getting the better of 'em. Long Lane holds our man down while I take his guns away, and then knocks him silly. Hank has slammed a lump o' rock on the head of his man, and he is gone to sleep, when all of a sudden we hear the sound of wheels, and, looking up, we expects to see the lady and One-Ton, only we don't!

No, sir; except for the senseless bandits, we is the only humans thereabouts, and right away we see what's happened. One-Ton has rescued the lady, and is taking her to Hammertoe Gulch in the coach. And, natcherally, us boys is plumb mad, along of us coming out to do the rescue business, and doing it, too, and One-Ton going off with the lady and the money.

Jumping rattlers, did you ever know sech luck as that hombre always met up with? Other guys do all the dirty work; he jest falls on his fat feet whatever happens along.

But Hank snarls like a wild beast, and he grabs his hoss what is like all cow ponies, and isn't far away.

"Guess I've had enough o' that fat bluffer!" he snarls. "I'm not staying to arrest no bandits while he runs off with the rich lady! I'm going!" he says.

(Continued on the next page.)

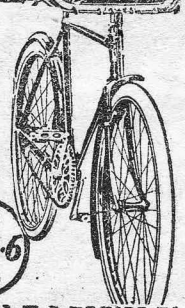
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And we all feel that way ourselves, so we leaves the bandits lying in the gully, we all grabs our hosses, forks 'em, and leaves there a sight faster than we arrived—which is saying something. We hits the trail after that coach, and we sights her. We gives chase, hollering and yipping enough to wake the dead.

But can we catch her? No, sir. We done saw One-Ton up on the box, and he's bobbing about like the seat's red-hot, and he's tugging at the reins like he's got all the Mohawks, Siouxs, Blackfeet, and the Jesse Lasky Indians after him. He don't look back, and he don't look anywhere. He jest hauls on them reins and bobs about as the coach jolts over the ruts and the rocks. And I'll be hogtied if I ever seed any vehicle travel like that coach did, behind them six horses. The faster it went the harder we yelled, and the harder we yelled the faster that coach went. The lady was inside—all except her head and mouth, which were both outside, and the mouth was shrieking blue murder.

"Save me!" she bawls. "Save me!"  
But whether she's yelling at us or One-Ton we didn't know, and we didn't care.

And we came back to Hammertoe that way. But One-Ton don't stop outside the saloon, and as he goes dashing by we suddenly knows why he don't stop—he can't! Them hosses was so plumb scared by our yells they was scooting for the moon as hard as they could go, and we'd been chasing 'em for miles across the mesa like that! Can you beat it?

But a little way along our street and One-Ton is so scared hisself he gives a mighty pull at the reins, and they snaps like cotton. One-Ton shoots backwards off that box and slides over the top of that coach on his back. Then the wheel of the coach hits the veranda step jest by our bank, and the said wheel comes off. The coach tilts over and hits the veranda post, and One-Ton slides off the top, feet first, with a howl, and goes clean through our bank window into the office, while the shafts and the traces break with a snap, and the hosses go on to the mesa again, leaving the coach behind 'em in our street, lying on its side.

Taking it all round, gents, there sure was a mess outside our bank, and the only one who really understands what to do is Hank, who climbs on top o' the overturned coach, opens the door, and hauls out the lady. She is squawking, but it's sure noticeable that she's clutching a sort o' iron box, which we gathers is her jewel-box. Her sombrero is still on her head, but as Hank helps her down to the road her hat tilts, though only Hank sees her face, and he don't say anything. At first he starts like he's stung, then he grins like he's tickled to death!

But when she is on her feet in the road she puts her hat on straight, and then there is a grating of bars and the bank door opens. One-Ton comes strutting out hauling behind him the senseless form of Bookman Bill.

"Here's a fine thing!" he cries in his squeaky voice. "A hombre cain't go to rescue fair ladies, but what some rotten skunk breaks into our bank, boys. I done seen him through that winder and I jumped clean through on top of him! Hank, I'll see to the lady. Put Bookman Bill in the coop!"

We is plumb amazed, though we know that One-Ton never went through the bank window for that purpose. He had been shot through there when the coach tilted, and he'd dropped on Bookman and fair squashed him flat. Talk about luck, gents! When it comes to luck One-Ton was sure the caterpillar's knickerbockers!

But what plumb amazed me was the calm way Hank took Bookman Bill to the lock-up, leaving One-Ton to put his arm round the lady's waist to help her across the road to the saloon.

"I sure hopes you're not hurt!" he bleats.  
"My hero!" she says, nestling close to him. "My hero! The hombre I done been looking for!"

One-Ton looks pleased, he does, and blinks at us.  
"Boys!" he says. "Looks like I'll be too busy spending money to bother about being sheriff. Is Hank there?"

"Here," says Hank, coming back from her gaol. "You want me, fatness?"

"Yeah!" says One-Ton. "Take this badge o' office. Henceforth you is Sheriff o' Hammertoe Gulch. Guess I'm going to be busy with writing cheques and things to worry about a one-horse show like this here. Ma'am, can I help you to the saloon?"

"My hero," says the lady. "Will you marry me? I been looking fr a hero like you!"

"Then you done found him to-night!" says One-Ton, taking her into the saloon where there's plenty of light.

And then he stares, his eyes popping. He peers under the brim of her sombrero. He even reaches out with one fat hand and takes her hat off her head. And we guffaws!

Why? She wasn't ugly, gents; no, she was plumb good-looking, in her way. But she was black—a negress!

"I never promised!" howls One-Ton, backing to the door.  
"Quitter!" snarls the lady, whipping out a gun. "You go back on me, would you? You—"

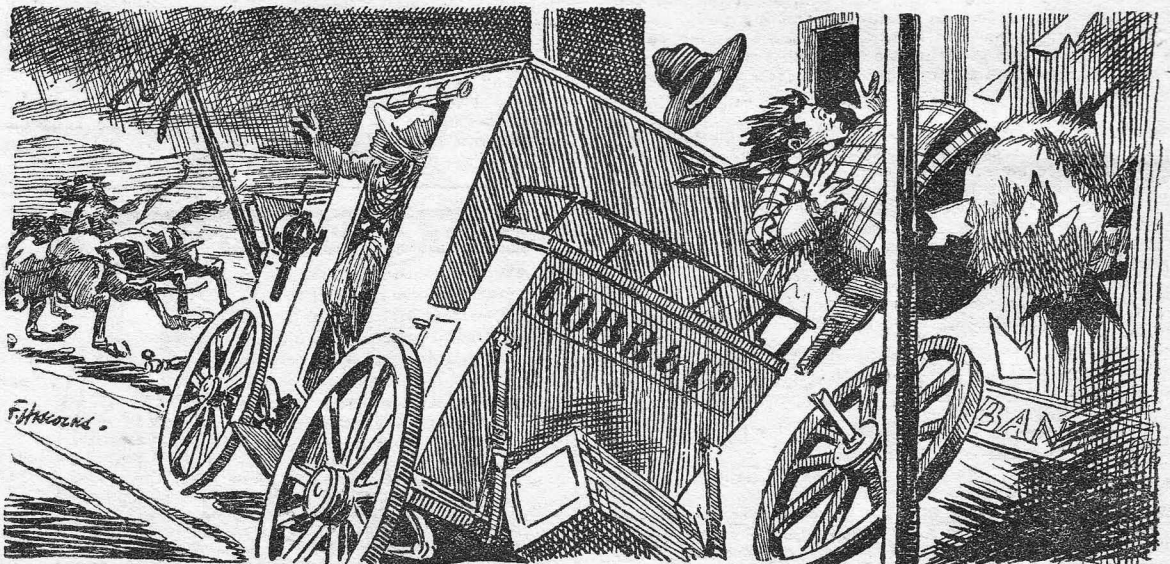
She lets fly at One-Ton and misses him. We seizes her wrists, but One-Ton's life is safe because he's gone. Yes, sir, he went for a hoss and he rode out of town—back to his daddy's ranch, and he hasn't been back yet. He'd thrown away his job, and made hisself the laughing-stock o' Texas, all for a lady as black as his black hoss. He was that mad he actually did some work. But he lived it down eventually.

As for the lady, she stayed at Hammertoe until her coach was mended. Them bandits, what got clean away, was really the men she had hired back in Mesa City, and who wanted to get her jewels, only she hid them.

And it appears that when One-Ton got out there he was too late, for the bad men had been down in the gully looking for the jewels they thought the lady had shied over the coach winder. One-Ton hadn't the nerve to go after 'em. Besides, he nosed around inside the coach and found them jewels, and he aimed to keep them even if he couldn't get the lady, only us boys came along and upset his plans. One-Ton's luck has broke at last, and, take it from me, gents, it stays broke!

THE END.

(Watch out for next week's GEM and the first of an exciting series of stories featuring "Nick o' the Highway!" They're real thrillers these, boys!)



One-Ton slides off the top of that coach and goes clean through the bank window into the office.



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(Now read on.)

### A Tempting Offer!

"IT is very kind of you to come all this way to see me, Mr.—er—Chance," said Latimer. "I am sorry my hospitality is so limited that I cannot offer you a drink or a cigar. Will you kindly inform Mr. Paige that I shall not be returning to England for some considerable time yet, and that it is immaterial how he deals with this sum of money that has been left to me."

Chick stared aghast at the man. Behind him Matturis chuckled deeply. It was evident that he understood the gist of the explorer's words.

"Great gosh, man! Do you realise what you're saying?" gasped Chick incredulously. "You refuse to come back to England with me? You will never get away from here if you don't. And you will be throwing away a fortune of over a half a million pounds unless you put in an appearance in London within six weeks' time."

Eustace Latimer clicked his tongue contemptuously.

"What is money, compared with the astounding discovery I have made?" he exclaimed enthusiastically. He gestured sweepingly towards the hieroglyphics that covered every square inch of space on the stone walls of the chamber. "Engraved there," he continued, "is the history of a race of white men who lived here on this rock thousands of years before the Amazeli were ever heard of. The race is extinct save for King Zernes, Matturis, and half a dozen others. I have only half finished my task of translating those hieroglyphics. It will take me at least another year."

Chick stared almost pityingly at the old professor, and a gleam of anger and indignation gradually kindled in his eyes.

"Look here, this is ridiculous!" he cried hotly. "You don't seem to realise the situation, Latimer. What of the message you sent to Frank Barron, the agent at Lakola, imploring him to send assistance? This brave fellow, Lobula, risked his life to deliver it, and he has risked it a hundred times since to come to your aid. And now you calmly inform us that we have come on a wild-goose chase."

Eustace Latimer shrugged his shoulders apologetically.

"I acted hastily. I regret that I sent that message," he confessed lamely. "I thought our lives were in danger when the Amazeli first attacked us, but once I had spoken with King Zernes, and he realised the peaceable nature of my mission, the situation was entirely altered."

"But you are being kept prisoner here," challenged Chick.

"In a way, perhaps," admitted the professor. "But I have nothing to complain of in the treatment I have received. And I am sure that the king will allow me to depart in peace once I have completed my task of writing the history of his race."

Matturis chuckled again, an ugly, sinister sound that sent a cold shiver down Chick's spine.

"See here, Latimer," he said persuasively. "The king

has already given his consent for you to leave here with me. My friends are waiting over there with the plane, and we can get you back to civilisation in twelve hours' flying."

"I—I can't leave my work unfinished," declared Latimer, clutching greedily at his notebook.

"Never mind about yourself, or your work. What about your duty to your daughter?" demanded Chick sternly, as he suddenly remembered the fact of the girl's existence. "Where is Miss Latimer? Do you mean to tell me she is content to remain here in these surroundings, and has no desire to get back to her home and her friends?"

Eustace Latimer bridled and tossed his bald head pompously.

"We will leave my daughter Jessie out of it," he said coldly. "I doubt if she would be willing to leave me here, and accompany you back to England. I don't know where she is at the moment, but you can ask her for yourself. In the meantime, if you leave me in peace, I will write a letter to Howard Paige, which will relieve you of all responsibility in this matter."

The old man deliberately turned his back and commenced to scribble away in one of his notebooks. Chick bit his lip, and felt his anger rise as he surveyed the obstinate set of Latimer's narrow shoulders. That he might refuse point blank to leave the Black City and return to England was a contingency that neither he nor Howard Paige had bargained for.

"Why, the pig-headed old gazaboo!" muttered Chick disgustedly. "If he thinks I'm going back without him he's got another guess coming. I wonder where the girl is? Surely she ought to be able to persuade him to chuck up this crazy idea of staying here until he's copied all those darned hieroglyphics."

"Ah, perhaps I can be of some assistance to you, Mr. Chance?"

Chick turned quickly at the sound of an unfamiliar voice speaking his own tongue. Matturis had disappeared, and in the narrow doorway stood a tall, thin individual, who, though he wore a white robe with golden girdle and leather sandals on his feet, was unmistakably a white man.

Chick sensed aversion to the newcomer with his narrow, green eyes, jutting, hooked nose, and wide, thin-lipped mouth that was twisted in a crooked smile.

"Great Scott! Where did you spring from?" he exclaimed, in surprise. "And how do you know my name?"

"I overheard your conversation with Professor Latimer," informed the stranger. He beckoned the young airman out on to the ledge that formed a break in the winding stone steps, and laid a friendly hand on his arm. "I am a Belgian. My name is De Selvas—Dr. Pedro de Selvas," he continued, in a smooth, purring voice. "I was the first white man to penetrate to the valley of the Amazeli. That was five years ago, and I have been held a prisoner here ever since. Thanks to my medical knowledge I was successful in curing King Zernes of a serious illness, and I have occupied a position of confidence ever since."

Had he wished, Dr. de Selvas could have told Chick Chance a great deal more about himself. He could have admitted that he was a fugitive from justice—an escaped murderer with a price on his head, who had fled from the Belgian Congo, and found a safe refuge with the Amazeli. In other respects his story was true. He had earned King Zernes' gratitude and confidence by curing him of a dangerous illness, that had also gained him the respect and admiration of the king's followers.

"And you have been here for five years?" jerked Chick, sympathy overcoming his instinctive dislike and distrust of the man. "That must seem like a lifetime to you."

De Selvas nodded, and tugged at the pointed beard that sprouted from his chin. Had he remained in the Belgian Congo he would have been hanged years ago.

"You came here by aeroplane to rescue Professor Latimer?" he asked curiously. "And now the old man refuses to go back with you. He is what you call a crank. He thinks more of the causes of science than of his own life. And where is your plane now?"

"Over there," Chick pointed vaguely towards the further end of the valley. "By giving a certain signal I could have the old crate brought here in five minutes; but I am not yet certain that it would be safe to do so."

The Belgian doctor smiled as he touched the gold ring that Chick had slipped on a finger of his left hand.

"You need fear nothing so long as you wear the king's signet," he assured. "The Amazeli will obey you as one man, and none would dare to harm you and your friends, or the plane. But it seems you have made this long and dangerous journey for nothing."

"Don't you believe it," said Chick grimly. "I am hoping that Miss Latimer will be able to persuade the old man to change his mind. If not, I'll probably knock him on the head and carry him off by force."

"Yes, the girl may be able to help you, and personally I can be of use to you as well." De Selvas nodded towards the continuance of the stone steps that led up and up towards the rearing crest of the Lion Rock. "I think you will find Miss Latimer up there," he informed him. "Later, Mr. Chance, I may have a proposition to place before you that would be of mutual benefit to the two of us."

"I don't like that guy. He doesn't ring true," mused Chick, as he commenced to climb the winding steps. "I guess he'll want me to smuggle him aboard the plane when we leave. Whoa! Steady on, old son! Have a look at that before you start punching holes in me."

A scowling Amazeli, armed with a huge spear, had suddenly barred the airman's way. One glance at the ring on Chick's finger caused him to reverse his weapon and step back with a bow that was so low that his feathered head-dress brushed the ground.

"By James, I hope I haven't got to climb right to the top of this rock to find Miss Latimer!" panted the lad, as he scrambled up another flight of at least fifty steps. "This beats the Eiffel Tower into a cocked hat. Hallo, what's that?"

A faint cry had suddenly reached his ears. It was a cry of distress from somewhere close at hand, and it sounded distinctly like a woman's voice.

Three bounds carried Chick around a corner to the next wide ledge of rock that jutted from the black pinnacle. He was almost on top of two figures which were struggling frantically together. One was that of a girl; the other was the tall, white-robed form of Maturis!

Jessie Latimer was fighting desperately to escape from the clutch of the man's enveloping arms. Her appealing eyes widened in amazement as Chick Chance bounded into view.

The young airman took in the situation at a glance. One hand closed like a vice on Maturis' shoulder, wrenching him away, and sending him spinning against the side of the rock. With a snarl of fury the man recovered himself, and whipping a knife from his girdle, hurled himself at the newcomer.

Chick met the vicious attack with a smashing straight left that caught his adversary squarely on the point of the jaw, lifting him clean off his feet, to flop limply to the hard rock.

"Hold that one!" grinned Chick, blowing on his bruised knuckles. "That ought to keep you quiet for a few minutes. Miss Latimer, I believe?" he went on, turning towards the girl, who was remarkably pretty, even in her agitation and distress. "My name is Chick Chance. I came here to take you and Mr. Latimer away."

"I am so glad. Oh, I am so glad to see you!" There were tears in the girl's violet eyes as, with a simple, confiding gesture, she gave the young airman both her slender hands. "That horrible man! He is always pestering me!"

"He won't pester you any more," assured the lad confidently, spurning Maturis' sprawling form with the toe of his boot. "I didn't like the look of the fellow when I first spotted him, no more than I did of Dr. de Selvas."

"Dr. de Selvas! He is even less to be trusted!" declared the girl, with a shudder of revulsion. "I am terrified of the two of them, though it is the first time that Maturis has dared to lay his hands on me. I saw your plane this morning, and I guessed that it was someone come in search of us. I tried to give you a signal. Did you see it?"

"The smoke from the top of this rock?" Chick nodded, and reddened as he suddenly realised that he was still holding the girl's hands. "Miss Latimer, you surely don't wish to stay here in this place?" he blurted. "You won't refuse this opportunity of getting away?"

"What does my father say about it?"

Chick's lips tightened.

"He can't be in his right senses. He refuses to leave until he has finished deciphering a lot of fusty hieroglyphics."

Jessie Latimer sighed and shook her curly head.

"I can't leave him here," she said simply. "My place is with him."

"That's all rot!" jerked Chick bluntly. He described the situation in a few terse sentences. "Surely," he cajoled, "you can persuade Professor Latimer to alter his mind?"

"The girl was silent for a minute or so.

"I think I could," she said at length. "Especially if I tell him of the way this vile man Maturis has dared to try to make love to me."

Maturis suddenly stirred and slowly scrambled to his

feet, one hand clasp his bruised jaw. His eyes blazed with venomous hatred as his twisted lips spat out a flow of unintelligible words. Chick Chance moved towards him with doubled fists, and turning on his heel, the man scurried away down the steps.

"He is a dangerous man. He will do everything he can to prevent us from getting away!" exclaimed Jessie Latimer nervously.

"Then the sooner we get away the better," declared the young airman. "I've got the king's permission for all of us to depart as soon as we like. You run along to Professor Latimer and tell him to get ready to quit. In the meantime, I'll signal to my pals to bring the old crate along."

Together they descended to the lower platform, where Jessie Latimer disappeared in search of her father. Beckoning to the waiting Lobula, Chick made his way to the base of the great rock, and holding the king's ring aloft for all to see, strode towards the head of the wooden bridge that spanned the turbulent, roaring river.

The black warriors of the Amazeli fell back in respectful silence. Their eyes rolled as Lobula impressively informed them that his master, the great white lord of the skies, was about to summon his slave, the flying demon, with the voice of thunder.

Chick frowned as he saw Dr. de Selvas strutting importantly towards him.

"You are sending for your plane?" the man asked uneasily. "Does that mean that Professor Latimer has consented to go with you?"

"I think that is what he will do," answered the lad evasively. "But, in any case, I want to have the plane handy."

There was a level expanse of hard-beaten earth, like a parade ground, within a couple of hundred yards of the opposite bank of the river. Hundreds of the Amazeli lined up on all sides of this open space, and watched in awed silence as Chick Chance strode out into the centre, and without any preliminary warning, drew his signalling pistol and fired it over his head.

There was a double report, followed by a howl of wonder as the Very light flamed crimson five hundred feet in the air and hung suspended for several long minutes.

All eyes were fixed expectantly on the sky, and a shiver of awe ran through the crowd of natives as, far away in the distance, they suddenly heard the throbbing roar of the powerful airplane motor.

Louder and louder it swelled as a black speck appeared in the clear sky and came hurtling like a bullet across the rock-walled valley.

Swift and graceful as an eagle, the big monoplane loomed larger and larger as it swooped down upon the selected landing-place, its wings gleaming silver-grey, the propeller a circle of fire.

Down it came in a long, smooth dive, and made a perfect three-point landing that brought the machine to rest within a dozen yards of where Chick Chance stood waiting.

"What-ho! Here we are again!" shouted Horace, as he poked his grinning face over the edge of the cockpit. "Look at all the troops. Is everything O.K., Chick, old son?"

"No complaints, as yet," replied Chick, a trifle grimly. "I'm not very popular in some quarters, but I've had a successful palaver with the boss of the show, and I've found Professor Latimer and his daughter alive and well. Do you think anyone is likely to interfere with the plane if I leave it here, Dr. de Selvas?"

"You can take it from me," assured the Belgian confidently, "that there is not one of these fellows would dare to go within a hundred yards of it. They're scared stiff. You could leave it here for a year and it wouldn't be touched!"

Chick opened the door and stepped into the saloon. Briefly he informed Horace and Herbert of all that had occurred.

"I'm going to bring Latimer away, whether he likes it or not," he said firmly. "But I'm hoping the girl will persuade him to come quietly. Fetch along an automatic apiece, and stuff some spare clips of cartridges in your pockets."

"And what about that skunk? D'you think it advisable to leave him here alone?" Herbert pointed to Burk Roscoe, who sat in the tail-end of the fuselage, his wrists and ankles bound together, and a forlorn, resigned expression on his face.

"I'm finished. I know when I'm beaten, Chance!" Roscoe said plaintively. "You've licked me all along the line up to now, and if you've found Latimer alive, then there's nothing more I can do! I give in, and I'll take my medicine without squealing!"

Chick hesitated for a moment. He had not forgotten Roscoe's previous acts of treachery, but there was not one

chance in a million that the man could do them any further harm.

"I think I'll take you along with us," Chick decided, drawing a knife and severing the cords that bound the man. "I shall feel safer than if I left you here with the plane. But don't try any more tricks, Roscoe. The Amazeli are on my side, and if I was to give the word, they'd fill you so full of spears you'd look like a blessed porcupine!"

"Who is this man?" asked Dr. de Selvas curiously, as Roscoe stepped from the plane, and stood with his hands in his pockets, and a chastened expression on his face. "Why did you bring him along if he is an enemy of yours?"

"Couldn't help it!" answered Chick shortly. "He had certain reasons for trying to prevent us from finding Professor Latimer!"

Herbert was the last to clamber down out of the machine. His eyes bulged with wonder as the little party passed unimpeded through the crowds of curious Amazeli and crossed the bridge to the amazing city that was built around the base of the gigantic rock, with its thousands of hand-hewn stone steps winding up to the rugged lion's head far above.

They ascended the first spiral of steps, and De Selvas conducted them to a kind of ante-room adjoining the chamber where Chick had interviewed the king of the Amazeli an hour earlier.

"I'll give Latimer just an hour," said Chick, glancing at the watch on his wrist. "If he hasn't made up his mind by then, we'll grab him by the ears and march him off to the plane, whether he likes it or not!"

De Selvas disappeared, to return a few minutes later with a queer expression on his face.

"I have just seen Miss Latimer," he announced. "It seems that the professor remains obdurate, and she is still endeavouring to persuade him to consent to accompany you in the plane."

"If the old fool wants to remain here, what right have you to try and drag him away?" snarled Roscoe disgustedly. "Where is Latimer? I demand to have an interview with the man!"

"Shut up!" said Chick shortly. "We're not interested in anything you have to say, Roscoe. And I'm not certain that I shan't leave you here when we go. Actually, there is no room in the plane for you. It wasn't built to carry more than six people!"

Dr. de Selvas started, and shot a glance at the young airman. He hesitated for a moment, and then beckoned him to one side.

"Mr. Chance, I hinted that I might have a proposition to make to you," he said in a low voice. "One that would be to our mutual benefit. I don't want to alarm you, but it is just possible that the king may give orders for your plane to be seized, and to withdraw his permission for you to leave the Black City!"

Chick caught his breath.

"What do you mean?" he demanded sharply.

"You were foolish to have made an enemy of Matturis," continued the Belgian ominously. "He is the king's cousin, and as such he has great influence, which he is now using with the object of preventing you from taking Professor Latimer and his daughter away from here!"

"The treacherous hound!" Chick's jaw hardened, and his hand dropped to the butt of his automatic. "If anyone tries to stop us from leaving here there'll be bloodshed, and plenty of it! There are three of us—"

"Three against as many thousands!" pointed out De Selvas. "You might shoot down a good few of the Amazeli,



Whipping a knife from his girdle, Matturis hurled himself at Chick!

but your plane would be destroyed, and you would be overcome in the end, when your ammunition was exhausted. I don't wish to see that happen. I am anxious to get away from this accursed place. If you will give me a seat in your plane, I will make it well worth your while. That is my proposition!"

Chick's lips curled contemptuously.

"Make it well worth my while? What do you mean by that?"

"In the heart of this rock is the treasure-vault of the kings of the Amazeli," explained De Selvas, sinking his voice to a harsh whisper. "Stored in there is enough pure gold to build a dozen battleships, and more diamonds and other precious stones than would fill a dozen sacks. I have access to the vault. We can carry away sufficient jewels to make us millionaires for the rest of our lives!"

Dr. de Selvas failed to notice the veiled hostility and contempt that was smouldering in Chick Chance's eyes.

"If you don't believe me I can show you the treasure-vault of the Amazeli," he whispered. "It is stacked with ingots of pure gold that have been accumulating there for centuries past. There are sufficient diamonds and other precious stones to furnish the regalia of a thousand kings. Half of them I am offering you, to get me away from this infernal place."

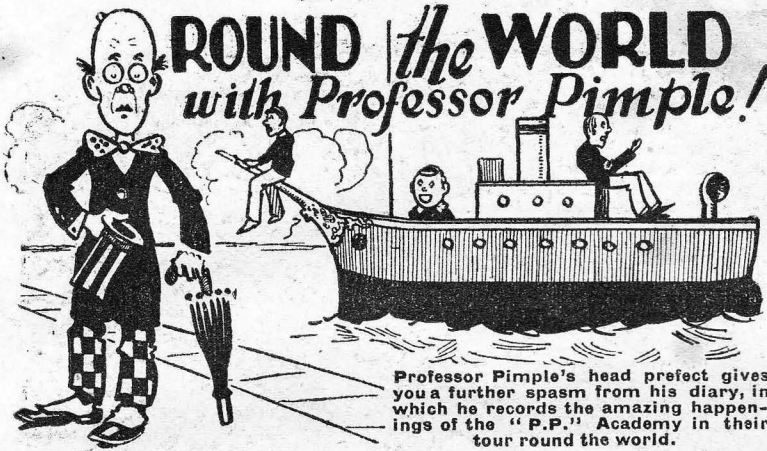
"You're a pretty low skunk, De Selvas!" he said scathingly. "Is this the way you would repay King Zernes for the confidence he has placed in you?"

"The gold and diamonds are of no use to the Amazeli. They are of less value to them than iron and pebbles," argued the Belgian.

Chick shook his head.

"I couldn't take you with us for all the gold and diamonds in Africa!" he declared bluntly. "There is no room for you in the plane. As it is, I may have to leave Roscoe behind, and I wouldn't hesitate to do that if his weight proved too much for the plane!"

(Although Chick has refused to succumb to de Selvas' tempting offer, there is someone else ready and waiting to oblige. Look out for another thrilling instalment next week.)



Professor Pimple's head prefect gives you a further spasm from his diary, in which he records the amazing happenings of the "P.P." Academy in their tour round the world.

**H**AVING got off the pier at Yarmouth, Pimple led us along the sands, which seemed to stretch a long way into the distance. You'll remember that we rowed ashore from the ship, but got mixed up with the pier, and had to abandon the boat, which Pimple gave to the pier attendant. I asked Pimple how we were going to get back to the ship, and Pimple said he had altered his mind about going round the world on a ship; he thought it would be more interesting to walk, because you can stop and look in the shop windows if you're walking. Then Sniffy asked the professor if they would get round the world walking along the sands, and Pimple said no; but every little helped, and on parting we should leave our footprints on the sands of time.

At the mention of the word "footprints" some of the kids got excited, and began to look for them, trying to pretend that they were on an uninhabited island, which was silly, 'cos there was a fat lady selling Yarmouth rock quite close, and a man with long hair reading people's bumps.

When we got up to the man with the long hair, Pimple thought we ought to have our bumps read, so that we would know what things we'd got wrong with us; and the man who was reading the bumps said that he would give us an accurate reading which we could show to our parents, so they would know what to do with us when we left school.

Pimple said he could tell them that himself, and it wouldn't cost anything, as all they would want would be a deep

pond and a lot of bricks to keep us from coming up. Then I suggested to Pimple that Sniffy should have his bumps read first, this being a joke of mine, 'cos Sniffy had a big swelling like a duck's egg on his head where the captain had hit him with the belaying-pin. So Sniffy sat in the chair, and the man with the long hair began to rub his fingers over Sniffy's head.

When he came to the lump the captain had put there, the man said: "Ha! This is an exceptional head, a very exceptional head!" I could see Sniffy wanted to cry, 'cos the man was rubbing the bump while he was talking, and it was hurting the bump like billy-ho; and Pimple said that the man was quite right, Sniff's head was exceptional—it was exceptionally thick.

"This young man," said the long-haired gent—Sniffy turned red at being called a young man, and tried hard not to cry with the pain—"this young man will one day be a great traveller!"

"That's right," said Pimple; "his father travels in fly-papers, and I'm told he's a fellow who sticks to his job."

"I don't mean that kind of traveller," said the man. "This fine development of brain that I feel here shows great inquisitiveness and determination, combined with a keen sense of smell and a capacity for doing without the little necessities of life."

"That's right," said Buster. "Sniffy can do without handkerchiefs, and he can smell a box of tuck from the other end of the dormitory."

The man didn't take any notice of Buster's interruption, but went on rub-

bing Sniffy's bump, and I could hardly stop laughing, seeing how Sniffy was wriggling with pain.

"This young man will be a great explorer," said the man with the long hair. "His head is exactly the same shape as Christopher Columbus. And that will be one shilling, sir, if you please, thank you very much!"

Pimple paid the shilling, and Sniffy got off the chair looking very sick. Then I pointed out to Pimple that the man was a professor as well, as he had his name on a board in big letters, and it said: "Professor Cranio, Phrenological Expert. Heads read from 1s. upwards." But Pimple said he was not the same sort of professor as he was, but only a quack; and the man heard what Pimple said and got wild, and said that if he called him a quack he would have Pimple up for libel. Then Sniffy asked Buster what a libel was, and Buster said it was the thing you stuck on jam-jars.

After a few heated words, Pimple asked the other professor to come and have a drink; so the man with the long hair said he would, if we would look after his pitch, and let him know if anybody came along who wanted their bumps read from a shilling upwards. I promised I would do that, and Pimple and Professor Cranio went off together.

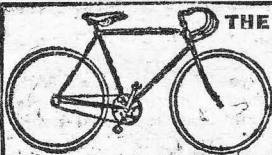
When they had got out of sight, Buster and some of the others said it would be a good idea if I pretended to be Professor Cranio, and read people's bumps from a shilling upwards; so I stood by the board and waited for someone to come along. We hadn't waited long when a little man came along with an umbrella and a big woman who looked like his wife. She had a very fierce expression, and glared at me as if I was an impostor; and I saw the little man looked very nervous, so I said: "Would your husband like his bumps read from a shilling upwards, ma'am?" And the woman said: "I would like to have my husband's bumps read, whether he would or not." Then she turned to the little man with the umbrella and said: "George, get into that chair, and let the professor read your bumps; then p'raps you'll know what an idiot I've married!"

George sat in the chair, and asked me if he ought to take off his hat; and I said yes, it would be better if he did; so he took off his hat, and I passed my hands over his head, trying to think of something to say that wouldn't put his wife into a temper with me.

(I'll tell you all about it next week.)

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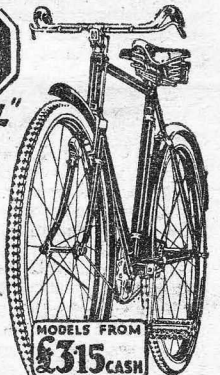
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