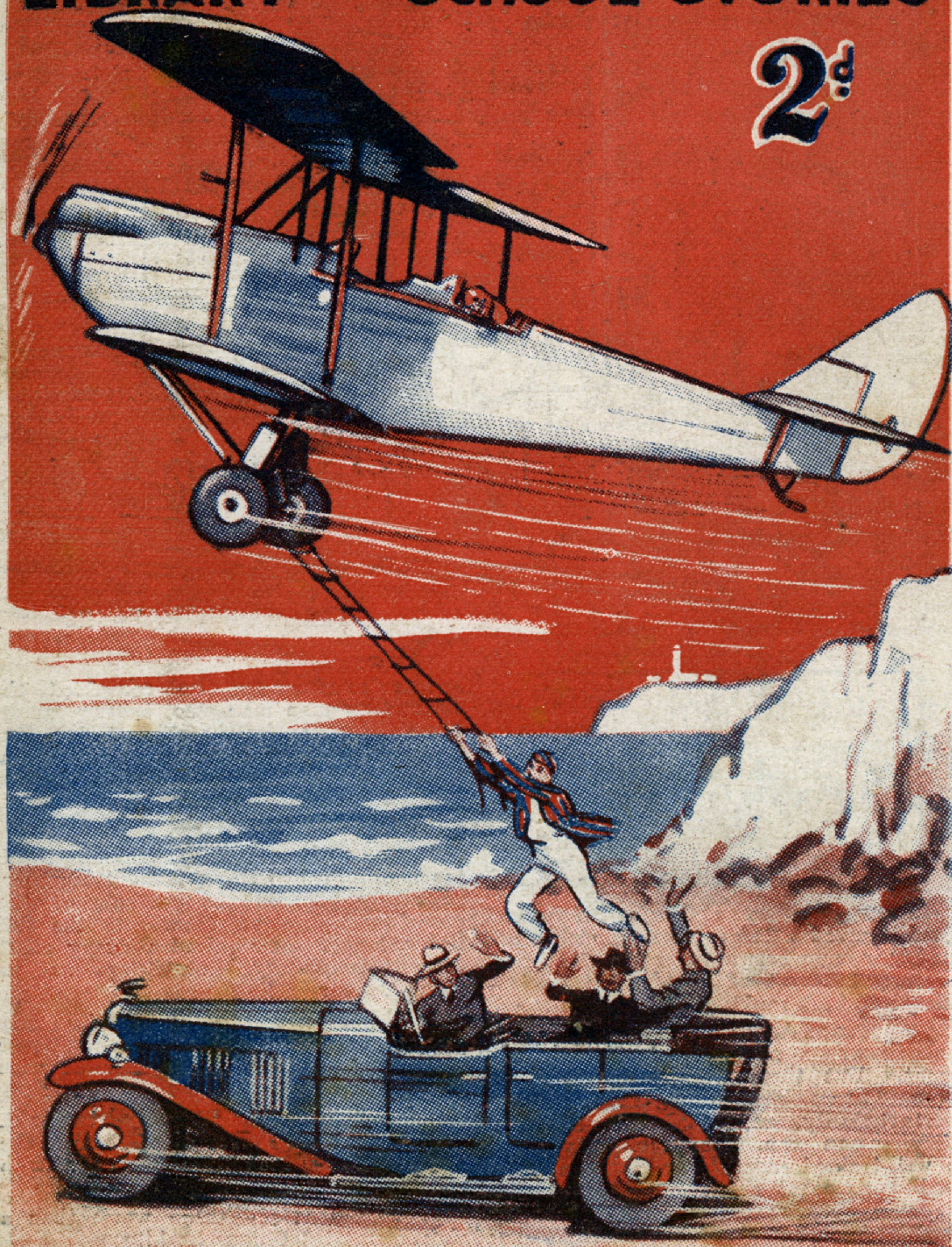


ST. FRANK'S SCHOOLBOY KING KIDNAPPED!

THE NELSON LEE

LIBRARY OF SCHOOL STORIES

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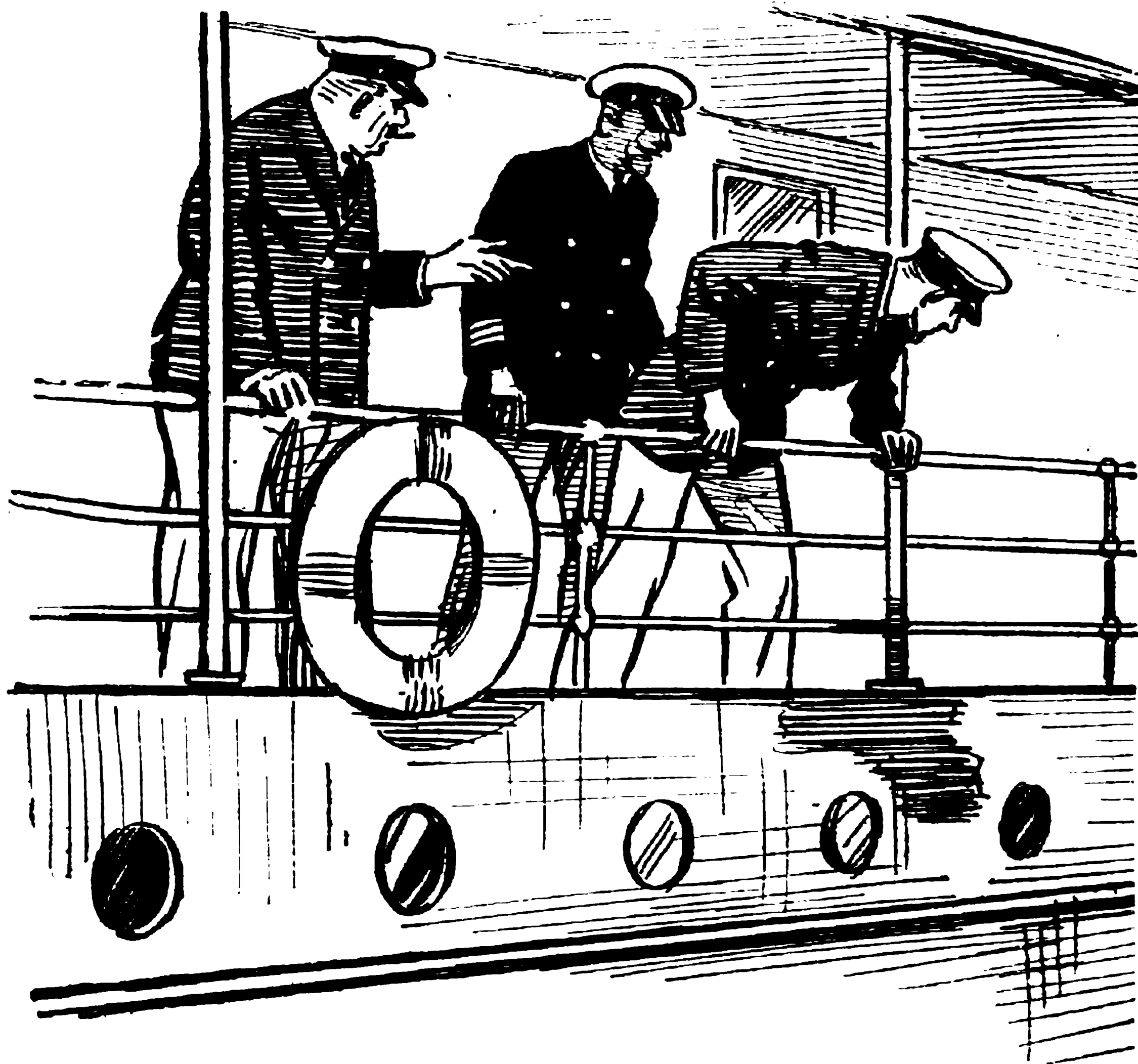
New Series No. 79.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY.

July 25th, 1931.

Schoolboy King Menaced By Caronian Plotters !

The KIDNAPPED



CHAPTER 1.

A Shock for Phipps!

“GOOD gracious me!”

If Phipps had been suddenly stung by a large and angry hornet, he could not have jumped more violently. The colour had flown from his cheeks, and he looked like a man who has received a terrific shock.

In a way this was right, for Phipps had just received a large brown-paper parcel, and this large brown-paper parcel, opened, reposed in front of him in the Ancient House at St. Frank's.

Phipps was Archie Glenthorne's valet, and he was a man of placid temperament. But there were moments when even Phipps shed that mask of imperturbability, and stood revealed as a very human man. However, Phipps was a well-trained servant, and only a great and unexpected shock could affect him as noticeably as this. As he stood by Archie Glenthorne's table on this hot

summer's afternoon, he resembled the smart City man who, having caught the eight-fifteen by the skin of his teeth, and having squashed into a crowded compartment, has discovered that he has omitted to don a necktie. In a word, Phipps was stirred to the depths.

A spasm of momentary weakness shook his frame, but, pulling himself together, he firmly grasped the contents of the parcel and dragged them into the full light of day. It required a strong effort of will to do this, but Phipps was no coward.

At this moment the door of the study opened, and Tubbs, the Ancient House page-boy, whistling shrilly, entered with some letters.

“Oh, hallo, Mr. Phipps!” he said, interrupting his song. “What's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost!”

“I have seen something worse than a ghost!” replied Phipps huskily.

"Well, I'm blown!" he said. "Are you looking so upset, Mr. Phipps, because of that there suit?"

"We will not discuss the matter," said Phipps stiffly.

"Looks all right to me," commented Tubbs. "Jolly nice suit! One of Master Archie's, I suppose? What's the matter with it, anyhow?"

"We will not discuss the subject, young man," replied Phipps coldly. "Go away. You worry me."

"Steady on, Mr. Phipps," protested Tubbs. "You're funny about clothes, ain't you? But I'm blown if I can see anything wrong with the suit. It's a nice colour—a sort of brownish-purple."

Phipps shuddered.

"I should rather call it a purplish-brown," he said distastefully. "An atrocious hue, Tubbs. The cut, too, is impossible. However, we will not pursue the subject. Put those letters down, and go."

There was such a note of authority in Phipps' voice that Tubbs placed the letters on the table and took his departure—but not without a last admiring glance at that new suit.

Phipps once again held the suit at arm's length, and gazed upon it in a sort of fascinated stupor, as though hypnotised.

Ordinary people could never quite understand Phipps' attitude with regard to clothing. His taste was perfect, of course, and he generally saw to it that Archie Glenthorne was turned out as nearly perfect as anybody could be turned out. But whereas the sight of a highly-coloured lounge suit would merely call for a passing remark from the ordinary person, Phipps would be affected for hours—perhaps days. He had been known to reel at the sight of a necktie, and he had many times made a long detour of the school, merely in order to avoid meeting Mr. Alington Wilkes, the Housemaster of the Ancient House—who, in Phipps' opinion, was a standing disgrace to the school. A gentleman, of course—a charming man—but, in the matter of clothes, a menace to the community.

Phipps was funny that way.

Only by constant supervision did he prevent Archie Glenthorne from making a hopeless young ass of himself. Archie's taste in suits and neckties was deplorable. He had a passion for colour—and vivid colour at that. Left to himself, he would run absolutely riot.

Here, in this appalling suit, was an instance of Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne's wilfulness. Quite unknown to Phipps—without even consulting

Phipps—he had had this suit made by his tailor. Only by the merest chance had the parcel come into Phipps' hands first. It was a narrow shave—so narrow that Phipps was still feeling shaky.

There was only one thing to do, of course; hide the suit. Better still, destroy it—and trust to luck that Archie would forget all about it.

But this was so unlikely that Phipps felt dubious. When Archie ordered a suit without his—Phipps'—knowledge, he seldom, if ever, forgot it. Rather did he wait upon the doorstep, looking with eager eyes for 'delivery-men. Phipps could only assume that Archie was not here now because he had been detained by the cricket match which was just taking place on Little Side. The St. Frank's Junior XI was playing Hal Brewster & Co., of the River House School. This match was a "local Derby," and it always attracted very considerable interest.

The study door opened again, and once more Phipps was discovered with that suit in his hand. But it wasn't Tubbs this time. It was Orlando, of the Remove. Orlando shared this study with Archie Glenthorne and Alf Brent, so he had a perfect right to walk in.

"Hallo, Phipps!" said Orlando cheerfully.

"Good-afternoon, sir," said Phipps, with deference.

Phipps felt that deference was due to this new Removite. For Victor Alexis Orlando was not of the ordinary run of schoolboys.

Although it was definitely understood by all and sundry that King Victor of Caronia should be treated as an ordinary schoolboy, Phipps could never forget Victor's real station. Phipps, in fact, considered that Study E was greatly honoured by its new member.

Victor Orlando, King of Caronia, had recently come to St. Frank's, accompanied by his boon friend, Paul Maddox. Paul was the son of a prominent Caronian tradesman, but he and Victor had been chums since early childhood, and they were practically inseparable.

It was difficult to realise that these two boys were not English. Victor was a cheerful, mischievous youngster, with twinkling eyes and curly chestnut hair; Paul was fair and rather handsome. They had had an English tutor since childhood, and they had spent two or three years in a high-class preparatory school in Bedfordshire. And Victor's uncle, the Grand Duke Rudolph, who was the regent of Caronia, was a great lover of England and all things English. Thus these two boys were very much Anglicised.

There had been quite a stir when they had first come into the Remove about a week ago. But by now they had settled down, the Remove had got over the novelty of having a king in their ranks, and Orlando and Maddox were regarded as ordinary, common or garden juniors. The Remove had soon found that Victor was a very human boy, as fond of mischief as anybody, and the fact that he was a king no longer mattered.

But Phipps, whose duties took him constantly in and out of Study E, could never forget the new boy's status, and he rather deplored the fact that Orlando lacked that dignity which such a status demanded.

"A NEW suit, Phipps?" asked Victor, eyeing the atrocity with interest.
"Yes, sir."

Phipps badly wanted to say "Your majesty," but he had been warned not to do so. However, he managed to get an extra amount of deference into his tone.

"Not bad, Phipps."

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"A nice piece of stuff, that," said Victor appreciatively.

Phipps had the impression that the room was rocking to and fro.

"You are joking, sir."

"Joking?" said Victor. "What do you mean? There's nothing wrong with the suit, is there?"

This time the room positively heaved. His majesty was serious! And Phipps, who had so scorned the taste of Tubbs, was shocked immeasurably. He had expected words of stern condemnation from this highly-born boy who was a king. And here was Victor Alexis Orlando giving that suit the O.K.!

"I imagine, sir, that you have not yet seen the suit in the full light," said Phipps, moving aside. "If you will look at it now sir, you will observe the colour of the material."

"Ah, yes," said Victor, nodding.

Phipps, eyeing him anxiously, failed to see any repulsive shudder.

"You agree with me, sir?" asked Phipps, almost pleadingly.

"Agree with you about what?"

"In my opinion sir, this suit is—er—hideous."

"I don't agree with you, Phipps."

"No, sir?"

"I like it."

"You—you like it, sir?" asked Phipps dazedly.

"A nice-looking suit, Phipps. Cheerful. Bright. Colourful. A suit expressive of happiness."

Phipps fought against a growing impression that he was dreaming. Could it be possible that he—Phipps—was wrong? Archie Glenthorne liked that suit, or he would not have ordered it; Tubbs liked it; and now the King of Caronia liked it! Phipps looked at it again, and his whole being revolted.

"I can only assume, sir, that you are saying this out of politeness," he declared firmly. "Master Archie ordered this appalling suit without my knowledge. I regret to say that that is one of Master Archie's weaknesses. I cannot, of course, permit him to wear it, and I am hoping that he will forget all about it. It is my intention to hide it. I should consider that I was lacking in a sense of duty, sir, if I allowed my young master to appear publicly garbed in this—this unfortunate apparel."

Victor laughed. It was quite the longest speech he had ever heard from Phipps, and the bitterness in Phipps' tone was amusing.

"You're old-fashioned, Phipps," said Victor genially. "You don't move with the times. It is an age of colour. If you ask me, I think it was rather brilliant of Archie to order that suit without your knowledge. It's hard luck on him that you opened the parcel first."

Phipps' opinion of kings slumped. Their stock had gone down rapidly.

"I regard it as my duty, sir, to confiscate this suit," he said, with quiet firmness. "I shall hide it away. In no circumstances shall I permit Master Archie to wear it. I have a good mind to destroy it."

"Don't do that," said Victor. "I'll wear the suit myself!"

CHAPTER 2.

The Mysterious Strangers!

FOR the second time that afternoon, Phipps jumped as though he had been stung by a large and angry hornet.

"I—I beg your pardon, sir?" he stuttered.

"I said I'll wear it myself," smiled Victor.

"But really, sir——"

"If Archie isn't to be permitted to wear it—and during my short period at St. Frank's I have discovered that you are his boss in all matters sartorial—I might as well bag it for myself," said Victor Alexis Orlando genially. "So hand it over, Phipps, and wipe that startled look off your face."

Phipps, with an effort, became his usual imperturbable self.

"Very good, sir," he said, in a voice not unlike the sound of an Arctic blast. Valiantly he concealed his consternation; bravely he smothered his pain.

"It'll be rather a lark," grinned Victor. "After all, Archie's my study-mate, so why shouldn't I wear his suit? I've taken quite a fancy to it, Phipps. I think it's topping!"

"Yes, sir," said Phipps stonily. His voice, this time had the bitterness of an east wind direct from Siberia.

But as Victor took the suit and went over to the window, so that he could examine it the better, Phipps' expression softened. An idea had come to him. Perhaps it was for the best, after all. Foolish of him not to have looked at it in this way before.

For, assuredly, when Archie Glenthorne saw that suit on somebody else he would have his eyes opened to the ghastly truth. He would probably have a fit on the spot. Thus he would approve of Phipps' ban, and everything would be all right.

"Is it your intention to don the suit at once, sir?" asked Phipps respectfully.

"Yes rather," grinned Victor. "Why not? Archie and I are just about the same size, and the suit ought to fit me perfectly. Poor old Archie! His face will be worth quids when he sees this marvellous suit on me!"

And the King of Caronia, chuckling gleefully, dashed out of the study and ran upstairs to change.

Of course, actually there wasn't much wrong with that suit. On the debit side there was the colour, which was certainly a bit vivid. But on the credit side there were many good points. The material itself was exquisite in texture; the tailoring was perfection. Victor Orlando, who knew something about good suits, recognised the unerring touch of Savile Row.

"Phipps," he said, as he changed, "is an ass!"

Surveying himself in the mirror, after he had donned that suit, he came to the conclusion that Phipps was not merely an ass but a silly ass. Why, this was a ripping suit!

Victor's spirits soared. He had been feeling a little depressed that afternoon, but as he now surveyed himself in the mirror he was once again his own gay, cheery self. Perhaps it was the colour of the suit which gave him such a feeling of gaiety. In Caronia, his own country, colour was much in evidence. Garbed in this new suit, he felt at peace with all the world.

His recent depression had not been caused by the weather, which was perfect. No; Victor had been feeling slightly gloomy because he was not playing cricket. He loved cricket, and he was as keen as mustard.

He had already proved his prowess, and he might have been included in the Eleven this afternoon, only the team had already been selected, and the list of names posted up. Nipper, the Junior captain, had not felt justified in dropping anybody to make way for Orlando, good as he was. Such a thing would have smacked of favouritism, and favouritism was a thing which Nipper distinctly and definitely barred. So Victor Orlando, this afternoon, was a mere spectator.

He felt happy, however, as he strolled out into the bright sunshine in that creation of brownish-purple—or purplish-brown, according to the way you looked at it. He met Biggleswade, of the Sixth, on the Ancient House steps. The prefect gave him a swift, appraising look, and grinned.

"Chase me!" said Biggleswade.

"Too hot!" replied Victor, shaking his head.

"What's the idea of the finery?" asked Biggy.

"Finery?"

"You're in your Sunday best, aren't you?"

"Oh, this suit?" said Victor, as though he had only just noticed it. "How does it strike you?"

"Like a blow between the eyes," said Biggleswade cheerfully.

"Like it?"

"Not so bad, kid," said Biggy, who rather enjoyed saying "kid" to a king. "In this sunshine it's a bit dazzling, but on a dull day it ought to be just the thing."

Victor chuckled and passed on. He was fond of a joke, and he was curious to see Archie Glenthorne's reactions when that elegant junior first caught sight of him. There ought to be some fun.

THREE well-dressed and gentlemanly-looking men, strolling from the cloisters, had not failed to see those two figures on the Ancient House steps. Biggleswade, in white flannels, was not so conspicuous, but the schoolboy king, in a brownish-purple halo, so to speak, had rather caught their eye.

The three men were attracted. Now, as Victor sauntered off towards Little Side, they gazed at him with concentrated interest.

"Yes!" murmured one of the men. "You see? As I told you, the boy is Victor himself."

"And we can do nothing," said one of the others regretfully.

"Not now—but an opportunity will come," murmured the first man.

They did not speak in English, these strangers. They used a language which was unfamiliar at St. Frank's—a branch of the Slavonic tongue, hinting at a Balkan origin.

The young King Victor did not even see the men; he was far too intent upon getting to Little Side and finding Archie Glenthorne. The men themselves were glad that they had been unobserved. They were here for a sinister purpose.

They were ostensibly looking over the school—having, of course, received permission to do so. At this time of the year visitors were commonplace enough. Tourists often came to St. Frank's to look round—particularly Americans. Foreigners were by no means uncommon, and, as a general rule, the St. Frank's fellows hardly took any notice of them.

These three men were undoubtedly foreign-looking, but it could not be said that there was anything sinister in their appearance. They were young, well-dressed, and their manners were charming. Biggleswade, in fact, had just left them, and Biggleswade was ready to vouch for their good character. In a manner which was both charming and complimentary, they had eulogised the famous old school, talking to Biggy in very excellent English. He took them to be Swiss, or Polish, and it never occurred to him that they might be Caronian—Caronian plotters!

Chatting leisurely, they strolled out of the school grounds, and went to a smart, expensive sports car which had been parked outside.



Browne went down on his knees and salaamed low to King Victor who, in his vivid purple-brown suit, was a sight for sore eyes.

"Well, my friends, we have seen," said one of the men. "We know just how things are, eh? You have memorised the exact details of the school buildings and the grounds?"

"We have not missed much, Lieutenant Klotz," said one of the others.

"Good!" nodded Lieutenant Klotz. "You, Karl, and you Nickolas, will return to the launch. It will be your duty to keep a careful watch on that side. I shall be ready here. Do nothing until an opportunity arises—and wait until it is a good opportunity."

"We have seen the boy, and we know in which House he boards," said Karl pleasantly. "We know his study and his bed-room. We know that the boys who share his study and bed-room are named Glenthorne and Brent."

Klotz nodded with satisfaction. They had made their inquiries innocently, and they had had no difficulty in obtaining the exact information they desired. Chat-

ting with a fag or two, here and there, their curiosity had seemed perfectly natural. Most people were interested in the young King of Caronia, and for strangers to ask questions concerning him and his companions was natural enough.

"Is it wise to leave yet, lieutenant?" asked Nickolas. "We have official permission to be on the school property this afternoon. Would it not be better to remain until we have made ourselves familiar with the appearance of these other boys—Glenthorne and Brent?"

"Quite unnecessary—and quite risky," replied Lieutenant Klotz. "So far we have avoided any encounter with young Victor himself. So much to the good. The other boys may take us for casual visitors, but if Victor comes face to face with us, he will suspect. No, my friends; we have done well. Let that be sufficient."

And the three Caronians, after a few more murmured words, parted.

MEANWHILE, other people had not failed to take special notice of Victor Orlando as he strolled towards the playing-fields in the sunshine. Victor himself, totally unconscious of the fact that he had created so much interest in three of his own countrymen, was feeling doubtful.

That suit, so attractive indoors, looked startling in the sunshine. Victor now had to admit that the colour was distinctly on the purplish side. He even wondered if Phipps was right, after all. Phipps knew. Phipps had had experience of these things. His eye was unerring.

Victor wasn't sure that he liked the suit now. It was too vivid.

"Ah, Brother Horace," he heard a voice saying, "unless I am greatly mistaken, here we have our young friend Brother Orlando, of the Remove."

Victor glanced round and saw the lean, lanky figure of William Napoleon Browne, the genial skipper of the Fifth. With him was his inseparable companion, Stevens. They were both in white flannels, and they were both regarding Victor with interest.

"Hallo!" said Victor, nodding.

"His majesty has graciously condescended to notice us, Brother Horace," said Browne, humorously kneeling on the grass and salaaming low. "We are honoured. It is rather a pity, however, that we did not equip ourselves with smoked glasses before venturing abroad."

He rose and surveyed Victor approvingly.

"St. Frank's will take it as a compliment, I am sure, Brother Orlando," he commented.

"Take what as a compliment?"

"This donning of the Caronian national costume."

"National costume!"

"I have heard it said, on the best authority, that, where clothing is concerned, Caronia is a land of bright and vivid colours," continued Browne. "The tourist, wending his way through the land, constantly encounters picturesque peasantry, gay in their reds and greens and blues, with embroideries and trimmings to match. I must confess, however, that my informant neglected all mention of heliotrope. The colour is heliotrope, I think? Or am I wrong? Can it be violet? Or purple?"

"Look here——"

"We assume, Brother Orlando, that you, being a king in your own right, have decided upon something distinctive," continued Browne, beaming. "I don't blame you. Nobody but a king in his own right would have the unadulterated nerve to appear publicly in that eye-scorching creation."

"It is a bit colourful," admitted Victor. "I didn't quite realise it until I got out here in the sunlight. But you jolly well know that I'm not in Caronian national costume."

"No?"

"It's quite an ordinary suit——"

"There, Brother Orlando, I must demur," interrupted Browne. "I should call it an extraordinary suit."

"Chuck it, Browne!" murmured Stevens. "The suit's all right. A bit colourful, but what of it? Colours are bright and cheery. Good luck to him!"

Browne passed a hand over his eyes.

"I consider it our duty, Brother Horace, to issue a word of warning to would-be snapshotters," he observed.

"What do you mean?"

"On such an afternoon as this, as you may be aware, visitors are apt to beetle in without the slightest warning," continued Browne. "They are all, without exception, armed with cameras, and I venture to predict that the pastime of snapping the young King of Caronia will become a most popular one. It would be only fair to the would-be snapshotters to warn them that they stand a grave risk of cracking their lenses, even of totally destroying their cameras, if they attempt to snap his majesty in his present attire. The modern camera is a marvel of scientific ingenuity, but it has its limitations. And this particular shade of purplish-brown——"

"All right!" grinned Victor. "I'll admit the suit's a bit highly-coloured."

But don't worry. It isn't mine, anyhow—and I'm only wearing it for a jape."

He passed on, and William Napoleon Browne shook his head.

"Ah, Brother Horace, these kings!" he sighed. "You heard what he said? A jape! It gladdens my heart to see this. Brother Orlando may be a king, but the Remove has claimed him for its own."

CHAPTER 3.

A Ticking Off For Phipps!

ARCHIBALD WINSTON DEREK GLENTHORNE, resplendent in spotless white flannels, was lounging elegantly in a deck-chair. He was ostensibly watching the cricket—and it was well worth watching.

Harry Gresham and Vivian Travers were batting, and the River House bowlers were getting badly thrashed. From the point of view of the St. Frank's spectators, the cricket was exhilarating.

Archie Glenthorne had allowed his monocle to drop from his eye, his hat had tilted over his forehead, and he was indulging in what he was pleased to term a slight dose of the dreamless.

Actually, it was not anything of the sort; for Archie, although asleep, was dreaming of pleasant things. Perhaps his mind had been dwelling upon that new suit he had ordered. At all events, in his dream he was standing in the centre of about a hundred cardboard boxes, and he was unpacking these boxes with feverish excitement, and out of every box he took a purplish-brown lounge suit. It was the sort of dream from which Archie did not care to be awakened.

However, he was awakened—very effectively. Travers, getting hold of a loose ball, swiped mightily. The leather came soaring through the air towards Archie, and whizzed past within a few inches of his nose.

Archie sat bolt upright with such a jerk that he nearly fell out of his chair.

"Hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "I mean to say, what happened— Good gad!"

He blinked round, disappointed. He was still thinking of those hundreds of purplish-brown suits. He saw any amount of green turf, white-clad figures, sunshine, but the stacks of suits were very conspicuous by their absence.

"I say, what rot!" he complained. "It must have been a dashed dream! Odds disasters and tragedies! I mean to say, dreams like that are so few and far between——"

He broke off, quivering in every limb. He wasn't dreaming now; he was wide awake. He could see the cricketers—one of whom was running up to retrieve the ball—he could hear the voices of the Removites and Fourth-Formers who were standing round. Therefore, that approaching figure in the purplish-brown suit must be a real figure.

Archie groped for his monocle, jammed it into his eye, and stared again. He jumped wildly to his feet. It is no exaggeration to say that Archie was shaken down the entire length of his spine.

"Odds shocks and horrors!"

It would not be true to say that Archie spoke these words; he bleated them. And his bleat was charged with consternation, confusion and indignation.

Archie was inexpressibly shocked. As he dithered across the turf—it could hardly be called walking—he saw that the fellow in the purplish-brown suit was Victor Orlando. Paul Maddox was by Victor's side, and Paul was grinning appreciatively.

"Snappy isn't the world," Paul was saying. "Where did you dig it up, old man? Of course, the colour is a bit rough on a fellow's eyesight, but there's no denying that the suit is It, with a capital I."

"Like it?" asked Victor cheerfully.

"Well, I wouldn't say I like it," replied Paul, with caution. "It's a suit you can admire—a suit you can gaze upon in wonder—but you can't exactly like it. Then there's the tailor to consider. He must be a man of invincible courage."

"I say! I say! I say!"

Archie Glenthorne had arrived on the scene, and apparently he wanted to say something. Victor and Paul regarded him politely.

"I say!" ejaculated Archie, in case they hadn't heard him the other three times.

"Hallo, Archie, old chap!" said Victor, with a mischievous gleam in his eye. "How's the cricket going?"

"The cricket?" repeated Archie, battling for breath. "Oh, you mean the cricket? Dash the cricket! That suit——"

"Rather smart, eh?"

"What I mean to say is——"

"On the snappy side," said Victor, nodding.

"Where did you get it, dash you?" demanded Archie, pulling himself together.

"Ah!" said Victor. "You want to know the name of my tailor, eh? But it's no good getting jealous, Archie——"

"Absolutely the identical!" babbled Archie hoarsely, as he made a close inspection. "Good gad! I mean to say, there's no coincidence about this. It's the absolute stuff! I ought to know. I selected the pattern——"

"Pardon me, old man, but may we know what you're drivelling about?" asked Victor politely.

"That suit!"

"I know you're drivelling about the suit, but——"

"I'm furious!" said Archie, his eyes burning. "I absolutely demand, laddie, that you shall tell me the name of your tailor!"

"Aren't you satisfied with your own tailor?"

"I should say I'm dashed well not!" ejaculated Archie hoarsely. "The chappie is nothing more nor less than a blister—a fibber who yelps all sorts of rot to his customers about exclusive summer suitings! Exclusive be dashed! The man's nothing more nor less than a frightful fibber!"

"That a hard thing to say about your tailor, Archie," protested Victor.

"Not a fortnight ago he sent me a bunch of exclusive summer suitings," said Archie tensely. "And he absolutely assured me that there wasn't another tailor on the face of the earth who could get hold of the same cloth. The man's a dashed scoundrel!"

"Not quite as bad as that, surely?"

"Absolutely a scoundrel!" insisted Archie. "I mean to say, here you are, laddie, wearing a suit made from that very stuff. And I'm expecting mine by every dashed post! When it comes, I shan't be able to wear it! Two of us can't drift about the landscape wearing identical suits!"

"No, that would be too rough on the other fellows," remarked Paul, shaking his head.

Victor suddenly laughed.

"Cheer up, Archie," he said. "Don't harbour such hard thoughts about your tailor. He hasn't let you down at all."

"Not let me down? I keep telling you——"

"I know," nodded Victor. "But it so happens that this is your suit."

Archie reeled.

"My suit?" he babbled. "What rot! I mean, how—— That is to say——"

"It came this afternoon," explained Victor. "I went into the study, and found Phipps unpacking the parcel. So don't worry about that tailor of yours any more. He's a man of his word."

Archie's relief upon hearing this in-

formation was somewhat nullified by his indignation at the rest of the news.

"My suit!" he breathed feebly. "Good gad! Dash it, old scream, you may be a king and all that, but isn't this doing it a bit low down on a chappie? I mean, bagging his new suit, and——"

"Well, I thought I'd better wear it," explained Victor. "You see, Phipps was going to put it on the fire, or something."

"Wha-a-a-at!" shrieked Archie.

"Fact!" nodded Victor. "Phipps disapproves. He was in a frightful stew about it. I only got into the study in the nick of time. Well, rather than have the thing destroyed, I thought——"

Archie scarcely heard. His head was buzzing. He had known all along that he would have a battle with Phipps about that suit. Phipps was too dashed autocratic in these matters.

Now, as Archie listened to the full explanation, his gore rose higher and higher. Victor Orlando, having had his little joke, was only too pleased to give the full facts. To tell the truth, he was rather anxious to take off the suit.

"I don't blame you for this, laddie," said Archie, when he had heard all. "In fact, I'm dashed grateful. You did the right thing. But kindly come indoors with me. An interview with Phipps, during which a large assortment of hard words will be brought into use, is distinctly indicated. Absolutely! I mean to say, the blighter! Vetoing the young master's summer suit!"

HALF an hour later, Archie Glen-thorne surveyed himself in the mirror with complete satisfaction. He had donned that suit, and it was undeniably a stunner.

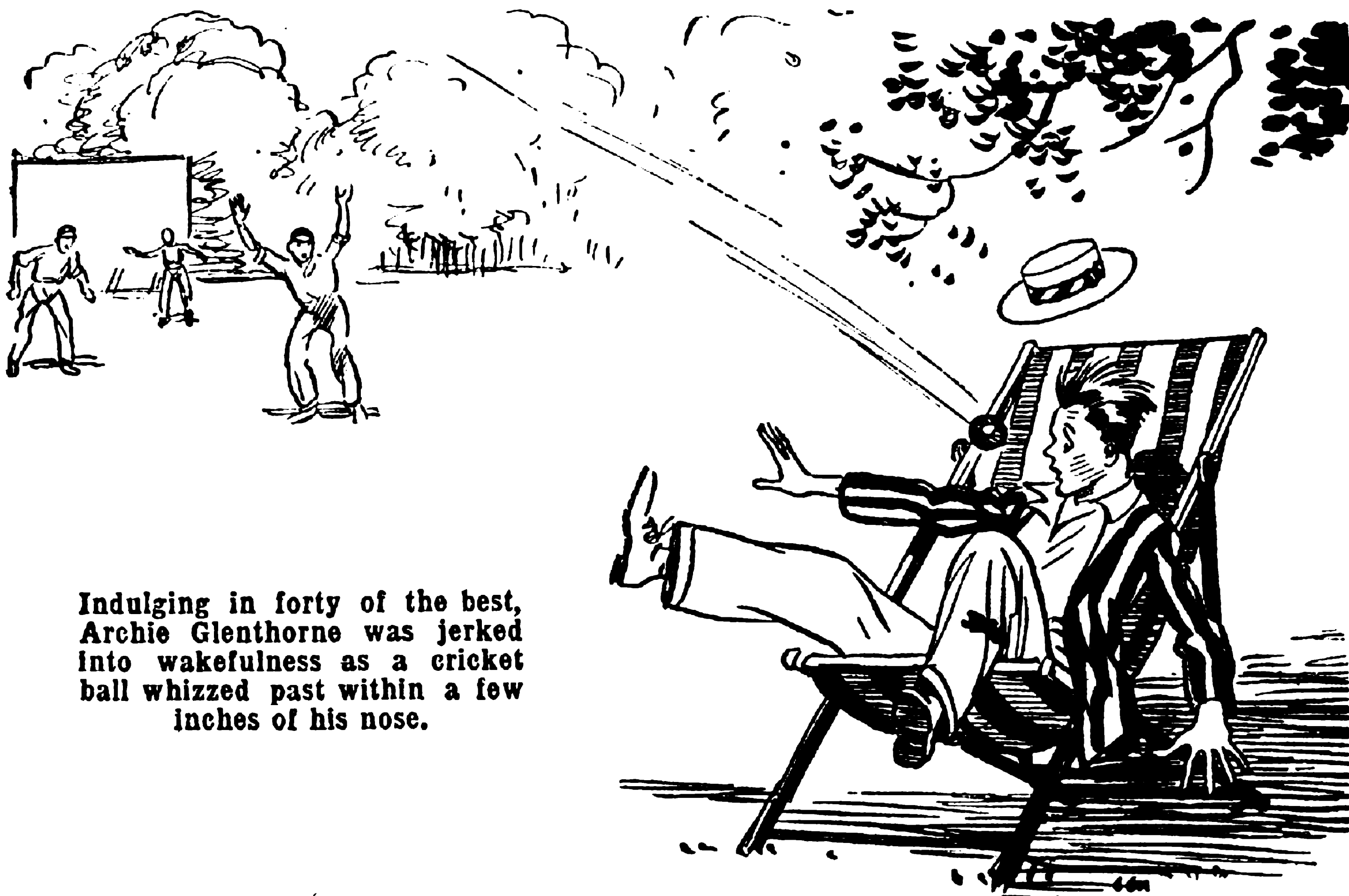
His good-humour was restored; he fairly beamed as he gazed upon his elegant reflection. Only when he thought of Phipps did a hard, relentless light come into his eye. But Phipps would do later; for the moment Archie was revelling in the joy of his new possession.

Having satisfied himself that his trousers were hitched up to the correct eighth of an inch, that his necktie was straight, and that everything else was in order, he lounged elegantly downstairs. Victor, long before this, had changed into flannels and had gone out again.

Archie went into Study E, closed the door, and arranged himself picturesquely on the big lounge. Having done this, he reached out and rang the bell.

"Now for it," he murmured, as he fixed his monocle securely in his eye.

A curious sound, not unlike the cry of a soul in torment, drew Archie's atten-



Indulging in forty of the best, Archie Glenthorne was jerked into wakefulness as a cricket ball whizzed past within a few inches of his nose.

tion to the doorway. Phipps was standing there, having entered with his usual noiselessness. And Phipps had taken one glance at Archie, and momentarily he had wilted groggily at the knees. Like the strong man he was, however, he quickly pulled himself together after that one involuntary yelp of agony.

"Ah, Phipps!" said Archie vaguely.

"You rang, sir?"

"I did, Phipps," replied Archie, in an icy voice. "And I'll bet you dashed well know why I rang, what?"

"I have a general idea, sir."

"Well, kindly gaze upon the general idea, and feast yourself," said Archie coldly. "I understand, Phipps, that it was your intention to confiscate the young master's new summer suiting?"

"In my opinion, sir, the suit is hardly worthy——"

"Never mind your blighting opinion, Phipps," interrupted Archie. "I'm the chappie who ordered this suit, and I'm the chappie who is going to pay for it and wear it. Did you, or did you not, tell Orlando that you were thinking of destroying it?"

"I did, sir," replied Phipps, in a hard voice. "Purely from a sense of duty, sir, I considered that such a suit had far better be destroyed. I should be unworthy of your esteem, Master Archie, if I permitted you to think that I approved of such an atrocity."

"Well, Phipps, I'm going to tick you off," said Archie, with some heat. "So kindly prepare yourself for the storm. I mean to say, who the dickens do you think you are to unpack my dashed parcels, to grab my suits, and to talk of destroying them? It may interest you to know, Phipps, that I am going to wear this suit."

"Have you viewed yourself in the mirror, sir?"

"I have," replied Archie. "And I like myself. So you can turn that over in your mind, Phipps, and see how it feels."

"I am pained, sir."

"I hope you are," agreed Archie. "You deserve to be pained. I've a dashed good mind to sack you."

Phipps brooded. He had been hoping that Archie, upon seeing that suit on somebody else, would realise its hideousness. But apparently Archie had realised nothing of the kind.

"If you will permit me to suggest, sir——"

"Nothing doing!" said Archie, waving his hand. "You can dashed well trickle away, Phipps. I only brought you here to show you that I'm having my own bally way about this suit. I've ticked you off, and the matter is finished with."

Archie waved a hand in dismissal. Phipps, down but not yet out, stole moodily away.

CHAPTER 4.

Kidnapped!

"AND that's that!" said Archie firmly.

He felt that he had gained a moral victory. Yet, upon due reflection, he did not quite like the look which had lurked in Phipps' eye just before the valet had retired. It was a disconcerting thought, but Phipps invariably had his own way in these matters. Occasionally—as now—Archie would jib, but sooner or later he gave in.

"But not this time," said Archie, bracing himself. "Absolutely not! There's always a dashed exception which proves the jolly old rule, and this is it!"

Phipps could plead; Phipps could threaten; Phipps could make himself generally unpleasant about the place, but Archie would not knuckle under—never! He was in a firm, unrelenting mood.

Of course, Archie knew that he would have to suffer. Phipps would be cold, distant, aloof. There would be a strained atmosphere about the study, and the valet would glide about like a chunk of cold fish. No feelings for the young master; no warmth; no friendly, cheery word.

"Oh, well!" said Archie, with a sigh.

He decided that the Great Outdoors was calling him. No sense in sticking in this study on such a warm, sunny afternoon. Besides, he wanted the fellows to see his new suit. And more than anything else he wanted to show Phipps that he—Archie Glenthorne—was in earnest.

He strolled out, and met Willy Handforth, of the Third, in the lobby.

"H'm!" said Willy, giving Archie a critical up and down inspection.

Somehow, Archie didn't like that "H'm" at all. It was far more expressive than any number of words.

"What are you 'H'm'-ing about, dash you?" asked Archie sternly.

"Words failed me, that's all," replied Willy. "It isn't often I'm stumped, either."

"Were you saying 'H'm' at my suit, you frightful young ass?"

"Oh, it's a suit, is it?" asked Willy, in surprise.

"Good gad! What do you think it was?"

"We won't talk about it, old man," said Willy, shaking his head.

He passed on, leaving Archie vaguely uncomfortable. If a mere fag could not trust himself to give a frank opinion, what would the other fellows think? However, Archie liked that suit im-

mensely; he squared his shoulders, and walked out into the sunshine.

He did not go towards Little Side, but he guided his footsteps in the direction of the river. Why should he invite cheap witticisms from the Remove fellows, who were, almost without exception, devoid of the artistic soul?

And he remembered that some of the Moor View girls had gone to the river earlier in the afternoon. He might meet some of them. Perhaps Marjorie Temple, his own particular girl chum, would be there. And she, as Archie knew, would appreciate that wonderful suit.

Yet soon he began to have a few doubts. Like Victor Orlando, he found that the bright sunshine had a disturbing effect. He seemed to be walking along in a purple halo. Still, he had made up his mind to wear the suit, and he was not going to change. If he did so, Phipps would score a triumph—and it was high time that Phipps was put definitely in his place.

Unfortunately for Archie's hopes, there wasn't a sign of the girls on the river—or anybody else, if it came to that. He had the landscape entirely to himself. He looked this way and that, but he looked in vain. Practically all the seniors were on Big Side, and all the juniors on Little Side.

The only living things within view were a few cows grazing peacefully on the Half Mile Meadow, and a few more cows, grazing just as peacefully, on a meadow beyond the river.

The air was hot and sultry, and scarcely a breath of breeze stirred. The sun beat down mercilessly, and Archie was conscious of feeling hot. In fact, unusually hot. Perhaps it was the suit. After all, it was essentially an afternoon for loose, airy flannels.

"If it wasn't for that dashed Phipps, I'd go back and change," he complained bitterly. "Oh, well, forty of the good old winks won't come amiss."

He selected a delightfully shady spot on the river bank. There were some graceful willows here, and the shade they afforded was grateful. He stretched himself out on the grass, his hands behind his head, his fingers clasped as an auxiliary cushion.

"Not so frightfully bad, what?" he murmured, yawning.

In spite of the shade, the bright sky and blazing sunshine had a disturbing effect, so Archie pulled out a silk handkerchief, covered his face with it, and settled himself again. It was certainly very peaceful and tranquil here. The air was filled with the lazy humming of

insects, and he could hear the twittering of birds, to say nothing of the rippling of the water.

Archie succumbed to the languorous peace of the summer's afternoon. He slept.

FOR ten minutes nothing happened. At least, nothing important. A couple of sparrows, greatly daring, hopped down from the willows and inspected Archie at closer quarters.

A couple of seniors, in a canoe, paddled lazily down stream and were lost sight of round the bend. Then, after another period of complete peace, a gentle chugging sound smote the atmosphere. It was so gentle that Archie was not even disturbed.

A smart, well-equipped motor-launch appeared round the bend. It contained only two men—obviously holiday-makers. The fact that they were foreign-looking meant nothing. All sorts and conditions of people took their summer holidays at Caistowe, the seaside resort only two or three miles away. Motor-launches frequently wended their way up the river for some miles.

This particular launch was in no hurry. Its motor was only going at a quarter power, purring lazily. Suddenly one of the men, happening to glance towards the bank, uttered a short exclamation. The next moment he turned to his companion.

"Look, Karl!" he murmured, in a foreign tongue. "Do you see?"

"It is the king!" muttered Karl, in a startled voice.

Both men stared. There could be no mistaking that distinctive suit! The face of the boy was hidden by the silk handkerchief. But how could these men doubt that they were gazing upon the sleeping form of Victor Alexis Orlando, King of Caronia?

It was a natural mistake.

They had seen Victor in that suit little more than an hour ago. It was quite impossible that there could be two suits like that in St. Frank's. So this must be the boy himself—sleeping by the river bank. It was an astounding piece of luck.

These men, whose presence on the river was plainly mischievous, had come across their quarry at a moment when they were not even prepared for action. They hardly knew what to do. The man who was at the controls instinctively throttled down the engine, however, until the launch was almost at a standstill, edging imperceptibly towards the bank.

"We might—yes?" murmured Karl tensely.

"Here? In the full daylight?" asked Nickolas incredulously. "No, no! It is too dangerous! Klotz told us——"

"What do we care for Klotz?" interrupted the other contemptuously. "Who is Klotz to give us his orders? He tells us to be careful, yes. We are careful. But if we let this opportunity escape us it might be days before another is found. And do not forget, my friend, that the summer holidays are near; the boys will soon be leaving the school to go to their homes."

They were silent for some moments, and they were closely watching that sleeping figure on the river bank. Their eyes were active in other directions, too. Up and down the river there was no craft in sight; up and down both banks there was no human being to be seen. Nobody—except that one resting figure.

"Perhaps we had better make the attempt," whispered Nickolas tensely. "It seems madness, but it is such a chance, Karl! As for the boys leaving the school, that will be better for us. Victor and his friend will remain."

"Better for us?" repeated Karl. "Oh, no! There is safety in numbers, my friend. The more boys here, the easier our task. If we take him now, nobody will know; he will not be missed for hours. By the time a search is made, it will be too late. He will be hundreds of miles away."

They rapidly considered the problem.

They had had no intention of making any attempt to-day; their only object in gliding up the river had been to familiarise themselves with the surroundings. Moreover, they wanted the boys and the other local inhabitants to get to know them by sight. They were ostensibly holiday-makers, and, as such, they would arouse no suspicions. People would just take them for granted. Thus, when the hour came for them to strike, all would be plain sailing.

But that sleeping figure on the river bank changed the situation. Now was the time to act!

"Get the stuff ready!" said Karl suddenly. "We are fools to hesitate! Look, Nickolas! Not a soul in sight! We take him, and nobody knows!"

"But if we are seen?" objected Nickolas.

"Bah! What of it?" said the other. "Can we not say that we saw the boy on the bank—that we thought he was ill? We go to him, we find him unconscious, so we take him on our launch. It is so

easy! Even if we are seen, it does not matter! Come!"

Some rapid preparations were made; and then, with a last look up and down the river, the men made certain that no other boats were approaching. There wasn't even a barge in the distance. The towing-path was deserted.

The launch glided noiselessly to the bank, and Karl leapt lightly ashore. In a moment Nickolas followed, and the launch was made secure. Even if those men had been seen, what of it? Two blithe holiday-makers, attired in white flannel trousers, blue jackets, and white peaked caps. There was nothing sinister in their movements—as yet.

Creeping carefully, they approached the sleeping figure of Archie Glenthorne. But they could not see beneath the silk handkerchief, and it did not occur to either of them to lift the handkerchief.

They took this boy to be King Victor. It was the suit that did it. A suit in a million! Once seen, never forgotten!

Now that the men had decided, they lost no time. They revealed a deftness and an efficiency which was most creditable. Dropping on their knees beside the sleeping junior, they acted. Nickolas gently held a pad of muslin-like material over Archie's mouth and nostrils. He pressed it lightly. Archie stirred, but he did not awaken, and gradually his breathing became more heavy. The pad was pressed down hard, and held. The other man was looking anxiously up and down.

"Is that not enough?" he asked. "Somebody may come!"

The pad was removed, and it was at this juncture that the men might easily have discovered their mistake. It would have been so simple to remove that silk handkerchief. But so certain were they



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that this boy was their proper victim that they did not trouble.

Nickolas thought it a good idea to make use of that silk handkerchief. He rolled Archie over, and at the same moment he seized the ends of the handkerchief and tied them securely at the back of Archie's head.

"In case!" he murmured. "He might awaken—and he must see nothing."

They lifted Archie bodily, and it was only the work of a couple of moments to carry him across to the launch and drop him into one of the padded seats in the comfortable cockpit.

The engine purred again, the launch glided away from the bank and made a wide semi-circle in the river. Then she glided down and vanished round the bend.

Peace and solitude once more descended upon that sunlit scene. Archie Glen-thorne had been kidnapped in broad daylight!

CHAPTER 5.

Plotters of Caronia!

TWO men sat smoking under the awning on the promenade deck of the small luxury steam yacht, which rode sedately at anchor well out in the English Channel.

She was a smart craft. Her trim decks were gloriously white; her brasswork gleamed in the sunlight; her paint was spotless. She flew the Caronian flag—in fact, the royal standard.

The two men in the comfortable chairs were dressed in the conventional yachting attire, and whilst one of them was short and elderly and stoutish, the other was slim and comparatively young. Both were dark and foreign-looking.

"While this weather lasts, my dear von Stelf, there is nothing to prevent us from making this daily trip out of our friendly French harbour and to take up anchorage here," said the younger man lazily. "I have seldom known this Channel of ill-fame to be so placid."

"Yet we are taking the risks, your highness," said the other man uneasily. "By St. Peter! I am none too comfortable!"

Both spoke in the same language as those men who had been at St. Frank's that afternoon. It was one of the many variations of the Slavonic tongue. The younger man laughed at his companion's fears.

"My dear von Stelf, you make mountains out of molehills—as usual," he said

lightly. "Are we not at liberty to anchor here, in the English Channel, if we so desire? We are on holiday. We are—shall we say?—fishing."

Count Frederic von Stelf looked at him sharply.

"Yes, fishing, your highness," he agreed. "But we are not fishing for—fish. And if our activities are even suspected, the British authorities——"

"Bah!" interrupted Prince Zeno with a snap of his fingers. "You think I care for the British authorities? Not that, my friend!" he added, with another snap. "We are breaking no law. And perhaps, after a little patience, we may be rewarded. Three days, four days—perhaps a week. We cannot tell. But my faithful men are at work yonder, and they will not fail me."

There was an almost contemptuous note in the voice of Prince Zeno of Kazatova. He was an arrogant young man, this Caronian prince. He was King Victor's half-brother, and he took his name from the great province of Kazatova, which was nearly half of the entire Caronian domain. Kazatova was a wild, mountainous province, populated almost entirely by Slavonic peoples.

"Yet, your highness, we play a dangerous game!" said Count von Stelf, leaning forward in his chair. "We fly the Caronian flag. But who is deceived by that? Is it not an open secret that we are revolutionaries?"

"And soon, my good von Stelf, we shall come out into the open," retorted the prince, nodding. "We are nearly ready for action. If only my efforts in England are successful, the day will soon come. Every man aboard this yacht is loyal to me; there are thousands of our supporters waiting in the Kazatova Mountains—waiting merely for the word. Oh, yes, my friend, we are ready!"

It was a fact that the owner, officers and crew of this yacht were avowed revolutionaries. Prince Zeno had gathered a powerful party round him. Big trouble was brewing in Caronia.

The British newspapers had printed no word of it as yet—mainly because they knew nothing. Caronia, to all intents and purposes, was prospering well under the rule of the Grand Duke Rudolph, the Regent. The drastic and startling changes he had made were apparently working out splendidly. Only the Grand Duke himself and his immediate advisers knew of the ugly undercurrents which were at work.

A SMALL river launch, containing a couple of smart holiday-makers, purred its way through the motley collection of small boats and sailing craft which were anchored in Caistowe Harbour.

The launch had come leisurely down the River Stowe, and now, apparently, it was making for the open sea.

"Well, my friend," said Karl coolly, as he sat at the wheel. "We have succeeded, yes?"

"The prince will be pleased," said Nickolas, nodding.

He glanced into the little cubby-hole of a cabin, and satisfied himself that the prisoner was still unconscious. That drug had done its work well. To be on the safe side, the captive's ankles and wrists had been lightly secured.

"He sleeps still," said Nickolas, in a moment of uneasiness. "There is no danger, I take it, that we may have given him too much?"

The other laughed.

"The drug is harmless enough," he replied. "He will come to himself within an hour or so. He should be well pleased, my friend; for he will find himself the guest of his charming half-brother."

They both chuckled, and the launch gathered speed as it headed out for the open sea.

PRINCE ZENO reached for a pair of binoculars, which stood on the table just in front of him.

"H'm! That launch seems to be coming in our direction," he remarked, levelling the glasses.

Count von Stelf started.

"The interfering British!" he muttered. "They come to make the inquiries, yes?"

"Let them come!" replied Prince Zeno.

"You are nervous, my dear count, and I have repeatedly assured you that there is no occasion for nervousness. We are breaking no laws."

A moment later, a little exclamation escaped him.

"But this is good!" he ejaculated. "It is my launch, von Stelf! I did not expect it for some days!"

"No doubt Klotz comes with ill news," said Count Frederic pessimistically.

By now other people on the yacht were becoming active. An accommodation ladder was lowered, and a couple of smart officers descended and stood ready. The launch approached across the calm, sunlit water at high speed. Then, her engines slowed down, she glided alongside.

"Wait here, Nickolas," said Karl briefly.

He was evidently known to the officers, for they nodded to him and allowed him to pass up the ladder. On deck he came face to face with Prince Zeno of Kazatova. He bowed stiffly.

"Well?" demanded the prince. "Is Klotz not here?"

"We had no opportunity, your highness, of reporting to Lieutenant Klotz," replied Karl. "We thought it better to come straight out to the yacht."

"For what reason?" asked Prince Zeno. "What is your report?"

"We have King Victor with us, your highness," said Karl coolly.

"By St. Peter!" ejaculated von Stelf, stepping nearer. "What is that you say?"

"We have secured the boy, your excellency," said Karl, with justifiable pride.

"But this is splendid!" exclaimed the prince, his eyes gleaming. "Such early success! What of your gloomy predictions now, von Stelf? The boy is here!" He turned back to Karl. "Well, why do you not bring him aboard?"

"I awaited your orders, your highness."

"Bring him at once, then," said the prince with a quick gesture. "Later, you shall tell me how you achieved this early success."

Karl returned to the launch, and, with the aid of Nickolas and the two officers, he carried the unconscious figure of the prisoner up to the deck. Prince Zeno and von Stelf met them.

"What is this?" asked the prince sharply. "The boy is hurt?"

"No, your highness," replied Karl. "But it was necessary to deepen his slumbers. He will awaken very soon."

The limp figure was carried below, and Prince Zeno turned to von Stelf with a smile.

"Am I not clever, my good count?" he asked. "My plans have succeeded—and I have avoided all unpleasantness with the English police. What can they prove? This boy has disappeared from his school. There will be much searching throughout the countryside. Oh, yes! But he is here—and soon he will be far beyond the reach of any possible rescuers. In the Kazatova Mountains none will find him!"

There was an evil, gloating note in Prince Zeno's voice. He went down into the saloon, and the officers were dismissed. The prisoner lay on a comfortable lounge. The only men present now were Prince Zeno, Count Frederic, and the two agents.

"This is excellent work, my friends," said the prince approvingly. "You shall tell me how you secured my charming

young brother. But first we will see if his majesty is in any need of restoratives."

He went across to the lounge, pulled the silken handkerchief aside, and smiled down triumphantly. Then suddenly his smile vanished, wiped off as though he had received a sudden physical blow. Consternation and incredulity appeared in his eyes; to be quickly transformed into a light of dangerous fury.

"What foolery is this?" he snarled, spinning round. "This is not the king!"

Karl and Nicholas, who had been preparing themselves for the congratulations to come, stared stupidly.

"Not—not the king!" stammered Karl. "Impossible, your highness! We cannot have made a mistake——"

Like shadows the two Caronian plotters crept up to the sleeping schoolboy on the bank.



"Fool!" shouted Prince Zeno. "I tell you this boy is not King Victor! He is an English boy!"

"But, your highness——"

"Look for yourself, you blundering dolt!" snapped the prince. "Look! Do you still tell me that this boy is King Victor? Do you think I don't know my own half-brother?"

The two men stared dazedly down at Archie Glenthorne's reposeful features.

"Did I not say that it was madness?" came a groan from von Stelf. "This game is dangerous. An English boy! By St. Peter! What complications may not arise now!"

Karl and Nickolas stood like stricken men.

"Well?" grated the prince.

"But I do not understand, your highness!" panted Karl. "We were with Lieutenant Klotz; we saw King Victor. He was wearing this suit—a most distinctive suit. Later, we saw this boy

sleeping by the river bank. We naturally assumed——"

"Bah! Are you such fools that you must assume things?" interrupted the prince savagely. "In a matter of this kind, you must be certain." He turned and shrugged helplessly. "Look at them, von Stelf!" he went on. "My trusted agents! Have I not always been cursed with such pin-brained blunderers? Where can I find men with intelligence? They assume—and they seize this boy and bring him to me! Dolts! Pigs! Imbeciles!"

Karl and Nickolas, pale to the lips, and trembling with apprehension, stood dumb. Their brains felt paralysed.

"Could you not see the boy's face?" demanded the prince, swinging round on them.

"It was hidden, your highness, by the silk handkerchief," muttered Nickolas.

"And you seized him, and drugged him, without even looking at his face?" asked the prince in amazement.

"We could not have been mistaken in that suit, your highness!"

"You hear them, von Stelf?" asked the prince. "Heavens! They bring me this boy because he wears a suit like Victor's! Are they men, or are they brainless children?"

However, he calmed down somewhat when Karl and Nickolas, between them, told the full story. Their defence was almost pathetic in its feverishness. But even Prince Zeno was compelled to admit that that suit was unique. The blunder had not been so reprehensible.

"Your mistake was in seizing the boy without looking at his face," growled the

prince at length. "A moment's work—and you neglected it. Otherwise, you did well—you acted commendably."

These words, after his previous condemnation, sounded sweet in the ears of the wretched men.

"You tell me that the boy did not awaken?" went on the prince, in a relieved tone. "He knew nothing?"

"Nothing whatever, your highness," said Karl eagerly.

"Good! It is not so bad as I had thought," said the prince. "No great harm has been done. You will take this boy back at once; you will return up the river, and you will place him on the exact spot where you found him. You understand? When he awakens he will never know that he has been disturbed. But you must lose not one second of time."

It seemed lucky, indeed, that no real harm had been done. But perhaps Prince Zeno would have been slightly disturbed had he known that the still figure on the lounge was not only fully conscious, but very alive to all that was taking place around him!

CHAPTER 6.

The Adventures of Archie!

A FELLOW of infinite surprises, Archie Glenthorne. A dark horse, in fact.

The casual observer set him down as a languid, feather-brained slacker. But Archie's intimates of the Remove, at least, knew that he was capable of big things when the occasion arose. Archie was certainly a slacker—he would have been the first to admit it—but he was certainly not feather-brained. He liked to take life easily, and the line of least resistance was his favourite route in any problem. However, when it came to the point, Archie was always there. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, he could think quickly, and act quickly, too.

Thus, when he had recovered consciousness in the little cabin of that motor-launch, he had promptly realised that something was very much amiss, and he had practised the art of lying doggo.

Fortunately, his two captors were "on deck," and had not observed his involuntary movements upon recovery. That "shot" of sleep-inducing drug had not been sufficient. Archie possessed a constitution like iron, and lungs of leather.

Dazed and bewildered, he had dimly realised that he was no longer sleeping on the river bank, as he had supposed, but was in a strange boat, and, judging by the

motion of that strange boat, out at sea. It was all very bewildering. It was all the more bewildering because his face was still covered with that silk handkerchief, and something was bound round his mouth. Furthermore, his feet and ankles were tied.

It seemed very much like a dream. In his dazed state, Archie had not been able to reason to any great extent; but, at least, he knew that these people in the launch could not be friendly, otherwise they would not have bound him. So he had been very careful to remain, to all intents and purposes, totally unconscious.

Since then he had had a most astonishing experience.

He had felt himself hoisted out of the boat, he had known that he had been transferred to a ship, and carried below to a saloon. There were many men around him—men who used a remarkable foreign language. It was a language which Archie quite failed to recognise. It wasn't French, or Italian, or Spanish, or German. He had not understood a single word.

But he certainly understood that it was better for him to remain "unconscious." For, while his wrists and ankles were bound, he was at the mercy of these men. If he showed them that he was awake, they would probably put him to sleep again. And he was hoping that somebody would remove those bonds. If that happened, he would have a big advantage. He would be able to spring unexpectedly into action with some possibility of success.

It was a great pity that he could not understand these strange men. Still, he was permitted to see them now. The handkerchief has been removed—and its removal had occasioned a most extraordinary fury in the man who seemed to be the master of the ceremonies.

His enraged shouting, in fact, did much to drive the last traces of stupor from Archie's brain. By the time this man had calmed down, Archie was very much alert. He had his eyes ostensibly closed, but he was peeping out from beneath his lowered lids, and he was taking stock of this luxurious cabin and its occupants.

There were two fellows in flannels who looked like holiday-makers; a stoutish, elderly man with a soldierly aspect; and this chief robber, as it were, who was younger and quite frightfully villainous. Other men came in, dressed as ship's officers. It was all very confusing.

And then, unfortunately for Archie's high hopes of escape, something happened which completely upset his calculations. The silk handkerchief was replaced over his face, and tied at the rear. And while

he was wondering why this had been done, a pad of something was pressed over his mouth and nostrils, and his senses reeled.

For a second he thought of struggling. But what was the use? Before he could make up his mind one way or the other, his mind developed a sort of engine trouble and conked out. Archie experienced a sensation of sinking. Down—down! Slowly at first, and then rapidly, and after that—oblivion.

THAT will be enough," said Prince Zeno sharply. "We don't want to send the boy to sleep for too long. But it was better that he should have this second dose. It would be awkward if he recovered too soon."

"Well, he knows nothing, and that is some consolation," growled von Stelf. "But I don't like the look of all this, your highness. It's going to lead to trouble. England isn't the kind of country where we can play fast and loose —"

"For heaven's sake, von Stelf, keep your pessimism to yourself!" interrupted the prince. "You are the most infernal growler in existence!"

The count turned away to hide his anger.

"Well, we shall see," he muttered. "I don't like this business at all"

Archie was lifted and carried out. He was replaced in the launch, and Karl and Nickolas took their places.

"See that you carry out my orders," said the prince, as he watched them go. "And the next time you blunder you will have no second chance."

Karl and Nickolas were only too glad to get away. During that return trip to Caistowe they discussed the matter continuously. Even now they could not, for the life of them, understand how the thing had happened. In the end they came to the only possible conclusion—that both King Victor and this other boy had been wearing that same suit during the afternoon. So they had a grievance. They weren't to blame at all. How could they possibly have foreseen that one suit would be worn by two boys?

Luck favoured them.

They made the trip up the Stowe without attracting any unwelcome attention. And when they arrived at that fateful spot they found, to their intense satisfaction, that it was deserted.

Nobody was in sight; no boats were on the river. It seemed as though holiday-makers, farmers and the St. Frank's



Tom Merry's Challenge!

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fellows had conspired together to keep away for the especial benefit of these Caronian gentry.

It was merely a case of luck. Not five minutes before a noisy crowd of River House fellows, returning to their own school from the match, had passed this way. Boats containing St. Frank's seniors had been much in evidence, too. A steam-driven barge had only just vanished round a bend of the stream. Handforth & Co., of the Remove, were setting out along the towing-path now, and were approaching. But at this particular moment the coast was clear.

"This is good," said Karl, in a low voice. "Come! We put him ashore quickly."

It was the work of only one breathless minute. After another quick glance up and down, the men leapt ashore; Archie Glenthorne was hauled limply out, and he was laid on the grass in an attitude of complete repose. The bonds were removed. Only the silk handkerchief was left loosely over his face.

The two men leapt back into their launch, the engine purred, and the little craft slid out into the centre of the stream.

"We have done it, my friend!" said Karl breathlessly. "And it was easier than we expected."

"Yes, we are safe now," agreed Nickolas, with a deep breath of relief. "But what of our afternoon's work? All wasted! What do we do now, Karl?"

"There is only one thing for us to do—get hold of Victor as quickly as possible," said Karl. "It is the only way in which we can put ourselves right with Zeno. He called us fools and blunderers. Yes, my good Nickolas, we must make ourselves right with Zeno, or we shall be sent back to Caronia in disgrace, and others will replace us. And what of our pleasant little summer holiday, then? What of our rich payment? We must get hold of that boy—and quickly!"

FOR three or four minutes after the departure of the launch the scene remained peaceful. Archie Glenthorne, reclining full length on his back, had not moved. Then the peace was definitely broken by the arrival of Edward Oswald Handforth.

He was strolling along, his hands thrust deeply into his trousers pockets, and he was chatting with Church and McClure about the match against the River House fellows. At least, Handforth was doing all the chatting, and Church and McClure were listening.

"We ought to have given Brewster and

his crowd a terrific licking!" Handforth was saying. Instead, we just managed to win by a few runs. What's the good of that?"

"Better than losing," commented Church, slipping a word in for the first time in three minutes.

"I'd show you how to win matches if I was skipper of the Eleven!" said Handforth, with a sniff. "Nipper's all right, but he lacks originality. Did you see the way he placed his field while Commerford and Ascott were batting? All wrong! I should have had Commerford out in a couple of overs, instead of letting him knock up eighteen off his own bat. He gave three or four chances——"

"Hallo!" interrupted McClure. "Look who's here!"

Handforth frowned. He did not like his eloquence to be interrupted in this brusque way.

"I don't care who's here!" he retorted. "We're talking about cricket, and——"

"Funny!" said Church. "It looks like Orlando—but it can't be Orlando. We left Orlando in the Triangle, chatting with Maddox and Travers."

Handforth now became aware of the figure sprawling on the grass. He forgot all about cricket. That suit was enough to make him forget anything.

"It must be Archie," he said gruffly. "Haven't you heard about that beastly suit? Orlando bagged it, and Archie had a row with Phipps about it. So this is where Archie got to!"

"I suppose he came out here to drown his sorrows in slumber," grinned Mac. "You know what Archie is after he's had a dust-up with Phipps. As miserable as anything. And Phipps will get his own way in the long run, of course. My only hat! That suit is a bit dazzling, isn't it?"

They approached, and Handforth flicked the silk handkerchief away from Archie's face. The genial ass of the Remove was looking singularly peaceful.

"The lazy bounder!" said Handforth accusingly. "He must have been sleeping for hours! And it can't be doing him much good, either. It's not so warm now, and this grass may be getting a bit damp. Hi! Wake up, Archie, my lad!"

Archie failed to oblige.

"Sleeping like a log!" growled Handforth, seizing Archie's shoulder, and shaking it violently. "Hi! Wake up, you fathead! Do you want to catch cold?"

"That's rummy!" said Church, staring down. "He hasn't even heard you yet!"

(Continued on page 24.)

LINE UP HERE FOR A GOOD LAUGH, LADS!

HANDFORTH'S Weekly



No. 14. Vol. 1.

EDITORIAL STAFF.

Editor-in-Chief E. O. Handforth
Editor E. O. Handforth
Chief Sub-Editor E. O. Handforth
Literary Editor E. O. Handforth
Art Editor E. O. Handforth
Rest of Staff E. O. Handforth

July 25th, 1931.

THE EDITOR'S CHIN-WAG.

ST. FRANK'S LIMERICKS

By
TOMMY WATSON

GOOD Wednesday, you chaps—how are you? Down and out? Then come to Doctor Handforth for a tonic. Here's your prescription. Don't take it to a chemist. Your nearest newsagent will make it up for you. The prescription is:

1 "Handforth's Weekly," every Wednesday, and 1,000 jolly good laughs (which will be derived from the former).

You'll soon feel better if you stick to this medicine.

Next week, you fellows, the old WEEKLY will contain two new features. That chump McClure says it would be better if the Editor of the WEEKLY could obtain lots of new features—particularly substitutes for those written by E. O. Handforth. I've attended to Mac, and you can take it from me that he jolly well needs some new features at the moment.

First of all, the most brilliant writer at St. Frank's—or, in the world, for that matter—will commence his LIFE STORY.

You will want to read this thrilling yarn. The writer of it is a well-known journalist, and has won great fame as the Editor of a certain school weekly journal. I won't tell you his name at the moment. You can guess it, if you like.

The other feature is by Our Interesting Interviewer. He is starting a new series of Imaginary Interviews—this time with St. Frank's fellows when they are 50 years old.

I wanted him to open the series with me as the subject. He said he was sorry but he didn't care to risk over-taxing his brain by endeavouring to imagine what I should be like when I was fifty. I have a suspicion he was being rude.

Anyway, I'm sure readers will be interested in this novel series. Look out for the first one next week.

E. O. HANDFORTH.

A FELLOW called Timothy Tucker
Played cricket, but soon came a
mucker;

Two speedy full-tosses

Fell on his proboscis

And made him cry loudly for succour.

A fatheaded Modern named Boots,
With a large rubber catapult shoots;
He aimed a hard pea

At an owl in a tree;

But the owl didn't worry two hoots.

When Archie's dressed up to attract,
His clothing is neat and compact;

He lounges and struts,

For he's one of the knuts—

A "knut," sad to say, that is "cracked."

Handy's motto is "Never surrender"!!

He's never too soft or too tender;

His young sister Ena

Has this same demeanour—

She's "Handy" in feminine gender.

SPORTS DAY AT ST. FRANK'S.

Held last Saturday in glorious weather. Only one incident marred the day's proceedings. E. O. Handforth entered for the throwing-the-cricket-ball competition. His effort landed plonk on the top of his pater's topper. Said topper slightly dented. Handforth senior is now taking a course of arm muscular development for certain reasons.

The egg-and-spoon race provided a comic interlude—with E. O. Handforth again performing. Somebody had stuck a real, ripe egg in his spoon. Handy fell. The egg broke. Nobody finished the course.

IMAGINARY INTERVIEWS.

Our Interesting Interviewer chats with
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

OBEDIENT to the instructions of our Mighty Editor (on whom be the peace, but who doesn't let the peace be on anyone else), I duly transported myself to the year 1498, and met Mr. C. Columbus in his office in one of the New York skyscrapers. He spoke Spanish with an American accent.

"Breeze right in, kid!" he said cordially. "I guess I've only just discovered this burg, but I calculate I can give a few minutes to a reporter. Yep!"

"I just looked in to ask you if it is true that you discovered America, Mr. Columbus?"

"Sure!"

"Well, are you sincerely sorry for it, and do you promise never to do it again?"

"You bet! Have some gum."

"Thanks. Now tell me how it happened."

"Right!" Mr. Columbus lit a cigar. "I just went in to King Ferdy and told him I wanted a ship to take me to America. He came across with a tidy old boat, and I got busy and whipped up a crew and we started out from Spain way 'bout six months ago. Then one morning the look-out raised a cry of 'Land!'"

"And it was America?"

"No," said Columbus, "it was a whale."

"Not land at all?"

"No; just a little mistake. But—I shall never forget it! Three mornings later there came another cry of 'Land!'"

"And this time it was America itself!"

"No!" said Columbus. "It was a raft!"

I began to get ratty.

"Well, go on!" I hissed.

"Not a week after that the cry of 'Land!' was raised for the third time."

"And this time it was——?"

"A false alarm!"

I ground my teeth as I said:

"Go on!"

"At last, on one eventful morning, everybody on the ship cried 'Land!'"

"And it was America at last?"

"No; it was a wreck!"

I rose to my feet and grabbed my hat.

"And after that?"

"After that," said Columbus, "the cry of 'Land!' was raised for the fifth time."

"And it was Amer——?"

"It was a lump of seaweed!"

Two seconds later I slammed the door behind me. As I did so I heard the cry of "Land!" being raised for the sixth time. Doubtless it was an albatross.

THE DOCTOR CALLS.

By **WALTER CHURCH**

HANDY'S little car has developed measles, or something, and stubbornly declines to proceed to proceed. Personally, I think it's gone off the boil; but Handy fancies that he must have forgotten to flood the incubator or condenser or something. Mac, of course, sticks to it that all it requires is winding up. He says that the car is obviously "run down."

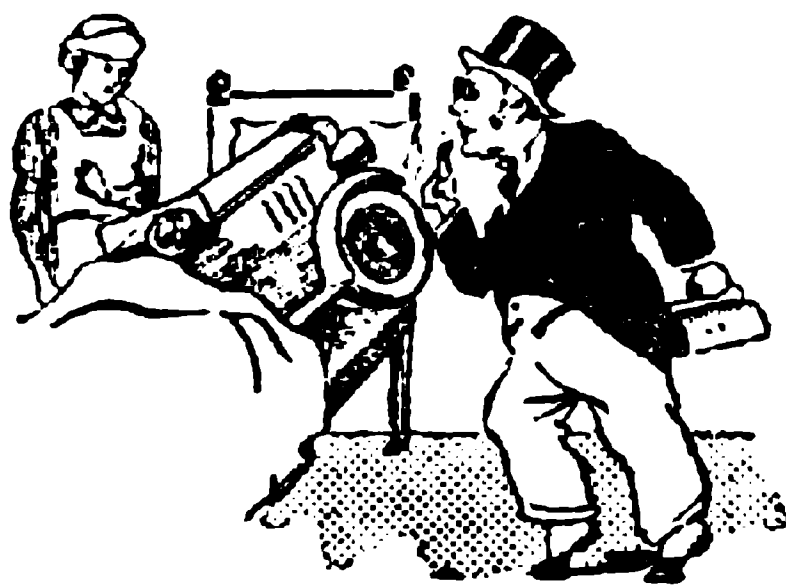
I really do think we should have car doctors, the same as doll doctors and wireless doctors and ordinary doctors. I've got an idea I should make a

good car doctor. I have an excellent road-side manner.

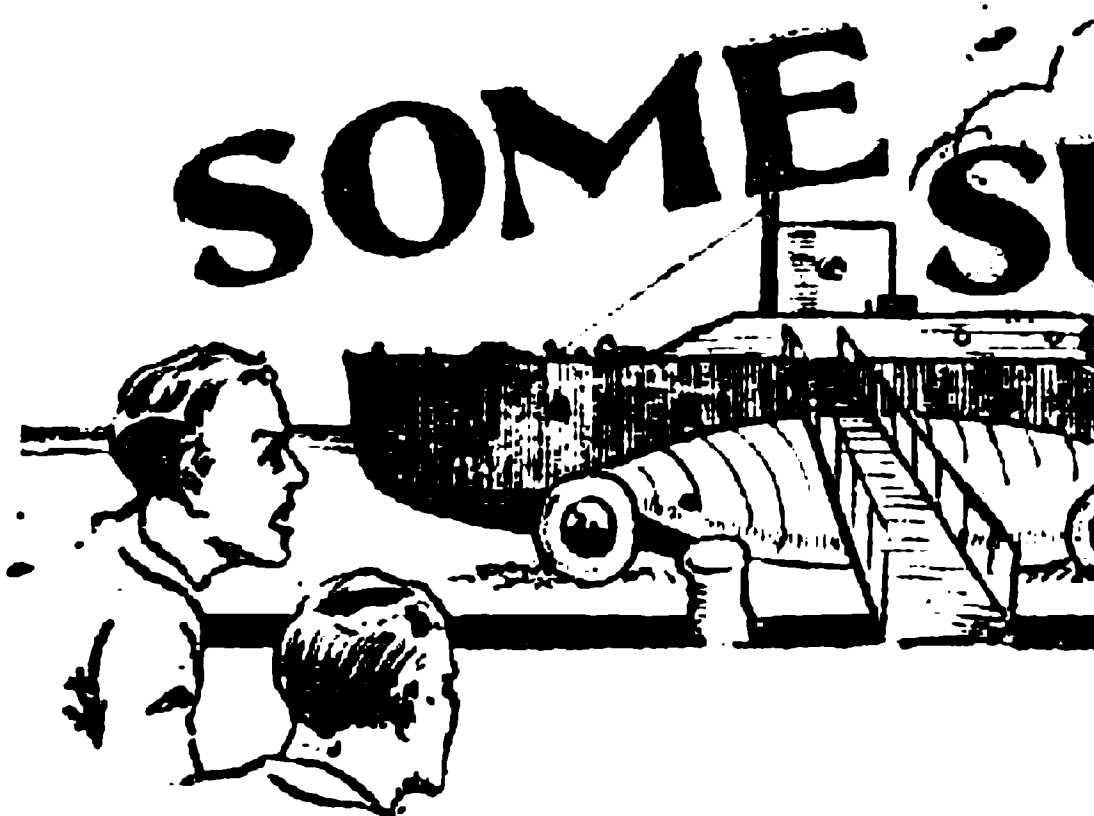
You see, if we knew a really good car doctor, Handy would call him in, and he would pack his stethoscope and screw-hammer and barge right along.

"Well, well, well!" he would say breezily. "And how is our little patient this morning? Still very immovable? I'm sorry to hear that. May I tip-toe into the garage?"

(Continued at foot of column 5)



A stunning short story that



Specially written by the world's

E. O. HAN

STEPHENSON EDISON MARVELL was the brightest scholar in the Fourth-Form at St. Sumwun's. Marvell of the Fourth was usually known to his chums as the "Marvel of the Fourth." You see, it was a sort of pun on his name. And Marvell was a marvel, too.

It may surprise you to hear that this bloke Marvell was an inventor. By George, he had invented some "marvellous things!" ('Nother pun.)

When he was quite a kid he invented a machine which could cut large holes in pen-nibs. Of course, nobody wanted holes cut in their pen-nibs, but it was a jolly good machine for all that. He won the first prize (£1 13s.) at the INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY OF CUTTING-HOLES-IN-PEN-NIBS MACHINES held at the Crystal Palace. He won the second prize, too. In fact, he won all the prizes, because none of the other machines could even grip the pen-nibs, let alone cut holes in them.

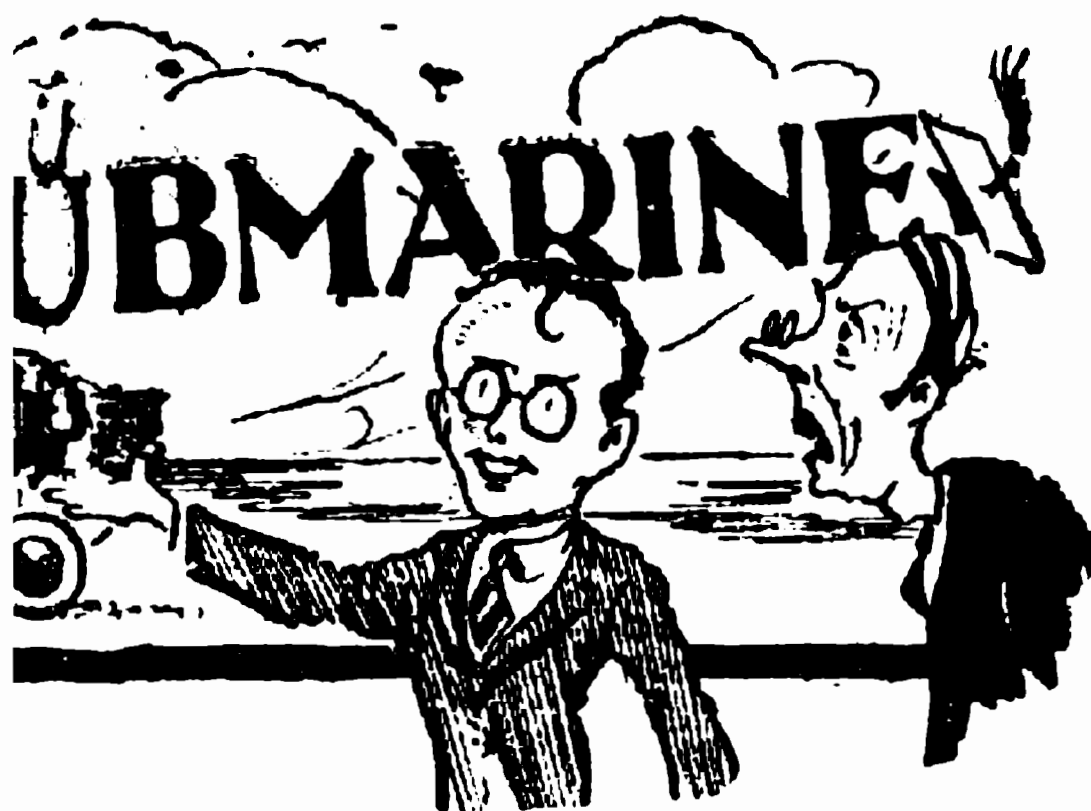
A little later he won a gold cup (complete with saucer) for a patent dye which could turn cigarettes blue. Naturally nobody wanted to turn cigarettes blue; but it was a brainy idea, all the same.

His chums in the Fourth at St. Sumwun's wanted him to invent something to take away the pain of a hefty licking. Stephenson Marvell jolly soon did that. He invented four large, flat exercise books which could be placed inside a fellow's bags at the locus cani—that's a Latin phrase made up by me. It means "the place of the cane"—and no whack, however hefty, could be felt.

But his submarine was the most marvellous thing he ever made. Everybody "marvelled" at Marvell. (Pun!) He made this submarine in the woodshed, and carried it down to the seaside.

It was a huge thing, capable of holding forty or fifty people. It was quite as large as the Pioneer (that's the submarine belonging to Irene Manners' pater, though, of course, she has nothing

will make you shriek.



greatest (unintentional) humorist
HANDFORTH

to do with this yarn), and it was far more powerful.

When Stephenson Marvell was ready to go out in his submarine, the whole of St. Sumwun's came down to the seaside to see him off. He had invited a huge party to go with him on his first trip. There was Dr. Duckweed, the Head; Mr. Cribb, the Fifth Form-master; and Mr. Grimjaw, the master of the Fourth. In addition, there were scores of the fellows, from Stan Still, the captain of the school, to Owen Munnie, the frowsiest fag in the Third. In fact, the whole school, with the exception of Craven Kerr, of the Fourth—who was a bit of a coward—were going on the submarine.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head as the party reached the sea. "What a remarkable-looking vessel! A most wonderful invention, my dear Marvell!"

"A truly immense bit of work," nodded Mr. Grimjaw. "Marvell, my boy, I will let you off the hundred lines I gave you this morning."

Marvell chortled with glee, and stepped on to the submarine.

"Walk in, gentlemen!" he bawled, opening the conning-tower. "Welcome to my submarine!"

The crowd flocked up the gangway with such force that Mr. Cribb was knocked into the sea. The fags and the juniors were very excited, and even the seniors could not retain their usual look of vacancy.

"Get inside the submarine and we'll dive to the bottom!" roared Marvell.

"After you, my dear Grimjaw," said the Head politely.

They all slid breathlessly into the great vessel's innards, and Marvell closed the conning-tower and tied it up with string. When all was right and tight, he took a lever in his hand.

"Ready?" he yelled.

He pulled the lever, and the giant boat sank like a lifebelt to the floor of the ocean. When they bumped on the ground, Marvell pulled another lever and

two sets of wheels shot out at the bottom, and the great ship travelled along the ocean bed like a charabanc.

"Amazing!" stuttered the Head.

Then the schoolboy inventor made the submarine perform tricks—looping the loop in the sea, rolling over and over, and standing on its nose. After an hour or so of this, the Head said:

"Enough, my dear boy—enough! Let us return to the surface. I feel giddy."

Marvell suddenly went as white as a giddy sheet. He looked an absolute ass.

"Well I'm dashed!" he gasped. "I'm blessed if I haven't forgotten to put in any machinery to raise us to the surface again!"

"What!" screamed the Head.

"It's my fault!" grinned Marvell sheepishly. "I absolutely overlooked it. We can't get up again. We're doomed."

The whole school fainted with the exception of Mr. Grimjaw. He said:

"Boy, you will take back that imposition of a hundred lines I gave you this morning!"

THE END.

THE DOCTOR CALLS.

Then he will tell the car to open its bonnet while he feels its magneto. I can imagine him shaking his head gloomily.

"H'm! Action very irregular—slight congestion in the induction, I fancy. You may give the car a little hard oil three times a day, with perhaps just a wine-glassful of spirit. If the patient gets worse, I'm afraid we shall have to rush it to the nearest repair-shop for an operation. That will be two guineas, please. Good-morning."

But I suppose car-owners would not be in a hurry to call in experts at two guineas a time. No doubt they would actually prefer to give a mechanic five bob to repair it.

Not that Handy would pay that five bob—he didn't pay as much as that for the car itself. He thinks he can do all the repairs necessary. He's going to try this afternoon—but I think he'll be unlucky. Mac and I have hidden the car under an empty matchbox.

READY WIT FROM REGGIE PITT.

THERE is a new craze in the Junior Common-room these days. Even the chess and draughts experts are catching on to it. It is the game called Pit—not named after me, although possibly one of my venerable ancestors may have been guilty. I expect you know it. The chief idea, it seems to me, is to make as much noise as possible and wave several cards about like an idiot.

Needless to say, Handforth is a first-class player. It comes natural to him.

This game caused rather an amusing situation the other evening. I barged into the Common-room and saw a crowd of fellows sitting round a table and bawling for all they were worth. Tommy Watson was looking on, and I called out to him:

"Tommy—what's on?"

He answered:

"Reggie—Pit!"

Pit, I understand, is founded on the Stock Exchange deals, and a player can either be a "Bear" or a "Bull." You can always tell when Handforth is one of these. When he's a "Bear" he roars like a bull, and when he's a "Bull" he's as savage as a bear.

Handforth was saying this afternoon that he ran across a man he knew in the village. I hope he wasn't in his Morris Minor at the time.

Mr. Alington Wilkes is due to give a lecture to-night on the famous Bronte family—Charlotte, Emily and Ann—all three of them authoresses. I wonder if he has ever heard of the books written by the celebrated Dover family? Here they are:

"The Highwayman," by Ann Dover.

"The Fall from the Cliff," by Eileen Dover; and "Six!" by Ben Dover.

This station is now closing down. Hope you've enjoyed the programme. Toodle-oo, everybody, toodle-oo!

THE KIDNAPPED KING!

(Continued from page 20.)

What the dickens is the matter with him?"

"Nothing!" retorted Handforth. "You know Archie when he gets fast asleep. Wild horses won't wake him. Perhaps we'd better chuck him in the river. That ought to do the trick."

"But we should ruin that new suit of his!" protested McClure.

Handforth nodded.

"That's what I was thinking," he replied.

CHAPTER 7.

Rough on Archie!

THERE was much to be said in favour of Handforth's idea. Throwing Archie Glenthorne into the river would probably revive him at once, and his terrible suit would be irretrievably ruined. Two birds killed with one stone.

However, Church and McClure dissuaded Handforth from the project. It was a bit too thick. Handforth contented himself by cupping his hands and dipping them into the river. He splashed about a pint of water over Archie's face. Archie did not even quiver.

"I say, you know, there must be something wrong with him!" said Church, in sudden alarm. "He won't wake up! I believe he's ill!"

"Sun-stroke!" nodded Handforth, with conviction.

"Great Scott!"

"That's what it is all right—sun-stroke," said Handforth. "Well, it serves the silly ass right for coming out here and lying down and going to sleep. What else can he expect but sun-stroke?"

"Sun-stroke's serious, isn't it?" asked Church.

"Might easily be fatal," nodded Handforth. "He'll probably be unconscious for days."

"Well, don't look so jolly pleased about it!" said McClure tartly. "Can't we do something to help the poor chap? Get some more water!"

"Water's no good for sun-stroke," replied Handforth, shaking his head. "I knew a chap once——"

But his chums were not interested. They dashed to the river bank, got some more water, and splashed it over Archie's face. To their relief the patient now showed some signs of awakening. He stirred and tried to open his eyes.

"Hallo! What's going on here?" asked Vivian Travers, strolling up with Sir Jimmy Potts, Skeets Rossiter, and Harry Gresham. "So this is where Archie has got to?"

Orlando and Brent have been inquiring all over the place for him."

"He's had sun-stroke," explained Handforth.

"Rats!" said Church. "It can't be sun-stroke, or he wouldn't show any signs of coming to himself. Get some more water, Mac."

"Well, if it isn't full sun-stroke, he's had a touch of it," insisted Handforth. "Chaps don't sleep as soundly as this unless they've had sun-stroke, or something."

More water was splashed into Archie Glenthorne's face; and his recovery was assisted, perhaps, by the fact that he opened his mouth to yawn just as a large dose of water was splashed upon him. Some of the water got into his mouth, and it not only went down his throat, but it went the wrong way.

The unfortunate Archie gurgled, he spluttered, and a moment later he was sitting up and coughing violently. Church and McClure were patting him on the back, and generally hammering him about. Under the influence of this rough-and-ready treatment, a complete cure was effected.

"Here, I say, dash it!" spluttered Archie, finding words at last. "Chuck it, you blighters!"

"Wake up, Archie!" said Church. "Great Scott! We've been trying to knock some life into you for the last five minutes!"

"Eh? What's that," asked Archie dizzily. "Oh, I see what you mean! Knocking the life out of me, what?"

"Knocking the life into you, fathead!"

"Then be good enough to cease fire," said Archie feebly. "I mean to say——"

He looked somewhat blearily at the circle of juniors. Then, his consciousness returning fully, he gave a violent start. He looked round wildly.

"I say!" he ejaculated. "I say! Where are they?"

"Where are what?"

"Good gad! Am I here?" asked Archie. "I mean, where am I? This isn't the yacht!"

"The what?"

"No, not the what, you frightful ass—the yacht!"

"What yacht?" asked Handforth blankly.

"This is most rummy," said Archie, passing a hand over his brow. "Odds mysteries and staggerers! I mean to say, here I am, back on the good old spot, what?"

"You've been on the good old spot, my lad, for two or three hours," said Handforth. "You've been sleeping like a log——"

"Absolutely not!" interrupted Archie.

"I've had a most blighting adventure."

"Tell us about it, dear old fellow," grinned Travers.

"I don't exactly know how it started, but I came to this jolly old spot and decided that it was just the stuff to give 'em," said Archie. "That is to say, I rested the good old bones on the landscape, and came to the

conclusion that forty of the best and sweetest would restore the tissues. When I woke up, I was miles away!"

"You silly ass, when you woke up you were here!" said Handforth. "We woke you up, didn't we?"

"I mean, when I woke up for the first time," explained Archie. "I was on a ship, out at sea—and a ship, my dear old things, which was simply overrun by gabbling foreigners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Absolutely!" insisted Archie. "You've never heard such foreigners in all your life. I'm dashed if I could understand their bally language. These blighters carried me off in a launch, and I was hoisted on to this other ship, and lugged below, and a whole gang of these merchants held a sort of general meeting, and I imagine that I must have been the chief item on the agenda. Anyhow—"

"Cheese it, Archie!" grinned Handforth. "I was wrong about that sun-stroke, after all. There's nothing wrong with you—except that you've been dreaming."

"Of course he's been dreaming," said Harry Gresham. "He's been sleeping here on the river bank—"

"Kindly allow me to know best, whether I've been dreaming or not," interrupted Archie coldly. "Dash it! I distinctly remember being carried on to that yacht. I was bound hand and foot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And gagged, too, I suppose?" asked Travers cheerfully.

"Well, sort of gagged," replied Archie. "I couldn't see much because I had a dashed silk handkerchief over my face. But these foreign merchants removed it when I was down in the cabin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A top-hole cabin, too," said Archie. "Rich lounges, soft carpets, and all that sort of thing. And these gabbling blighters talked like anything, but I couldn't understand a word. There was one chappie who got into a most fearful rage. I don't quite know what happened after that, because I must have been drugged again."

"Poor old Archie!" chuckled Skeets. "I guess you've had more than a dream. It must have been a nightmare."

"What have you been eating?" asked Jimmy Potts.

"Eating wasn't the cause of it," said Handforth. "It was that suit."

"Good gad! I mean—"

"Of course it was that suit," continued Handforth. "Any fellow going to sleep in a suit like that would have vivid nightmares."

Archie was looking very startled. By now, he had recovered his wits completely; his brain was quite clear. And all that had recently happened to him took on a vague, unreal aspect. The clearer his brain became, the more fantastic those adventures seemed.

"It's dashed disturbing, laddies," he said, passing a hand over his brow. "I mean to say, all these frightful things absolutely happened. Dash it, I remember distinctly! I was in a sort of motor-launch, going out to sea. Then there was that bally ship, and all those gabbling foreigners—"

"Dreams, old man—dreams!" said De Valeric, who, attracted by the group, had strolled up with Somerton and one or two other Removites. "You've been asleep for hours."

"It's all very rummy, said Archie. "What I can't understand is, finding myself back here."

"There's nothing rummy about that," said De Valeric. "You found yourself back here because you never went away. Why, two hours ago, when I happened to go to the boat-house, I spotted you lying on the grass, asleep. More than two hours ago. You haven't moved since then. It stands to reason."

Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox, who were now with the crowd, were looking interested. Victor, in particular, was curious.

"I'm afraid it's that suit, Archie, old man," he said to his elegant study mate. "I wore it for a bit, and so I know. It's the kind of suit to make you dizzy."

"I thought you liked this dashed suit?" asked Archie stiffly.

"I did—at first," replied the young king. "Afterwards, however, I decided that it was just a little too bright for my liking. But what about this dream of yours?"

"It wasn't a dream!" insisted Archie frantically. "Good gad! Can't you chappies believe me? I tell you, I went to sleep on this spot, and when I woke up I was in a motor-launch. I was taken on a ship, with all sorts of gabbling foreigners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What were these foreigners like?" asked Victor, looking strangely startled.

"Well, there was one stout chappie—an elderly blighter, with a ferocious sort of moustache," said Archie. "And there was another one, who seemed to be the master of the ceremonies. A younger bloke, frightfully authoritative, and all that. The other merchants absolutely quailed when he yapped at them."

"What was this man like?" asked Victor.

"Oh, a tallish, well-built sort of chappie," replied Archie, frowning. "Dark and sinister, if you know what I mean. Foreign-looking, but well-dressed. I will say that for these blighters—they were pretty snappy in their apparel. This gangster-chief fellow struck me as being an aristocrat of sorts. A frightful scoundrel, of course, or he wouldn't have let me lie on that dashed lounge with my hands and feet bound! But, in all fairness, I've got to admit that he was a man of dashed good stock."

There was a general laugh.

"My poor old Archie, why can't you be sensible?" asked Travers. "Isn't it as clear as daylight that you've been dreaming? All this is mere drivel. I mean, about this yacht, these foreigners, and your being bound hand and foot. You must have been reading some thriller and, what with that and the suit and the heat of the afternoon——"

"All I can say is, it's dashed rummy," interrupted Archie, disturbed.

He was beginning to have doubts. It not only seemed dashed rummy, but ridiculous. On the face of it, the thing was crazy. If all those things had really happened, why had he been brought back? Upon awakening for the second time, why had he found himself on the grass, lying on the very spot where he had fallen asleep? Who would kidnap him just for the fun of the thing—and then bring him back?

He had already felt his pockets, and he had assured himself that his wallet was safe, and his other valuables intact.

"Oh, well, perhaps you're right," admitted Archie reluctantly. "I suppose it must have been a dream—although, dash it, I've never had one like it before. Most frightfully alarming. I shall have to ask Phipps about it. He'll rally round, and—— Good gad!"

It wasn't so much an exclamation as a groan. Archie had just remembered that he and Phipps were scarcely on speaking terms. Phipps wouldn't do much rallying round.

"Oh, well, there's only one thing for it," murmured Archie, more to himself than to the fellows. "I suppose I shall have to give this dashed suit to Phipps and tell him to burn it. That will restore the old boy to the usual form. Then he'll dash about with restoratives, and the young master will once again be himself."

The juniors chuckled, and Archie, still feeling decidedly groggy, wearily set off towards the school. The rest of the fellows dispersed. At least, they would have done, only Victor Orlando detained some of them. Victor was looking quietly serious. He buttonholed Handforth & Co., Travers, and one or two others.

"Can you fellows come along to my study soon?" he asked.

"No reason why we shouldn't," said Handforth. "What's the idea?"

"Something I want to tell you," replied Victor. "And it's something startling."

CHAPTER 8.

Victor Springs a Bombshell!

STUDY E was rather crowded.

Half an hour had elapsed, but Archie Glenthorne was now looking quite contented. He had had a five-minutes heart-to-heart talk with Phipps; he had removed that purplish-brown suit, and was elegantly attired in flannels. Phipps had smiled upon him once more, and the world was looking pretty good all round.

That dream was now very vague, and Archie was doing his best to forget it completely. He couldn't quite understand why all these chappies were gathering in his study, but they were perfectly welcome. After all, it was Orlando's study as well as his, and Orlando had invited them.

Nipper was here with Tregellis-West and Watson, his own study mates; also Handforth & Co.; Travers, Potts and Gresham; Skeets and Fullwood—and, of course, Paul Maddox, Victor's own special pal.

"What's the general idea of this?" asked Nipper.

"A jape, I expect," said Handforth, with relish. "Orlando's pretty hot on japes. He may be a Caronian, and he may be a king, but he's the goods."

Victor Orlando shook his head.

"It's not a jape this time, Handy," he said, the gravity of his tone making all the others stare. "No, I'm afraid I'm going to bother you with my family troubles."

"Do kings have family troubles?" asked Handforth in surprise.

"More family troubles than ordinary people, I'm afraid," replied Victor. "For they're the kind of troubles that involve wars and revolutions."

"What the dickens are you getting at?" asked Gresham, in wonder.

"I didn't want to bother any of you fellows with this matter, but after what has happened to Archie to-day, I feel that you ought to know."

"But nothing's happened to Archie!"

"Fortunately, he has come to no harm," replied Victor. "But something might have happened—something very nasty."

"Good gad!" said Archie, sitting up.

"All you fellows believe that Archie had a dream out there on the river bank," continued Victor. "But I happen to know that that story of his was true. He was kidnapped, he was taken aboard a strange yacht with a lot of gabbling foreigners, and he was brought back, drugged."

There was a chorus of startled exclamations.

"Cheese it, Orlando!" protested Handforth. "Draw it mild, old man!"

But Nipper, who could see the earnest light in Victor's eyes, looked at him squarely.

"Why are you so sure?" he asked.

"Because I know a few things which you fellows don't know," replied the young King of Caronia. "I know, for example, that certain of my own countrymen are plotting against me."

"What!"

"Great Scott!"

"Being a king isn't all honey," continued Victor. "And even in England I'm not safe from these conspiracies. I thought I was going to have a fairly good time of it at St. Frank's, but this affair to-day has given me a bit of a shock."



Handforth & Co. seized poker, shovel and tongs and ranged themselves around King Victor. They were his majesty's bodyguard!

"What affair?" asked Travers. "You're talking in riddles, dear old fellow. Nothing has happened to you, has it? Archie is the merchant——"

"I'll explain," said Victor. "When I heard Archie's story, I was immediately struck by one significant fact. He was taken to a strange yacht, and then he was brought back—after being drugged. In other words, he was kidnapped, but he wasn't wanted. So the kidnappers brought him back and placed him on the same spot, thinking that he would awaken without any knowledge of what had happened."

The juniors were bewildered; all this seemed absurd.

"Archie was pretty brilliant in that affair," continued Victor admiringly. "Congratulations, Archie, on your presence of mind."

"Oh, really!" protested Archie. "I mean to say——"

"If you had allowed those men to know that you were really awake, they wouldn't have brought you back," said Victor gravely. "They'd have kept you there—a prisoner. They daren't have brought you back, for you'd have known too much. But by lying doggo, and allowing them to think that you were unconscious all the while, you have enabled us to get a clear line on what's happening."

"The poor chap's raving!" said Handforth sadly. "He's just drivelling!"

"Leave him alone," said Nipper. "Go ahead, Orlando!"

"The whole thing hinges on the fact that Archie was wearing that new suit," said Victor impressively.

"What on earth——"

"I was wearing that suit earlier—and that's the point," said Victor. "While I was wearing it, my enemies must have seen me. The suit fixed itself in their minds. Can't you see? When they came down the river in their launch, and spotted Archie asleep on the bank, they mistook him for me."

"My only sainted aunt!"

"But who the dickens would want to kidnap you?" asked Nipper.

"There's one man who is very interested in me," said Victor quietly. "He's the man Archie has described—the aristocratic-looking leader of this gang of gabbling foreigners. I'm pretty certain that the man was Prince Zeno of Kazatova, my half-brother."

Archie started as though he had been stung.

"I say!" he ejaculated. "Odds regrets and apologies! And I called the chappie a dashed scoundrel! Really, Orlando, old boy, I hadn't the faintest idea——"

"Don't worry!" interrupted Victor. "When you described my half-brother as a dashed scoundrel you weren't half severe enough. Prince Zeno is the most dangerous

man in Caronia—or out of Caronia. — He hates me like poison, and I'm not exactly mad about him myself. Our feelings towards one another, in fact, are pretty mutual."

The juniors were all looking excited, and more than a little bewildered.

"It's all perfectly clear," said Victor. "Archie was kidnapped in mistake for me. He was brought back because Prince Zeno thought that he knew nothing, and because he was the wrong victim."

"It all sounds like a lot of rot to me," said Handforth bluntly.

"Perhaps it won't sound like rot when I tell you that my half-brother has been conspiring for months," replied Victor. "I happen to know that he is on a pleasure cruise at the moment in his own private yacht—or he's pretending to be on a pleasure cruise. His right-hand man and companion is Count Frederick von Stelf, and von Stelf is a stoutish, elderly man——"

"Good gad! The chappie I described!" said Archie.

"Exactly," replied King Victor. "The men you saw were Prince Zeno and Count von Stelf. The others were either some of the yacht's officers or some of my half-brother's agents."

"Well, I'm dithered! I had an idea all the time that I wasn't dreaming," said Archie. "Dash it, a chappie can't mistake a thing like that. Absolutely not!"

"By lying doggo, you fooled them beautifully," said Victor. "And that's the only reason you were brought back. I'm not saying that my half-brother would have dropped you overboard, or anything drastic like that, but he would certainly have kept you a prisoner."

"Then I seem to have had a pretty priceless shave," said Archie with relief.

Victor was looking troubled.

"At the risk of boring you fellows, I'm going to be a bit long-winded," he said. "I wish you'd sit down and make yourselves comfortable. This little chat of ours may take some time."

The juniors, far from bored, settled down. They had an idea that they were going to hear something sensational—and they were not disappointed.

CHAPTER 9.

His Majesty's Bodyguard!

IT was difficult to realise that this cheery, curly-haired schoolboy was a king; yet it was not so difficult now as it had been. Until this hour, Victor had shown himself to be just an ordinary, mischief-loving schoolboy. But now he seemed to assume a new strength of dignity which made him different from all the others.

Paul Maddox, his friend, was looking anxious and worried.

"Do you think there's any real danger, Vic?" he asked with concern. "I'd no idea that your half brother was really active."

"We'll see—we'll sift the facts, as they say in the detective stories," replied Victor with a smile. "Now, all you fellows know that Paul and I are practically as English as you are. Since childhood we have had an English tutor; then we spent some years in an English preparatory school; then we came here. We don't want you to look upon us as foreigners."

"We don't," said Nipper. "Forget it, old man. You're Removites, both of you."

"My uncle, the Grand Duke Rudolph, has had this dream in his mind for years," continued Victor thoughtfully. "He is a great patriot, and his love of Caronia is something which even I can't quite understand. Perhaps I will later on, when I'm old enough to reign. But at present, as you know, I'm only just a schoolboy, and so my uncle is reigning for me. He is the regent. He's more than that; he's the supreme dictator of Caronia's destinies."

"Years ago he realised that Caronia was drifting helplessly; that the people were more or less poverty-stricken, and that prosperity seemed as far away as ever. Caronia's a queer little country. Some of my people speak Italian, some German, some Slav. At least, they did. Then my uncle issued a decree that those languages were to be abolished, and English substituted."

"When he took hold of the reins, on the death of my father—who was a grand old chap, but old-fashioned—he decided that the time had come for him to put his dreams into practice," went on the young king quietly. "I was only a kid, and I hadn't any say in the matter. Now I'm a bit older, I know what it all means, and I'm one hundred per cent in favour of my uncle's plans."

"The people, for the most part, are behind him, too. In Galvarad, the capital, my uncle is backed up by ninety per cent of the people, and it is just the same in all the other big towns. The people are helping him loyally, willingly. And during these past few years amazing changes have taken place in Caronia. The country, instead of being poverty-stricken, is prospering; factories are springing up everywhere; roads are being built on a magnificent scale; unemployment is almost unknown. Everything is patterned after the English style."

"Our railways, our roads, our factories, our post-office, our army—they're all just like the English," continued Victor proudly. "Our newspapers are printed in English, since every other language is forbidden. And the people have learned English by now, and most of them prefer it. In the old days, our newspapers had to be printed in three languages, our stamps were printed in three languages, and there was always a lot of confusion. That's all been wiped away at a single stroke. My uncle believes that English will one day become the language of the whole world—and he means to be in time with Caronia."

"And jolly good luck to him!" said Nipper. "Your uncle is a bit before his

time, perhaps, but he knows what he's doing!"

"That's just it—he's a bit before his time," admitted Victor, with a sigh. "Like all great pioneers, he is misunderstood by some. It is the Slav population which is causing the trouble. The people in the Kazatova Mountains are bitterly opposed to all these new-fangled ideas. They want to go on in the old way; they distrust all changes. What was good enough for their ancestors is good enough for them. That's the attitude they take. My half-brother, Prince Zeno, has appointed himself the champion of these revolutionaries. But he has only done so because he believes that he can gain power. He wants to precipitate a revolution—and force my uncle to abdicate—so that he, Prince Zeno, can seize the throne and rob me of my birthright. He wants to put Caronia back where it stood, and to abolish all these modern innovations which are bringing such prosperity to the country."

"The man must be a fool!" said Nipper.

"Not a fool—a rascal," replied Victor.

"He's not thinking of the country—he's no patriot. He's only thinking of himself. He wants to become the king, and if the country is sacrificed so that he can mount the throne, he will be satisfied. That's the kind of man he is."

"But where do you come in?" asked Handforth curiously.

"If Prince Zeno can get hold of me—kidnap me, in fact—and hide me away, he will possess a weapon of tremendous strength," replied Victor. "Don't you understand? He can even threaten to kill me, and so force my uncle to abdicate."

"Phew! The man must be a most frightful blighter!" said Archie. "Of course, I could see that when I spotted him. But, dash it, this is a bit blue round the edges, laddie!"

"Zeno has been plotting for two or three years," said Victor. "He has been gaining strength among the Slavs, and the time is rapidly approaching now when he will be ready to strike. Very little of all this is heard in the newspapers—even in Caronia people don't know much. But my uncle knows, and those in his confidence know. At any moment Prince Zeno might strike. And the fact that he tried to kidnap me to-day proves that he's getting ready to strike at once. I don't like the look of things at all!"

"I suppose you were sent to England so that you would be safe?" asked Nipper.

"That was my uncle's main idea, of course," replied Victor. "He felt that I would be secure here, and, at the same time, he wanted me to become thoroughly English in my outlook. He wants the English outlook to be the outlook of all good Caronians."

"A stout-hearted chappie, your uncle!" said Archie approvingly.

"He needs to be stout-hearted," said Victor. "He has many friends, but he has countless enemies. And with my half-brother secretly plotting against him, the crisis is getting nearer and nearer."

"Do you really think that Zeno will start a revolution?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"He daren't start one yet," replied Victor. "But if he gets hold of me and uses me as a hostage, he might risk it. He knows that the grand duke wouldn't allow me to be sacrificed. So you can tell I'm pretty worried about that affair this afternoon. It shows that Prince Zeno is getting desperate. Once he steps upon the throne he'll repeal all the new laws that my uncle has made; he'll allow Caronia to fall back into its former condition. And with the Slavs solidly behind him, the rest of the people will be pretty helpless. These Slavs, who move about in tribes in the mountains, are a fierce, war-like lot, whilst the rest of the population is peace-loving."

"During these last few years my uncle has been trying to win the Slavs over to his own way of thinking," continued the young king. "He has used every kind of diplomacy, and there were signs that he was succeeding—that he was getting these fierce people to modernise their outlook."

"But all the good that my uncle did has been undone by Prince Zeno's revolutionary activities. While the grand duke has been persuading, on the one hand, the prince has been goading on the other. The very future of Caronia lies in the Kazatova Mountains. It's a funny thing that that wild region should be of such importance—that the fate of tens of thousands of lawful, industrious people should rest in the hands of these tribes who are little better than bandits and brigands. But that's just the way of things."

"Gee! It's pretty tough, whichever way you look at it," remarked Skeets.

"A few days ago I had a letter from my uncle," said Victor. "He wasn't alarmed, but he warned me to be careful. He told me about Zeno's cruise—and he had his suspicions, perhaps, that my half-brother was planning to plot against me. He warned me to be careful, to be constantly on my guard. Yet I don't think my uncle quite realised that Zeno was determined to go to such lengths."

"We ought to let your uncle know what's happening," said Paul earnestly.

"No need to worry him," replied Victor, shaking his head. "He has quite enough worries at home in Caronia. I'm not afraid of Zeno or his agents. My uncle said there was very little danger of the prince attempting any funny business."

"But he has attempted funny business already," said Nipper.

"Yes; and that's why I've told you fellows about it," replied Victor, with a smile. "I think it's only right that you should know. So if you see any foreign-looking fellows hanging about, you'll know who they are. And perhaps you'll lend me a hand. I'm a Removeite now, and I'm rather hoping that the Remove will rally round. We can attend to these things without bothering my uncle."

"Good egg!" said Handforth eagerly.

"You bet the Remove will rally round!"

"Rather!"

"Bravo, Orlando! We're with you!"

"Hear, hear!"

Victor flushed as he heard the enthusiastic chorus.

"It's awfully decent of you chaps," he said gratefully. "I know it's not right for me to spring my troubles on you——"

"Rats!"

"Dry up, ass!"

"All right, I won't press the point," grinned Victor. "Anyhow, my uncle tells me in his letter that he has had secret information from one of his spies that there has been talk in the revolutionary camp of grabbing me and holding me as a hostage. That's why I know so much about it. My uncle told me not to take too much notice of those alarmist yarns, but he warned me that I had better be careful. He says that he is glad that he arranged for Paul and me to spend our summer holidays here at the school."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Travers. "Aren't you going away for the vac.? I mean, back to Caronia?"

"No. My uncle thinks it would be better for us to stay on."

"I say, that's a frightfully frightful prospect!" said Archie sympathetically. "I mean, it's most awfully dull for a chappie to spend the holidays at school. I mean, hardly any of the lads trickling round, and all that sort of thing. Wide-open spaces wherever you look. Solitude, and all that rot."

"You'll have to come home with me," said Handforth generously. "My people will be only too jolly pleased."

"That's very decent of you, Handy——"

"Don't you take any notice of Handy," interrupted Travers. "You'll have to come to my place, Orlando."

"No fear!" roared Handforth. "I asked him first!"

"Well, don't fight about it," grinned Victor. "We can easily settle that a bit later. And thanks awfully for being so nice. Let's get back to the point. The one fact which stands out clearly is that my uncle's warning was more timely than he suspected. The genial Prince Zeno is getting busy; he's made one attempt to grab me, and it's pretty certain that he'll make others when he has got his second wind. Not that I'm worrying."

"We'll look after you, old son," said Nipper briskly. "Trust the Remove!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rats to my half-brother and all his beastly plots!" continued Victor lightly. "I'm jolly glad I've got this off my chest—it's made me feel heaps better. But after what happened to Archie I felt that you ought to know."

"You did the right thing," said Nipper. "We'll form a sort of bodyguard, and we'll watch over you night and day."

"Hear, hear!" supported Handforth enthusiastically. He strode over to the fireplace and grabbed up the poker. "We'll show 'em!" he declared fiercely, as he



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know a good rib-tickler, send it along now. A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; pocket wallets, penknives, and bumper books are also offered as prizes. Address your jokes to "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

STRATEGY.

Uncle (to nephew playing at "war" with a companion): "If you can take the fortress within a quarter of an hour, I'll give you sixpence."

Youngster (a minute later): "Uncle, the fortress is taken. May I have that sixpence you promised me, please?"

Uncle: "How did you manage it so quickly?"

Youngster: "I offered the enemy three-pence and he capitulated."

(D. Duncan, 71, The Drive, Golders Green, N.W.11, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

PREPARING TO RUN.

Pat was sleeping in a haunted house when he heard a voice moaning:

"There's only you and me! There's only you and me!"

"Begorra!" said Pat. "There'll only be ye when Oi get this other boot on!"

(H. Nicholson, 1, P.O. Row, Westhouse, Ingleton, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

QUITE ENOUGH, THANKS!

"Have an accident?" asked the fellow who arrived too late at the scene of the motor-car crash.

"No, thanks," replied the victim, as he picked himself up. "I've just had one."

(Miss F. Duggan, 95, Rennie Street, Coburg, Melbourne, Australia, has been awarded a book.)

TESTED.

Foreman (testing wall in new house): "I'm speaking quietly, Bill. Can you hear me?"

Bill (on the other side): "'Ear yer? Lumme, I can see yer in three places."

(W. Hedges, 9, Ansley Road, Stockingford Nuneaton, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

THE BARE-FACED TRUTH.

Two men were having a heated argument.

"There's only one thing that stops you from being a bare-faced fibber," declared the first.

"Well, and what's that?" asked the other.

"Your moustache!" retorted the first man.

(F. Andrews, 5, Challin Street, Maple Road, Penge, S.E.20, has been awarded a penknife.)

marched back and ranged himself alongside Victor. "Just let these mouldy Caronian plotters try any of their funny stuff, and they'll feel the weight of this on their nappers!"

Some of the other juniors, following Handforth's lead, also armed themselves with the shovel and tongs and any other "weapons" they could find.

"Don't you worry, Orlando!"

"Rely on us!"

"This is your bodyguard, and we'll look after you!"

"I say, cheese it, you chaps!" grinned Victor, but at the same time he warmed more than ever towards these fellows. They were true blue.

"They're right, Vic," said Paul earnestly. "You'll need guarding. Zeno has shown his hand by this afternoon's work, and we can be absolutely certain that he'll start more mischief pretty soon. He's well on the job now, and he's not the kind of man to accept defeat. His agents are in the district; his yacht is out in the Channel. If we don't look after you we'll find you missing one of these days."

"If I'm missing you won't find me," grinned Victor. "But chuck it, Paul! Things aren't as bad as that."

However, the Removites were thoroughly excited and aroused. They regarded the schoolboy king as one of themselves, and they

were determined to form themselves into a loyal and efficient bodyguard.

CHAPTER 10.

The Schoolboy King's Peril!

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE had every reason to feel pleased with himself.

That suit of his had done excellent service during its short but hectic life. For, solely owing to that atrocity, Victor had got a "line" on his half-brother's activities. There is an old saying that forewarned is forearmed. Victor was on his guard now, and his many friends in the Remove were ready, too.

Archie, the slacker, the duffer, the genial ass, had put a very serious kink into Prince Zeno's scheming. Archie, by his astuteness in remaining "unconscious," had given Victor the upper hand. For a ready and watchful Victor was not such an easy victim as an unsuspecting Victor.

Nevertheless, the young king was too contemptuous, perhaps, of his half-brother's plotting. He certainly under-estimated the wiliness of his enemies. He was soon to regret it.

Victor did not dream that his enemies would make another attempt to capture him immediately following their first failure. Having been frustrated, they would be baffled

NOT GREEDY.

Father had been giving his son a lecture on greediness.

"Now, Tommy," he said, extracting a three-penny bit and a penny from his pocket, "which will you have?"

"Well, father, I won't be greedy," replied Tommy. "I'll have the little one."

(J. Booth, 3, Pine Grove, Farnworth, Lancs, has been awarded a penknife.)

LOOKING BLACK.

Teacher: "Who was the father of the Black Prince?"

Freddy: "Please, sir, Old King Cole."

(V. Winn, 8, Darnley Grove, Gravesend, has been awarded a book.)

WANTED A WARRIOR.

Higgins: "I say, old chap, you might push me or give me a kick."

Spiffkins: "What on earth for?"

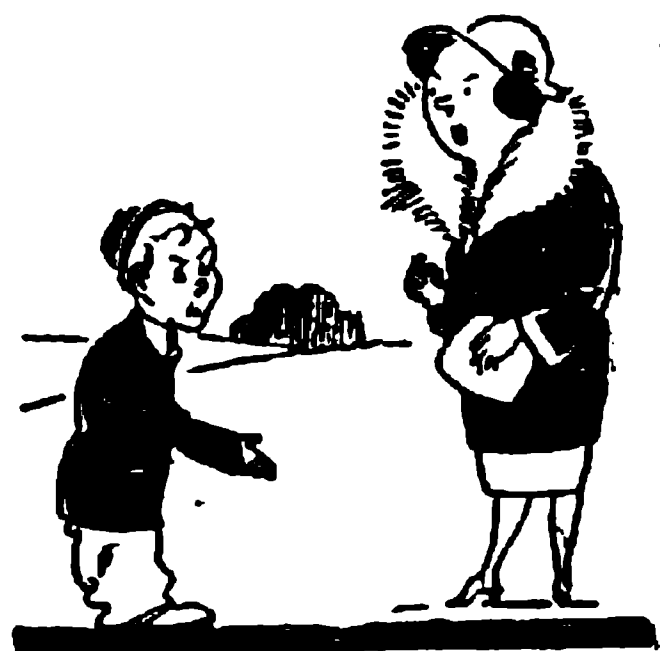
Higgins: "I've just bought this dog, and I want to see if he gets ferocious when anyone attacks me."

(F. Miller, 63, Constitution Road, Chatham, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

VERY GOOD.

For the first time mother had gone out for the afternoon and left her ten-year-old son in charge of the younger ones.

"I hope you have been good children," she said on her return.



"Oh, yes, mummie!" replied the boy. "I kept them amused. We turned on the bath taps and let the water overflow; then we played Niagara Falls on the stairs."

(Miss O. Day, 3, Hubert Road, Birmingham, has been awarded a book.)

"CUTTING DOWN" EXPENSES.

Old Lady (to small boy): "You are getting a big boy. I suppose someday you expect to step into your father's shoes?"

Small Boy: "I suppose so. I've been wearing out everything else of his since ma learned how to cut 'em down."

(N. Hallett, 22, Ellen Street, Manchester, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

A HUMAN BAROMETER.

Jock (explaining to business partner why he has bought a barometer): "It tells you when it is going to rain, you know."

Sandy: "Hoots! Tells you when it is going to rain? Why, I've never heard of such extravagance! What do you suppose I've got rheumatics for?"

(J. Eve, 366, Valance Avenue, Chadwell Heath, has been awarded a book.)

for the time being—until another plan was evolved. But they were not baffled.

It was a sad fact, but a true one, that prep. had to be done. A schoolboy king may be in peril of being kidnapped, and his schoolboy friends eager to organise an efficient bodyguard; but prep. was prep., and unless it was done there would be awkward inquiries from acid-tongued Form-masters in the morning. Thus it was that the bodyguard was forced to take leave of its charge.

When prep. was over in Study E, Victor arose and stretched himself. Brent wasn't quite finished, and Archie Glenthorne was still in the throes.

"Well, I'll buzz along to the Common-room," said Victor, stretching himself. "Thank goodness there's no more work this evening."

Brent glanced up from his books.

"Mind the kidnappers!" he warned.

"Fathead!" said the king.

He strolled out, went to the Common-room, and found it empty. At least, Victor considered it empty. Bernard Forrest and Gulliver and Bell and Teddy Long were there, but they didn't count. They urged him to remain, but he had no use for the black sheep of the Remove.

He looked into Study G and found that Paul Maddox and De Valerie and Somerton, who shared that apartment, were not quite through their prep. So he wandered out into the Triangle.

It was a glorious evening after the hot day. The sky was clear, there was scarcely a breath of wind, and a complete peace had descended over the countryside.

"Hallo, young 'un" said Fenton of the Sixth, as he happened to meet Victor. "How are things going?"

"Fine, thanks, Fenton!" said the new boy.

"Settling down comfortably in the Remove?"

"Yes, thanks!"

"Don't forget to come to me if there are any little snags," said the school captain kindly. "Of course, I don't approve of new boys running to a prefect with trifles; but you know where to find me if I'm needed, eh?"

"Yes, rather!" said Victor. "How long before locking-up, Fenton? Is there time for me to pop down to the post office?"

"Yes, if you do some quick popping."

Fenton smiled, nodded, and went on his way. And Victor Orlando was not only careless and thoughtless, but unforgivably lax. After what had happened that afternoon he should have known better.

There wasn't any real need for him to go down to the post office that evening—and certainly not alone. But as the other fellows were at their prep., and there was nothing particular for him to do, he thought he might as well fill in the time.

Victor hurried down the lane; he even trotted. He did not want to be late back.

The lane, as he might have expected at this peaceful hour of the evening, was deserted. He did not even glance round when he heard a motor-car coming along in his rear. More carelessness. He was thinking of that letter from his uncle, and he should have been on the alert.

There was a sudden scraping of brakes, and the sound of tyres skidding on the dry road. Victor glanced round, and he was just in time to see the car swerve towards him.

"Hallo! What the——"

He broke off. One of the doors had been flung open. Two men sprang out, and at the first glimpse of these men Victor recognised the characteristic features.

His own countrymen! Slavs!

The young king was completely taken by surprise. One of the men had a travelling-rug, and he hurled it unerringly over Victor's head. The other man, glancing rapidly up and down the lane, saw that no other eyes had witnessed this dramatic incident. The driver was racing his engine, ready for a quick get-away.

Victor struggled, but it was useless. The whole thing was over within the space of two or three seconds.

Helpless in the folds of that rug, gripped by the two men, he was hauled into the car and slammed down on the floor. The door crashed, a shout sounded, and the driver jerked in his clutch. The car sped off.

"This time we have made no mistake!" exclaimed Karl triumphantly. "What luck! He walks into our hands, the young fool!"

His companion was Nickolas, and the man driving the car was Lieutenant Klotz.

Bellton Lane, up and down its entire length, was empty. There had not been a single eye-witness of that smartly-executed coup. Or so the kidnappers thought.

But somebody had seen—and from a most unexpected quarter.

FOR it so happened that a light Moth aeroplane had been gliding overhead at that crucial moment.

The fact that the Caronian plotters had not heard the machine was easily explained; for the pilot was gliding down in order to effect a landing on the Half Mile Meadow, which adjoined the lane. The 'plane's engine was completely cut off, so the only audible sounds were those of the gently swishing propeller and the wind as it sang through the stay-wires. These sounds had been effectually drowned by the racing of the car engine.

The pilot, looking out of his cockpit to make sure of his landing-place, had been an astonished witness of the whole incident. He had seen the car stop, he had seen the man leap out, he had seen them throw the rug over the schoolboy. Then he had watched the car driven off at a furious pace immediately afterwards.



The kidnappers jumped out of the car and flung a rug over Victor Orlando, taking the schoolboy king completely by surprise.

Now, that pilot was no ordinary light-hearted young air enthusiast. He was a man of action—a man who, in the course of his varied career, had more than once found it necessary to make up his mind within a split second.

In a word, Lord Dorrimore.

The famous sporting peer had been doing some stunt flying at an aerial pageant in the South of England. He was always springing surprises, and it had tickled his fancy to drop into St. Frank's on his way back to London, for a chat with the boys.

But he did not drop in just yet. He changed his plans. That incident in the lane intrigued him.

So, instead of landing in the Half Mile Meadow, he opened up the throttle of his engine, zoomed round, and gained height. He wanted to know where that car was going, and here was a simple way of finding out. Easy enough for him to follow!

"Deucedly rummy," commented Lord Dorrimore.

He knew that the schoolboys were always japing one another, and they were often getting up to unexpected tricks. But for two men to leap out of a car, and to drag an apparently harmless schoolboy into that same car—well, that wasn't at all usual.

It was, in fact, "deucedly rummy."

It was characteristic of Dorrie to take such immediate action. He wasn't naturally inquisitive, but he instinctively felt that this business needed looking into.

The car sped through Bellton village, and it took the road to Caistowe.

Nothing extraordinary so far. But when the car turned off and made its way along a narrow track which could only lead to the barren cliffs, Dorrie experienced a bit of a thrill. He was always out for a thrill—and it was his standing complaint that there were never enough thrills to satisfy him.

Dorrie thought it better to climb higher and to fly as far away as possible without losing sight of the car. The men had not looked up and spotted him yet, but they were liable to do so at any minute. Not that they were likely to take alarm even if they did see him. They did not know that Dorrie had seen the whole kidnapping incident; and they would feel secure in the fact that Victor, helpless and covered with the rug, was not very noticeable on the floor of the car.

Dorrie zoomed up higher and higher in wide circles. Very soon he was at an altitude of two thousand feet, and the car looked a mere toy beneath him. But his range of vision was wide now, and it was easy enough for him to watch events.

If the mysterious men happened to spot the plane, they would not suspect it—as they might have suspected if the machine had kept very low.

It was significant that the car cautiously descended the steep gap in the cliffs which led down to the beach. The beach, here, was deserted. It was out by the Shingle Headland, and this particular bay was secluded and desolate.

The tide was more than half out, and there was a nice stretch of firm sand. The car

ran right down on to it, and came to a standstill. One of the doors opened and a man emerged. He stood looking out to sea.

"Oh, ho!" murmured Dorrie.

He had switched off his engine. He had plenty of air space now, and he might glide about for some little time before those men became aware of the plane's existence. At that height, the sound of the swishing propeller and the singing stay-wires was more or less inaudible to those on the beach.

At all events, the man near the car did not even look up. He was still staring out to sea. And Lord Dorrimore, from his superior position, saw a motor-boat approaching. It was a good distance out yet, but it was clearly making for this bay.

A boy kidnapped by men in a car—the car coming to this deserted beach—a motor-boat approaching that beach!

Dorrie considered that it was the moment for action.

He had plenty of time. It would be ten minutes, at least, before that boat could arrive. He did not know anything about the arrangements, but Dorrie was no fool and could guess. Perhaps those men had not premeditated the kidnapping—perhaps they had just seized an unexpected chance. But, clearly, this meeting on the beach had been pre-arranged.

Dorrie was right.

Lieutenant Klotz had come to report; and now he was gloating because he had brought the schoolboy king with him. It was a great triumph for himself and for Karl and Nickolas. They were a little early on the beach, but that did not matter. The boat would soon be here.

Meanwhile Victor, held securely by Karl and Nickolas, would be kept hidden on the floor of the car in case any energetic holiday-makers happened along. But, as it chanced, the bay was deserted. At this hour of the evening, all holiday-makers had gone home—or were listening to the pierrots, or at the talkies.

And then, at that interesting point, Lord Dorrimore butted in. He arrived—literally—out of a clear sky.

Nickolas was the first to spot the danger. He heard a strange sound from above; glanced up in wonder—and gasped. The plane was not more than two hundred feet up, diving steeply.

"Quick!" shouted Nickolas hoarsely.

"What's wrong, you fool?" asked Lieutenant Klotz, startled by the other's tone.

"Look!" panted Nickolas. "Start the car, lieutenant!"

Klotz looked, and then he, too, gave a gasp of surprised alarm. For the first time he saw the 'plane. It was swooping down upon them with a roar. For what reason? It seemed only too obvious to Klotz. Somehow the pilot was in the know; and he was coming down to take a hand in the game.

CHAPTER 11.

Thanks to Dorrie!

KLOTZ bounded into whirlwind action. He jumped into the car, operated the self-starter and the engine purred into life. Throwing in the clutch desperately, the car leapt forward and was soon racing over the beach. Zooming only a few yards above was the 'plane.

Victor Orlando struggled desperately. He had heard his captors' dismayed words; had heard the roaring of the 'plane, and he knew that something unforeseen had cropped up. The thought gave him strength.

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



Frantically he wrestled with the rug that enveloped him, and such were his efforts that he succeeded in releasing himself from the clutches of his two captors. In a second he had thrown the rug from him—and looked up to see a 'plane roaring overhead, from the undercarriage of which dangled a rope ladder!

Victor leapt to his feet. Nickolas and Karl attempted to grab him, but his two fists flashed out and the Caronians staggered back. By now, the car was hurtling over the sands as Klotz, at the wheel, sought to elude the pursuing 'plane. But he was forced to keep to a more or less straight course, and Lord Dorrimore had no difficulty in remaining overhead. Lower and lower he dropped until the rope ladder

was dangling within reach of the struggling boy in the car below.

"Grab it—and hold tight!" he bellowed.

Orlando heard the words faintly above the roar of the 'plane's propeller. His outstretched hands grasped the rope, held—and he felt himself swung away with a lightning jerk just as Nickolas and Karl made futile efforts to grab his legs.

Up, up, up! Desperately the schoolboy king held on to the rope ladder, and he was whirled through the air. The wind whistled and shrieked about him, threatening to tear him from his perch. But in spite of his peril a wild elation surged through him.

"The Bandits Of Caronia!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

The Boys of St. Frank's in Caronia—searching for Victor Orlando, who is a prisoner in the hands of his rascally half-brother, Prince Zeno.

Captured by brigands—Handy falling down a ravine—fights—countless perils—Nipper & Co. are booked for plenty of excitement in Caronia.

Next week's topping schoolboy-adventure yarns teems with thrills—don't miss reading it, chums.

"The Phantom Foe!"

By JOHN BREARLEY.

Another gripping instalment of this enthralling serial next Wednesday—in which the Night Hawk once more clashes with the Phantom Foe in whirlwind battle.

"Handforth's Weekly!"

"OUR ROUND TABLE TALK."

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

He had escaped. Once more, thanks to his daring, unknown rescuer, he had been audaciously snatched from his enemies just when everything seemed lost.

By now the car had been left well behind. Victor had escaped from the Caronian plotters, but he was still far from out of danger. Now commenced the perilous task of climbing up the swaying rope ladder and getting into the cockpit of the 'plane.

Setting his teeth determinedly, the schoolboy king hauled himself up slowly until he had reached the undercarriage, after which he scrambled on to the lower wing.

Lord Dorrimore, at the controls, watched anxiously. He was an experienced pilot, and all his skill was needed now to keep the

'plane steady. One jolt and the boy on the wing would be hurled to the ground—possibly to his death.

"Great stuff, laddie!" said his lordship encouragingly, as he saw Victor perched on the wing. "Steady, now. Can you manage to climb up here?"

"Watch me!" called back the schoolboy king cheerily.

And in a few breath-taking moments he had done it. He sank back into the seat in front of Lord Dorrimore with a gasp of relief.

"I say! Thanks awfully, sir, for rescuing me!" gasped Victor at last, turning and shouting above the roar of the engine.

Dorrie grinned.

"Rats!" he exclaimed rudely. "Why, I've done nothing. I think it's up to me to congratulate you. Gosh, what you've done is one of the pluckiest things I've ever seen. I guess it was lucky I had to fix that rope ladder for some stunting I've been doing this afternoon. By the way, youngster, what's all the trouble? What were those men——"

"They kidnapped me!" explained Victor. "They grabbed me by force——"

"So I saw," nodded Dorrie. "I'm glad I happened to be pottering about. You're from St. Frank's, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Funny!" said Dorrie. "I thought I knew 'em all."

"I'm a new boy—Victor Orlando."

"By the Lord Harry!" ejaculated Dorrie. "Victor Orlando, eh? I've heard about you, sonny! You're the King of Caronia, aren't you? Oh-ho! I begin to see daylight! These blighting foreigners must be Caronians, and they were trying to nab you, eh? Elementary, my dear Watson—elementary!"

"I say, sir, you're a caution!" said Victor admiringly.

By now, St. Frank's had been reached. Dorrie shut off his engine.

"We'll glide down here," he said. "So you're the young King of Caronia, eh? Glad to have given you a hand at a useful moment, young 'un."

"You're an absolute marvel, sir—the way you come along to the rescue was wonderful!" said Victor breathlessly.

"Rot!" laughed Dorrie. "I suppose you know Handforth and Nipper and Travers and Archie and all those other fellows, eh? Pals of mine, you know."

"I don't even know who you are, sir!"

"Sorry! I forgot," grinned Dorrie. "My name's Lord Dorrimore, and——"

"What an absolute idiot I was not to guess!" yelled Victor. "Of course! The chaps have been saying lots of things about you, sir."

"I hope they were nice things."

"Rather, sir—and I ought to have known!" said Victor. "It's just the sort of thing you would do. I can't very well

explain up here, but those men are agents of my half-brother, Prince Zeno. It's the second time they've tried to kidnap me to-day. It was all my own fault, too. I was a careless ass!"

"We're all careless at times," agreed Dorrie. "Well, we'll hear more about this after we've landed."

They were getting near to the ground now, and they could see crowds of juniors staring up from the Triangle. When the 'plane gently landed in the Half Mile Meadow, there was a rush. Handforth and Nipper and Travers and lots of other Removites and Fourth-Formers were the first on the scene.

"Great Scott! It's Dorrie!" yelled Handforth excitedly.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Dorrie!"

They swarmed round, and Lord Dorrimore grinned cheerily. There was no doubting the warmth of this welcome.

"I thought I'd drop in, old sons," he said genially.

"But—but how did Orlando get in your 'plane, sir?" asked Nipper, in amazement.

"My only hat!"

"Orlando's in the passenger-seat!"

"Well I'm jiggered!"

All the fellows were astounded. It was only about half an hour ago that Orlando had glanced through the doorway of Study E. Some of the fellows had been looking for him, but none knew that he had been out. To find him in the 'plane was rather bewildering.

"Oh, we've had a bit of an adventure," explained Dorrie. "Orlando was grabbed by some blighters in a car."

"What!"

"I happened to spot 'em as I was about to land," went on Dorrie. "So I followed and I was able to make myself useful. But everything's all right now."

The juniors fairly dragged him and Victor out of the 'plane, and then they insisted upon knowing all the details. Between them, Lord Dorrimore and Victor told the story of their remarkable adventure.

"Orlando's one of the pluckiest kids alive," concluded Dorrie heartily.

The schoolboy king flushed at this praise.

"Anyway, it's been a lesson to me," he said fervently. "I was an absolute fool to go out alone. I ought to have known better. Thanks to Lord Dorrimore, I'm safe—and after this I shall be more careful."

Lord Dorrimore and Victor were escorted back to the school in triumph by the excited juniors.

"What I really came down here for was to spend the evening with you chaps, and to look up old Wilkey and old Lee," said his lordship. "I want to fix things up, if I can. What are all you chaps doing for the summer holidays?"

"Going home, sir!" went up a chorus.

"That's all right, of course, but I was

wondering if you'd care to be my guests at Dorrimore Castle?" went on Dorrie. "Nothing very exciting, admitted. Cricket and fishing and bathing and all that sort of thing. A kind of merry house party, eh? What do you say? As many of you as you like—the more the merrier!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Dorrie!"

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

"I'm not often at the castle, and it's about time the old place was livened up," continued Dorrie, grinning. "I'm going to ask some of the girls, too, so there ought to be plenty of fun. Oh, and I forgot. Umlosi will be there."

"Umlosi?" yelled Nipper. "Good egg! We haven't seen him for an awful time, sir!"

"You're a brick, Dorrie!" said Handforth delightedly. "The holidays at Dorrimore Castle will be topping! I say, what about Orlando and his pal, Maddox?"

"Bring 'em along, by all means."

"But we're practically strangers, sir!" said Victor uncomfortably.

"Rot!" replied Dorrie. "Any friend of these youngsters is a friend of mine. Eh? What's that, Nipper? You say they were going to stay here, at school, for the holidays? Oh, well, that settles it!"

"He'll be offended if you don't come, Orlando," said Nipper, as he grabbed Victor and Paul. "You, too, Maddox. And it'll be so much safer there, too. Don't you see? These giddy plotters won't have much chance of grabbing you at a big house party."

"Yes, I understand," said Victor. "Phew! I hardly know whether I'm on my head or my heels!"

"You'll get used to that," grinned Nipper. "Dorrie is always the same—he always takes our breath away. Good luck to him! He's one of the best!"

"By jove, I second that!" declared Victor fervently.

And so it was arranged. Victor Orlando, the schoolboy king, and Paul Maddox became members of Lord Dorrimore's holiday party. The St. Frank's boys were greatly excited. They had spent many holidays with the genial Dorrie as their host and, remembering those glorious times, they knew they could look forward to a ripping summer vacation.

As yet they did not realise exactly how adventurous it was to prove; how exciting. For Prince Zeno's emissaries were far from beaten, and their activities in the near future were to involve Victor Orlando and the boys of St. Frank's in the greatest adventure of their career!

THE END.

(Grand new summer holiday series featuring the Chums of St. Frank's starts next Wednesday. Nipper & Co. in Caronia, enjoying many thrilling adventures. Opening story entitled: "The Bandits of Caronia!" Don't miss it.)

Gather Round For This Week's Chin-Wag, Chums.



THE following letters from readers have been received by Edwy Searles Brooks: Reg. T. Staples** (S.E.17), Thos. Watchins (Johannesburg), Eric S. V. Ryland (Birmingham), Ralph E. Clarry (Toronto), Gladys Ball (Fort William, Ont.), Chrissie Crowie* (Stellenbosch, C.P., South Africa), H. Rupin* (Penzance), Sidney R. Carter* (Bristol), Chua Tong Hooi** (Penang, S.S., Malay Peninsula), "Old Timer" (Nottingham), Raymond Cliff (Wolverhampton), Leonard Burstow (Plymouth), "Daisy" (West Hartlepool), Irene Mary Randall* (Sandwich), John R. Fearn (Blackpool), Brian A. Greenwell (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Daniel D. Haslam** (Brooklands, Cheshire), Lily Kutnow (Bournemouth), Aubrey Kemp (Fulham), F. G. Cheesman (Sydenham), Alice Latham (St. Helens), Ernest S. Johnson (N.17), Arthur B. Turck (W.2), "Hopeful" (Belfast), F. H. Martin (Bristol), Ernest S. Holman** (Leyton, E.10), W. R. Osborne (Leicester), Joseph B. Ralph (Battersea, S.W.11), Derrick Greg. Butts (Johannesburg), G. Dodd (Birmingham), Charles A. Webb*, (Heston), Y. Barbara Taji* (Tokyo, Japan), Thomas Moore (Battersea, S.W.11), Tom Armitage (Horbury, Yorks).

It was not a mistake when it was stated in one of the stories, Eric S. V. Ryland, that Waters had been Dr. Scattlebury's butler for a great number of years. Waters came to the school with his master, and when Dr. Scattlebury left, Waters left.

The steward of the estates owned by Colonel Barclay Glenthorne, V.C., D.S.O.—Archie's father—is a short, fat gentleman, named Horace Giddy. He first appeared in the stories, Ralph Clarry, at about the same time as Archie himself.

All your questions, H. Rupin, have already been answered in very recent issues, and if such information is constantly repeated it naturally becomes tiresome to other readers.

Mr. Ulysses Piccombe, the manager of the Blue Crusaders Football Club, is as active as ever these days, F. H. Martin, and, although it is still hot weather, he is already beginning to make preparations for the coming season. He'll soon be getting his men together for hard practice. That cricket match between St. Frank's and the River House School, dealt with in "Hands Off the Head," resulted in an easy victory for the Saints.

The first headmaster of St. Frank's to be mentioned in the stories, Joseph B. Ralph, was Dr. Malcolm Stafford.

Study No. 1 is not in the East House, Derrick G. Butts, but in the Modern House. It is shared by Bob Christine, Roddy Yorke, and Charley Talmadge.

It is most unlikely, Thomas Moore, that there will be any further stories of Northestria in the Old Paper. But it is quite on the cards that the St. Frank's boys might pay further visits to other strange lands that have been visited in former series—such as that wonderful hidden country in the heart of the Sahara, and a somewhat similar mystery land up the mighty Amazon, known as the land of the White Giants. Lord Dorrimore often talks about getting up expeditions to go back to those places—and one day he may prove as good as his word.

The regular wicketkeeper of the St. Frank's Junior XI, F. G. Cheesman, is John Busterfield Boots. The wicketkeeper of the Senior XI is Harold Carlile of the Sixth. The regular goalkeepers of the Junior and Senior Elevens are, respectively, Edward Oswald Handforth and Walter Reynolds.

Readers should address all letters to The Editor, "Nelson Lee Library," Flectway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. They will secure Mr. Brooks' personal answers on any points of wide general interest concerning the St. Frank's stories.

Snub Hawkins Captured By The Phantom Foe!



The PHANTOM FOE!

Thrilling mystery and adventure serial.

By JOHN BREARLEY

The "Thunderer" Attacks!

SNUB HAWKINS fought like a demon. He was trapped in mid-air; overwhelmed by the clinging meshes of the magnetic steel net that trailed from the Phantom's airship, and into which he had blundered in the stormy darkness. Nearer with every second he was being drawn to where the two masked men waited in the air-lock to haul him into captivity; while lightning slashed the gloom and thunder rolled crashingly through the night.

Caught hopelessly on his first trip, when the fantastic craft had been at his mercy! And somewhere behind him the Kittens in the "Thunderer" and Thurston Kyle, the Night Hawk, were also waiting to attack. Rage and chagrin choked the youngster.

Writhing and struggling with all his

strength, he strove to get away; to jerk out his flare-pistol and let drive a blaze of signals. But the beautiful wings that had carried him aloft were now the chief cause of his undoing. The net clung to their metal "feathers" and steel controls with a grip he could not break; four strong arms reached down soon and grasped him fiercely. An instant later the floundering battle was over. "The Sparrowhawk" was caught by the Phantom's men—in the trap that had been destined for the Night Hawk.

With the wind shrieking triumphantly in his ears, the thunderstorm raging in spectacular accompaniment, Snub was yanked into the air-lock, net and all. A gong clanged, a hoarse voice shouted. In the hull of the airship, a switch was turned over and the door snapped-to with a bang. Then his captors wrenched him

by main force from the embraces of the net, disarmed him, hauled him upright and hustled him forward. Safe in their clutches, wing-tips trailing awkwardly on a duralinum deck, Snub was rushed through another door and thrown brutally down in a heap.

As he went down, he felt the airship tilt in a flat, gradual climb.

For a moment he lay quiet, recovering his wits and breath. He still wore the goggles of thick purple crystal, which had enabled him to spot the Phantom Foe's ship, and he stared furtively around. His first sight of the main deck and the rigid men at their stations, all masked, all in shapeless yellow cloaks, made him grunt with amazement.

A swimming violet light filled the slender hull, lending mystery and horror to the scene. Everything looked dim and ghostly. A few cloaked men, who were lounging aft, turned their goggled faces towards him in fixed and silent stares; but the others at the controls might have been carved in yellow stone for all the heed they paid. Looking up from where he lay on the deck, he saw his stalwart captors standing over him alertly, arms folded. And suddenly, out of a sliding door farther down, another tall figure appeared, striding briskly towards him.

Like the rest of the gang, he wore a mask, purple goggles, and a long cloak that concealed his figure completely. His walk, the set of his head and shoulders, however, radiated calm authority. Snub eyed him bleakly as he advanced. Was this the Phantom Foe at last, the strangest criminal of modern days, who used the fruits of modern science for his own vile ends?

The youngster's well-muscled body stiffened. Heedless of the men behind him, he sprang to his feet, crouching at bay.

His swift action had a strange effect on the tall, cloaked newcomer. It was as though he had received an unexpected blow in the face. He stood transfixed,

halting in his stride as abruptly as Snub had risen. Through the thick goggles, the lad could feel two piercing eyes glaring at him in angry and utter bewilderment; and knew that, for some reason, the man before him was filled with swift disappointment and dismay. Why, he did not know; but the fact was plain. A furious clutch landed on his shoulder and a husky voice growled at him from behind the mask.

"What's all this? Who the devil are you?" Snub was shaken backwards and forwards, helpless in the powerful grasp; while a bitter stare took in his short, sturdy figure and youthful face disgustedly. He was flung at last into the arms of the men behind, and their irate leader clenched his gloved fists ominously.

"You are not Thurston Kyle!" The harsh words were a statement, not a question; but the mortification and uneasiness behind them told Snub a lot. He grasped the situation in a flash. Instead of a boy, this man had expected to see the herculean figure of Thurston Kyle. This much-advertised raid of the Phantom's on the little towns of Porthampton and Southtown was just a bluff to lure the scientist to the scene. While the Night Hawk had been planning to trap the Phantom and his gang, the arch-criminal had been carrying out a similar scheme for his benefit!

And instead of Thurston Kyle, it was Snub who had fallen into the snare. The man in the yellow cloak rapped out a blistering oath.

"You're not Kyle!" he repeated savagely. "You're his cub assistant, I believe. By thunder—two of you. And we've caught the wrong one; a confounded kid!" Contempt and anger crackled in his voice.

Then abruptly his manner changed to a deadly smoothness. He came closer, folding his arms while he sneered down at the stocky youth.

"Yes, Kyle's assistant; I know you!" he

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

THE NIGHT HAWK, known to the world as Thurston Kyle, scientist, declares war on **THE PHANTOM FOE**, a ruthless criminal, who has commenced a reign of terror, killing, kidnapping, looting. Always he attacks amid a cloud of yellow gas, which stupefies his victims; then disappears literally into air, for he directs operations from an invisible airship. Kyle combines with

CAPTAIN FRANK ARTHURS, of Scotland Yard, to bring the criminal to book, but their plans are frustrated owing to a leakage of information. Lucius Pelton, of the Treasury, vanishes, and Arthurs immediately suspects that he is the Phantom Foe. The Night Hawk severs his connection with Scotland Yard; he intends to play a lone hand, for he also has his suspicions regarding the identity of the Phantom. The criminal announces that he intends to attack the towns of Porthampton and Southtown; Kyle goes out to meet him in his own airship, the *Thunderer*. Flying through the night on wings, his young assistant, Snub Hawkins—nicknamed "*The Sparrowhawk*"—sights the Phantom, attacks, and finds himself caught in a trap.

(Now read on.)

nodded. "Well, my young friend, you're unlucky, eh? And now you're going to tell me whereabouts your infernal master is. Quickly!"

"Am I?" Snub had recovered his hardihood by this time and he answered promptly. "Then you're unlucky, too, my old friend!"

"So?" The exclamation was ugly. The man whirled quickly and called to one of the crew, who stood before a wheel, with an electric instrument-board in front of him. "Pilot! What's your course and position?"

"Ten thousand feet, sir!" chanted the pilot mechanically. "Cruising due east—quarter-speed—midway between Portsmouth and Southtown!"

"Dead-stop, then!" A bell clanged instantly; another man pulled over a lever. Snub heard the whine of helicopters above him, rising swiftly to an almost silent whir. He gulped, for they reminded him of the Thunderer, still eagerly watching for the coming of the enemy. The gangster turned to him again.

But he no longer wasted time in useless rage. He had to act, and that swiftly. If this kid was up in the air on such a night as this, he knew enough of Thurston Kyle to be sure that the grim Night Hawk was close at hand, too. At any moment a second attack might come. In the short interval spent in giving orders, he had recovered himself. He studied Snub afresh, with cool and deadly intensity.

"Get that net out again!" he snapped to the two men. And as they jumped to it, he shook the youngster vigorously. "Whereabouts is Thurston Kyle? Quick!"

Snub laughed at him insolently. Next moment, by a lightning movement, the protective goggles were snatched from his face.

"Now tell me, you pup. Where's your chief?"

But Snub, blind as a bat, only reeled hopelessly. Everything had vanished—masked men, airship, all. A seering, stinging agony darted through his eyes; it was as though red-hot daggers were pressing through to his brain. He clapped his hands to his face with a low sob of pain; lurched dizzily and fetched up against a hard, unyielding body. Then his knuckles were forced down and the goggles replaced over his eyes.

"Like it?" purred a silky voice. "Ten minutes in this light without goggles, my lad, and you'll never see again. Whereabouts is Thurston Kyle?"

Snub panted, great tears streaming from his inflamed eyes. He saw his tormentor through a watery mist, and, mad with obstinate fury, hit out cleanly from the shoulder. So fast and unexpected was the punch that it got home, taking the masked man flush on the chin. He went down like a log, to the sound of angry snarls from his men. But no sooner had he hit the deck than he was on his feet again in a single lithe bound.

Hunching his big shoulders, he leapt at the youngster tigerishly. Snub, handicapped by his wings, tried to sidestep; a smashing blow punched the breath from his lungs, throwing him backwards, sick and winded. He bobbed his head beneath a second drive and fell groggily into a clinch, knowing, as he did so, that he was in for the hammering of a lifetime. But even as the masked man's fist was raised to knock him clean out of time, there came a terrific interruption.

It was a frantic shout of alarm; followed by the thud of running feet. A sentry, posted at the starboard window, suddenly spun round, flinging up his arms and bawling at the top of his voice. The effect of his frightened shout was instantaneous.

"Another airship, chief. An airship—closing right in against us. It—it——"

In a moment Snub was slung viciously aside. His enraged opponent left him, to run to the window, turn and rap out a string of orders. Scarcely had he done so than a noise like thousands of hammers beat upon the airship's hull in a furious, nerve-wracking tattoo. The Phantom's motor whined into life at the same instant and the great vessel streaked ahead like a fish pursued by a shark.

Breathless, bruised and beaten, Snub scrambled to his feet, cheering hoarsely. Another man, rushing past, knocked him flat again. He knew what had happened: the Thunderer had sighted the enemy at last and was closing in for a machine-gun attack from her turrets. Raising himself on one elbow, the boy whooped defiantly once more.

To find that another airship was opposed to them, instead of the lone Night Hawk they had expected, almost flung the gangsters into fatal confusion. Only the coolness of their leader and the splendid speed at which the airship leap off the mark, saved them. Another blistering salvo of lead rattled on the hull, and against the bullet-proof windows; a hoarse, coughing explosion, almost drowned in a peal of thunder, told

that the Thunderer's quick-firer was in action.

With voice, fist and boot, the tall leader of the gang pulled his men together. The airship was reeling and swaying, dipping and twisting madly as she sought to escape from the vengeful menace outside. Crr-ack—spangggg! Snub heard the quick-firer's report plainly this time and the whistle of the little shell as it missed by inches. And suddenly he saw the man whom he took to be the Phantom Foe come striding past him towards a steel lever in the wall.

Snub watched him closely, seeking an opportunity to get square. Under the lever were insulated wires running to all parts of the ship, and connected by terminals to squat, fat cylinders, whose jets were thrust through tiny loopholes. Some instinct told him what they were: the smoke-screen apparatus that had baffled Thurston Kyle in the past and enabled the Phantom's ship to escape.

In another moment, thick brown fumes would belch out into the night, covering the vessel from stem to stern. And outside, in shooting-range, was the Thunderer with—perhaps—the Night Hawk, too! Heedless of the fact that if the bandit-ship was destroyed, he would be killed, too, the hard-eyed youngster rose to his feet silently; balanced himself for a moment on the sloping deck; then, with a blind, determined rush, hurled himself at the gang-leader's shoulders.

His chunky body shot through the air. By main strength then he hauled the man back from the lever, fighting like a sturdy wildcat to give the Thunderer a few more seconds in which to slam home an accurate, crippling shot. A wild-beast growl sounded in his ear, lashing fists pounded him with bone-crushing force. On all sides, tough manhandlers rushed forward to bear a hand. Still sticking to his man like a leech, the youngster heard confused, impatient shouts: "Let 'im go, chief—sling him off." Whereupon an iron hand gripped his throat, and forced his head out and back.

"Get him, then!"

Thud!

A terrible blow slammed fairly down on Snub's head. He dropped slowly, crumpling at the knees and waist, falling down and down into a bottomless pit of mad-whirling lights that went out suddenly. The darkness of unconsciousness rushed over him.

And as he fell face down on the deck, the masked man grabbed at the smoke-screen lever with a gasp of thankfulness.

A Callous Captor!

THE first impression Snub received when he opened his eyes again after many hours was one of stiffness, and intense, heavy pain in his head. After a long dull interval, during which he lay quite still, he looked languidly around, knitting his brows in an effort to think where he was.

Above his head were the wooden struts and corrugated iron roof of a bare, untidy hut. He lay stretched out flat, on hard, naked boards, that were miserably cold. Everywhere a dismal silence reigned, and through the window before him he saw drifting wreaths of raw, white fog that intensified the stillness.

What first helped him to regain his scattered senses was the sight of his wings, of which he had been so proud. Vaguely muttering something to himself, he turned his head in another direction and saw them standing on their tips in a corner. As though an electric current had shot through him, he struggled to sit up, clasp his forehead painfully the while. A sudden rush of thoughts made his dull brain spin. Where was he?

One thing was certain: he was no longer in the Phantom's ship, rising and fleeing through the storm with the Thunderer on her tail, drenching her with lead. He had failed, then, in his attempt to prevent the switching-on of the smoke-screen apparatus! The dense brown cloud had been launched just in time, despite his mad fight. And the Thunderer's surprise attack had failed.

Snub fairly groaned, staring straight ahead with eyes for nothing but his precious wings. It dawned on him at last that his captors had neglected to tie him up. No sooner had he realised it than he made a quick, involuntary movement towards the corner.

A quiet chuckle stopped him dead.

"Awake at last, my bonny boy? Slept well, I trust?"

Snub slowly relaxed, a frozen, stupid look masking his features as always in moments of danger. Still holding his head and fighting the dizziness that threatened to overcome him, he turned in the direction of the speaker. Lounging on a stool behind him sat the masked commander of the airship, still in his hideous cloak, but without his purple goggles. The man inclined his hooded head in a derisive bow, as though waiting for him to answer.

No reply came from Snub, however, who merely looked more vacant still and leaned back against the wall of the hut. But his eyes gleamed fleetingly as the

other rose and strolled towards the folded wings. He picked them up, holding them at arm's length, while his quick eyes examined every part of their construction, from the neat battery and controls to the wonderful way each metal "feather" fitted into its companions. There was a certain reverence in the way he did so. Snub even heard him utter a little sigh of admiration.

"A genuine ornithopter!" The words, faintly muffled by the man's loose head-piece, held a distinct ring of pleasure and anticipation. "Gad, I've been experimenting with bird-flight for years, my dear Hawkins. And never solved it yet. However, I can study this idea at my leisure now; and possibly—who knows?—I may get you to explain certain points before I—er—dismiss you!"

He spoke pleasantly in a quiet, conversational drawl. But Snub kept his mouth shut tight. There was a grim meaning in the last sentence that did not escape him.

His captor, still holding the wings, strolled over and looked at him thoughtfully.

"Your master, the great Thurston Kyle, must be a clever man, eh?" he went on in the same friendly manner. "I should love to meet him. Perhaps I shall—very soon!"

Before Snub could realise it, a savage kick landed heavily in his ribs.

"And but for you, you pup, I'd have met him last night!" drawled his captor smilingly, following the kick with a clout that made the lad's wounded head spin round. The man was an utterly cold-blooded bully. The contrast between his soft speech and brutal actions was appalling.

"Now, about that airship that attacked us—and nearly got us, thanks to you again!" Another kick numbed Snub's thigh. "That, I confess, was very unexpected. In fact, it dawns upon me that, in setting a trap for your precious master, we very nearly sailed into one ourselves. It was a splendid craft, as powerful as ours; although, fortunately, not invisible as ours is—although I see you have a pair of our special goggles and presumably your friends have them, too!" Thud! "Where is that airship stationed, my dear young flyer?"

Snub, gasping under the last heavy blow and infuriated by the man's wordy taunts, growled at last between clenched teeth.

"Find out, you hog!"

Uttering a genial laugh, the man

calmly kicked him again and stood back, stroking his chin.

"Listen, my boy; and just get wise to yourself, as the Yanks say. We dodged your airship last night and Thurston Kyle, too. You are at present a captive in our headquarters. That headquarters is an island, with twenty miles of very rough sea between us and the nearest mainland. There are over thirty men here, any of whom would willingly flog you to death if I give the word. Or practise a few other little tricks, that would make flogging seem pleasant in contrast. Do I make myself clear?"

A dogged stare answered him.

"Quite so. Now, unless you want me to hand you over to the men, you'll answer my questions. See? For instance, exactly how much does Thurston Kyle know about us? Also, as he has left his Hampstead house, where is he? And, most of all, where is his airship stationed?"

Snub, bracing his shoulders against the wall, gave a mirthless grin, and all the obstinacy of his nature gleamed in his grey-green eyes. He had had time to recover. When he answered eventually he did so with cool, cutting deliberation.

"Mr. Phantom Foe, I wouldn't tell you the day of the week, you cur. Do I look the blabbing sort? Bring in the rotten scuts you've pinched from gaol to do your dirty work; bring who you thunderin' well please, and let 'em enjoy themselves. Whatever happens to me, you and your gang are due to get it in the neck mighty soon. And I hope it keeps fine for you, you comic-looking Yellow Peril!"

His captor heard him out in a sort of daze. No one—not even the toughest crook in the gang—had ever spoken to him like that before. Snub saw the muscular body stiffen with blind passion under the yellow cloak; saw two heavy fists clenched slowly into balls of steel. "This is where I get it bad!" he thought sullenly. And he was right.

When the furious beating was over, he sprawled on the floor, limp and semi-conscious, blinking through half-closed eyes and clutching at the boards beneath him, as though to keep them from spinning away. As in a dream, he saw his attacker pick up the wings and saunter to the door. There, with one hand on the latch, he paused and looked back.

"You called me the Phantom Foe just now, I believe. As it happens, I have the honour to be merely his lieutenant. The Phantom was not on the airship last night. But he'll be on his way here soon. And then if you don't talk, my stubborn Hawkins—may the devil help you!"

The door opened, letting in a rush of cold fog. When Snub looked dizzily again, the tall man had gone. He was alone; imprisoned on the Phantom's headquarters till the dread chief himself arrived.

The Telephone Message!

AT the moment when Snub Hawkins was receiving the merciless thrashing from the Phantom Foe's lieutenant, on the gang's island-lair off the wild Hebrides, a car drew up at Scotland Yard, London. Two men descended from it—Chief Detective-inspector Lennard and Captain Frank Arthurs, once of the Canadian Secret Service.

Both men were dog-tired, stiff and hungry. It was four o'clock in the morning and they had been up all night, on the alert among the defenders of Portsmouth and Southtown.

Arrived in their room, Arthurs clamped a cigar between his strong white teeth and stood staring out of the window, a curiously strained expression in his eyes, like that of a man pondering some weird puzzle.

One thing only was bringing Lennard and Arthurs comfort that morning: the Phantom Foe had not made good his threat to raid Portsmouth and Southtown. Knowing nothing of Thurston Kyle's activities, they, like most others, put the fact down to the tremendous storm which must have prevented the criminal's airship flying.

Yet it was cold enough comfort. To guard the threatened towns, anti-aircraft batteries had been installed and a flotilla of warships stationed off-shore—all of which meant tension and expense. And there was no telling now when the Phantom would carry out his promise; perhaps to-night, to-morrow night, any time. The one thing certain was that he would carry it out. Lennard felt as though he was crouching beneath a vast, menacing shadow.

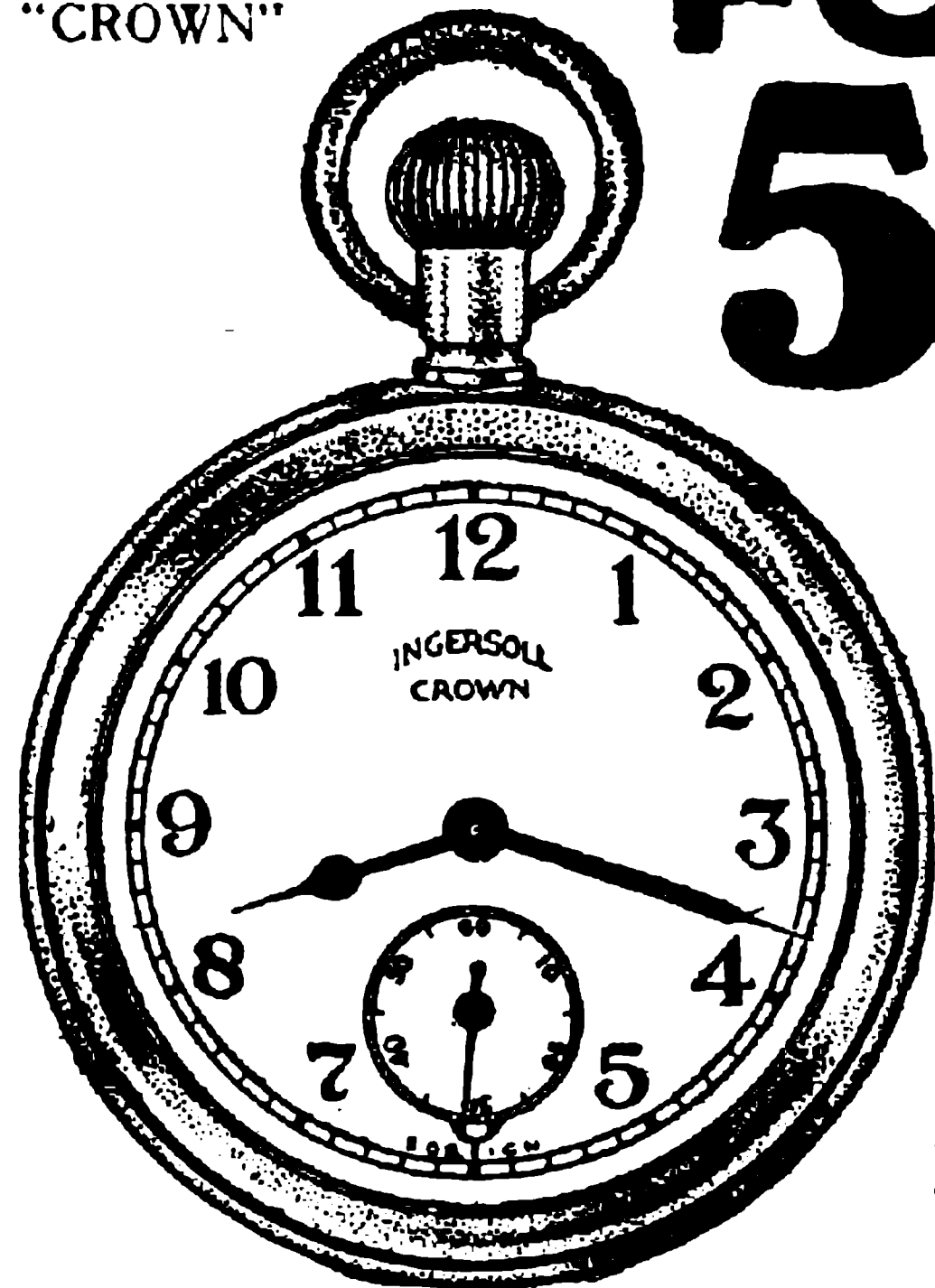
Also, his own police career, and that of Arthurs', too, was in danger: for both had been warned in no uncertain manner by high authorities that something must be done very soon to smash up this brooding peril. But what? They had tried everything and everything had failed!

The Phantom's espionage on the Yard was uncanny. Always he seemed to have full knowledge of their plans, and laughed at their defences with his airship and yellow gas. Lennard, a sturdy bulldog of a man, uttered a sound suspiciously like a groan. Then a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he looked up to see Arthurs frowning down on him.

(Continued on next page.)

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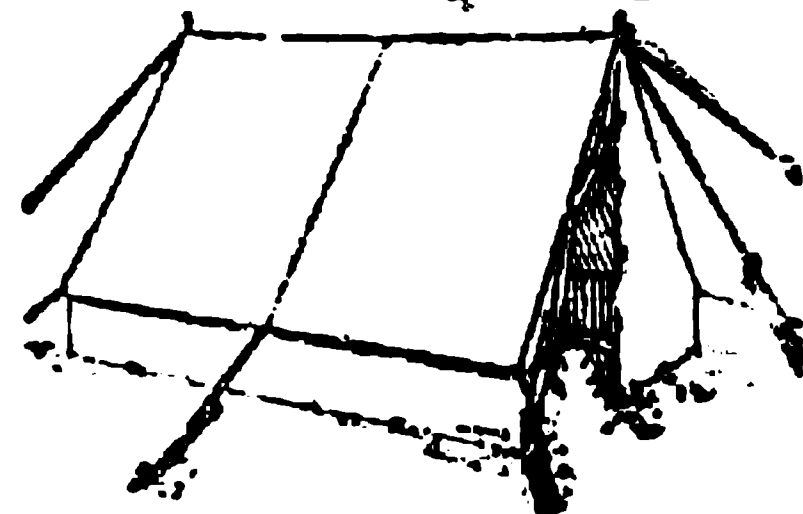
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The Phantom Foe!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Guess you're all-in, old man!" nodded the Canadian sympathetically. "Suppose you beat it for breakfast and bed? There's nothing more we can do now—I'll stay and get out the report for Sir Hugh when he comes. Then I'll trail home likewise!"

Lennard began a few conscientious protests, but the younger man over-rode them. Disconsolately Lennard went, with a gruff word of thanks. A few minutes after he had gone, Arthurs rang for his sergeant.

"Any 'phone calls come for me, Baker?" The strained expression in his eyes grew deeper, and he scowled as the sergeant shook his head.

"No, sir, none. Shall I make sure and ask the operator——?"

He stopped. At that moment, as if in answer, the sharp thrill of the 'phone bell rang out. Arthurs grabbed the instrument and jerked his head curtly towards the door.

"All right, Baker, you can get. I'll ring if I want you!" As soon as he was alone, he spoke tensely. "Hallo? Captain Arthurs speaking. What——?"

"Trunk-call for you, sir!" came the operator's voice; and Arthurs grip tightened on the 'phone.

"Uh-huh. Put 'em through, then, and get off the line. Hallo-o?"

There was a click, and this time another voice came to him, very faintly

but rapidly. So guarded were the speaker's words that they would have conveyed nothing to any curious listener-in. But their effect on Arthurs was electrifying.

His strong jaw hardened and his eyes narrowed to eager, pensive slits. He listened to the cryptic message without interruption save, once, a disgusted snort and when his cautious caller had finished, jerked out a single crisp answer.

"Right. I'll start now. Ring off!"

Replacing the receiver, he stood for a moment thinking. His face had become an expressionless mask. Suddenly he flung himself down at his desk, dashed off a note and sealed it. Then he rang sharply for Sergeant Baker again.

"Sergeant, this is for the Commissioner. Official. See that he gets it before you go off duty. I'm away on a job now—indefinitely!"

The officer took the note stolidly.

"Very good, sir. But if anyone special asks where you are?" he hinted.

Arthurs, struggling into his motoring coat, stopped and smiled a dour, sardonic and mirthless quirk of the lips.

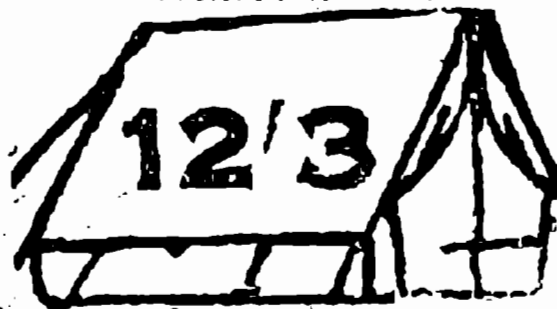
"Tell 'em I'm payin' a friendly visit to the Phantom Foe's gang!" was the reply that staggered Sergeant Baker completely. "And I don't know when I'll be back!"

(Who is the mysterious Phantom Foe? Next week's smashing instalment tells you—make sure you don't miss reading it chums.)

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