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The **MODERN BOY**

EVERY MONDAY.
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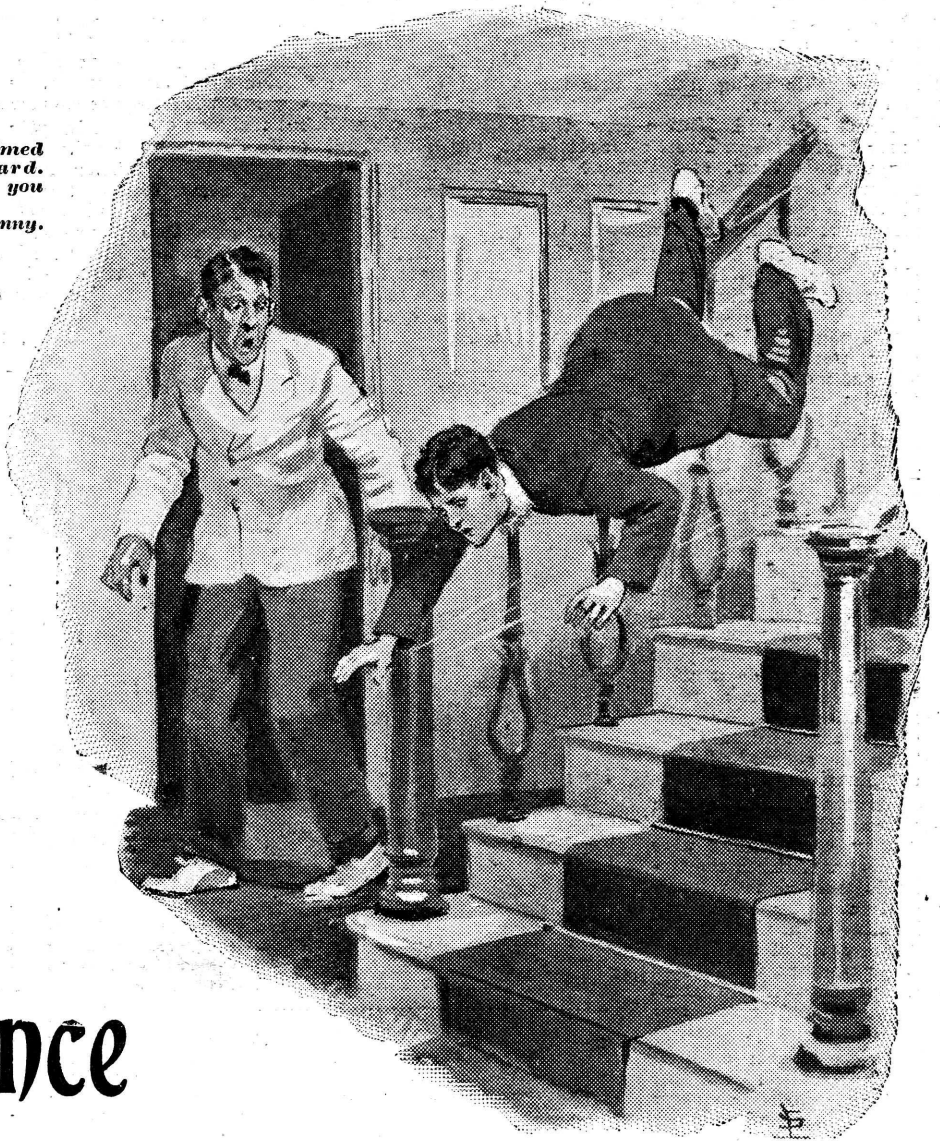
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THE MODERN BOY GOES BACK TO SCHOOL!—See page 3!

"My eye!" exclaimed Gubbins, the steward. "Falling downstairs, you clumsy swab?"
"No!" gasped Bunny. "Kicked down!"

More Kicks Than Ha'pence



Lost Temper!

BUNNY'S eyes were wide as he gazed at the Rock of Gibraltar. Shaped like a crouching lion, it was a wonderful sight to him, and he could not take his gaze away from it as the Albatross steamed into Algeciras Bay.

Mr. Earle, the owner of the yacht, who was talking with Hall, the mate, glanced at him, and his clouded face broke into a smile. The boyish wonder and delight in Bunny's face seemed to touch the hardened man of the world.

He left Hall, came over to Bunny, and touched the boy lightly on the shoulder. Jack Hare started and looked up. In his keen interest in the Rock of Gibraltar, and his memory of what he had read of its association with the heroism of British sailormen, Bunny had rather forgotten that he was steward's boy on the yacht!

He supposed that Mr. Earle was about to remind him that he was not expected to stand on deck admiring the scenery, and he coloured.

"Oh crumbs!" said Bunny. "I forgot, sir—and I've got the silver to polish for Gubbins, and—"

"Never mind that now, Hare," said Mr. Earle.

"And I've got to—"

"Never mind, I tell you. Stay on deck, and stare at the Rock as much as you like, you young ass."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" said Bunny.

"You've never travelled before, kid?" asked Mr. Earle.

"Never, till I was blown away in that balloon from Margate, sir," answered Bunny. "Except once, when I had a trip in a charabanc to Canterbury. And I've been on a Thames steamer."

Mr. Earle laughed. Apparently he was not impressed by the extent of Bunny's travelling.

"I've always wanted to travel," said Bunny confidently. "I used to watch the ships at Margate and wish I was going in them. I'm a jolly lucky chap to get this chance of seeing the world. I've always been lucky," added Bunny complacently. "My cousin Gilbert says it's fool's luck. But I don't care."

"You think you were lucky to get on this yacht?" asked Mr. Earle.

"Yes, rather, sir!" answered Bunny cheerfully. "It's topping to be on a splendid ship like this, with such a good man as you are, sir."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Earle, and stared down at the cheerful Bunny.

"Do you think I am a good man, Hare?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," answered Bunny. "Of course, you've got your faults. You drink too much—"

"Eh?"

"And you gamble," said Bunny. "But look at the way you jumped into the Bay of Biscay to fish me out, when that brute Hall chucked me overboard. That was awfully brave, and my uncle at Margate says that a brave man is never really bad."

Mr. Earle screwed his eyeglass a little tighter into his eye. He seemed in doubt whether to laugh or to kick Bunny down the saloon stairs. Fortunately, he decided to laugh.

"You'd like to go ashore at Gibraltar, Hare?" he asked, after a pause.

Bunny's face fell.

"Of course, I can't object, sir, as I stowed myself away on this ship," he said. "You can land me where you like, of course. But—but I've tried to make myself useful helping Gubbins. I—I know I've broken a good many glasses—and—and I've spilt the soup sometimes——"

"I mean you'd like to go for a run ashore, you young ass?"

Bunny brightened at once.

"Oh, yes, sir, if you'd let me. Fancy treading on the Rock of Gibraltar itself," said Bunny gleefully, "and hearing the Spaniards talk Spanish!"

"You would hardly hear them talk anything else!"

"Nunno! I suppose not!" agreed Bunny. "But I've never met a Spaniard, only once, sir; that was a Spanish sailorman who was at Margate, and he wanted to rob me. His name was Ruy Pinto, and he wore gold ear-rings in his ears, like a pirate. But I'm to come back to the Albatross?" asked Bunny.

Mr. Earle smiled cynically.

"Do you think Hall would let you out of his sight, now that you know our secret?" he said.

"I've promised to keep that secret, sir!" said Bunny, with dignity.

"I'm afraid Hall doesn't believe much in promises."

"Yes, he's an awful rotter, isn't he?" said Bunny. "I wish——" He broke off.

"Well, what do you wish?" asked Mr. Earle.

"I wish you'd sack Hall, and give up that rotten idea of swindling the insurance company, sir," said Bunny. "I'm certain it was Mr. Hall led you into it, because you're too good to think of such a rotten thing for yourself. I'd like to see you get rid of that brute. My uncle at Margate says that evil communications corrupt good manners."

"Never mind your uncle at Margate now, Hare," said Mr. Earle. "I am not getting rid of Hall, and I am not giving up the scheme. Do you still want to stick to the Albatross?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Bunny.

"Why?" demanded Mr. Earle.

"You could easily get another job as good as you've got on this yacht. Better, in fact, as I'm paying you no wages."

"I hadn't thought about wages," said Bunny innocently. "As I was a stowaway, I can't expect any, I suppose. But I'd like to stick to this ship!"

"Why?" repeated Mr. Earle.

"I suppose it's because I like you, sir," Bunny said. "Besides, I think I may be of use, sir."

"In breaking glasses or spilling the soup?" asked Mr. Earle sarcastically.

"I mean, I may be able to influence you into giving up that beastly

swindle that Mr. Hall's leading you into," explained Bunny. "My uncle at Margate says——"

"Bother your uncle at Margate."

"Yes, sir. But he says that a good example has a wonderful influence on a weak character——"

"A weak character?"

"Yes, sir! It's because you've a weak character that you're letting Mr. Hall lead you into wickedness. Now, as I am perfectly honest, I'm a good example," explained Bunny. "And so I think I can say—— Whoooooooooop!"

For some reason unknown to Bunny, Mr. Earle lost his temper at that point in the conversation. For the second time he was undecided whether to laugh or to kick Bunny down the saloon stairs. This time he decided on the saloon stairs. Bunny flew.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped, as he descended into the saloon, making a nose-dive under the propulsion of a hefty kick.

"My eye!" exclaimed Gubbins, the steward. "Falling down the stairs, you clumsy swab?"

"Ow! No! Mr. Earle kicked

sprayed him in the eye with soda water. He's a queer codger, is the boss. One minute he kicks you down the stairs and the next he takes you ashore for a run. Jever 'ear anything like it?"

Bunny brightened.

"I'm going ashore?" he asked eagerly. Since Mr. Earle had kicked him off the deck Bunny had rather given up hope of being taken for that run on the Rock.

"Jest that!" said Gubbins, in disgust. "You're to make yourself tidy, and go ashore with the governor. My eye! 'That young swab's got his work to do,' I says to the boss. 'Old your tongue, Gubbins!' he says to me. Me, that's been stooard on this hooker for donkeys' years! If the pay wasn't good, and if a bloke didn't make a bit here and there, I'd chuck up the berth. I would that! Taking stowaway kids for a run ashore!"

"But p'raps he's going to and you over to the police for stowing yourself away on the Albatross," he added. "P'raps that's it."

"Oh crumbs!" said Bunny.

"Anyhow, you got to wash and make yourself respectable, and get into the boat along of the boss!" snorted Gubbins. "So cut off and do it, afore you break anything else!"

"Wha t-h o!" said Bunny.

It did not take long for Bunny to get ready. The clothes Bunny had worn when he left England had suffered sadly from wear and tear, but he was neat and careful in such matters, and he made quite a respectable appearance. Mr. Earle,

in whose nature a careless generosity was combined with a very uncertain temper, and who had an amazingly extensive wardrobe, had given him many things, which Bunny had cleverly cut down and fitted to himself.

So when he looked in Mr. Earle's tall glass after dressing to go ashore, Bunny was flattered by the reflection of quite a well-dressed fellow. And his chubby face shone with high spirits and a recent wash when he appeared on deck, where Mr. Earle was awaiting him with his usual irritable impatience.

"Oh, here you are!" he snapped.

"Yes, sir!" said Bunny brightly.

"Jump into the boat!" A shore boat had stopped beside the anchored Albatross, with two dark-skinned Spanish boatmen in it. The harbour was as smooth as glass under a blaze of sunshine.

Mr. Earle remained speaking with the mate for a few minutes in low tones before he followed Bunny into the boat. Hall glanced down at Bunny over the rail with a dark look. A grim smile came over his hard, tanned face—a smile that Bunny did not heed at the moment, but which he remembered afterwards.

Bunny wondered dismally for a minute whether Hall was coming

It never is young Bunny Hare's fault when he lands in a scrape. They seem to come along to Bunny of their own accord. But this one—it's less of a scrape than a whacking great calamity. He's in an awful fix in this rattling fine yarn

By CHARLES HAMILTON

me down!" gasped Bunny. "I don't know why?"

"Well, you know why I'm going to kick you," said Gubbins. "It's because you've been loafing on deck and ain't polished that there silver. 'Ere goes!"

Bunny squirmed away from the steward's boot.

While the Albatross ran on into Gibraltar Harbour, between the North Mole and the South, Bunny polished silver and wriggled uncomfortably while he polished. Bunny was seeing the world. But there was no doubt that, so far, he was earning more kicks than ha'pence.

An Old Enemy.

"JEVVER 'ear of such a thing?" ejaculated Gubbins, a couple of hours later.

Bunny eyed him warily.

"I couldn't help breaking that egg-spoon," he said. "I'd just got it beautifully bright, when it snapped in my hand!"

"Who's talking about hegg-spoons?" said Gubbins. "Seems to me you can break anything you like on this 'ere hooker, and no 'arm done. You seem to be a favourite with the boss, you do, though you've cost him a fortune in glasses you've broke, and spilled soup on his trousers, and

More Kicks Than Ha'pence

ashore also. That would have spoiled the excursion for Bunny. But if Mr. Hall had business ashore, he did not go in the same boat. Mr. Earle descended, and the Spanish boatmen pushed off from the vessel and bent to their oars.

Bunny, looking back, saw Hall watching him over the rail, still with that peculiar, grim smile on his face. But Bunny soon forgot Hall. His delighted glance roved round him as they pulled for the landing-steps. Ships of many nations met Bunny's view, and the dark faces of Moors and Arabs, and over all towered the great Rock.

Mr. Earle sat silent and morose, with a clouded brow. He did not look like a man going on a pleasure excursion. But the cheery Bunny was happy enough for two.

They landed, and Bunny realised, with a thrill of excitement, that he was treading the famous Rock at last. The sights and sounds of the streets were new and delightful to Bunny, and Mr. Earle, morose as he was, pointed out various objects of interest, and finally led him into the Alameda Gardens, where Bunny was delighted anew by the sight of gigantic geraniums—much bigger, he told Mr. Earle, than those grown by his uncle at Margate.

There were plenty of people in the Alameda, all of them interesting to Bunny, and he did not mind at all when Mr. Earle planted him on a seat and told him to remain there till called for, as it were.

"I shall probably be occupied for an hour or so," said Mr. Earle. "Let

me find you here when I return. I dare say you will find it amusing to watch the crowds."

"Yes, rather, sir!" answered Bunny.

The owner of the Albatross walked back into the town.

Bunny found ample interest in watching the people who strolled in the Alameda Gardens—English and American tourists, swarthy Spaniards, still more swarthy Moors from Tangier, brown Arabs, and long-bearded Jews.

A man in a wide-brimmed sombrero came swinging along with a light, panther-like step, though he was of

Your Last Opportunity To Win These Prizes

sinewy frame, and Bunny's eyes picked him out from the crowd. It seemed to Bunny that that lissome, swinging walk was familiar to his eyes, and he looked curiously at the face under the sombrero as the man came nearer, walking by in front of the seat where Bunny sat.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunny, under his breath.

He knew the olive, rather handsome face, the glinting black eyes, the cynical curve of the lips—above all, the gold ear-rings in the dark ears. It was Ruy Pinto, the Spaniard, who had long ago robbed Bunny on the beach between Margate and Kings-

gate in far-off Thanet, and whom Bunny had forced to disgorge his plunder!

Bunny sat very still. He had never forgotten Ruy Pinto, but he had not expected to meet the man again. And here he was in his own country, only two or three yards from Jack Hare's startled eyes!

In the Alameda Gardens of Gibraltar, in the passing and repassing crowds, Bunny felt that he had nothing to fear from the desperado, but he hoped that Pinto would pass him by unseen. The hour of Mr. Earle's absence had elapsed now, and Bunny did not want his employer to find him engaged in a row with a ruffianly Spaniard when he returned.

Pinto was not looking at him, but he stopped at the other end of the seat and sat down. Taking tobacco and papers from his pocket, he rolled a cigarette and lighted it. And Bunny remembered the aroma of the strong-scented cigarettes Pinto had smoked on Margate beach. As he smoked, Pinto idly watched the passing crowds in the fateful walks of the Alameda, and for some time did not glance at his companion on the bench.

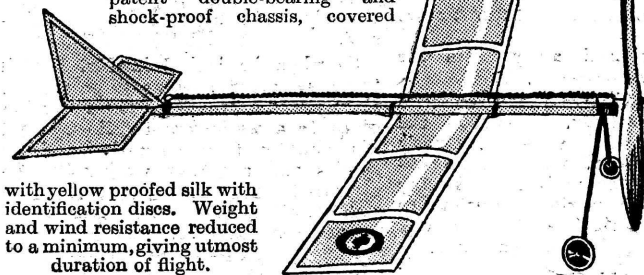
Bunny could not leave the spot. Mr. Earle expected to find him there when he returned. And he shifted uncomfortably when at last the Spaniard's black eyes turned on him—carelessly at first, then with a surprised and fixed stare.

"Madre de Dios!" muttered Pinto. He moved along the seat towards Bunny, and his black eyes glittered. "It is you, muchacho!" he said, in the hisping English that Bunny remembered so well.

(Continued on page 16.)

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WARNEFORD "DEMON" TRACTOR PLANES. Length 25½ inches, span 23 inches. Fitted with 10-inch hand-carved and balanced propeller, patent double-bearing and shock-proof chassis, covered



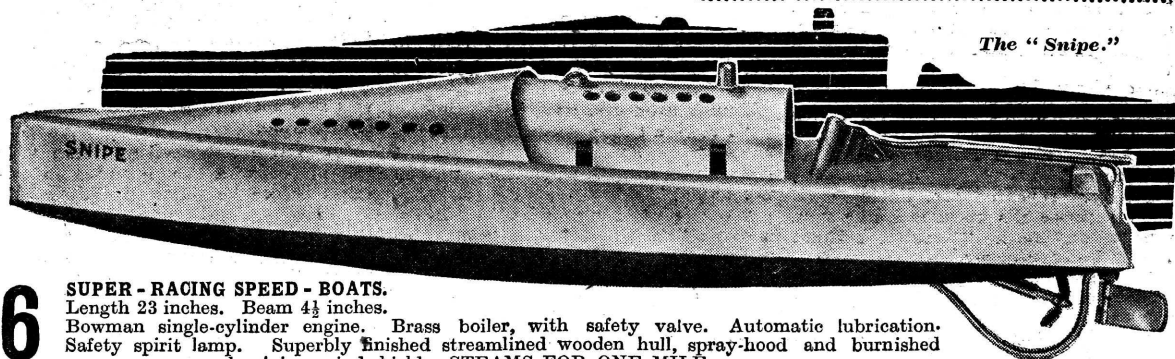
with yellow proofed silk with identification discs. Weight and wind resistance reduced to a minimum, giving utmost duration of flight.

LOOK—HERE ARE! THE PRIZES!

6

"BOWMAN" MODEL STEAM LOCOMOTIVES, 0-4-0, Tank Type, Model 265. COMPLETE WITH RAILS. Length of engine, 10½ inches. Weight 2½ lbs. Boiler of Seamless drawn brass, with safety valve. Solid-drawn brass cylinders, ¾-inch by ¾-inch stroke. Heavy gauge steel plate frames. Wheels of turned cast steel, with steel axles. Filling funnel, oil, and full instructions. **RUNS FOR 1½ MILES!**

PHOTO ON OPPOSITE PAGE.



The "Snipe."

6

SUPER-RACING SPEED-BOATS.

Length 23 inches. Beam 4½ inches. Bowman single-cylinder engine. Brass boiler, with safety valve. Automatic lubrication. Safety spirit lamp. Superbly finished streamlined wooden hull, spray-hood and burnished aluminium wind-shield. **STEAMS FOR ONE MILE.**

More Kicks Than Ha'pence

(Continued from page 12.)

"Hallo!" said Bunny feebly. He wondered whether Pinto had a knife in his boot, as he had had that day on Kingsgate beach. It was likely enough. Still, if he had, he could hardly venture to use it under a hundred eyes.

"You here—in Spain!" said Pinto. "In Gibraltar," said Bunny. "This is British territory, Mr. Pinto."

Pinto's black eyes glinted at him. Desperado as the man was, he shared the feeling common to all Spaniards on the subject of the Rock. He did not like to be reminded that a foreign flag waved over even so tiny a corner of his native country.

"Little picaro," he said, "I have not forgotten that you struck me with a rock. And now you are here—in Spain! I kiss you the hands, *senorito!*"

That was a common phrase of Spanish courtesy, but evidently Pinto did not mean it in a friendly sense. He rose from the bench and stood before Bunny, and Bunny rose to his feet also. The Spaniard had a flexible cane under his arm, and he slipped it into his hand. He made a gesture with it towards the distant Spanish mountains.

"Had I met you there, *senorito*, I should have used the *cuchillo*, not the *baston*. But here the stick must serve—for there is, as you have so politely reminded me, the British flag over us."

"Oh crumbs!" said Bunny. "Look here— Oh, my hat!"

He struck out as Pinto grasped him with his left hand and swung back the stick with his right. His knuckles dashed hard on the swarthy chin, but Pinto did not heed. The stick came down across Bunny's shoulders with a resounding whack.

"Ow!" yelled Bunny.

The next moment a sinewy hand closed on Pinto's collar, and he was jerked away from Bunny—and the swing of a powerful arm sent him sprawling on his back with a crash.

"Caramba!" panted Pinto, as he sprawled.

"Oh crumbs! Thank goodness you've come, sir!" gasped Bunny.

In the Saddle!

MR. EARLE glanced at Bunny, then turned his eyeglass on the sprawling Spaniard. The crash on the earth seemed to have knocked Ruy Pinto out. He lay gasping, his black eyes glittering up at Herbert Earle like a snake's.

"What does this mean, Hare?" asked Mr. Earle quietly. "Cannot I leave you for an hour, without finding you in a row with a native when I come back?"

"I couldn't help it, sir!" gasped Bunny. "That's the man I told you of, sir, who robbed me at Margate—the man with the ear-rings."

"Caramba!" panted the sprawling Pinto.

A number of people had stopped, and were looking on curiously at the

scene. Mr. Earle stooped, grasped the Spaniard by the collar again, and swung him to his feet.

"Clear off!" he said tersely. "Anda!" And he enforced the order with a powerful kick, which sent Ruy Pinto staggering away.

Pinto swung round, his dusky hand slipping under his short velvet jacket. It was evidently his intention to draw a knife. His swarthy face was convulsed with rage, his black eyes burning. Mr. Earle picked up the stick the ruffian had dropped.

"Look out, sir!" gasped Bunny. "He's got a knife!"

Mr. Earle smiled contemptuously, and advanced on the Spaniard with the stick in his hand. It was not the stick, however, but the knowledge that a hundred pairs of eyes were upon him, that caused Ruy Pinto to leave his knife in the sheath. Escape would have been impossible, had he used the knife. And Pinto remembered it even in his fury.

"Por todos los santos! I shall see you again, *senor!*" he muttered, as he turned and hurried away, and disappeared in the crowd.

Mr. Earle tossed the stick away in the shrubberies.

"Come!" he said curtly. "You are attracting altogether too much attention here, Hare!"

"I couldn't help—"

"That will do!"

Bunny followed the yachtsman in silence. He kept his eyes open for Ruy Pinto as they left the Alameda, but the man with the ear-rings was not to be seen.

For some time, as they walked, Mr. Earle maintained a morose silence. No doubt the scene in the Alameda had annoyed him. It really had not been Bunny's fault. It really never was Bunny's fault when he landed in a scrape. Scrapes seemed to come along to Bunny of their own accord.

"You'd like a ride?" asked Mr. Earle suddenly.

"What-ho!" said Bunny.

"Have you ridden before?"

"Lots of times, sir, on the donkeys at Margate!"

"Great Scott!" said Mr. Earle.

"I—I really can ride, sir!"

"I have no doubt that you are perfectly able to witch the world with noble horsemanship, after your exploits on the donkeys at Margate!" answered Mr. Earle; and Bunny was glad to see him smile.

Apparently Mr. Earle had made arrangements for the ride during his absence from Bunny, for he stopped at a building where, in the courtyard, two horses were waiting, saddled and bridled. Bunny joyfully climbed into the saddle. He was not, perhaps, a finished horseman, and the Spanish groom who held the horse grinned as he mounted. But a dusky grin had no effect on Bunny's cheery spirits. He could stick on a horse, at least, and Bunny loved horses. He made quite a creditable figure as he cantered away northward beside Mr. Earle.

They passed out of the town, and

followed the road across the Neutral Zone, a barren, sandy plain. When they passed through "La Linea," Mr. Earle told Bunny that they were on Spanish territory.

Bunny slowed down, looking about him intently, and Mr. Earle watched him in silence for some time. Bunny was evidently looking for something very keenly.

The young man's morose face darkened still more.

"What is the matter with you, Hare?" he asked suddenly.

"Eh?" Nothing, sir!" answered Bunny.

"You seem to be watching for something. What are you suspicious of?" snapped Mr. Earle. "Do you imagine there are still brigands in Spain, or what?" His look was both uneasy and angry.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Bunny. "I was looking for the Queen of Spain's Chair."

"The what?" ejaculated Mr. Earle.

"The Queen of Spain's Chair, sir," answered Bunny. "It must be about here somewhere."

"In the name of all that is idiotic, what do you mean by the Queen of Spain's Chair?" snapped Mr. Earle.

"Perhaps they didn't tell you about that at Oxford, sir," said Bunny innocently. "I'll tell you, if you won't think it a cheek."

"Tell me, by all means," said Mr. Earle, his face clearing. Obviously—though not to Bunny—he had fancied that the boy was in a suspicious and watchful mood.

"It was during the Great Siege of Gibraltar," explained Bunny. "From 1779 to 1783. A tremendous siege! And the Queen of Spain sat down on a big rock, and said she would never rise again till the Spanish flag flew over Gibraltar."

"Then she ought to be still there," said Mr. Earle, with a laugh.

"She was in a fix," said Bunny, "because, of course, they couldn't take Gibraltar, as it was defended by a British garrison. The poor queen sat there an awful long time while they pounded away at Gib, and she got very tired and stiff. But she couldn't break her word, and they couldn't take Gibraltar, so it looked as if she would have to stick there for ever!"

"And how did it end?" asked Mr. Earle, faintly interested.

"Why, it got to the British governor that the silly queen had sworn never to rise from that rock till she saw the Spanish flag flying over Gibraltar," said Bunny. "So he thought it out, and thought of a way of letting her off. He had the British flag lowered and the Spanish flag run up for five minutes, and so the queen was able to keep her vow. As soon as the Spanish flag was seen waving over Gib, she got up from the rock and toddled away—as stiff and sore as anything. Then the British flag was run up again. And that rock is still called the Queen of Spain's Chair."

Bunny stared round him again.

"I'd have liked to see it," he remarked.

"Probably it is not on this road," said Mr. Earle. "Let us get on. We are going to see a cork forest. That will be a novelty to you."

"Yes, rather," said Bunny. "There are no cork forests at Margate."

"I imagine not," said Mr. Earle dryly.

They rode on with a clatter, turning from the road at last into a by-road that was ruddy and dusty and burning with heat. The sunshine was like a blaze, and Bunny was perspiring, but he was enjoying himself. Mr. Earle apparently knew the country well. He rode on without slackening rein mile after mile, Bunny clattering by his side. They stopped at last at a little fonda, a wayside inn, where several dark-skinned men were gathered in the courtyard, all of whom stared very curiously at the two riders.

"We will leave the horses here," said Mr. Earle, dismounting. "We shall visit the forest on foot."

Bunny clambered off his horse. He could see that a message must have been sent from Gibraltar, for it was plain that they were expected at the fonda. The horses were taken away under a lean-to roof that served as a stable, and a fat, swarthy man came bowing and smiling from the dark interior of the inn, whom Mr. Earle greeted by the name of Valdez. Bunny sat down on a bench in the shade of a great tree in the courtyard, leaving Mr. Earle in conversation with Senor Valdez.

They were speaking Spanish—a tongue unknown to Bunny—and for that reason, perhaps, they spoke in his hearing. Valdez looked several times towards the boy under his black brows, with a greasy grin that Bunny did not like at all. It seemed to him that they were talking of him; though why Mr. Earle should be discussing him with the greasy Spanish innkeeper was a mystery. Bunny caught the word "cuchillo," which he knew meant knife, uttered by the innkeeper, and Mr. Earle frowned and shook his head angrily.

"No, no! Prisonero!" he answered, and from the resemblance of the word Bunny guessed that it meant "prisoner."

"Si usted gusta!" answered the innkeeper, with an expressive shrug, and without knowing the words, Bunny knew that the man was saying "as you like." "Con todo mi corazon, senor." And as he laid his hand on his heart in speaking, Bunny guessed that that meant, "With all my heart."

Mr. Earle joined Bunny on the bench, and Valdez spoke in Spanish to two of the swarthy loafers in the inn-yard. They nodded, looked hard at Bunny, and walked away and disappeared.

"You're thirsty, I suppose, boy?" said Mr. Earle abruptly.

"Yes, rather, sir," assented Bunny.

"Will you try the wine of the

country?" The innkeeper was placing flasks on the table under the tree.

"Thank you, no, sir," said Bunny.

"My uncle at Margate says—" "That will do. Drink what you like."

"Water's all right, sir," said Bunny.

"If you knew the ways of Spanish country inns, you would hardly think so," answered Mr. Earle. "But we can get some mineral waters."

So Bunny refreshed himself with Vichy water, while Mr. Earle sampled the red wine from the flasks rather freely. Bunny was inclined to warn him that wine-drinking in the heat of the day was not good for anybody, but luckily he held his tongue. Mr. Earle, with brief bursts of good-humour, had been growing more and more morose. It seemed to Bunny that he had something on his mind, and he wondered whether his conscience was troubling him, on account of the plot to rook the insurance company by the pretended loss of the yacht.

That Mr. Earle had landed him at Gibraltar and brought him to this lonely place so far from the fortress with any ulterior object did not occur to Bunny's simple mind. Bunny never had been suspicious, and he liked Mr. Earle too much, in spite of his vagaries of temper, to doubt his good faith.

"Let us go," said Mr. Earle at last. They left the inn, and walked down a

dusty and broken track that led into the shades of the cork forest.

"Come This Way!"

"H crumbs!" ejaculated Bunny suddenly, as he looked back towards the fonda.

Mr. Earle started sharply.

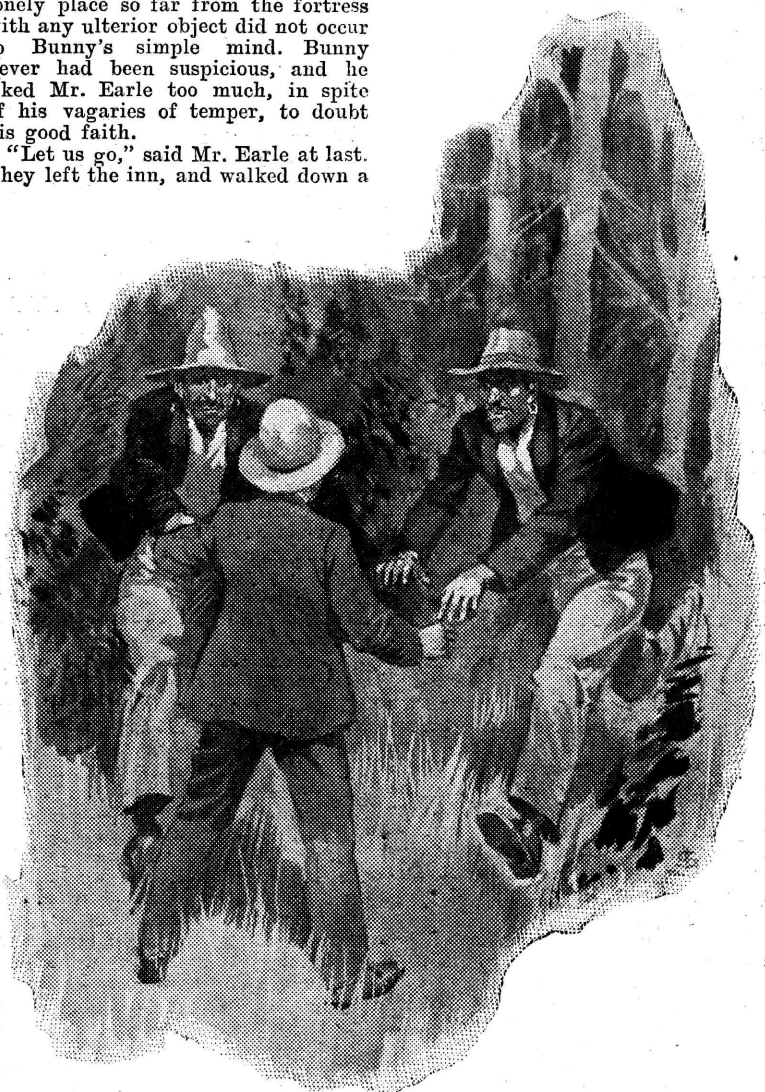
"What—what is it?" he exclaimed. His nerviness seemed to have increased since he had helped himself so freely to the red wine at the fonda.

"That merchant with the ear-rings, sir!" said Bunny.

Mr. Earle looked back. They were under the trees now on the verge of the forest. Behind them the fonda lay in sunshine and dust. At the open gateway of the courtyard a horseman had stopped and dismounted. The sunshine caught the glitter of the gold ear-rings in his ears. It was Ruy Pinto.

"Oh! What does it matter?" said Mr. Earle carelessly.

"He must have followed us from Gib, sir," said Bunny, rather uneasily. "He's a savage brute—and you remember you kicked him—"



Two men leaped at Bunny from the thicket and grasped him by the arms.

More Kicks Than Ha'pence

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Earle evidently attached no importance to Pinto. He was thinking of other things. He walked on by a trodden path, into the cork forest, and Bunny followed him. Bunny soon forgot Ruy Pinto, in his new surroundings. Tall, noble trees grew to a great height, great branches shutting off the glare of the sun, and the shade was delicious after the blaze of heat in the open.

"I say, isn't this ripping, sir?" exclaimed Bunny.

Mr. Earle did not reply. He walked on in a listless way, turning from the trodden track into the thickness of the wood. Here there were heavy undergrowths between the tall trees, shutting off the view, and countless insects buzzed in the leaves and twigs. Several times they had to part trailing branches and masses of bush to pass on their way. Mr. Earle stopped at last.

"I dare say you are tired, Hare," he said.

"Not a bit, sir!" answered Bunny cheerfully.

"I think you had better rest for a time," said Mr. Earle. "Remain here till I rejoin you, Hare!"

"Yes, sir!" said Bunny obediently. He would have preferred to ramble on, but it was not his place to argue with Mr. Earle. He threw himself on a bed of moss under a tree, while Mr. Earle went on through the wood, and in a few minutes was lost to sight and sound.

The moss was soft, the shade delicious, the buzz of the numerous insects lulling. Bunny found that he was, after all, a little tired, and he stretched himself luxuriously and rested. He was feeling disposed to fall in with the custom of the country, the "siesta" or afternoon sleep. And when he tired of watching flashing insects, and twittering birds in the branches, he closed his eyes.

But if Bunny dozed, he dozed lightly. His eyes opened quickly enough at the sound of a rustling in the underwood, and he jumped to his feet.

"Here, Mr. Earle!" he said cheerfully.

The next moment Bunny gave a yell. It was not Mr. Earle who appeared through the thickets. Two swarthy, grinning faces met his startled eyes—the faces of the two men at the fonda who had left after a word from Valdez and a look at Bunny. And both of them leaped at him at the same moment and grasped him by the arms.

"Oh crumbs!"

Both the Spaniards were lithe, sinewy fellows, taller a good deal than Bunny, either of them more than a match for him. They held his arms in a hard grip and grinned down at his startled face.

"Venga usted!" said one of them.

"Look here, let go!" exclaimed Bunny indignantly. "What's this

game? If you're going to rob me—"

"Venga!"

"I suppose that means come along," said Bunny, as the two Spaniards forced him away through the forest. "Look here, what do you want? Let go, you rotters, or I'll jolly well kick!"

"Por aqui!" said one of the bravoes.

Bunny struggled.

"Help!" he shouted. "Mr. Earle! Help!" He hoped that Mr. Earle might be within hearing.

One of the Spaniards jerked a knife from his hip, and the blade glittered under Bunny's eyes. Over it the man scowled at him blackly. He said something in Spanish, of which Bunny did not understand the words, but the tone and gestures were enough. Bunny ceased to struggle.

The man sheathed the knife again, and the two of them led Bunny on through the dark aisles of the wood. Bunny breathed hard as he went. Why the bravoes were marching him off he could not guess. The thought of Ruy Pinto came into his mind, with a chill to his heart. But he realised that this could have nothing to do with the revengeful Pinto.

These two rascals had left the fonda half an hour at least before Pinto had arrived there. They did not intend, apparently, to kill him. He was a

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HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

prisoner. Why they could want to make the steward's boy of the Albatross a prisoner passed Bunny's understanding.

And then, in a flash, it came to him, and he knew why Mr. Earle had left him alone in the cork forest. He remembered the talk at the fonda—the mention of the word "cuchillo" by the fondista, and Mr. Earle's angry reply: "No, no, prisionero!" If Bunny was not bright, he could at least put two and two together and make four of it.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunny, in dismay.

This was the explanation of that run ashore, of that ride to the cork forest far from the town. This was what had been heavy on Herbert Earle's mind all that day. Bunny had been led into a trap, and he was a prisoner in lawless hands. He owed that much to Earle; for had Hall had the ordering of it, he would have been stabbed and left dead in the cork forest. That, doubtless, was why Mr. Earle had taken the matter in hand personally—to make sure that no murder was done.

Bunny was a prisoner—to keep safe the secret he had learned on board the Albatross. Hall mocked at his promise, and even Earle could not believe that he was safe so long as Bunny had it in his power to talk.

The boy was to be kept a prisoner in some remote spot, to ensure his silence. Bunny understood now.

He was dismayed; but stronger than his dismay was the feeling of pain that the man he liked, the man he had trusted, could be guilty of such treachery. No wonder he had had a weight on his mind—no wonder his face had been overcast. Bunny knew now that he had left him in the Alameda at Gibraltar while he made the arrangements for this blow. That was why the rough crew at the fonda had been expecting the visitors.

"Oh crumbs!" said poor Bunny.

He tramped on between the two Spaniards. They followed lonely tracks through the forest in silence—only giving Bunny a threatening glare when he lagged. They emerged from the forest at last, and Bunny looked round him hopefully in the open sunlight. But the country was lonely and deserted, and they followed a rough foot-track through broken country. There was no building in sight, but in the distance Bunny sighted a windmill on a low eminence. And his conductors were heading for the mill.

They were hurrying now, with quick glances round them—and for Spaniards to hurry, in the heat of the day, showed that they were anxious to get their prisoner into cover. Once again the knife was displayed to Bunny, as a hint of what he might expect if he delayed, and he hurried on between the men who gripped his arms.

They passed through a tumble-down gateway, into the yard of the mill. Then Bunny was led through a low doorway.

"Hola, molinero!" shouted one of the bravoes.

A black-bearded man, in a white, dusty coat, came from the interior darkness. He nodded to the bravoes, and grinned at Bunny.

"Look here!" exclaimed Bunny. He guessed that he had reached the place where he was to be kept a "prisionero."

The molinero, or miller, gave him a grinning nod, and spoke in English. "No afraid—all right," he said. "You stop wiz me—yes! Venga usted por aca! Come zis way."

He took Bunny's arm, and led him up a narrow stair into the high upper room of the mill. And the black-bearded man, pushing him in, closed the door on him, and bolted it on the outside.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunny.

He jumped to the little dirty, cobwebby window. Outside, the sails of the windmill turned slowly and laboriously, under the wind from the Bay of Algeciras. Bunny sighted the two bravoes strolling away, laughing together.

No doubt they were returning to Valdez, at the fonda, to report their success. They disappeared in the distance, and Bunny sat down on a bench and fairly groaned!

(Yes, Bunny is in a decidedly tight corner now! The way in which he gets out of it is told in another enthralling story by Charles Hamilton in next week's MODERN BOY!)