The NELSON LEE Library 2D

From the roof of the Woolworth Building, New York, Nipper recognises, with the aid of a pair of binoculars, that the man fired upon is NELSON LEE. *(See This Week's Story !)*

No. 426. EVERY WEDNESDAY—PRICE TWOPENCE. AUGUST 4, 1928

The three juniors could just manage to see a man sprawled out upon a pile of grubby looking blankets. Near him lay an opium pipe, and the atmosphere within that place was foul in the extreme.

A Three Thousand Mile Race!

A stirring story of the adventures of the Boys of St. Frank's in a train journey across the American Continent. Think of it—three thousand miles by train! Of course, the carriages are specially built for long-distance travelling, and the locomotives are much bigger than the most powerful of our express engines.

The Author has just recently made the journey he has described in this week's story, and so writes with the conviction of one who knows his subject well. But apart from the wealth of material derived from personal observation, the story itself is without question one of the very best.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER 1.

MR. DINTY TODD OF NEW YORK.

"MIDNIGHT," I said briefly. "Time we were all in bed."

"Yes, I know; but we can't go to bed while Handforth and Co. and Archie are missing," said Reginald Pitt. "Mind you, I'm not worried much about Glenthorne. He's a peaceable kind of fellow, and unlikely to get himself into trouble."

"But Handforth!" I said grimly. "My only hat! Goodness knows what trouble he's found! In Chinatown, in the worst quarter of New York! It'll be a wonder if those chaps are still alive!"

Although the hour was just midnight, one would never have imagined this was the case when looking at Broadway—particularly that part of Broadway in the neighbourhood of Times Square.

At midnight the place is just about fully alive—with all the restaurants open, many of the picture theatres still doing big business, and hundreds of electric signs blazing away with the full intensity of their power.

But we were not on Broadway.

We were just setting out from the McDougall building, near the Battery—that is, right down at the end of Manhattan Island, close to the river. And here everything was practically dead at midnight.

The whole Remove was in New York.

There's no need for me to explain why. Everybody knows how we had come across the Atlantic by accident—having been shipwrecked near the coast of Ireland, and afterwards picked up by the Lauretanic outward bound—en route for New York.

And we had been in the great city only a very short time—just about one day. And during the first evening, while the Remove was out seeing the sights, all sorts of strange things had happened.

Archie Glenthorne, the dandy of St. Frank's, had mysteriously vanished, and was still missing. Handforth and Co. had vanished—and they were still missing, too. A good many of us were now getting ready to go out in search.

Handforth and Co. had been foolish enough to separate themselves from the rest while on a trip to Chinatown and the East Side of New York. None of us know what had happened to the famous trio of Study D.

Archie Glenthorne, finding himself alone with Fatty Little, had ventured upon a trip on the subway—and, as a result, the pair had arrived in Brooklyn, having over-run their station.

All would have been well if Fatty Little had curbed his desire for food. But, spotting a restaurant, Fatty Little had dived into it, leaving Archie outside. And by the time Fatty emerged, Archie had completely gone.

Our task was a bit of a problem.

For we didn't know exactly where to start. It was as much as we could to do to decide upon any definite course of action. We didn't want to go to the police and get up a scare—because in all probability the missing juniors were only mislaid, so to speak. They had temporarily lost themselves, and would ultimately turn up.

After due consideration we decided upon Chinatown as a commencement.

And while we were actually starting out from the McDougall building, other things were happening. The McDougall building, let me explain, was owned by one of the richest millionaires in New York.

Mr. McDougall had placed at our disposal his complete bungalow home. It sounds rather peculiar to talk about bungalows in connection with skyscrapers. And the McDougall building was one of the biggest skyscrapers on the riverside.

The Scottish-American millionaire had built himself a wonderful home on the roof of his skyscraper—a bungalow, entirely surrounded by flowers, green hedges and wonderful fountains and miniature waterfalls. And the Remove was housed in this beautiful dwelling. It was ours for the whole period of our stay in New York.

And while, I say, we were setting out, other things were happening.

Handforth and Co., for example, were getting quite thick with a rugged, burly gentleman known to his intimates as Dinty Todd. Contrary to our fears, Handforth and Co. had come to no harm.

But they were venturing into questionable quarters.

To be quite exact, they were going on a tour of the underworld—a most dangerous proceeding, if they had only known it. But Mr. Dinty Todd, their guide, was a fairly safe escort, and he had assured them that while they were with him they were perfectly safe.

"You'se stick around wid me, an' you'ee won't come to no harm," declared Mr. Todd. "I'm de guy dat put de must into mustard! Stick around wid me, and you'se safe, I'll tell de woild."

"All right, Dinty—lead the way," said Handforth.

"You said it!" said Mr. Todd.

They were strolling along that celebrated thoroughfare known as the Bowery—really and truly a most disreputable quarter. And Handforth and Co. were feeling quite safe in the hands of their remarkable new friend.

They had met Mr. Todd under curious circumstances. Wandering away from the Chinatown party, Handforth and Co. had been set upon by some foreign toughs. They had put up a good fight, but had been on the point of going under.

And then Dinty had appeared on the scene.

One glance had revealed to Mr. Todd that these boys were splendid fighters—and being a fighter himself, Mr. Todd was filled with admiration. He took an instant liking to the three English boys, and consented to escort them back to the McDougall building.

It had then occurred to Dinty that the juniors might like to see something of New York's underworld, and had suggested the idea. Handforth and Co. had been somewhat dubious to begin with.

"I've heard that it's pretty awful in those places," said Church. "Dope fiends, opium dens, and all that sort of thing."

Dinty grinned.

"Don't you'se make dem mistakes," he said calmly. "De underwoild is sure de snake's hips. Yeah, you said it! Wid me, you'se'll be as safe as babies in de cradle! Say, de guys dat don't know me ain't on de map! I'm de feller dat goes around widout even a gun! One look from me, and a guy drops like he was paralysed! Dat's de kind of a guy I am!"

And, without a doubt, Mr. Todd looked it.

He was a huge young man, with enormously broad shoulders, and a face that had received so many punches in its time that its original shape had practically disappeared. He had small eyes, but they twinkled wonderfully. He was attired in tight-fitting trousers of a loud check pattern, a striped sweater, and yellow boots. He was a typical East Side tough—one of those little kings that rule an entire neighbourhood.

And this was the kind of man that Handforth and Co. had chummed with!

Probably, Mr. Todd was several kinds of a rascal in his own way. But he had taken a fancy to Handforth and Co., and he had treated them well. He had saved them from being badly hurt, to say nothing of being robbed.

And Handforth, in particular, was keen upon seeing the underworld.

Handforth had read such a lot about it, that he was intensely curious to see the underworld with his own eyes. He had a vague kind of impression that there was another New York underneath somewhere, entirely peopled by gentlemen of a crooked disposition, including opium smokers and dope fiends.

And here was Dinty Todd willing to take them on a tour of exploration—a guide who was a part of the underworld himself. They would be far safer in his keeping than in the escort of a squad of policemen. So they decided to go.

"Where shall we visit first?" asked Handforth.

"Say, you'se say nothin'," replied Mr. Todd. "I'll sure see that you'se come to nó harm. Get me? You'se don't need to say a woid! Some guys wouldn't do dis for a hundred smackers!"

"A hundred which?" asked Church.

"Smackers—bucks!"

"Bucks!" repeated Handforth vaguely. "What are bucks?"

"Good gosh!" said Dinty. "You'se sure is a bunch of dumb-bells! Bucks, kiddoes, is dollars! One buck—one dollar—one smacker! Get de idea? Gee! I'd sure make a foist-class teacher!"

They walked on, and passed two or three men of a foreign-looking type who gazed at them furtively. But for the fact that Mr. Todd was present, they would probably have accosted the juniors.

"Notice de wops?" inquired Dinty, with a grin. "Say, dem guys is so full o' macaroni dey can't stand straight! Dey's all of a wiggle! If you'se been alone, dem hoboes would sure have stuck six inches of steel into you'se!"

"That's pleasant," said Church, glancing over his shoulder.

"You'se said a mouthful," agreed Mr. Todd. "But you'se don't need to kick any. Wid me you'se O.K."

And, indeed, Handforth and Co. certainly felt quite comfortable under their escort's wing. This was an opportunity that might not come again, so they were taking full advantage of it.

"Hadn't we better ring up the bungalow, and tell the chaps?" suggested Church.

"Ring up?"

"Yes."

"What the dickens for?" asked Handforth.

"Well, they might get anxious, you know," said Church. "We shall probably be an hour or more on this trip, and it'll be past midnight by then. We don't want to cause any worry."

"Oh, rats!" said Handforth. "They won't worry about us."

"You'se don't need to waste any time wid de telephone," said Dinty. "Gee! Dem doggone t'ings sure make me kind of sick! You'se don't need to waste a nickel dat way."

"Oh, all right—I suppose it'll be as well," said Church.

They continued their walk, and presently turned down a narrow alley. Mr. Todd explained that he was now taking them to a place which he described as an opium dive.

He was going to give the juniors a glimpse of a real opium den in the heart of the underworld.

Presently they came to a kind of door, set low down in the wall. Mr. Todd rapped upon it, and it was opened after a moment by a villainous-looking Chinaman.

He stared at Dinty without a motion of his face, and then regarded the juniors rather suspiciously.

"Guess I've brought some swell friends around," said Mr. Todd. "Open de door, monkey face, or you'se'll get a sock in de jaw! You ain't de kind o' guy to stop me! I eat 'em alive!"

The Chinaman didn't move a muscle.

"Allee lightee," he said unemotionally. "Me lettee you in!"

"You'se sure got de right idea," said Mr. Todd, nodding.

The Chinaman stood aside, and all four entered. They found themselves in a rough, dingy, dimly-lighted passage.

It was very low, and there was a peculiar smell hanging in the atmosphere—a smell which the juniors first thought to be the production of opium. At any rate, it was decidedly unpleasant. As a matter of fact, this odour was the outcome of dirt and stuffiness more than anything else.

Having proceeded to the end of the passage, the little party arrived at another door. They then walked down some stone steps into what appeared to be a cellar. The juniors were rather surprised that all this was so easy to get at.

They had always thought that opium dens were guarded by locked doors, and that passwords were required in order to get through. Handforth and Co. didn't know that many of these places are almost open to the public—the police knowing all about them, and only raiding them when they think it necessary.

The cellar was a particularly awful kind of place.

"My only hat!" breathed Church. "What a horrid niff!"

"It—it must be the opium!" said Handforth. "Where are we? I can't see any Chinaman smoking pipes! There ain't any carpets on the floor, or Oriental divans with cushions, or anything!"

Dinty chuckled.

"For the love of Mike!" he exclaimed. "Listen, brudder! Did you'se expect to see a swell lay-out like dat? Gee! You'se best lay off dat bunk! I'll show you'se a boid dat comes here reg'lar—he's sure a nifty guy!"

They went a little further, and Mr. Todd pulled some curtains aside against one of the walls. And the juniors found themselves looking into a kind of little cubby hole. The only illumination was a heavily-shaded electric light down the passage.

This section was nearly in darkness. But the three juniors could just manage to see a man sprawled out upon a pile of grubby-looking blankets. Near him lay an opium-pipe, and the atmosphere within that place was foul in the extreme. The man was in a kind of semi-conscious condition—his eyes half-open, his expression rather awful to look at.

Church shuddered.

"Let's—let's get away!" he muttered huskily.

"Sure!" said Dinty. "Guess you'se ain't kind o' stuck on dis outfit, hey? We'll sure beat it to de next joint!"

"Who is this chap, anyway?" asked Handforth.

"Dis guy who's soaked up wid dope?" asked Mr. Todd. "Say, he's just some big cheese dat don't know better. He's sure a snappy boid when he's himself—but when

he's like dis, I guess he's only a gosh-dinged mutt!"

Handforth and Co. didn't want to see any more.

They certainly glimpsed into one or two other bunks, but the whole thing was disgusting to them. They hadn't pictured the underworld in this way. They had mental visions of scenes in certain dramatic photoplays in their minds. Real life was rather different.

It wasn't long before they passed out of the noisome place altogether, much to the relief of the boys. Dinty was quite amused in his own way. He had probably felt all along that his charges would not be particularly impressed.

"All rightie, kids, I'll take you'se somewhere's else," he said obligingly. "I gotta cook up some stunt or you'se'll sure think I'm a mutt! Guess we'll beat it to Pete Blaney's joint!"

"What's that?" asked Handforth.

"Say, Pete's place is sure de alligator's hide," replied Dinty. "You'se can't pull any bull on Pete, neither. Pete's a wise guy, and de cops just stick around and do nuthin'. Some class to Pete! Dem cops is poor simps, anyway!"

Handforth and Co. didn't exactly know where they were going. They only knew that they followed Mr. Todd down various dark streets until they came to one that was slightly darker than the rest. And they entered.

The juniors little imagined what was to be the result!

CHAPTER II.

THE TRIALS OF ARCHIE!

"ARCHIE GLENTHORNE sighed.

"Possibly," he murmured, "some chappies have gone through even more poisonous experiences than this. If so, I pity them. I mean to say, this is absolutely the absolute limit! In fact, about five yards beyond the limit!"

Archie sighed again, and shifted his position.

At the moment he was sitting on a kind of packing case, and he was by no means comfortable. His surroundings were dark and smelly. The foul odour of rank tobacco smoke and illicit liquor filled his nostrils.

The swell of the Remove, in fact, was a prisoner.

And, by a curious set of circumstances, he was a prisoner in the establishment of Pete Blaney. This gentleman has been mentioned previously. Handforth and Co., in fact, were just about to be introduced.

Archie would certainly have been astounded if he had known that three of his celebrated chums were so near at hand. And Handforth and Co. would have been surprised, too, if they had had the slightest suspicion that Archie Glenthorne was already a guest of Mr. Blaney's.

Archie wasn't there because he liked it.

He had been taken against his will, and in spite of all his vehement protests. But during his brief stay in the place he had learned something that might be of value—although Archie, in the simplicity of his heart did not realise this.

Let me make it clear.

Nelson Lee was hot on the track of two slippery rogues of English birth, but of international fame—or, to be more exact, ill fame. They were Mr. Simon Hawke and Mr. Al Roker, card-sharpers, swindlers, and confidence men.

For years they had passed backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, fleecing victims in America, in England, and on the high seas. And so far they had eluded capture, and had made a fairly successful thing of their swindles.

But they had never really pulled off a big haul.

Always hoping for the great chance to come, it had somehow eluded them—until now. And at the present moment they were engaged upon a pretty little game which had millions at the end of it. If they could only succeed in this, they would be able to retire for life.

Consequently, Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker were just in that state of mind when they were not likely to have too many scruples. In order to gain this big prize, in order to gain their ends, they would stick at nothing.

By methods of cunning duplicity—methods which were second nature to them—they had robbed a certain Mr. Roger Sterling of the title deeds to some oil property in California.

Mr. Sterling was a moderately prosperous business man of London, and he had never thought of becoming an oil magnate. But this property in California had been bought years earlier, the ground being comparatively valueless except as building land.

Then oil had been discovered. Right near by a powerful gusher had set up thousands and thousands of gallons of the precious fluid. And all the property in the vicinity had boomed up in price, until it was of fabulous value.

Mr. Sterling's ground, according to his American lawyers, was worth many millions of dollars, and increasing in value daily. Accordingly, Mr. Sterling had made prompt arrangements to leave his modest London business, and to go out West.

And on the boat, in mid-Atlantic, Messrs. Hawke and Roker had carefully and quietly robbed Mr. Sterling of his papers. And these title deeds were everything. The crooks would be able to claim absolute ownership.

In England, no doubt, the game could not have been worked. But in America methods are different. A crooked deal can be easily pulled over, as they call it. A certain

amount of graft—bribery—in conjunction with a dishonest lawyer, and that vast oil property would belong to Hawke and Roker. Probably enough, Mr. Sterling would institute proceedings against the usurpers, but he wouldn't stand an earthly chance against the criminal gang.

For Hawke and Roker were supported by an influential New York attorney—a gentleman who rejoiced in the name of Mr. Schultz. He was a lawyer of much renown, who was well "in" with the police, and who had spies working for him in almost every quarter of the City. Mr. Schultz's clients were generally of a disreputable order—with plenty of money, perhaps, but disreputable, nevertheless. And by means of graft Mr. Schultz was able to deal with the police almost as he liked. For the New York police are very different from our own.

The whole room was in an uproar. The mention of Lee's name caused the card-players to spring to their feet.
"And this man, hang him, is probably in Lee's pay!" shouted Hawke, pointing an accusing finger at Dinty.

Now, to put it briefly, Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker were up against it.

From the very first they had had Nelson Lee on their track. To begin with, they had rather scoffed at Lee and his activities. They had fooled themselves into believing that the famous detective could do nothing.

But they had learned, to their consternation, that a strong force of American detectives were coming on board to arrest them. Lee had engineered this, but he did not know that his quarry received a wireless message in code from Mr. Schultz. Thus they were able to escape, even before the liner docked.

And since then Hawke and Roker had been skulking in New York—making plans for a quick departure across the vast continent. It is not easy to take a train for California in New York—one does not merely enter a station and buy a ticket. There are all sorts of things to be done. Reservations must be made regarding sleeping accommodation—papers have to be signed—and it is generally the custom to book one's passage days in advance.

The two rascals, having made all their plans, believed themselves to be quite safe. Then, by pure accident, they had run into Archie Glenthorne. Fearing that he would tell Nelson Lee what he had seen, Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker had captured Archie on the spot.

Bundling him into a taxi-cab, they had brought him to this place, and were intent upon persuading Mr. Blaney to keep the junior there until after their departure for California.

And that, in a nutshell, was the position. I'll admit it's a pretty large nutshell, but you'll have to make the best of it. Archie was shoved into a dark, cupboard-like place, and there he languished.

His only seat was a packing case, which was placed against a wooden partition which did not quite reach the ceiling. And Archie's captors were talking just on the other side of this partition. They didn't particularly care if he heard them, for he was to be kept a prisoner until they had gone.

"Of course, New York is a dashed priceless kind of a place," observed Archie. "I mean to say, it's a bally ripping spot, and all that kind of stuff. At the same time, a chappie must be allowed to remark that this part of the old city is decidedly foul! Absolutely!"

Archie got down from the packing case, and took a few paces up and down.

"The old tissues are weakening," he murmured sadly. "Large quantities of sleep are required to bring about the necessary recuperation. And it seems that the good old forty winks are several miles away."

There was only one door to the place, and this was so securely fastened that Archie had no chance of getting out. And if he hammered upon the panels, and shouted for help, he would only bring his captors in upon him.

His position was unfortunate.

In the meantime, Handforth and Co. arrived with Mr. Dinty Todd.

From the exterior, they could not possibly judge what this place was. Dinty led them into one of the lower type restaurants which are freely sprinkled about the East side of New York.

It was quite a small place, with one or two dingy tables, and any amount of food. Here one could obtain such delightful dishes as corned beef and cabbage, chop suey, or hot dogs—the latter being Frankfurter sausages.

On the window of the little eating house there was a card announcing to all and sundry that furnished rooms were to be obtained. Mr. Todd expressed the desire to rent two rooms straight away.

The quartet was escorted to the rear of the restaurant, and through a little doorway into a passage. Archie himself had been brought in by means of a side entrance, and had not seen the cafe at all.

"It's all right, bo'—you'se can beat it now," said Dinty, to the guide. "I guess I know de way down."

"Sure!" said the other man, with a wink. "These swell kids O.K.?"

"You betcha dey are."

"Some o' them English guys, ain't they?" asked the other suspiciously.

"You said it!" replied Dinty. "But dey'se snake's hips all right. My land! Dey sure are a bunch of nifty guys."

The other man grinned, and departed. He probably thought that Dinty had designs upon the juniors. But, whatever Mr. Todd's thoughts were—and he probably had a few hundred—he was perfectly straightforward with Handforth and Co. This East Side tough had taken it into his head to show the boys round. If Pete Blaney didn't like it, Pete Blaney could do the other thing. Mr. Todd was the kind of man who generally got his own way.

Having passed down some stairs, the juniors found themselves in a fairly well lighted passage, with doorways on either side. They passed into a big well-lighted room. Against one side there was a bar, with whisky bottles, glasses, and everything appertaining to liquor.

The bartender was kept quite busy serving drinks to gentlemen of Dinty's own particular type. There were also numbers of tables. And at these tables sat other men—quite a number of them playing cards, or throwing dice.

All eyes were turned upon Handforth and Co as they entered.

"Gee whizz! Look at dem swell ginks!"

"Say! Who let de menagerie loose!"

"Gee! Dinty's sure pulled a stunt dis time!"

Mr. Todd grinned.

"Gents, lemme explain," he said genially. "Meet my friends from England!"

"How?" asked the bar tender.

"You got me de foist time," said Dinty. "Say, where's Pete?"

"Talkin' with two swell guys in there?" said the bar tender, jerking his thumb towards a doorway. "Say, Pete! Guess you're wanted right now!"

A wizened little man appeared in the doorway—a man who looked incapable of putting up any kind of a fight. But, actually, Pete Blaney was as wiry as any man could be, and he was one of the deadliest gunmen in the whole of New York. He was famed for being quicker on the draw than any other guy in town.

"My stars!" he said, frowning. "What's the game, Dinty?"

"I brought dese gents in——"

"Guess you'd best take 'em out, right now!" interrupted Mr. Blaney, with a curiously hard note in his voice. "Ain't yer got more sense than to bring them kids here? What's the blamed idea?"

Dinty's lower jaw protruded aggressively.

"Guess these kids stay right here!" he said. "Who's gonna put dem out? Dey'se my guests for de evenin', and you'se best get dat soaked in your fool noodle! Get me?"

"See here, Dinty—those boys go out!" said Blaney harshly.

Mr. Todd tightened his fists.

"For de love o' Mike!" he exclaimed. "Yuh big stiff! You'se beat it, you poor sap, before I soak you'se! Guess you'se sure a nifty boid, but you'se don't pull dat bull on me! Dese brudders of mine stay right here, yuh big cheese! So lay off dat bunk while you'se safe!"

Handforth grunted.

"Jolly decent of you to bring us here, old son, but I'm not particularly impressed," he said casually. "This isn't the underworld, is it?"

"De underworld!" said Dinty. "You betcha!"

"But I can't see any crooks!" said Handforth. "All these chaps are only drinking and playing cards! I thought we should see all sorts of fights, and burglars dividing swag!"

"Dry up, you ass!" whispered Church, nudging his leader.

Handforth glared.

"If you stick your giddy elbow in me again, I'll slosh you!" he said warmly. "It was jolly good of Dinty to bring us here, but it's a rotten place! I think we'd better get out as quick as we can!"

"So do I!" muttered McClure.

Dinty grinned.

"Notice de swell accent?" he asked, appealing to the room in general. "Say, ain't dey sure de cat's whiskers?"

"I don't care what they are—they're going out of here!" said the proprietor. "You're a durned fool, Dinty, for——"

"Gee!" said Dinty. "You ain't de guy to call me a durn fool! Why, yuh big hobo, I'll twist yuh into a knot if you'se ain't careful."

At this interesting point of the conversation, Mr. Hawke emerged from a doorway to see what all the noise was about. Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker had been discussing Archie with Pete Blaney before the latter had intervened.

The proprietor's annoyance could be easily understood, for this place was distinctly illegal, and if the police only had direct information they would drop upon it at once.

True, Mr. Blaney was well in with the police, but there was absolutely no sense in asking for trouble. And it seemed to him that these three English boys were decidedly out of place.

The effect upon Hawke as he caught sight of Handforth and Co., was surprising.

He started back, and a cigar dropped out of his mouth, emitting a shower of sparks as it struck the floor. Mr. Hawke's mouth opened, and a light of furious annoyance entered his eyes.

"Hang!" he snarled. "What the thunder are those boys doing here?"

"Say boss, you'se don't know nothin'!" said Dinty. "I guess these swells is sure my latest pals——"

"What did you bring them here for?" snapped Hawke, striding forward. "You infernal idiot! There'll be big trouble over this! I've a good mind to knock you down."

"Knock me down—nuthin'!" snapped Dinty, his eyes gleaming. "Gee! Yuh big lump of cheese! You sure think you'se some nifty boid! Beat it, you smart Alec, or I'll give you'se a sock in de jaw!"

"Steady—Dinty——" began Blaney.

"Steady—nuthin'!" roared Dinty. "Nix! Why, you punk boob! I'll sure croak you if you ain't careful!"

It seemed that trouble was very near at hand.

And the three juniors, who had stood looking on with great interest, suddenly awoke to life. At least, Handforth did. He stared at Hawke, and then gave his attention to Mr. Roker, who had just appeared in the doorway.

"Great pip!" shouted Handforth. "These are those two rotters who pinched Mr. Sterling's papers! They're the men that Mr. Lee was after!"

"Quick!" gasped Church. "We'll get outside, and tell the police!"

"Rather!" roared Handforth. "We've collared 'em! Didn't I say that I was a jolly good detective? We've trailed the crooks to their lair!"

This was something of an exaggeration, for the meeting itself had been quite unexpected, and was quite a surprise to Handforth. In fact, he was as much astonished as was Mr. Hawke.

The latter strode forward.

"Look here, Blaney—capture these kids!" he snarled. "We can't let them get out—they know too much! They're spies!"

"Spies!" bellowed Handforth.

"Sent in here by Nelson Lee, the detective!" thundered Hawke.

The whole room was in an uproar. The mention of Lee's name caused the card-players to spring to their feet. Cards and money were forgotten. Chairs and glasses of liquor were overturned.

"And this man, hang him, is probably in Lee's pay!" shouted Hawke.

He pointed an accusing finger at Dinty. Mr. Todd compressed his lips, and clenched his fists. There were a good many men present who knew him personally—and who knew, therefore, that the implication was unfounded. But there were many others who were strangers to him. And they jumped to the conclusion that Dinty was a police spy—a man hated in the underworld.

What followed was dramatic.

In next to no time a dozen men were attacking Dinty and the juniors. They went at it blindly—some even pulled out revolvers, but fortunately did not use them.

For Mr. Blaney hoarsely shouted out that there was to be no firing, or the cops would be down on them. But there was a fierce, desperate hand-to-hand battle.

It need not be imagined that Handforth and Co. and Dinty Todd were unsupported. At the very first sign of the battle a dozen burly men rushed to Dinty's assistance.

Thus there were two big forces, one against the other—Dinty and his friends against Blaney's crowd. Within thirty seconds the room was in the most hopeless uproar. Many of the men separated, and engaged in single handed battles. Dinty fighting with terrific energy.

Handforth, although a magnificent boxer, instinctively kept out of this affray. Much as he loved fighting, he realised his own limitation. And it was obviously hopeless to be engaged in battle with these burly bruisers. Not even Handforth, with his famous punch, would have stood an earthly chance.

He and Church and McClure stood by, excited and rather alarmed.

This was not the kind of battle they were accustomed to. Many a fight had they engaged in—but nothing so brutal or beastial as this. The men cursed and

swore as they fought, and some were using jemmies and other instruments which had been produced as though by magic.

It would have been madness for the juniors to join in the scrap. And it proved Handforth's good sense that he kept his head. The fight had been started for the main purpose of capturing the three juniors. But it had now grown into something much larger.

It had, indeed, become a grim contest between two different sections of East Side toughs. Even the fighters had forgotten all about the juniors. And Handforth and Co. decided that their better course was to escape while they had the opportunity.

rushed to his aid, although they knew well enough that this delay might mean the loss of their own liberty. It was a plucky, generous act.

In the nick of time, they seized the moaning old fellow, helped nim aside, and put him on his crutches again. He looked at them with grateful eyes as he fought for his breath with great wheezy gulps.

"All right—don't say anything!" muttered Handforth. "But if you want to thank us, keep mum—we're going to slip away. Don't say we've gone!"

Without waiting for the old man to reply, the juniors turned to the door, and hastened to find the exit.

But they were not free yet.

The whole affray was becoming horrible.

There was one of the inmates of the place, a grimy, elderly man who was a cripple. In attempting to get out of the way of the fighters, he was pushed aside, and his crutches swept away. He fell with a low cry.

"My hat!" muttered Handforth. "Help him up—quick!"

The Removites realised that the cripple was probably as bad as any of the others, but they couldn't bear to see him suffering in that way. In another minute he would be killed.

With one accord, Handforth and Co

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE FIGHT WAS OVER!

"THIS way!" said Handforth breathlessly.

He commenced running rapidly towards the end of the passage—in quite the opposite direction to the way he ought to have done. Both Church and McClure grabbed at him, and pulled him up.

"No, no!" gasped Church. "You're wrong!"

"It's the other way!" panted McClure.

Handforth paused, and glared.

"Fatheads!" he snapped. "I know what I am doing!"

Handforth was quite convinced that he knew—he always was convinced. But he was a dreadful fellow when it came to locating any particular spot. He had a most inaccurate sense of direction.

"Look here—the door we came in by is at the other end," said Church rapidly. "We came down a flight of steps, too!"

"Yes, this way!" said Handforth.

"No—the other way!"

"You—you dummy!" snorted Handforth. "Standing here, and arguing—and all the time those men might come along and pinch us! My goodness! Did you ever see such an awful crowd of ruffians?"

"Never!" said McClure. "The London roughs ain't half so awful!"

Handforth insisted upon going his own way. And Church and McClure, consequently were compelled to go with him. They couldn't very well allow him to be alone. He was almost certain to get into fresh trouble.

But Fate, as it happened, was taking a hand in this affair. Fate's a queer gentleman. He generally knows what he's up to, but he doesn't tell people in advance. He likes to stand round the corner, ready to spring a surprise of some kind.

And just as Handforth was beginning to realise that he was, indeed, wrong—— Well, just then a well known voice came to the ears of the three juniors.

"What-ho, without!" said the voice. "I mean to say, kindly rush to the assistance old beans! I'm in the most foul predic., and all that kind of thing! Be good enough to rally round!"

Handforth and Co. stared at one another.

"Archie!" said Church.

"Archie!" said McClure.

"Archie!" said Handforth, as a kind of final echo.

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "Here I am, dear old lads! Kindly shove the old bolts aside, and turn the key in the jolly old lock! I don't know what all the frightful commosh. is about, but it seems that a dashed earthquake is happening in the dashed place."

Handforth and Co. were startled. Archie was the last fellow in the world they had expected to find here. Down the passage the uproar of the fight was lessened somewhat. Many of the combatants had fallen out of the tussle—mainly because they were spent.

So it behoved Handforth and Co. to hurry up.

They found themselves almost exactly opposite a closed door. There were two bolts fitted to it, but no lock. Archie, as a matter of fact, had heard the well-known tones of Handforth and Co. a few minutes earlier.

Archie himself was astounded, too—but so many surprising things had happened to him just recently, that he wasn't bowled over when he heard that well-known voice raised in argument. He was mightily pleased.

Archie knew, of course, that there was big trouble of some kind in the air—the noise of the battle was eloquent enough of that. But to hear three of his own chums was like sweet music to his ears. And his appeal was not absolutely in vain.

Slam! Slam!

Handforth seized the bolts, and pushed them back without any thought or care for being silent. Handforth was always laughed at. It might mean the loss of liberty, but such a thought did not occur to the leader of Study D.

He flung the door open and peered into the dark room.

"You there, Archie?" he asked quickly.

"Absolutely!" said Archie, appearing like a ghost.

"Then come on—no questions!" commanded Handforth. "We'll exchange yarns after we're outside. Grab him, and yank him along!"

Archie was seized and yanked along.

"But, dear old lads!" he protested. "I—I mean to say—— Great gadzooks! This—this is frightful! Why all this dashing hither and thither? Why this running about like one o'clock?"

His rescuers did not think it necessary to waste breath in replying. Church and McClure had seized the opportunity, and were speeding down the passage in the opposite direction.

They passed the scene of activity at a run. And a glance into that big bar-room showed them that the fight, although still in progress, was dying down rapidly. In a few moments the men would begin looking for the juniors.

"Come on!" panted Church. "Neck or nothing!"

They reached the stairs, and piled up them as hard as they could run. They were greatly speeded by a sudden shout which sounded behind them. As it happened, that shout was not connected with them at all, but they thought it was.

They burst open the door, tore through, and found themselves in another passage. A light gleamed at the end, from beneath a door.

"That's the way!" said Church. "There's the restaurant beyond that door."

"Good!" said Handforth. "Come on!"

"Gadzooks! Dear old tulips——"

Still Archie was not allowed to speak. In the grasp of his rescuers he was whirled along to the doorway, and it was flung open. The juniors received a surprise for it was not the restaurant at all, but a kind of kitchen. It was well lighted, and some sausages were boiling furiously in a big pan on the gas-stove. There was nobody present.

"We've come the wrong way!" said Church. "I knew it was along this passage, but we seem to have got the wrong door——"

"Never mind, we can get out of the window," shouted Handforth.

They dashed across the room, flung the window open, and Handforth leaned out. At least, he intended to lean out, but he overlooked the fact that there were heavy iron bars protecting the window outside, and he caught his head a terrific crack against one of these.

"Yow!" he howled. "What the—— Great pip!"

"The window's barred!" gasped McClure.

It seemed, indeed, that fate was turning against them now. But they spotted another door on the other side of the room, and they dashed towards it. It was a swing door, and just as they arrived a man came pushing through, carrying a huge tray of dirty crockery.

The crash was appalling.

It was Handforth who struck the unfortunate fellow first. He hit him with such violence that the tray shot upwards to the ceiling, overturned, and there was a vast shower of plates, cups, spoons, knives and all sorts of other things.

But the juniors got out.

They left the victim lying on the floor, surrounded with the debris. And, charging through the little restaurant—which they had really found this time—they plunged out into the open street.

"Phew!" said Church thankfully. "Thank goodness we're out!"

"Rather!" agreed Handforth, rubbing his head. "Oh, my only hat! I jolly well believe my head's cracked!"

"Always has been!" panted McClure.

"What?"

"Let's get away from here before we start arguing," put in Church hastily. "Those brutes might come out any minute—and if we're captured it'll be all up."

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "The fearful bounders actually kept me locked in that room, and goodness knows what they meant to do. I shouldn't be at all surprised, laddies, if they were planning a few murders, or something like that. A most poisonous bunch of blighters!"

They all hastened down the street at a fast walk—deciding that it wouldn't be good policy to run. They would only attract attention to themselves, and that was the last thing they wanted.

They turned corner after corner, hoping to confuse any possible pursuit. And at length they found themselves in a street which, to their astonishment proved to be Broadway. Without knowing it they had turned from several of the little alleys near the riverside, and had struck westwards to Broadway. And here, of course, they were quite safe.

Broadway was dark and quiet in this section, but there was a great comfort in the sight of a street car in the distance. And a constable on the opposite corner gave the juniors an added feeling of security.

"Great Scott!" said Church, with a sigh of relief. "That was a pretty near thing, if you like!"

"No more underworld jaunts for me!" said McClure with conviction.

Handforth rose to the defence of Dinty.

"Oh, rot!" he said warmly. "You can't blame Dinty for what happened. "In fact, we've got to thank him for our release. It was all the fault of those two crooks, Hawke and Roker! If Dinty hadn't been on the spot with his pals, we should have been collared just the same as Archie."

"Yes, Dinty's all right," agreed Church. "We didn't mean to question it. But you can't get away from the fact that this underworld business is a bit strenuous."

Archie Glenthorne nodded.

"Hardly the right word, old lad," he exclaimed. "I mean to say, strenuous, what? I'd prefer to call it dashed exhausting, if you know what I mean. My brain, so to speak, is on strike. The bally thing won't answer the dashed controls. In other words, I can't think clearly."

"That's nothing new—you never could," said Handforth bluntly. "How the dickens did you get in that place—that's what I want to know. It's a giddy mystery! You, of all people, down in a—a drinking joint!"

Archie stiffened.

"That," he observed, "Is an insinuash."

However, after being told that no insinuation was intended, Archie explained precisely what had happened to him—how he had met Hawke and Roker by sheer accident after Fatty Little had entered a restaurant.

"It seems to me those two rotters are responsible for everything," growled Handforth. "By George! We're mad! We're dotty!" he added, with a gasp.

"Eh?"

"No, we're not!" said Handforth.

"What the dickens are you talking about?" demanded Church.

"Why I was thinking we ought to have told the police, so that they could go in and arrest those two rotters," said Handforth. "But I don't suppose it would be right, when you come to think of it. Dinty took us there, and he might be arrested with the others. That would be a dirty trick."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Church. "But I think we ought to—— Hallo! Who's that coming along on the other side of the road? Why, I'm blessed if it's not the crowd! Some of 'em, anyway!"

Church was right.

For a minute later a large party of us surrounded Handforth and Co. and Archie.

We had come down on the quest for the missing juniors, and had found them practically when we were not looking. For we had never expected to find them on Broadway at this point.

Naturally, they were full of explanations. We heard everything from Handforth and Co., and everything from Archie, and after a considerable amount of questioning we were able to ascertain fairly accurately what had occurred. I looked at them all rather grimly at the finish.

"Well, you ought to thank your lucky stars that you're here at all," I said. "By jingo! After going down into an awful place like tnat, you're jolly lucky to get out safe and sound!"

"Not so much luck as sheer ability!" said Handforth. "When you come to think of it, that's what it is. Look at the way we dished the bounders, and escaped. I call that pretty smart, you know."

"You can call it what you like—you were lucky!" I declared. "We can't do anything about those men—what we've got to do is to get home as quickly as possible. Here's a nice time to be out! Nearly one o'clock in the morning! Our first night in New York, too!"

"By George!" said Handforth. "It seems as if we've been here a week! Well, we've had plenty of excitement, anyway."

"I mean to say, plenty, what?" said Archie mildly. "Rather too much, if you ask me, old peachblossom! The tissues are so frightfully weakened that I rather think a taxi would be the thing, don't you know."

But Archie had to think again. It was only a comparatively short walk to the Battery at this point, so we all went down Broadway in a clump. And we arrived feeling highly satisfied at the outcome of our search.

The lost ones were found, and no harm had been done. On the contrary, it seemed quite likely that Archie Glenthorne had made one or two valuable discoveries. But I was rather anxious about Nelson Lee.

The guv'nor had told us that he would be away, and might not return for some days. In that case, we should not be able to tell him what had happened. But it was no good getting worried.

We arrived at the top of the skyscraper and made our way along the pathway of the wonderful roof garden. It was wonderful by day, and wonderful by night. At least, there were wonderful numbers of mosquitoes.

High up as it was, we could not escape these little pests—which are an awful nuisance in New York in the summer time. No doubt, the thick vegetation up there had something to do with it.

Fatty Little, indeed, had been bitten considerably, and he was swollen in several parts of his anatomy. Fatty was most indignant when Pitt put this swelling down to overfeeding.

It was Handforth who struck the unfortunate fellow first. He hit him with such violence that the tray shot upwards to the ceiling, overturned, and there was a vast shower of plates, cups, spoons, knives, and all sorts of other things.

We entered the main hallway of the delightful bungalow, and Handforth and Co. came to an abrupt halt, staring.

For there, sitting in one of the easy-chairs of the great lounge-hall, was the poor old cripple they had helped so gallantly in the underground bar-room!

CHAPTER IV.

MR. TODD PAYS A CALL.

HANDFORTH strode forward.

"What are you doing here?" he asked bluntly. "And how did you know that we lived in this place? Saw the papers, I suppose?"

"Yes, boss, I saw the papers," agreed the old man.

We were all interested in the little scene, for the whole crowd of juniors had come in behind. The cripple got to his feet, and regarded us all from beneath his grey, bushy eyebrows.

"And are you not all ashamed of yourselves?" he asked severely.

There was something in his tone that made me start.

"The guv'nor!" I exclaimed, in amazement.

Nelson Lee placed his crutches aside, and removed a wig.

"Exactly, Nipper," he said smoothly. "But I have a little matter to discuss with

these boys here. Handforth, what on earth do you mean by interfering——"

"But—but I—I—— Great pip!" said Handforth blankly. "I didn't know it was you, sir!"

"We hadn't got the faintest idea of it, sir!" panted Church.

"No, I don't suppose you had," agreed Lee.

"It was wonderful the way you fell over when your crutches were knocked away," went on Handforth. "My only topper! What a ripping disguise!"

"We will not discuss the disguise now, Handforth," said Nelson Lee. "In spite of my annoyance, I must commend you boys for the gallant way in which you came to my assistance—believing me to be a cripple. I was very pleased to see that action on your part. But what explanation have you to offer for such a disreputable jaunt?"

"We didn't know, sir," said Church. "That chap Dinty Todd saved us from some footpads in Chinatown. Then he said he'd show us round a bit, and we went down there. We never had the faintest idea what the place was like, and we certainly didn't know that all that trouble would follow."

"Under the circumstances, Handforth, I suppose I must forgive you," said Lee. "But in future you must be very careful about going into such places. Indeed, I positively forbid you to visit that part of the city unless under safe escort. You are extraordinarily lucky to have escaped unharmed."

"Archie, too, sir," said Church. "It's wonderful how it all happened."

"Of course, you were there on the track of those men, weren't you, sir?" I asked. "You were watching Hawke and Roker?"

"Naturally," replied Lee. "Indeed, I had every hope of big success. But the fight, of course, ruined all prospect of that."

"I'm sorry if we messed things up, sir," said Handforth humbly.

"Never mind, my boys," said Lee. "The best thing you can do is to get straight to bed. By the way, I'd like to have a word with you, Glenthorne."

"Absolutely, sir!" exclaimed Archie. "I'm frightfully low at the moment—the good old vitality is somewhat spent, as it were. But, by well-assorted manly efforts, I dare say I shall be able to muster up a small supply of the good old energy!"

"That is exceedingly obliging of you, Glenthorne," said Nelson Lee drily.

He questioned Archie closely, and the latter explained how he had got into the "joint." He also told Lee what he had overheard.

"Those two men have got tickets to go to California, sir," explained Archie. "They're leaving on Saturday by some dashed train called the jolly old Century, or something. I believe it's owned by a limited company, sir."

Lee smiled.

"The train is probably the Twentieth Century, Limited," he said. "That is a very famous train on the Grand Central Railroad which leaves for Chicago daily, Glenthorne."

"That's the train, sir," agreed Archie. "But they're going to California."

"Not on the same train," said Lee. "There are no trains that run all the way through. The Twentieth Century is the fastest express going Westward, but that only reaches Chicago. From there one can continue the journey to California either on the Santa Fe or the Union Pacific, or——"

"Gadzooks!" said Archie. "That's the one—the Santa Fe. They've got sleeping accommodation reserved, sir, on a train called California, Limited. That's it, by gad! Queer how all these dashed things are limited!"

"Most of the crack trains are dubbed 'Limited' out here, my boy," said Nelson Lee. "H'm! that is very interesting. So our excellent friends leave New York on Saturday by the Twentieth Century, and proceed to Los Angeles from Chicago on the California, Limited. Well, well! We shall see what can be done."

"Anything we can help with, sir?" I asked.

"Yes—you can confine yourselves solely to holiday-making," replied Nelson Lee pointedly. "I shall be greatly obliged, boys, if you will seek less hectic excitement in future. There is plenty to be seen in New York without visiting the East Side. Take a trip to Woolworth building—go up the Hudson River on one of the pleasure-boats—visit Coney Island——"

"We've got it all mapped out, sir," I interrupted. "We do the Woolworth Building to-morrow."

"Good!" said Lee. "And now you'd better get to bed—the hour is practically morning already."

Most of the fellows were far more tired than they had believed. They got into bed, with grateful comfort, although no blankets were necessary. It was a very hot, sultry night, with a touch of humidity.

A good many of the juniors had been in bed for some time, for only the minority of us had gone out looking for Handforth and Co. Fatty Little was greatly relieved to find that Archie had returned safe and sound.

A few of us remained talking for a little time before going to our beds. And we were aware of a ring at the bell. The door was answered by the coloured butler, who was somewhat astounded to see a battered specimen of humanity on the doorstep. There was a man there, attired in tight-fitting check trousers, a striped sweater, and numerous bandages. His face was puffed up and swollen. One eye was nearly closed, and his left ear was standing up from his head like a semaphore. One arm was in a sling. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, the caller appeared to be cheerful.

"Is de kiddoes home?" he inquired genially. "Gee whizz! I guess I can spot

'em right now! Hey, bo! Just a woid wid you!"

Handforth turned as he heard that peculiar accent.

"My hat!" he said. "It's Dinty!"

"De same guy!" agreed Mr. Todd, walking in.

"I say, you've been in the wars!" exclaimed Church, with concern. "You're in a terrible state, Dinty! Why, you ought to be in hospital! You're smashed all up!"

Dinty grinned.

"Aw, lay off dat bunk!" he replied. "I'm sure a tough boid, and dis beatin' up don't count any! I just called around to see if you'se all got home."

"Yes, we escaped," said Handforth.

"Say, brudder, you'se sure a snappy guy!" said Dinty admiringly. "De way you'se vamoosed out o' dat joint was some class! I was sure fearin' de woist until I saw you'se right here."

Mr. Todd looked quite relieved.

"Say, dem boids in dat joint sure got as much as dey wanted! Guess I'm real pleased to have been kind of handy. Yup, sirree! Seein' as you'se all is O.K., I guess I'll beat it!"

We informed Mr. Todd that it was very thoughtful of him to call round to inquire after the state of our health. And Mr. Todd cheerfully replied that he merely wanted to know that we were all safe.

Finding that we were, he bowed low, grinned, and took his departure. Exactly how he had succeeded in getting up the elevator we didn't know. But Dinty had a certain way with him that could scarcely be resisted.

And then we all went to bed.

Archie had a room quite to himself. He didn't really mind sleeping with any of the other fellows, but Archie was a particular kind of fellow. He had always been accustomed to everything of the best all his life, and even at St. Frank's he had the privilege of a private bed-room.

Here, in this millionaire's skyscraper home, there were any amount of bed-rooms, and they had all been prepared for the especial benefit of the youthful visitors. There was one small room which, we learned, was Mr. McDougall's own sleeping chamber.

And Archie graced this apartment with his presence. It was quite simple, and without any attempts at show or display. The bed looked extremely comfortable, and all the other furniture was quiet and dignified. At first I wondered why the guv'nor himself didn't choose this room. But I soon learned that Nelson Lee wasn't sleeping in the place at all. He had quarters elsewhere.

Archie was soon in bed, revelling in the luxurious pillows and snowy white linen. He was so tired that he closed his eyes almost at once, and lay there, an elegant sight in his gold and black silken pyjamas.

He was just dozing off when he remembered that the electric lights were still blazing overhead, in a little artistic cluster in the ceiling. Archie looked round for a switch.

"What-ho!" he murmured drowsily.

Just on the wall, at the head of the bed, there were several electric pushes—obviously switches. He put his finger on one, and pressed. By the way, I'd better explain that in America practically all the modern electric light switches are made in the form of a push button like that of an electric bell, except that there are two—one for off and one for on.

Archie pressed the first switch.

"What-ho!" he murmured. "I mean to say, what-ho! It appears that the old light still remains!"

But, although the light was blazing out with just as much brilliancy as ever, a curious kind of rumbling noise happened just behind Archie's bed. He couldn't make out what on earth it was, or what it was caused by. He turned round and gazed beyond the mahogany bed-post.

"Good gad!" he murmured, dazed.

The wall had vanished! Archie blinked, rubbed his eyes, and gazed again. He was quite certain that a good, solid, respectable wall had been there a moment before. But, by some mystical process, the wall had gone. There was nothing but space, with the stars gleaming in the sky.

In fact, Archie was looking out upon a kind of verandah. A huge slice of the wall immediately at the back of the bed had ceased to exist. Archie stared outside, and assured himself that he was already asleep, and dreaming.

"This is absolutely uncan.!" he murmured. "I mean to say, it's dashed ridic.! The wall was there, and now there's nothing but large slices of thin air! Absolutely!"

His eyes suddenly gleamed.

"But what do I see?" he added. "What, to be absolutely exact, do I gaze upon?"

He had noticed another switch fixed to the bed itself—but almost concealed by the carved work. Perhaps the switch was intended for the light. But Archie hesitated.

"Perhaps another wall would go! He was beginning to think that there was something rather extraordinary about this bedchamber. Nevertheless, he thrust his hesitation aside, and pressed the switch.

"Great gadzooks!" he gasped. "My only sainted and highly respectable aunt! What, as it were, is happening!"

There was every reason for Archie to be startled. For this time the bed itself was moving!

The whole solid mahogany bedstead was actually running outside into the open. And after the first few inches of slow motion, the bed shifted quite rapidly. It almost whizzed out.

Archie clung to the posts desperately, and had a few awful visions in rapid succession. Something had gone wrong! In touching those switches he had made a frightful blunder! It reminded him of a story he had

once read of a house with all sorts of hidden trapdoors in the floors.

But this was ten times as bad. The bed was shooting towards the edge of the sky-scraper! Perhaps it was some kind of diabolical contrivance to get rid of unwelcome visitors! After retiring they were simply shot off the roof and into the river!

But Archie need not have had these nightmare-like thoughts, really. For, after only a few yards of travel, the bed came to a peaceful halt. And there it stood, perfectly serene, under the night stars. Sweet-scented creepers were on either side, with trellis-work, and with the sound of trickling water at hand. Archie sat there, looking round almost fearfully.

"This," he said firmly, "is enough! In other words, quite suffish! To be exact—too dashed much!"

He placed his hand upon the bed-post, with the object of assisting himself to leap out. And it was really a matter of sheer chance that his finger pressed another switch. Before he could get off the bed it started moving again. And this time it shot back into its original position, rolling speedily into the bed-chamber, and coming to a halt in exactly the same spot as it had originally stood. And when Archie looked round he was rather astounded to find that the wall was there, too.

"Help!" he exclaimed loudly. "I mean, kindly rally round, lads!"

He gave one leap, and landed on the floor. He wasn't going to take any more chances with that peculiar bed. He didn't mind novelties, but this was rather too much of a good thing.

"What's the trouble in here?" asked Reggie Pitt, looking in.

Jack Grey and Armstrong and one or two others were with him.

"Who yelled for help?" demanded Grey.

"Dear old lad, kindly support me!" said Archie feebly. "The old bed is haunted. As soon as I get into the dashed thing it whizzes out into the garden. Most frightfully disturbing, don't you know!"

"What do you mean—whizzes out into the garden?" said Pitt. "You ass! You must have been dreaming."

"I thought so, too," said Archie, "but I wasn't. Absolutely not in large quantities! Press the old switch, and see for yourself."

"Which switch?"

Archie pointed, and Reggie pressed it, never believing for a moment that anything would actually happen. But the whole wall at the back of the bed slid almost noiselessly into a kind of slot at one side. The wall was thick, too—it rolled as though on rubber wheels, leaving a blank space, with the warm night air wafting in—to say nothing of sundry mosquitoes and a few moths.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Armstrong blankly.

"Absolutely," said Archie. "So was I, dear old lad!"

Reggie chuckled.

"Nothing to be scared about," he said. "Now I come to think of it, Mr. Lee was saying something about one of the bed-rooms—Mr. McDougall's own sleeping chamber. I suppose this must be the one."

"It is," said Archie.

He indicated the first switch on the bed, and Armstrong pushed it. The bed promptly proceeded to run outside into the open, with the juniors chasing it. But they soon found that there was no fear of the bed coming to any harm. It halted in its appointed place, and remained there.

"It may be a frightfully good scheme, don't you know, but give me a bed of the good old sort," said Archie, shaking his head. "Why, dash it, this dashed thing might start whizzing about when a chappie's asleep."

"Not unless you touch the switches," said Pitt. "You see, Mr. McDougall's a millionaire, and he can indulge all his little whims and fancies. It was an idea of his to sleep out in the open occasionally. He didn't want to change his bed—he didn't want even to get out of bed—so he thought of this wheeze. Press one button, and the wall goes—press another, and the bell goes. Press a third button, and everything goes back to its original state."

The other juniors grinned.

"Better get back to bed, Archie, and forget all about it," suggested Jack Grey. "You'll soon be asleep."

Archie was dubious.

"Somehow or other, dear lad, I feel decidedly insecure," he remarked. "I mean to say, it gives a chappie a bit of a start when the old bed waltzes away into the offing. I think I shall sleep in one of the other rooms—what?"

But the juniors laughed at Archie so much that in the end he felt compelled to remain. Reggie told him that if he refrained from touching any of the switches he would be quite safe.

So at last peace reigned, and Archie dozed off.

As he went to sleep he drowsily told himself that New York was a somewhat priceless place, but deucedly strenuous.

(*Continued on page 15*)

No. 35. PRESENTED WITH "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY." August 4, 1923.

THE SILVER DWARF

In this amazingly clever detective story, NELSON LEE is matched against the brains and subtle skill of Professor Mark Rymer, an exceedingly dangerous type of intellectual criminal—inhuman, crafty, resourceful and daring.

FOR NEW READERS.

If the rascally cousin of the late Lord Ensington, Professor Mark Rymer, can destroy certain documents hidden inside the silver effigy, known as the Silver Dwarf, he will inherit his cousin's title and wealth. There is a son living by a secret marriage of the late peer, evidence of which is contained in the documents aforementioned. So far, the Silver Dwarf has eluded the clutching fingers of the unscrupulous professor. Nelson Lee, who is determined to frustrate Rymer's evil designs, is also in quest of the effigy. Owing to a fire at the late peer's house, the effigy is lost. The quest takes Lee and Rymer to Paris, and from there to Spain. But the professor is detained by the Paris police for twenty-four hours. After which he learns that the effigy has been sold to a Spanish nobleman, and that Leo has already set off for Spain. Rymer follows, and succeeds in getting the statuette. Then, on a lonely road, Lee confronts the professor, but the latter declares that he has thrown away the Silver Dwarf, and that it will never be found.

(Now read on.)

NELSON LEE ESCAPES!

"THE professor has sent his compliments," said the Jew, as he lowered the basket, "and he bids me tell you that he leaves for Tangier by the seven o'clock boat this morning. As soon as he has secured the Silver Dwarf, he will endeavour to let you know at the earliest possible moment. In the meantime, he trusts that you are keeping in good health, and not giving way to the blues."

The detective made no reply; but as soon as he had finished his breakfast, and his gaoler had departed, he returned to his underground burrow, and resumed his task with something akin to ferocity.

"If I can only get through in time to catch the eleven o'clock boat," he muttered to himself, "I may still be in time to thwart him."

An hour passed—two hours—three hours. Then at last his dogged efforts met with their reward. Inch by inch he raised the ponderous stone, till at length, with a final vigorous thrust, he heaved it aside, and crawled out into another underground vault, which differed from the one he had left in two important particulars.

In the first place, the floor of this second vault was not of earth, but was paved with slabs of stone. So much the detective knew already; but it was not until he had struck his last remaining match that he discovered, to his intense relief, that this vault was not entered by means of a trapdoor in the roof, but by an ordinary upright door at the top of a flight of stone steps.

He glanced at his watch. It was half-past ten. He stole to the top of the steps, and placed his ear to the keyhole of the door. Hearing nothing, he tried the handle. The door was locked or bolted on the outside.

He peered through the keyhole. So far as he could see, the door opened into the kitchen. A fire was burning in the grate, and a kettle was singing on the hob. Of the Jew there was no sign.

He applied his shoulder to the door and gave it a vigorous push. Once, twice, thrice he pushed. Then the door burst open with a resounding crash, and he fell floundering on his hands and knees on the kitchen floor.

In the meantime, the Jew was coming down the passage leading to the kitchen. Upon hearing the crash of the cellar-door, he whipped out his revolver and quickened his pace. At the same moment as he darted into the kitchen the detective leaped to his feet. With a startled cry, the Jew flung out his hand and pressed the trigged of his revolver. The bullet grazed the tip of Nelson Lee's ear and flattened itself against the wall. The next instant the detective sprang at his burly foe and fastened his hands on his throat.

For a second or two they fought and struggled in a desperate hand-to-hand encounter. Then they fell to the ground, locked in each other's arms; and even as they fell the barking of a dog was heard, followed by an excited shout from one of the Jew's accomplices.

Nerving himself for a final effort, the detective loosened one hand from the Jew's throat and dealt him a blow between the eyes, which momentarily stunned him. Then he scrambled to his feet and snatched up the Jew's revolver, which had fallen to the ground in the course of the struggle. Scarcely had he done so ere the dog rushed into the kitchen—a long, lithe, sinewy deerhound, as powerful as a mastiff.

"Good dog! Seize him!" cried a voice from the far end of the passage.

The deerhound uttered a low, fierce growl, and launched himself at the detective's throat. Quick as thought, the latter leaped aside, and at the same time pressed the trigger of the revolver.

The bullet crashed into the deerhound's skull, an inch or so behind the ear, and the huge brute dropped to the ground. Before the echoes of the shot had died away the detective had cleared both the Jew and the dog with a flying leap, and was racing down the passage towards the front door.

Standing at the end of the passage was a tall and villainous-looking Spaniard. It was he who owned the dog, and it was he whose voice the detective had heard a second or two earlier. He was armed with the favourite Spanish weapon—a short, black-handled dagger—the moment he perceived that Nelson Lee had a revolver he spun round on his heel and flew upstairs as fast as his legs would carry him.

The detective sent a bullet after him to hasten his flight. Then he hurriedly opened the door and sprang out into the street, where his appearance gave rise to something akin to a sensation. His clothes were literally in rags, and were encrusted with a liberal coating of clayey soil. His hands were almost as black as those of a chimney-sweep, and his face was not only begrimed with earth, but was rendered still more unattractive by a four day's growth of beard.

Unheeding the stares of the curious or the gibes of the would-be facetious, he thrust his revolver into his pocket and glanced at his watch. It was five minutes to eleven. Mark Rymer had left for Tangier by the English boat at seven o'clock. The Spanish boat sailed for Tangier at eleven. It was then Saturday, and there was not another boat until the following Tuesday. Unless he could reach the Waterport, from where the Spanish steamer sailed, by eleven o'clock, the Silver Dwarf—so he told himself—would be lost to him for ever. On the other hand, if he could only manage to catch the boat, there was still a chance of his reaching Tangier in time to save the precious Dwarf from falling into his rival's hands.

Fired by this hope, he pressed his elbows to his sides and raced down the steep and narrow street with the fleetness of a hare.

But all in vain! It was eleven o'clock when Nelson Lee reached the bottom of Engineer Lane, and by the time he arrived at the Waterport the steamer had slipped her moorings and was steaming out to sea!

—•—•—

THE DWARF AGAIN DISAPPEARS.

"SURELY I cannot be mistaken! It is Mr. Nelson Lee, is it not!"

The detective was standing on the end of the pier, gazing at the rapidly retreating hull of the Spanish steamer. At the sound of the speaker's voice he started, and turned round. Then his eyes lit up as he recognised in the smiling, grey-moustached gentleman who had accosted him, none other than Colonel Talbot, a very old acquaintance whom he had not seen for several years.

The two shook hands cordially, the colonel explaining that the battalion he commanded had recently come to Gibraltar for garrison duty. Then he looked the detective quizzically up and down.

"What on earth have you been doing to get yourself into this disreputable plight?" he asked. "You look as if you had been working down a coalmine!"

"As a matter of fact," laughed Lee, "I have been mining—though not for coal. I

was kidnapped on Tuesday, and imprisoned in an underground vault, from which I've only just managed to burrow my way out again. Do you happen to know Professor Mark Rymer?"

"I know the gentleman by name, of course, but not personally? Surely he isn't mixed up in this kidnapping business?"

"It was he who arranged the whole affair!"

"Great Scott! For what purpose?"

"In order to keep me in Gibraltar until he had time to secure the Silver Dwarf."

"You're talking in riddles, Mr. Lee! What may the Silver Dwarf be?"

"It's a small silver statuette, and in its hollow interior are some important documents which I am anxious to recover, and which Professor Rymer is equally anxious to destroy. The statuette was stolen in England, taken to France, brought to Spain, and is now in Tangier. Rymer left for Tangier by the boat just now. If I could have caught the boat, I might have been in time to checkmate him. As it is, I cannot reach Tangier before Tuesday, by which time the professor will doubtless have secured the Silver Dwarf, and burnt the documents it contains. Hard lines, isn't it?"

"Deuced hard lines!" agreed the colonel. "But why not cross to Tangier to-day? I think I can fix things."

"You can?" exclaimed Lee eagerly. "How?"

"Well, as it happens," replied Colonel Talbot, "the British Minister in Tangier is giving a ball this evening. About a dozen of my officers have been invited to it, and they have chartered one of the English company's steamers—the Gib-el-Tarik—to take them across. Some of them want to explore the town before they go to the ball, so they have arranged to leave here at one o'clock, and will arrive in Tangier at about four this afternoon. If you care to go with them, I'm sure they'll be only too delighted to have you."

"And I shall only be too delighted to go!" said the detective joyously. Then his face fell. "Confound it! I'd forgotten that!" he exclaimed. "Those beggars have robbed me of every penny I possessed!"

"You needn't let that interfere with your plans," replied Colonel Talbot. "I shall be very glad to act as your banker, and also as your—er—tailor and outfitter! You can hardly travel to Tangier in your present attire, you know."

"No, I suppose not," said Lee, with a rueful laugh. "But I scarcely like to trespass so much on your kindness."

"Bosh! Not another word!" laughed the colonel. He drew out his watch. "Half-past eleven. That gives you an hour and a half in which to change and have lunch. Come along!"

. . . . . .

By a quarter to one Nelson Lee was once again a well-dressed, well-groomed, well-fed member of society, with a well-lined purse. By one o'clock he was on board the Gib-el-Tarik, and by four o'clock he was standing on the pier at Tangier.

Benzaquen's shop was half-way down a narrow lane, leading off the main street. Just as the detective turned into this lane an elderly Jew, mounted on a sturdy-looking pony, and leading a heavily laden mule, came to a halt outside the shop, and sprang to the ground. No sooner had he done so than a second Jew, much younger than the first, rushed out of the shop and embraced the elder with affectionate effusiveness. The old man then disappeared into the shop, whilst the young one set to work to unload the mule.

"Father and son, I should guess," muttered Nelson Lee.

He was right. The elder Jew was Isaac Benzaquen, who had just arrived from Kelelin. The younger was his son—the young man who had interviewed Mark Rymer earlier in the day.

The detective quickened his pace, and followed old Benzaquen into the shop.

"Are you Isaac Benzaquen?" he asked, in Arabic.

"I am," said the Jew. "And you?"

"My name is Nelson Lee," said the detective. "I have called to see you about a small silver statuette which you bought last Tuesday from a——"

A startled exclamation from behind caused Nelson Lee to wheel round sharply. Benzaquen's son had just entered the shop, and had heard him mention the silver statuette. In his astonishment the young man had uttered a cry.

"What is it, my son?" asked Isaac. "Why art thou so agitated?"

The son looked embarrassed. He was anxious to warn his father to be careful what he said, but did not know how to do so without the detective hearing him. Suddenly, however, a happy idea occurred to him. He would speak Hebrew—a language which this English visitor would not understand.

"Take heed how you answer this man," he said, addressing his father in Hebrew. "I fear there is some trouble brewing. There was another stranger here this morning—a man with a monstrous nose and terrible eyes. He asked, even as this man has asked, about the silver statuette."

"Did you give it to him?" demanded Nelson Lee, in Hebrew.

The young Jew started, and flushed to the roots of his hair. His "happy idea" had ignominiously failed. It was evident that the detective was as well acquainted with Hebrew as he was with Arabic.

"Did you give it to him?" repeated Nelson Lee, his voice vibrating with suppressed excitement.

"No-o," faltered the young Jew.

The detective heaved a sigh of relief. He was in time, after all. Despite his six hours' start, Mark Rymer had not yet secured the Silver Dwarf.

"What did you say to the man who called this morning?" he asked.

The young Jew glanced at his father.

"Answer him, my son," said Benzaquen. "We have nothing to conceal and nothing to fear."

"I said to the man that I knew nothing of the statuette," replied his son. "I told him that my father was away from home, but would return either to-night or on Monday. I said to him that he had better speak to my father when he returned."

"Good!" said the detective. "You were prudent. And what did the man reply?"

"He said that he would call again this evening, shortly after sunset."

"Then he may be here at any moment," said Nelson Lee hurriedly. He whipped out his purse, and thrust a coin into the young Jew's hand. "Go to the door and keep watch for him," he said. "Let me know the instant he appears in sight."

Again the youth glanced inquiringly at his father

"Go, my son," said Benzaquen. "It is Nelson Lee who desires it. It is best that we obey him in all things."

The son withdrew, and took his stand just outside the door. The detective then turned to the father, and briefly told him the story of the Silver Dwarf, and the neck-and-neck race which had taken place between himself and Mark Rymer.

"I have no desire to take any advantage of you," he said, in conclusion. "You will now understand from what I have told you that whatever price the professor is prepared to pay, I am prepared to pay a bigger. What do you say to a thousand pesetas?"

The Jew groaned—positively groaned.

"Alas!" he wailed, wringing his hands. "I have already sold it! Sold it for a beggarly two hundred pesetas!"

"Sold it?" cried Nelson Lee, in dismay. "To whom have you sold it?"

Before the Jew could reply, his son put his head in at the shop door, and announced that "the other gentleman" was coming down the lane.

"Tell him when he comes that your father is engaged," said the detective hurriedly. "Don't tell him that I am here. Just tell him to take a seat, and keep him waiting until your father and I have finished our conversation." He turned to Benzaquen again. "Have you a private room?" he asked—"a room where we can talk without being seen or overheard?"

By way of reply, the Jew quickly raised a curtain, and ushered him into a low, dark room at the back of the shop. From there he led him across an open courtyard, a flight of steps, and into a cosily-furnished sitting-room.

"And now for your story," said Nelson Lee. "To whom have you sold the Silver Dwarf?"

"To the Kaid of Kelelin," said Benzaquen.

"The Kaid?" said Nelson Lee. "That's a sort of shiekh, or native chief, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered the Jew. "Kelelin is a small village about fifty miles from Tangier, on the way to Tetuan. It is inhabited by one of the fiercest tribes in Morocco, and the Kaid is their chief."

"When did you sell him the Silver Dwarf?"

"On Tuesday afternoon. On that day I arrived here from Gibraltar shortly after ten o'clock in the morning. A few hours later the Kaid came into my shop and said that he wished me to go back with him to Kelelin with an assortment of jewellery and embroidered garments for his wives to select presents from. Noticing the silver statuette, he asked me what I would sell it for. I told him two hundred and fifty pesetas. He bargained with me, ultimately I agreed to accept two hundred for it.

"We left Tangier on Wednesday morning, and reached Kelelin on Thursday evening. Having finished my business with the Kaid's wives, I left at sunrise yesterday, and arrived here a moment or two before you entered the shop."

"So the Silver Dwarf is now at Kelelin?" said Nelson Lee.

"Yes."

"Well then, I must go there and——"

"It will be useless!" broke in the Jew "The Kaid is as superstitious as he is obstinate. He has taken it into his head that the statuette is a 'gin,' or charm, dating from the time of the great King Suliman. Moreover, he has a great hatred of all foreigners, especially of the English, and nothing you can say will induce him to part with his precious 'gin'."

"We will see about that," said Nelson Lee.

"Be warned by me, and do not go!" advised the Jew earnestly. "It is as much as your life is worth to venture into Kelelin."

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"I shall risk that," he said. "At the earliest opportunity I shall go to Kelelin and see the Kaid. In the meantime, here are a thousand pesetas, which I wish you to divide between yourself and your son. In return, I want you to promise me that you won't breathe a word of what you have just told me to the man who called this morning, and who is now in your shop. Do not even tell him that I have been here. He believes that I am a prisoner in Gibraltar. I wish him to continue to believe so."

Old Isaac clutched the money, and thrust it into his leather wallet.

"Your wishes shall be obeyed, most noble sir," he said. "By all that I hold holy I swear that both my son and myself will be as silent as the grave! Not a word shall cross our lips!"

The detective looked him full in the face. Apparently he was satisfied with his scrutiny, for he smiled and nodded his head.

"It is well," he said. "I trust you. Now show me how I can leave this place without being seen."

The Jew led the way down the steps again, and across the courtyard. He pointed to a narrow passage which led into the main street of Tangier.

"Farewell!" he said. "May Heaven preserve you from all harm!"

rode steadily on towards the east, halting only for a brief rest in the middle of the day. At night they tethered their horses, and pitched their little tent by the side of a trickling stream. By sunrise next morning they were in the saddle again, and at two o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at Kelelin, which was little more than a straggling collection of small thatched cottages, grouped in an irregular circle round the house of the Kaid.

The Kaid's house was of stone, and was

Nelson Lee waved his hand, and a moment later he was gone.

THE KAID OF KELELIN.

NEXT day was Sunday. At sunrise a couple of mounted figures rode through the eastern gate of Tangier, and struck out across the barren sandy waste that stretched towards Kelelin. One of the figures was Nelson Lee; the other was a trusty native guide, recommended by the British Minister.

For the whole of that day the two men

built in the form of a hollow square, with an open courtyard in the middle. An orange-tree stood at each of the four corners of the courtyard, and in the centre was an ornamental fountain, the waters of which fell into a circular basin.

Each of the four walls of this courtyard consisted, in the first place, of a row of Moorish arches, leading into the lower rooms of the house. Above these arches was a kind of gallery, at the back of which was another row of arches, leading into the upper rooms. And above these upper rooms was the flat roof of the

house, part of which was arranged as a garden.

Having hobbled their horses on the outskirts of the village, the detective sent his guide to announce his arrival to the Kaid, and to arrange for an interview.

An hour elapsed ere the guide returned, and when he did so his face was grave and troubled.

"It would be better to return to Tangier, your Excellency," he said. "The Kaid is angered by your request for an interview, and I fear——"

"Never mind what you fear!" said the detective impatiently. "Has the Kaid refused to see me?"

"No, your Excellency," said the guide. "The Kaid has consented to grant you an audience; but——"

"Then lead the way," broke in Nelson Lee.

The guide obeyed, and a few minutes later the detective stood in the courtyard. The Kaid was seated, Moorish fashion, on a rich, Oriental rug, with his rifle across his knees. Behind him stood his bodyguard —four stalwart Moors, each armed with a rifle, an old-fashioned pistol, and a sinister-looking knife.

"What is thine errand, dog of a Christian?" demanded the Kaid, when Nelson Lee was ushered into his presence.

"I come to crave a favour at your hands," said the detective.

"Then thou hast come in vain," retorted the Kaid. "Thou art surely a stranger in this land, or thou wouldst have known that the Kaid of Kelelin is not of the breed that grants favours to the Nazarenes."

"It is true that I am a stranger and a Nazarene," said Nelson Lee. "It is also true that I have heard that you do not regard my fellow-countrymen with favour. At the same time, the boon I crave is so small, and the reward I offer is so great, that I am not without hope that my humble request may be granted. Your Excellency was in Tangier on Tuesday afternoon."

"I do not deny it. What of that?"

"Your Excellency bought from Isaac Benzaquen a silver image fashioned in the form of a dwarf."

"Again I ask thee, what of that?"

"Your Excellency bought the image for two hundred pesetas. I have here a thousand pesetas—give me the image, and the money is yours. That is all I ask. Did I not speak truly when I said it was a small boon that I craved?"

"Small it may be," said the Kaid, with an insolent laugh, "nevertheless, it is greater than I am minded to grant."

"Your Excellency will not sell me the image?"

"Not for a hundred thousand pesetas!"

"Will your Excellency permit me to examine it for a moment or two? It is not the image itself that I desire to possess; it is that which is contained therein."

"That which is contained therein?" repeated the Kaid. "Thou speakest in parables. How can that which is composed of solid metal——"

"But the image is not solid," said the detective. "It is hollow, and within it are certain writings which I desire to peruse."

The Kaid's eyes sparkled, and he turned to his bodyguard.

"Did I not tell ye that it was a gin?" he cried. "Ye hear what the Nazarene saith! There are writings within the image! Doubtless they are the secret writings of the great King Sullman!"

The detective could not repress a smile.

"Your Excellency is mistaken," he said. "The writings within the image are merely the official record of a marriage which took place in England twenty-five years ago. If your Excellency will only permit me to examine the image——"

"Never!" exclaimed the Kaid. "Never again shall the eyes or the hands of an accursed Nazarene pollute the sacred image!"

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"Am I to understand, then," he said, "That you will neither sell me the image nor allow me to examine it?"

"Neither the one nor the other," said the Kaid.

"Very good," said the detective. "Hassan"—he called to his guide—"we will depart."

His coolness, together with something in the tones of his voice, made the Kaid uneasy.

"Stay!" he cried, as the detective turned to go. "Whither goest thou?"

"To the Sultan!" said Nelson Lee curtly.

The words had scarcely crossed his lips ere he would have given all he possessed to recall them. Their effect on the truculent Kaid was as that of a red rag on a bull. He leaped to his feet, his face ablaze with fury.

"A threat! By the beard of the Prophet, a threat!" he cried. "The Kaid of Kelelin is threatened in his own house, and by an accursed Nazarene!"

He signed to his four retainers, and in the twinkling of an eye they sprang to Nelson Lee's side and seized him by the arms.

Then the Kaid whipped out his pistol, and levelled it at the detective's head.

"For once thou hast spoken truly," he said. "Thou shalt indeed go to the Sultan, whom Allah preserve! Thou wilt not be the first dead man he hath received as a present from his loyal subjects of Kelelin!"

Not a vestige of fear displayed itself on the detective's face.

"You are going to shoot me?" he asked, in the most matter-of-fact voice.

"Again thou hast spoken truly," replied the Kaid. "It is thy wish, thou sayest, to go to the Sultan. Bismillah! Thy wish shall be granted. Thou shalt go to the

Sultan—whom Allah preserve!—and thou shalt take with thee a bullet in thine head, as a present for his Majesty from Abtsalam el Bakaly, the Kaid of Kelelin! Hast thou anything else to say?"

"Yes, I have one thing else to say," replied the detective. "Since threats and warnings have alike proved useless to turn you from your purpose, I will make your Excellency an offer. In return for my freedom I will present your Excellency with a wondrous charm of magic power—a charm no bigger than a pigeon's egg, yet so mighty withal that solid rocks will crumble into powder at its touch!"

The Kaid, as already explained, was superstitious to the last degree. The detective's words produced a visible impression on him.

"Hast thou the charm with thee?" he asked craftily.

"I have," said Nelson Lee.

The Kaid burst into a loud guffaw.

"Fool—fool!" he cried, snapping his fingers in the detective's face. "If thou hast the charm with thee, why should I spare thy life to gain possession of it? Can I not take it from thee after thou art dead?"

"True," said the detective calmly, "but the charm is of no value—it is even dangerous—to those who know not how to use it aright."

"Then thou shalt show me how to use it before I order thee to be shot!" retorted the Kaid.

"No, no!" said Nelson Lee, with feigned reluctance.

"I say yes!" replied the Kaid, in a menacing voice. "If thou wilt not show me how to use the charm of thine own free will, I will have thee tortured! Where is the thing?"

The detective thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a small cardboard box. Thrusting his pistol into his belt, the Kaid snatched the box from Lee's hand and opened it. Inside it was a mass of fluffy cotton-wool, in the centre of which was a hollow glass ball, about an inch in diameter, containing perhaps a couple of teaspoonfuls of colourless, oily-looking fluid.

During his one-night stay in Tangier the detective had been the guest of the British Minister. In the course of conversation the Minister had shown him a small glass ball, filled with nitro-glycerine, which had been found in the possession of a certain notorious Anarchist, who had been arrested when trying to force his way into the Legation buildings.

The detective, knowing that he was about to set out on a dangerous mission, had laughingly suggested that this little bomb—for such it was—would form a very useful addition to his means of defence, and the Minister, with characteristic generosity, had made him a present of it.

And this was the "charm" which the Kaid of Kelelin was now fondling with such affectionate interest!

"Beware of dropping it!" cried Nelson Lee, as the Kaid removed the bomb from the cardboard box and eagerly examined it. "If the charm should fall to the ground, the evil spirits that are imprisoned therein would burst their bonds and overwhelm us with destruction. Your Excellency should not have taken the charm from the box until I had first said the mystic words that put the spirits to sleep."

"Teach me the words, and I will put the spirits to sleep myself," said the Kaid.

The detective glanced around him before he replied.

In front of him, in the centre of the courtyard, was the ornamental fountain, with its shallow, circular basin. Close behind him was the passage which led from the courtyard into the street.

On his right hand were two of the Kaid's bodyguard; on his left were the other two.

He held out his hand to the Kaid.

"Give me the charm," he said, "and I will show your Excellency how to hold it whilst the mystic words are being said."

Suspecting nothing, the Kaid placed the little glass ball in Nelson Lee's hand.

The four retainers lowered their muskets, and whispered to each other that they were now going to see something wonderful. They were right!

"First of all," said Nelson Lee, "you raise the charm in the air—thus." He raised his hand above him head. "Then you wave it to and fro."

Suiting the action to the word, he waved his hand backwards and forwards once or twice; then, suddenly, before they could grasp his intention, he tossed the bomb towards the middle of the courtyard, and flung himself flat on his face.

"By the beard of——" began the Kaid.

But ere he could complete his sentence the bomb alighted on the marble edge of the basin at the foot of the fountain.

For the next few seconds the assembled Moors were divided in their opinions as to whether an earthquake had occurred, or whether the end of the world had arrived.

The moment the bomb struck the fountain it exploded with a roar that shook the house to its very foundations.

The fountain toppled over like a house of cards. One of the orange-trees was entirely uprooted, whilst the others were stripped as bare as telegraph-poles; fragments of marble and multi-coloured tiles were scattered in all directions.

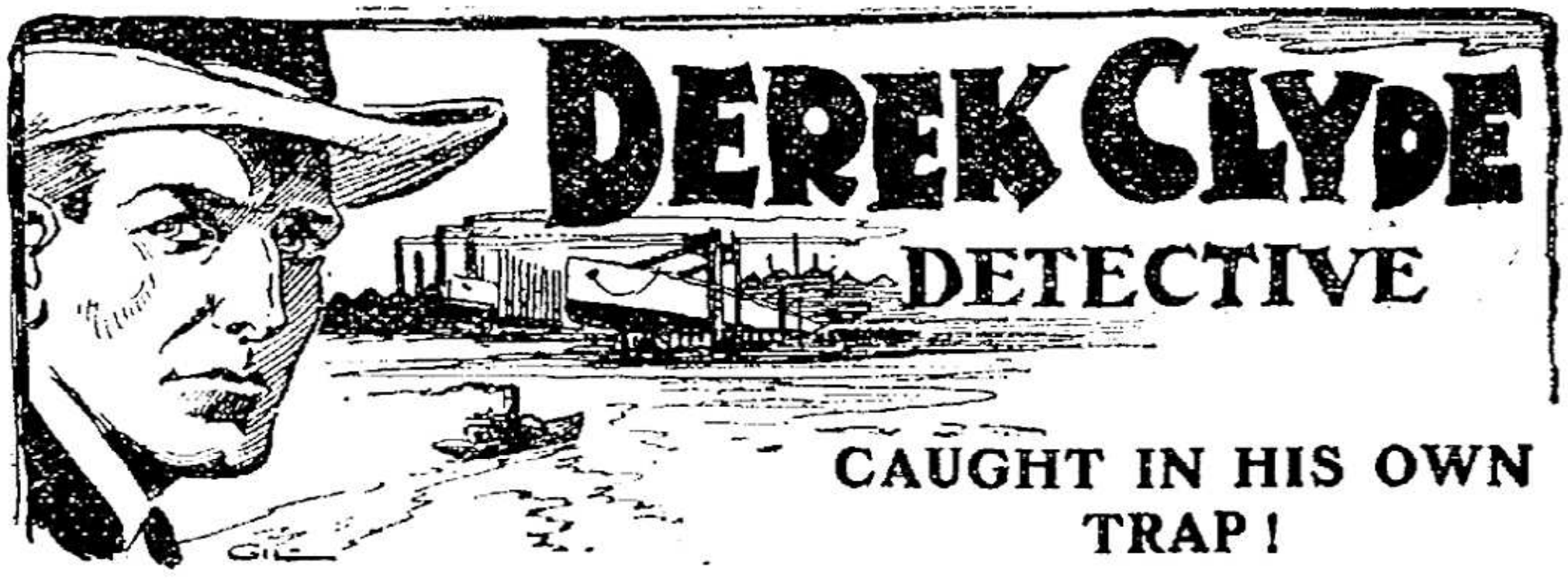
So violent was the concussion of the air that the Kaid and his four retainers were ruthlessly swept off their feet and hurled against the nearest wall with so much force that for several minutes they were too utterly dazed to comprehend what had happened.

And by the time their scattered wits returned—by the time they scrambled to their feet—the detective had vanished, and was nowhere to be seen.

(To be continued.)

OUR DETECTIVE STORY SECTION

GRAND NEW COMPLETE TALES OF THE FAMOUS SCOTS DETECTIVE !



CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP!

ATTIRED in light grey and carrying a pair of field-glasses slung from a strap, with a big cigar in his mouth, Derek Clyde was strolling along the course at Oldmarket in the midst of the surging crowd, gazing indolently around him.

The important race was due, and Clyde had not yet chosen a place from which to view it. He sauntered idly to and fro for half an hour, when his attention was drawn to a bookmaker whom he knew by sight.

Martin Hurst was his name, and he was a middle-aged man of gentlemanly appearance, with a very florid complexion, and a heavy, fair moustache. He wore a white top-hat and a dust-coat of a fawn colour. He was mounted on a box shouting his prices, and by his side was his clerk.

At that moment a well-dressed young man of perhaps twenty-five, stepped up to the bookmaker. He took a sheaf of banknotes from his pocket, and, speaking to Martin Hurst, he gave him the money.

The clerk registered the bet, and the bookmaker handed a card to the young man, who moved slowly away. Clyde had observed him closely, and his interest had been roused.

"That young fellow looks nervous and agitated," he reflected. "Probably a novice at the game, and perhaps he has staked considerably more than he can afford to lose. Well, that's his look-out."

There was a sudden commotion. The police were clearing the course, and Clyde, swept to one side with the people, contrived to get a fairly good position. He noticed the nervous young man within several yards of him, and glanced at him once or twice; and then he gave his attention to the race, which had started.

Cheers rang in the distance, and swelled louder and louder. The horses were approaching, drawing nearer and nearer, three of them running almost abreast, and the others straggling behind. On and on they came, faster and faster, straining every muscle. They dashed by the detective, the caps and jackets of the jockeys making a blaze of colour, and a moment later they shot by the post.

"Kenilworth wins!" went up the cry. "Kenilworth wins!"

It had been a good day for the bookies, on the whole, and a bad day for the backers. The Cup had been won by Kenilworth, a rank outsider; and Rainbow, the favourite, had run third. There was not a great deal of applause. Too many people had been disappointed. The cheers soon died away, and now there rose of a sudden an ominous shout:

"A welsher! A welsher!"

A number of the crowd were running to the left, and Clyde, gripped by the excitement, ran with them. Like everybody else he detested a welsher. He hurried across a strip of open ground, jostled and squeezed, and stopped on the crest of a gentle slope that dipped beyond him.

From here he had a clear view of the chase. A man in a white top-hat and a fawn-coloured dust-coat, with a bag dangling at his side, was sprinting over the sward towards a large spinney that was within fifty yards of him. And some distance in the rear, racing after him in straggling formation, and yelling curses and threats, were a score and more of angry people. Clyde raised his glasses to his eyes, and focussed them on the fleeing figure.

"By jove, it is Martin Hurst!" he muttered in surprise. "Not a doubt of it!"

THE ESCAPE.

THE absconding bookmaker reached the spinney well in the lead, and disappeared, and after him went the little crowd, breaking into the dense cover at different points. Clyde had recognised one of the party as the young man he had observed on the course. He stood there for a few minutes, listening to the shrill clamour, until he saw the pursuers returning. As they drew near he questioned the foremost of them.

"Did you catch him?" he asked.

"No, we didn't; worst luck!" the man replied, with an oath. "We couldn't find him."

"He may be in hiding in the spinney," Clyde suggested.

"We searched it thoroughly, sir. He isn't there. The trees are all small. There isn't one big enough for him to have climbed into and concealed himself. He must have got to the open ground and whipped across to a big stretch of woods without being seen by any of us."

"Didn't you get even a glimpse of him after he entered the cover?"

"Not a glimpse, sir. But somebody picked up the scoundrel's white topper, which he dropped. It is a good thing for him that he wasn't caught, else he would have been badly mauled, if not killed."

The speaker passed by, and Clyde walked slowly back as he had come, thinking of the affair.

"It is very curious," he reflected, "that a man of Hurst's reputation should have done such a contemptible thing. I wonder why? He could not have lost very heavily, though I saw him lay one large bet against a horse. Why did he take to flight? What was the reason? He knew that he would never dare show his face at a race meeting again."

* * * * * *

After supper that evening Derek Clyde was sitting in a quiet corner of the smoking-room in the Bull Hotel, where he was staying. The door was almost opposite to him, and he could see across the hall to the entrance of the bar. Three gentlemen were sitting near him, and they were discussing the affair of the welsher. All of them were puzzled.

Martin Hurst bore a good name in his profession. He had been attending race meetings for several years, and he had never been a defaulter. He could not have been hard hit. He must have done well that day, for he had laid heavily against the favourite, which had lost.

Such was the talk to which the detective listened. The speakers presently got up and left, and a moment later there came out of the bar, and into the smoking-room, a well-dressed young man with clean-shaven features. He appeared to be utterly miserable and dejected.

There was a look of despair in his eyes, and from his tremulous hands and the hot flush on his cheeks, it was evident that he had been drinking to excess. Not observing that there was anybody else in the room, he dropped into a chair, muttering to himself. Clyde went quietly over to him, and sat down by his side.

"What is the trouble?" he asked. "Been betting and lost?"

The young man glanced up with a start. "Yes, that's right," he huskily replied. "I put two hundred pounds on Kenilworth, and the horse came in first."

"I know that. And you didn't get the money?"

"No, I was cheated out of it. I would have had a little fortune if that cursed bookmaker hadn't bolted. Hurst was his name. He has robbed me of a couple of hundred pounds and more, for the price was a hundred to eight. What infernal luck!"

A CONFESSION.

"IT was indeed. Was it your own or other people's money you risked?" Clyde quietly asked.

"Of course it was my own. You—don't suppose I would have——"

The young man's voice faltered. Clyde could read fear in his eyes, and he was sure that the dim suspicion he had formed was correct.

"I don't think you are speaking the truth," he said. "It was somebody else's."

There was a moment of silence. The youth was very pale ,and quaking like a leaf. He shrunk from the detective's gaze, breathing hard.

"Yes, I am a thief," he blurted out. "I may as well own up, for it can't make things worse for me than they are. I'll tell you the whole story. My name is Harry Blundell. I am a clerk in the office of Mr. James Collingwood, a silk merchant in Market Place, off Oxford Circus, in London.

"I had the tip last week from a jockey, a pal of mine, who told me that Kenilworth was a dead cert for the Cambridgeshire Cup. I had saved fifty pounds, and—and I borrowed one hundred and fifty more from my employer's safe, feeling sure that I would be able to put it back before it was missed.

"I got Mr. Collingwood to let me off to-day, telling him that my aunt was very ill, and came down to Oldmarket. I put the money on Kenilworth with the man Hurst, and felt a bit uneasy afterwards. I hadn't any reason to, except that I had never backed a horse before, and I had heard of welshers.

"So I stood near to the bookmaker, keeping an eye on him; and I noticed that he kept looking at me in a queer sort of a way, which made me the more nervous. He slipped off of a sudden after the race had started, and I went after him.

"He escaped, though; worse luck. If only he had been caught! It wasn't until I got back to the course that I learned that Kenilworth had won the race, and you can imagine how I felt then."

Clyde stared blankly. "Am I to understand that Martin Hurst bolted before the finish of the race?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir; he did," Harry Blundell declared.

"Were the horses near to him at the time? Or had they passed him?"

"No, they were coming towards him, but they were a good distance off. He couldn't have known then which horse would win, but I daresay he believed Kenilworth would, and he wanted to get out of paying me."

"I don't think that'll wash," said Clyde emphatically. "You have said that the bookmaker kept looking at you queerly. Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, sir, I am. He must have been

nervous because he saw that I was watching him, and he thought that I suspected him of meaning to slip off."

A DISCOVERY.

CLYDE nodded absently. He took a card from his pocket, and handed it to the young man, who turned pale again as he read the name that was engraved on it.

"You—you are the famous detective?" he gasped.

"Yes, that's quite right," Clyde assented.

"And you are going to arrest me?"

"No, I haven't any such intention. You are more of a fool than a knave. You did not mean to be dishonest. You did what others have done under stress of temptation, and I have some sympathy for you."

"It is awfully good of you, sir. But—but I am in an awful scrape. Mr. Collingwood will send me to prison. I am sure he will, and it will break my mother's heart. I daren't face him. I'll shoot myself or jump into the river."

"Don't talk nonsense. You are going to take my advice. You will go back to town to-night and confess to your employer in the morning. Make a clean breast of it, and ask him to give you a chance to redeem yourself."

"He won't," said Harry Blundell. "You don't know him as I do."

"Try it, at all events," bade Clyde, "and let me hear the result. The address of a London club to which I belong is on my card. Write to me to-morrow, and the letter will reach me there."

"Suppose Mr. Collingwood refuses to forgive me? What if he insists on having me arrested?"

"In that case I might intercede on your behalf."

"You would speak to my employer yourself, sir."

"Yes, I shall probably call on him if I haven't heard anything from you by the day after to-morrow."

"It would be awfully good of you. But, what of the bookmaker? Is there any chance of recovering the money, do you think?"

"A very slim one. Don't count on it. You can go now. Keep cheerful, and hope for the best. I will do what I can for you, my boy."

Clyde spent the night at Oldmarket, though he had not intended to do so. He rose at an early hour the next morning, and, not waiting for his breakfast, he walked through the town, and across open country to the spinney into which the welsher had been chased on the previous day.

He searched it thoroughly, moving slowly and alertly here and there, pausing at intervals to scan the ground. Was there a likelihood of his finding something here? He did not know. He could not have analysed the motive that had prompted him to come. He pushed over to the farther side of the spinney, and stood shaking his head dubiously as he gazed towards a large plantation that was beyond him, across a wide meadow.

He turned back, and searched again as he retraced his steps, ranging to right and left, looking up into the boughs of the young and slender trees. And at length, when he was on the point of abandoning his quest, something attracted his attention.

Stooping low, he thrust his arm into a small but dense clump of bushes, and pulled out a bag of brown leather. It was not locked. He snapped it open, and took from it a fawn-coloured duster, a false moustache of a tawny hue, and a number of cards.

"Ah, here we are!" he muttered.

There was no money. The bookmaker's takings were missing. Carrying the bag, Clyde left the spinney, and walked thoughtfully towards the town.

It was on Wednesday that the race for the Cambridgeshire Cup was run. On the Thursday, after his visit to the spinney, Clyde went up to London from Oldmarket and got a room at his club in Piccadilly. And on Friday morning, when he came downstairs, he found a letter addressed to him in the rack in the hall, and read it while he sat at breakfast. It ran thus:

"Dear Sir,—I took your advice, and made a full confession to my employer this morning. He was furiously angry, as I had expected he would be. I told him how I had been tempted, and how I had lost a couple of thousand pounds through that dirty welsher. But he absolutely refused to listen to me. He called me a thief and other names.

"At first he threatened to send for a constable and have me arrested, and then he said that I would have to refund the money inside of a week or he would put me in prison. There is no earthly chance of my doing so, for I placed every penny I had on Kenilworth, and I have no friend from whom I can borrow so much as £150. I have to face ruin and disgrace, and I am nearly distracted—worried out of my mind.—Yours truly,

"HARRY BLUNDELL."

THE UNEXPECTED.

AT three o'clock that afternoon, Clyde, carrying a small parcel, stepped from a cab in Market Place, near Oxford Circus, and entered an office that was on the ground-floor of a mercantile building. He had a glimpse of Harry Blundell seated to one side of him, and then he spoke briefly to another clerk, who took him to a private office at the rear.

Mr. James Collingwood, a middle-aged gentleman with clean-shaven features, was sitting at his desk. He glanced at the card that the detective handed to him, and looked up in surprise.

"Sit down, Mr. Clyde," he bade. "Your name is familiar to me, of course. More than familiar. What can I do for you?"

Clyde took a chair, and his gaze rested steadily on the silk merchant. For a moment he seemed to be at a loss for words. Then as he again scanned the other's features a curious gleam shone in his eyes.

"I have called regarding Harry Blundell, one of your clerks," he said. "I met him at Oldmarket on the day of the Cup race. I perceived that he was in trouble, and, guessing the cause of it, I persuaded him to tell me the whole story. I felt very sorry for him, as——"

"He doesn't deserve a spark of sympathy," Mr. Collingwood harshly interrupted. "He is a thief."

"I can't help that. He will have to repay me promptly, or suffer the consequences. My decision is final, Mr. Clyde. You will only waste your breath if you try to change my mind."

There was silence for a second or two. Then Clyde untied the parcel he had laid on the table.

"These belong to you, Mr. Martin Hurst, I believe," he said quietly, revealing a false moustache and a fawn dust-coat.

James Collingwood started violently, as if he had received an electric shock. He sprang to his feet, and sank limply down on

Clyde had a clear view of a man in a white top hat sprinting over the sward, and some distance behind, racing after him, were a score or more of angry people.

"I know that," Clyde replied. "But it is his first offence, and I trust that you will overlook it. The temptation was a strong one. Moreover, you cannot doubt that he fully expected to be able to put back the money he had stolen."

"That doesn't matter. I have stated my terms to young Blundell. He will repay the money within a week, or be arrested."

"You are very severe on him. Don't you think so?"

"No, Mr. Clyde, I do not. I think I am treating him very leniently."

"But it is impossible for him to find so large a sum as £150 inside of a week."

the chair, pale and trembling, staring in consternation at the things on his desk.

"How—how did you know?" he gasped.

"That doesn't concern you," replied Clyde. "It is sufficient that I do know. You are Martin Hurst."

There was a slight pause. The man breathed heavily.

"Yes, I am Martin Hurst," he said at last. "I cannot deny it."

"And why have you been leading a double life? You found it paid, I suppose."

"Yes, I did. I will tell you all Mr. Clyde. I had a great deal of knowledge of racing matters, and several years ago, when my

business was doing badly on account of the war, I hit on the idea of turning bookmaker. I disguised myself and, took the assumed name of Hurst, as I did not care to let my friends know that I was following the profession. I attended most of the race meetings, and did so well, luck favouring me, that I kept it up after my regular business improved."

Clyde nodded. "So that was how it was," he said. "As for what happened on the day of the Cup race, I presume you took flight because you fancied that young Blundell suspected who you were."

RESTITUTION.

"YES, exactly," Mr. Collingwood assented. "He looked at me very queerly when he put the money on Kenilworth, and he afterwards stood close by and kept watching me."

"It was due to nervousness. He imagined that you were watching him, and he was afraid that you might slip off if Kenilworth should win. He had not the remotest suspicion of your identity, nor has he now."

"I was sure that he had, though. I dreaded exposure, and, on the spur of the moment, not thinking of the consequences, I suddenly bolted."

"And before the race was finished. That puzzled me, and suggested the theory which has proved to be correct. Go on with your story. You escaped by a trick."

"That is quite right. I threw my white hat away and hid behind a tree in the spinney long enough for me to whip off my dust-coat and my false moustache, thrust them into a bag, and put on a cap which I had in my pocket. I concealed the bag in some bushes, and mingled with my pursuers when they had gone by me.

"No one recognised me, of course, as I had completely altered my appearance. I have made a clean breast of it, Mr. Clyde, and I hope that you will consent to screen me, as no harm as been done."

"What of Harry Blundell?"

"I realise now that I was too hard on him, and I will gladly overlook his fault."

"I should think you would, under the circumstances. You owe young Blundell a couple of thousand pounds, but I can't ask you to give him that amount, as he won it with money which he stole from you. You must give him the fifty pounds that belonged to him, however, and wipe out his indebtedness to you."

"I will do all that. I promise you."

"And what of your indebtedness to those who backed horses with you for the Cup race?"

"I don't owe a penny, as it happens. Not one of the horses I laid against was in the first three."

"You had a prosperous day, then."

"A very prosperous one, Mr. Clyde."

Clyde hesitated for a moment. "Very well," he said, "I will keep your secret. I will let matters rest as they are, subject to the conditions I have stated. That is all, Mr. Collingwood. Good-afternoon."

He rose as he spoke, reached for his hat and stick, and left the office. He paused in the outer room, and stepped over to the desk where Harry Blundell was seated. The young man looked up at him anxiously.

"What—what did he say?" he asked in a husky tone.

"It is quite all right," Clyde replied. "I have fixed things up. Mr. Collingwood is going to give you £50 in compensation for the money of your own that you lost, and he intends to wipe out your debt to him of £150. So you will start fresh with a clean slate."

Harry Blundell stared. "Start fresh?" he repeated in bewilderment. "I am to have £50? And I won't have to repay the money that I took from the safe?"

"No, not a penny. I talked your employer round. It only required a little persuasion. And now for a word of warning. Have nothing to do with horses hereafter. Don't bet in any shape or form."

"I will never back another horse, sir. I swear I won't."

"See that you keep your promise, my boy. I believe you will, for you have had a lesson that you are not likely to forget."

"Nor will I ever forget your kindness. I will remember it as long as I live, sir. I—I don't know how to thank you for——"

The young man's voice choked with emotion. Clyde shook his hand, and was gone. After all it was sufficient reward to him that he had brought happiness, and perhaps saved a young life from a career which could have only one end.

THE END.

ANOTHER THRILLING STORY OF THE ADVENTURES OF DEREK CLYDE NEXT WEEK!

Entitled:

A DEMONSTRATION IN FORCE!

(*Continued from page 14*)

CHAPTER V.

THE CATHEDRAL OF COMMERCE!

"EIGHT hundred feet high?" said Tommy Watson incredulously. "What rot!"

"Impossible!" declared Bob Christine.

"Mad!" said Hubbard.

"All right—if you don't believe me, you can ask somebody else," snorted Edward Oswald Handforth. "The Woolworth building is nearly eight hundred feet high——"

"Nearly?" grinned Pitt. "It's growing smaller already!"

"Fathead!" said Handforth. "If you want to know exactly, it's seven hundred and ninety-two feet high, and it's the tallest building in the whole giddy world. I've been reading a booklet about it, and know all the facts. Why, they even call it the Cathedral of Commence."

"My hat!" said Pitt. "Nearly eight-hundred feet high! Why, it's almost impossible to imagine!"

"And the Observation Gallery is fifty-eight storeys above the street," went on Handforth. "Just try to picture that, my sons! In London we think a building is pretty high if it's got ten or twelve floors. An ordinary business place has only got about four floors. And this Woolworth skyscraper has got fifty-eight floors!"

"We shall have to go up and have a look," said Pitt.

"Rather! That's what we're planning for this morning," said Handforth. "Why, during the daytime, in the Woolworth building there are about fourteen thousand people always there—the population of a big city in itself. And the structure is wonderfully designed in Gothic lines. I tell you, it's a pretty marvellous building, on the whole. It's got over eighty thousand lights in it!"

It was the following morning, and the juniors were actively discussing their plans for the day. Nelson Lee had assured us all that we were not to worry over him or his affairs with Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker. He could look after that quite well without our assistance—and probably better.

So we were confining our attentions to holiday-making.

Having come to New York without any previous plans or arrangements, we were rather devoid of suitable clothing. But outfits were being prepared for us, and they would soon be ready.

In the meantime, there was no reason why we shouldn't enjoy ourselves. We had half expected to hear from Lord Dorrimore, in England, or possibly from some other place.

Because his genial lordship had intimated, some time earlier, that he was preparing a holiday for us. That was knocked on the head, of course. We had accidentally come to America, and we were making the best of it.

And just at the moment the fellows were all interested in the Woolworth building—that enormous, towering skyscraper on Broadway, in close proximity to City Hall Park, and within a stone's throw of Brooklyn Bridge.

The Woolworth building is the highest skyscraper in New York—indeed, the highest building in the world. Sometimes, on dull, cloudy days, the summit is entirely lost in the clouds themselves.

"I don't reckon we shall feel very safe up there, at the top of that building," said Hubbard dubiously. "Supposing it suddenly collapses?"

"It's about as likely to collapse as the whole city is," I put in. "Of course, if Fatty Little comes up there might be some danger——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You won't catch me going up there," sniffed Fatty Little. "I don't suppose you can get any grub at the top, and look how awful it would be if something went wrong with the lifts! We should be starved!"

"There are stairs; you can walk down," said Pitt. "The exercise would do you good, Fatty. Why, you'd come down a few stone lighter than you went up."

"Rats!" said Fatty. "Gimme the solid ground."

"A chap might almost think the place had something to do with the giddy Woolworth threepenny and sixpenny stores," grinned Owen major. "Same name, anyhow."

"My dear ass, the man who built the Woolworth building was the founder of all the threepenny and sixpenny stores," pointed out Reggie Pitt. "This skyscraper, in fact, is a kind of monument to Mr. Woolworth's memory. He made a huge fortune over his shops, and built this place here."

Breakfast was already over in the bungalow—a breakfast which was not quite the kind we had been accustomed to. Grapefruit, strange, but delicious, salads, and all sorts of other foods which we were not in the habit of getting at St. Frank's. Our millionaire host had given orders that our menus were to be exactly the same as his own. Fatty Little was in a kind of paradise.

Quite a few of us decided upon the trip up the Woolworth building—Handforth & Co., Pitt, Grey, Bob Christine, Tregellis-West, Archie Glenthorne, Watson, myself, and two or three others. The other members of the Remove had decided to go off to Coney Island—that pleasure-ground for the multitude within easy reach of New York by subway train.

When we arrived at the Woolworth building we found that the entrance was palatial, but by no means marvellous. Streams of people were passing in and out constantly, intent upon their every-day business.

There is a kind of feverish bustle in New York.

Everybody seems enormously busy, rushing

about, with their thoughts intent upon nothing else but the job in hand. They are all racing against one another to get the most done.

That, at least, is the impression one receives. After a superficial glance—and the impression that is generally held in England. But, actually, this wonderful hustle of the New York multitude is something of a myth.

Everybody hustles, it is true—but for how long? A man will rush like mad from one spot to another, not because it is necessary to do so, but because it is more or less of a habit. When he gets to his destination he doesn't feverishly conduct his business, but in all probability will spend an hour or so talking about nothing in particular with a friend. Then he'll suddenly remember the time is passing, and do another ten minutes good old hustle.

The people who were passing in and out of the Woolworth building found sufficient time to pause and thoroughly examine the St. Frank's crowd. They found that their craving for speed was not strong enough to overlook us. And we came in for quite a lot of attention.

Some of the fellows thought they simply had to go to the lifts, and mount to the top of the building. They were rather surprised when they found that a fee was necessary.

In fact, we were obliged to go to a desk up one corner, and obtain tickets for the journey—the charge being fifty cents each. Handforth was inclined to be somewhat indignant.

"Fifty cents!" he snorted. "Not likely! Why, that's over four bob! I'm blowed if I'm going to pay four bob to go up a giddy lift!"

"Well, if you walk it'll cost the same," I grinned.

"Four bob for walking up the stairs!" roared Handforth. "It's—it's a rush! Besides, what do we see when we get to the top? Nothing but a lot of giddy roofs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—don't make a fuss!" I said severely. "Everybody's staring at you."

Handforth glared round, and turned red when he saw that quite a number of interesting New Yorkers were gazing at him.

"Oh, all right!" he growled. "We're visitors here, so I suppose we can't say much! But it's a rush, all the same! Four bob!"

"My dear idiot, you're wrong!" said Pitt gently. "Fifty cents is only two bob—to be exact, two shillings and a penny!"

"That's right," I agreed.

Handforth opened his mouth to roar, but suddenly closed it. A pitying expression came into his face, and he deliberately took out a small copper coin—to be exact, a cent.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"A cent!"

"Well, fifty cents comes to four and tuppence!" said Handforth triumphantly. "You can't teach me! Lots of people have told me that a cent is a penny! And fifty pence are four-and-tuppence! Well?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fifty of our pence are four-and-tuppence, but fifty American pennies amount to half-a-dollar—roughly, two bob," I said. "Can you understand that? That cent in your hand is equivalent to a ha'penny."

Handforth stared.

"But you just said it's a penny!" he exclaimed.

"Yes—the Americans call it a penny."

"But it's really only a ha'penny?"

"Yes."

Handforth gave a disgusted snort.

"My hat!" he said sourly. "Of all the rotten coins! They call the thing a penny, and yet it's not a penny! How the dickens can anybody reckon up like that? Oh, all right! Let's go up the lift!"

"And you mustn't call it a lift, either," chuckled Reggie Pitt. "Nobody says lift here: it's always elevator."

"Lift!" said Handforth firmly. "If that thing isn't a lift, what is it?"

He pointed to one of the elevators with the air of one who has asked a question that is absolutely obvious. Apparently, Handforth was not one of those fellows who are easily adaptable. He was so tremendously English, in fact, that the American spectators were chuckling with great enjoyment.

At last we managed to get into one of the elevators—only a few of us, because these express lifts in the Woolworth building are quite small, in fact, surprisingly small compared to the importance and size of the structure.

But didn't they go!

Once starting, the elevator shot upwards with the speed of an express train. Through the criss-cross of the gates we could see the floors whizzing past at an extraordinary rate. And the sensation when the elevator first started was rather terrific.

But this vanished after the first few seconds, and almost before we knew it we were nearly at the top. Here we found ourselves in a wide kind of a hall—a huge lobby, where there stood a bookstall, and other places of a similar nature.

One could buy views, postcards, souvenirs, and such like. And in order to reach the Observation Gallery we had to continue on a smaller elevator, just a few floors higher. We went up, and emerged.

"By jingo!" said Reggie Pitt breathlessly.

"It's—it's marvellous!" muttered Tommy Watson, in a kind of awed voice.

We were distinctly fortunate. The summer's day was perfectly clear and bright. And we could see out for miles and miles in every direction—north, south, east and west, over the entire expanse of the great city.

There were only one or two other people there, and it can be almost said that we had the gallery to ourselves. It was hot, too—blazing, blistering hot in the sun. But

we didn't care. The view was so wonderful, and the sensation was strange, that we cared nothing about the heat.

The Americans declare that this view from the Woolworth building is the most wondrous in all the world. That, of course, is a matter of opinion—but it was certainly a most remarkable experience.

The atmosphere was so clear that we could see for close upon twenty-five miles in every direction. To the north itself lay the greater expanse of the vast area of New York—Manhattan Island, the Bronx, Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and beyond into Westchester County.

We could see the Hudson River, and the lordly highlands beyond. And all the streets looked like little tiny ribbons, with insects crawling about—some small and some tiny. The small insects were street-cars and taxis and other vehicles. The tiny insects were human beings.

Bending over the rail, and gazing down, the effect was almost uncanny. We looked straight down upon Broadway itself—over seven hundred feet below us. In our ears was the dull, monotonous roar of the city, but everything seemed far away and detached. The people in the street below were just like so many ants.

Gazing to the east, we could see Long Island and the mighty Atlantic Ocean. We could even see ships passing to and fro on the distant horizon. To the south was the great harbour of New York, and we gazed upon the Narrows, through which passed all ships entering and leaving the port.

We could see the Statue of Liberty, and Staten Island in the distance. And to the West there was the Hudson River again, and mile after mile of flat marshland, which was New Jersey, with mountainous country beyond.

Most of the fellows were quite bewildered by all this scenic effect. The other skyscrapers in close proximity to us seemed to rise up from the ground like enormous giants of brick and steel and stone. But none were as high as the Woolworth building.

"Marvellous!" said Pitt at length.

"Well, not so dusty," admitted Handforth, with rather a grudging air. "Of course, you can get a pretty decent view from any high building, but this takes the cake. We ought to have brought some binoculars, or something——"

"That reminds me," I interrupted. "I've got some."

Until Handforth had spoken I had forgotten my glasses. They were a comparatively small pair, but of excellent quality, and wonderfully powerful. In fact, they belonged to the guv'nor, and I had borrowed them without bothering to ask his permission.

I took them out of my pocket, and leaned over the rail.

And I gazed right down upon Broadway, looking at the throngs of people in the little patch of grassland which lay between us and the City Hall. After a few slight alterations I got the focus right.

Those glasses were wonderful. The people below sprang into prominence. Instead of being midgits, they became ordinary human beings. It seemed as though I was only four or five storeys high, instead of fifty-eight.

"Let's have a look," said Handforth impatiently. "What's the good of staring down there, you ass? You want to look out over the landscape."

"All right; don't bother," I said. "You'll have 'em in a minute."

I was just about to take his advice, and look over the landscape, when I gave an involuntary exclamation. For there, calmly strolling on the pavement near the subway station entrance was no less a person than Nelson Lee himself.

"My hat!" I exclaimed. "I can see the guv'nor down there."

"Rats!" said Watson.

"Fact!" I insisted, grinning. "I can see him as clear as you like; he's looking up here now! I'll bet he would be surprised if he knew I was staring right into his face."

The situation was, indeed, amusing. Nelson Lee had paused, and was gazing up to the summit of the Woolworth building. I could look direct into his face, and there was no question at all about the identification. And then, in a flash, the comedy of the situation turned to a tense drama.

Subconsciously, I noticed a taxicab coming along Broadway. Just at the moment the traffic had thinned, and this taxi came along at some speed, edging towards the pavement near where Nelson Lee was standing.

Then, to my horror, I saw the side door open, and a man half leaned out. I could even see that he held a revolver in his hand.

Two puffs of smoke came from it in rapid succession; but I could hear no reports, naturally. A curious feeling thrilled me. The whole thing seemed so unreal and so preposterous. But, following the reports, Nelson Lee threw up his hands and fell into a crumpled heap on the pavement.

The taxi door slammed to, and the vehicle shot away across the road, and went at lightning speed into the traffic. People crowded round Nelson Lee—and then everything seemed to go dim.

I couldn't see any more, I took the glasses away from my eyes, and stood there as though transfixed. I was almost numb with horror and blinding grief.

Was it possible for a situation to be more awful? The guv'nor had been shot before my very eyes—and even now he might be breathing his last upon the pavement, surrounded by that jostling, inquisitive, half-mad mob!

And I was fifty-eight storeys above the ground! I was at the top of the highest building in the world, and couldn't hope to

reach Nelson Lee's side until five or ten minutes had elapsed.

I think I nearly went mad with helplessness and inward frenzy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCHEMERS!

MR. AL. ROKER nervously twitched the ash from his cigarette.

"I don't like it, Hawke—I don't like it!" he muttered. "Something might go wrong --we might be connected——"

"When you've done whining, perhaps you'll get a little sense into your head," interrupted Simon Hawke grimly. "And for Heaven's sake, don't talk about the thing here! Haven't you got any brains?"

Mr. Roker relapsed into silence.

The precious pair were seated in a restaurant in the heart of Greenwich Village—the Bohemian quarter of New York City. Greenwich sounds a very attractive name, and there seems a certain fascination about the subject which is very pleasant.

But Greenwich Village itself is nothing much to look at—a number of narrow streets, with old-fashioned houses and quaint restaurants. The district is just off Washington Square, and is cracked up to be quite a feature of the City.

By night, perhaps, there may be a certain glamour about it, but by day, stripped of all its romance, it becomes rather sordid.

Mr. Roker and Mr. Hawke were seated in that curious eating-house known as the Pirate's Den. It is a well-known resort, and there is no question at all about its novelty. When one goes in this place of an evening, one can sit down at little black tables on little black stools, and partake of tea, coffee or iced drinks, to say nothing of excellent foodstuffs curiously served.

All the waiters are attired as bloodthirsty pirates, even the orchestra appear to be pirates of the worst and most horrible kind. Outside, a pirate helps you out of your taxi-cab, with some remark like "Pirate Den ahoy!"

It is all very novel—particularly when the pirates commence chasing one another through the restaurant, flourishing swords, and such like. The place itself is festooned with chains and ropes, and other articles reminiscent of the sea and a pirate ship.

Of course, the pirates themselves are highly respectable citizens when they are off duty. But when at work, they look surprisingly like the real thing.

Hawke and Roker had chosen this spot because it was secluded, and because it was an easy place to keep an appointment. And, what was more necessary, there was practically no publicity.

For this restaurant was rather dark inside—there were no glaring electric lights as in most of the other restaurants. The pair could enter, sit there at one of the corner tables, and it would be almost impossible to recognise them.

They could talk quite freely, too, for there was no fear of their conversation being overheard. It was just Mr. Hawke's state of nerves that made him refrain from discussing the subject which was uppermost in both their minds.

Although they smoked and drank their coffee with apparent ease, they were both very anxious. It was morning, and they had been making all sorts of plans and preparations since that little adventure in Mr. Pete Blaney's underworld saloon.

"Why doesn't that infernal Marshall come?" muttered Mr. Roker.

"Marshall isn't due here for another five minues—so don't be impatient," drawled Hawke. "You needn't worry, old man—everything is going to be all right. Schultz has engineered this thing—and Pete positively assured me this morning that there couldn't be any hitch. Pete's in touch with some of the most notorious gunmen in the town."

"We ought to have thought of some other way—that's what I say," declared Roker. "It's—— Hallo! Who's this coming?"

They had been talking in the lowest of low undertones, so that nobody could possibly overhear. Another visitor entered the restaurant, looked about in the dim light for a few moments, and then came across to the pair.

It seemed that the Pirate's Den was just the right kind of place for rascals to gather in—but it was rather hard on the establishment, nevertheless. For, in spite of its name, the Pirate's Den is a very respectable place.

"How do, Marshall?" said Mr. Hawke genially, as the newcomer sat down. "How are things this morning?"

Marshall gave the pair a sharp look.

"I guess they're fine," he replied meaningly.

"Did that little job come off O.K.?"

"Sure!"

Roker gave a quick breath of relief.

"You—you got him?" he whispered.

"I didn't—but the others worked the thing fine," replied Marshall, lighting a cigarette. "I 'phoned Schultz, and he reckoned you'd best come straight up to his place for a talk. It'll be quite safe now, with that guy out of the way."

Mr. Roker couldn't contain his anxiety.

"He's dead?" he breathed.

"As good as—but we needn't discuss it now," replied Marshall, rising to his feet. "Well, let's go."

They made their way out of the Pirate's Den, and that select place was undoubtedly much improved after they had departed. Walking across Washington Square a few minutes later they went past the imposing arch and found themselves on Fifth Avenue—at the very commencement of that imposing, celebrated thoroughfare.

Here they had no difficulty in obtaining a taxi, and a minute later they were bowling towards the offices of Mr. Otto Schultz on West 14th Street. They arrived in due course and entered.

Mr. Schultz had his rooms on the second floor—that is, the floor immediately above the ground floor. In England, we always call this the first floor—but in America it is invariably the second.

Mr. Schultz was sitting in his own private sanctum.

He proved to be a fat, greasy little German-American. He was perfectly American in his speech, but perfectly German in his character. In fact, he was the very worst type of German.

With his bloated face and heavy bags under his eyes he looked like some fat spider sitting in the middle of its web. And there he crouched in his swivel chair, a fat cigar stuck in the corner of his thick-lipped mouth.

"Well?" he asked, as his three visitors sat down. "I guess I told you what would happen, Hawke. Leave these things to me, and they're O.K. That guy is pretty well croaked."

"Not dead, then?" asked Hawke, with just a little touch of relief. "I didn't want him to be put right out, you know."

Schultz shrugged his shoulders.

"Rather a pity he wasn't put right out," he said. "Somehow, it's a difficult matter to finish off a man like Lee. But he's finished for the next month or so, believe me."

"What exactly happened?"

"Why, Pete's gunmen shot Lee up on Broadway," replied Mr. Schultz. "And, what's more to the point, they succeeded in getting completely away. The police here are pretty smart, but our gunmen are smarter. Lee's been taken to one of the City hospitals, and he's sure bad.

"Where was he hit?"

"Right through the left lung," replied the other. "I've had information from the hospital, and the guy's still unconscious. It's just possible he may pass out yet. If so, all the better. You needn't fear that anything will ever be brought home to us. I've got too much pull with the police."

Mr. Hawke breathed with relief.

"Well, I feel a darned lot safer now that Lee's out of the way," he said. "That makes the position a whole lot better. What about the police, Schultz? Do you think they're likely to bother?"

"Not a cent's worth," replied Mr. Schultz. "I've got the cops fixed just where I want them. They know practically nothing about you fellows, and I guess they're not interested. You can chase off to the coast as soon as you like, and you won't be even looked at."

A few minutes later a newspaper was brought into the office, Schultz having sent for it. Right across the page, in glaring

"I must see him—I must!" I said, my voice cold and grim. "You can't keep me out! I'm going in, I tell you!"

headlines, almost wet from the press, the news was displayed.

It was a brief report, explaining how Nelson Lee, the celebrated English detective, had been shot and nearly killed by a gunman on Broadway. It gave all the details of the taxicab, etc., and added that Lee was badly hit in the lungs, and in a grave condition. Surgeons were fighting for his life.

Soon after that Schultz received a special message from one of his agents. This rascally lawyer even had a spy in the hospital itself. And it was learned that Lee was so badly hurt that his life was despaired of. It was questionable whether he would recover consciousness during the next three or four days.

"This makes everything easy for us, of course," said Mr. Hawke. "We'll go over to Los Angeles just as we planned——"

"Except for one alteration," interrupted Schultz. "You'd better alter those tickets and reservations to Friday, instead of Saturday. Take my tip, boys, and leave town to-morrow. I guess you don't need to stay here a minute longer than is necessary. Don't worry about those tickets—I'll fix it for you. You'll leave New York for the West to-morrow."

And Mr. Hawke and Mr. Schultz went into close business details regarding their scheme for the appropriation of Mr. Roger Sterling's millions. Mr. Roker was equally interested, but said little.

The schemers were highly satisfied—but events were not destined to happen exactly as they imagined.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLAN OF ACTION.

"SORRY, young man, but it's impossible——"

"I must see him—I must!" I said, my voice cold and grim. "You can't keep me out—I'm going in, I tell you!"

My face was pale and my heart was like lead. I was arguing with one of the officials of the hospital—the place where Nelson Lee had been taken after that awful affair on Broadway.

I don't exactly know how I got down from that Observation Gallery and reached the street. I can't quite remember getting to the hospital even. I only know that the other fellows were considerate enough to let me go alone.

They were dreadfully anxious, too—but they fully realised that we couldn't all be admitted. There would be a much better chance for me.

And there I was trying to get into the private room where Nelson Lee had been taken. Doctors, I learned, were fighting for his life—an operation was being performed even at that minute.

I didn't care—I wanted to be there. If the dear old guv'nor was going to die, I wanted to be by his side at that fatal moment. And my grief was so acute—my anxiety so terrible—that the officials took notice.

I was told to wait, and they would see what could be done.

They had to consult one of the head surgeons—for under any ordinary circumstances, no outsider was allowed to be present during an operation. It seemed that hours and hours passed.

I paced up and down the waiting-room alone. And then, after an age, a white-coated gentleman came in and gently told me that I could go up. The operation, in fact, was over, and the guv'nor's life was probably saved—although nothing could be said just yet.

In a fever of anxiety and worry, I accompanied the surgeon up an elevator and along some passages until we arrived at a white door with a number on it. We went inside, and the door was closed. Then we passed through into another inner apartment.

I halted in the doorway, almost fighting for breath.

Nelson Lee was sitting in an easy-chair, with his arm in a sling. He was smoking a cigarette, and chatting amiably with another gentleman in a white coat. He looked at me and nodded.

"Sorry to have given you a scare, Nipper," he said smiling.

"Guv'nor!" I choked, rushing forward.

I was bewildered—amazed—staggered. I had seen Nelson Lee shot—I had seen him fall—I had heard the reports that he was mortally injured. And here he was practically unhurt!

"But—but I can't understand, sir!" I gasped, flushing with sheer joy.

"As soon as I heard that you were here, Nipper, I naturally gave instructions for you to be brought up," said Nelson Lee. "But the world at large is being fooled for the moment. These gentlemen have very kindly agreed to assist me in my little facts."

"But—but weren't you hit at all, sir?" I asked incredulously.

"Just a superficial flesh wound in the side, under the arm," replied Lee. "That is why I am wearing this sling. In a day or two I shall be perfectly all right, so you needn't worry."

The reaction was rather awful. I felt limp and dizzy. The joy of discovering that Lee was practically unharmed struck me like a blow. And then, as I sat there, he explained.

Even as the man shot at him, Lee had realised that this was an attempt upon his life, and that it would be better to fool the would-be assassin. So he dropped on the spot and feigned unconsciousness.

The crowd which gathered round could not tell whether he was badly hit or not. And when the ambulance arrived Lee had no difficulty in keeping the secret. And the hospital officials had agreed to send out an imaginative report.

"You see, Nipper, I want these men to believe that I am croaked, as they would call it," said Nelson Lee. "For one thing, I shall be safe from any further attack, and for another thing I shall be in a position to steal a march on the enemy."

"How, sir?"

"They leave for California on Saturday," replied Lee. "But I shall leave to-morrow on the 20th Century Limited for Chicago—transferring there on to the California Limited. I shall arrive in Los Angeles a day ahead of Mr. Hawke and Mr. Roker, and will have everything nicely planned for their arrival. I could, of course, effect their arrest here—but there are several excellent reasons why I should take the trip to California. To clear up this case completely, I must be on the actual spot."

"My hat!" I said breathlessly. "You'll be disguised, of course?"

"Naturally."

"And—and can't I come with you, sir?"

"I'm afraid not, Nipper," replied Lee. "You must remain in New York with the other boys. You will have ten days or a fortnight to enjoy yourselves until I return. Mr. McDougall will see that you get plenty of entertainment."

Although I was disappointed about not going, my joy at finding Lee alive and well was tremendous.

But when I left the hospital soon afterwards, I looked as sad as ever. It would never do for me to appear happy under the circumstances.

So, although my face was long, my heart was light.

I went back to Mr. McDougall's skyscraper home with all speed, knowing that I should find practically all the juniors there. All pleasure had been forgotten when Nelson Lee's condition had been learned. I had been told to inform the juniors that the papers had exaggerated somewhat, and that he was certain to recover before long. There was no need for me to go into the whole truth and let the cat out of the bag.

While I was entering the McDougall building, a number of juniors were mooching disconsolately about the roof garden, in and out of the bungalow, and none of them could keep still.

Not all the fellows were there. Those who had gone on to Coney Island were still absent, and they were likely to get a pretty big shock when they saw the headlines of the newspapers.

In America there are no placards, as in England, but the newspapers print their most important items in such enormous type on the front page that one can hardly fail to see the words, even at a great distance. And there are so many yelling newsboys that any special excitement is always made very public.

Handforth was looking quite pale and upset.

"I don't believe it," he growled. "And why doesn't Nipper come back? Why doesn't he telephone? Leaving us here alone like this, without any information! It's awful! I don't believe a word of what these rotten papers say."

"But Nipper actually saw it happen, Handy," said Church gently.

"Yes, I know," muttered Handforth miserably. "By George! If they've done any real harm to Mr. Lee, I'll—I'll commit slaughter! And I'll leave this blessed country in two minutes!"

"Don't blame America——"

"Rot!" snapped Handforth. "Of course I shall blame America! If Mr. Lee hadn't come to the place, he wouldn't have been shot!"

"Don't, old man," exclaimed Reggie Pitt quietly. "It doesn't do any good to talk like that. Let's hope for the best."

The Remove fellows had not looked so thoroughly downcast for many a day. If Nelson Lee could only have seen them, he might have felt somewhat flattered. Practically all the juniors almost loved him, and to hear that he had met with some terrible disaster was like a personal blow.

And then I appeared.

The fellows rushed round me like a wave breaking on the seashore. They completely surrounded me.

"What's the news?"

"How's Mr. Lee?"

"Quick! Let's hear, dear old boy!"

"Absolutely!"

"Can't you talk, or what?" snorted Handforth. "How's Mr. Lee, you duffer! Gone dumb, or lost your tongue——"

"Dash it all! Give me a chance to open my mouth!" I protested. "It's all right, you chaps—the guv'nor's not so badly hurt as they first thought——"

"Honest injun?" gasped Pitt.

"Yes,"

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

"He's in no danger at all," I went on. "You can be absolutely certain that the guv'nor will be all right again before so very long. Take my advice, and don't worry—and don't talk too much about it. Mr. Lee wants people to think that he's badly winged."

The juniors, having had their anxiety allayed, were feeling quite light-hearted after a short time. And they continued to discuss the affair with much animation. And when the others returned, there was more talk.

Armstrong and Co. and Fullwood and a good many others arrived back pell-mell from different quarters—eager to hear the full report. Some of the fellows indignantly declared they had been swindled—they had come all the way back for nothing. But these were chaps like Fullwood and Co., who didn't have any personal liking for Nelson Lee.

And the guv'nor's condition was still being discussed when the telegram came.

It was a telegram from the one and only Dorrie!

CHAPTER VIII.

JUST LIKE DORRIE!

I LOOKED at the yellow envelope in surprise. It had just been handed to me by the coloured butler, and I could not possibly understand who the telegram could be from. It was a Western Union wire, and felt somewhat bulky. It was addressed to "Nipper, c/o. Henry P. McDougall, New York." That had been quite sufficient.

"Who's it addressed to?" demanded a dozen juniors.

"Me," I replied.

"Then open it, ass, and don't waste time," said Handforth tartly. "Of all the dotty lunatics! Standing there and studying the envelope?"

I tore open the flap, and removed two or three sheets of yellow paper—each one containing quite a large number of words in neat typewriting. Telegrams are always typewritten in America.

"Yards of it!" I said, in astonishment. "What the dickens—— Three pages of it. And—and it's from—from Lord Dorrimore!"

"What!"

"From Dorrie himself!" I grinned. "Well, if this isn't just like him—to send a telegram costing quids."

"What does he care—he's a millionaire," said Handforth. "If I had millions I wouldn't write a letter at all—I'd send everything by telegram. Five quid to Dorrie is just the same as a penny to me!"

I examined the wire with greater interest than before. And I was further surprised by the fact that it had been dispatched from Los Angeles, California. Considering that Nelson Lee was just preparing to leave for Los Angeles, this was rather a remarkable coincidence.

And the telegram itself read as follows:

"Dear Youngsters,—Have seen all about your exploits in the newspapers here. Greatly interested in account of your adventures. Mightily pleased to learn that all safe, and no injuries. Good of Mr. McDougall to let you stay in his home.

"But don't make any fresh plans. Want you out here—whole crowd of you. Have just arrived in Wanderer in Los Angeles harbour, after trip through Panama Canal and into Pacific. Have made several surprising discoveries, and have got rare treat for you boys. Don't try to get out of this, or I'll pulverise you. Just the kind of thing you'll gloat over.

"Real, hair-raising adventures, and all sorts of things like that. Have reserved sleeping accommodation for you on second section of California Limited from Chicago at 8-15 p.m. on Saturday. This means you must leave New York on Friday. Don't fail. Everything fixed up, so no bother. Two pullman coaches reserved for you all on Santa Fe train.

"Wire me at once that you have made arrangements to come. If you fail, I'll sail away and become a pirate!

"Yours, as ever, DORRIE."

"Well I'm jiggered!" I said rather blankly.

"Let's have a look at it!"

"What does he say?"

"Mean bounder!" snorted Armstrong "Let's have a look!"

The telegram was torn from my hands, and Handforth succeeded in getting it. He then proceeded to read it aloud in a stentorian voice. The other fellows listened with growing excitement.

"We're going out to Los Angeles!"

"My goodness!"

"But—but Mr. Lee won't let us go!"

"He says we've got to stop here!"

"We'll see about that!" said Handforth. "Mr. Lee's in hospital, and can't do anything, anyhow! Here's a chance to go right across the giddy United States—all the way through Tennessee, Georgia, Carolina, Florida, Alberta, Quebec and Mexico! Do you think we're going to miss an opportunity like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the silly laugh for?" roared Handforth.

"Well, it's the first time I knew we had to pass through Florida and Carolina to get to California," I grinned. "It's news to me, too, that Quebec and Mexico are in the United States."

"To say nothing about Alberta!" chuckled Pitt.

Handforth glared.

"Jolly clever, ain't you?" he snorted. "What does it matter, anyway? What's the idea of quibbling over a blessed place or two? Come to think of it, we don't pass through Quebec—but we shall go through Alaska, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It seems to me that it'll take us three or four months to get to California if we take the route you suggest," I grinned. "But we won't argue on the matter. The main thing is, can we go?"

"Yes!"

"We must go!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, the bally old tickets are bought, don't you know. Two pullman cars have been chartered for the old occasion! Dash it all! We can't let good old Dorrie down!"

"Rather not!" said Pitt. "Look here. Mr. Lee has told us to enjoy ourselves, so why on earth can't we take advantage of this? We haven't seen much of New York, and we haven't been Mr. McDougall's guests for long—but we can easily make up for that on the way back."

"Hear, hear!"

All the juniors were thoroughly excited. The prospect of travelling right across the United States to Sunny California was extremely alluring. There was a magic about the word—a fascination about the whole suggestion.

On the top of that, we should be going to Los Angeles—that wonderful city of Southern California that the whole world had talked about—the city that had grown with such enormous strides.

And, on top of all this, there was Lord Dorrimore's message.

In it, he plainly hinted that he had something particularly good in store for us. Obviously a trip on his superbly equipped yacht. He had a rare treat for us—something we would gloat over.

Lord Dorrimore, the famous sporting peer, had taken us on many an adventure. And the thought of being in his company again—the prospect of being his guests—thrilled the whole Remove.

Dorrie was a boy himself—a man in years, but a boy at heart. He loved the company of the juniors, and nothing pleased him better than when we were all on some adventure together. As a matter of absolute fact, Dorrie looked forward to such trips with the liveliest anticipation.

We couldn't possibly let him down.

And it was exactly like him to make all preparations for our going, and only leaving us a bare twenty-four hours' notice. He probably thought that if he left more we might change our minds.

"Well, Mr. Lee will have to know about this, of course," I said.

"Why?"

"Is it absolutely necessary to tell him?"

"Of course it is," I declared. "We couldn't possibly go off and leave him in hospital here, without saying what we intended doing. I'll tell you what—I'll hurry off to the hospital, and show him this wire."

"Good egg!"

"That's the wheeze!"

And, in a few minutes I was off—not only thrilled by the thought of what Dorrie had in store, but greatly concerned by other thoughts.

I knew more than the rest of the Remove.

Dorrie had secured accommodation for us on the Santa Fe train which left Chicago on Saturday evening. And Nelson Lee himself had prepared to go on this train, too—disguised!

How would Lord Dorrimore's plans effect the guv'nor's plans?

That was the thought that was causing me much exercise of mind. I almost feared that we should not be allowed to go. It would be difficult to delay our departure for a day, for all the plans were made.

Dorrie, of course, had known nothing of Nelson Lee's decision to go to Los Angeles. It just happened that way.

I arrived at the hospital, and after a little trouble I was allowed to see the guv'nor.

"My dear Nipper, you should not have come back so soon," he said, after I had been admitted into his private room. "We don't want to cause any comment. But possibly your mission is an important one?"

"Read this, sir," I said, thrusting the telegram into his hand.

Nelson Lee read it, looked up thoughtfully for a moment or two, and then smiled.

"Just like Dorrie!" he chuckled. "Blundering, good natured, with no thought whatever for anybody else's plans. Why, you might have been on your way to Niagara Falls, for all he knew. I've never known such a man for taking a chance."

"Well, what about it, sir?" I asked. "That's what I'm anxious about."

"Yes, no doubt you are, Nipper," said Lee slowly. "Well, I suppose all the boys know about this?"

"Yes, sir."

"And, no doubt, they are mad to go on the trip?"

"Crazy about it, sir."

"H'm! And Dorrie has thoughtfully reserved sleeping accommodation for you and bought your tickets for the second section of the California Limited," mused Nelson Lee. "Well, Nipper, it would be a pity to disappoint all of you, including Dorrie. I suppose you had better go."

I jumped.

"And—and won't it interfere with your plans, sir?"

"I hardly think so," said Nelson Lee. "You see, I shall be on the first section of the California Limited which leaves promptly at eight o'clock. If you can arrange it, leave it until the last moment before you get to the train in Chicago. That is, arrive at the Santa Fe station at about five minutes past eight. The first section will have pulled out by then, and it won't matter."

"Right you are, sir," I said briskly. "Leave it to me."

"And you had better reach Chicago from here by the Pennsylvania Railroad," continued Lee. "I shall travel on the Grand Central. By taking these little precautions, there will be no chance of my being connected with you. I shall be disguised, and in another name and character, but it is just as well to take every precaution."

"All right, sir," I said. "You can be absolutely certain that you won't see anything of us until we're in Los Angeles."

I was overjoyed at the whole prospect, and hastened back to tell the others the good news.

But there was one thing that neither Nelson Lee nor I knew.

Mr. Simon Hawke and Mr. Al Roker had decided to leave New York on Friday, too! And they would be on the California Limited for Los Angeles which left Chicago on Saturday evening!

It seemed that a few interesting complications were brewing!

CHAPTER IX.

ALL ABOARD!

"PENNSYLVANIA STATION, New York, throbbed with its usual life and activity at two o'clock on the following afternoon.

It was Friday, and as the journey by the Pennsylvania route takes well over twenty-four hours to Chicago, we should not be due in to the great Middle West city until three or four o'clock on the Saturday afternoon. But this would leave us heaps of time to look round Chicago, and then catch the eight o'clock train leaving for the far West.

There is no question that the great terminus—or terminal, as they call it—of the Pennsylvania Railroad in New York is a wonderful building. The grandeur of the station is a bit startling at first.

You enter, and find yourself in a vast.

domed, cathedral-like hall—a place of truly impressive proportions. Everything is on the grand scale—and, brought down to rock-bottom facts, the place was undoubtedly built for display. It gives you the impression of great solidity and wealth. Indeed, it seems almost too good to be a mere railway station.

The same can be said of the Grand Central terminus, which is just as impressive, and just as huge. There are only these two big stations in New York. They probably thought they would have two good ones while they were about it. Besides, the traffic problems of New York are far more intricate than those of London. And great stations are really necessary.

After the first look at these places, one forgets their size and magnificence, and goes about one's business in just the ordinary way. There are no railroad tracks to be seen upon entering the station.

Indeed, one would think that there are no trains within twenty miles. All the tracks are right underneath—dozens and dozens of them, leading out of New York by means of tunnels in all directions.

The Remove arrived in good time for the afternoon train to Chicago.

Upon application the previous day, we had found that the railroad company had received full instructions by wire from Lord Dorrimore. Not only had the sporting peer made things easier for us on the Santa Fe route, but he had also fixed up our transportation on the Pennsylvania. Nelson Lee's advice to travel on that road had not been really necessary.

Our fares were paid for, and sleeping accommodation secured.

For one cannot just enter a train at a minute's notice, as in England. If you desire any comfort at all on your trip, you've got to book your sleeping berth on the pullman, and so forth.

Every fellow in the Remove was there, including such fellows as Fullwood and Timothy Tucker and Nicodemus Trotwood. There was not a single absentee. All were keen upon the trip, with its hint of adventure—with its fascination. There is something rather thrilling in the idea of starting off on a railway trip of close upon three thousand miles.

"Now, you chaps, we've all got to stick together," I said. "Must have some kind of order. All got your tickets? Where's Fatty? I'm blessed if he hasn't bunked off again! That's the third time we've lost him this afternoon!"

"Oh, we know where to find him," said Pitt. "Just search for the nearest refreshment-room, and Fatty'll be there."

As it happened, Fatty Little himself came bustling up a minute later, with a few crumbs still clinging to his chin.

"Had to have a snack before starting off," he said. "Might not get any grub until tea-time."

"On the train?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Sorry to disappoint you, old son, but there's no tea on the train."

Fatty turned pale.

"No tea!" he said, aghast.

"None!" I said. "Dinner, of course, but ——"

"I—I can't wait until dinner-time before having any more grub!" hooted Fatty Little wildly. "It's—it's awful! They won't serve dinner until about half-past six or seven, and by that time I'll be exhausted."

"The general rule on American railway trains is three meals a day," I said. "Breakfast, luncheon, dinner. You're supposed to go from luncheon, at about one o'clock, to dinner, soon after six."

Fatty nearly collapsed.

"If I'd had known I wouldn't have agreed to come!" he said, in a hollow voice. "Don't be surprised if I never get there! I didn't want to die in this country, but it looks as if I'm doomed!"

All the juniors who listened to Fatty's laments were surprisingly callous. They didn't seem to care a bit. And then there was no further time to care, anyhow. For the barrier was opened, and we all went down.

We walked down some stairs, and then found ourselves upon the platform—not the kind of platform one gets in England, but quite a low affair. The American trains are so different.

They have just the two doors, one at either end, and you go to your own particular berth and take possession of it. The number is on your ticket, and you must have the seat, whether you like it or not.

They are arranged in pairs, on either side of the carriage—and overhead there appears to be a roof of beautifully polished mahogany, arranged in artistic panels. As a matter of fact, it is all metal, and these are the upper berths.

They pull down, side partitions are put up, and the coach can be turned into a sleeper in a surprisingly short time. Curtains are fixed on both sides, leaving a narrow corridor in the middle.

But when we entered the train all these carriages were just like any other kind of day coach. They are slightly bigger than the English train, and very well equipped and appointed.

"Well, we'll be off in a few minutes," said Tommy Watson, and he sat down. "My word! Starting off for California! We never expected anything like this yesterday morning, did we?"

"No fear," I replied. "It's surprising how much can happen in a little time. And by this time to-morrow we shall almost be in Chicago. We've got to go through New Jersey, and Pittsburgh, and all sorts of other big towns. It's going to be an interesting trip."

"Rather!"

"Where do we feed?" asked Fatty Little, looking round anxiously.

"There's the dining-car, of course—either

somewhere in the front or the rear," I replied. "We'll find it all right—when the time comes, don't worry. And I think they serve lunch as soon as the train starts."

"Oh, good egg!" said Fatty, with much relief. "But it's an awful shame there's no tea!"

"Tea is not an American institution," I grinned. "They pretend to laugh at tea over here—they say it's English. But a good many people drink it, all the same."

"Tea!" sniffed Handforth. "We went in the refreshment-room not long ago, and what the dickens do you think? They brought us a teapot with nothing but hot water in it! The tea was in a little cloth bag in the saucer! Naturally, it was as weak as dishwater!"

This little incident was by no means uncommon in New York—where, as a matter of fact, it is extremely difficult to get a decent cup of tea. In America they don't seem to know how to make it properly.

But this wasn't a subject which concerned the juniors much. They were on the train, and all they thought about was starting off. The Remove, in fact, might almost be said to have invaded the train.

It was full of nothing else but St. Frank's fellows. They were sprinkled along every coach, and the train was pretty full in consequence. It was not one of the best trains of the system, but as it would land us in Chicago in good time for the Santa Fe express, we didn't care.

Travelling to Los Angeles from New York is a pretty big affair. One starts on Friday, and arrives on the following Tuesday. Or one starts on Monday, and arrives on Friday. It takes the best part of a week—five days—to make this enormous railway trip, living and feeding on the train throughout the whole journey, with only one or two brief opportunities for exercise.

And a few minutes later we were off. The train glided smoothly and quietly out of the big station.

We were bound for the far West!

CHAPTER X.

THE BEGINNING OF THE RACE.

MR. JEFFERSON PARKES sat back luxuriously in his seat on the Twentieth Century, Limited—the famous crack train of the Grand Central Railroad, which leaves daily for Chicago from New York. It is scheduled to make the trip in about twenty hours' actual running time, or possibly less. It lands one in Chicago in the forenoon, with plenty of time to execute business, if necessary, before continuing on the trip westwards.

They picked out Mr. Jefferson Parkes without difficulty. They were astounded, and could hardly believe that he was actually Nelson Lee. The make-up was certainly a masterpiece.

One can travel to Los Angeles by two or three routes, but the Santa Fe is one of the most popular. They all take about the same time. Passengers by all railroads leaving Chicago on Saturday cannot arrive in Los Angeles before Tuesday.

Mr. Jefferson Parkes was a hale, hearty gentleman of about sixty. He had grizzled, iron-grey hair, and a small goatee beard. He looked a typical American gentleman of the old school.

And Mr. Parkes was waiting for the train to start. Of course, you will easily have guessed that he was actually Nelson Lee.

The famous detective had adopted a wonderful disguise.

If I had entered the train then I should never have recognised the guv'nor. He no longer had his arm in a sling. His wound was rather painful, but there was no fear of any complications, and he made light of the slight inconvenience.

As Mr. Jefferson Parkes, he was booked through to Los Angeles, and reckoned upon arriving in that thriving Western City a clear day ahead of the men he had set himself out to defeat.

And then Nelson Lee got a bit of a surprise.

For who should enter the coach but Mr. Simon Hawke and Mr. Al. Roker!

They came in with handbags, and were evidently in the best of spirits. They passed right through into the adjoining coach.

Nelson Lee, leisurely lying back in his seat, watched the two men through the blue haze of smoke from his cigar. The detective eyed them with casual interest as they passed him, making no attempt to avert his gaze.

And the rascals went by without a suspicion.

They would have been startled if they had known that Nelson Lee, instead of being helpless in hospital, was sitting there within a single coach of themselves—for it turned out that Hawke and Roker had their berth in the next carriage.

"Oh, indeed!" murmured Lee, to himself. "So these cheery gentlemen have hastened their own departure by a day, too! Very interesting—but very annoying. I cannot say that I am delighted."

Lee reviewed the situation.

"Infernal nuisance!" he went on. "This will make a great difference to my plans. If possible, I shall have to think of some way of getting in ahead of them. This alters the whole affair."

Lee had no fear that his own disguise would be pierced. He was quite satisfied on that point. Neither Hawke nor Roker would recognise their enemy in that upright old gentleman with the goatee beard.

Lee had plenty of confidence in himself in that respect.

And as he thought the matter over more thoroughly he was almost convinced that this was the better course. It had one advantage, certainly. He would now be able to keep his eye on the rascals throughout the trip.

He would know them, but they would not know him. That was the interesting fact about the situation. And the advantage was entirely with Nelson Lee.

At least, it was to begin with.

The train started on its long, thousand-mile journey, and was soon settling down to a steady average speed. Evening came, and with it dinner. Lee consumed his own meal, secretly amused. Hawke and Roker were at the very next table, without the slightest suspicion.

They left the dining-car first, and went back to their own private drawing-room—on these American trains a private compartment is honoured by the name of "drawing-room." They are rather more expensive than the ordinary fares, but one at least has the advantage of privacy. And privacy was most necessary to Hawke and his ally.

They had only been in the little cabin-like compartment a few minutes before the train stopped. And after it had once more started on its way, a black boy in uniform tapped on the door, and appeared.

He had a telegram.

Obviously, it had been handed on board at the recent stop, and Hawke took it quickly, and closed the door. He had not been expecting any wire. And for one to arrive so soon after departure was rather disconcerting.

He tore it open, and quickly read the contents.

"By Heaven!" he snapped, at length.

"What is it?" demanded Roker.

"That man is an infernal magician!" snarled Hawke.

"What man?" asked Roker, surprised by his companion's tone.

"Nelson Lee!"

"But what about him?"

"He's here—on this train!"

"On this train!" repeated Roker, startled. "Oh, ridiculous! He can't be! Didn't we leave him back in New York, nearly on the point of death? Somebody's trying to fool you——"

"No—we're the ones who've been fooled all the while until now," interrupted Hawke. "Read this! Lee's on this train, I tell you—and we're lucky to be warned."

Roker took the telegram and read it.

It was quite long, and dealt with stocks and shares for the most part. It was, indeed, in code, as Roker had expected. But the news it contained was significant. It explained, briefly, that Nelson Lee was on the train, and gave an accurate description of him—also that he was using the name of Jefferson Parkes.

"It's staggering!" muttered Roker, at length.

"Yes, but we've got to make the best of it," agreed Hawke. "Just imagine what would have happened if we had not been warned. We know now—and we can make our plans accordingly."

"But he was badly shot——"

"So we though at the time," said Hawke. "But it's pretty clear that Blaney's men blundered. Lee succeeded in fooling them. Schultz must have found out the truth after we left, and that's why he sent this wire. It's the second time we've got to thank him for warning us."

Although the two men didn't know the actual facts, they could easily guess. The spidery Mr. Schultz, to tell the truth, had indeed discovered through one of his spies that Lee was no longer in the hospital.

While Nelson Lee himself had been pre-

sent in New York there had been no possibility of a leakage. But after Lee had gone somebody had talked—and an agent of Mr. Schultz had heard.

A very brief investigation had proved the truth of the rumour, and it did not take long to ascertain that Lee had left on the Twentieth Century—the same train as Hawke and Roker.

The situation was now remarkable.

Nelson Lee knew nothing of this warning telegram. He fully believed that he was safe, and that his disguise was impenetrable. He could go about openly, and the enemy would not know of his presence.

But the very opposite was the case.

Hawke and Roker knew the whole truth. They were aware of the facts, and were determined to act accordingly. They made a point of strolling through the next coach soon afterwards.

They picked out Mr. Jefferson Parkes without difficulty. They were astounded. The make-up was a masterpiece.

"I don't believe it!" said Roker, when they got back to their own drawing-room. "That man's not Lee. It's ridiculous!"

Hawke nodded.

"I'd say the same, but I know Schultz too well," he replied. "He's the kind of man who never makes a blunder. He certainly wouldn't have sent us this wire if there had been the slightest shadow of doubt."

"You really think that that man with the goatee beard is Lee?"

"I know it."

"And what do you intend doing?"

"Nothing!"

"Nothing?"

"At the moment, yes," said Hawke. "We can't take the risk of any action while we're on this train. Don't forget that Lee believes that we are in ignorance of his presence. Therefore, he'll remain inactive."

"But he knows us——"

"What of that?"

"He might bring about our arrest in Chicago," said Roker nervously. "That would be a fine end to our schemes——"

"Don't be so infernally nervous," interrupted Hawke. "Lee won't take any action at Chicago—that's certain. If he really wanted to have us arrested, he would have done that in New York. His idea is to be in Los Angeles at the same time as us—he probably wanted to be there before we arrived. Well, by the time we get there, Lee will be about a thousand miles away."

There was something grim and determined in Hawke's tone, and Roker looked at him curiously.

"What do you mean to do?" he asked slowly.

"I don't know—yet!" replied Hawke. "But you can be quite certain that Nelson Lee will never reach Los Angeles!"

And the journey continued.

Going across the States towards Chicago were two trains—one containing the Remove, and the other containing Nelson Lee and the scoundrels he had pitted his wits against. There was every indication that there would be some thrilling excitement before the end of the trip was reached!

THE END.

Another Splendid Story of This Grand Holiday Series will appear Next Week, entitled:—

"ON THE CALIFORNIA EXPRESS;

or, WESTWARD HO!"

CAN YOU FORECAST THE RESULT OF THE COUNTY CRICKET CHAMPIONSHIP?

£300 in Prizes offered to Readers in a Fascinating Competition

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GREAT COMPETITION FOR CRICKET LOVERS!

First Prize £100! Second Prize £50! Third Prize £30! And 120 Prizes of £1 each!

CAN YOU FORECAST HOW THE COUNTIES ARE GOING TO FINISH UP?

We offer the above splendid Prizes to the reader who is clever enough to send us a list showing exactly in what order the seventeen first-class County Cricket Clubs will stand at the end of the season.

For your guidance we publish the order in which each of the clubs stood last year, which was as follows:

1. Yorkshire.
2. Nottinghamshire.
3. Surrey.
4. Kent.
5. Lancashire.
6. Hampshire.
7. Middlesex.
8. Essex.
9. Sussex.
10. Somerset.
11. Derbyshire.
12. Warwickshire.
13. Gloucestershire.
14. Leicestershire.
15. Northamptonshir
16. Glamorgan.
17. Worcestershire.

What you have to do is to fill in on the coupon on this page your forecast of the order in which the counties will finish up. To the reader who does this correctly we shall award a prize of £100, and the other prizes in the order of the correctness of the forecasts.

In the case of ties any or all of the prizes will be added together and divided, but the full amount of £300 will be awarded.

All forecasts must be submitted on coupons taken from this journal or from one of the other publications taking part in this contest.

You may send as many coupon forecasts as you like.

They must all be addressed to "Cricket Competition," Gough House, Gough Square, E.C.4, and must reach that address not later than Thursday, August 16th.

You may send in your forecasts at once if you like; but none will be considered after August 16th.

The decision of the Editor in all matters concerning this competition must be accepted as final and binding, and entries will only be admitted on that understanding.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Football Favourite," "Sports Budget," "Magnet," "Young Britain," "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Boys' Friend," "Popular," "Pluck," "Union Jack," "Rocket," "Boys' Cinema," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

I forecast that the Counties will finish the season in this order:

No. 1	**No. 10**
No. 2	**No. 11**
No. 3	**No. 12**
No. 4	**No. 13**
No. 5	**No. 14**
No. 6	**No. 15**
No. 7	**No. 16**
No. 8	**No. 17**
No. 9	

I enter "Cricket" Competition in accordance with the rules as announced, and agree to abide by the published decision.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Closing date, August 16th, 1923. N.L.

Editorial Announcement.

My dear Readers,—

The juniors have already started on their 3,000 mile journey across the United States, and in next week's story, "ON THE CALIFORNIA EXPRESS; or, Westward Ho!" the author will give you a graphic description of that wonderful train journey. The impressions of the country through which the boys pass, and their unique experiences on the great American Trans-Continental Express will be most faithfully recorded from the author's recent journey over that identical route. You may have already some idea of what it is like to travel on an American Pullman from seeing some of the American films at the picture theatres. I have seen many such films, but until I read through the story that will appear next week, I did not realise how little I knew about railway travelling in the States. The films only give a glimpse of what the American trains are like, and it needs the gifted pen of an author to describe the many sights and sounds to be experienced on a three thousand mile train journey across America.

A STORY OF THRILLS.

In addition to the interest of the journey, there will be many exciting incidents in the story. Nelson Lee, very cleverly disguised, is on the train, and so are Messrs. Roker and Hawkes. These desperate rogues have been warned by Schultz, the clever but rascally New York attorney, of Nelson Lee's movements, and their purpose in travelling by the same train is to get the famous detective out of the way. But the hold-up by a gang of train robbers provides one of the most thrilling situations in the narrative.

£300 IN PRIZES MUST BE WON!

In a few short weeks our Great Cricket Forecast Competition will be closing down. Now is your chance, my chums, if you would secure one of our handsome money prizes! Fill in as many coupons as you can. There is no limit, and you can buy several copies of this paper, and, having cut out the coupons, distribute the books among your friends. Or you can buy the "Boys' Realm" and the "Union Jack" and use their coupons. Remember that there are three big prizes to be won and a lot of smaller prizes. Full particulars are given on another page in this issue. Don't wait until August 16 before collecting your coupons.

Your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

Printed and Published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd. The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 11/- per annum; 5/6 for six months. Sole Agents for South Africa: The Central News Agency, Limited. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Limited; and for Canada: The Imperial News Co. (Canada), Limited.

No. 426. D/R **August 4 1923.**