

GRAND LONG DETECTIVE THRILLER INSIDE!

The NELSON LEE

2^d



3

DANDY FREE GIFTS
FOR YOU IN 3 WEEKS

A "Swallow Flight" **BOOMERANG-THROWER**
• NEXT WEEK •

A "Shoot Straight" **CATAPULT** in 2 weeks'
TIME •

A "Home Jazz" **KAZOO-HUMMER** in
• 3 WEEKS' TIME •

A BREATHLESSLY THRILLING LONG COMPLETE YARN—

THE MAN



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

A prominent baronet kidnapped and taken off in a car. Man and car vanish completely! How it was done? What happened to them? It is left to Nelson Lee and his "cub" detectives to solve this baffling mystery!

CHAPTER 1.

The Trap.

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH glanced at his watch as the big limousine glided out of the busy Essex town of Chelmsford, and took the Braintree road.

"I shall do it comfortably," Sir Edward told himself.

He selected a cigar from his case, and lit it.

It was a bright, sunny February day, and the run from London had been swift and uneventful. Sir Edward was bound for Bury St. Edmund's, and he was rather pleased with the chauffeur, a new man, who had only been in his employ for about a fortnight. The man had not asked any questions: he knew the route perfectly. In fact, Sir Edward was congratulating himself

—OF AMAZING DETECTIVE ADVENTURE AND MYSTERY!



on securing such an excellent man. Hale—that was the man's name—was really the most efficient chauffeur Sir Edward had ever employed. His driving was superb, his judgment perfect.

As Chelmsford was left behind the limousine increased its speed. This was a quiet, fairly unfrequented stretch of road. There was very little traffic in the middle of the day between Chelmsford and Braintree. It wasn't one of the big main roads.

Sir Edward was rather looking forward to his arrival in Bury St. Edmund's. He regarded it more or less as his own town. Travis Dene, his country estate, was situated in the district, and in Bury St. Edmund's he was a well-known figure—a popular figure. He was on his way down to-day to lay a foundation stone in connection with some local charity.

Sir Edward felt that the quiet old Suffolk town was honouring him by requesting his presence at this ceremony. And Sir Edward was not entirely impervious to the limelight. In fact, he rather liked it.

During this ride from London he had had plenty of time to think over various matters. And it was only natural, perhaps, that his thoughts should revert, now and again, to his sons.

He was thinking of them now, as the car left Chelmsford behind. His two sons—Edward Oswald and Willy—were both members of the new Detective Academy which had recently been started by Nelson Lee, the world-famous criminologist. The academy was situated in Gray's Inn Road, next door to Lee's own chambers. And Nelson Lee himself was in sole control of the "cub detectives," as the boys who formed this establishment were called.

They numbered between twenty and thirty, and before the academy had come into existence they had all attended St. Frank's College; Nelson Lee himself had been a Housemaster there. The famous Sussex Public School had been burned down, however, and then Lee had thought of the brilliant idea of opening an academy for embryo young detectives. Thus the Detective Academy had come into existence, Nelson Lee taking with him a number of selected juniors from St. Frank's; the other boys had been sent off in batches to other big schools all over the country.

Sir Edward frowned once or twice as he recalled some rather startling events which had recently taken place. One of his sons had been in considerable danger. He wondered if it was wise to leave the boys in the academy. Willy, no doubt, was keen and sharp, and would probably make a very good detective when he grew up. But the blundering Edward Oswald was different. He was so clumsy, so ram-headed.

"Well, I trust Mr. Lee," muttered Sir Edward finally. "And a little knocking about won't do the boys any harm; a dangerous adventure now and again will teach them a great deal more than football or cricket. Rough knocks early in life are good for people."

Sir Edward's thoughts were suddenly distracted. He could see a fairly long stretch of road ahead. They had passed Little Waltham and were now on a quiet piece of road where there were scarcely any houses. Before very long they would pass the Highland Garage. Sir Edward knew the route well, for he was always motoring up and down, between London and his country place. And he invariably took this route.

A man was standing in the middle of the road, waving his arms. Alongside the road there was a saloon car, stationary. Sir Edward frowned.

LOOK, BOYS—THIS WILL INTEREST YOU!

THREE SUPERB FREE GIFTS COMING—THE FIRST NEXT WEEK!

A "SWALLOW-FLIGHT" BOOMERANG THROWER FOR ALL READERS!

Turn to pages 22 and 23 for full details of this amazing offer.

"Hope this fellow won't detain us too long," he muttered. "I've no objection to helping a motorist in distress, but some of them are a bit unreasonable."

Hale, the chauffeur, glanced round, as though asking for instructions.

"Yes, stop!" called Sir Edward, nodding.

The limousine's brakes were applied, and the car came to a stand-still. The driver of the other vehicle, a man in a heavy overcoat and soft hat, ran up. His expression was charged with alarm, and his manner was frantic.

"Thank Heaven somebody's come along!" he panted, as he tore open the limousine door. "Can you lend a hand, sir?"

"What on earth is the matter?" asked Sir Edward sharply.

"I don't know. My boss has had a stroke, or something!" said the man, breathing hard. "Happened about five minutes ago. Gave an awful cry, and collapsed. I can't do anything with him, sir. I'm afraid to drive on—"

"I'll come," said Sir Edward promptly.

He got out of the limousine, and ran across to the other car. The frantic stranger opened the door, and Sir Edward looked in with concern and anticipation. At the same second the stranger gave Sir Edward a violent shove from the rear.

"What on earth——" began Handforth senior.

He found himself pulled by somebody within the car. He was jerked right in, and he saw two men in there. One of them clapped a sickly-smelling pad to Sir Edward's mouth and nostrils, and he was forced back amongst the soft cushions of the saloon.

THE whole thing was over in a flash.

Sir Edward had absolutely no chance. And before he could make any outcry he was unconscious.

One of the men in that saloon quickly got out, closed the door, and moved across the road towards Sir Edward Handforth's limousine.

And the amazing thing was, this man bore such an uncanny resemblance to Sir Edward himself that he might have been mistaken for his twin brother!

"Ready, sir?" asked Hale.

"Yes," replied this surprising duplicate of Sir Edward. "All right, No. 204. Go ahead."

"O.K.," said the chauffeur.

The imitation Sir Edward got in, after glancing up and down the quiet, deserted stretch of road. The limousine drove off, gathering speed.

From first to last the incident had not occupied more than a single minute.

And here was Sir Edward's car driving on towards Bury St. Edmund's in exactly the same way as before. To all intents and purposes Sir Edward was still inside, and everything was as it should be. Yet, actually, the unfortunate Sir Edward was in the other car—that saloon which was now moving rapidly towards London.

There was something suggestive in that "All right, No. 204." Hale, the chauffeur, was quite palpably a traitor, or he would not have allowed his master to fall into that trap. Hale had seen the whole incident. He knew that the man he now drove was not Sir Edward Handforth.

The limousine went on through Halstead and then through Sudbury and Long Melford. The road to Bury St. Edmund's was quiet all the way.

AT last the quaint, old-fashioned Suffolk town was reached. Hale had timed his arrival to the minute. Sir Edward was expected at a certain hour, and various municipal officials were ready to receive him. Big crowds had gathered, too, in readiness to give Sir Edward a hearty reception. He was popular, and deservedly so.

The impostor opened one of the limousine windows as the car passed through the outskirts of the crowd. Instead of doing his best to efface himself, this man was acting in precisely the opposite way. He was showing himself as openly and as brazenly as possible.

The result was that "Sir Edward" was recognised by everybody. Hundreds of people were familiar with his big, brawny, well-set-up figure, and his rugged, good-natured face.

Some of the people began to cheer, particularly the numerous children, and the impostor smiled, waved his hand, and bowed. The car began to slow down as the centre of activity was neared. Here the crowd was biggest, and there were many police controlling and regulating the traffic.

At the last moment, just before the limousine came to a standstill, a huge, powerful open car sprang into activity. It had been waiting quietly and unobtrusively beside the road. There were four young men in it, in addition to the driver; they were wearing thick overcoats and soft hats.

With a zooming roar the car shot forward, causing two constables to leap wildly aside. The open car came to a standstill alongside the limousine just as the latter stopped.

"We want you, Sir Edward Handforth!" shouted one of the men in the open car.

At the same second he and his companions produced formidable-looking pistols.

There was a shout of surprise and consternation from the crowd. Many of the people began laughing. They thought that this was some advertising stunt, perhaps; some affair got up by a film company. But they soon knew differently.

"Stand clear!" shouted one of the other men. "If anybody tries to interfere, he'll be shot down! Sir Edward Handforth is wanted by the Green Triangle!"

"Oh!"

It was a long shout which passed through the crowd. The Green Triangle! Everybody had been reading about the Green Triangle in the newspapers—that formidable criminal organisation which had baffled the best brains of Scotland Yard.

The false Sir Edward stepped out of the limousine boldly, and he was shouting at the top of his voice. And that voice was astonishingly like the real Sir Edward's.

"Infernal impudence! How dare you? If you think I'm going to be intimidated——"

"In with him—quick!" rapped out one of the men.

Two of them leapt down, seized "Sir Edward," and yanked him bodily into the back of the open car.

"Right!" yelled one of the kidnappers.

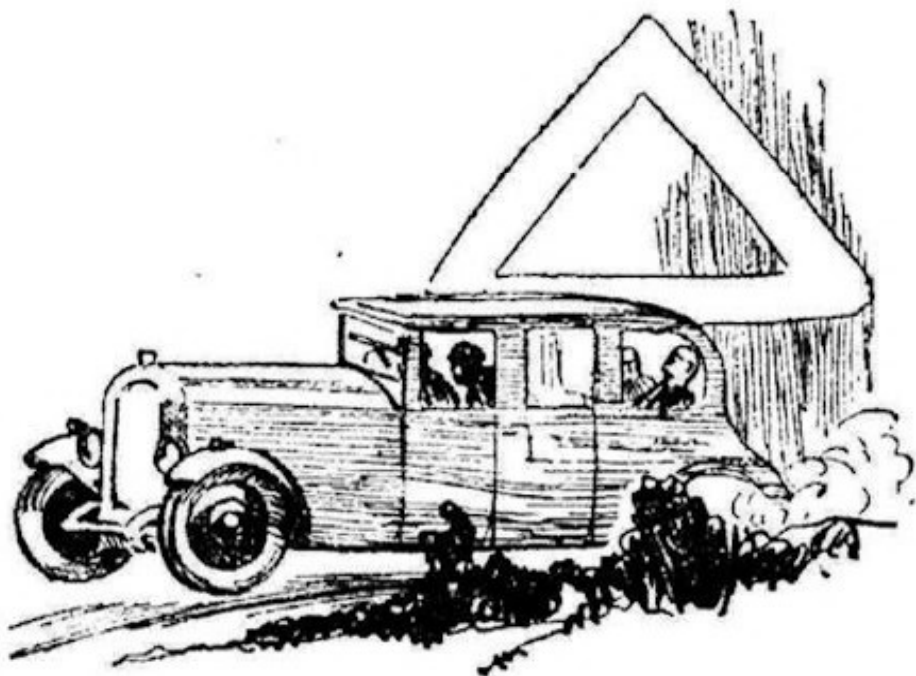
The driver engaged his gears, let in the clutch, and the car jerked into activity. At the same second several policemen had practically reached the car's side.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Revolver shots rang out, and the air became filled with the shrieks of women. But the shots had been fired into the air. Now everybody could see that the big car's headlamps had been switched on; and on the glasses of those headlamps a vivid green triangle was in glaring evidence.

The car gathered speed, and two policemen and several civilians only leapt aside in the nick of time.

Then the car turned into a side street, zoomed into high gear, and went off with ever-increasing speed.



CHAPTER 2.

Vanished!

FROM the first moment to the last—from the instant when Sir Edward Handforth's limousine had stopped until now—only one minute had elapsed. And with the purring roar of that great open car still quivering on the air, the crowds of people broke into a pandemonium of shouting.

Before their very eyes—so they believed—Sir Edward Handforth had been kidnapped. How could they know that "Sir Edward" had been perfectly ready to be kidnapped—that he was part and parcel of the plot? It might not have been so easy to seize the real Sir Edward!

But who was to know? The thing had been gone through with precision and clockwork-like exactitude. Seldom did the League of the Green Triangle blunder.

Everybody was fooled—the public, the officials, the police.

All thought that Sir Edward Handforth had been kidnapped in front of their eyes. Many motorists were leaping for their cars, bent upon giving chase. A few of them did give chase, but it was not long before they gave it up. There was practically no hope of overtaking that high-speed open car which had carried "Sir Edward" away.

As far as the police could ascertain, the car had taken the road for Norwich. At all events, it had roared off along the main highway in that direction.

The police acted with promptitude.

They telephoned to Thetford, to Mildenhall, to Soham, to Ixworth, to Diss, and Harling, and Brandon, and Downham Market, and Swaffham, and Attleboro'—in fact, to every town of any size along all roads in that particular part of East Anglia.

Every road was to be watched—every town was warned.

There could be no mistaking that big open car—with its great sloping radiator and its grey body. Long before the kidnappers would reach any of those outlying towns the police would be on their guard.

But while confusion reigned in Bury St. Edmund's—during those first few minutes of utter consternation—the Green Triangle car had made good headway. It sped along the road towards Thetford at a terrific speed, reaching between seventy and eighty miles an hour.

"This'll do!" shouted one of the men, into the driver's ear.

The road was barren out here. On either side stretched long vistas of heathland—the typical game country of the district. There were no houses in sight—no other motor-cars.

The open car slowed down, until it was only travelling at about fifteen miles an hour. The men became intensely active. They operated levers and handles. And, as though by magic, an additional bodywork sprang up from the existing body. Supports were almost instantaneously erected, and the open car was converted into a limousine. With the sides in position, a roof was drawn over the entire framework—pulled up like a roller blind.

Windows appeared out of the sides, and at the same time the man in the seat beside the driver touched a button. The radiator went forward as though on a hinge, changing its character completely, and becoming upright instead of sloping.

This was indeed a car of magician's tricks.

To add to the complete transformation was the work of a minute. The car stopped, and one of the men got out with a peculiar-looking instrument in his hand. The man turned a nozzle and a stream of heavy vapour came hissing out at high pressure. Quickly, this vapour was directed against the car's grey sides.

The effect was startling. As the vapour touched those grey sides, they became royal blue. The other part of the car—that which had so recently sprung as though from nowhere—was blue already.

"That will do!" said the false Sir Edward. "Drive on again."

The four men stood back, and they watched while the converted car drove away. It was now a limousine, with a chauffeur in livery, and with a single passenger.

"That'll fool 'em!" said one of the men with a grin.

"The chief's clever!" remarked one of the others admiringly. "Never saw anything so brainy."

A ramshackle Ford van hove into sight out of the distance. It rattled along and when it reached the four men they quickly jumped on board. Within two minutes they were in grimy engineers' overalls, with greasy caps, and with blackened hands and smudged faces.

IT was typical of the Green Triangle's audacity that this van, containing these men who had so recently been engaged in the daring hold-up should run straight into Bury St. Edmund's. The van was even stopped by the police, the driver was questioned regarding the open grey car. What was more, the driver remembered all about it.

"Why, yes," he said. "Big, powerful 'bus, with a sloping radiator."

"That's the one," said the officer, who was questioning him.

"Passed me like a streak o' lightnin'," said the driver. "Didn't it, boys?"

"Never see'd anything so fast," said one of the men in the van. "Goin' towards Thetford, it was, I reckon."

The daring of this thing was astounding. There was only one man out of all those people in Bury St. Edmund's who could appreciate it. That man was Hale, Sir Edward Handforth's chauffeur.

He was there, acting his part well. He was looking intensely worried, and he was making himself a nuisance to the police, excitedly demanding action, asking whether he should telegraph to Lady Handforth, and so on. He was acting, in fact, exactly as a genuine chauffeur would act if his master had been suddenly kidnapped before his very eyes. Nothing was being forgotten by these Green Triangle men.

In the meantime, the limousine was proceeding at a stately speed towards Thetford. Even the engine had lost its zooming roar. It was now so quiet that it could hardly be called a purr. No doubt a cut-out had been closed, thus completely altering the sound of the exhaust.

The impostor in the rear had now completely removed his make-up. He no longer resembled Sir Edward Handforth. The rugged countenance had gone. Instead, there sat at the back a tall, broad-shouldered, upright man.

He was clean-shaven, keen-faced, sharp-eyed. His nose was inclined to be thin, and his lips were set in a straight line. He looked a powerful man—a stern, resolute man.



Shimmering on the window was a green triangle, in the middle of which were the words: "The First of the Fathers."

Thetford was reached before any stoppage came. And here, as was only to be expected, the police was ready. A number of them barred the road, and commanded the driver of the blue limousine to stop.

"What's up now?" asked the chauffeur, in a patient voice. "Examining licences again? Aren't you fellows getting tired of it? Because if you're not, I am."

An inspector came forward.

"We don't want to see your licence, my man," he said sharply. "This matter is much more serious."

The man in the back opened one of the windows, and looked out.

"Is there anything I can do, inspector?" he asked. "What's wrong?"

The inspector looked at him hard, then frowned—as though unable to place him.

"Sorry to bother you, sir, but all the roads are stopped just now," said the inspector.

"Indeed! Has there been a hold-up of some kind?" asked the man in the back of the blue limousine. "My name is Cartwright—Scotland Yard."

The inspector looked startled, then he smartly saluted.

"Sorry to bother you, sir," he said deferentially. "Didn't know it was your car."

"You are only doing your duty, inspector," said the other, getting out of the car and smiling at the police officer. "I seem to have come along at an opportune moment."

"Do you mean that you are Superintendent John Cartwright of the Special Branch, sir?"

"Yes."

"I thought I knew your face, sir," said the inspector; then he went on quickly: "Something serious has happened in Bury St. Edmund's. Hold-up. Sir Edward Handforth has been kidnapped."

"Indeed," said the superintendent. "That's serious. Let me have the details."

There was something humorous in this situation—the inspector giving the details of that hold-up to the very man who had been kidnapped!

There was no second imposture here. This man was really Superintendent John Cartwright, of Scotland Yard. But how was this inspector of the Suffolk Constabulary to know that Superintendent Cartwright was one of the Special Members of the League of the Green Triangle?

Yet it was a fact.

This hard-headed Scotland Yard man, trusted by his colleagues, respected by his subordinates, was a traitor and a fraud. He belonged to the Council of the League, and he was one of Professor Cyrus Zingrave's chief lieutenants. In fact, the chief lieutenant. He was second in command of the League. He was No. 2.

He was a clever man, so clever that he had risen rapidly in his profession. He was energetic, enterprising, and a born leader. The men under him flew to obey his word. Nobody in authority had the faintest suspicion of his double game.

For many months the Chief Commissioner had known that there was a leakage at Scotland Yard. Crooks of all kinds, gang-leaders, even murderers, were warned and protected. But Superintendent Cartwright was the last man to suspect of betraying the inner secrets of Scotland Yard to the criminal fraternity.

Raids were planned, and every precaution was taken to ensure that there could be no leakage. Yet when the raid took place, the birds would have flown. Again and again this had happened. And through it all the superintendent retained the confidence and respect of the Chief Commissioner. Yes, he was a clever man.

He was clever in more ways than one, too. He was a remarkably brilliant actor—as his recent impersonation of Sir Edward Handforth had shown.

"A pretty bad business," he commented, when the inspector had told him. "And you say that this grey car came along this same road?"

"So the Bury St. Edmund's police 'phoned," said the inspector.

"No grey car overtook me," replied Cartwright. "At least, none that I can remember. What do you say, Judson?"

"Can't remember having seen one, sir," said the chauffeur, shaking his head.

"Well, it must be up here somewhere," said the inspector, shaking his head. "Somewhere in Norfolk, I imagine. I don't see how it could have doubled back. I dare say we shall find it later on, abandoned. Heaven only knows what they're doing with Sir Edward, though."

The affair became a baffling mystery.

That Green Triangle car, with Sir Edward—or the supposed Sir Edward—in it, had apparently vanished into thin air. Although every road was watched, no trace of the car was found.

Which was not very surprising, considering that it appeared openly in Thetford, and was allowed to continue just as openly towards Norwich—with a special police sign on the wind-screen, giving it instant right of way.

It was a cunning plot. There was an excellent reason for that double kidnapping stunt. For while the real Sir Edward Handforth had actually been kidnapped between Chelmsford and Braintree, the hue and cry was all concentrated between Bury St. Edmund's and Thetford!

CHAPTER 3.

The Sign on the Window!

NELSON LEE entered the class-room of the Detective Academy, in Gray's Inn Road, and looked round with a quick smile.

"Everybody here?" he asked cheerily.

"Yes, sir," chorused the boys.

"Good," said Lee. "We'll do a bit of work then."

Things were generally like this in the Detective Academy. Everything was free and easy. There was none of the formality of the ordinary Public School. Nelson Lee was the



Principal of this novel establishment, and he believed in doing things in his own way. Although he had been a Housemaster at St. Frank's, before that famous school had been burnt down, there was nothing of the schoolmaster about him.

There never had been, in fact. Even at St. Frank's, Lee had been different from the rest. And now that he was in control of his own school, he saw that things were done as he liked them to be done.

There were between twenty and thirty pupils—quite a small number—but sufficient. Several had been seniors at St. Frank's, but the majority were juniors. They were sitting in their places now, eager and interested. Nipper was there, of course—and Edward Oswald Handforth, Church and McClure; and Reggie Pitt, and Fullwood, and Nick Trotwood, and Travers, and Archie Glenthorne. Willy Handforth was much in evidence, with his two particular chums, Juicy Lemon and Chubby Heath. They were the youngest members of the Detective Academy.

Such fellows as Edgar Fenton and William Napoleon Browne looked quite grown-up in their lounge suits and soft collars. But they were all held together by the one common bond—they were here for the purpose of being trained in the art of detection.

Their ordinary school duties were done in private—in their own rooms. There were no restrictions, no fixed hours. And Nelson Lee was finding that this plan worked well. Not one of the boys was shirking his studies.

The Detective Academy was different from anything that had ever been established, and, so far, it was proving to be a big success. The boys were showing every indication of progress; they were eager to learn.

This enterprise had even attracted the attention of the Home Office. The Home Secretary himself was tremendously interested in the experiment, for he regarded Nelson Lee's Detective Academy as an experiment. If these boys were successfully trained, they would be drafted, after graduation, into the various departments of Scotland Yard. The Chief Commissioner himself felt that new blood was required in the detective force, and who could train the young idea in the many intricacies of crime detection better than Nelson Lee, who was admitted to be one of the cleverest criminologists living?

The Detective Academy had not been going for long, but even in this short time some of the boys had encountered the League of the Green Triangle. And there was not one boy who was not anxious for another encounter.

They little realised that one was to come in a very short time.

WE'LL have a little demonstration in fingerprints this afternoon," said Nelson Lee. "It's a very important branch of crime detection, and there is a great deal to be learned."

Lee had only just come in. He had been busy on a case all the morning, and he had found jobs for two of his "cub" detectives. Simple jobs, it is true, but they had been satisfactorily performed. Now that Nelson Lee was permanently back in Gray's Inn Road he was rapidly building up his old practice.

The boys had spent the morning at their own studies—those boys, that is, who had remained at the academy. They had worked in a free and easy way, and, if anything, they had done more by this method than they would have done in the ordinary class-rooms at St. Frank's. They liked to be on their honour—Nelson Lee trusted them, and they did not let him down.

"Fingerprints are very important," continued Lee. "I shall give you some demonstrations, and show you exactly how and why fingerprints are valuable as a means of identification. I have some excellent lantern-slides here, and after a preliminary lecture on the subject we'll have a look at them."

He commenced the lecture on fingerprints, but it was not destined to be completed. Lee had hardly got thoroughly into his subject before Handforth and Fullwood and Tommy Watson and one or two others allowed their attention to drift. They kept looking towards the window—which was at Nelson Lee's back. Outside, there sounded the rumble of busy traffic in Gray's Inn Road.

"What are you boys looking at?" asked Nelson Lee, interrupting himself, and glancing round.

"I don't know, sir," said Handforth. "A rummy sort of effect. I keep thinking that I can see some green on the glass. But it's impossible. It's full daylight——"

"There it is—clearer now!" interrupted Nipper. "Can't you see, guv'nor? In certain places the window has gone all greenish. It's a sort of luminous effect. I thought that some sign in the street was being reflected——"

"Great Scott!" broke in Reggie Pitt. "Look at it now! It's a triangle!"

"What!"

"Yes—it's a green triangle!" shouted Reggie.

"Good gad!"

Nelson Lee stared in astonishment. The boys were right. That greenish effect had become more and more apparent. It was on the big window—a shimmering triangle of green, with a

Wembley

CUP FINAL TICKETS To Be Won!

Every NELSON LEE reader stands an equal chance of winning one of these tickets in the grand, easy-to-win football competition which starts NEXT WEEK!

white centre. It was luminous and even as he looked it became more and more brilliant. In fact, it suddenly sprang into startling prominence, until the green from it was filling the whole class-room with a weird kind of light.

"There are some words, brothers," said Browne. "Correct me if I am wrong, but surely I can see some words in the centre of the triangle?"

"Well, well," murmured Travers. "What next? By Samson! This is getting interesting."

"Look!" shouted Nipper. "You can read the words now—'The First of the Fathers.' What the dickens can it mean?"

They all stared, fascinated. Nipper was right. The words were perfectly clear. They stood out in white letters, in the centre of that green triangle:

"THE FIRST OF THE FATHERS."

It was a meaningless, cryptic sentence. And as Nelson Lee leapt towards the window, with the boys close at his heels, the whole sign suddenly vanished—green triangle, lettering, and everything.

Lee flung open the windows and looked out. Everything appeared to be normal. He gazed across at the opposite windows, but there was nothing there of a suspicious nature. Down below, however, a closed motor-car, which had been standing against the opposite pavement, was just moving off. And Lee was in time to see a panel in the roof sliding back into position. Some of the boys, crowding at the window, saw it, too.

"That car, sir!" ejaculated Willy. "I'll bet they used a sort of cinematograph projector, or something—and stuck it out of the roof of that car."

The saloon was gliding off into the traffic in the direction of Holborn. It vanished behind a couple of big red and yellow buses.

"Did any of you boys make a note of that car's number?" asked Lee.

"GT 99988," went up a general chorus.

Nelson Lee smiled.

"Good!" he said, approvingly. "I am glad to see that you are already learning the value of quick observation. That's very smart of you, boys."

"I say, you know—GT 99988," said Nipper. "That's a bit significant, guv'nor—unless it's coincidence. 'GT'—that stands for Green Triangle."

"Undoubtedly that luminous sign was thrown upon our windows from that car," said Nelson Lee. "And there can be no doubt that the car was driven by a League man. But I am very puzzled. What can that sign have meant?"

Zzzzzzzzz!

The telephone buzzer sounded insistently. The instrument itself was not here, but in Nelson Lee's own chambers.

He hurried off, passing out of the class-room, going across a big hall, and traversing a short passage which led directly from the Detective Academy into his own chambers. He reached his consulting-room, closed the door, and went to the telephone.

"Yes?" he said, placing the receiver to his ear.

"That you, Lee, old man?" asked a cheery voice.

"Why, Lennard, I thought you were down in Cornwall," said Lee, recognising the familiar tones of Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard.

"Got back this morning," said the Chief Inspector. "That affair down there was a wash-out. Couldn't make head nor tale of it, and I've left the local police to get on with the job. Don't think it's much, anyway. But I didn't ring you up about that. I thought you might like to know of the latest stunt of the Green Triangle."

"Thanks—I'm very interested."

"Just got the news through, from Bury St. Edmunds's," said Lennard. "There was a daring hold-up there not half-an-hour ago. Green Triangle men suddenly appeared, grabbed hold of Sir Edward Handforth, and whisked him away."

"Sir Edward Handforth?" repeated Lee sharply.

"That's him—big man in the City," said Lennard. "M.P., too, I believe—or he was. By glory! Now I come to think of it, two of his sons are in your academy, aren't they?"

"Yes," replied Lee. "But that's neither here nor there. You say that Sir Edward Handforth was kidnapped by the League of the Green Triangle. Do you know any details?"

"Not many," said Lennard. "All the roads are being watched, of course, but you know as well as I do that the kidnappers won't be found. These Triangle men are too infernally clever. They took Sir Edward off right out of the middle of a crowd—with policemen not ten yards off. A piece of absolute impudence."

"And so far the car has not been traced?"

"It went out of Bury St. Edmund's at high speed, and nothing has been seen of it since," replied the inspector. "Two of our men are going down there, but I doubt if they'll do any good. Personally, I think it's only a preliminary move; we shall hear some more of it later on. These Green Triangle blighters are getting on my nerves."

"Let me know if anything fresh crops up, won't you?"

"Of course I will," promised Lennard. "Oh, by the way, Cartwright is down at Thetford and he's personally looking into things. If anybody can get on the track, Cartwright can."

"Yes, the Superintendent is a smart man," agreed Nelson Lee shortly.

THE WORLD'S TWO FUNNIEST BOYS!



Slim Baotle and his brother, Tubby, well deserve that title. Why, you've only got to look at them and you'll laugh: Slim, as thin as a rake; Tubby, fat and ungainly, with the chubbiest, cheeriest face imaginable! And they're always getting into the most amusing scrapes. Their hilarious escapades will make you laugh and laugh—and then laugh! Meet Slim and Tubby in the "Nelson Lee" NEXT WEEK!

HE was thoughtful after he had rung off. Somehow, he couldn't get the thought of Superintendent Cartwright out of his head. He had met Cartwright once or twice, and he instinctively disliked him. He didn't know why. Yet—at this stage—there was certainly no suspicion in Nelson Lee's mind regarding Superintendent Cartwright's real character.

Nelson Lee had something else to think about.

"The First of the Fathers." It was a significant message for the Green Triangle to flash upon the Detective Academy window. Sir Edward Handforth had been kidnapped. Surely there was a connection between the kidnapping and that message.

"The first," muttered Lee. "Does this mean that the fathers of all the boys are to be served in the same way? This looks ugly, and I don't very well see how I can keep the matter to myself. The boys are bound to find out when the early editions of the evening papers come out."

He went back to the class-room, and the boys could see at once that they were in for some news. Nelson Lee's expression was grave.

"I have some serious news, boys—particularly serious for two of you," said Lee quietly. "Now, please keep your heads—please remain calm. Handforth, your father has been kidnapped by the Green Triangle."

Edward Oswald and Willy started up in their seats, and the difference in them was remarkable. Edward Oswald had turned as pale as a sheet, and he was clutching at his desk so tightly that his knuckles showed white. Willy, on the other hand, showed scarcely any sign of emotion. He was better able to control himself than his elder brother.

"The pater—kidnapped!" he said quietly. "Rough luck."

There was a murmur from the others—a murmur of sympathy. It seemed to rouse Edward Oswald Handforth, and the pallor of his cheeks was suddenly changed as the blood came surging back.

"Is it really true, sir?" he asked hoarsely. "I mean, have you any proof——"

"Your father went to Bury St. Edmund's to-day for the purpose of laying a foundation-stone," said Nelson Lee. "When his car got to Bury St. Edmund's, he was seized by Green Triangle men, placed in another car, and driven off. Since then no sign of your father has been seen—or of the car, either."

"And the Green Triangle's done it!" shouted Handforth excitedly. "Let me go, sir! By George, you've got to let me go! I'll dash straight down to Bury St. Edmund's and get on the track!"

"Steady, young 'un," said Nelson Lee. "You can do no good by going to Bury St. Edmund's."

"But that's where my father was kidnapped, sir!"

"I know, but there is not one chance in a thousand that he is anywhere in the neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmund's now," replied Lee. "He may be hundreds of miles away. You must leave this matter in the hands of the police, Handforth. There is very little that you can do—or I either, if it comes to that."

"But—but——"

Handforth paused, almost overcome.

"The first of the fathers!" said Willy, softly.

"Good gad! That's a pretty foul idea, laddie!" said Archie Glenthorne, jamming his monocle into his eye and looking at Willy with deep concern. "I mean to say, you think that that message meant your pater, what?"

"Of course it meant my pater," said Willy. "The Green Triangle put that message on our window—telling us that the first of the fathers had been kidnapped. I expect they're going to collar others later on. Your father, perhaps, Archie."

"Oh, I say, how utterly poisonous," said Archie.

He appeared to be almost stunned by the thought; and the others were equally dumbfounded. There was a tense silence for some moments. This dramatic news had come very much like a bombshell.

It was Edward Oswald Handforth who broke the silence.

"Look here, sir!" he exclaimed, pulling at Nelson Lee's sleeve. "My pater's been kidnapped! I've got to do something—we've all got to do something!"

"And the first thing you must do, Handforth, is to steady yourself," said the famous detective quietly.

"How can I, sir?" demanded Handforth, in a frantic voice. "It's my pater! He's been taken by the Green Triangle—and they may mean to kill him! Let me go off to Bury St. Edmund's, sir!"

"I have already told you that such a journey would be a waste of time——"

"But it'll be something to do, sir!" broke in Handforth hoarsely. "It'll be better than staying here, doing nothing—waiting for news!"

Nelson Lee laid a hand on Edward Oswald's shoulders.

"Unless you can learn to obey orders, Handforth, you will never make a good detective," he said. "Unless you can learn to keep cool under stress there is not much hope for you in this academy."

Handforth started, pulled himself up, and breathed deeply.

"Sorry, sir," he said, in a low voice. "I'll remember in future."

CHAPTER 4.

The End Of The Journey.

DARKNESS had fallen over London, and a thin drizzle was falling as a saloon car glided down the dingy, ill-lit streets by the Thames side in the neighbourhood of Rotherhithe.

It was not a pleasant district; and it was looking its worst in this drizzle.

The evening was still early, however, dusk having only just turned into darkness. The saloon car did not pause until it arrived in a road more dingy than any of the others—a road which lead to a dark, unsavoury-looking wharf. Just beyond flowed the black, swirling waters of the great river.

There were no gates barring the wharf from the road, and it seemed, indeed, that this wharf was a disused one. Everything was ramshackle and dilapidated. Most of the windows of a warehouse, near by, were cracked or broken, or boarded up. There were one or two "For Sale" boards in evidence here and there. Altogether, a dismal spot.

The saloon car went nearly as far as the wharf, and then turned into a little alley like a mews, finally disappearing into a shed, which was evidently a lock-up garage. As soon as the car was inside, two men, appearing mysteriously out of the blackness, closed the doors and locked them on the inside.

"Everything all right?" asked one of the men, approaching the driver as the latter climbed out of the car.

"Yes."

"Anybody spot you as you came along to the wharf?"



The baronet was lifted out of the car and lowered through a trapdoor in the floor of the garage.

"Who'd spot me on a dirty night like this?" asked the chauffeur. "What if I was spotted, anyway? I'm known here, aren't I? I've garaged the car here for months. Nothing suspicious in that."

"How's the old boy?"

"There hasn't been a sound from him yet, although he ought to be waking up pretty soon," said the driver, looking into the back of the car. "We'd better get him out as quickly as possible. Everything ready here?"

"Been waiting for you for a couple of hours," said one of the men.

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH, quite unconscious, was at the back of the saloon. He knew nothing of this ride; he had been unconscious ever since that moment he had stepped into the strange saloon car on the road between Chelmsford and Braintree. And that saloon had taken its time in returning to London; it had deliberately waited until the fall of night.

Sir Edward was now lifted out of the car and laid upon the dirty garage floor. A trapdoor had been opened, revealing a flight of stone steps leading steeply downwards.

Quickly, but carefully, the three men lowered their prisoner down these steps. They were new steps, of concrete, but when the bottom was reached there was a change. If Sir Edward had been conscious he would have known that he was in an aged, disused sewer. It was one of London's ancient conduits—one that had probably been idle for ten or twenty years. It was so narrow and so low that the men were compelled to walk double, dragging their prisoner along with some difficulty.

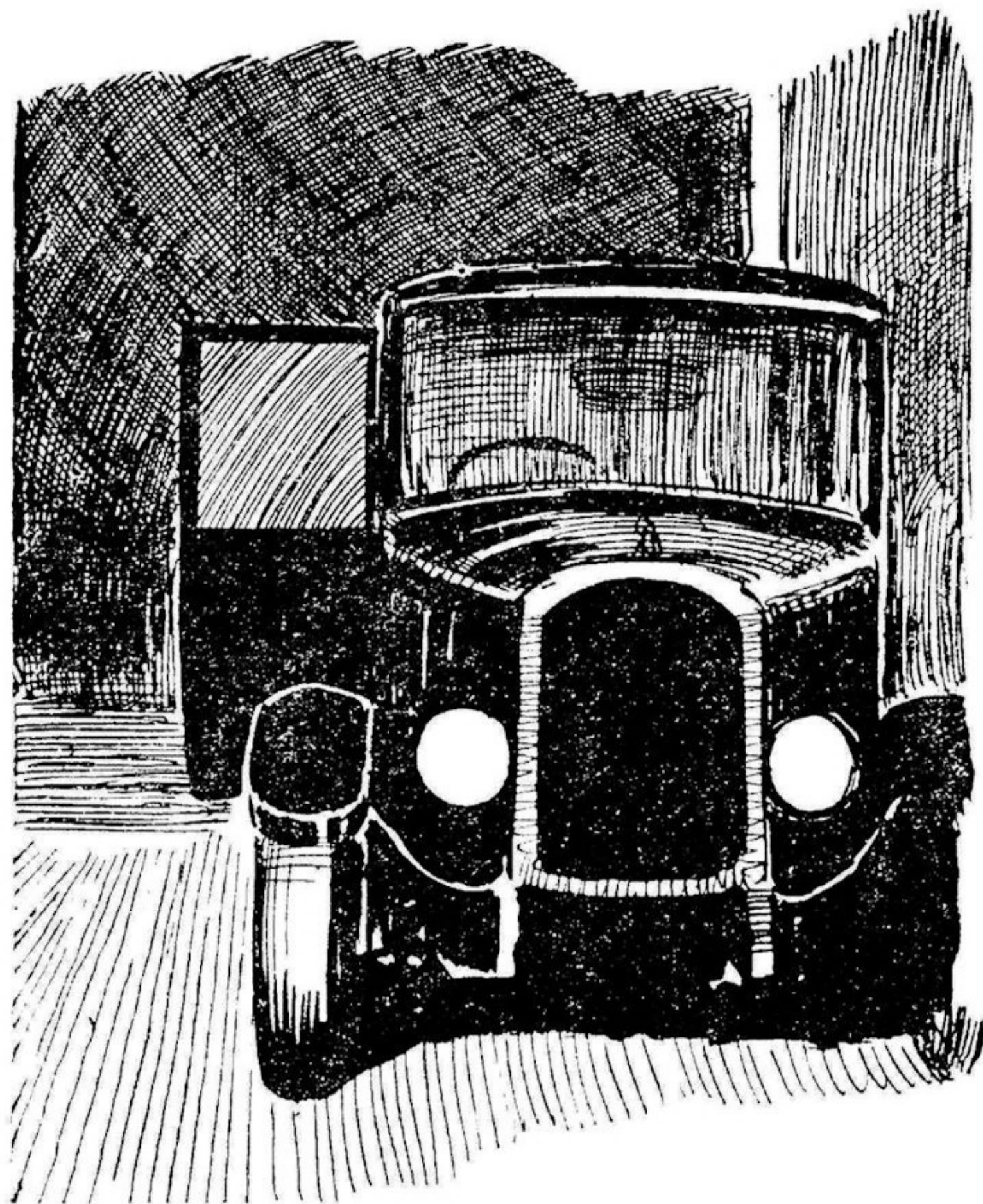
The foremost man carried an electric lantern, lighting the way. The air was stuffy and evil-smelling.

At intervals, along the rough, pitted floor, there were big pools of murky water.

Before long a kind of recess in the sewer was reached; and in this recess there was a heavy door. This door was of oak—solid, formidable, and comparatively new. No doubt it had been fixed there by the Green Triangle agents.

Beyond it there was a small stone chamber. It was a prison—far more impregnable than any prison cell. The walls and the floor and the ceiling were of solid stone. The only ventilation came through some little holes in the top of the oaken door.

"Well, we've got him here," said the chauffeur. "Thanks goodness the job's over. What's next?"



"We've got to go and report to Number Forty-three," said one of the other men. "We can leave the old boy here—he'll be safe enough."

In this stone chamber there was a little folding bed, and the prisoner had been laid upon this. There was a table, a chair, an oil-stove, and a tiny metal stand with a wash-basin. Preparations had been made, apparently, for the reception of such prisoners as Sir Edward Handforth.

One of the men put a match to a small paraffin lamp, and after that they all cleared out, closing and bolting the door behind them. The prisoner was left alone.

ABOUT half an hour later Sir Edward opened his eyes.

He recovered consciousness gradually. For some fifteen minutes he had been slowly coming round; and now that his eyes were open he looked about him dully, with only vague interest. Before long, however, he raised himself on one of his elbows, and gazed round the stone chamber with an expression of bewilderment, which rapidly became more and more pronounced.

"Ridiculous!" muttered Sir Edward gruffly. "I must be dreaming! By gad! What's wrong with my head?"

He put a hand to his forehead, and it felt as though the whole top of his skull was on the point of coming off. He sank back again, resting for some moments. But his brain was clearing all the time, and his curiosity now got the better of his pain.

He looked round again, and he was amazed by what he saw. Damp, dingy stone walls; a cold, cracked stone floor. A tiny table, a kitchen chair, a dimly-burning lamp. A smelly oil-stove flickered in one corner.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated Sir Edward blankly.

He put his feet to the floor, and tried to stand up. But he was dizzy and weak. It felt as though all the strength had been taken from his muscles and sinews. He sat down again, resting his head in his hands. What had happened? Vainly, he tried to recall the recent events. How had he come here? What was the meaning of this extraordinary business?

At first he could not even remember the date, or the day of the week. He was muddled and confused. He tried to recall what had happened last—prior to this dramatic awakening.

"Why, yes!" he said, raising his head, and staring straight before him. "I was in my car travelling somewhere—— That's it! To Bury St. Edmund's! Of course!"

It was coming back to him now.

"To Bury St. Edmund's!" muttered Sir Edward. "That foundation stone affair. But I don't seem to remember—— Yes, that's it! There was another car on the road. We were stopped, and when I was looking into that other car somebody pushed me."

Beyond that he could remember practically nothing. He knew that there had been a bit of a struggle; something had been forced over his face. And Sir Edward, who was a keen-witted man, could easily guess the rest.

"By heaven! I was drugged!" he muttered, in amazement. "That's it—they got me into that car and drugged me. That's why my head is so infernally thick—that's why I feel so weak. They brought me here. But why? And who did it?"

His brain was much clearer now, and when he attempted to get on his feet he found that the numbed feeling was going.

The whole thing was an insoluble mystery. Who could have done this? And for what reason? Was it a gigantic hoax, or had he been seized by some crooks who were hopeful of making money out of him?

He examined his tiny prison, and found that the door was practically as solid as the stone walls. Even if he had had a sledge-hammer in that chamber, he could not have conquered that door. It was like iron itself.

He went back to the little bed, and sat on it. He wanted to think—to puzzle out this singular riddle. But he was not allowed the opportunity.

The sound of footsteps came to his ears. He drew himself up, listening intently. His aggressive jaw became squarely set, and a glare entered his eyes.

THE bolts of the door were shot back, and a key turned in the lock. The door swung open, and Sir Edward stared. Standing on the threshold was a slight, gentlemanly figure attired in a black cloak. The figure entered, and the door was immediately closed.

"Good evening, Sir Edward," said a soft, silky voice.

Sir Edward was too astonished to make any immediate reply. He stared at his visitor in growing amazement. The newcomer's cloak was now open, revealing scrupulously-neat evening dress. Sir Edward saw a man of distinguished appearance—a man with a dome-like forehead.

In a word, he was face to face with Professor Cyrus Zingrave.

There was something compelling and arresting about Zingrave's eyes. They were full of a hidden force. They compelled attention. In a glance Sir Edward could see that this man was no common ruffian. He was a man of brain—a genius. There was that indefinable something about him which indicated, too, that he was on the border-line. Many a genius has only to go one step and he is in the region of insanity.

"Good evening, Sir Edward," repeated the Professor, in a smooth, purring voice.

"Good evening!" grunted Sir Edward. "May I ask who the devil you are? And may I further ask what the devil this means?"

"I am afraid that the accommodation is very poor," said Zingrave, with an eloquent wave of his hand. "However, that will soon be altered. Your stay in this place, Sir Edward, will only be brief. At an early hour you are to be moved into more comfortable quarters."

Sir Edward felt his gore rising.

"What do you mean?" he demanded angrily. "You'd better let me out of this place at once. If this is some idiotic joke——"

"I regret to tell you that it is no joke," interrupted Professor Zingrave. "Lest you should be under any misapprehension, Sir Edward, I will inform you at once that you are a prisoner in the hands of the League of the Green Triangle."

The prisoner started, and his eyes opened wider. For an instant a flash of fear and apprehension shone in his eyes.

"The Green Triangle!" he repeated hoarsely.

"The Green Triangle," nodded Zingrave calmly.

"And you?" asked Sir Edward.

"I am Number One—I am Professor Cyrus Zingrave," replied the Chief. "It is not my custom, Sir Edward, to interview any and every prisoner, but you are such a distinguished gentleman that I thought it advisable to come along in person, and to——"

"You—Zingrave!" broke in Sir Edward, staring. "I might have known it! You infernal rogue! If you think that you can gain anything by this outrageous——"

"One moment, Sir Edward," interrupted Zingrave, holding up a hand. "I would remind you that there are four men just outside this door. At a word from me they will enter. Do not, I beg of you, attempt any act of violence. It will avail you nothing—and brawling, after all, is vulgar. It would pain me exceedingly if I were compelled to call in my men to subdue you by force."

Sir Edward clenched his fists, and his eyes blazed.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked, his voice quivering with suppressed fury. "You've got me here! You've captured me, and you've dragged me into this foul cellar of yours. What is it you want? Money?"

"I am afraid you have a crude mind, Sir Edward," said the professor, shaking his head. "No, it is not money. It will be quite useless for you to offer me a sum for your immediate release."

"I'll offer you nothing, you confounded rogue!"

"You are to be transferred, presently, to a comfortable ship," said the professor gently. "You will be well cared for—and you will have every comfort. Your liberty, however, will be curtailed. And before long, I trust, you will be joined by others. Your solitude will not be of long duration."

Sir Edward breathed hard.

"You mean that you are going to kidnap other people?" he asked tensely.

"Exactly," said the professor. "You, Sir Edward, have the honour to be the first. You are the first of the fathers."

"The first of the fathers!" repeated Sir Edward, in amazement. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Is it necessary for me to remind you that your two sons are pupils of the distinguished Mr. Nelson Lee?"

"By Heaven! You don't mean——"

"I do!" interrupted Zingrave, his voice becoming icy. "One by one, the fathers of Nelson Lee's pupils will be seized—they will join you in your enforced retirement, Sir Edward. One by one they will mysteriously disappear. They will go without leaving a trace, and so gradually at first, but rapidly later, the Terror will spread."

Sir Edward stared at his companion in bewilderment and anger and mystification. There was something so calm and deliberate about Professor Zingrave—something so confident—that Sir Edward could not doubt his word. Yet this whole affair was like a nightmare. It seemed too outrageous to be real—and yet it was real.

"Yes, the Reign of Terror is about to commence," continued Zingrave, his eyes gleaming with evil. "My object, first and foremost, is to draw Nelson Lee's teeth. And while he is busily engaged in looking for such gentlemen as yourself—a fruitless quest, by the way—the whole country will be talking of the exploits of the League of the Green Triangle. When we mark out our next victims they will be willing to listen to reason. You see, Sir Edward, we do things very thoroughly."

Sir Edward Handforth was a sensible man. He had all the forcefulness of his eldest son, but he was not quite so impulsive. What he wanted to do, at this minute, was to take Professor Zingrave by the throat, and to shake him like a rat. But he knew that any such course would be futile.

"And this visit?" he asked contemptuously. "I take it that you have merely come here to gloat over me? There is nothing particularly clever, Professor Zingrave, in what you have done. Any harmless citizen can be kidnapped by a clever gang of ruffians. We do not prepare ourselves against such dirty treachery and villainy."

Professor Zingrave smiled.



"No; I have not come here to gloat," he replied softly. "My object was quite different. I wished to assure myself that you were safe and unharmed—and I furthermore desired to see, with my own eyes, if my instructions had been faithfully carried out. One day, perhaps, I shall see you again, Sir Edward."

He turned, the door opened, and he passed out. Sir Edward clenched his fists with helpless rage as he heard the key turn in the lock, and the bolts shot into their sockets.

CHAPTER 5.

Handforth On The Job.

"**H**ARD luck, old man," said Church sympathetically.

"Pretty tough, Handy," said McClure.

Edward Oswald Handforth did not even hear them. He was sitting in Study D, at the Detective Academy, and his chums were uneasily hovering near him. The "cub" detectives were at liberty now. In fact, it was tea-time—and, exactly in the same way as in the old days at St. Frank's, the fellows were allowed to have tea in their own private quarters. There were studies at the Detective Academy, and they were shared in the same way as of old.

Handforth was subdued. Those warning words of Nelson Lee had affected him. But only for a time. Suddenly he rose to his feet, and there was a purposeful light in his eyes.

"It's all very well for Mr. Lee to tell me to keep calm, and to obey orders, and to remain cool under stress!" he said huskily. "But there's an exception to every rule, isn't there?"

"Not with a detective, old man," said Mac gently. "You mustn't allow yourself to get excited."

"I'm not excited," denied Handforth. "I'm worried! My pater has been grabbed by those rotten Green Triangle men. And nothing's being done!"

"That's not right!" put in Church. "How do you know that nothing is being done? I expect the police are busy all over the country."

"The police!" grunted Handforth.

"No need to be so contemptuous," said McClure. "The police are pretty smart—the smartest police in the world, anyway. And if they can't find your pater, Handy, what chance have you got?"



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know of a good rib tickler send it along now—and win a prize! A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; all other readers whose efforts are published will receive a pocket wallet or a penknife. Address your jokes to: "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

Lucky Boy!

The head of a large shop, while passing through the packing-room, observed a boy lounging against a case of goods and whistling cheerily. The chief stopped and looked at him.

"How much do you get a week?" he demanded.

"A pound," came the brief retort.

"Then here's a week's money. Now clear out!"

The boy pocketed the money and departed.

"How long has he been in our employ?" the chief asked the head of the department.

"Never, so far as I know," was the reply.

"He has just brought me a note from another firm!"

A False Alarm!

A young gentleman friend of Nellie's had come to spend the afternoon and evening at her home. The party were laughing and chatting at the supper-table when Nellie's brother shouted across to the visitor:

"Oh, Howard, you should have seen the fine big soldier who came to see Nellie yesterday! Gee! He was some swell! He was talking to Nellie, and he had his arm——"

"Johnny," said his sister, blushing deeply. Whereat Johnny looked surprised.

"Well, I was only going to say that he had his arm——"

"Johnny," said his mother sternly, "that's enough from you!"

"Well, I was only going to say he had his arm——"

"Johnny, leave the room at once!" said his father angrily.

Johnny began to cry, and slowly moved towards the door. As he opened it, he said between his sobs:

"I was only going to say he had his Army clothes on!"

And No Wonder!

Jack had received an invitation to a fancy-dress dance. He did not know what costume to wear. At last a brilliant idea struck him; he would go as the NELSON LEE. Accordingly, on the night of the dance he appeared

"I want to go to Bury St. Edmund's!" said Handforth obstinately. "That's where my father was kidnapped—and that's where I ought to be. I might be able to get on the trail."

"Not at Bury St. Edmund's," said Church. "Your father won't be there now, Handy. He's been carried miles away, I expect. These Green Triangle people do things thoroughly."

But, of course, it was useless to argue with Handforth. He was never open to argument at the best of times. He generally made up his mind, and whether he came to a sensible conclusion or a senseless conclusion, he was just as determined to go ahead in his own way.

"It wouldn't be so bad if Mr. Lee himself went out into Suffolk," he said. "But as far as I can see Mr. Lee's doing nothing. None of us is doing anything! What are we here for? Why are we being trained as detectives? What's the good of this academy, anyhow?"

"My dear chap, it's no good talking like that," said McClure. "Let's have some tea. Perhaps the Green Triangle will make another move soon, and then we shall have an opening——"

"Tea!" said Handforth fiercely. "Who wants any tea? I'm surprised at you chaps for thinking of grub at a time like this!"

He stuck his hands into his pockets, and paced up and down the study. He was like a cat on hot bricks. He couldn't rest. And presently he made for the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Church quickly.

"I want to find Mr. Lee!" said Handforth, pausing in the doorway. "I'm going to put it to him straight. He's got to let me do something."

He went out, and Church and McClure glanced at one another.

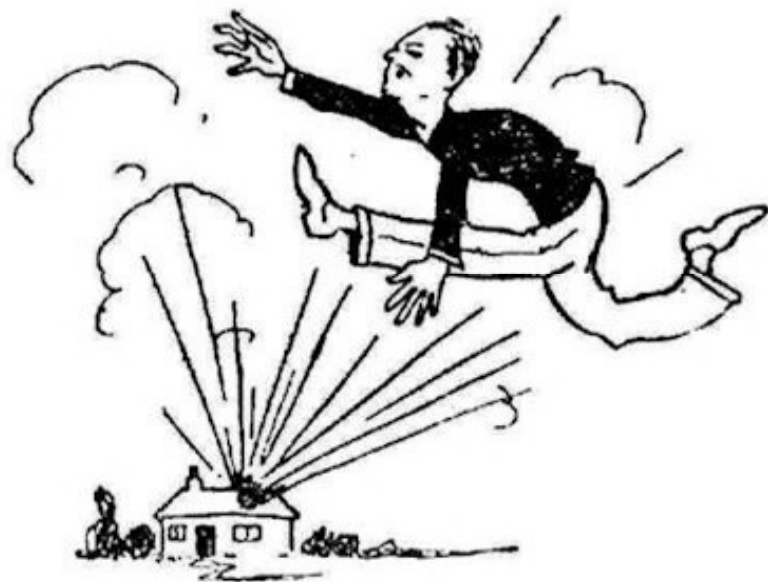
"Better let him go," murmured Mac. "Mr. Lee will cool him down."

Handforth only got as far as the hall, however, when he changed his mind. He had intended to go to Nelson Lee, and to argue with him, but in the hall he paused. He remembered Lee's former attitude: What was the good of going to him now?

And, acting on a sudden impulse, Handforth seized his overcoat and hat, and he quietly slipped off the premises.

He felt rather guilty a minute later, as he was walking down Gray's Inn Road. He felt that he had deceived Church and McClure; but it was too late to go back and explain. Besides, if he went back they would only grab him, and keep him indoors by force. He was out now, and he would stay out.

As for disobeying orders, and as for getting excited and falling short of the requirements of a genuine detective, he dismissed all these thoughts without a qualm.



in his original costume, made up entirely of covers of the NELSON LEE. Before very long a girl friend approached him, and said:

"You must be very fond of the NELSON LEE."

"Fond of the NELSON LEE!" was the reply. "Why, I'm simply wrapped up in it!"

Safety First!

Murphy had gone hunting for a gas leak with a match. When he came to his senses some hours later in the hospital, he found several nurses and a doctor bending anxiously over his head.

"Good gracious, man," said the doctor, "I should have thought you'd have had more sense than to look for an escape of gas with a lighted match!"

"Faith," retorted the sufferer, "but 'twas a safety match I used, doctor!"

Cheery!

"Dear me," cried Mrs. Careless, as she rushed into her neighbour's house, "I've broken my looking-glass! Seven years' bad luck now, I suppose."

"Don't you believe it!" retorted the neighbour. "A friend of mine broke 'ers, and she didn't have no seven years' bad luck. She was killed in an explosion a few days later, so you have no need to worry."

They Were Both Wrong!

"Yes," said Swagger, "this is a turkese ring."

"Excuse me," said his companion, "the correct pronunciation of that word is 'turkwoise.'"

"No, 'turkese,' excuse me."

"But I say 'turkwoise.'"

"Well, let's go to a jeweller and ask him."

"In order to settle a wager," said Swagger to the jeweller, "would you mind telling me if the correct pronunciation of the stone in this ring is 'turkese' or 'turkwoise'?"

The jeweller took the ring and examined it carefully, then, turning to the two men, he said:

"The correct pronunciation is glass!"

What A Team!

In a recent football match the goalkeeper failed to stop a ball which was travelling slowly. When the ball was centred, one of the full-backs said to the goalkeeper:

"How did you manage to let that one through?"

"Well," the goalie replied dryly, "after the ball had passed about ten other chaps I hadn't the heart to stop it!"

His father had been seized by the League of the Green Triangle. And by hook or by crook Handforth was going to the scene of the kidnapping. His logic was simple, if lacking in soundness. The best place to start an investigation was on the scene of the crime. Why stay in London, cooling his heels, until something else happened?

When Handforth got into Holborn he slowed his pace. He didn't quite know which way to go. Perhaps he had better get on a bus and go to Liverpool Street station. He could get a train for Bury St. Edmund's—

He remembered, now that it was too late, that he had scarcely any money on him. A few shillings, but certainly not enough to buy a ticket for Bury St. Edmund's. In any case, it was hardly likely that he would get an immediate train. And the service to Bury St. Edmund's was not particularly rapid, at the best of times. It was easy enough to get to Ipswich or Cambridge quickly—but Bury St. Edmund's lay in between, and it wasn't always easy to get a fast train.

"My Austin Seven!" said Handforth abruptly.

One or two passers-by looked at him curiously, for he had uttered the words aloud, but he took no notice. He made a wild rush across the road, through the traffic, and leapt upon a moving bus. He would go straight to Grosvenor Avenue.

This was his home. And his faithful little Austin Seven was snugly in the garage there, ready for immediate use. He could fill the petrol-tank from the main supply—there was always plenty of petrol in Sir Edward's garage.

He was excited over this plan as he rode on the bus. It appealed to his adventurous spirit. A dash by road to the scene of the kidnapping—and then, perhaps, an investigation. How glorious it would be if he—alone—could find out what had become of his father!

And Handforth was such an optimist that he even toyed lovingly with this thought. He did not regard it as a wild dream.

By this time he had forgotten Nelson Lee and Nipper and Church and McClure, and all the other members of the Detective Academy. He was doing this job on his own. He was playing a lone hand. Well, he would show everybody! His father had been kidnapped by the League of the Green Triangle, and he would go all out to effect a rescue.

He decided he would not see his mother when he arrived home. His mother might ring up Nelson Lee, and then—No, Handforth wasn't taking any chances.

He got off the bus at New Bond Street, walked a short distance down, and turned into Grosvenor Avenue, which was a quiet, select, exclusive residential thoroughfare leading off from Grosvenor Square. He knew every inch of the way here, for he was familiar with every hole and corner of the neighbourhood.

Very soon he dived into the narrow openings of a mews. It led to the back of his home, where the garage was situated. It was a quiet, secluded backwater, and although he could dimly hear the rumble of the busy traffic, here everything was sleepy and quiet.

Rather to his surprise, he found the garage doors wide open; and standing just inside was his father's limousine. The sight of it pulled him up short.

"By George!" he muttered. "So the chauffeur's got back already! I forget his name now—a new chap, I believe. I'd like to have a word with him before I start off."

He considered the point. The chauffeur was bound to be somewhere close by. Hale was his name. Yes, that was it—Hale. No doubt Hale was indoors now, giving his report to Lady Handforth. It might be a good idea to wait, and have a word with the man—

But Handforth shook his head. What good would it do? The chauffeur obviously knew nothing. Sir Edward had been forced out of the limousine, and had been carried off in another car. Hale knew nothing. He had been kept at Bury St. Edmund's by the police, anyhow—at least, he hadn't been able to pursue the kidnappers. And now he had got home, minus his master. If Handforth questioned him, the man might easily inform Lady Handforth, and then the fat would be in the fire. Far better for Edward Oswald to get off as quickly as possible, while nobody was about.

Having come to this conclusion, he strode towards the back of the roomy garage, and found his Austin Seven tucked away in a corner, exactly as he had left it.

He was about to test the petrol-tank when he suddenly remembered something. When he had brought the car in the garage last, there had been a clatter from underneath. Something was loose—a brake-rod, or an oil-tray, or something of that sort. Something trifling, but nevertheless it needed fixing before the car could be used again.

Handforth decided to see about it at once.

He pulled his electric torch from his pocket, and dived under the little car.

There was something uncannily lucky about that action of his. He might easily have left that adjustment of his until the last—and until he had filled up the petrol-tank. And in that case the whole course of his evening's adventures would have been altered.

HE had hardly got under the car when he heard footsteps, and he caught in his breath. The footsteps were made by two men, at least, who came right into the garage. It was obvious that they knew nothing of the youngster who sprawled beneath the Austin.

"No need for you to have come here at all," one of the men was saying—and Handforth recognised the voice of Hale, his father's new chauffeur.

"I only wanted to remind you that you've got to report at Powell's Wharf at half-past seven."

"Can't you give a man a chance?" Hale demanded angrily. "I haven't been back for more than half-an-hour."



The grating opened suddenly. The two "cub" detectives felt their ankles gripped and the next moment they had been pulled down into the dark cavity.

"Don't get excited No. 204," said the other man mildly. "What's biting you? Didn't everything go all right?"

"Everything went off like clockwork," said Hale.

"And by this time I expect his 'nibs' is in Rotherhithe," remarked the other man. "Glory! Who'd think of looking for him there? The police are turning Suffolk inside out!"

Handforth nearly betrayed himself. It was as much as he could do to prevent himself from shouting. His mind was in a whirl. Was he hearing aright, or was he imagining this? It was too stupendous—too staggering.

Hale had been called "No. 204." Members of the League of the Green Triangle were known by numbers, rather than names! And Hale, Sir Edward's new chauffeur, was a Triangle man! A traitor! Handforth, very startled, remained motionless, listening intently.

"Better not say too much here," muttered Hale. "Can't be too careful, you know."

"Getting the wind up?" asked the other, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice. "Nobody can hear us talking here."

"All the same, we've had orders not to talk at all," said Hale. "You'd better be getting along, No. 180."

"Well, don't forget, Powell's Wharf at half-past seven," said the other. "No. 43 will be raging mad if you're late. You know what he's like."

"That's the same place as the old boy's been taken to," said Hale thoughtfully. "Wonder why I've got to report there?"

"I fancy you'll have some more work to do," said No. 180.

They drifted off towards the entrance, and Handforth was left alone. He was thankful that he had not revealed his presence. He had overheard something of infinite value.

It had never occurred to him that Hale, the chauffeur, could have been mixed up in this ugly business. The police had not had the faintest suspicion against the chauffeur. For hadn't Sir Edward Handforth been kidnapped in full view of thousands of people, in the very middle of Bury St. Edmund's? How could Hale be in any way connected with that dramatic incident?

If Handforth had any impulse at all during those first tense minutes, it was to swarm out from beneath the Austin, and to slog into the chauffeur with all his strength. But, fortunately, he checked this desire. No good purpose would be served by such methods.

The training that Handforth had already had at the Detective Academy stood him in good stead. Here was a chance for him to distinguish himself! And caution must be his watchword. If Hale and this other man discovered him, they would deal with him ruthlessly. There wasn't a doubt that they were Triangle men—and, as such, they would go to the extreme limit in order to ensure his silence.

As he lay there, he pondered over what he had heard. By this time the two men had passed out of the garage, and Handforth was alone again. But he did not move.

There had been some talk of Hale reporting at Powell's Wharf at seven-thirty. Where was Powell's Wharf? Somewhere near the river, obviously.

"Rotherhithe!" muttered Handforth gloatingly. "By George, of course! That other chap said something about 'the old boy' being at the same place where Hale had to report! That's Powell's Wharf! They've taken my pater to Rotherhithe, and they're holding him a prisoner there!"

At this point Handforth experienced a sense of keen admiration for Nelson Lee. The great detective had said, from the very first, that it would be utterly useless going down to Bury St. Edmund's. And Lee had undoubtedly been right. For Handforth, more by accident than design, had learned that Sir Edward was even now in London. The Green Triangle agents had brought him straight here—straight to Rotherhithe. It was a starting-point for an investigation, and Handforth, with all his usual optimism, decided to undertake this mission single-handed.

His obvious course would have been to make for the nearest telephone, and to ring up Nelson Lee. But he was so excited—so overwhelmed with relief and anxiety mingled; that all he wanted to do was to get off to Rotherhithe; to find Powell's Wharf.

If he hurried, he could get there long before half-past seven. By George, that was a good idea! He would get there first, and he would wait for Hale—No. 204—to come. He would have all the advantage, for he would be able to watch Hale, and see exactly where he went.

CHAPTER 6.

Face to Face!

"WE can't understand it, sir," said McClure worriedly.

He and Church were standing in Nelson Lee's private sitting-room, and Nipper was there, too. Nelson Lee was looking thoughtful.

"You say that Handforth told you that he was coming to speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"When was this?"

"Only about half an hour ago, sir."

"And you haven't seen him since?"

"No, sir; he went out," said Mac. "He must have gone out, because his overcoat and cap are missing."

"Well, you needn't worry, boys," said Nelson Lee. "We must excuse Handforth for being a little overwrought. The news that his father has been kidnapped has naturally affected him. I am afraid he is rather bowled over."

"It's awful rough luck, sir," said Church.

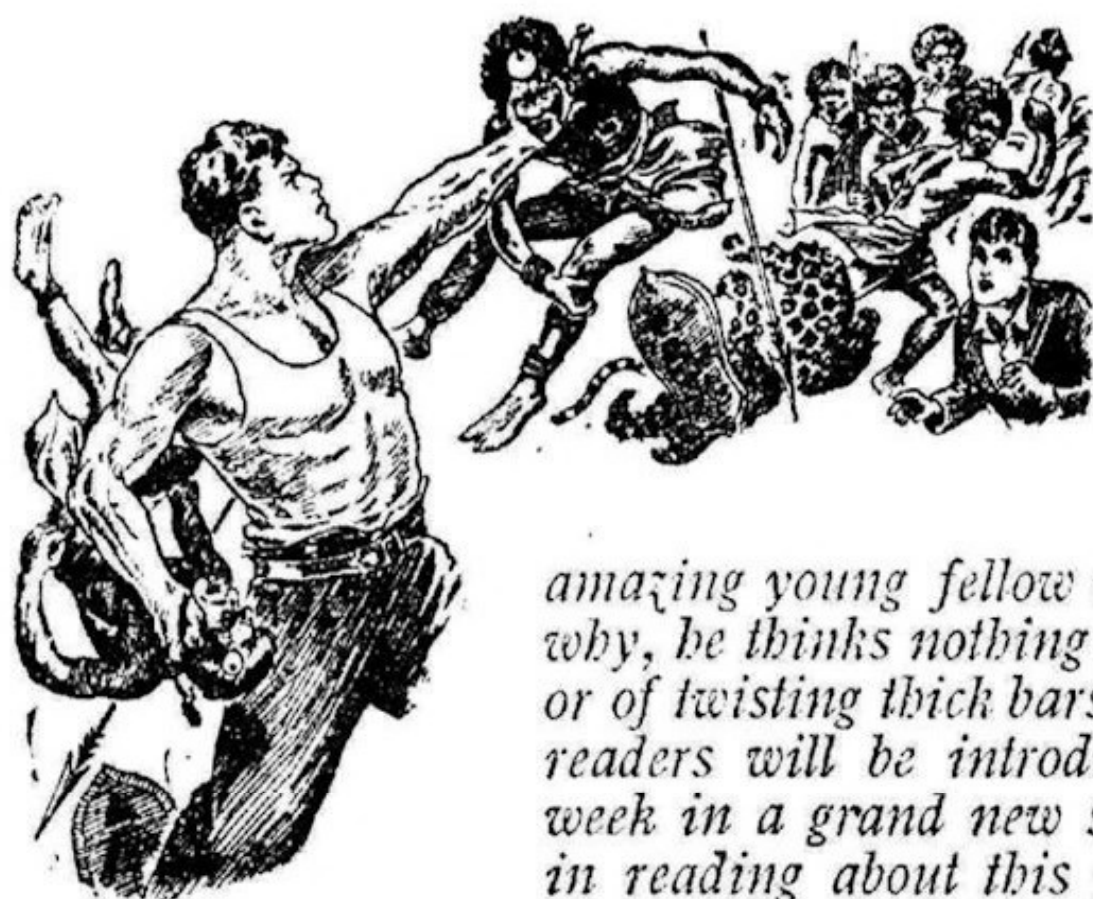
"Perhaps he has only gone out for a walk—or it is possible that he has gone home to see his mother," continued Lee. "In any case, I shouldn't worry. He'll turn up again soon."

"I hope so, sir," said McClure. "But you know what Handy is—always doing silly, impulsive things. There's no telling what danger he'll get himself into. Is there anything we can do, sir, to help? I wish you'd find us a job."

Nelson Lee smiled.

"Just because you boys belong to a Detective Academy, you think that you should be engaged on detective work every day," he said dryly. "But I'm afraid it can't be done, young 'un. As for helping in this search for Sir Edward Handforth—— Yes, come in!"

The door opened, and Mrs. Jones, the housekeeper, entered. She was carrying a card.



PRIMO THE TERRIBLE WILL MAKE YOU THRILL!

Who is this Primo? What is he? He comes from the backwoods of Australia. He's one of the world's wonders! An amazing young fellow in all truth. Enormously strong—why, he thinks nothing of picking up two men in one hand, or of twisting thick bars of iron into knots! "Nelson Lee" readers will be introduced to Primo the Terrible next week in a grand new series of short stories. You'll revel in reading about this young giant's amazing adventures.

"There's a gentleman in the consulting-room, sir," she said. "He looked so worried, poor old dear, that I showed him straight in."

"I think I told you, Mrs. Jones, that I could see nobody except by appointment," remarked Lee reprovingly.

"I know that, sir, but he was so rare upset-like that I hadn't the heart to turn him away," said the housekeeper. "Such a dear old gentleman, too."

"All right, Mrs. Jones," said Lee, with a twinkle. "I'll go to him at once."

He took the card and turned to the boys.

"You'd better be getting back next door," he said. "As soon as I have dealt with this prospective client—and I am afraid I shall have to disappoint him—I am going to Scotland Yard. If there is any further news concerning Handforth's father, I will telephone you from there."

"Can I come with you, guv'nor?" asked Nipper eagerly.

"I'm afraid not, young 'un," replied Lee.

Nipper did not argue—he never attempted to do so. He knew that Nelson Lee's word was final. So he and Church and McClure went off, and Nelson Lee himself rose to his feet, looking at the slip of pasteboard in his fingers.

It bore the inscription, "Sir Montgomery Chester, Littleton Hall, Suffolk." And on the back, scribbled in pencil, were these words: "About G. T. Very important."

"H'm!" murmured Nelson Lee.

He went into his consulting-room and found his visitor there. Sir Montgomery Chester was sitting in the easy chair, close to the fire. He was a bent-shouldered old gentleman, with long white hair and with a benevolent face. His beard was white, and his eyes twinkled behind big spectacles.

"Ah, Mr. Lee, this is extremely good of you!" he said eagerly, as he rose to his feet.

"Remain exactly as you are," broke in Nelson Lee quietly. "If you move as much as a finger, Professor Zingrave, I'll shoot you down!"

Within a split second Lee's revolver was out, the barrel pointing wickedly at his visitor's chest. The imposture was clever, but it had not deceived Nelson Lee.

A chuckle came from the old gentleman.

"Well, well! My congratulations, my dear Lee," came a soft, silky voice. "I really did not think that you would be so keen-eyed—so clever. Well done!"

They faced one another. Lee had hardly been prepared for such audacity as this. A personal visit! Professor Cyrus Zingrave walking right into his rooms. It was astounding.

But the honours were certainly with Lee. He had not been deceived.

"I shall be obliged, Professor Zingrave, if you will explain why you have come to me in this way," said Lee. "In the meantime, please remember that I have you covered, and that the slightest move will mean your death."

"I don't doubt you, Mr. Lee," said Professor Zingrave, nodding. "But you are quite wrong in assuming that I have come here in a hostile spirit. I am unarmed."

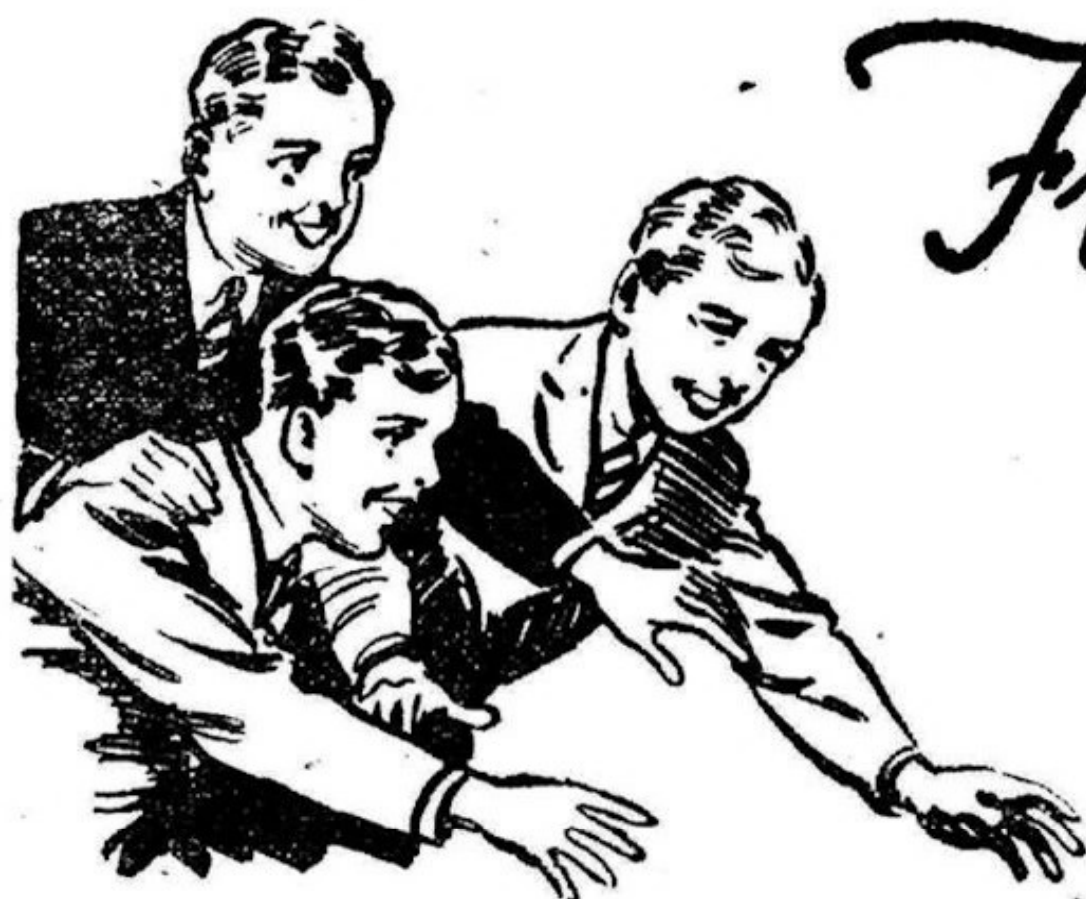
"We shall see," said Nelson Lee.

Without taking his eyes off Professor Zingrave, he reached forward and pressed a button on the desk.

The door opened, and Biggleswade entered. Biggleswade was one of the senior boys of the academy—he had lately been in the Sixth Form at St. Frank's. He opened his eyes rather widely as he took in the situation.

"Biggleswade, search this gentleman," said Nelson Lee, without moving, and without taking his gaze off the professor.

(Continued on page 24.)

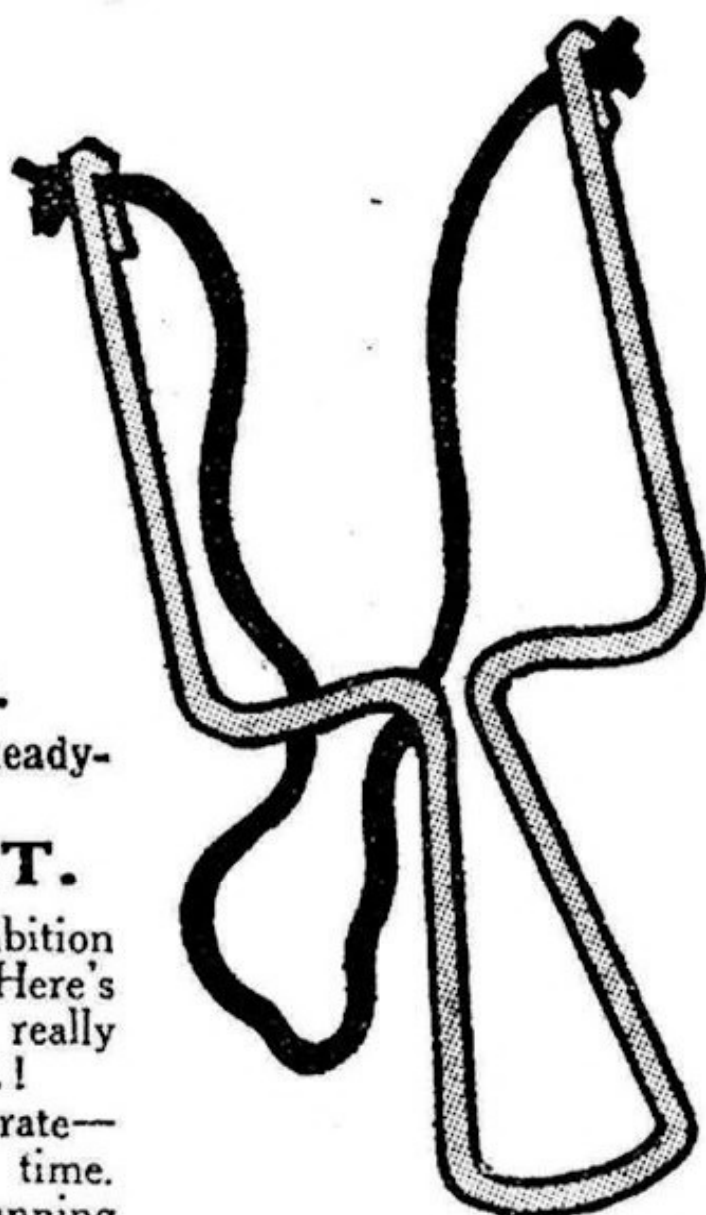


Free Gifts for of the "NE

NEXT WEEK'S
Splendid Free Gift.

"A Swallow-Flight"
**BOOMERANG
THROWER.**

You'll be able to enjoy
yourselves for hours and
hours with this topping
Gift, chums. Easy to
operate—remarkably effec-
tive results!



2nd Free Gift.
A "Shoot-straight" Ready-
to-use

CATAPULT.

It's every boy's ambition
to possess a catapult. Here's
your chance to get a really
excellent one—FREE!

Strong, reliable, accurate—
a bull's-eye every time.
Look out for this stunning
Gift in **TWO WEEKS' TIME.**

**THESE
DANDY
FREE
GIFTS
FOR
YOU!**

TELL ALL YOUR PALS ABOUT THIS AMAZING OFFER—

"S.O.S."

BY-EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Dramatically the Indian Air Mail Liner sends the message over the ether—"Help! Help!" Then silence—and yet another plane, together with its valuable cargo, has disappeared—completely vanished from human ken!

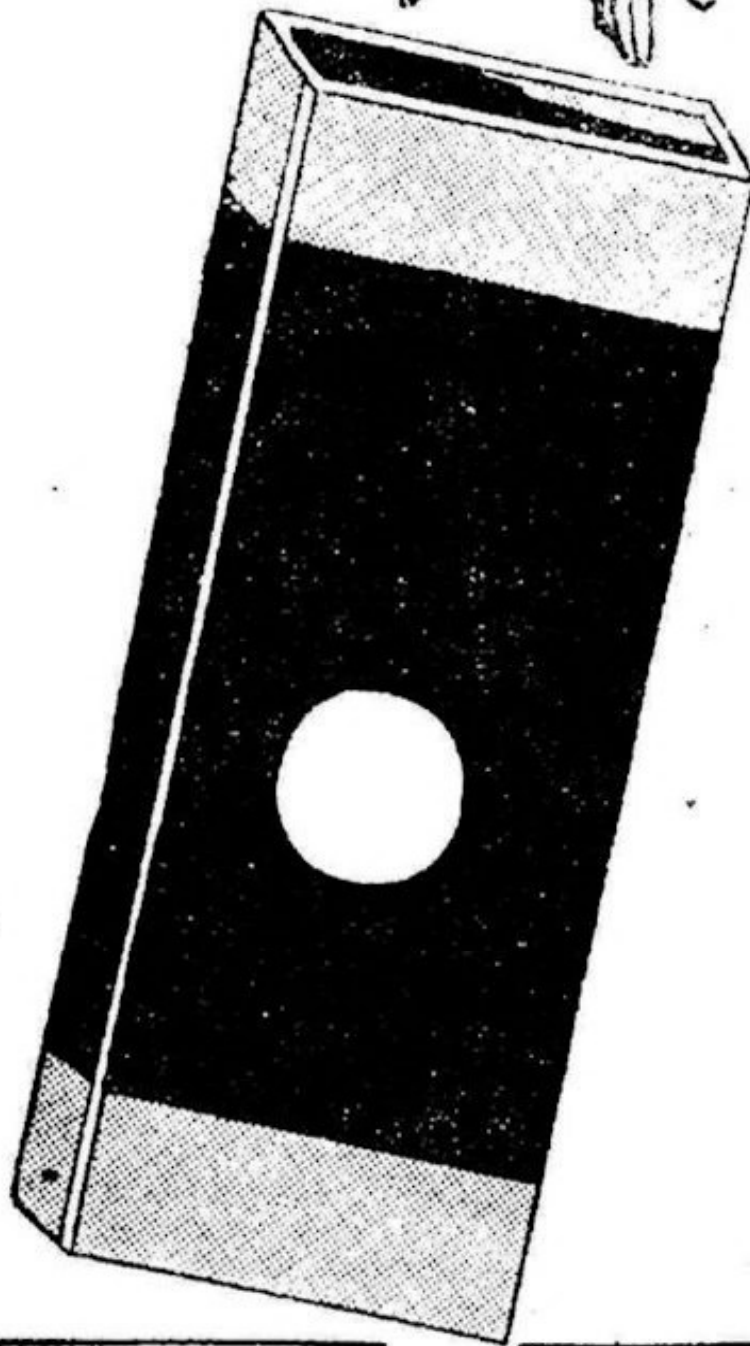
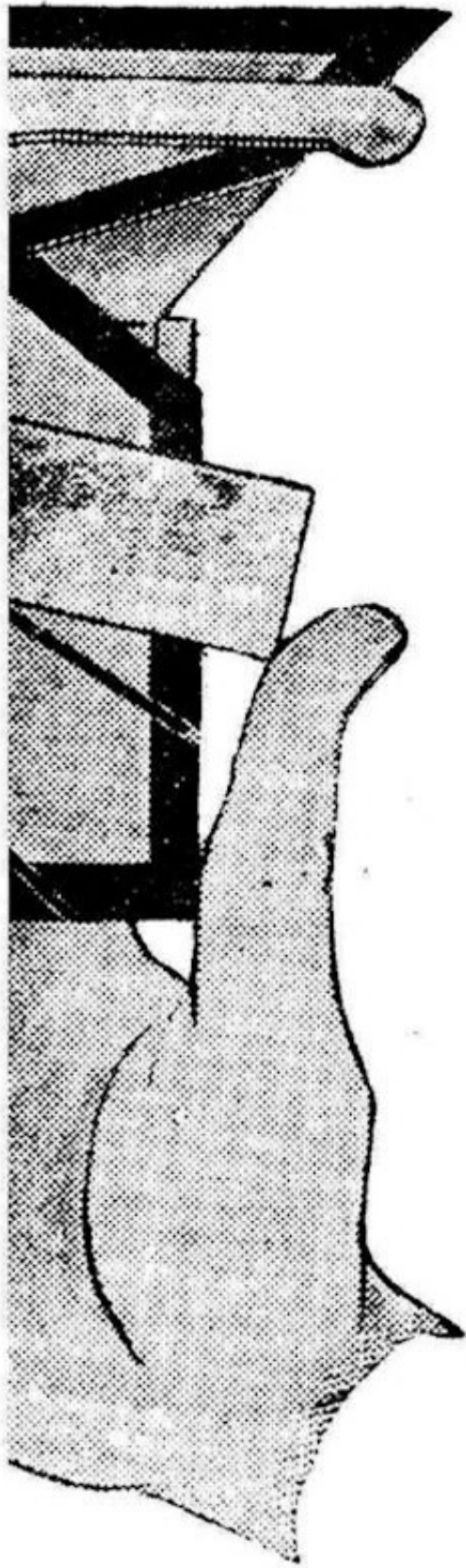
Here's mystery; amazing, startling! What's the solution? And is that hideous hunchbacked dwarf who calls himself Dacca connected with the series of extraordinary occurrences which have baffled the world?

That's what Nelson Lee sets out to discover—assisted by his "cub" detectives and Lord Dorrimore—in the magnificent new series of stories which is starting next week.

PRIMO THE TERRIBLE!

Wrecked on a coral island! Primo, the super-man, soon finds himself mixed up in all sorts of hair-raising adventures—with his enormous strength standing him in good stead. You'll marvel at the exploits of this amazing new character, chums!

ERY READER N LEE"



3rd Free Gift.

A "Home-Jazz"

KAZOO HUMMER.

No more dull hours for you when you've got this dandy Free Gift. All the latest dance tunes: all the famous classics—this Kazoo Hummer will reproduce them faithfully and melodiously. Make sure you get this splendid Gift—it's coming in **THREE WEEKS' TIME.**

—THEY'LL WANT TO GET THESE WONDERFUL GIFTS, TOO!

SLIM AND TUBBY!

The first escapade of these two champion "funny merchants" will make the tears come to your eyes. Imagine Tubby and Slim trying to pilot an aeroplane and knowing nothing about how to do it—you can guess what happens. This is a real full-o'-laughs feature.

"THE IRON SPEEDMAN!"

By ALFRED EDGAR.

Hurtling along at a hundred miles an hour! The tiniest miscalculation means a terrible crash. But young Jim Ross doesn't make mistakes, and he's quite calm as, sitting behind the big wheel, the racer thunders on. And beside him Joe Cooper grins admiringly. By Jove! what a driver! Why, some day—and not in the very distant future—Jim will be famous as the world's greatest and most daring speedman.

Motor-racing thrills—this stunning new serial is crammed with 'em! Alfred Edgar will hold you in breathless suspense as Jim and Joe career along the perilous path of motor-racing fame and fortune! Don't miss the first instalment of this top-notch story—next week!



Free Gifts for EVERY READER of the "NELSON LEE"

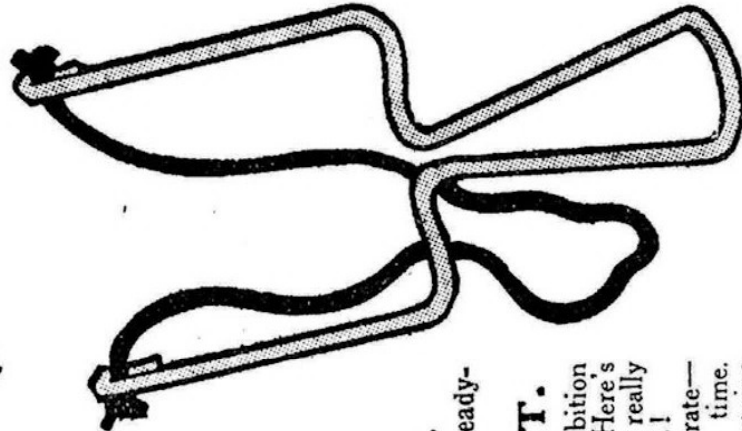


NEXT WEEK'S

Splendid Free Gift.

"A Swallow-Flight" BOOMERANG THROWER.

You'll be able to enjoy yourselves for hours and hours with this topping Gift, chums. Easy to operate—remarkably effective results!



2nd Free Gift.

A "Shoot-straight" Ready-to-use

CATAPULT.

It's every boy's ambition to possess a catapult. Here's your chance to get a really excellent one—FREE! Strong, reliable, accurate—a bull's-eye every time. Look out for this stunning Gift in TWO WEEKS' TIME.

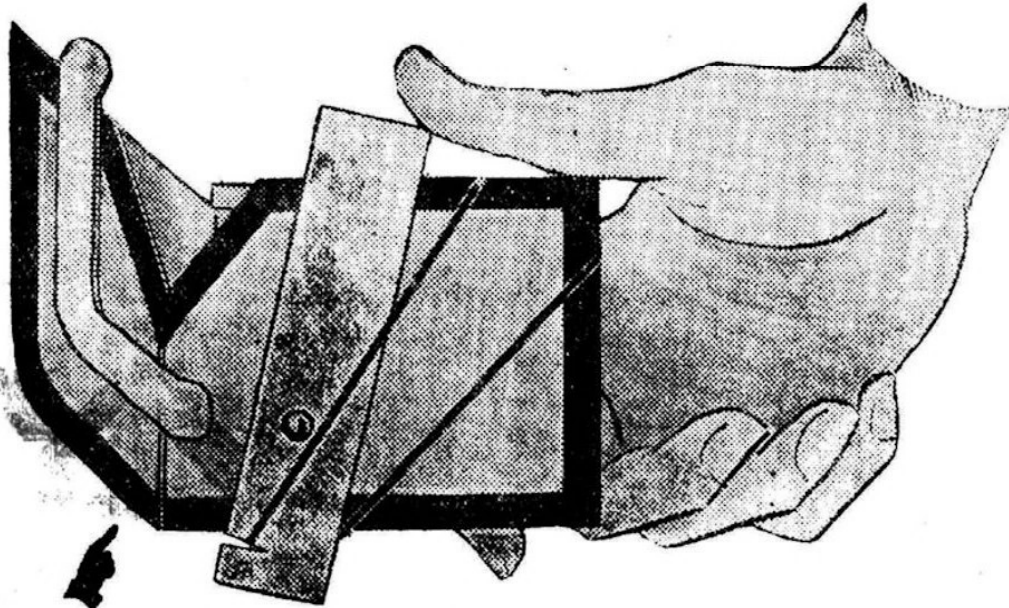
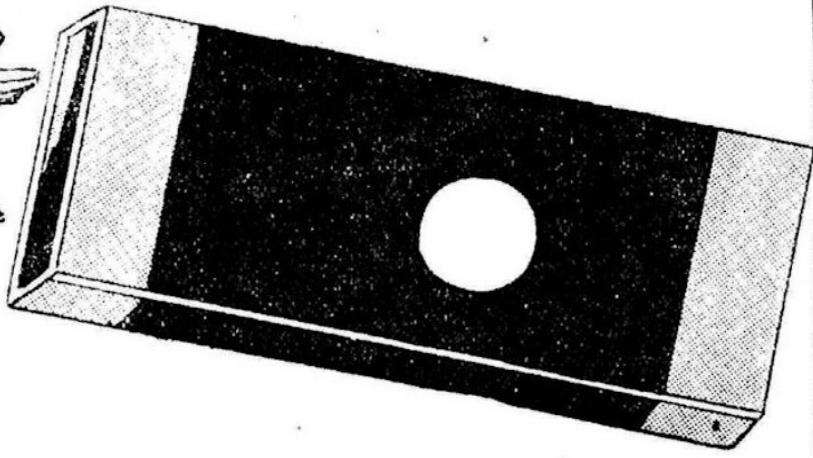


3rd Free Gift.

A "Home-Jazz"

KAZOO HUMMER.

No more dull hours for you when you've got this dandy Free Gift. All the latest dance tunes: all the famous classics—this Kazoo Hummer will reproduce them faithfully and melodiously. Make sure you get this splendid Gift—it's coming in THREE WEEKS' TIME.



THESE DANDY FREE GIFTS FOR YOU!

TELL ALL YOUR PALS ABOUT THIS AMAZING OFFER—

—THEY'LL WANT TO GET THESE WONDERFUL GIFTS, TOO!

"S.O.S."

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

Dramatically the Indian Air Mail Liner sends the message over the ether—"Help! Help!" Then silence—and yet another plane, together with its valuable cargo, has disappeared—completely vanished from human ken! Here's mystery; amazing, startling! What's the solution? And is that hideous hunchbacked dwarf who calls himself Dacca connected with the series of extraordinary occurrences which have baffled the world? That's what Nelson Lee sets out to discover—assisted by his "cub" detectives and Lord Dorrmore—in the magnificent new series of stories which is starting next week.

PRIMO THE TERRIBLE!

Wrecked on a coral island! Primo, the super-man, soon finds himself mixed up in all sorts of hair-raising adventures—with his enormous strength standing him in good stead. You'll marvel at the exploits of this amazing new character, chums!

SLIM AND TUBBY!

The first escapade of these two champion "funny merchants" will make the tears come to your eyes. Imagine Tubby and Slim trying to pilot an aeroplane and knowing nothing about how to do it—you can guess what happens. This is a real full-o-laugh feature.

By ALFRED EDGAR.

Hurling along at a hundred miles an hour! The tiniest miscalculation means a terrible crash. But young Jim Ross doesn't make mistakes, and he's quite calm as, sitting behind the big wheel, the racer thunders on. And beside him Joe Cooper grins admiringly. By Jove! what a driver! Why, some day—and not in the very distant future—Jim will be famous as the world's greatest and most daring speedman. Motor-racing thrills—this stunning new serial is crammed with them! Alfred Edgar will hold you in breathless suspense as Jim and Joe career along the perilous path of motor-racing fame and fortune! Don't miss the first instalment of this top-notch story—next week!

"THE IRON SPEEDMAN!"

THE MAN WHO VANISHED !

(Continued from page 21)

"Search him, sir?" asked Biggleswade blankly.

"Yes, and do it thoroughly," ordered Lee. "Search every one of his pockets, the lining of his jacket, and make sure that you miss nothing. Be careful, too, that you do not get between this man and my revolver."

"Oh, rather, sir!" said Biggleswade.

He didn't know what on earth it all meant, but he carried out his instructions, and within fifteen seconds he triumphantly produced a curious pistol from one of Zingrave's inner pockets. There was a strange bulginess about the barrel—a silencing apparatus. There was a mocking light in the professor's eyes as Biggleswade placed the weapon on the desk.

"Merely a precautionary measure," said Zingrave. "I had no intention of using it. Lee. You don't believe me? What a pity."

Biggleswade continued his search, but he found nothing else of any importance. He rifled the professor's pockets completely, and when he had finished he stood back, rather breathless.

"That will do, Biggleswade, thank you," said Nelson Lee. "You can go now. Remain at hand, however, and be ready to come if I ring."

"O.K., chief," said Biggleswade, as he went out.

"Now, Professor Zingrave, we can talk more comfortably," said Nelson Lee, as he sat down and placed his pistol handily near. "I suspected from the first that you were lying to me."

"A lie—and yet not a lie," said the professor. "I had no intention of being so foolish as to attempt to shoot you, Mr. Lee. I know better. So many attempts to remove you have failed that I am becoming superstitious."

Nelson Lee ignored the mocking compliment.

"Since you have been so kind as to honour me with a visit, Professor Zingrave," he said, "I intend to inform Scotland Yard——"

"One moment!" interrupted the professor, who seemed perfectly at his ease. "I knew that I should be running into danger by coming here, but I am perfectly safeguarded. You will allow me to walk out just when I please. I have no guards outside, I am now unarmed. Yet you will let me walk out unmolested when I desire to do so. I shall rely upon your commonsense."

"Explain yourself!" snapped the detective shortly.

"I have already told you, Mr. Lee, that I am becoming superstitious regarding you," said the professor silkily. "I am realising that you are too clever for me. The League has had many disasters on account of your—shall we say interference? I no longer desire your removal, since it appears to be beyond our powers to remove you. At the same time, I must insist upon you abandoning all action against us."

"You insist?"

"I insist!" repeated the professor. "It may have reached your ears that I have a hostage in my power. I regret the necessity for treating Sir Edward Handforth so roughly, but I am getting just a little tired of being so frequently thwarted."

"And you intend to use Sir Edward for your own purposes?"

"Sir Edward Handforth will die unless you immediately cease all activity against me and against the League of the Green Triangle," said Professor Zingrave, his voice becoming thoroughly evil. "Do you understand that, Mr. Lee? I give you your chance."

"A clever move, professor."

"Quite clever," agreed Zingrave, nodding. "If you make any attempt to inform the police of my presence here—if you have me molested in any way—certain of my men will know; and that will be the signal for Sir Edward's instant execution. I hope you thoroughly appreciate the position."

Nelson Lee said nothing for a moment or two. He was no longer surprised at Professor Zingrave's presence. The wily No. 1 had certainly safeguarded himself.

"You have given me an interesting problem, professor," said Nelson Lee. "However, I should like you to understand that I can make no terms with you. In no circumstances shall I withdraw from this fight."

"You are prepared to send Sir Edward Handforth to his death?"

"No, no, Professor Zingrave, you cannot shift the responsibility of such a crime on to my shoulders," said Lee sharply. "Your murder threats do not interest me. I simply refuse to be handcuffed and gagged. As long as I am healthy and strong I shall use my energies against such men as yourself—men who are the enemies of society—the enemies of law and order. I should be an arrant coward if I made any compact with you."

Professor Zingrave shrugged his shoulders.

"It is for you to decide, Mr. Lee," he said purringly. "You know the position; you know that Sir Edward Handforth is in my hands. I will give you twenty-four hours. I am generous, I am patient. Within twenty-four hours you must make up your mind."

"My mind is made up already," said Lee.

"I don't think so—in fact, I'm sure it isn't," replied the professor, rising to his feet. "And let me remind you, Mr. Lee, that it will be very dangerous for any of your—or—pupils if you set them to shadow me after I have left these premises. It will be equally dangerous if you attempt to shadow me yourself."

"And yet you told me, not three minutes ago, that you had no guards near by?" said Lee mockingly.

"There is none immediately near these premises," replied Zingrave; "but there are many distributed along Gray's Inn Road. I shall be closely watched when I leave, and if there is any attempt to shadow me, the shadowers will pay the penalty. You have twenty-four hours to think this matter over, and I have sufficient faith in your commonsense to believe that you will allow Sir Edward Handforth to live."

No. I suddenly leaned across the desk.

"Twenty-four hours!" he repeated ominously. "If you have made no sign by the end of that time limit——"

"One moment," said Lee. "What sign do you expect from me?"

"Anything simple will suffice," said the professor. "Shall we say the drawing of your blinds? A little symbolical sign that you have gone out of business? But do not imagine that I am attempting to deprive you of your livelihood. Not at all. By 'going out of business' I merely mean that you must cease your activities against me and the Green Triangle. You are at liberty to pursue your ordinary commonplace crook-hunting."

"Your generosity, Professor Zingrave, profoundly impresses me," said Lee dryly.

"It pleases you to be sarcastic, but I quite understand," said the professor. "Remember that I shall be expecting the sign from you, Mr. Lee. If it does not come, Sir Edward Handforth's body will be found in some quite unexpected spot before the end of the twenty-fifth hour from now. And there is something else."

His eyes glowed, and he looked straight into Nelson Lee's face.

"Sir Edward is merely the first of the fathers!" he said, in a whisper. "Other fathers will be seized and treated in exactly the same way. In every instance you will have your chance—your twenty-four hours of grace. And so it will go on until you succumb. I fancy that the strain will prove too great—even for your iron nerve, Mr. Lee."

The professor bowed, turned swiftly, and walked out of the consulting-room. Nelson Lee's impulse was to spring to his feet—to do anything to detain this master criminal. But he checked himself. He knew that it would be dangerous to make any such move. Sir Edward Handforth was undoubtedly in the hands of the League of the Green Triangle and, knowing that organisation as Lee did, he had no doubt that Sir Edward's life would be ruthlessly sacrificed.

For the moment Professor Cyrus Zingrave held the trump card.

There was only one possible line to take. Nelson Lee would have to locate Sir Edward and rescue him within the next twenty-four hours.

CHAPTER 7.

At Powell's Wharf.

ROTHERHITHE is not a pleasant district at any time; but on this damp, drizzly evening it struck Handforth as being positively awful. Down by the river, in the mean, dingy streets, everything was depressing.

By this time Handforth wondered if he had done right in coming to Rotherhithe. As yet he had not found Powell's Wharf. He had asked three policemen but they had been unable to direct him.

And Rotherhithe, he discovered, was a big district.

He badly wanted to conduct this investigation "off his own bat." To ring up Nelson Lee now would be to admit defeat, and in addition to that he would waste valuable time. He felt that it was up to him to find Powell's Wharf, and to get there before seven-thirty.

The fourth policeman proved an exception. Handforth found him in a dim, dingy neighbourhood standing in the doorway of a closed shop.

"Powell's Wharf?" said the policeman thoughtfully. "What do you want there, young shaver?"

"Do you know where it is?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"Yes, down at the bottom of Friar's Street," said the policeman. "Powell's Wharf hasn't been used for years. Been shut up as long as I can remember. The warehouses are coming down next year, I think, and the whole place is going to be rebuilt."

"Friar's Street!" said Handforth. "Where is it? I want to get to Powell's Wharf at once."

"Just a moment, young gent," said the constable, looking at Handforth closely. "You don't live in this district, do you?"

"No."

"Thought you didn't," said the policeman. "What do you want at Powell's Wharf? It's not the kind of place for a young gentleman like you to visit. Besides, it's empty and deserted. Sure you haven't made a mistake?"

"I—I wanted to meet somebody there, that's all," said Handforth hastily.

He bolted off, and the policeman made as though to stop him, or to follow. But Handforth was gone like a flash. He dodged round a corner, ran through an alley, and found himself in



another dingy road. He didn't want that policeman to accompany him—and he had seen that the officer was becoming uncomfortably inquisitive.

"Friar's Street," muttered Handforth. "I'm all right now! Anybody will tell me where Friar's Street is!"

He was right. Within two minutes he had been directed towards Friar's Street, and when he arrived he found that it was an ill-lit backwater. There were no houses or shops—just plain walls, with empty warehouses beyond.

It wasn't a thoroughfare at all, really, for there was no outlet at the other end. As Handforth walked stealthily down he could see the lights of a barge as it lazily wended its way down the great river. He could see, too, the twinkling lights on the opposite bank, afar—the lights of Wapping and Shadwell, he imagined.

Arriving at the end of the road, he found himself actually on the old, deserted wharf. There was no gateway or barrier. An ancient, ramshackle warehouse reared itself up on his left, black and menacing, with smashed windows and grimy walls. He went past this and leaned over another wall. Down below was the swirling river.

"Well, I've done it!" he muttered exultantly. "I'm here!"

He had found Powell's Wharf, and he was in good time. Glancing at his watch, he found that the time was just seven-fifteen. As far as he could see, he was alone. There was not another living soul within sight. A more deserted, dismal place than this he could not imagine.

He edged round by the old warehouse, and finally took his stand in a dark recess. He felt that he would be safe there; he could watch everything that went on, and he himself would be unseen.

He was intensely excited; but now that he had achieved his object—now that he was here, on the spot—he began to wonder if he had done right. After all, he was up against the League of the Green Triangle men, and he was alone. If it came to a fight, what chance would he have?

For once Handforth appreciated that his powers were limited.

He wouldn't mind a scrap with bare fists—in fact, he would rather like it. But would these Green Triangle men be satisfied with that? In his heart he knew they wouldn't.

"I've got a quarter of an hour to wait, anyhow," murmured Handforth. "By George! Why shouldn't I get a message through to Headquarters?"

It was an excellent thought. But there were some snags. How could he get a message through? He should have telephoned long since; he could easily have found a public telephone-box in the busier streets.

"If I go back and find a telephone now, something might happen while I'm away," he told himself. "What an ass I was not to—Hullo! Who's this?"

He had caught sight of a small figure coming along Friar's Street, towards the Wharf. But there was no need for him to get excited. The newcomer was only an urchin, in ragged, tattered clothing.

Acting on a sudden impulse, Handforth darted out from his recess and approached the youngster.

"Crikey!" ejaculated the urchin. "You didn't 'arf gi' me a start, mister! What's the blinkin' idea, jumpin' out on me like that?"

"Do you want to earn a bob, kid?" asked Handforth.

"Try me!" grinned the other. "'Ullo! I thought you was a man! What are you doin' down 'ere?" he added suspiciously.

"Never mind that," said Handforth. "And if it comes to that, what are you doing?"

"Me? Oh, I'm waitin' for some o' my mates," said the urchin. "We generally play games round the old wharves."

"Blow your pals," said Handforth. "I want you to take a message to an address in Gray's Inn Road. And I'll give you five bob for it—and pay your 'bus fare, too."

"Garn! You're kiddin', ain't you?"

"Here's the money!" said Handforth, producing it.

"Let's get into this doorway," suggested the urchin. "Somebody might spot us 'ere—and between you and me, matey, we're trespassin'. This 'ere wharf is private property."

He caught Handforth's arm, and they both withdrew into that deep recess from which Handforth had emerged. Edward Oswald produced his pocket-book and tore out a page. He frowned for a moment, wondering what he should write. A few simple words would do—"Come at once to Powell's Wharf, Friar's Street, Rotherhithe—on track of G.T. and pater. E. O. H." That ought to do.

"You can't write without a light, mate," said the urchin.

"Yes, I can," whispered Handforth. "You hold still until I've finished."

The urchin pulled Handforth's arm down.

"Better not write anything, Ted!" he said, in a changed voice. "I think it's about time you explained yourself, old man!"

Handforth gave a violent start.

"Eh?" he gasped, staring blankly at the urchin. "Why, what the dickens—"

"Yes, it's me!" nodded the other.

"Willy!" gurgled Edward Oswald.

"Yes, Willy—and you've got to give an account of yourself, my son!" said Willy Handforth sternly. "You dotty ass! Dodging off on your own like this—and getting into danger. It's a jolly good thing I shadowed you."

OH, BOY!
LOOK AT
THIS! 

Handforth was too amazed to make any immediate reply. He could only stare at the "urchin" in bewilderment. If there had been more light he would have recognised his minor at once. For Willy's disguise was of the simplest. He merely wore a ragged overcoat and a torn cap; and he had smudged a good deal of grime over his face.

"How—how the dickens did you know I was here?" asked Handforth, at length.

"My dear ass, I've been following you all the time."

"What?"

"Ever since you left Gray's Inn Road," said Willy. "And I want to know what all this means, Ted! I saw you dodge out, and I knew that you were worried about the pater, and that you would probably do something silly."

"You mean that you followed me home—to Grosvenor Avenue?"

"Yes," said Willy. "I saw you go into the garage, and I guessed that you were after your Austin Seven. I didn't go in after you, because I meant to stop you as you came out. But something seemed to go wrong. You didn't come out for quite a while—and there was Hale and that other man. Then you dodged out without the Austin, and——"

"And you kept on my trail, eh?"

"All the time," said Willy. "I wanted to see just where you were going before I came out into the open. Now, Ted, what's the big idea?"

WIN

A TOPPING BIKE or A WEMBLEY CUP-FINAL TICKET

in the grand Picture Football
Competition which is starting
in the NELSON LEE next week.
Nothing difficult about it—
and jolly interesting, too!

**DON'T MISS THIS WONDERFUL
OPPORTUNITY, CHUMS!**



WILLY was looking thoughtful and uneasy when he had heard all the details.

"Phew!" he whistled softly. "I'd no idea it was so serious! I thought you were off on a wild-goose chase, as usual."

"You silly young ass——"

"Don't raise your voice, Ted," warned Willy. "We're in a tricky position. It's nearly half-past seven now, and Hale might come along at any minute. Oh, you hopeless chump! Why didn't you telephone to Headquarters before you came on this job?"

"I suppose I ought to have done," said Handforth lamely.

"Well, it's no good crying over spilt milk," went on Willy. "We shall have to do the best we can. Perhaps Mr. Lee will be here before anything serious happens."

Handforth stared.

"How can he be here if he doesn't know anything about it?" he asked.

"Oh, he knows!" said Willy.

"But—but——"

"My dear ass, I'm not so thoughtless as you are," interrupted Willy. "I 'phoned Mr. Lee nearly twenty minutes ago."

"Great Scott!"

"I was close by when you were talking to that bobby," continued Willy. "I heard you ask for Powell's Wharf, and I heard him say that it was at the end of Friar's Street. So I dodged off to the nearest telephone, and got through to Headquarters. Mr. Lee said he'd come at once."

"My only hat! That's good hearing," said Handforth, with relief.

"I lost you then, of course, but I knew that I should find you here," continued Willy. "And now what are we going to do? I tell you, this position is rocky. If we're found here by any of

those League men our number will be up. No good fooling yourself, Ted. They won't give us a dog's chance."

"We can fight, can't we?"

"With our fists?" asked Willy. "A fat lot of good fighting with our fists! The chances are they'll grab us and chuck us into the river. I'm game enough, but I don't see any sense in committing suicide. The best thing we can do is to lie low—keep hidden here. Whatever we see, we mustn't take any action. We've got to wait until the Chief comes."

"And what about the pater?" demanded Handforth aggressively.

"We shall help the pater all the better by being cautious," said Willy. "You don't seem to understand that— Sssssh!"

He broke off, and listened intently.

"What's the matter?" whispered Handforth.

"Nothing—but I thought I heard a sound just now," murmured Willy, looking round closely.

"Did you hear it? A kind of thud? It wasn't four yards away."

"Your imagination," said Handforth, as he looked round. "There's nothing here."

Their eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness by now, and they could see quite plainly that they were still alone. There were no holes and corners where any enemies could hide. But what they did not see was a heavy iron grating, set flush with the pavement, close to the warehouse wall. It was a grating which allowed the daylight to filter through into one of the basements. They were standing almost on top of it.

"We can't be too cautious, Ted," said Willy softly.

"We've come into a hornets' nest."

"But there's not a soul in sight!"

"What does that matter?" asked Willy. "If any man walked on to this wharf now, he'd swear there was not a soul in sight—and yet we're here, aren't we? How do we know that Green Triangle men weren't watching when we came along? How do we know that they're not keeping their eyes on us now? Isn't it logical? Hale has been told to report here, and that proves that it's a sort of meeting-place for these Triangle rotters."

Neither of the "cub" detectives noticed that the heavy iron grating, so near by, was lifting inch by inch, silently and ominously. Even Willy, astute as he

was, did not guess that any peril could come from beneath his very feet.

Suddenly the grating went back with a dull clang. The two boys, taken completely by surprise, felt their ankles gripped by two pairs of hands. They were pulled downwards; and with startled cries they found themselves falling into a dark cavity. Dazed and breathless, they landed on a hard stone floor; were pounced upon, seized and held.

Clang!

The grating dropped back into place, and Handforth and Willy were dragged along into a damp, evil-smelling cellar.

"Better rope them up!" said a harsh, panting voice.

"You rotters!" gurgled Handforth. "You dirty crooks!"

"Put something round the young fool's mouth!" said another voice.

In less than a minute both Handforth and Willy were roped up, and coarse pieces of sacking were wound round their faces, so that they could make no outcry. They found themselves lying on the damp cellar floor, the two men standing over them. A small electric lamp was providing the only light on the scene.

"Wait until the Chief hears of this," said one of the men. "Number Forty-three will report us, and if we don't get a bonus of ten quid each you can call me Lord Nelson!"

"Think the Chief'll be pleased?"

"Pleased? He'll be tickled pink!" said the other man. "These two kids are old Handforth's sons. Two of Nelson Lee's brats, too! I tell you, Jim, it's a capture!"

"Better shift them out of here!" said the other.

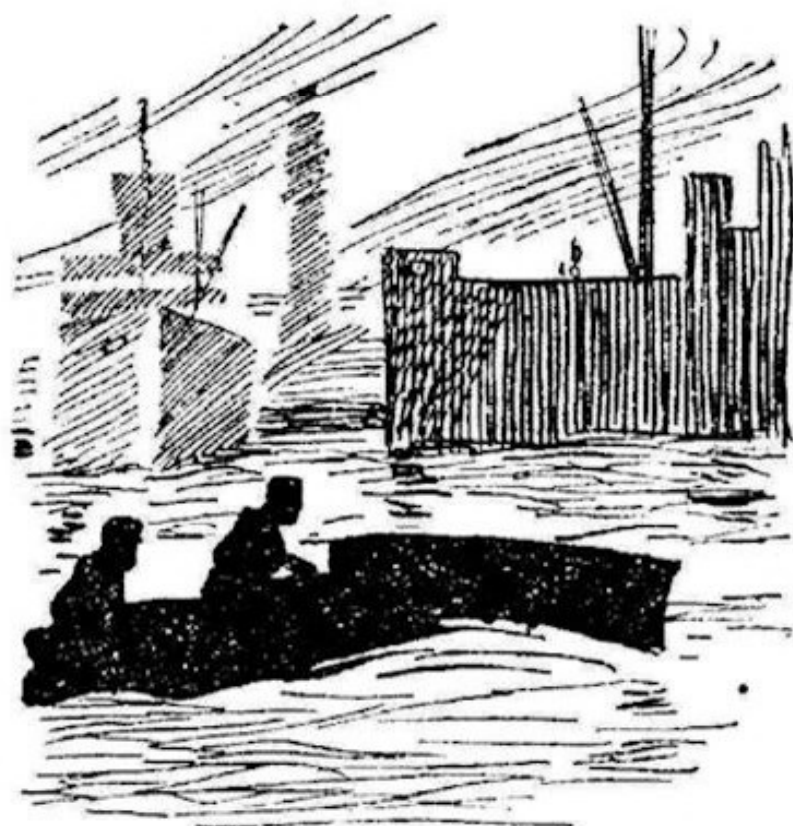
Handforth and his minor writhed with helpless rage. Willy, in particular, was furious. Yet he was not surprised. He had said from the first that they were in danger. He was only angry because he had not spotted the peril in time to avoid it.

Now it was too late.

They were roughly dragged across the cellar, they went down some steep stairs, and then through a stone doorway. They could see very little, owing to the fact that one of the men led the way with a torch. This man was dragging Willy, and it was impossible for Willy to look ahead of him.

But he knew that they were taken far below into an old tunnel of some kind. He recognised it, indeed, as a disused sewer.

"Might as well leave them here," said one of the men. "Number Forty-three will be here soon, and we can leave the rest to him."



"He'll be pleased to know that that rat, Lee, is coming along," said the other, with a chuckle. "By thunder! Lee himself! We'll be ready for him!"

Handforth nearly burst a blood-vessel when he heard this; and Willy felt sad. It was bad enough that he and his major should have been captured; but it was grave indeed to learn that the Green Triangle men had overheard most of the conversation. They knew that Nelson Lee was coming to the wharf! And, as they had said, they would be ready.

CHAPTER 8.

In The Old Conduit.

NELSON LEE was thoroughly annoyed.

In addition to being annoyed, he was alarmed. The telephone message from Willy came as a complete surprise to him; for, after speaking so sternly to Handforth, he had never believed that Handforth would have disobeyed orders so glaringly.

Lee did not know much. Willy could only tell him that Edward Oswald had got on the track of something, and that he had gone to Powell's Wharf, in Rotherhithe. For at the time when he gave the message Willy had not known any of the details.

However, Nelson Lee acted with his usual promptitude. He acted so swiftly, in fact, that he gained a distinct advantage over the enemy. Within one minute of Willy's call, Nelson Lee's powerful racing car was outside the door of his chambers in Gray's Inn Road. Nipper had been sent off to fetch it, and Nipper wasted no time.

Lee leapt in, took the driving wheel, and that journey to Rotherhithe was one of the most hectic experiences that Nipper could remember. The powerful car turned into Holborn, shot down towards Cheapside, and within a few moments was tearing down King William Street.

Nelson Lee's driving was superb. The car roared over London Bridge, turned sharply into Tooley Street, and went tearing on towards Jamaica Road. Nipper could hardly believe it when he found himself in Union Road, and practically in Rotherhithe. Owing to Nelson Lee's lightning-like action, scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since the car had started from headquarters.

And while this car was tearing through London Willy was trailing after Handforth, and having that chat with him against the old warehouse. Thus, although it seemed quite unbelievable at first sight, it was a fact that Nelson Lee arrived at Powell's Wharf before the two boys were seized by the Green Triangle agents.

Even Willy had not expected Lee for at least half an hour. But Lee cautiously approached the wharf a minute or two before half-past seven, and he was just in time to see the dramatic capture of Handforth and his minor. Yet Lee did not make the mistake of dashing up and joining in the scrap. To do so would have been to show his cards—and he was not ready for that just yet.

Moreover, he did not know how many Green Triangle men there were. He might do far more harm than good by taking action now. Better to wait.

But he knew that Willy's message had been timely. Here was proof of it! For Willy and his brother were already seized—dragged down through that grating into some murky cellar. And although Lee knew no details, he was convinced that these men were some of Zingrave's wolves.

Everything was silent after that dramatic attack upon Handy and Willy. Nelson Lee crept cautiously forward—and behind him, at some little distance, came two stealthily-moving figures. When Lee turned to glance back the figures wrapped themselves against the wall, becoming practically invisible.

Lee went on, and just before he reached the spot where the two boys had been seized, a man sprang out. This man had just arrived—not along Friar's Street, but he had come up some steps from a narrow alley, which led right along the waterside.

Nelson Lee was ready. With one spring, he met the fellow. He had little doubt that this man was Hale, the chauffeur—arrived on the stroke of seven-thirty to keep his appointment.

Crash!

Nelson Lee's right fist came round, and the uppercut that he delivered was devastating. Hale, unprepared for that savage attack, reeled back, and went over with such a tremendous crash that he lay still. That blow of Lee's alone would have been enough to stun him—but he had caught the back of his head on the hard pavement, too.

Lee glanced round, and a soft whistle escaped his lips. The two shadowy figures came up close. It was difficult to recognise them as Fenton and Morrow—late of the St. Frank's Sixth.

"Take this fellow away—keep him quiet!" muttered Lee.

"O.K., Chief!" said Fenton briefly.

Without asking any questions, Fenton and Morrow seized the unconscious man, lifted him, and carried him swiftly away. The whole thing was done so quickly, so expeditiously, that the wharf was dark and deserted again within a space of thirty seconds.

Lee was just as quick with his next move. He found the grating which covered the cavity where Handy and Willy had vanished. He gave a heave, and the grating came up. Lee slipped down, replaced the grating in position, and slid into an evil-smelling cellar.

He was prepared for anything now. In one hand he held a tiny electric torch, and in the other his revolver was firmly held, his trigger finger already crooked.

But there was no danger here. The cellar was empty. And the light from his torch revealed the unmistakable marks on the grimy, dusty floor. He could see exactly where the two schoolboy-victims had been dragged.

The Triangle men imagined that they had plenty of time to get ready for Lee's reception—never dreaming that Lee was actually in their stronghold already!

WHEN Nelson Lee reached the bottom of the old stone steps which led out of the cellar he even heard the men in front of him. It was an easy matter, therefore, for him to creep up and to get a clear view of what was going on.

He had no difficulty in recognising this old conduit as a disused sewer. It was a sort of underground warren—just the type of place that the Green Triangle rats would naturally infest.

Much as Lee wanted to press on and rescue the boys at once, he held himself in check. He felt that it would be a better policy to wait. Obviously they were in no immediate danger, or they would not have been captured in this way. Their captors had no authority for dealing drastically with the young prisoners. And Nelson Lee realised that he might make some important discoveries if he held his hand.

He was glad to see that this old sewer was honeycombed with smaller side tunnels, and with hollows and crevices where the ancient masonry had crumbled away. In a word, there was plenty of cover. At a moment's notice Lee could dodge into one of these openings, and conceal himself.

He did so now. The men ahead had come to a halt. They were standing over the two bound helpless school-boys, talking. One of them was holding the electric lamp.

"Might as well shove them in with the old boy, eh?" came the voice of one of the men. "Better than leaving them here."

"Think Number Forty-three would like it?" asked the other.

"Why not?" said the first man. "These kids can't be allowed to go. They know too much, Jim. Best pack them away where they'll be safe. We don't want to stay here looking after them, do we?"

"All right then," said the second man.

He went forward, and Nelson Lee heard the opening of a door. He heard the bolts being shot back, and he heard a key turned in the lock. Peering cautiously round from his place of concealment, Lee saw Willy and Handforth seized and dragged through an opening. They vanished completely.

There was a mumble of talk, a rising and falling of voices. Then the door closed with a slam, and the bolts were re-shot. The two men appeared, and they came down the sewer towards Lee. He squeezed himself back further into the crevice where he had sought shelter. And he kept his revolver handy.

There would be no time for arguments if he was seen. He would have to fire first—and fire effectively.

But, as it happened, the men walked straight past without even giving a glance into that dark fissure in the sewer's wall, for they certainly did not expect to find an enemy lurking within their secret retreat.

They went right down the conduit, and Lee knew that they had gone back into the cellar. Perhaps they were on their way out into the open—to meet Hale, the chauffeur. But by this time Hale had been taken well away by Fenton and Morrow.

Lee felt his heart beating a little more rapidly than usual.

This was an opportunity which he had not expected.

He squeezed his way out, and proceeded with extreme caution up the sewer. He had not ceased to be angry with Handforth—for, in his opinion, this adventure was entirely unnecessary.

Having disposed of one man, Nelson Lee leaped and grabbed the other occupant of the boat. "This is where we come in!" said Fenton eagerly, as he and Morrow swam up through the murky water.



Handforth had come openly into danger—danger that might easily have resulted in his death. Willy was not to blame, since Willy had followed his major with the idea of helping him. And Willy, too, had telephoned the warning.

Lee found that door in the side of the ancient tunnel. One flash of his torch was sufficient. He could pull the bolts back, but there was no key in the lock. And he could see, in a flash, that it was no ordinary lock. Much as he desired to open that door, and help the two schoolboys, he could not do so. It would need a charge of dynamite to blow that door down.

He could hear a murmur of voices from within. No doubt, Handforth and Willy were talking—discussing this misadventure. He placed his ear to the heavy woodwork, and the voices sounded clearer.

"But we didn't know, pater!" came Handforth's agitated voice. "We wanted to help you——"

"I appreciate your thoughtfulness on my behalf, Edward, but it was madness for you to come here!" came another voice. "Sheer madness! Isn't it bad enough for me to be captured by these infernal rogues?"



"Yes, pater, but——"

"You're hopeless, Edward!" came the other voice. "How many times have I told you to think before you act? Every time you cross the street I expect you to be run over! You are so blundering—so ram-headed—so reckless. And look what your recklessness has led to now!"

Nelson Lee was aware that his heart was now positively thumping. He was completely taken by surprise. And in that moment all his anger against Handforth vanished.

Remembering that strange interview with Professor Cyrus Zingrave, Nelson Lee gloated inwardly. With any sort of luck, he would succeed in freeing Sir Edward this very night.

"As soon as I knew that you were in London, pater, I couldn't help acting," came Handforth's voice. "That rotter, Hale, is a traitor. It was he who delivered you into the hands of the Green Triangle!"

"Don't I know it?" asked Sir Edward grimly. "And you came here to help me, Edward? Well, I can't be very angry with you. But what is the outlook now?"

"Don't you worry, pater," said Willy confidently. "Mr. Lee knows all about it—and he won't fail us."

Nelson Lee, listening outside, smiled quietly to himself. He was pleased to hear that expression of confidence from Willy.

CHAPTER 9.

Some Useful Information.

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH was more worried than he would have cared to admit. He had been gratified, at first, to see his two sons. But the knowledge that they, too, were in the hands of the Green Triangle troubled him exceedingly.

"It would have been better if you had gone straight back to Gray's Inn Road," said Sir Edward. "You ought to have let Mr. Lee undertake this task. Perhaps he would not have got himself captured in this way."

"Well, it's no good talking now, pater," said Willy. "Mr. Lee's on his way to us by this time, and we can be jolly certain that he'll make things hot for the Green Triangle men. You mark my words—he'll have us out of this before long."

"I wish I could believe you, Willy," said Sir Edward, shaking his head. "But even Mr. Lee does not quite realise the terrible power of the Green Triangle."

"He does, pater," said Handforth. "What we want to know is how you were kidnapped? What did those rotters do with you after they had grabbed you out of the car at Bury St. Edmund's? They didn't leave any trace."

"Bury St. Edmund's? I never reached Bury St. Edmund's."

"But you did, pater," said Willy. "You were grabbed in front of all the crowds."

"Nonsense!" said his father. "I was seized while my car was at some lonely spot between Chelmsford and Braintree."

He gave the details, and his sons listened in growing astonishment.

"But—but it's uncanny!" ejaculated Handforth, at last. "I don't understand it, pater! All the reports say that you arrived at Bury St. Edmund's, and that you were kidnapped there."

It was Sir Edward's turn to be amazed when he heard those details.

"The cunning fiends!" he said, at length. "Of course, they could not have accomplished the thing if Hale had not been in league with them. Don't you understand, my boys? I was taken from my car at that lonely spot in the road, and another man was substituted—a man who was undoubtedly impersonating me."

"Well I'm jiggered!"

"That can be the only possible explanation," continued Sir Edward. "It was this man who was so openly kidnapped in Bury St. Edmund's. And his disappearance was made easier by the fact that he removed his make-up as soon as the town was left behind. In the meantime, of course, I was being conveyed towards London—where there was no hue-and-cry whatever."

"No wonder the police couldn't find you, dad," said Willy. "There's one thing about these Green Triangle people—when they do a thing, they do it thoroughly."

"But what became of that big grey car?" asked Handforth. "That's the puzzle, you know. It left Bury St. Edmund's at terrific speed, and nothing has been found of it since."

"Hold on!" said Willy suddenly. "Somebody coming, I think."

They waited, listening. Sure enough, the bolts were shot back, the key was turned in the lock, and the door opened.

A man entered—a gentlemanly-looking individual, well-dressed, and smart. This was No. 43. His name was Dawson, and he was a responsible official of the League. He was a zone-leader—a man who was in command of a whole district.

"So these are the brats!" he said, looking at the two boys. "What did you untie them for?"

"We didn't," said one of the two men, who were at his rear. "We dumped them in here just as they were, roped up. The old boy must have unfastened them."

"You infernal rogues!" said Sir Edward hotly. "Of course I unfastened them! Do you think I should allow my sons to—"

"All right, Sir Edward—all right!" said No. 43. "I only came here to satisfy myself that my men had made no mistake. I can see that these boys are your sons. Well, I'm sorry for them. They've landed themselves into a nice mess."

"We're not in such a mess as you'll be in soon!" said Handforth fiercely. "Wait until Mr. Lee gets busy."

No. 43 laughed.

"We shall be very glad to see Nelson Lee," he said ominously. "We are quite ready for him—when he arrives. But, somehow, I don't think he'll be so foolish as to show his face here. Mr. Lee is a clever man, and, as far as I know, he has no desire to commit suicide."

"Is that all you have come to tell us?" asked Sir Edward coldly.

"No, Sir Edward; you are to leave this place at once," replied No. 43. "Come on, men! Rope up these boys first."

"Don't you dare——" began Sir Edward.

"And it'll be a lot healthier for you if you keep back," said No. 43, producing an automatic pistol. "Keep quite still, Sir Edward. I'm in no mood to stand any interference. Come on—those ropes!" he added, beckoning to the men.

"What do you intend to do with us?" demanded Sir Edward.

"You'll find out before long," replied No. 43. "You are to be transferred to a specially prepared barge. Oh, it will be quite comfortable. It will soon be slipping down the river, and I

can assure you that there'll be no hope of rescue once you get on board. It's waiting close at hand to receive you."

"Rats!" said Handforth defiantly. "We're not frightened of you, you rotter! By George! If only I could get my hands on you——"

He was interrupted by the two men who now came in and started work. Handforth and Willy were securely roped up again. And then Sir Edward himself was dealt with in precisely the same way.

"Now bring them along," said No. 43. "Sir Edward first."

They were all helpless, and it was impossible to defy the enemy.

Sir Edward was carried down the old sewer, right past the exit which led up into the warehouse, and on into a narrow side tunnel. This was only short, and when a heavy door was opened he felt the cold night air on his face. There was still a drizzle falling, and he could hear the lapping of the river.

In fact, this exit led right out on to a narrow ledge of stone, close against the water's edge. Sir Edward was propped there, and his first idea was that these men had been lying. What they really intended to do was to pitch him into the river.

The dark waters were close at hand, and Sir Edward was bound hand and foot and gagged. There could be nothing easier than to topple him over into the rapidly-flowing river. But he was wrong. He was kept there, with No. 43 watching over him, while the other men went back. Soon they returned with Handforth. And then, after another journey, they brought Willy.

The three prisoners were propped side by side on that ledge.

"That'll do," growled No. 43. "I shall be confoundedly glad when this job's over. Of all the rotten nights, this is the rottenest. Where's the boat? Why can't our men keep to an arrangement?"

He stared out over the river. A tug was plugging along in mid-stream, with a line of lighters behind it. But near by there seemed to be nothing, except one or two small boats moored fairly close to the bank.

"What's that over there?" asked one of the men.

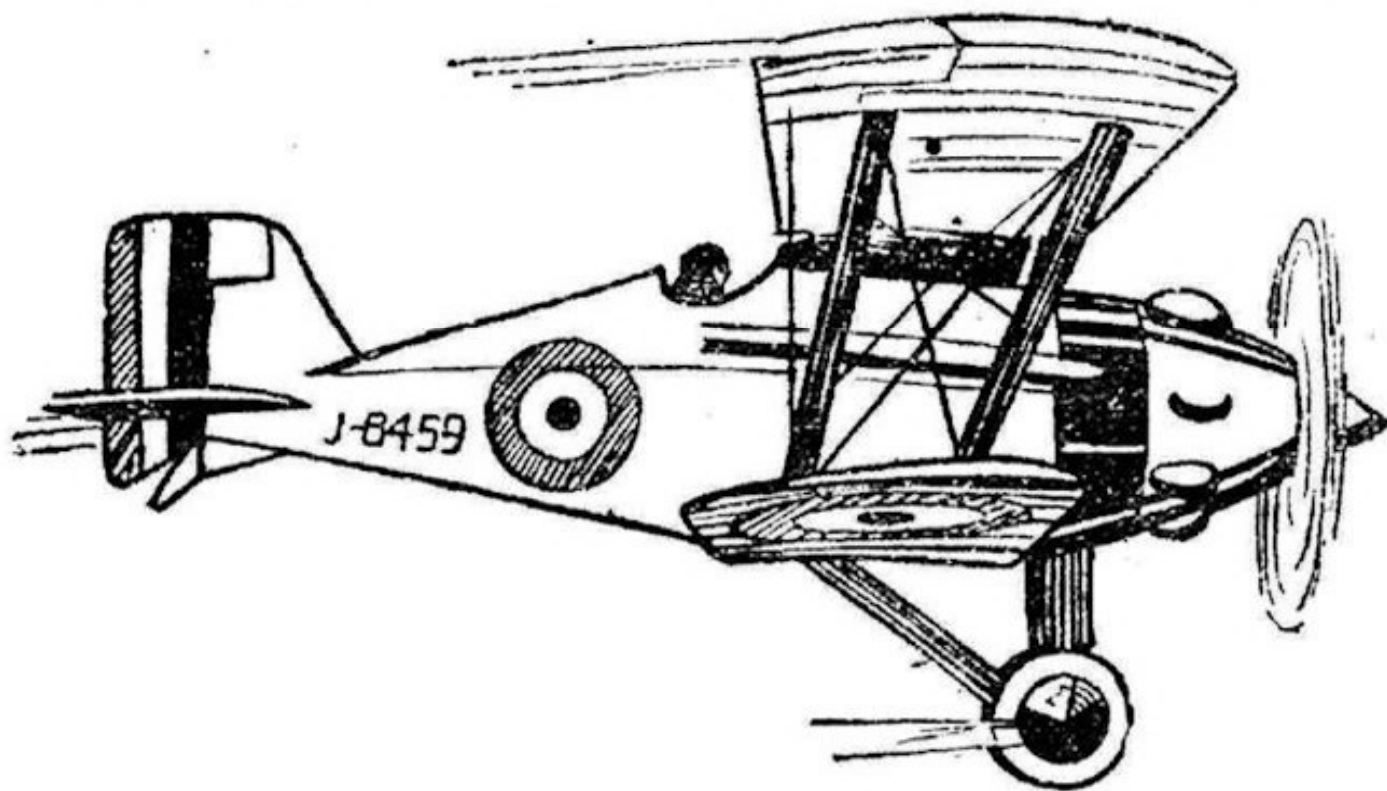
He pointed. There was a larger boat there, and it was moving slowly and cautiously toward the south shore.

"We'll soon see," said No. 43.

He took a small electric torch from his pocket and slid a little disc over the bulb. He pressed the switch, and there was one flash—a flash of green.

A few seconds later there was an answering green flash from the approaching boat.

*Britain's
Fighting
Planes*



FREE this week. Two
COLOURED AEROPLANE

Pictures with

MODERN BOY

Get Your Copy NOW

2d.

CHAPTER 10.

Honours For Nelson Lee.

BUT once again Nelson Lee, by his promptness of action, had forestalled the Green Triangle men.

The great detective was playing a clever game.

Down in that old conduit he had realised that he was trapped. Any move on his part—any open move—would be fatal. He could not serve the prisoners by getting himself captured, too. And he knew that if he showed himself, and it came to a fight, he would be ruthlessly shot down.

So Lee had played his cards cunningly.

He was at that door, listening to Sir Edward Handforth and his sons, when No. 43 and the other men came along. Lee heard them in the nick of time, and slid back into one of those handy fissures. And he was lucky enough to hear No. 43's words. The prisoners were to be taken out at once—they were to be transferred on to a waiting barge, and taken down the river!

Nelson Lee waited for no more. It would take these men some time to convey the three prisoners down the tunnel, and out on to the wharf. And while they were engaged in this work he might be able to do something useful.

It only took him a single minute to slip back down the conduit, and up those stairs into the cellar of the warehouse. A few seconds later he was outside, through the grating, and in the drizzle on the wharf. There was no sign of anything living. The place was black, empty, and deserted.

Lee emitted a peculiar little whistle. He waited, and two figures came sliding along the rain-soaked wall towards him.

"Good!" murmured Lee, as they joined him. "Are you fellows ready for some dangerous work?"

"Try us, sir!" whispered Fenton eagerly.

"We're game for anything," declared Morrow.

"Then come with me," said Lee. "You're both armed, aren't you? All right. If it comes to a fight, don't forget that you've got to shoot. There's going to be danger here."

Very quickly, Lee led the way round, and before long Fenton and Morrow found themselves going down some slippery steps. They led right down to the water's edge. When they were nearly at the bottom Lee paused, and pointed.

"See!" he whispered. "A boat hovering close in-shore. That's the boat that's waiting for the prisoners."

"What do you want us to do, sir?" asked Fenton.

"You can both swim, can't you?"

"Swim! In this—Why, yes, sir!"

"Right!" said Lee. "Take the water immediately after me, and do so quietly. We're going to swim to that boat and get on board. It'll be ticklish work—and we can only succeed if we take the boat by surprise."

Fenton and Morrow were rather startled at this programme, but they raised no objections. This was not the kind of weather for swimming—particularly in the Thames. However, they were ready enough for the adventure. They followed Lee in, and, although they were chilled to the marrow by that first plunge, they struck out boldly and silently.

Belonging to the Detective Academy was really no joke! At any moment, any of the pupils were liable to be called upon to perform duties of this kind—particularly such fellows as Fenton and Morrow, who were big, brawny and strong. Nelson Lee had no lack of assistants nowadays.

Lee was the first to reach the boat, and, swimming cautiously, he took a look at the two occupants. Any ordinary kind of fight would be out of the question. This was essentially a time for strategy.

Lee suddenly made himself known to those two men. He beat the water feebly, gasping at the same time. The men, startled, turned their attention upon him. They saw a black shape floating close to the boat—evidently a swimmer in the last stages of exhaustion.

"Help—get me in!" groaned Lee. "I'm winged. I'm No. 234. Those cursed river cops—"

"By glory! He's one of us!" whispered one of the men. "Quick! Lug him aboard!"

They dragged Nelson Lee on board, and he sprawled listlessly in the well of the boat.

"Where did they get you?" asked the man, bending over Lee.

Nelson Lee didn't quite like doing it, but the necessity was urgent. His right fist came up with devastating force, and caught the man a blow between the eyes. He fell back, half-stunned. And in the same moment Lee leapt up, grabbed the other man and held him.

"This is where we come in!" said Fenton eagerly.

He and Morrow were quite near, and they had seen everything. They swarmed aboard, and Fenton seized Nelson Lee's second victim from behind. The whole thing was over very quickly.

Lee produced two pairs of handcuffs and the men were manacled with their hands behind them. Scarves were tied round their mouths, and they were laid in the bottom of the boat.

"What next, sir?" asked Morrow breathlessly.

A green flash suddenly appeared from the shore, and Lee spotted it on the instant.

"Search these men—quickly!" he said. "See if you can find a torch."

Lee himself found one almost at once—in the breast pocket of one of the Green Triangle men. It had a little attachment—a disc to slip in front of the bulb. Lee put it in position and flashed on the light. He answered that signal from the shore.

"Take those oars, Fenton!" he said, in a low voice. "This is going to be the crucial test. We don't know how many Triangle men there are ashore there—but we've got to beat them!"

THEY edged nearer and nearer to the shore. Close at hand, they could see a stone ledge near to Powell's Wharf. There were some dim figures standing there—and some other figures resting against the wet, slimy wall.

The boat grated against the stonework, and there were some slippery steps just there. Nelson Lee kept his head low, in case one of the men should flash a torch.

"All right!" he muttered. "Put them aboard."

"What is your number?" demanded No. 43.

"No. 256," replied Lee promptly.

"Look out, men!" snapped No. 43. "This fellow's a tee!"

"You're mad!" said Lee contemptuously. "I tell you——"

"There's no No. 256 in my zone!" snapped No. 43. "Hands up! Quick, or I'll plug you! I'll fill you so full of lead——"

Crack!

It was Nelson Lee's weapon that spoke. He fired deliberately, aiming at No. 43's right arm. The man gave a shriek and staggered back. His weapon was jerked out of his hand, to go clattering on the stonework and to slither into the river.

"Now, boys!" shouted Lee.

He leapt ashore, and Fenton and Morrow were close behind him. The affair was becoming desperate.

Crack! Crack!

Two revolver-shots rang out—there were five Green Triangle men there now. Lee had only expected to find three. A bullet hissed past his head, and another tore through the sleeve of Morrow's soaked jacket.

"On them!" shouted Lee. "Don't let them fire again! It'll be death next time!"

Sir Edward Handforth and Edward Oswald and Willy watched fascinatedly. They had been amazed at this sudden turn of events—and now they were filled with dread. Lee and his two helpers were outnumbered, and although they were fighting gamely, it seemed that there could be only one end to this scrap.

A new sound abruptly made itself heard.

It was a shrill whistle—the unmistakable blast of a police whistle. It was taken up by others, and in a moment the air was throbbing with the sound. It had a magical effect upon the Green Triangle men. They lost all heart in the fight, and they backed away, alarmed and frightened.

"The boat!" snarled No. 43.

He leapt into it as he spoke, his right hand hanging limply to his side. Shouts came from the wharf, up above. Figures came tumbling down the slippery stairs—figures in uniform.

Police seemed to arrive out of nowhere—and there were other men, too. Men in plain clothes—but just as grim and just as dangerous.

In a word, the Flying Squad was on the job!

And this, incidentally, was William Napoleon Browne's doing. Browne had accompanied Lee in that dash to Rotherhithe, but he had been instructed to remain behind. On his own initiative Browne had decided that Scotland Yard should be let into this affair, and he had lost no time in 'phoning through. And at the Yard the wireless had been set at work and four Squad cars had been instantly informed. They had concentrated upon Powell's Wharf, and they had arrived at the right moment.

At the same time a River Police launch swept down from mid-stream. No. 43's idea of escaping by water was frustrated. The River Police boat came up, and a searchlight was switched glaringly upon the scene of action. It was a complete trap, from which the Green Triangle men had no chance of escaping.

THERE were no fewer than twelve Green Triangle men captured in that dramatic affair. For in addition to these prisoners on the wharf, the River Police launch raided a suspicious-looking barge which was lying out in the river. It proved to be an interesting craft.

Down below one of the holds had been converted into living accommodation. Several men were aboard—and all proved to be members of the League.

Sir Edward Handforth and his two sons were freed, and they, with Lee and the rest, were piled into one of the waiting Squad cars and rushed to the nearest hotel, where they were provided with warmth and dry things.

Nipper was the most disgusted fellow in the Detective Academy, for he had been left in charge of Nelson Lee's car, and had missed the whole "picnic."

There was another dramatic result of this raid, too. Nelson Lee was grim when he learned that Superintendent Cartwright, of Scotland Yard, had at first refused to communicate with the Flying Squad cars. He had been inclined to ignore Browne's warning—and it had been the Chief Commissioner himself who had given the orders.

Lee was struck by the significance of this fact. It had been Superintendent Cartwright who had arrived at Thetford, soon after Sir Edward Handforth's supposed abduction at Bury. And Nelson Lee had more than once had suspicions about Cartwright.

(Concluded on page 42.)

The THRILL CLUB!



You want thrills? This is where you get 'em! Each week one of the club members relates his most thrilling experience.

No. 3. Coffee in Damascus!

THE tall, grizzled man fumbled with two scraps of paper which he had withdrawn from a pocket-wallet whilst the members of the Thrill Club were settling down in their seats—looking to him for that night's story—the story of his most thrilling experience.

Without preamble he plunged into it directly the shuffling of chair legs had ceased.

These two pieces of paper (he began, holding them aloft) form the beginning and the middle of my most thrilling experience. This one is a clipping from a newspaper. It reads "Wanted, young man to undertake dangerous but extremely remunerative commission. No family ties. Apply G.M., at the office of this paper."

The other, this smaller, dirty piece, reads: "You die at 12!"

Well, the newspaper cutting interested me immensely. At my wit's end for a job, with only ten pounds remaining of the fortune that had been left me before I was out of my teens, I was game for anything. And so I found myself interviewing G.M. After sizing me up and hearing all I had to say, he blurted:

"You'll do. You will go at once to Damascus, to the gold market. There, on the Tuesday after your arrival, you will be offered a cup of coffee by a Syrian merchant whom I will describe to you. Take it. And that which you find in the dregs you will pocket, and guard with your life. Remain there until I send for you. Do you agree?"

I did, for the sum which he named as my reward took my breath away, accustomed as I had always been to spending money in riotous plenty.

At about eleven-thirty in the morning on the Tuesday following my arrival in Damascus, a mysterious-looking Syrian beckoned to me from his bazaar in the gold market as I passed by. I approached, and without a word he handed me the cup of coffee.

Not without qualms as to whether I was a fool—for the stuff might be poisoned—I drank it. But why should G.M. want to poison me? Why—but there were scores of "Why's," and, anyhow, I was not in the mood to draw back now.

I drank it to the dregs, felt something large knock against my teeth, took that something into my mouth, transferred it swiftly to my handkerchief, and my handkerchief to my inside breast pocket. The Syrian nodded gravely, as though approving my action, turned his back on me—and passed out of my life.

Back I went at once to my lodging, not more than a couple of hundred yards from that teeming market-place. In the privacy of my single room, which was on the second floor of a ramshackle wooden building, I took out my handkerchief and inspected the thing which I had found in the coffee dregs. It was a magnificent diamond, which I should say was worth a cool half-million.

At that moment I glimpsed from the corner of my eye a scrap of paper being pushed farther and farther into my room through the tiny crack at the bottom of the

door. Noiselessly I leapt to the door and unlocked it, and flung it open. Not a soul in sight, and I hadn't heard so much as a rustle.

I knew it would be pretty hopeless to go chasing downstairs, for these Syrian gentry move about like ghosts. So I hastily edged back into my room, locked the door, and examined the scrap of paper.

"You die at 12." Nothing else was written on it. Just that. Involuntarily I glanced at the clock. Ten minutes to mid-day! I did some quick thinking, not pausing to wonder who was going to "get" me, or why. So far as I could see, there was only one way in which "they" could get at me. And that was by the door, which was locked. It was the door, then, I'd got to guard.

And so I crouched facing it, my revolver ready cocked. They hadn't wasted much time! *Tick-tock—tick-tock*—the seconds ticked away like eternity. Five to twelve—one minute to—mid-day—a minute past—five past. Perhaps it wasn't this twelve o'clock they meant. Midnight, perhaps? Or were they just trying to scare me away, thinking they stood a better chance of getting me and the diamond out in the open?"

Well, I wasn't going to stand for that. Grimly I pocketed my revolver, right hand still gripping it, and went cautiously down the dark stairs and into the blazing, sweltering street. I had got what my employer had sent me for. Should I bolt? But his strict orders were that I should wait until sent for. How he would send for me, or when, I hadn't the foggiest notion.

I'd got to stick it out!

I WENT out into the crowded street, and was just in time to witness the arrival of an aeroplane. The pilot jumped out—it was a single-seater—stared around for a minute, gave a start as he saw me, and jerked back his head as a signal to me to advance.

With as careless a manner as I could assume—but with my eyes skinned for any sign of attack from either side—I sidled to where he stood by the side of his 'plane. I just caught his mumbled words, accepted his proffered cigarette, handed him my matchbox, turned on my heel, and hurried back to my room—to wait for midnight! I glanced at the clock on the mantelshelf. Ten minutes to twelve!

Once more I looked round to make sure no one could possibly be hidden behind any of the scanty furniture. My eyes strayed back to the clock. *The hands had not moved—*

they still pointed to ten minutes to twelve. And yet the clock was ticking! In two strides I had reached it and convinced myself that the ticking was *not* coming from that clock. Then what the deuce was it?

Tick-tock—tick-tock! There it was, inexorable as doom. I wiped the sweat from my face and, not daring to turn my back to the door, started another search of the room. *Tick-tock—tick-tock!*

Then at last I had it! A board creaked noisily under my feet. In a flash I tore the ragged carpet up and pulled away the loose board. I grabbed the thing I was looking for, and even as I hurled it through the window there was a deafening report.

Yes, it was an infernal machine that had been planted beneath my floor. If it hadn't been for the stopping of that clock ten minutes before the moment appointed for my doom I should have gone sky-high.

I packed up there and then, in spite of



"... On the stairs they got me—two knife-wounds and a bullet!"

G.M.'s orders through the 'plane pilot that I should stay for another day at least. Half-way down the stairs they got me—two knife-wounds and a bullet. But I fought 'em off and crawled to hospital, where I lay for seven weeks.

Did they get the diamond? I thought perhaps you would have guessed it was in the matchbox which I handed to the pilot of the 'plane. And did I get my "extremely remunerative commission"? Well, G.M. had bolted when I returned to England. He was a number one size crook, with no other object, so far as I was concerned, than to get rid of me for all time after I had collected his stone for him. Hence the infernal machine and the thugs on the stairs.

CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF OUR THRILLING DETECTIVE SERIAL!

THE FOUR-LEGGED EAGLE!



There's trouble in plenty in Abronia. The people are restless. A revolution is certain unless—it all depends upon Ferrers Locke!

A Race to the Frontier!

As he felt Jack wriggle from his grip, Perilla swung round menacingly. "Cub!" he snarled. "I'll—"

As quick as lightning his hand came into view, and the sun glinted on a knife. But Jack was prepared for that. Without a moment's hesitation, he launched himself full at Perilla, jumping at him. His right fist drove home like a sledge-hammer.

It was all done so quickly that even the snake-like Perilla was a shade too slow. Jack's bunched knuckles fairly cracked on the man's jaw. Perilla shot backwards, barely half-conscious, helpless, slithering wildly, arms flung high over his head. The knife dropped from his nerveless fingers. His limp body crashed through the low, thorny hedge and he dropped out of sight over the precipice to the floor of the gully, fifty feet below.

The Duke of Silene shrieked with horror. Prince Carlos growled like a wild beast. Major Patens whipped out his revolver, but Jack was galvanised into activity now and he wasted no time. He ducked low and the bullet from the major's revolver whined over his head. The next second he had dived between the major's legs, toppling the big military man over into the dusty road like a ninepin. Then he scuttled under the hay cart.

Prince Carlos was shouting rapidly in the Abronian dialect; Major Patens picked himself up and levelled his revolver. But Jack had already dodged through to the other side of the hay cart, and now he was running full pelt. He leapt the low hedge and raced off up the mountain-side, dodging from boulder to bush and back to a boulder again.

Major Patens' revolver crackled fiercely, and the bullets chipped the boulders wherever Jack dared to show himself, but the boy seemed to bear a charmed life and was not hit once. Major Patens had now clambered on to the hay cart for a better view, and by his side stood the Duke of Silene, also blazing away with a revolver.

And up on the mountain-side an owl hooted continuously. Jack headed for that owl. It was a risky business. Major Patens was shooting straighter now, and Jack had come to a spot where the boulders were scarce and the bushes rather scanty. The bullets whistled unpleasantly close to him.

He lay prone beneath a boulder to get his breath and snatch a few moments' rest, which he badly needed. And as the storm of lead whistled all around and over him he frowned, wondering how he could get away from this death trap.

At that moment a revolver cracked higher up the mountain-side, and down on the road the Duke of Silene yelped like a puppy and dropped, squirming in agony, out of sight behind the hay cart. The wounded man was seized by Prince Carlos and Major Patens and tossed unceremoniously into the tonneau of their car. The prince spoke to Patens, who nodded, and then Carlos took his seat at the wheel alone and drove off up the road at a reckless pace.

Jack immediately guessed why the major had been left behind—namely, to give chase to himself, Ferrers Locke, and King Ferdinand.

However, Jack had a good lead, and he made the most of it. He continued clambering on up the steep side of the mountain, from boulder to boulder, from bush to bush, guided by the hooting of an owl he never saw.

And suddenly he heard a voice calling to him.

"This way, Jack!"

The boy dropped down into a shallow gully, and completely out of sight of his pursuer—who was now toiling up at the foot of the mountain—ran for all his might, rounded a bend by a great rock, and came on Ferrers Locke and the King of Abronia.

"The major is after us——" began Jack breathlessly.

"There's no need to worry," said the detective coolly. "He can't spot us amongst all these rocks."

"How did you manage to escape from that cart of hay, guv'nor?" asked Jack.

"While they were hauling you out and threatening you, we scrambled out on the other side of the cart and hid among the rocks, gradually climbing the mountain-side," explained Ferrers Locke. "What's happened since?"

"Oh, there's been plenty of excitement," replied Jack, grinning reminiscently. "I landed Perilla a beauty and he went toppling over the gorge. I'm afraid that's the end of him. Then I managed to escape up the mountain-side. You winged the Duke of Silene, and after that Carlos put him in his car and then drove off like mad, leaving Major Patens to give chase——"

"Which direction did Carlos take?" broke in King Ferdinand anxiously.

"He was heading for Abronia, I guess," replied Jack. "But the major is all alone. The three of us ought to be able to hide and jump out on him——"

"No, no!" cried the king, greatly agitated. "Messieurs, there is not the time to worry about Major Patens. For, see, Carlos drives for the frontier. If he crosses the frontier before us, then there will be war. We must get to Abronia first!"

Locke frowned thoughtfully.

"Carlos is at the wheel of a high-powered car," he said.

"True, m'sieur," retorted Ferdinand. "But the road winds and twists miles out of the straight. It is a dangerous road all the way and gets worse as the frontier is approached, with the sheer side of the mountain on one side and the precipice on the other. We can go on foot over the mountain, in a straight line. An arduous march, messieurs, but we must get there first. There is a chance—a slight chance, perhaps——"

"We can but try," broke in Locke. "And it's our only chance, anyway."

It was rough going over the wiry, slippery turf, in and out amongst the boulders and the prickly bushes. The higher they climbed the more difficult was the route. Only once did they sight the pursuing Major Patens, and then he was nearly a mile to the southward, entirely off his course. Jack's last desperate run along the gully had deceived him completely and he was searching in the wrong direction. Locke's party did not worry about the major. He hardly counted now. Their main purpose was to reach the Abronian frontier post before Prince Carlos.

The perspiration streamed from them all as they clambered up the steep slope which led to the topmost ridge of the mountain. This was the hardest climb of all. The ground was bare of turf, the cold rocks were slimy and damp. The mist hung over them, blotting out the valleys and the winding road completely, soaking their clothes, chilling their bodies which were already unnaturally heated, with weakening results.

Then began the descent! If anything, it was more dangerous than the ascent. At times the progress was quicker, but that was not always desirable, when speed meant slithering down a bare rock on one's back, clawing out with heels and hands for a restraining hold.

Bruised and bleeding they left the bleak mountain-top and marched hurriedly down the slopes. They left the clinging mist above their heads like a looming cloud and could see down into the green valley, where the cottages clustered together, and the cattle grazed. The road wound and twisted on the side of the mountain beneath them, the low red roof of the Abronian frontier post showed up conspicuously.

With their destination in sight they hurried more than ever. At last they had reached the roadway and were running along it towards the frontier post. They could hear the steady purring roar of a high-powered car coming from the direction of the Italian frontier. Prince Carlos was not far away. Would they be able to beat him to the frontier?

The three of them were running as fast as they could go, with Locke and Jack in the lead. Soldiers came out of the guard-house.

"Halt, there!" cried a sergeant, in the Abronian tongue.

Locke did not understand Abronian, but the gesture was enough. He pulled up with the keen point of the bayonet barely six inches from his chest.

And then he wondered what he ought to say and do next. Did the king still desire to preserve his incognito? Would he want these soldiers to know who he was?

Ferdinand settled that question himself. He came panting to the spot.

"The officer of the guard!" he cried. "Where is he? Bring him! Quickly!"

Locke did not understand Abronian, but he guessed the purport of what was being said.

"Why should I?" argued the sergeant. "Who are you?"

"Sir! Do you not know your king?" raved Ferdinand.

The sergeant stared, then drew himself up stiffly and saluted. Even so, he looked dubious as he ran back to the guard-house.

The detective was frowning with anxiety. The matter was taken out of his hands now, but the roaring of the oncoming car sounded louder and louder, although it could not be seen because of the sharp bend in the road. The mountain loomed overhead on one hand, and on the other was a sheer drop of thousands of feet to the valley below. The road could be easily barricaded. That was one thing to be thankful for.

The officer of the guard came strutting from the guard-house. Ferdinand went up to him, and at first sight the officer started as if shot; then he saluted stiffly, although, like the sergeant, he was puzzled.

"Listen," said Ferdinand boldly. "There is a car coming down the road. Prince Carlos is in that car. I am Ferdinand of Abronia. If you are loyal to me you will prevent that car entering Abronia. If you are a supporter of that rebel prince, then——"

It was a bold move, for this officer might have been one of Carlos's supporters, in which case the king would be helpless. But the officer never hesitated.

"If you will go into the guard-house, sire," he said, "we will barricade the road!"

He went, shouting orders. A great baulk of timber was stretched across the narrow road. Behind the barricade the soldiers were drawn up, their loaded rifles raised, ready to fire.

And then, with a terrific roar, that high-powered car came hurtling round the bend. Carlos was at the wheel, and at sight of that barricade and that file of soldiers he immediately clapped on the brakes. There was nothing else for it. But the car was travelling at fifty miles per hour, and the gradient just there, together with the bend in the road, was more than dangerous.



Grand New Serial Starting Next Week!

"THE IRON SPEEDMAN!"

By

Alfred Edgar

This is a story of Jim Ross and Joe Cooper. Two chums—and both speed mad. They're never happy unless they're careering along at a hundred miles an hour or thereabouts. Jim—that's him behind the wheel—is sure some driver. His father was a star speedman, and Jim looks like following in his footsteps. But he's faced with a formidable obstacle—Lon Stargie, a crack driver who has a grudge against Jim. Stargie's a dangerous man; ruthless, too. There are going to be many stirring tussles between him and the two chums.

Look out for the opening instalment—it's a real thriller—of Alfred Edgar's magnificent new motor-racing yarn in next Wednesday's special bumper Free Gift issue of the

NELSON · LEE LIBRARY

The car skidded madly, flinging up the grit of the road. Carlos fought to gain control of the vehicle, but it was hopeless from the first. The machine hurtled off the roadway and crashed through the sparse hedge at the side. The Duke of Silene, wounded though he was, leapt to his feet in the tonneau and screamed with shrill fear.

Too late! He was doomed, like his leader. The car hurtled over the edge of the precipice and dropped through space to the valley below.

King Ferdinand stood on the steps of the guard-house. There was an appreciable lapse of time before a metallic crash was heard from the distant valley. The king stood at attention, and saluted.

"Messieurs," he said grimly, "it is the passing of Carlos. For Carlos, I am sorry. But for Abronia, I am glad!"

Ferrers Locke's Triumph!

AN awkward silence followed. Then King Ferdinand turned to the officer of the guard. "Would it be possible to get a car from here?" he asked.

"There is only my own car, sir," replied the officer, "but I should consider myself honoured if you would use it."

"I must get to the capital immediately," said the king.

He translated all this for Ferrers Locke's benefit, but the detective raised a warning hand.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but I think it would be advisable to let them know at the palace of your arrival. Is there a telephone here? I see wires leading from the guard-house."

"But why?" asked the king.

"You are supposed to be in the palace now," argued Locke. "Just suppose that you are seen driving into the capital. It will arouse suspicions. You ought, I suggest, swear the guard here to secrecy over all that has happened. You ought to get into touch with someone you can trust at the palace—her Majesty, the Queen—so that she can make any necessary arrangements. It will also put her Majesty at rest concerning your safety."

Ferdinand nodded approvingly.

"Besides," went on the detective, "if things are peaceable enough here and favourable to you, how do you know it will be the same at the capital? Let your supporters know you are safe."

The king smiled and nodded again.

"M'sieur Locke," he said, "during the short but exciting time I have known you, your help has always been invaluable, and your advice has always been good advice. I will do as you say."

He called the officer to him and together they went into the guard-house, where the king 'phoned to his palace in the heart of the capital. He was smiling when he came out, although his eyes glinted grimly.

"You were right, m'sieur," he said to Locke. "As always, your advice is good advice. The people in the capital are restless. The crowd gather outside the palace every day and shout for the king. The supporters of Prince Carlos are inciting them to revolt. We must hurry to the capital at once. You are to drive, m'sieur, if you will, and the good sergeant will be seated beside you. The sentries at the palace will not attempt to stop the car when they see the sergeant seated beside the driver."

The officer of the guard brought out his car. He also lent the king a military cloak, rather shabby, which muffled him up to the eyes. Ferdinand sat in the tonneau with Jack beside him. Locke took the wheel, and the sergeant occupied the seat next to him.

The ride to the capital was uneventful. No one paid any attention to the car, nor to its occupants. Certainly no one suspected that the man huddled up in that shabby military cloak was Ferdinand of Abronia.

At last the capital was reached. It was noticeable that the main roads were thronged with people, and the crowd grew more dense as the palace drew nearer. The gates of Ferdinand's imposing residence were open wide, and were guarded by numerous sentries who paced to and fro. Along the high railings outside the palace swarmed the people—a yelling, clamouring mob which, composed to a large extent of the rowdy element of the city, looked ripe for trouble at any moment.

As the car approached the gates the sentries stood alert, but the sight of the sergeant seated beside Locke reassured them and they allowed the vehicle to pass. Ferrers Locke drove through the gateway, proceeded across the courtyard, went under the lofty arch and so to the doors of the palace, out of sight of the people in the street.

And as the detective shut off the engine, he glanced back and saw that all the palace gates had been closed. The soldiers were not running any risks. Outside, the mob was now shouting furiously.

"The king! The king! Where is the king?"

Ferdinand was out of the car with a bound, for Queen Zita stood there to welcome him. Behind her were Court officers and high Government officials, who had helped to keep secret the fact of the king's abduction by Prince Carlos. Ferdinand took Zita in his arms; then he turned to the officials and shook hands with them. They bowed before him. The queen took this opportunity of crossing over to where Ferrers Locke and Jack stood, both her hands outstretched, her face aglow with happiness.

"M'sieurs," she said, "for all both of you have done—for all you have dared—I can never thank you enough!"

About half an hour later the famous detective and his young assistant were standing in the lofty audience chamber of the palace, from the windows of which they could gaze down at the wildly clamouring crowd. Many of the rowdier people were brandishing sticks at the soldiers who patrolled the palace grounds; one or two stones had been thrown. The situation was becoming acute.

At that moment Ferdinand strode into the audience chamber. He was dressed in his gayest and most elaborate uniform, gleaming with decorations and gold braid. The windows were flung open and he stepped out on to the balcony, with the queen on one side of him, and his surgeon on the other.

It was a coup—a surprise. For a few moments an amazed silence fell on the crowd, during which period the king saluted the throng. Then someone cheered, and thus the tide turned. Others took up that solitary cheer till all the crowd was cheering. They had seen their king at last, obviously fit and well. That was all they wanted.

In the forefront of the crowd a stalwart figure caught Locke's eye. It was Major Patens. The king saw him, too, and turning to his aide de camp he issued some orders. The aide de camp hurried away. Out of the palace came a company of soldiers. They converged on the major, who could not escape because of the dense crowd. Yet he did escape. The crack of his revolver was plainly heard on the balcony of the palace.

"I am sorry for the major," said the king solemnly. "No doubt he was unscrupulous, but there was no question as to his courage. But, messieurs, it is fitting that the guilty should suffer rather than the innocent. I fancy there will be peace in Abronia, instead of war!"

* * * *

And thus Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were instrumental in averting a revolution in Abronia. The return of King Ferdinand had been only just in time, for the people were ripe for rebellion. However, now all danger was over, and there was no doubting their loyalty to the king.

Locke and Jack, of course, were fêted and honoured by the country. They were guests of the King and Queen of Abronia, and had a magnificent time. And when eventually they left that country, homeward bound once more, they were both entitled to wear the Star of the Noble Order of the Four-Legged Eagle of Abronia!

THE END.

Look out for the opening chapters of our stirring new motor-racing serial entitled: "The Iron Speedman!" in next week's Special Free Gift issue of the "Nelson Lee." Order your copy of the Old Paper NOW, chums!

THE MAN WHO VANISHED!

(Continued from page 35.)

He did not remain at Rotherhithe for more than another fifteen minutes—and then he was off again. Nipper drove him at full speed into London, and the journey ended in Fulham. Here Lee forcibly entered the private garage adjoining Cartwright's home.

He examined the superintendent's big car, and made some interesting discoveries. For it was a trick car—capable of being converted from a limousine into an open tourer. In a word, it was the car which had been used by the League of the Green Triangle for the kidnapping of Sir Edward!

And as a result of Nelson Lee's information, Superintendent John Cartwright was placed under arrest. It was a staggering blow for the League of the Green Triangle—practically a knock-out blow.

On the top of all this, the Green Owl night club was raided. Paolo Rossi, the proprietor, was arrested. Two members of the League Council were unmasked. And the secrets of the night club were exposed—the cunningly-concealed lifts and the underground tunnels. The League's Council Chamber was discovered, and seized.

"I rather think, boys, that our old friend, Zingrave, will lie low for some little time after this," said Nelson Lee, as he addressed the Detective Academy the next day. "We have dealt him a smashing blow."

"Rather, sir!" said Handforth exultantly. "And my pater is safe!"

"I fancy we shall hear very little of the Green Triangle in the immediate future," said Lee. "It will take them a long time to recover from this set-back."

And in this the great detective was right. The League of the Green Triangle was, for the moment, demoralised. Once again Nelson Lee had triumphed. But on this occasion he had had the active help of the Detective Academy—and he was the first to admit that his "cub" detectives were proving their worth.

THE END.

Next week Nelson Lee and his young assistants come to grips with a new and even more formidable enemy—Dacca the Dwarf! Don't miss the opening story in this amazing new series, entitled: "S.O.S." And don't forget that next Wednesday's issue will contain the first of our stunning Free Gifts!

The St. FRANK'S LEAGUE GOSSIP

THE CHIEF OFFICER CHATS WITH HIS CHUMS

The Chief Officer always welcomes letters from his fellow-members of the St. Frank's League; he is always willing to help and to give advice. Here's his address: The Chief Officer, "The Nelson Lee Library," Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London. E.C.4.

A Wonderful Programme!

NEXT week's the great week, chums! The first topping Free Gift—grand new series of stories featuring Nelson Lee and his young assistants—magnificent new motor-racing serial—two new short story features, and a simple and fascinating footer competition. How's that for a wonderful programme? And the price of the Old Paper is the same as usual!

Full details concerning all these attractions can be found elsewhere in this issue, so there is no necessity for me to repeat them here. I just want to impress upon my chums not to miss this glorious twopennyworth.

The Free Gifts will, I feel sure, be all the rage. They are unique; they are articles which every boy has longed to possess. Take the boomerang-thrower—next week's Free Gift—for instance. We have all read and marvelled at the things which the natives of Australia can make their boomerangs do. Now you will have the chance of emulating those natives in a smaller degree.

Naturally, there's bound to be a huge demand for next week's bumper number of the NELSON LEE. And if you don't take the necessary precautions you'll find yourself unable to obtain a copy. Avoid all risks of disappointment by ordering your copy **IN ADVANCE!**

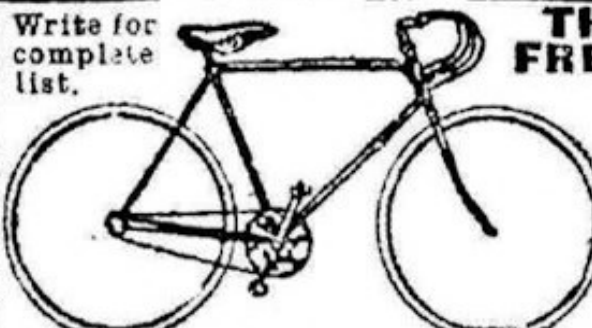
From Success To Success!

AN interesting letter has come to hand this week from Alex Henderson, who is the president and foreign secretary of the Wide World Wireless and Correspondence Club. This club is going from success to success, and branches have been formed in various parts of the world. A Canadian section has recently been started, and readers living in that country will be well advised to get in touch with the branch secretary, D. A. Powell, Junr., 1211, King Street, West, Elmhurst, Westdale, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Alex has also asked me to announce that members are required at home and abroad for his club, and that secretaries are needed in many countries to run the local branches. Full particulars can be obtained from him at 35, Broadlands Road, Southampton.

THE CHIEF OFFICER.

Write for complete list.



THE "SPUR" FRENCH RACER.
Guaranteed forever
55/- Usual retail £4-4-0
Frame enamelled in various colours.
Genuine Clincher Popular Cord tyres

Deposit 14/- and 12 monthly payments of 4/9.
GEO. GROSE & Co., 8, New Bridge St., London, E.C.4.

BE TALL!

Your Height increased in 14 days, or money back! 3-5 inches rapidly gained, also health and new energy. Amazing Complete Course costs only 5/-, or 15d. STAMP brings Free Book, testimonials, and Guarantee in plain sealed envelope.—**STEBBING SYSTEM**, 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

Stop Stammering!

Cure yourself as I did. Particulars **FREE**.—**FRANK B. HUGHES**, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

BE TALLER!

Increased my own height to 6ft. 3ins. STAMP brings FREE DETAILS.—**ROSS**, Height Specialist, Scarborough.

FREE PASSAGES

to Ontario, Canada, for approved boy farm learners, age 15 to 19. Apply:—**ONTARIO GOVERNMENT**, 346, STRAND, LONDON.

GROW TALLER!

ADD INCHES to your height. Details free.—**JEDISON**, 39, BOND ST., BLACKPOOL.

All applications for Advertisement spaces in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "The Nelson Lee Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street London, E.C.4.

Be sure to mention **THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY** when communicating with advertisers.



Be a Railway Manager

OPERATING—your own railway system—controlling—directing—fast traffic running to the “tick”—“locals” interweaving with main-line trains—planning schedules—organising—dictating. What fun to be a Railway Manager! Everything you need to build your own model railway you can get—**FREE**—in exchange for B.D.V. Coupons. Begin saving to-day and ask your friends to help.

GET THE 100 PAGE GIFT BOOK WORTH 5 COUPONS

It contains full particulars of the Bassett-Lowke and Bing model railway systems. Write to Godfrey Phillips Ltd. (Gift Dept. N.L.), 112, Commercial Street, London, E.1.

BING “VICTORY”
ENGINE

**260
COUPONS**

BING TANK
ENGINE

**160
COUPONS**

PASSENGER
COACH

**65
COUPONS**

B.D.V.

*“as good as the best
non-coupon cigarettes”*

10 for 6d., 20 for 11½d., Plain or Cork Tips.

*Coupons also in every packet of
B.D.V. Tobacco, 11d. per oz.*

BASSETT-
LOWKE ENGINE

**375
COUPONS**

TIME TABLE
BOARD

**125
COUPONS**

CORRIDOR
BOGIE COACH

**400
COUPONS**