

ST. FRANK'S BOYS FIGHT REVOLUTIONARIES!

THE NELSON LEE

LIBRARY OF SCHOOL STORIES

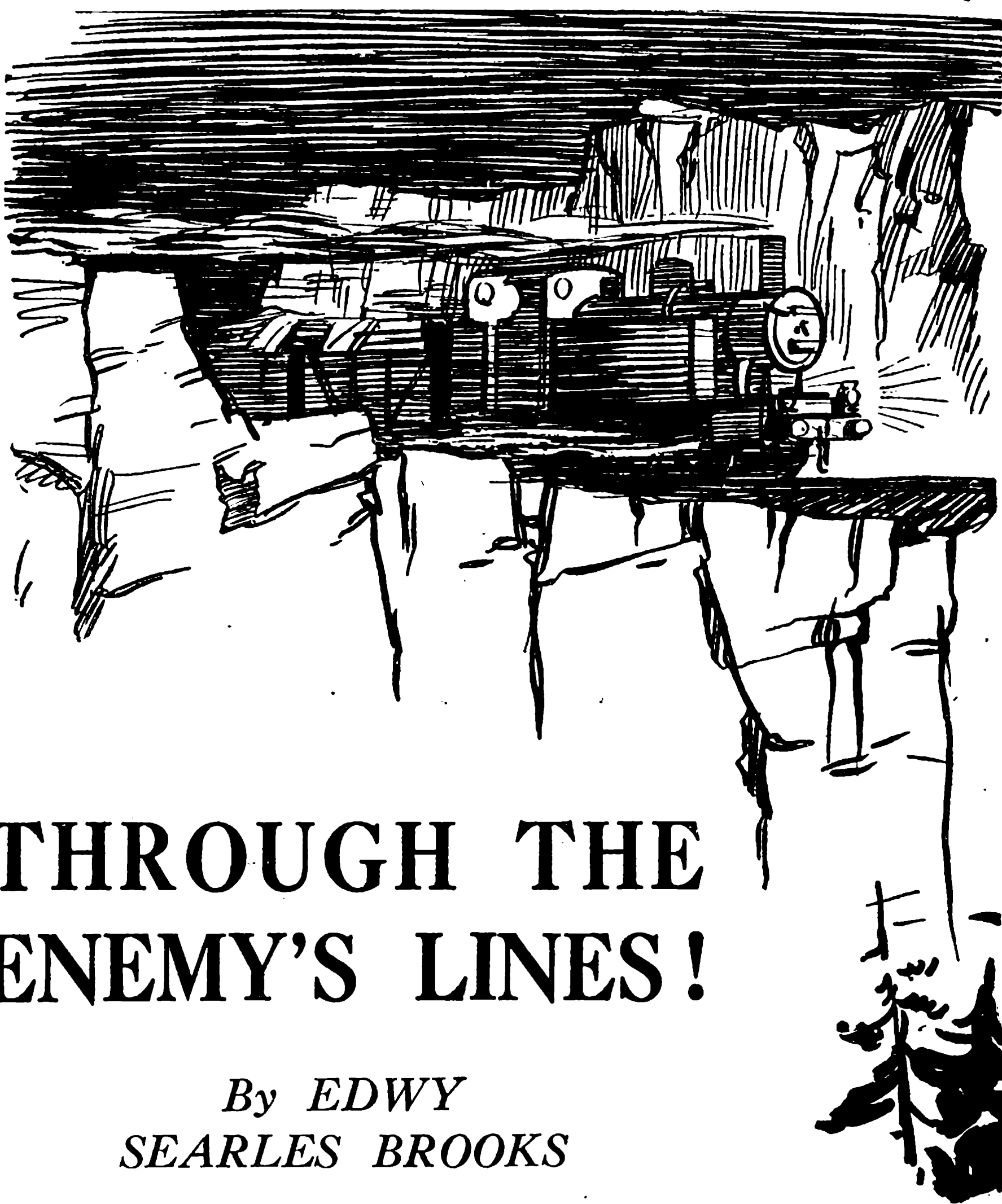
2d



**CRASHING
TO
FREEDOM!**

A smashing long schoolboy adventure yarn of the chums of St. Frank's on holiday abroad. Full of action and thrills—complete in this issue.
New Series No. 83. OUT ON WEDNESDAY. August 22nd, 1931.

Revolution in Caronia! Rebel Forces Sweep Towards Capital!



THROUGH THE ENEMY'S LINES!

By *EDWY*
SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER 1.

Prisoners of the Pass!

LISTEN!" said Nipper tensely. The silence of the night, broken only by the breathlessly excited murmurings of the St. Frank's boys and Moor View girls, was suddenly disturbed by a new sound—menacing. Far, far above, among the lofty rocks of the pass, a cracking

and grinding broke out, developing into a thunderous roar.

"Back, everybody!" shouted Nelson Lee urgently. "Run for your lives. Dorrie, look after those girls."

"I'm doing it," snapped Lord Dorrimore.

Through the night, made lurid by the blazing petrol wagon on the trestle bridge, the munition train hurtled to inevitable disaster! At all costs the rebel Prince Zeno had to prevent King Victor and the St. Frank's party reaching the capital!

As the thundering roar increased in intensity the whole party raced for safety. They ran down the pass for their very lives, and they were only just in the nick of time. The spot

Smashing Climax to Adventures of St. Frank's Party Abroad!



Tennett =
Brookes

they had just vacated was bombarded by an intensive shower of boulders and rocks, which came hurtling down from the heights. The noise was deafening, and the pass was filled with volumes of choking dust.

"Great Scott! What was it?" gasped Handforth. "Another explosion?"

"No; only an avalanche," said Nelson Lee, relieved to find that every member of the

party had escaped unscathed. "There might be more, too. The sooner we can get out of this pass, the better."

"A not unfruity suggestion," murmured Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, life is getting too dashed hectic, what?"

Nelson Lee was looking anxiously upwards at the crags. The pass was very narrow here; the rocks rose sheer for hundreds of feet on

either side, and the slit in the mountain—which was actually the pass—was really little more than a crevice. The stars were gleaming and twinkling far overhead.

"Expecting more trouble?" asked Lord Dorrimore gently.

"It's quite possible, old man," replied Nelson Lee. "That explosion rocked this mountain pass like an earthquake, and at any moment there might be another avalanche. We're in considerable danger here."

He turned briskly to the shadowy figures near by.

"Before we discuss our position, or make any plans for the immediate future, follow me—all of you," he went on, raising his voice and speaking with crisp decision. "There may be some more falls of rock, and we don't want to be buried alive. So come on!"

"We'll follow you, sir!" went up an eager chorus.

"Wau! Do thou lead, Umtagati," came the low, rumbling voice of Umlosi. "I like not this hole in the mountains, where a man has no space for fighting, and where the rocks themselves are his enemies."

For the party to escape, as it had intended, was impossible; there was no exit in the direction the party desired to go. Thousands of tons of rock barred the way.

But they could retreat—they could return to the gorge from which they had recently escaped.

Crash!

A large jagged chunk of rock dropped within a foot or two of Nipper, splintering to fragments with a sound like that of a pistol shot. Proof, indeed, of the danger.

"We'd better run," muttered somebody.

There was no panic, but the danger was very real. Further proof of this came less than two minutes later, after the fugitives had hastened into a wider section of the pass. From their rear came another rumbling roar, like that of an earthquake. A tumultuous crashing followed.

"We were none too soon," growled Dorrie, with satisfaction. "By the Lord Harry! I shouldn't have thought of those avalanches, Lee."

"They're always a danger," said Nelson Lee. "The explosion shook the whole pass, and rocks have been loosened by the ton."

They hurried on, and they breathed more freely when they emerged from the pass, and hurried down the rocky, sloping ground into the wide expanse of the fertile gorge.

Somewhere in the gorge Prince Zeno of Kazatova was probably gloating over the astute manner in which he had prevented the escape of the English party. And Miklos Keiff, the bandit chief, was there, too, with a great many of his men.

By returning to the gorge, therefore, the fugitives were virtually falling out of the frying-pan into the fire. However, it was the only thing to do since death itself lurked in the pass.

A few lights, ruddy and flickering, were gleaming in the distance; bonfires or torches. The enemy was active. But Nelson Lee neither referred to those lights nor gave them more than a brief glance. He led the way towards a dense belt of woodland which loomed blackly ahead. And he urged every member of the party to maintain an absolute silence. Not even a whisper was allowed.

The boys and girls obeyed—intensely mystified. Even Lord Dorrimore was puzzled by Nelson Lee's move. But he knew that Lee would explain in his own time; and he knew, moreover, that there was an excellent reason for the great detective's haste and urge for silence.

These were perilous times—and the greatest peril of all was looming.

REVOLUTION!

An ugly enough word. Yet there could be little doubt that the prosperous kingdom of Caronia, in Central Europe, was on the brink of revolution.

In Galvarad, the capital, and in most of the important towns and industrial areas, there was no hint of the coming upheaval. The majority of the people had complete confidence in the Grand Duke Rudolph, who, by his brilliant statesmanship had taken less than five years to put Caronia definitely on the map.

As Regent of this little country, the grand duke had supreme power. He believed that his drastic changes were for the good of the people; and although the people had not taken kindly to these changes at first, time was proving that the grand duke was right.

It was mainly in the province of Kazatova that the populace bitterly resented the modernisation of the country; it was here that the seeds of revolution had been sown.

Kazatova, for the most part, was populated by Slavonic tribes—wild, gipsy-like people of very different blood from the other Caronians. They had always been a race apart from their countrymen of the plains. Under the fiery leadership of Miklos Keiff, the "King of the Mountains," they were ripe for revolution. Miklos Keiff himself was dominated by Prince Zeno, the man who aimed to seize the Caronian throne.

Young King Victor—who could not rule until he came of age—was a St. Frank's Removite. He was convinced that his uncle, the Grand Duke Rudolph, was the greatest man that Caronia had ever known. Prince Zeno was his half-brother, and all this present trouble was directly traceable to Zeno's mad desire for power.

It was Zeno who had caused Victor to be kidnapped from Lord Dorrimore's house party in England; it was Zeno who had held Victor prisoner, threatening death unless the grand duke surrendered his power. At first Zeno had aimed at a bloodless revolution. But as things were going, it now seemed impossible that he could achieve his original object.

Assisted by many other plotters, Zeno was financing the revolution; Miklos Keiff and his "bandit army" were provided with modern equipment of war. The great explosion was about to burst upon the little country.

And the St. Frank's boys and Moor View girls, who had come out as ordinary tourists—but with the secret object of rescuing King Victor—were in the thick of it.

Thanks to Nelson Lee, King Victor had been snatched away from the Grod Valley, which was Miklos Keiff's mountain stronghold, where he had been actively training his revolutionary army. But before Lee and his party could escape from the outer gorge, which was the only route to safety, the enemy had become aware of their flight.

And the pass had been blown up, blocking it completely, and imprisoning them within the mountains.

"IT'S an infernal pity we couldn't get through that pass before they twigged our game," said Lord Dorrimore regretfully. "Another hour or two at the most, would have seen us safely on the way to Nid. The railway's there, and we could have grabbed a train——"

"It's not like you, Dorrie, to be pessimistic," interrupted Nelson Lee. "In any case, it's no good discussing what might have been. We've got to face the situation as it is, and do the best we can for our own safety."

The party had reached the dense tract of woodland. They had all penetrated into the trees, and now they were practically swallowed up by the dense undergrowth. In a small clearing, where only a gleam or two of the twinkling stars could be seen, Nelson Lee had called a halt.

"But what *can* we do, guv'nor?" asked Nipper wonderingly. "There's no escape from this gorge now. Those rotters have dished us completely. And as soon as daylight comes they'll search, and we shall be found."

"Here's another pessimist!" said Lee dryly.

"No, sir, I don't mean that!" protested Nipper. "But the whole thing seems so mad to me. Either Miklos Keiff went out of his mind with rage, or somebody blundered."

"You mean that explosion in the pass?" asked Dorrie gruffly. "'Pon my word, Lee, it does seem a bit rummy."

They all recalled that dreadful explosion with an involuntary shiver. Just as they had begun to feel themselves safely out of the gorge, the explosion had come. A blinding flash, a deafening, devastating report—and the blocking of the pass.

Only by a miracle had they been saved. For had they been two hundred yards farther into the pass at the moment of the explosion they would certainly have been buried alive—crushed to instant death by the thousands of tons of falling rock. Buried so that no trace of them remained. It had been the narrowest of narrow escapes.

"My half-brother will pay!" said young King Victor quietly. "Perhaps he didn't try to kill us, but he didn't care whether we died or not! Oh, he'll be punished!"

"Easy, old man," murmured Nipper.

"I mean it!" said Victor fiercely. "I can understand his wanting to kill me, because I'm an obstacle in his path to the throne. But you fellows and Lord Dorrimore, and Mr. Lee and Umlosi, and all these girls—you're strangers in my country. And Zeno blows up that pass, knowing that we're in it. It was a murderous, criminal thing to do!"

"Your half-brother is reckless," said Nelson Lee. "His plans have miscarried so badly that he is in a state of desperation. And desperate men count human life cheaply. However, the situation may not be quite so grave as it appears."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"There is really no reason why we should be discovered by the enemy," replied Nelson Lee. "Neither is there any need why we should remain here, trapped in the mountains."

Lord Dorrimore rubbed his chin, and was reminded of the fact that he needed a shave.

"I don't get the hang of this," he said bluntly. "We're all bottled up, aren't we? And that's [the crazy part of it. By blowing up the pass and preventing our escape, Zeno has imprisoned himself, too. Not only himself, but Miklos Keiff and his entire gipsy army. It seems insane!"]

"So insane, Dorrie, that another explanation is obvious," said Nelson Lee grimly. "Man alive, isn't it perfectly plain? We've always believed that that pass was the only exit from this gorge. But we were wrong—we must have been wrong! There's another pass!"

CHAPTER 2.

Nelson Lee's Strategy!

EVERYBODY was excited.

"Another pass!" ejaculated Nipper. "But how do you know, sir? Have you seen it? Do you know where——"

"I haven't seen it, and I haven't the faintest idea where it is," interrupted Lee.

"But there's no doubt that there is a second exit. Frantic as Prince Zeno was to prevent our escape, he would not have been fool enough to enclose himself in his own trap."

"That's true," admitted Dorrie, nodding.

"There was Keiff, too; and Keiff would not have given the order for that explosion unless he had a second string to his bow," continued Lee. "Keiff, in fact, is the more important man of the two. These mountains are Miklos Keiff's own domain; his tribe is all-powerful. In the Grod Valley his main forces have been secretly gathering. And I think we can take it for granted that this gorge is now rapidly filling with the enemy."

"Don't you think they'll search for us, sir?" asked Travers.

"I doubt it," replied Lee. "Anyhow, I am counting on the assumption that they won't search too well. But if the worse comes to the worst we'll put up a good fight."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"We girls will do our bit, too," said Irene Manners breathlessly.

"War! Are we cowards to hide in the forests?" asked Umlosi, almost plaintively. "What is this plan, N'Kose? Why do we linger? Rather let us emerge into the open, my master, and fight as men!"

"I'm all for it, old boy, but it wouldn't be fair to the young 'uns," replied Dorrie. "Besides, our mutual pal, Umtagati—he of the wizard-like ways—has got something else up his sleeve. Leave everything to him, and we shall come out of this mess on top."

"To go out to fight, Umlosi, would be madness," said Lee quietly.

"Are my ears bewitched, that I hear such words from thy lips, Umtagati?" asked Umlosi, in amazement. "Thou speakest thus! Thou, the mighty warrior of a thousand triumphant battles!"

"This would be one battle, Umlosi, which would not be triumphant—if we were foolish enough to seek the enemy," said Nelson Lee. "No, old friend; there are times when strategy can be of greater service than battle. We are armed, perhaps, but we are no match for these crack-shot mountaineers."

"You're not including me, I hope?" asked Dorrie gruffly.

"I am thinking mainly of the boys and girls," replied Lee. "But you and I, Dorrie, come into that category, too. Miklos Keiff and his men were born in these mountains, bred in them. They are mountain fighters, knowing every part of the country. And you mustn't forget that that explosion was, to all intents and purposes, the signal for the commencement of hostilities. It is war now, Dorrie—grim, relentless war."

"You're right, of course," admitted Lord Dorrimore.

"If we went out into the open, and invited a fight with Keiff and his men, we should not

be merely surrounded and captured," continued Lee. "We should be shot down, with never a chance of victory. In the name of common-sense, Dorrie, we must be cautious, we must employ strategy."

"What's at the back of your mind?" asked Dorrie curiously.

"Well, before we talk any further, we'll make another move," replied Nelson Lee. "Are you all ready? Follow me, then. And, remember, be as silent as you can!"

Nelson Lee had been a fugitive in this gorge some days earlier, and he knew many of its secrets. He led the way, now, through the wood, and presently Dorrie and the boys and girls were astonished to find themselves up against a great rocky cliff. They had thought that they were right out in the open; but Lee had doubled back.

The forest grew right up to the cliff-face; and Nelson Lee was soon plunging into a black opening in the rocks. It was another of the caverns which abounded in the gorge. But this one was concealed by the screening trees.

Not until every member of the party had penetrated deeply into the cavern did Lee feel easy in mind.

"Well, we're comparatively safe here," he said. "You and I, Dorrie, could hold this cave entrance against a thousand men."

"I believe you," said his lordship, peering out of the narrow exit. "By gad! How on earth did you know of this cave, Lee? Its entrance is completely screened by the wood."

"I found it some days ago, when I was hiding from Keiff's men," replied Lee. "I don't think there's anything secret about it. There must be scores of these Kazatovians who know of its existence. But that's not the point. It is very unlikely that the enemy will think of looking here."

"I am not sure that I agree," said Dorrie. "When they don't find us in the open, they'll start searching——"

"Perhaps they won't search at all."

"Why not?"

"Because it is highly probable that they will have come to another conclusion," said Lee quietly. "There was a very definite idea at the back of my mind when I advised an immediate retreat from the pass. I think we managed it without being observed."

"In other words, as far as the enemy is concerned, we've just vanished into thin air, eh?" asked Dorrie. "You mean that our disappearance will be a complete mystery?"

"I mean that our disappearance will have a perfectly obvious explanation."

"What on earth——"

"The explosion, Dorrie," said Lee significantly.

"Eh? By gad! You mean——"

"I mean that Miklos Keiff or Prince Zeno will have sent men to the pass without a minute's loss of time," said Nelson Lee.

Nipper started back in alarm as a chunk of rock dropped within a foot or two of him, fragments flying in all directions!



"Those men, finding no trace of us, will jump to the conclusion that we have all been killed. Don't you understand? They'll think that we were buried alive by those thousands of tons of falling rock."

"I say, sir, that's a brilliant wheeze," said Nipper cagerly.

"Rather!" said Handforth. "If the enemy thinks we're all dead, there won't be any search!"

"That is just what I am hoping for," said Nelson Lee, nodding.

"And by lying low, and saying nothing, we shall have the advantage," said Dorrie, grasping the possibilities. "You brainy old

fox! So that's the wheeze! Here we are, temporarily safe, and we can watch the enemy, locate their movements, and find out just where the secret pass is."

"We can do more than that," replied Nelson Lee. "We can use that pass ourselves—if we have even ordinary luck. We shall have a big advantage, too—for we can be quite certain that Prince Zeno will be thrown into something like a panic by the supposed death of King Victor. It's any odds that he'll act precipitately—rashly."

"I say, sir, that's right!" said Victor Orlando. "And if we can only get out of here safely we shall hold the trump card. I mean, if I turn up suddenly, unexpectedly, just when

things are looking easy for Prince Zeno—Well, anything might happen!"

"Yet we mustn't forget that we're in a nasty predicament," said Lee warningly. "We must not neglect any precaution. As things are likely to be quiet for the rest of the night, you boys and girls had better get some rest. You, too, Dorrie. Sleep, if possible. Heaven alone knows what lies ahead of us; but we can be quite certain that there will be plenty of excitement, and perhaps danger. We want to be ready—clear-brained and generally refreshed."

It was sound advice; and soon the boys and girls, in two different groups, were trying to get to sleep on either side of the black cavern. But sleep was not so easy. Their minds were very active.

"By George! I'd love to be out there now!" muttered Handforth enviously. "I'd give quids to see Prince Zeno's face!"

"When he thinks that we're all dead?" murmured Church.

"Yes!"

"It'll be worth a lot more to see his face when he discovers that we're all alive!" said McClure, with a chuckle. "Later, I mean—after we're all out of this mess."

"We're not out of it yet," muttered Jimmy Potts.

"But we will be," declared Handforth, with confidence; "with Mr. Lee leading us. He always does the right thing—and his judgment is sound."

"Dorrie's all right—but he's too reckless and impetuous," said Nipper, in a low voice. "He doesn't think things out like the gov'nor. This affair will turn out all right in the end—and, what's more, Prince Zeno will be squashed and the revolution squashed with him."

NEAR the cavern entrance, Lord Dorrimore felt a hand suddenly placed on his arm.

"Not now, old man," came Nelson Lee's whisper.

"Eh?"

"It wouldn't be wise."

"How in the name of wonder did you know that I was taking out a cigarette?" demanded Lord Dorrimore. "Can you see in the dark, or what? Sometimes, Lee, you're positively uncanny!"

Nelson Lee laughed.

"I have ears," he explained dryly.

"Yes, but I didn't make a sound," protested his lordship. "I had only just opened my case."

"That case of yours is an excellent one—solid gold, I believe—but the hinge requires a little attention," murmured Lee. "I have noticed that it gives a faint sort of click. Better not smoke, Dorrie. We can't be too careful."

They went to the entrance, where Umlosi, like a black shadow, was silently on guard.

Here they were out of earshot of the boys and girls.

"Of course, Dorrie, I made the best of it in the hearing of the youngsters," whispered Nelson Lee. "But there's no denying that we're in a nasty fix. I'm convinced that there's another exit from this gorge; but as we cannot escape in advance of Miklos Keiff's army, we shall have to follow in its wake. And that's infernally unpleasant."

"You mean that the revolution will have started before we can get out?"

"Something like that," replied Lee. "But it's best to face these things squarely. It would be plain suicide for us to reveal ourselves to the enemy—after what has happened. They would destroy us ruthlessly. Zeno is reckless now—and Keiff has been after our blood ever since we came into these mountains. One word from Zeno, and he will take quite a relish in polishing us off."

"Does that mean we shan't be in the fighting at all?" asked his lordship gruffly.

"Oh, no!" came Nelson Lee's grim reply. "I'd very much like to have a smack at His Highness—or, alternatively, at the burly Mr. Keiff. But there's a time and a place for everything, Dorrie. This gorge is not the place, neither is this night the time. At a rough estimate, the bandits outnumber us by an average of two hundred to one. And that estimate of their numbers might be very far off the mark. I know that both you and Umlosi are spoiling for a fight; but this wouldn't be a fight at all. You'd have a hectic ten minutes, and then you'd both start off on your journey into the next world."

"Well, you always know best, so I'll say no more," grunted Dorrie. "After all, there are the young 'uns to consider. We can't leave them in the lurch."

"Wise words, O N'Kose," rumbled Umlosi. "The young white masters and the young maidens must be protected. Were we to seek battle we must, of necessity, venture forth into the open. And methinks our duty lies here."

"Yet we must acquaint ourselves with the enemy's movements, old friend," murmured Nelson Lee. "Therefore, I shall go forth. There is scouting to be done."

"Hold on!" said Lord Dorrimore suspiciously. "Where do I come in?"

"Perhaps you'd better accompany me, Dorrie," replied Lee. "Umlosi will remain on guard at this cave entrance. We can trust him to protect it well, and to give us a warning in case of trouble."

A minute later Nelson Lee and Dorrie were silently slipping off through the trees. With Umlosi on guard, neither of them felt anxious. After a while Lee paused, and pointed upwards.

"You can't see very well now, but I've had a look at this place in daylight," he murmured. "Do you see past the tree-tops, Dorrie?"

"You mean the cliff up there?"

"Yes."

"What of it?"

"By climbing one of those trees, it is possible to reach a lofty ledge," said Lee softly. "From that ledge, one can climb higher, to a crevice which forms a natural eyrie. From that spot, the greater part of the gorge can be watched—and the watcher is perfectly screened by the rocks."

"By gad! You've thought it all out!"

"When daylight comes, we must not allow ourselves to be seen," continued Lee. "These bandits are keen-eyed. We mustn't give them half a chance, Dorrie. To-morrow, no doubt, some big movements will be in progress. And from that eyrie we can watch without danger of being seen."

Emerging from the belt of trees, they found the gorge full of movement. Overhead the stars were twinkling in their myriads, and a faint, cooling breeze blew down from the mountains. Lights were gleaming from one end of the gorge to the other. Some of these lights were given by bonfires; others by torches, carried by groups of men.

All along the dusty roads, horsemen were in evidence. Some were galloping out of the pass—that pass which had so nearly proved a death-trap for the English party, and which was now blocked.

On the farther side of the gorge intensive movements were apparent. Men were pouring in continuously—arriving from the Grod Valley. Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore could not help being impressed as they stood in the shadows, watching this gloomy panorama. There was very little that they could definitely see, but much they could guess.

"By the Lord Harry! You were right, old man!" whispered Dorrie. "The place is fairly swarming with the beggars! It would be plain suicide for us to invite a scrap."

"Our only hope lies in one direction," murmured Lee. "If Zeno and Keiff take it for granted that we have all been killed, we shall be fairly safe. But if this gorge is searched"—he shrugged—"they'll find us," he added briefly. "That cavern is no secret, and it will probably be one of the first places that the brutes will look into. We can only hope that they'll believe us dead."

"If the worse comes to the worst, they'll have all their work cut out to collar us," said Lord Dorrimore philosophically. "That cavern is a good refuge." He yawned. "Well, there's nothing much we can do to-night, is there? Wouldn't it be a good idea if we copied the example of the boys and girls, and obtained some sleep? What do you say?"

"Once in a blue moon, Dorrie, you come out with a really brainy suggestion," replied Lee dryly. "Let's go!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Passing of Miklos Keiff's Army!

PRINCE ZENO of Kazatova was haggard with anxiety.

He sat his horse like a tired man; his shoulders drooped, and his whole bearing was one of weariness. A very different man, this, from the handsome, dashing, upright prince who had but recently ridden into the mountains.

With him rode Miklos Keiff, the so-called "uncrowned king" of this region. Keiff was a man of brawn and muscle; a great animal of a man, with a full beard and unkempt hair. Dressed in the picturesque garb of the wild country he ruled, he looked a typical bandit chief.

"By St. Peter!" he growled suddenly. "We are but wasting time, your Highness."

"Yet we must be absolutely certain," said Prince Zeno huskily. "We can leave nothing to chance, Keiff."

They were riding out of the pass, and Zeno was still awed by the spectacle which he had recently gazed upon. That pass, through which he himself had ridden not many hours earlier, was completely blocked. Millions of tons of rock had crashed down. For a distance of three or four hundred yards the pass was no more. The mountain itself had collapsed.

"I can't understand it," muttered Zeno. "Those English people were escaping from me, Keiff; and you told me that the pass was mined, and that a signal from you would be sufficient. You gave that signal."

"It was your wish, Excellency, that the foreigners should not escape," growled Miklos Keiff. "Neither have they escaped. Was I to know that the mountain itself would crash?"

"King Victor was with those English people," said the prince dully. "Don't you understand, Keiff? King Victor himself—he was there!"

Miklos Keiff shrugged.

"Is not that all to the good, your Highness?" he asked, with a touch of irony. "Is it not your wish to mount the throne of Caronia?"

"But not in that way, my friend—not in that way," muttered Prince Zeno, with a shiver.

The great Miklos Keiff gave his companion an almost contemptuous glance. They rode on in silence; and presently they emerged from the wide exit of the pass, and descended along the dusty, gritty road into the gorge. Here men were riding up from all directions. And their reports were identical. No matter where they searched, they had found no traces of the English party.

Prince Zeno said little. He heard no more than he had expected. Already he had come to the obvious conclusion.

Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore and the boys and girls had been in the pass at the moment of cataclysm, and now they had vanished. A great length of the pass was buried beneath the fallen rocks. It seemed a very simple example of two and two making four.

"By Heaven!" muttered Zeno, with a shudder. "I did not mean them to die like that, Keiff!"

"Yet their death was merciful," said the bandit chief, with an indifferent shrug. "They knew nothing, your Highness. It was swift—it was painless. And no trace is left!"

The prince looked at him sharply.

"You are sure of that?" he asked.

"But yes, your Highness," replied Miklos Keiff. "Let there be a hundred years search, and still there will be no trace! For are not the English intruders—ay, and King Victor, too—buried beneath a mass of rock which will be their tomb for all time?"

TWO hours later, in Miklos Keiff's own quaint house in this gorge, Prince Zeno was looking better. He sat at a rough table, and food and wine—particularly wine—had brought colour to his cheeks, and he was looking less haggard.

"Perhaps it was all for the best, Keiff," he said, lighting a cigarette. "Yes, you think so?"

Keiff, who sat in the other side of the table, laughed.

"What is done, is done," he replied. "Of what use to regret? There are other matters which need our attention, your Highness. Already I have sent orders into the Grod Valley, and by dawn my men will be marching here in their thousands."

"Yes, we must strike," said Prince Zeno, a sudden fire coming into his eyes. "It is now or never, Keiff. We must march to Nid with the dawn."

"There will be no trouble in Nid," said the bandit chief. "For years the town has been under my control, and the people will offer no resistance. Even in the city of Malva we shall gain an easy victory. Do not think, your Highness, that I am afraid of the Grand Duke's soldiers." He snapped his fingers. "I and my men are fighters, and we have always dreamed of this day."

"It will be—revolution," said Zeno grimly. "Warfare—bloodshed. With young King Victor dead, I can no longer make threats to the Grand Duke Rudolph. Victor was my hostage, and by threatening his death, I held the advantage. But that is over now, Keiff."

"The Grand Duke does not know of the boy's death," said Keiff cunningly. "How can he know? Is not our campaign all prepared? You will bring off the great bluff, whilst I and my men strike terror into the insipid fools who inhabit the plains. Bah! They are not

fighters, those men of the plains. We shall sweep all before us as we advance."

Zeno rose from the table, and paced up and down, smoking hard.

"Once Malva is taken, the rest ought to be fairly easy," he said. "We can advance straight down upon Galvarad itself. The Grand Duke will never allow us to threaten the capital. He will capitulate long before then. It will be a swift revolution, Keiff. Success will be ours within a few days."

"Perhaps within a few hours," said Miklos Keiff. "But there must be no delay. Now that Victor is dead we spring the surprise, yes?"

"By Heaven, yes!" vowed Prince Zeno. "Were Rudolph to guess the truth he would never budge."

"He will have no time for guessing," said the bandit chief, with a great laugh. "His armies will be defeated, and he will surrender. Too late he will find that he has been fooled. For the peace of Caronia, for the sake of the people, Rudolph will make terms—and those terms will be our terms."

"Yes, and everything depends upon speed," agreed Prince Zeno, nodding. "Rudolph is a man of peace; he detests bloodshed. We have but to strike, Keiff—and strike hard—and victory will be assured."

DAWN brought feverish activity to the gorge.

Miklos Keiff, moving here and there, consulted with his captains and lieutenants; and very soon there was a general movement of men down the gorge.

Formidable-looking fellows, these, and all well trained and splendidly equipped. From every corner of the Kazatova mountains they had been collected, men of many tribes, but all Slavonic. Big, muscular, ferocious men, with a burning, fanatical hatred of the new régime which the Grand Duke Rudolph had brought into effect.

Beyond Nid, the town which nestled in the foothills, and which represented the railhead, Prince Zeno had established a great depot. Here there were tanks, guns, and great stores of munitions of all kinds. Other armies would concentrate there, ready for the victorious march into the plains.

The revolutionaries were relying upon the element of surprise. Rumours had been rife in Caronia for some months, but the populace in general did not really believe that there would be a revolution. It would strike them suddenly, dramatically. And their faith in the Grand Duke Rudolph would be shattered; as likely as not they would turn upon him at the very moment when he most needed their support.

Prince Zeno took advantage of his opportunity to sleep. But he only slept fitfully.

For Zeno, in spite of his plottings and intrigue, was not conscienceless. The thought of his half-brother's fate, and the fate of those English boys and girls, preyed upon his mind. Yet he was thinking mostly of himself, perhaps. For he knew that if the truth of that disaster reached the ears of the British Government there would be an international sensation—an inquiry.

It was as well for the Prince that his mind was fully occupied by other matters when he awoke. Miklos Keiff's army was already on the move.

And by now Zeno was thoroughly satisfied

ON a rocky ledge, screened from the sun by overhanging crags, two men lay stretched full length.

The great panorama of the gorge lay stretched before them; yet they themselves were invisible, owing to the screen of rock, with its curious formations, which rose in front.

Immediately below were the tree-tops of the forest. There was no open land within half a mile. Gazing at those cliffs from a distance, one could never have guessed that a ledge existed there at all; the rock-face looked sheer.

Far ahead the beams of searchlights and quick flashes could be seen, and faintly to the ears of the St. Frank's party came the boom of distant gun-fire.



that the fugitives had perished in the pass. There was no trace of them; so there was no further search. Exactly as Nelson Lee had anticipated, the mountain men attempted no comprehensive hunt up and down the gorge. Miklos Keiff was burning with anxiety to commence hostilities. He had no men to spare for a footling search for people who were obviously buried beneath a great mass of fallen rock.

Zeno was catching the same fire, too. He was impatient to be moving. His chief anxiety was to reach Malva, where he would meet a number of his secret generals, and receive their reports.

The die was cast now, the rebel army was on the move—and Prince Zeno had no time to think of other matters.

The Day had come.

"A brainy idea of yours, this, Lee," commented Lord Dorrimore. "We can see exactly what's going on, and there's not a chance in a thousand that we shall be spotted."

Nelson Lee merely grunted.

"Of course, we're safe enough now," continued his lordship. "Nearly midday, and there hasn't been a sign of any search parties. They've given us up."

Lee grunted again.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Lord Dorrimore bluntly.

"You will notice, Dorrie, that these bodies of men are moving steadily down the gorge, and disappearing beyond those rocks to our left," said Nelson Lee, completely ignoring Dorrie's earlier remarks. "Even you, with your limited brain capacity, must see that the secret pass—the second pass—is in that direction."

"Roughly about three miles from here," said Lord Dorrimore. "I expect it leads down into Nid, just the same as the other pass."

"But look closely, old man," continued Lee. "The assumption is that these men are continuing straight on after they pass beyond our view. But if you will concentrate your attention a little to the right, you will notice a curious haze in the air. Look closely."

Lord Dorrimore did so, and nodded.

"That's right," he said. "I can see it now, although I shouldn't have noticed it unless you had pointed it out. What do you make of it, anyhow?"

"Dust," replied Lee. "Dust caused by the passing of these men. That must be the exact position of the pass, Dorrie. We thought it was farther to the left, because the men were going in that direction; but they must take a sharp turn behind those rocks, and then bear off to the right. It's a point worth keeping in mind."

"By gad, rather!" agreed Dorrie. "When we make our exit from this place we shall probably do it in the dark."

They had been watching for hours—whilst the boys and girls remained in the cool, spacious cavern below—with Umlosi constantly on guard at the entrance.

During the hours since dawn, Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore had been watching the activities of Miklos Keiff's army. They were not a little disturbed, for the whole gorge seemed to be filled with men. There were many thousands. And this "bandit army" was by no means undisciplined. There was an orderliness and a precision about their movements which told of intensive training.

Throughout the day, in fact, those secret watchers gazed down upon the spectacle. The passing of Miklos Keiff's army!

Prince Zeno's confidence was not entirely unwarranted. With such an army as this at his command, he was certain, at least, of making a bid for the throne. And it would be no feeble bid, either!

As Lee pointed out to Dorrie, they had only seen Keiff's forces. There were others. Down in the foothills, round about Nid and Malva, other revolutionary armies were gathering. They were smaller than Keiff's, but they would all help.

"It's going to be an ugly business, Dorrie," said Nelson Lee grimly. "And the only pity is that we must lurk here, seeing it all—but helpless! We cannot even send a warning to the grand duke."

"But our time will come!" growled Dorrie. "By gad! Can't we get into action to-night, Lee? Can't we do something worth while?"

"I believe we can," replied Nelson Lee, an eager light in his eyes. "Yes, Dorrie, to-night we will act!"

CHAPTER 4.

Through the Hidden Pass!

THE last glow of the sunset was fading in the sky; a few fleecy, pink-tinted clouds were visible over the mountain-tops towards the west. The air was heavy and still after a hot day of sunshine.

And the gorge lay in ever-deepening shadows, silent, peaceful. Not a living thing was to be seen—save, perhaps, herds of cattle, or flocks of sheep on the distant pastures.

The last of Miklos Keiff's forces had passed.

In the spacious cavern, so cunningly concealed by the dense woodland, a few flickering lights were burning. They were caused by the wood fires, the smoke from which went curling up into the black recesses of the cavern.

Squatting round, in various groups, the boys and girls were partaking of a hearty meal—and they were indulging, too, in the luxury of hot coffee.

The food was simple, and there was scarcely more than enough for the one big feast. Many members of the party had felt that it was rash to eat so heartily; but Nelson Lee had urged them all fully to satisfy their hunger.

When they had set out on their original bid for liberty, they had prepared carefully; they had carried ample packs, containing all kinds of foodstuffs. It was just as well that they had taken these precautions, for the food was coming in extremely useful now.

"We need to travel light," Nelson Lee had said, before the commencement of the meal. "Therefore, eat as much as you can. We have a hard, strenuous night ahead of us, and you will require all your strength and endurance. It would be folly to commence this march on half-empty stomachs."

"Wouldn't it be better to eat sparingly, sir—and sort of eke the grub out?" somebody had asked.

"No," replied Lee; "that would be neither one thing nor the other. Eat well, so that your strength may be at its maximum. Your next meal? Well, I don't know. We are embarking upon a big adventure, and we have no means of knowing how it will end."

So the boys and girls consumed that meal with gusto. Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, and Umlosi gave a good account of themselves, too.

"We shall divide into three parties," said Lee, when the meal was nearing its end. "Whatever food is left over will be carefully packed and carried. But the lighter we can travel, the better. However, we are not going into the wilderness—rather the opposite. We shall find plenty of water. So there is no need for us to be hampered in that way. We might come upon plentiful supplies of food, too."

"But why take three parties, sir?" asked Nipper.

"I shall take all you girls directly under my care," replied Nelson Lee, looking at Irene Manners and Doris and Mary and the other Moor View girls, who were as eager and as excited as any of the boys. "I shall expect you to obey me without question, and to follow any instructions I may have to give without a second's hesitation."

"You can count on us, Mr. Lee," said Doris promptly.

"Half you boys will accompany Lord Dorrimore, and the other half will go with Umlosi," continued Lee. "You can divide yourselves up as you please."

"We're going to get through the enemy's lines, aren't we, sir?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"That's the general idea," replied Nelson Lee. "Whether we get through or not, Handforth, is another matter. You can be quite certain that we will do our best. Now, I don't mean to say much to you; but you must remember that the whole adventure will be fraught with peril. You must be ready for any emergency. Above all, you must obey orders without question, and you must maintain an absolute silence."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"We'll get through all right!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We're taking the secret pass, through which Miklos Keiff's army has gone," went on Nelson Lee. "We may meet with some resistance there—and, if so, we must be ready for quite a lot of trouble. And, if it does come to a fight, there'll be no quarter. These hot-blooded Kazatovians are mad with revolutionary zeal. If any of us are caught by these men, we shall have little or no chance of escape. They'll execute us out of hand—treating us as spies. So I'm warning you that the prospects are far from rosy."

"In other words," said Lord Dorrimore, "our very lives will depend upon you youngsters keeping cool, and bottling up your natural vim. We're not looking for trouble, you understand—we're not going deliberately into battle. Our game is to slip through the enemy's lines during the hours of darkness. And that, if you ask me, will be far more exciting than any scrap."

"Good gad! I mean to say, rather!" murmured Archie Glenthorne. "I've read stories about chappies getting through the enemy's lines, you know. It's a most frightfully blighting sort of business. You've got to dodge here, and dodge there, and if any poisonous coves happen to spot you, the only thing to do is to run. A most foul game, one way and another. But exciting. Exciting, in fact, isn't the word."

"We're going now—immediately on the heels of the enemy—because we shall stand a

greater chance," said Nelson Lee. "If we leave it until later, the enemy will have become organised, and we should have less chance of success. But to-night everything down on the plains, beyond Nid and Malva, will necessarily be in a state of absolute confusion. If I thought that we couldn't get through, I wouldn't move an inch. But I think we can get through. We need courage, strength, and determination. Everybody here possesses those very necessary qualities. Boys and girls, we can do it."

"Hurrah!"

"We'll go anywhere with you, sir!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Go ahead—cheer as much as you like," smiled Lee. "You'd better get it right out of your system. For, once we start, there mustn't be any cheering—or even talking. Have you all finished your meal? Good! Then let's be making a move."

While the boys and girls were preparing, Lee had a quiet word with Lord Dorrimore.

"I made the worst of it," he murmured. "At the same time, I did not actually exaggerate. If we're caught, Dorrie, we shall get very short shrift."

"Then we mustn't get caught," said Dorrie promptly. "That's an easy one."

"We have a good chance of winning through," continued Lee. "I'm thinking of the railway. We'll go across country to begin with, old man, skirt round Nid, and then strike the railway farther down—somewhere between Nid and Malva."

"And then?"

"I don't know," said Lee slowly. "The whole affair is a gamble—and much will depend upon how we use our opportunities."

HALF-AN-HOUR later, the fugitive party, in three sections, was on the move.

Umlosi, by reason of his uncanny powers of sensing danger, led the way. Even Nelson Lee, with all his experience and skill, was a mere amateur compared with Umlosi. If any danger lurked ahead, Umlosi would "smell" it before any of the others. In the African chieftain's party were Browne and Stevens, of the Fifth; Fullwood, Russell, Waldo, Archie Glenthorne, and even Willy and Co., of the Third.

Nelson Lee followed with the girls; and Lord Dorrimore brought up the rear, accompanied by the Remove stalwarts—Nipper and Co., Handforth, Travers, and others. Nelson Lee had suggested that Victor Orlando and Paul Maddox should accompany him and the girls; but the pair preferred to be with the Removites.

The silence of the gorge was all the more striking because there had been such a commotion throughout the day. Except for the fugitives, it was like a place of the dead.

They marched silently, and all around them were the frowning cliffs and crags, and the dense stretches of woodland.

"We're not so badly off, you know," whispered Handforth, as he marched with the others. "We've all got rifles—and we can use 'em, too!"

"No talking, Handy!" murmured Church.

"Rats! We're only whispering," went on Handforth. "We've got heaps of ammunition, too. If it comes to a scrap, we can make a pretty good show, my sons. We mustn't be squeamish, either. We must use these giddy rifles. After all, we're cadets, aren't we?"

"It'll be awful if we do have to fight," breathed McClure. "It's not our war, is it? You'd rather use your fists any day, Handy, than a gun!"

"By George! I should say so!" agreed Handforth. "I'd like to have one good old

slosh at Prince Zeno! Just one! He wouldn't wake up for a week!"

"You'd better wake up yourself!" came a word of advice from Nipper. "You're not likely to get any smacks at Zeno, or anybody else, Handy. We didn't come into these mountains to fight—but to rescue Victor Orlando. We've got him, and if only we can get through to Galvarad, we shall save Caronia from disaster. Fighting won't do us any good."

"We shall have to fight, to get through," retorted Handforth gruffly.

They were all keyed up to a high pitch of excitement—inwardly. They all strove to be calm—to show an almost indifferent exterior, as though these adventures were commonplace with them. But they didn't make much of a success of it. They were frankly and palpably "on edge."



THRILLS!

*Book-Length Yarns
of SEXTON BLAKE
for 4d. ONLY.*

No. 297—GANG WAR

A gripping novel of detective adventure

By G. H. Teed

No. 298—THE NIGHT CLUB CRIME

A powerful story of crime and intrigue

By Anthony Skene

No. 299—THE MURDER OF MUNSDEN

A sensational drama of plotting and thrills

By Coutts Brisbane

No. 300—THE FORTNIGHT OF FEAR

A baffling narrative of amazing mystery

By Sidney Drew

SEXTON BLAKE Library

Now on Sale

4d. each.

There was no difficulty in finding the pass. So many thousands of men had passed that way during the day that there were traces everywhere. Umlosi was not at fault for a second.

Very soon the fugitives were passing between frowning masses of rock. It was anticipated that there would be some parties of guards on duty here—either in the pass itself, or at its exit. The going was very rough, and in places the track became so narrow that not more than two could walk abreast.

Nelson Lee marvelled at the miracle of organisation which Miklos Keiff had achieved. He had taken all his thousands of men out through this narrow defile. It had been cleverly and orderly done.

Lee grimly wondered what the outcome would be.

Miklos Keiff and his men had always been masters of the mountains; and their ancestors before them. But for the first time in history, they were deserting their mountains, and descending to the plains of Caronia. And somehow, at the back of his mind, Nelson Lee possessed an instinctive knowledge that Miklos Keiff would fail. Supreme in the mountains, yes; but the conditions of warfare in this sudden revolution would be so different that the Kazatovian mountain men would lose their efficiency.

However, that was to be seen.

Two or three hours of hard marching, and the fugitives gained their first reward. To Lee's surprise, and certainly to his relief, there was no sign of resistance. So eager had Miklos Keiff been to wage this warfare that he had left nobody to guard the gorge; he had taken every man with him. It was not so much a sign of carelessness as a sign of arrogance. Keiff was so certain of ultimate victory that he deemed it a waste of man power to leave a force, no matter how small, in the mountains.

To the boys and girls it seemed as though they would never get free of the frowning crags. The pass twisted and turned tortuously; in places it descended steeply into ravines, where the track ran parallel for some distance with a rushing mountain torrent. Then it would climb again, worming its way round a mountain side, with a sheer drop on one hand and overhanging crags on the other.

Thus they went on, their eyes now so accustomed to the gloom of the night that they could see fairly distinctly. They emerged from the pass suddenly, unexpectedly. They found themselves on a wide, rocky plateau, high on the mountain.

And before them lay a great rolling expanse of countryside, extending into the dim, hazy distance. They were looking upon the Caronian plains.

It was a welcome sight—and just a bit awe-inspiring.

For that vast panorama was eloquent of the drama which was being enacted.

Straight below, and not many miles distant, gleamed the lights of Nid. Farther on was a glow which denoted the city of Malva, and all over the dark countryside lights were splashed about in profusion—telling plainly of the army that was on the move.

Farther afield the vague beams of searchlights, pointing skywards, could be seen. They were evidently mobile searchlights, too, for they were crawling in a curiously snail-like manner across the horizon. Actually, the searchlights were mounted upon great lorries, and they were probably travelling at good speed.

"Listen!" went up a murmur from some of the boys and girls.

Boom-oom! Boom-boom!

There was no need to listen carefully. Far beyond the lights of Malva came the thudding of gunfire. Occasionally a ruddy splash could be seen in the darkness, just a swift point of light, to be instantly gone. Guns were at work. Those booms were caused by artillery fire. Or perhaps by the dropping of bombs from aeroplanes.

At all events, the boys and girls knew that they were gazing upon a scene of warfare. The revolution had commenced!

CHAPTER 5.

Taking a Chance!

"HALT!"

The word went round softly amongst the weary, footsore St. Frank's fellows and Moor View girls. They had been on the march for many hours now. It was at least three hours since they had stood upon the heights, watching the distant bursts of gunfire.

Never for a moment had they paused; they had plodded on, descending the foothills, and now, at last, they were playing a sort of hide-and-seek with the many woods and spinneys which characterised the country round and about the town of Nid.

They had passed Nid—they were beyond. Nelson Lee's objective was to pass Malva in the same way—but it might not be so easy. Zeno's forces were concentrated upon Malva, by all that Nelson Lee could judge; and it was highly probable that there would be troops well out into the country.

But Lee knew that his only chance of getting his party through was to carry on without hesitation—without pause. There were not many hours of darkness left, and when dawn came they would either have to be clear of the enemy's lines, or they would be hopelessly trapped.

Nelson Lee was admittedly startled by the progress which Prince Zeno had made. In

starting out, Lee had anticipated that the rebels' would not have progressed beyond Malva; thus it was only necessary to get through the rebel lines there, and all would be well.

But Lee was now convinced by the continuous rolling of gunfire from the distance, that Malva had not only been taken, but that the rebel forces had pressed on for many miles farther. This meant that there was a much greater distance for the fugitives to cover. Such a great distance, in fact, that there was not much chance of their doing it before dawn. Unless they took advantage of the railway.

And the railway was in full sight. Hence Nelson Lee had called a halt. Down a sloping hillside the track was just visible, snakelike and sinuous in the gloom.

And what was more to the point, Nelson Lee could see a train—evidently a freight train—standing on the track about a mile distant, towards Nid.

The boys were feeling excited again—after a period of depression. Their hours of marching, without encountering the enemy, had rather affected them. They were hungry, too. Their last food had gone many hours ago, and although they had had a good few drinks from friendly streams, they felt empty enough.

"Action!" muttered Handforth feverishly. "By George! I hope we get some at last!"

Never once had they lost the feeling that they were surrounded by enemies—hemmed in by them. And now that feeling was more intensified than ever. For they were looking down upon the railway; they could see that train standing there, steam issuing noisily from the safety valve, as though the engine was impatient to be off with its load. Men were there, too—soldiers.

"Dorrie!" said Nelson Lee quickly. "You take charge here. Go right ahead, and get everybody down to the railway—make diagonally across these meadows, and strike the railway track about a mile farther towards Malva. Is that clear?"

"Quite," said Dorrie. "And you?"

"I'm going to do a little scouting," replied Lee. "This train interests me."

"Can I come, gov'nor?" asked Nipper eagerly.

"Better not, young 'un; stick with the others," replied Nelson Lee. "I shan't be long."

He was off before any further questions could be put to him. And like a shadow he ran through the night, reaching the stationary train after some minutes of hard and cautious running.

As he had half expected, he found that the train was standing alongside a big military dump. The quaint, old-fashioned trucks were being loaded. Lee crept along silently, taking cover behind a screening hedge. He obtained quite a deal of valuable information.

He listened carefully to the talk of the men; he used his eyes, too.

The train was a long one, and for the most part it consisted of ammunition trucks. Shells were being sent to the front, in the wake of the advancing rebel army. Some of the trucks carried guns, too. Others were filled with food for the men. This train was, Lee gathered, one of many.

He did not wait. His heart was thudding rather more rapidly than usual now—for even Nelson Lee, hardened though he was, was still capable of feeling a thrill. Here was a golden opportunity if only they could take advantage of it.

He found Dorrie and Umlosi and the boys and girls near the railway, two miles farther on. They had found excellent cover in a little wood which grew parallel with the track.

"All here?" asked Lee tensely when he arrived. "Everybody safe?"

"Yes."

"No encounters with the enemy?"

"Haven't had a smell of 'em," said Dorrie. "And you? What's up, old man, you seem quite excited?"

"Perhaps I am," replied Lee, his voice as steady as a rock. "That train will soon be coming. Listen, all of you! We've got to capture that train."

"Oh!" went up an excited murmur from them all.

"It's a great chance," continued Lee. "I don't think there'll be many men guarding it. We shall have to deal with the driver and fireman, and perhaps half a dozen armed guards. It'll mean a fight, and perhaps a stiff one. But once we have seized the train we shall have the means of conveyance. With any luck, we can get right through the enemy lines—clean through to Galvarad, in fact."

"But how, sir?" went up a chorus.

"This train is full of war material, and so it will have the right of way all along the line," said Lee, in a low voice. "Don't you understand? I shall stand on the footplate, at the throttle. I'll make a rush clean through Malva, and then— But we can't know what will happen after that. The main thing is to seize the train, and to get aboard."

"Listen, you chaps!" exclaimed one of the Removites.

Everybody remained still. A shrill, piercing whistle had sounded in the distance, followed by the laborious puffing of the locomotive. The train had started—and was coming.

"You girls will remain here," said Lee. "No, for Heaven's sake, don't argue—this is men's work. Some of the boys will have to help, because there aren't sufficient men. But it is certainly no job for girls. Nipper! Browne! Handforth! Come with me; we must take up our positions on either side of the track."



The men in the engine-cab were overpowered by Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore, while the boys and girls swarmed up into the trucks to get to grips with other rebels.

It was a time for action. Nobody questioned Lee's orders. No need to tell Lord Dorrimore and Umlosi what to do; they collected some groups of their own boys, so to speak, and rushed them into position.

"I shall stop the train," came Lee's voice. "Don't act until you get the word."

They waited breathlessly, their hearts thudding.

"Brothers, this bears some slight resemblance to the real thing," murmured William Napoleon Browne. "I think it is what the novelists call red-blooded adventure. The seizure of the munitions train by the hard-pressed fugitives in the enemy's lines."

"Dry up, you idiot!" hissed Stevens. "It's no joking matter."

But Browne was to be really commended for his care-free spirit. His example caused many of the other boys to cool down. It was a perilous and difficult task they were attempting to achieve; success here might mean complete success later. Failure——

But not one of those boys even considered failure.

They held themselves ready, listening eagerly to the laborious puffing of the approaching engine. There was a slight grade here, so the train was only travelling very slowly. Nelson Lee stood beside the track, a shadowy figure, only just visible to the waiting boys.

The train was in sight now; there were red and green lights glowing and winking. Lee waited until the train was nearly upon him, and then, running towards it, as though madly excited, he fired a revolver repeatedly into the air.

"Stop! Stop!" he bellowed, in Slav. "There is danger ahead! Stop!"

The engine-driver, leaning out of his cab, heard some of those words, and his hand instinctively went to the throttle. The fireman operated the brake. Both men assumed—naturally—that the unknown man on the track was one of their own kind, and that he had knowledge of some unsuspected peril along the permanent way.

With a great clanking of metal, a hissing of steam, and a grinding of brakes, the train slowed to a standstill.

"Now!" yelled Lee, in English. "On them, boys!"

The men in charge of the train were taken utterly by surprise. Whilst Lee was shouting, he leapt upon the footplate.

Crash!

His doubled fist thudded into the face of the engine-driver, taking that unfortunate man by surprise.

At the same moment, Lord Dorrimore swarmed into the cab from the other side, and he dealt swiftly and effectively with the fireman.

"No sense in being gentle with these blighters!" panted Dorrie, as he enthusiastically hammered the fireman. "Oh, you'd show fight, would you? All right, my friend!"

They struggled and swayed, and Dorrie, leaping back, took aim. The left-hander he delivered was devastating. It caught the fireman on the point of the chin, and the man, without a groan, fell headlong out of the cab, to crash upon the track.

Shots were being fired up and down the train. Two or three alarming volleys sounded, and spurts of fire showed wickedly in the gloom.

It had been Nipper's idea. Rushing up from both sides of the permanent way, the boys advertised their arrival by a quick burst of rifle fire. They aimed into the air deliberately—for they had no desire to kill. And the effect was instantaneous.

There were about half a dozen Kazatovians guarding that train—a man dotted about here and there, on the open trucks. And seeing the black figures, rushing up out of the night, the rebels immediately came to the conclusion that a large force was attacking. They were so confused and scared that they were beaten in the first minute.

Two or three of the men managed to get hold of their rifles, and to fire, but their aim was wild. The next moment figures were swarming up into the trucks. Too late the men discovered that the figures were only boys. Yes, and girls, too!

For Irene & Co., ignoring Nelson Lee's orders, were taking a hand in the game. They were of the opinion that this was a case of "all hands to the pumps!" It was likely they were going to be left out in the cold!

So the plucky schoolgirls, cool-headed and active, entirely unarmed, climbed as nimbly as any of the boys. They swarmed over the train. In less than three minutes all the guards were in a state of helplessness. Each man had four or five boys upon him, to say nothing of two or three girls. Handkerchiefs, belts, neckties, and similar useful articles were used to bind the hands and feet of the victims. One after another, they were dumped on to the permanent way.

And while all this excitement was going on at the front and in the centre of the train, the grimest fight of all, perhaps, was taking place at the rear. There were four of the enemy here, in the quaint guard's van of the train. These four could have turned the tables if they had had the opportunity. Startled by what was happening, they leapt from the van in a group, and stood on the permanent way, staring up the train. Their rifles were ready. From their advantageous position they could do terrible damage.

A sudden burst of firing, and they could mow down a dozen of those slim, agile figures. Already they were getting their rifles to their

shoulders, jabbering excitedly amongst themselves whilst doing so.

Then a huge, black form leapt upon them like some monster of the night. Umlosi, the great Kutana chief, was not to be cheated out of his share of the fight.

Characteristically, he took on these four men—and the four men, after the first few seconds, had a vague impression that a cyclone had hit them.

With one swinging sweep of his mighty arm, Umlosi robbed three of the men of their weapons; he leapt bodily upon the fourth man, jerked him off his feet, and swung him high into the air.

"Dogs, and sons of dogs!" growled Umlosi. "Methinks it is my turn at last! For many days I have waited!"

The man in his grip was shrieking with mad fear. He was like a baby in the grasp of this great negro. With terrific force the fellow was hurled at his companions. They all went down in a confused heap.

Umlosi was a bloodthirsty rascal, and he would have enjoyed killing them all; but he had an instinctive feeling that Nelson Lee would object. So he contented himself by grabbing up each man in turn and delivering a blow which would cause insensibility for some hours. It was more than likely, too, that one or two jaws were broken.

Seeing that there were no more men to deal with, Umlosi ran swiftly along the train. He was sadly disappointed, for the train was now in the possession of the raiders.

CHAPTER 6.

Through the Enemy's Lines!

"HURRAH!"

"It's ours!"

"By George, we've won!"

The cheers and the joyous cries were very subdued. The boys felt like letting themselves go; but such a thing would have been foolhardy in the extreme.

"Well done, boys!" said Lee, as he ran along the train. "All here? Everybody all right?"

"Yes, sir!"

"We've dished them, sir!"

Nelson Lee and Dorrie, hurrying up and down the train, were relieved to find that there had been no casualties. Not a boy was hurt—or a girl, either.

"So you girls took a hand, after all?" asked Lee, as he encountered Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley and one or two others in one of the open trucks. "You young hussies! Well done! Splendid work!"

"We thought you'd be cross, Mr. Lee!" laughed Vera.

"It's too late to be cross now," replied Lee dryly. "All aboard, everybody! The sooner we're away, the better!"

"What about these blighters?" asked Dorrie, indicating the helpless train crew.

"We shall have to leave them here," replied Lee. "Some of them are insensible, and others are bound. I don't think much of their bonds, but——"

"I say, gov'nor!" sang out Nipper, from one of the trucks. "There are some great coils of rope here!"

"Good!" retorted Lee promptly. "Bring it! We'll bind these fellows up more securely. A few precious minutes will be spent—but they'll be well spent."

But Nelson Lee had not noticed that one of the men, presumably unconscious, had rolled away into a dense clump of weeds. The man had sense enough to move with caution; he realised that the odds were against him. Worming his way through a gap in some bushes, he gained the open. Staggering to his feet, he ran off. And not one of the raiders knew of his going.

Nelson Lee, Dorrie, and Umlosi, eagerly assisted by the boys, made short work of the train crew. Each man was tightly bound, and bundled into the thick grass which grew alongside the permanent way.

"It may be an hour before they are found

—perhaps longer," said Lee. "By then, we shall be well through the enemy's lines. Our only chance is to delude the enemy into thinking that this train is still manned by its rightful crew. Dorrie, you take charge of the girls—see that they keep well down in some of those half-filled trucks."

"I'll look after 'em," promised Dorrie breathlessly.

"You boys—distribute yourselves up and down the train. And don't show yourselves under any consideration," went on Lee. "Umlosi, you're pretty handy with a shovel, aren't you? You can be my fireman."

"Wau! A spear is more fitting to my hand than a shovel," grumbled Umlosi. "But I am thy servant, Umtagati. If it is thy wish that I should wield a shovel, then I will wield it well."

Lee turned to the boys again.

"Have your rifles ready, and, if it comes to a fight, give a good account of yourselves," he said. "There's a chance that we can get through. We're heading for the thick of the enemy, but the advantage is with us."

"Hurrah!"

"Let's be going, sir!"

"Down with Prince Zeno!"

"If only we can get through to Galvarad, we might save the whole situation!" said



with TO-DAY'S ISSUE of
The MAGNET Get Your Copy Now! **2^d.**

Victor Orlando, his eyes burning with excitement. "For we can tell the people of Prince Zeno's treachery—and that story will arouse them to such a fury that the rebels will lose thousands of their supporters."

A sudden cry came from the girls.

"Oh, quick!" cried Irene. "Look what we've found in this truck!"

"Be careful!" warned Lee, in some anxiety. "You'd better not tamper with anything. This train is half full of munitions, and——"

"But look at this, Mr. Lee!" interrupted Irene, holding a large round object in her hand.

"By George!" gasped Handforth. "A bomb!"

"Don't be silly, Ted," said Irene. "It's a cheese!"

"What!"

"There's a whole truckload of them!" sang out Mary Summers. "Cheeses by the hundred!"

"Food, brothers!" said Browne. "Ordinarily, I am no enthusiast over cheese. But, at the moment, I am ready to declare that cheese is the most appetising food in the world. Kindly chuck me a sample, sister!"

Everybody clamoured, and Nelson Lee allowed another precious minute to go by whilst cheeses were generally doled out. After that, everybody was ordered aboard the train. Even Dorrie had collared one of the cheeses, and he was breaking into it enthusiastically.

"A deucedly good idea, this!" he mumbled, his mouth half full. "Gad! It's good cheese, too!"

Until now, the fugitives had scarcely realised their hunger; but the cheese was not only nourishing, but satisfying. A solid meal like this put new strength and fire into them all.

NOW came the real test—the big thrill.

Many of the boys had an idea that the train could dash clean through, and so carry them beyond the enemy's lines, and into friendly country.

But Nelson Lee, who was at the engine's throttle, had no false ideas. He knew that the whole thing was a gamble. Two or three trucks on the same line would bring the dash to a premature end; one set of points, switched the wrong way, could bring disaster.

Everything depended, in fact, upon the line being clear. And was there any real hope, after all, that the line *would* be clear? Nelson Lee had no illusions.

But he decided that the gamble was worth while.

The locomotive, he found, was an ancient enough monster; it wheezed, it clanked, and it creaked. But it answered the throttle readily enough, and with a roaring of steam, a crackling of metal, the train got under way.

Umlosi, wielding the shovel, kept the firebox fed.

Handforth was also on the footplate. He had jumped aboard when the train was actually in motion. He explained his recklessness by suggesting that he might be able to give Nelson Lee a few tips on driving the train! Lee had been angry, but there was no time for delay, and so Handforth had been allowed to remain.

Soon the old engine was rocking and swaying as it tore along over the indifferently-laid track. Lee, keeping a watch ahead, saw that the line was clear so far. A haze of lights in the distance told the fugitives that they were nearing Malva.

"I like it not, O Umtagati!" shouted Umlosi, as he clung to the swaying engine. "Thou hast indeed chosen a strange mode of travel. Wau! Methinks we shall all meet with death on this monstrous machine!"

"We're not dead yet, old friend," retorted Lee. "More coal! Get busy with that shovel! And look here, Umlosi—just before we get to the town, close the firebox, so there's no glare. And duck—you also, Handforth! Do you understand? Don't let yourselves be seen!"

"Trust me, sir," said Handforth.

Nelson Lee began operating the whistle, sending forth continuous blasts into the night air. Lee's other hand was on the throttle, and he stared out through the engine's window; his face was already begrimed, and he was scarcely recognisable. Handforth was looking out of the window on the other side of the cab. He had decided to keep his driving tips to himself. He felt Nelson Lee was not in the mood to appreciate them.

"Malva!" Nelson Lee suddenly muttered.

The train, swaying and roaring, was taking a sweeping bend. Dense woods lay on either side of the single track. But now an open space lay ahead—fields and meadows. There came a hollow, thunderous roaring as the engine crossed a crudely-built wooden bridge. Many lights were gleaming just ahead. The town of Malva! And the station, as Lee could now see, was swarming with activity. There were lights everywhere.

But it was no time for hesitation—no time for caution. Lee jammed the whistle control, so that the shrilling became insistent and continuous. As he had expected, a considerable commotion was caused in the station ahead.

The munitions train was expected—but, as it happened, it was scheduled to stop at Malva, to pick up some troops. But it could now be seen that the train was not stopping—it was hurtling through the station at full speed, the engine emitting great volumes of

(Continued on page 24.)

A Laugh a Day Keeps the Blues Away!



HANDFORTH'S Weekly

No. 18. 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

August 22nd, 1931.

THE EDITOR'S LIFE STORY

(Continued)

Written by Himself.

A Letter TO THE HEAD From "J. L."

WE went to Southsea for our holiday—the governor, the mater, the nurse and I. We started off by car. The nurse wrapped me up in mountains of woolly clothes and carried me out to the car and sat me in it.

"Be good, baby!" she chirped. "We shan't be long."

"Oh, buzz off!" I snorted.

After she had gone, I opened the door and wormed my way out of the car. At the back was a pile of luggage, fastened to the car with a strap. I tried to find out if I could undo the buckle of the strap, and found that I could. I wasn't strong enough to do it up again, though, so I just left it.

It was a lovely morning, and I thought I'd take a short stroll before the car started. There was a large pond just outside our garden, and in it I saw quite a big silver fish. So I waded into the pond to get it; but the fish must have seen me coming, for he breezed off.

Just then I heard my mater scream and cry out: "Where is that child? Oh, he'll be the death of me, I know!"

"I left him in the car, ma'am," I heard the nurse say. "Surely the precious darling can't have got out?"

I sniggered as I heard that beetle-brained nurse rushing up and down, bawling out for her precious darling. By and by, she and the mater came rushing through the hedge, and saw me in the pond.

"Bless my heart and soul—he's drowned!" yelled the nurse.

They yanked me out and wept over me and put me in a fresh lot of woollen clothes, and then they shoved me in the car again.

Pater started up the car and we all climbed in. For an hour everything was all right; but I was soon in trouble again. As we were flying along the Portsmouth Road at forty miles an hour there were several loud thuds. The pater stopped the car and looked out.

Our luggage was lying along the road behind us in a long stream. The trunks and bags had

(Continued at foot of next column.)

(The writer of this is anonymous; but is strongly suspected to be Juicy Lemon. Third Form.)

DEER SIR,—I am sending this to Willy's major's paper becos I don't want you to kno who wrote it. It isn't from me, so please don't think it is.

Deer Sir, we humbley ask you to give orders to the Form masters not to teech us any more Latin or other rot, sir. We reely don't want to lern it, sir. I got fore on both fins from Suncliffe to-day, sir, just becos I didn't know my Pressent and Supine Stemses, sir, and the diference between the Perfect Tense and the Aorist, sir—an orful lot of rot, wich wooldn't do me any good if I did kno it, sir.

Deer Sir, I reely don't want to lern Latin, becos when I leave skool I'm going in my father's department on the Railway, sir. He's a Traphic Suprintendent or something, so I expect I shal have to wave the green flag to make the trains start off. Wooldn't it be silly, sir, if I had to stop to conjugate the verb "to wave" evry time I tried to start a train. The train woold be standing still, sir, while I was muttring to myself, "I wave, thou wavest, he waves, we wave, ye wave, they wave," etc., etc.—it woold take me hours and hours. Anyone can start off a train without knoing a word of Latin.

Deer Sir, if you will kindly give orders to Mr. Suncliffe to start teeching us how to wave green flags insted of all that Latin bosh, sir, I woold be very humbley greatful and obliged.

Yours faithfully,

J. L.

all burst open, and all our clothes and things were scattered over the place.

Then the pater looked sad.

"Did you do this, sir?" he demanded.

"I only tried to see if I could unfasten the strap, father," I gasped.

As usual, at the end of these instalments, I will draw a veil over the scene that follows, and just remark that the old wound is still rather painful at times.

(To be continued.)

Our Interesting Interviewer Looks into the Future.

FIFTY YEARS
HENCE

PROFESSOR TIMOTHY TUCKER, whom I had been instructed to interview, lived in a large house at Hampstead—when he thought of it. Usually, so the maid told me, he slept on the Embankment, or even went back to the West House at St. Frank's through sheer absent-mindedness.

However, the great man was in when I arrived. He was wearing a topper and his night-shirt. He wanted me to shake hands with a Bunsen burner he was carrying, but there was nothing doing. Then he told me that he was sorry he had not sent me a cheque before, but he would do so right away. He begged me not to cut off the water, mistaking me for the man for the water rate.

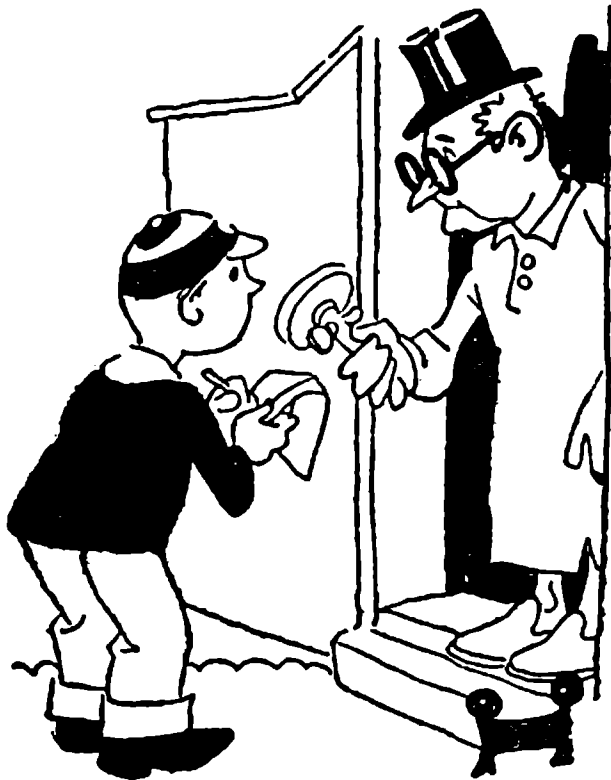
"I'm afraid you've made a mistake," I told him. "I'm not the man for the water rate. I'm just a reporter who has biffed in to interview you."

"Two million apologies!" gasped T. T. "Now, what can I do for you, my dear sir? First of all, have a cigar?"

"Certainly."

"Unfortunately, I haven't any. I neglected to purchase a fresh supply. I should, however, be delighted to offer you a glass of wine—"

"Thank you, professor."



"... if I had any, which, unfortunately, I have not. Now, my dear sir, pray listen to reason. Do not cut off my supply of water. I will pay your account as soon as—"

"Haven't I just said I'm not the water rates?"

"Three million apologies! Let me see! What are you?"

"A reporter."

"Exactly! I remember! Biffed along to interview me, I believe. Now listen to me, my dear sir," said T. T., blinking at me owlishly. "You may tell the British public that I have proved by experiment that the evaporation of a saturated solution of Kanelhydrin is equal in a ratio of three parts to one to the condensation of its relative compound when applied to a heat of 182° Fahrenheit."

"Impossible!" I gasped.

"It's true!" he cried, his fine face flushed with the excitement of this astounding discovery. "I have proved it over and over again."

"I shouldn't have believed it possible."

"Nevertheless, such is the fact. And you see what that leads to?"

"You mean that—"

"That the crystallisation of Oxyhydrinalin is made possible in the formula $\text{N}\text{Ca}\text{Cl}_2 - \text{K}_2\text{CO}_3 = (\text{NH}_4)_2\text{CO}_3$."

I sat back and gasped with amazement at this simple solution. As the professor explained it, it all seemed so easy, and yet it had baffled the best brains for hundreds of years.

"Wonderful, my dear Holmes!" I gasped, wringing his hand. "I've never heard anything like it in my life"—which was true. "And now I'll show you a little formula I discovered myself."

"Do!" said he.

I showed him thus:

One $\frac{1}{2}$ -wit—1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -brain+1 large jaw=T. T.

"Very remarkable!" he exclaimed, nodding ponderously. "And now, my dear sir, one last request."

"What is that?"

"I beseech you, in the name of humanity, not to cut off my water for the sake of a trumpery three pounds ten, which, after all—"

I threw a crucible at him, and went.

NIPPER'S PUZZLE CORNER

THIS week I have written a description of a cricket match, which contains the names of a number of fellows at St. Frank's. Some of these names are used just as they are written down; but others are buried in two or even three words. For instance, in the phrase, "Tap it to square leg," the name of PITT is buried—"TaP IT To square leg." How many names can you discover without looking at the solution, which appears in another column?

BURIED NAMES

The club rented a little ground west of Long Heath. A match was proceeding as I watched. The batsmen scored fast, and as they began to quicken more and more, the crowd began to yell more and more, and some chappy craftily rang a bell every time the bowler took his run. He was a good bowler; but the batsman would meet him

with the full wood every time, or tap it to square leg—he stole many a single to near leg—until the other captain told fieldsmen to stand in close—much to their indignation. They were clearly determined to owe no runs to chance, but the other fellow easily outwitted them with bangs and hooks to leg. The batsmen do not take long to get to the wicket. As soon as one man is out another claps on a pair of pads and does not stop for rest until he in turn is dismissed. Truth to tell, some of them were too big for their boots, and came out very easily. They had not lost, even so, but had beaten their opponents by thirty runs. A very good win.

DON'T GO! STOP! LOOK!

"Handforth's Weekly" is always up-to-date and original. A rollicking Special Summer Number will appear in a fortnight's time. Publication of this has purposely been delayed in the hope that summer—complete with sun—will have arrived by that date.—E. O. H.

THE JOKE

Humorous Short Story by **BOB CHRISTINE**

THERE is an old sailor in Caistowe, known to all his friends as Dan.

Whether old Dan has ever been to foreign parts or not, I can't say; but he tells a very good story at times, especially when he is thirsty and sees a sixpence in your hand.

One half-holiday I was lounging on the breakwater at Caistowe watching old Sailor Dan, who was smoking a short clay pipe and kicking up a terrible smell of stale tobacco. He has had sixpences from me before, so he cocked an eye at me and, jerking the stem of his pipe towards a man in a bowler hat who was passing, he said:

"Jevver see a man with sich an ugly dial as that there, sir?"

"The fellow was certainly no beauty. I shook my head.

"Reminds me of old Tim Wiggins," said Dan. "Did I ever tell you the story of my ol' pal Tim?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, it was rather a pecooliar story, sir. Old Tim Wiggins was the ugliest man I ever set eyes on. A proper 'uman gargle, he were. Yet, mind you, he were a good-hearted chap, and many's the time he has stood me a drink in that very inn over there.

"Tim and me were deck-hands on the steamer Marigold, which sailed to Africa four times a year. On his last v'yage the steamer broke down at Mombasa and we was given a month's leave. And Tim, who were always a very coourageous sort o' chap—he thought as how he'd like to shoot a few lions and g'rillas to take home to Caistowe.

"So four of us makes up a Big-Game 'Unting party. There was Tim and me and Bob Ludgett, and for the fourth we 'ad a bloke named Walter Weeks. This Weeks was a short, nervous little fellow with a squeaky voice and glasses.

"Well, one morning we set out with our guns and natives to the mountains on this side o' Nairobi, which was said to be a good place to find g'rillas.

"Sure enough we struck a g'rilla arter a time. Walter Weeks was a bit ahead o' us at the time, and the fust thing we

knew about it was when Walter Weeks passed us like a express train headin' in the other direction. He ran about seven miles afore he eased up, and then he come back and said he was tryin' to get a better shot at the broot.

"Old Tim laughed hisself hoarse about it. He tried to make out that what Walter Weeks 'ad seen was not a g'rilla but a baa-lamb. Just as he was a torkin', the g'rilla itself popped its 'ead out of the trees.

"For about a minute the g'rilla looked at Tim, and then the broot gave a yell which set my teeth on edge, and ran away as 'ard as it could pelt.

"Your face 'as scared it stiff, Tim,' I ses to 'im.

"He give me a nasty look; but he didn't say anythin'. No wonder 'e was 'urt—fancy 'aving a face which could scare a g'rilla. Old Tim thinks a minute, and then seizes 'is gun and bolts off along the path taken by the g'rilla. He was dertemined to make the hanimile pay for yelling at 'im like that.

"Well, I looks round, and there's only Bob and me left, Walter Weeks 'ad vanished. We waited a hower, and then we 'card somebody laughin', and presently Walter Weeks staggered up to us, absolutely doubled up with mirth.

"Wot's up with you, ass?" ses Bob.

"Oh, dear, it's the funniest thing I've ever seen," squeaks Walter, yellin' again as if he'd never leave off. "I meant to prove to you fellows that I wasn't a coward, so when that g'rilla ran off and yelled, I grabbed my gun and pursood it. I was sneakin' along on its trail, when all of a sudden there was a movement and the hijcous face of the broot rose out of a bush right in front of my eyes."

"And you ran for it?" ses Bob.

"No, I didn't," chortled Walter, "I lifted my gun and popped a bullet right in its chest, and it went down with a 'eart-rending groan."



"Well, I don't see anythin' so very funny in that," ses Bob.

"No, I ain't told you the cream of the joke, yet. The laugh's on me, boys—the laugh's on me. 'Cos when I went round the bush to get my g'rilla, it—ha, ha, ha—it wasn't a g'rilla at all. It were old Tim!"

"And Walter Weeks absolutely roared."

Sailor Dan sighed.

"Strange sense of 'umour that little feller 'ad, to be sure," he said.

I gave him a shilling. I reckoned the lie was worth it.

ELDORADO

By **ARNOLD McCLURE**

*I'd love to go to a spot I know,
It's the place that I love best;
Where lasting peace bids trouble
cease,
And the weary are at rest.*

*It's there I brood in solitude,
Secure from every harm,
And, unalloyed, am overjoyed
In deep and solemn calm.*

*And yet I feel I can't reveal
This spot—I shouldn't dare!
(Twixt you and me, it's Study D
When Handforth isn't there.)*

SOLUTION OF BURIED NAMES

There were twenty-three names hidden in the "cricket match," as follows:

Brent, Little, West, Long, Heath, Kenmore, Ellmore, Pycraft, Bell, Fullwood, Pitt, Singleton, Oldfield, Nation, Owen, Fellowe, Bangs, Hook, Clapson, Forrest, Boots, Stevens, Goodwin.

Who got them all right?

THROUGH THE ENEMY'S LINES!

(Continued from page 20.)

steam, the whistle shrieking its warning without cessation.

Confusion reigned in the station.

Men ran in all directions, a truck was trundled off the permanent way and into a siding; the points were only just turned in the nick of time. The train thundered on.

Nelson Lee, his jaw grimly set, did not ease the throttle. A quick glance at the train behind him had shown that none of the boys or girls was in evidence; they were all crouching low, so that they could not be seen.

Gazing ahead again, his attention attracted by a sudden cry, barely heard, from Handforth, Lee saw that men were standing near the track, waving their arms madly; they were shouting, too, but no sounds could be heard. For the rattling and thundering of the engine drowned all else.

But Nelson Lee could now see the reason for the frantic excitement. The line was clear—except for one obstruction! At the further end of the station, which was fairly packed with men, there was a level crossing. And the gates were closed!

What was more, a whole string of army lorries was on the move, crossing the track.

Lee clenched his teeth. It was a moment for quick decision.

Lee decided within a split second.

Even if he closed the throttle, and applied the brakes, he could never bring that train to a standstill in time. And to hurtle into the gates at half speed would inevitably mean disaster. But at full speed there was just a chance——

Lee jerked the throttle—wider open!

Those rebels in the station had expected the train to stop—to take the troops aboard. So nobody had thought of clearing the road, and opening the gates. Now it was too late.

The train hurtled on, and Nelson Lee sent up a silent prayer. The thought occurred to him that the lorries were probably filled with explosives. If so—— There wasn't even time for Lee to conclude his thoughts. Like a charging juggernaut, the hissing locomotive tore through the station; vaguely, Lee heard the shrieks and shouts of the rebel soldiers.

Then—Cra-a-a-sh!

Lee caught a glimpse of the two men on one of the lorries leaping for their lives. The lorry itself had not cleared the track, and the speeding engine crashed headlong into it. Instinctively, Nelson Lee ducked. Fragments of debris flew over the engine in all directions; the engine itself rocked and leapt.

For that dreadful second it was touch and go.

By a miracle, it seemed, the locomotive kept to the track. The gates, splintered to a thousand fragments, had flown in all directions: the wrecked lorry was pushed aside as

though by a giant hand. And the engine, with its long train, thundered on. But it wasn't a miracle. Speed alone had saved the train from disaster.

On it went, leaving consternation in its wake. Nelson Lee's daring had succeeded. The train was through—beyond Malva—thundering onwards towards safety!

CHAPTER 7.

Dashing to Disaster!

CAPTAIN KELLNITZ, dusty and travel-stained, stepped out of a big car opposite the Town Hall in Malva.

The Town Hall was Prince Zeno's temporary headquarters; and Captain Kellnitz belonged to the Prince's General Staff. He had arrived with important dispatches. They told of sweeping victories all along the rebel lines.

The central square, in Malva, was agleam with lights and bustling with activity. Cars and lorries were coming and going; men were marching continuously. It was a scene of intensive bustle.

On the steps of the Town Hall, Captain Kellnitz paused as he heard the shrieking brake of a motor-car. A moment later, a rebel soldier, hot and dishevelled, leapt up the steps towards him.

"Halt!" snapped Kellnitz. "You cannot go in there, you fool!"

"I must see His Highness!" panted the man frantically.

"Oh! And who are you that you must see His Highness?" demanded the captain.

"What's wrong with you, man?"

"I am one of the men who were in command of the munitions train which started from Nid!" gasped the other. "Something has happened! I must see His Highness and tell him——"

"You will see His Highness later!" interrupted Kellnitz curtly. "Keep this man here!" he added, turning to the sentries. "Do not admit him until you get the order!"

The sentries saluted, and Captain Kellnitz strode in. A minute later he was closeted with Prince Zeno, and the latter was eagerly scanning the dispatches.

"This is good!" said the Prince at length. "Splendid! We make excellent progress, my good captain!"

The Prince was flushed and hot. He had had no rest since the revolution had commenced; yet he managed to look very spic and span in his smart uniform.

"We are certain of victory," he said gloatingly. "Miklos Keiff and his men are sweeping all before them. I understand that the Grand Duke is sending all his reserve forces, but they will arrive too late—and, in any case,

they will have no spirit for the fight. We have caught them unawares, captain, and —”

He was interrupted by an urgent knocking on the door, and a moment later another officer entered.

“Well?” demanded the Prince.

“There is a man outside, Your Highness, who insists upon seeing you.”

“A man who insists?” repeated the Prince harshly. “Oh? And who is this——”

“He must be the man who attempted to stop me,” said Captain Kellnitz. “I was about to inform you, Your Highness. It might be as well to admit him. I believe he has urgent news—something in connection with a munitions train.”

“Bring him in!” said the Prince briefly.

He was impatient and angry; but both his impatience and his anger evaporated soon after the soldier had been admitted. For the man told a story which brought utter consternation to Prince Zeno’s heart.

“But you are talking nonsense!” said the Prince shakily, after he had heard the first report. “Foreign boys—and girls? An immense black man? You tell me that they attacked the train, and that——”

“As I live, Your Highness, they seized the train, and left our men either dead or unconscious on the track!” said the soldier. “English boys and girls, yes? We have heard of them. Are they not the same boys and girls who were captured by Miklos Keiff?”

“Be silent!” said Prince Zeno, staring straight before him.

This was a staggerer. There could be no doubting the man’s story. Yet, for over twenty-four hours, Prince Zeno had believed that Nelson Lee, Lord Dorrimore, and all the boys and girls had perished in the pass. It was now obvious that they hadn’t perished—they were very much alive! So alive, in fact, that they had penetrated beyond Nid, and had seized a munitions train!

Suddenly, the full significance of the move came to Prince Zeno. Those fugitives were attempting to get through—right through to Galvarad!

“By my sword!” panted Zeno, aghast.

If those English boys and girls got through, it would be nothing short of a catastrophe. For King Victor himself was alive, too! Victor was with those English boys and girls! The story they could tell in Galvarad would so discredit him—Prince Zeno—that the people of Caronia would never allow him to mount the throne as King! In one flash, Zeno realised that his whole ambitious dream was in danger of being shattered. Unless that train could be stopped he was ruined!

He suddenly leapt to his feet, shouting madly. Captain Kellnitz and the other officer stared at him in blank amazement.

“To the station!” croaked Prince Zeno. “Do you hear, you staring fools? We must get to the station and have that train stopped!”

He ran out like a maniac, leapt into the first car he saw, and Captain Kellnitz had only just time to join him. No less than three men were knocked down as the car roared out of the square. But Prince Zeno did not care. He drove like a man possessed. Five minutes earlier, he had been congratulating himself upon the success of his plans; now he was frantic with fear.

And his feelings were in no way eased as he was approaching Malva’s quaint, out-of-date railway station. For a tremendous tumult was taking place there, and the Prince could hear the thundering roar of an approaching train. Even as he leapt out of the car he saw the train arrive, he saw it smash headlong through the gates of the crossing, taking a lorry in its stride. Away went the train, rattling and thundering, leaving panic and confusion in its wake. It roared on into the night, and Prince Zeno had seen all that was necessary.

The fugitives had got through—they were beyond Malva, and now that train was hurtling on to join the Grand Duke’s loyalist forces.

“**D**ONE it!” gasped Nipper exultantly. “My only sainted aunt!” gurgled Church. “I thought we were all booked for Kingdom Come that time!”

“So did I!” breathed McClure.

The juniors, [crouching in one of those rocking trucks, stared behind them at the receding lights of Malva. In many of the other trucks, the fellows were standing up, attempting to regain their breath.

There was no need to conceal themselves now; for that incident in Malva Station had clearly told the enemy that this train was in the wrong hands. Speed had saved them at that crossing, and speed was the only thing which would save them now. Their only chance of getting through the enemy lines was to “make it” before the enemy could take steps to tear up the track, or block it, or otherwise bring the train’s hurtling career to a stop.

“By jingo! The gov’nor’s a marvel!” said Nipper, as he felt Mary Summers clinging to him. “It required nerve to charge through that station like that!”

“He didn’t even hesitate!” said Mary breathlessly. “It might have been death for us all, but he took the chance!”

“He had to,” put in Vivian Travers. “To have stopped there, in the station, would have meant falling into the hands of the enemy. It was just a matter of touch and go!”

“And we’re going!” said Mary happily.

On the engine, Lee was urging Umlosi to pile more and more fuel upon the fire, and Hand-

forth was assisting. The great detective was getting every ounce of speed out of that clanking, wheezing locomotive.

"I believe we're a bit buckled in front, but we're still running," said Lee, his gaze intent on the track ahead. "The line looks clear, too. We might do it."

"There is no man living who can strike fear into me, Umtagati, but I will confess that this vile, rocking monster of metal affrights me much," said Umlosi, his black face shining with perspiration. "Wau! This is no work for a warrior!"

"You're wrong, Umlosi; you and Hand-forth are doing better work than any fighting," said Nelson Lee. "Keep it up! More coal! And let us thank Heaven that there is still water in the boiler, still an excellent head of steam."

Lee was not trusting to his naked eyes; he had powerful night-glasses on him, and every now and again he placed them to his eyes and peered intently ahead at the black, widespread landscape. More than ever, now, he was expecting trouble ahead.

AND Nelson Lee's fears were likely to be realised.

Back in Malva, Prince Zeno was frantically getting the telegraphs to work. The telephones were busy, too, and very soon he was talking with the officer in command of a station some ten miles ahead. It was the nearest station to Malva, in fact, except for one or two minor halts. The rebel front line was only just in advance of this station.

"The munitions train, yes," said the officer over the telephone. "We are expecting it, Your Highness. We need the materials——"

"That train has been seized by the enemy," interrupted Prince Zeno. "Ask no questions. The train must be stopped—destroyed!"

"By St. Peter!" came a gasp over the wires. "The train has been seized? But——"

"Have you any trucks at that station of yours?" demanded the Prince.

"None, Your Highness."

"What men have you? Can you tear up the track during the next ten minutes? I doubt if you have as much time as that——"

"Impossible!" came the answer. "There are men here, but I do not know if we have any tools. But yes! There is one truck that we might use to block the track. It is a petrol wagon, and it stands near the great trestle-bridge over the big ravine. There is a siding there——"

"A siding?" interrupted the Prince sharply. "Good! Let this runaway train be switched on to that siding. It is a simple way of wrecking it."

"But no, Your Highness, that is quite impossible!" said the officer. "The siding enters the main line in the wrong way, if you

can understand me. Even if we turn the switch, the train will not be derailed. It is, in fact, a spring switch. I do not see— Your Highness," went on the officer, after a second's pause, "they tell me that the train can be heard even now."

"Then we are too late!" shouted the Prince savagely.

"Perhaps not, Your Highness. There is a long grade, leading towards the trestle-bridge, and the train is labouring heavily——"

"The bridge!" panted Prince Zeno. "Yes, yes! Listen carefully, my friend! Get that petrol wagon off the siding, send it on to the trestle-bridge, and set it afire!"

"But, Your Highness——"

"In that way the train will hurtle to destruction over the bridge, carrying every human being with it!"

"But if that bridge is destroyed, our lines of communication——"

"Obey!" thundered Prince Zeno, who was so frantic with alarm that he was well nigh panic-stricken. "Would you dare to question the orders of your Prince, man? Do as I say!"

And the officer, rushing out, obeyed. He knew that it was madness. But he did not know that the passing of that train would mean the absolute shattering of Prince Zeno's ambitious plans. Far better to destroy the bridge.

There was no time to be lost.

The petrol wagon, standing on its siding, was quickly pushed upon the permanent way. There were a good many men there, and the officer took Prince Zeno at his word. At the last moment, just before the wagon was sent rolling upon the bridge, the valves were opened and petrol was allowed to pour out in a great stream.

"Stand back!" commanded the officer.

He had matches ready. He was at the end of the petrol trail, and he suddenly dropped a lighted match into that pool of spirit. The result was devastating; it was awful in its effect.

There was a blinding glare, a terrific roar as the flame leapt. It sped across the bridge, it enveloped the wagon, and the next second a sheet of flame was leaping into the night sky—fifty, sixty, seventy feet upwards.

At the same moment the petrol on the bridge caught fire; the flames spread in a blinding mass, reaching downwards over the wooden trestles where the petrol had flowed. It was a terrifying sight indeed. In that one moment the whole bridge had become a mass of white-hot, livid flame.

The officer and his men stood staring fascinatedly. A terrific roar was coming from the wagon itself, and the flames were leaping even higher. The entire ravine was illuminated from side to side.

And the runaway train, having reached the summit of the long incline, was now gathering full speed again, tearing onwards towards the trestle-bridge.

But before it could reach the bridge it was obliged to pass through a great rock cutting which completely shut off all sight of the ravine.

Thus the train thundered upon the bridge suddenly, unexpectedly, as it came hurtling into the open.

With a hiss of steam it clanked on its way unchecked. Roaring and swaying, the doomed train rumbled over the great trestle-bridge; it reached the petrol wagon, and—

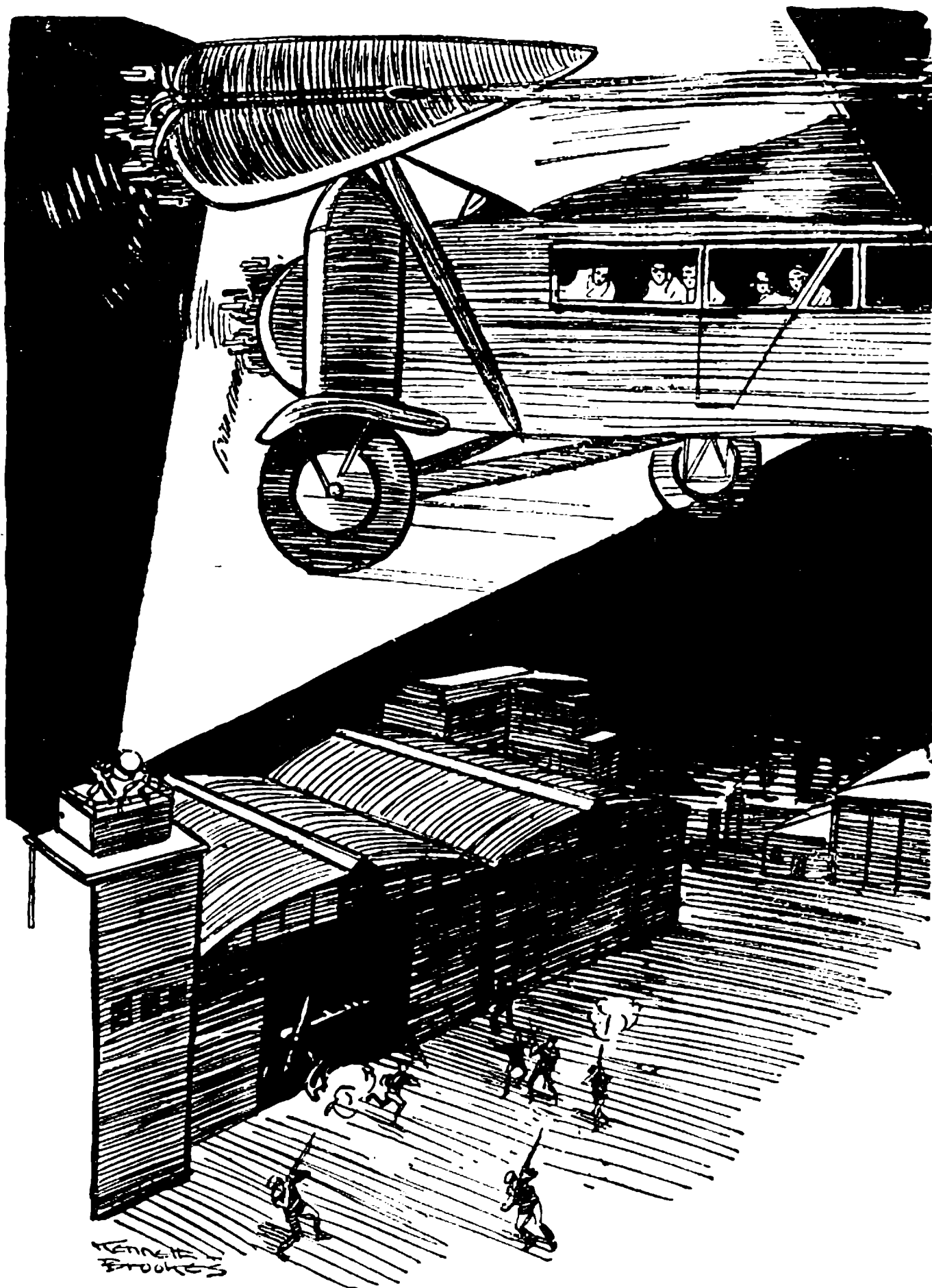
The explosion which followed was horrifying. Sheets of flame spread outwards and upwards. The petrol wagon ceased to exist; the locomotive, leaping the rails, charged madly into the ravine, carrying half the train with it.

Engine and trucks went hurtling down; they struck the shallow river beneath, and there followed another appalling, devastating explosion as the munitions went up in a blinding glare.

Boom—boom! Crash! Crash!

With those explosions from below the trestle-bridge was shattered. It went in all directions, in a thousand fragments, flames and smoke converting the ravine into a hideous inferno. The other trucks thundered down, exploding as they went.

It was an absolute chaos of horror! Nothing could have lived through that terrible catastrophe; and now there was nothing left of the runaway train but a mangled, tangled heap of wreckage, with the destroyed trestle-bridge flaming like a million demon torches.



With the St. Frank's party on board, the giant monoplane soared away over the hangars. Too late, shots were fired as the searchlight caught the plane!

CHAPTER 8.

At the Aerodrome!

WITHOUT doubt, Prince Zeno's drastic plan for stopping the runaway train was effective. For that train was now no more. Unfortunately, from Prince Zeno's point of view, the destruction of the train's amateur crew was not so successful.

For when the train met its doom, with a noise which could have been heard for fifty miles, and which shook the ground like an earthquake, Nelson Lee and his fellow fugitives were standing on the permanent way, half a mile distant.

"By Heaven! I thought so, Dorrie!" said Lee fiercely, as the ground rocked.

"And we might have been aboard!" said Lord Dorrimore soberly.

"But we're not—and we still have hope," said Lee crisply. "Come along, now. We mustn't go along the track. We can guess what's happened."

"They've blown the train up, sir!" exclaimed Nipper, his voice husky.

"I think it's a bit worse than that," said Nelson Lee. "In any case, we can be quite certain that we have delivered a very serious blow to the enemy."

The boys and girls had not yet got over their startled surprise.

It had all come so suddenly. As the train had been labouring sluggishly up the incline, the old locomotive puffing and wheezing like some creature in pain, Nelson Lee had given the order that everybody was to jump clear. The order had passed down the train, and nobody had questioned it.

Jumping clear had been easy enough, too, for at that moment the train had not been doing more than eight miles an hour. Lee had not even touched the throttle; it had remained wide open.

The detective had cause to bless those night-glasses of his.

When nearly at the top of the grade, he had been in a position to see beyond a jutting mass of rock; he had seen a blinding flare of light; and through the glasses he had caught a quick glimpse of a great trestle bridge, with a flaming waggon in the centre of it. Then the train had lumbered into the great rock cutting. And after that had come Lee's dramatic order.

He had known that it would be certain death to stay on the train. Easy enough for them all to jump off now. But Lee had displayed rare brilliance by keeping the locomotive's throttle wide open, so that the train, on reaching the top of the incline, gathered speed and went roaring down upon the bridge as though its driver and passengers knew nothing of the peril.

Thus had a double object been achieved. By sending the train on, Nelson Lee had assured its destruction. And munitions were not so plentiful in the rebel army that a whole trainload could be wasted. Furthermore, the bridge itself, a vital link of communications, was shattered.

That officer had realised this, and he had been appalled at the order from Prince Zeno. The destroying of that bridge would mean utter chaos in the rebel forces; for the advance guard was cut off from the main army, behind. The railway was the only adequate means of communication. There were roads, but they were bad roads.

Now that it was too late, Prince Zeno was

to regret his panic-stricken order. At the time, his only thought had been to destroy the English people who could do so much to frustrate him. His one consolation, in this situation, was the knowledge—or what he thought to be the knowledge—of their death. They had all gone to destruction with the train.

And that was an advantageous point for the fugitives. Zeno believed them dead, so there would be no further search!

Climbing out of the rock cutting, the party went off into the darkness across the open country.

Nelson Lee was perfectly calm, but he was now getting anxious. Dawn was near at hand. But there was something in his mind which filled him with new hope. Nelson Lee was at his best now; the emergency was great, and he was ready for it. Even Lord Dorrimore, man of action though he was, felt awed by Lee's masterly command of the situation.

"Where are we making for, old man?" asked Dorrie breathlessly, as Lee urged them all to hurry.

"Didn't you see what we passed a couple of miles back?"

"I'm hanged if I did!"

"It is always as well, Dorrie, to keep your eyes open," said Lee. "Didn't any of you boys or girls notice something away to the left, as the train approached the gradient?"

"Yes, sir, lights—and some big buildings!" said Nipper. "There was a big open space, about half a mile from the railway line."

"That's it!" agreed Handforth. "I saw it, too. I thought it was one of the enemy's camps."

"So it was—in a way," replied Lee. "An aviation camp."

"Oh!" went up a general cry.

"As we passed, I had time to take quite a good look," continued Nelson Lee. "I will admit that I had the advantage, for I looked through my night-glasses. There are two or three temporary hangars on that big stretch of open grassland. Some aeroplanes, too. Evidently one of Zeno's depots. The Prince was well prepared before he started this revolution; he has bombing 'planes, scouting 'planes—every type of modern war material."

"Ye gods and little fishes!" said Lord Dorrimore. "I'm beginning to get your meaning, Lee! We're making for that aerodrome, eh? You think there's a chance that we might bag a 'plane of some kind?"

"We bagged a train, so why not an aeroplane?" retorted Nelson Lee. "They think we're dead, Dorrie, and that gives us a big advantage. But there's precious little time left, and unless we act before dawn we shan't have much hope. So hurry, everybody!"

THERE was a further reason for Nelson Lee's optimism.

As the train had laboured along, he had not only seen the hangars, but he had seen a great passenger-carrying aeroplane, one of those enormous modern machines which are in daily service between the Continental capitals.

This aerodrome was not merely a hastily-converted meadow, or anything temporary like that. It was one of the Grand Duke Rudolph's latest innovations.

Caronia's "strong man" had established a chain of aerodromes throughout the country. He believed in being up-to-date in every way. He had already inaugurated a regular service of magnificent passenger-carrying 'planes between Galvarad and the capitals of all adjoining countries.

Zeno, of course, had immediately seized every available aerodrome; and he was now using them for war purposes. He had also seized many aeroplanes. Some of these were the machines of the new passenger-carrying service; but they were so constructed that they could be quickly converted into military bombers.

Seeing that great machine from the train, Nelson Lee had not been sorry at the sudden change of plan necessitated by the burning bridge.

Perhaps it was all for the good.

For that machine was big enough to carry them all—if only they could get hold of it. They were approaching the flying-ground in the darkness—their presence unsuspected. By this time, no doubt, the enemy would have come to the conclusion that they were all dead. But for the second time Prince Zeno was being fooled.

Nelson Lee's sense of direction and distance was almost uncanny. Unerringly, he led the way through the dense coppices which lined the railway track. Here and there a break in the trees occurred, and it was while the train had lumbered past one of these openings that Lee had caught a glimpse of the aerodrome.

But it was better to stick to the trees now, for they afforded excellent cover. The boys and girls had completely forgotten their tiredness. They had had plenty of excitement on the train; there was a chance that they would have even greater excitement soon.

This business of getting through the enemy's lines was one of the most thrilling adventures that any of the youngsters had ever had. They were gripped by the perilous nature of it. Surrounded by foes, in constant danger of

their lives, yet they were all sound in limb and in spirit. So successful had their venture been that they had even found a chance of satisfying their appetites.

But the situation was becoming grave now. The hue and cry was silenced, perhaps, but dawn was near at hand. And with the coming of dawn, unless they found some method of escape, they would be lost. Never before had they so appreciated the friendliness of the night.

"Good!" came a murmur from Nelson Lee. "I thought we should just about hit it."

Emerging from the coppice, through the undergrowth of which they had been plunging for some time, they found themselves on the edge of a wide, level expanse of grassland. In the far distance, lights were gleaming, and some of the lights could be recognised as those of motor-car headlamps. There were big buildings, too, dim and vague. The air throbbed with the deep purring of powerful aero engines.

A great searchlight blazed forth, and Lee saw that it was fixed on the top of one of the great hangars. It swung round, sweeping across the aerodrome, and into the beam came that great air-liner.

"I don't like that searchlight much," murmured Lord Dorrimore. "It might come over in this direction—the beam, I mean."

"It wouldn't matter much, we're a long way off," replied Lee. "Nobody over there would see us unless they were specially looking. It's pretty nearly a mile to those hangars, Dorrie. We are at the extremity of the aerodrome."

"And what do we do next?" asked Handforth eagerly. "By George, sir! Supposing we all dash across, take the place by storm, and——"

"Supposing you talk sense, young man?" interrupted Lee. "It wouldn't be so easy to take the place by storm. For all we know, there are three or four hundred men stationed here. We can't take chances like that."

"No, sir," said Handforth meekly, his enthusiasm dampened.

"I admire your pluck, all the same," went on Lee, not unkindly. "But it won't do, Handforth. We've got to be cautious."

Dorrie chuckled.

"We've always said that you were a cautious old stick, Lee, haven't we?" he murmured. "But to-night, by gad, you've proved that you can be as reckless and as daring as anybody. The way you went through Malva station was too glorious for words."

Help Your Newsagent.

Have you ever thought how difficult it is for a newsagent to order just the right number of copies of any particular paper each week? You can make his task much easier if you place a regular order with him. You will not only help him to order correctly and avoid waste, but will make sure of getting your copy regularly each week.

"Oh, it was dreadful!" breathed Irene Manners. "And yet, at the same time, it was just too glorious for words. The excitement of it!"

Nelson Leo was watching the distant aeroplane. It was taxi-ing laboriously, and it was, in fact, coming out in their direction. Lee suddenly made up his mind.

"Listen, you boys and girls," he said quickly. "Stay here, under cover of this little wood. No, don't argue. I mean what I say. Dorrie and Umlosi and I will go forward, and we'll see what we can do."

"You—you mean collar that bus, sir?" asked Nipper.

"It's a tall order, but no taller than the other orders we have essayed to-night," said Lee. "You youngsters stay here while we have a closer look. Be ready to move if you are needed."

And Lee and Dorrie and Umlosi crept forward into the darkness.

CHAPTER 9.

A Desperate Bid!

THE officer in charge of the aerodrome was worried.

Angry orders had just come through, by telephone, from Prince Zeno, insisting upon the big bomber being in the air at the first glimpse of dawn.

"Does he expect us to perform miracles?" grumbled the officer. "The aerodrome was only seized a few hours ago, and there's not one machine ready for the air."

"They think that a passenger liner can be converted into a bomber in a few minutes," said one of the other officers, with a snort. "We'd better get her up, I suppose. The mechanics say that her engines need tuning."

The officers were weary after thirty-six hours continuous action. But there was no rest for them yet. They had recently had a bit of a scare, too, owing to that terrific explosion, which had shaken the whole countryside. The glare of the burning trestle-bridge could still be seen in the distance, although it was dying down now.

These people at the aerodrome had heard some of the details by 'phone, but little did they guess the real truth.

They would have been considerably astonished, for example, could they have known that King Victor of Caronia himself was lurking at the very edge of the aerodrome, watching the buildings!

One of the officers was the pilot selected to take up that great air-liner. He went out now, and with a mechanic beside him in the cockpit, he decided to go across the aerodrome, taxi-ing, in order to give the engines a thorough test. Meanwhile, men were labouring with the bombs, preparing them for the machine.

"I shan't take her up," said the pilot, as he shouted to the other officer on the ground.



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.

SAFETY FIRST.

Peter wanted to play, and he asked his mother for a hammer.

"Certainly not," she replied. "You will only hurt your fingers."

"I won't, mummy," promised Peter. "Mary is going to hold the nails."

(V. Abrams, "Turf Lea," Mornington Road, Radlett, Herts, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

GETTING WET.

Two boys had quarrelled, and were fighting furiously in the pouring rain. They fought until one got the other on his back and held him there.

"Will you give up?" he asked.

"No," replied the other defiantly.

After a time the question was repeated, and again the answer was in the negative.

"Then," said the victor, "will you come on top for a while? I'm getting wet through."

(A. Sparks, 49, Marlborough Road, Dorking, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

NOT QUITE CORRECT.

Teacher: "Now, Tommy, what does 'knows no bounds' mean?"

Tommy: "Please, sir, a kangaroo with rheumatism."

(C. Slattery, Monster House, Tralee, Ireland, has been awarded a book.)

MISTAKEN.

Musician (with very long hair, speaking to assistant barber): "Ah, I think you're the fellow who cut my hair last time."

Assistant (eyeing flowing mop): "It couldn't have been me, sir, I've only been here two years."

(B. Laws, 5, Wayland Avenue, Dalston, E.8, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

COULDN'T BE JONES.

The class was taking a singing lesson. The teacher, hearing someone singing in a very low tone, asked:

"Jones, is that you singing in your boots?"

"No sir. I've got shoes on," replied Jones.

(M. Ward, 34, Grosvenor Road, Woodlands, Nr. Doncaster, has been awarded a penknife.)

"Too risky in this darkness, even with the searchlight. But I want to get these engines right. I'll take her over to the other side of the aerodrome, and then open her out a bit on the way back. I want to get the feel of her, too. First time I've ever been at the controls of a machine this size."

It was certainly an enormous aeroplane—an all-metal monoplane with a luxurious passenger saloon and an enclosed pilot's cabin. The saloon even extended into the central portion of the great wings, and there were three powerful engines.

The pilot was quite a young man—one of Prince Zeno's dupes. A very different type from Miklos Keiff and his wild mountaineers. By bribery, by false promises, Zeno had persuaded all classes of the Caronian population to rally to his banner.

The young revolutionary was experienced enough—but only with the small, light aeroplane. He felt rather scared of the machine which he was to pilot—which he was to take over Galvarad on a bombing expedition.

Zeno was determined to strike stark terror into the hearts of the loyalists. It was his plan to bomb the city at dawn—or as soon after as possible.

The young pilot was delighted with the way in which the great machine answered his touch. He was becoming enthusiastic by the time he had reached the farther end of the big aerodrome. He was eager, now, to take the monster into the air. He felt that it would not be so

difficult as it had seemed. The first flush of dawn was already appearing in the sky.

The air-liner had now passed beyond the beam of the searchlight—which, it seemed, was unable to swivel round so far.

Comparatively close at hand, a full mile from the aerodrome, was that coppice. And there, watching, were the St. Frank's boys, the Moor View girls, and King Victor—and the monoplane was coming towards them.

All were breathless with excitement. It seemed to them that the enemy was playing right into their hands. It was an amazing piece of luck.

King Victor watched in suspense. He, more than any of the others, was passing through severe nervous tension this night. It was his beloved little country which was being wounded and scarred by this revolution. He was grateful to his rescuers—for Victor never lost sight of the fact that they had entered upon all these dangers largely for his sake. It would be cruel, indeed, if they were to fail now, at the eleventh hour.

For everything depended upon their getting away. If only they could reach Galvarad in safety—

A dark figure was running out towards the plane, which was now swinging round, preparatory to making the homeward trip, her engines humming loudly, and with a regular beat. The pilot was finding that the engines were really in no need of tuning.

That figure, mysteriously appearing out of the gloom, was running madly in front of the

HAD ITS USES.

"That's rather a big hole in your umbrella."

"Yes, but it's jolly useful to look through to see if the rain has stopped."

(K. Carnie, P.O. Box 4,609, Johannesburg, S. Africa, has been awarded a book.)

VERY H'ODD.

Two bricklayers were climbing ladders, an elderly one carrying sixteen bricks, the other eight bricks. The foreman called the younger man and said:

"Hi, why are you only carrying eight a time, while Murphy is taking up double that number?"

"Oh, Murphy is too lazy to go up and down the ladder twice," replied the young man.

(R. Collins, 54, St. James' Street, Dover, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

A LONG JOB.

Over the garage was a sign: "Repairs while you wait." Into the garage came a very delapidated car.

"Say, if you want this repaired, we don't guarantee you board and lodging while you wait," remarked the garage man.

(V. Fowles, 9 Mattison Road, Hornsey, N.4, has been awarded a penknife.)

IT SHOOK THE CAR.

Motor-lorry driver (to driver of "baby" car): "I say, old chap, your back wheels keep jerking off the ground."

Driver of "baby" car: "Well, what of it? Can't a fellow sneeze without your interfering?"
(H. Green, 94, Doris Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, has been awarded a book.)

INTERIOR DECORATION.

Little girl: "A packet of pink dye, please."

Grocer: "For woollen or cotton goods?"

Little girl: "It's for ma's stomach. The doctor said she'd have to diet, and pink's her favourite colour."

(C. Whiteman, 49d, Warner Road, Camberwell, S.E.5, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

NOT AMBITIOUS.

Father (to small son): "And what would you like to be when you grow up, my boy?"

Small son: "Just an ordinary man like you, daddy."

(H. Brogden, 2, Sticker Lane, Bradford, has been awarded a penknife.)

HE WON.

Mother stood facing her son, whose clothes were dripping wet.

"What ever have you been doing?" she asked in startled horror.

"Oh, I was having a game with the boys to see who could walk nearest the canal," replied the lad. "I beat them all 'cos I fell in."

(R. Purser, 6, Vicarage Road, Stratford, E.15, has been awarded a book.)



great air-liner, waving its arms. Instinctively, the pilot eased up, until the propellers were just ticking over. The machine lumbered to a standstill. That figure, looking so small on the ground below, was a man in rags and tatters.

"A message—a message!" he croaked in Slav. "An urgent message for Prince Zeno!" The man clutched at his heart, swayed, and then ran nearer. "You hear?" he asked feebly. "A great loyalist army is breaking through, and Prince Zeno must know. He must be told—"

The man swayed again, reeled, and fell heavily to the ground. He lay perfectly still. And the young officer and the mechanic, climbing hastily down, ran to the fallen man.

"He's wounded!" panted the young pilot. "But was he raving, Jakob? You heard what he said. We must—"

He got no further; for at the same second two dark forms loomed up from the surrounding gloom. Lord Dorrimore and Umlosi were on the job—and the prostrate figure on the ground suddenly galvanised into life. That figure belonged to Nelson Lee—and Lee felt that he had been thoroughly justified in adopting that simple trick, in order to lure the pilot and mechanic down from the cockpit.

There was scarcely any fight.

Umlosi had the mechanic in his iron grip, and was holding him with ease. Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore were giving their full attention to the pilot. They did not treat him badly; they rolled him over, quickly tied his wrists behind him, and secured his ankles.

"Sorry, my friend," said Lee coolly. "It was rather a shabby trick, perhaps, but war is war."

"Shabby be hanged!" said Lord Dorrimore. "It was either that or shooting him. He has come to no harm—and he's well out of trouble, if you ask me. What do we do next?"

"See that they are both bound tightly—and gagged," replied Lee. "We can leave them here, on the open grass. It doesn't matter. Once we're away, we need not fear any of these revolutionaries."

"Whoopee!" grinned his lordship. "We'll be well away soon!"

"Wau! Is there to be no end to these mad-nesses, N'Kose?" asked Umlosi, as he stared up in awe at the vast enormity of the all-metal air-liner. "Nay, my master! Never will I consent to travel in this! Rather would I face the enemy single handed, and die in battle, as a man should!"

"You're not going to die at all, Umlosi," said Nelson Lee crisply. "Dorrie, dash back and get the crowd. And hurry! Things are beginning to look good."

"Beginning?" grinned Dorrie. "Why, we're as good as home!"

He dashed off, as lighthearted as a boy. And Nelson Lee, having made certain that the two prisoners were helpless, leapt lightly on to the great machine. In the cockpit he examined the controls, and was in no way puzzled. Lee himself was a brilliant pilot, and on more than one occasion he had taken charge of a big machine of this type. He saw, to his satisfaction, that the petrol gauge told of well-filled tanks.

There was a little doorway at the back of the cabin, and Lee, opening it, went through a

tiny passage, and thus into the big passenger saloon. It only took him a moment or two to find the electric light switches; and soon the saloon was flooded with soft radiance.

Lee strode over the carpet, opened the big door, and stood there. He made an incongruous figure in the doorway—ragged, tattered, grimy.

He felt as though he had suddenly been spirited out of a particularly nasty nightmare into the world of realities again. For this aeroplane meant freedom—safety. And Lee was thinking far more of the boys and girls than he was of himself.

They soon came, helter-skelter, with Lord Dorrimore well in the lead.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Mr. Lee!"

"We've done it—we've got the 'plane!"

"All aboard, you girls! Women and children first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let his Majesty be the first!" cried Irene.

"It's one of his aeroplanes, anyhow, isn't it?"

They were all so excited that they were ready to laugh at anything. One or two of them, in fact, were inclined to be a bit hysterical. And it was not to be wondered at; they had recently passed through a period of hectic tension. To see this great machine here, with the cabin all lighted up, seemed rather too good to be true.

And it was, really, a striking example of the magic of the modern aeroplane. For the fugitive party, in the heart of the enemy country, with dangers on all sides of them, were at liberty to escape—easily, freely, and without risk. This one machine was the "magic carpet" on which they could flee.

They all piled in, and Lord Dorrimore, who was the last, closed and bolted the door.

He gave a swift glance round, a sort of roll-call, and he was satisfied. Umlosi was there, too, and Umlosi was looking very, very uncomfortable.

"Cheer up, old coal-box," grinned Dorrie. "We shall soon be all right now!"

"Rather would I face a hundred savage foes!" muttered Umlosi.

Dorrie passed through into the control cabin, where Nelson Lee was already sitting in the pilot's seat.

"Ready?" he asked, glancing round.

"Go ahead, old man!" said Dorrie. "All aboard!"

Nelson Lee nodded, opened up the throttle, and the three great engines roared in response. The enormous machine lumbered across the grass, gathered speed, and soon she had gained flying speed.

He moved the "joy-stick"—which, in this machine, was really a beautifully-equipped wheel. As lightly as a feather that enormous aircraft left the ground, and rose. In sheer exuberance, Lee opened the throttles wider, pulled the "stick" more, and she soared higher and higher. Lee found that the craft answered instantly to her controls, and she was as easy to pilot as a little Moth.

They went roaring over the hangars, and the searchlight played upon them for a moment. Men could be seen running about on the ground; shots were fired, for by this time the rebels had begun to suspect the truth.

But it was too late—that great plane had got away.

Success! Nelson Lee, in the pilot's seat, felt supremely happy. Freedom! The night's perils and excitements were over.

AT that very time, in Galvarad, and in most of the other big towns of Caronia, the people were dumb with consternation and fear. They were stunned by the dramatic news which had reached them. The people felt as though they had been dealt a number of hammer blows, one after the other.

First had come the news of the sudden revolution—the taking of Nid, the storming of Malva, the spreading of the rebel forces throughout the countryside—the advance upon Galvarad itself.

Refugees had come pouring into the capital by every available train, and along every road. The revolution was no longer a myth—but a grim reality. It was war!

And then, on the top of all this, other news arrived.

It was rumoured that young King Victor had been killed in the Kazatova Mountains!

Nobody believed it at first, and immenso crowds stormed the Grand Duke's palace, clamouring for news.

That night, in fact, nobody in Galvarad slept. The town was in a fever of excitement, anxiety, and dread.

Soldiers were moving out every hour; they were off to the front, to repel the rebel forces.

It seemed that some of Miklos Keiff's bandits had been drinking heavily in Nid; and, intoxicated by success as well as by the drink, they had been boasting about the recent events in the rocky gorge. They had told the whole story of the "tragedy of the pass."

It had become general knowledge throughout Nid—and throughout Malva—that King Victor had perished with every member of the English party when the pass had crashed down upon them.

Thus the news had spread like wildfire until, in some miraculous manner, it reached the capital itself.



Shouting, cheering crowds lined the streets as the cars containing King Victor and the St. Frank's party proceeded to the royal palace.

And then, like a stunning blow, came an official bulletin, signed by the Grand Duke himself, admitting that King Victor had been seized by Prince Zeno, and that he had been carried into the mountains; the reports of his death were probably true. The Grand Duke held out no hope that King Victor would ever be seen again.

This was convincing enough, and the people of Galvarad mourned their young king; the hatred against Prince Zeno became fanatical, and the citizens were enrolling hourly, eager to fight, to defend their country against the rebels.

Caronia, in fact, was stunned by all this dreadful news—and it was particularly alarming to hear that Prince Zeno and his victorious forces were advancing rapidly upon the capital.

Then came a new terror.

Dawn found the streets as full of people as ever; aeroplanes came droning over, and bombs were dropped. There were many casualties.

Zeno, it was evident, was out to make this war short and sharp. His idea was to batter the Caronian populace until they demanded a cessation of hostilities; and Prince Zeno would be able to dictate his own terms.

CHAPTER 10.

The Turning of the Tide!

"LOOK!" said Victor Orlando, pointing. **"Galvarad!"**

Not one of the boys or girls in the air-liner's cabin had thought of sleeping. The chairs were luxurious enough, but the young people were beyond sleep just now. The excitement was not yet over. Until they were actually on solid land, amongst friends, they would not feel themselves safe.

But, at least, they felt that the worst was over.

There was something wonderful in the smooth gliding flight of this great machine. Under Nelson Lee's guiding hand, she was behaving splendidly. Flying at a height of three or four thousand feet, she had winged her way swiftly over the Caronian countryside—and now the capital was below.

The lights were no longer burning in the cabin. Full daylight had come, and the sun was rising in golden glory. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and the day looked like being another of those hot, breathless days which Caronia had been experiencing lately.

"My only sainted aunt!" said Handforth, as he stared out of the window. **"Yes, it's Galvarad right enough! We've arrived, you girls! Pretty good, eh?"**

Irene made a grimace.

"We're not fit to be seen," she said, with concern.

Handforth grinned.

"That's just what a girl would say!" he commented. **"Well, I'm jiggered! We've escaped from those beastly rebels, we're out of danger—and all Renie can think about is her giddy appearance!"**

"Girls are always like that, you ass!" said Nipper, with a chuckle.

"And, let me tell you, boys can be like it, too," said Archie Glenthorne. **"Odds frights and horrors! I'm in a most awful condition, laddies! If it comes to that, we all are! I mean to say, we can't possibly land at Galvarad."**

"We're dipping now, old man," said Travers gently. **"There's the big airport, down there. We're going to land."**

"Good gad!" said Archie bleakly, as he gazed at his tattered and dirt-begrimed attire.

Not many of the others minded. They would all be glad of a wash and a change, but they regarded such things as mere details.

Down below, in the city, fresh consternation was spreading. The coming of this giant air-liner—recognised immediately as one which had been seized by Prince Zeno's forces—was a signal for fresh panic.

Bombs were expected.

People stared up in dread as the great metal monoplane circled over the city. But no bombs came, and the machine dropped lower and

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



lower—finally to glide down into the grounds of the great Galvarad airport. This was another of the Grand Duke's innovations. It was one of the most up-to-date and perfectly-equipped airports in Europe, and it was regularly used by the aeroplanes of other nations.

As lightly as a feather, the machine landed, and then taxied across the aerodrome towards the stately hangars, customs buildings, and other edifices—which included a modern hotel of the luxury type.

Officials were running out, and they were accompanied by numbers of army officers, for, in the emergency which now existed in Caronia, all aerodromes had been commandeered by the military.

It was thought that this big machine had been saved by one of the loyalists, and there was a good deal of enthusiasm. But when the cabin

door opened, and the boys and girls and Umlosi and Lord Dorrimore came pouring out, the shouts which went up were deafening. Everybody was wild with excitement.

"Hallo! We're getting quite a good welcome," said Dorrie cheerfully. "Frightfully sorry to drop in so unexpectedly—we apologise for our appearance—"

"But—but this is impossible!" exclaimed one of the officers, pushing forward. "Are you not Lord Dorrimore?"

"Even through the grime, I'm recognised," nodded his lordship. "That's right, sir. Mr. Nelson Lee will be here in a minute. He's been our pilot."

"For League and Cup!"

By E. S. BROOKS.

Fresh from their amazing adventures abroad, the St. Frank's chums return in triumph. School once again—and football! But it's Soccer with an added zest, for Lord Dorrimore forms a league and cup competition, with two splendid cups as awards. The St. Frank's Remove seethes with excitement to get going, keen to commence their first league match. Then comes the bombshell! The school's new chairman, Professor Ogleby, wants to uproot the precious playing fields to unearth some Roman ruins! Consternation in the Remove, and anger.

This topping yarn will compel your interest from first line to last.

"Outlawed!"

By DAVID GOODWIN.

The first gripping instalment of a magnificent new serial makes its appearance in this issue—an old chum in Dick Forrester returns to our pages. You'll enjoy every word of the first chapters.

"Handforth's Weekly!"

"OUR ROUND TABLE TALK!"

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

"Mr. Lee!" shouted the officer joyously. "Then the rumours were false?"

"If you heard rumours that we were all killed, they're certainly false," agreed Dorrie. "We've had a pretty lively time, one way and another, but we're all safe and sound—and jolly glad to get back to civilisation."

"My lord," said the officer, his tone changing, "you say that you are all safe? But what of His Majesty? What of our young King?"

Dorrie grinned.

"I don't blame you for failing to recognise your own king," he said. "But Victor is somewhere among these boys and girls. He's a modest fellow, for a king—and I don't think he quite relished being seen until he's had a wash and brush-up. But—"

He was not allowed to get any further. For by now King Victor had been recognised,

and there was a wild rush; even the officers and officials joined in it, and for some little time pandemonium reigned.

Cheers rang out again and again. King Victor had returned!

It was a joyous moment for all those loyal Caronians.

And after the depressing news of the night the dramatic arrival of King Victor and Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore and the boys and girls came as a shock—but it was a glorious shock.

Motor-cars were quickly commandeered, and a procession started—from the airport to the royal palace. And long before the main streets of Galvarad were reached the news had passed in advance.

The people went mad with excitement and enthusiasm. The streets were lined with shouting, cheering mobs. The boys and girls felt that all they had passed through was worth it—if only for the thrill of this tremendous reception.

There was an interruption long before the centre of Galvarad was reached.

For a great limousine car, forcing its way through the thronged streets, met the procession on the outskirts.

The Grand Duke himself stepped out of that car, and for a moment he stared almost blankly at the grimy, dishevelled figures which confronted him.

"Uncle!" exclaimed a joyous voice.

And then the Grand Duke saw that one of the figures was that of Victor. He leapt forward, and a moment later they were clasped in one another's arms. Tears were streaming down the old man's lined cheeks.

"My boy—my boy!" he murmured. "Then you are safe!"

"Everything's as right as rain, uncle," said Victor, gently.

"Last night I heard that you were dead—this morning they told me that you had landed at the aerodrome, but I could not believe it," said the Grand Duke, standing back and viewing Victor at arms' length. "Well, well! Yes, it is you, Victor, my boy! How glad I am to see you! How badly Caronia needs you at this hour!"

"Are things so terribly grave, uncle?" asked Victor, quickly.

"Not now," replied the Regent, pulling himself up, and speaking with confidence. "They were grave—but they're not now! Oh, my boy, your coming will mean the saving of thousands of young lives—lives which would otherwise have been ruthlessly destroyed by the accursed ambition of that young scoundrel, Zeno!"

He turned, and he gripped Nelson Lee's hand in his.

"So we meet again, Mr. Lee?" he said huskily. "You set forth to rescue my nephew—and you succeeded!"

"I am afraid I made a poor job of it, your Excellency," said Lee.

"No, no! Do not say that!" protested the Grand Duke. "I know of the difficulties you encountered; I know of the treachery which enabled Miklos Keiff to escape, and thus upset all your plans. And you have all returned safely? Lord Dorrimore, these good English boys and girls? I am a happy man, Mr. Lee."

"Do you really think that our coming will affect the general situation?" asked Nelson Lee.

"My dear sir, it will bring about the collapse of the revolution!" declared the Grand Duke. "There is no question of that at all. Zeno cannot possibly mount the throne of Caronia when the people hear the full and treacherous story of his plotting and scheming. Your return, and Victor's return, will enable me to publish that story. For you are here to supply the living evidence. Your arrival will mean the utter discrediting of Prince Zeno. I very much doubt if his own rebels will support him for long, once they learn of his villainy."

"You shall have my full report after I have visited my hotel, and——"

"But no!" protested the Grand Duke. "I desire that you shall all be my guests in the royal palace. Or if you prefer, the guests of His Majesty."

"You bet!" said His Majesty promptly. "Cheese it, Mr. Lee! While you're in Galvarad you've got to be my guests, or I shall want to know the reason why. In fact," he added sternly, "you'll jolly well earn the royal displeasure if you jib!"

SO, within the hour, the entire party was enjoying itself in the royal palace.

They didn't know much about it, for they were all sound asleep.

No sooner had they arrived than the reaction set in. Their dangers were over—they were in a safe haven. And they more or less collapsed. Most of them just had time for a good hot bath and then they tumbled straight into bed. They were so worn out that they did not even desire any food.

Even Umlosi, iron man though he was, slept.

Nelson Lee was the only one who contented himself with a mere one hour's nap. Then he prepared his full report for the Grand Duke, and for two or three hours they were in close conference, while Lee gave every detail of the adventures in the Kazatova Mountains.

Meanwhile, the great broadcasting station of Galvarad was working overtime.

The Grand Duke was modern in every way; and he had provided Caronia with a string of broadcasting stations which were second to none in Europe. From one end of the country to the other the great news was sent forth; it was broadcasted repeatedly, with further and further details. The Grand Duke made no secret of the recent events. He believed in telling the full truth—so that the people of Caronia should judge.

The results were exactly as he had expected.

Plentiful as the volunteers had been overnight they were now confusing in their numbers. Every able-bodied man in the capital was anxious to enrol—to fight against the advancing rebels. Galvarad was a city of wild excitement.

And it was the same in the towns and the villages and the hamlets. In every corner of Caronia men were laying down their tools, they were leaving the factories, they were thinking only of fighting back the rebels.

More than this.

The rebels themselves were learning of the startling events which had taken place that morning in the capital. Like a flaming sword, the

truth seared through the ranks of Prince Zeno's rebel armies.

Many thousands of those men had hitherto regarded Prince Zeno as an honourable, upright nobleman—a man whose single thought was the good of his country. He had gained the support of the Grand Duke's political enemies—men who had radical ideas, perhaps, but who were no traitors.

And the result, when the full truth was known, was devastating.

For the rebels themselves were in doubt. Their leader was a plotter, a trickster, a liar!

And the revolution, which had started so strongly, showed ominous signs of cracking up.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH yawned, turned over lazily, and grunted. "Rats!" he mumbled. "Blow the rising-bell!"

He did not open his eyes, but he was aware of bells. Yet, somehow, they did not seem entirely unmusical. The sound was certainly not like the unwelcome clang of the customary rising-bell at St. Frank's.

"Great Scott!" came a sudden exclamation.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth.

He sat up in bed, opened his eyes, and blinked.

"What the dickens are you doing in my dormitory, Nipper?" he demanded. "You don't usually——Hallo! What the——Where are we?" he added blankly.

He found himself in a noble apartment, where there were two or three great beds. Church and McClure were sleeping beside him. In the next bed, Nipper and Tregellis-West and Watson were to be seen—and Nipper was sitting up.

"I don't blame you, Handy," said Nipper. "I was a bit muddled myself at first. Don't you remember? We're in the Royal Palace."

"The royal which?" yelled Handforth.

"We're in Galvarad."

"By George, yes!" gasped Handforth, leaping out of bed. "I remember now, of course! Galvarad! Our giddy adventures on that awful train, and then the aeroplane, and——"

"Seems like a dream, doesn't it?" asked Nipper.

"I wonder how long we've been sleeping?"

"Twenty-four hours, I should say," said Nipper. "It's only early morning, by the look of the sun, and something else seems to be happening out in the city, too. Listen to those bells chiming! They're like joy-bells!"

"Twenty-four hours!" ejaculated Handforth, startled. "Rot! What's to-day?"

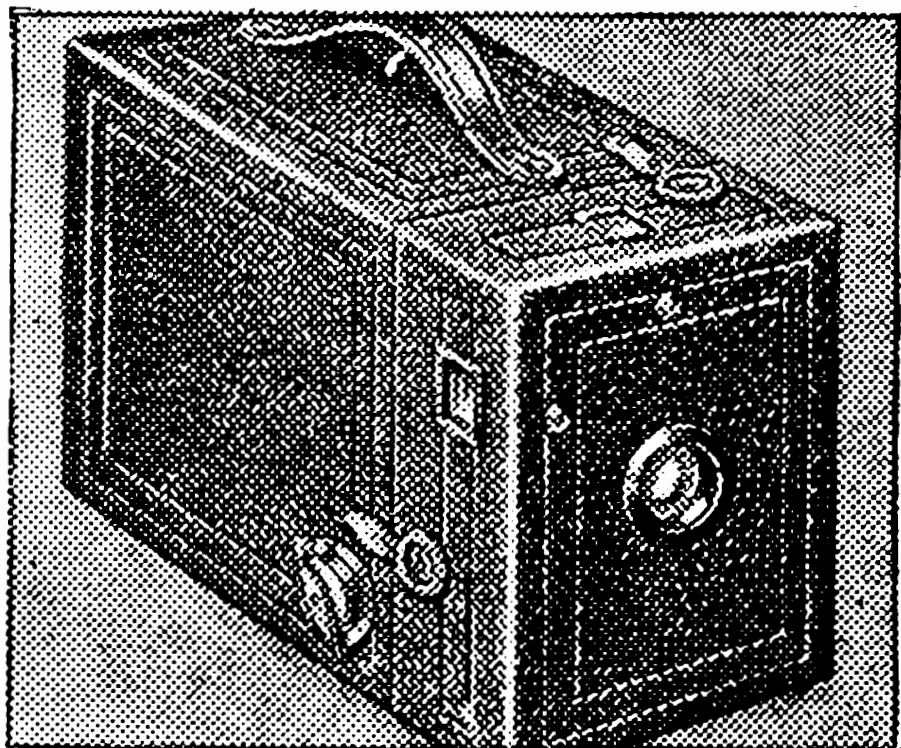
"Thursday, of course. We arrived yesterday morning—Wednesday," said Nipper. "By jingo! I'm feeling fresh enough now—and I could eat a giddy ox!"

The other fellows were awakening now; but before they could ask any questions the great double doors at the end of the apartment opened, and Lord Dorrimore strolled in.

"Hallo, hallo!" sang out his lordship. "Wake up, you sluggards! Can you hear the joy-bells ringing?"

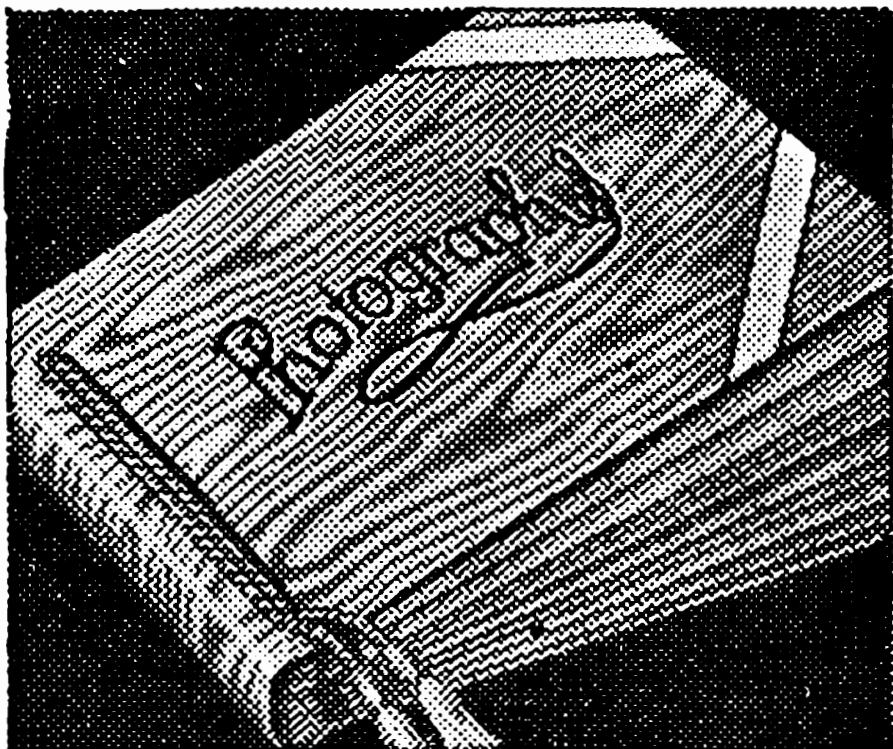
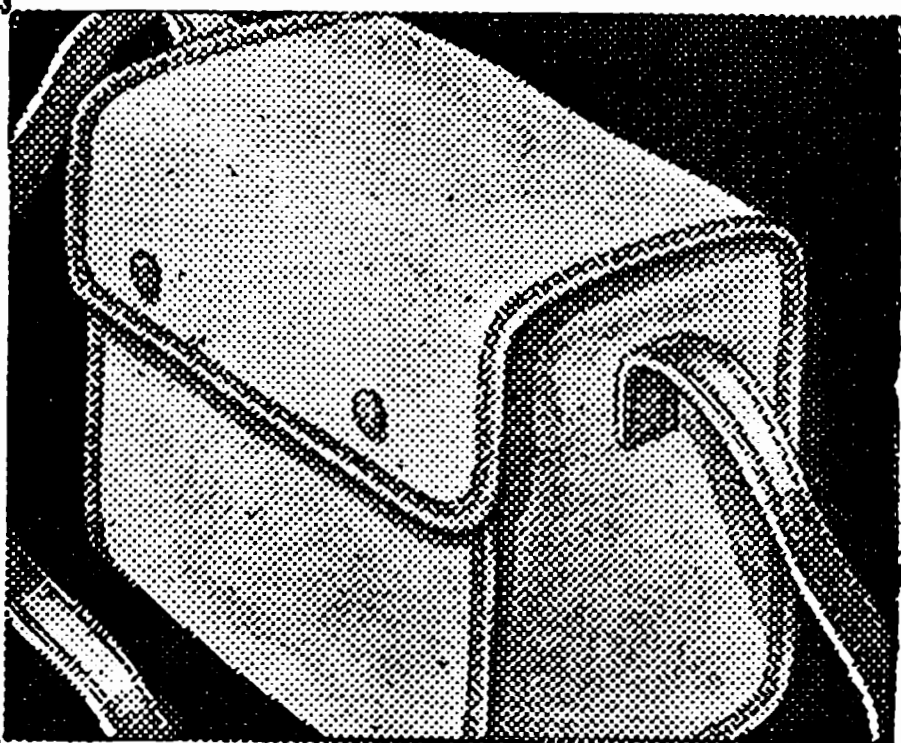
"What do they mean, Dorrie?" went up a shout.

(Continued on page 38.)



LOOK WHAT'S IN THE NEW NESTLÉ'S GIFT BOOK

A "Hawkeye" camera made by Kodak.
A waterproof case to carry it in.
A silk-bound album to mount the fine
snaps you have taken! These are just
three out of scores of useful gifts
in the new Nestlé's Free Gift Book.
And there are one or more Free Gift
Coupons in every Nestlé's packing,
from the 2d. wrapped bar upwards.



Send to-day for this the finest list
ever offered of things you really want.
With it comes a voucher for five coupons.

- G. 135. Camera. Two View-finders. 140 Coupons.
One View-finder. 120 Coupons.
G. 136. Shoulder Strap Camera Case. 50 Coupons.
G. 197. Moiré Silk Album. 48 Pages. 110 Coupons.

NESTLÉ'S CHOCOLATE

To NESTLÉ'S (Gift Department), Silverthorne Road, Battersea, London, S.W.8.
Please send me Voucher for 5 FREE COUPONS and the NEW Nestlé's Presentation List
53/22.8.31.

NAME
IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Address
This offer applies only to Great Britain & Northern Ireland. ½d. Stamp sufficient if envelope is unsealed.

FIVE FREE COUPONS

Through the Enemy's Lines!

(Continued from page 36.)

His lordship was looking quite himself—resplendent in summer flannels, as spic and span as ever.

"I thought I'd better come and wake you up," he explained. "You've had quite enough sleep."

"We've been in bed for twenty-four hours, haven't we?" asked Nipper.

"Guess again," said Lord Dorrimore.

"Not longer?" yelled Handforth.

"Forty-eight hours, my lad—forty-eight solid hours," said his lordship sternly. "You went to bed on Wednesday morning—and now it's Friday morning."

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"No wonder we're hungry!"

"I don't blame you, of course," went on Dorrie. "I don't mind admitting that I've only been out of bed about six hours myself. And you'll probably be interested to know that the girls are only just getting up. When you come to think of it, we all needed a thoroughly long sleep. We were a good bit behind."

"Phew! Forty-eight hours!" whistled Nipper. "How's the revolution going?"

"The which?" asked Lord Dorrimore politely.

"The revolution."

"The revo—— Oh, you mean that dirty business which Prince Zeno was mixed up in?" said Dorrie, as though it were the merest trifle. "My dear kids, it's over."

"Over!" yelled the boys.

"Over and done with—and in a week's time it will be forgotten," said his lordship. "That's why the bells are ringing. The rebels were finally routed last night—after a pretty hefty battle, in which the Grand Duke's forces put it well and truly across the enemy. There were a good few volunteers in that action, too, and they made hay of Miklos Keiff and his bandits."

"Tell us!" urged Handforth.

"There's nothing much to tell, old man," said Dorrie. "The fact is, the populace rose in its might. Prince Zeno found that he had bitten off far more than he could chew. We expected something of the sort, didn't we? Even his own men turned against him, so you can quite understand that the revolution was short and sharp."

"But we expected it to last for some weeks, at least," said Nipper.

"Our turning up at such a dramatic moment made all the difference in the world," explained Dorrie, losing some of his lightness. "It gave the people just that fire they needed. It robbed the rebels of their own determination. Thousands of them had no more heart in the game. They deserted in droves—just when the prince needed them most. Still, he's paid the penalty."

"What have they done to him?" asked Handforth.

"Prince Zeno fell in battle," replied Dorrie quietly.

"Oh!"

"There's not much to be said in favour of

that scamp, but he at least had the decency to fall like a soldier," said Lord Dorrimore. "I've heard that Miklos Keiff has been wiped out, too—to say nothing of half his fiery force. It's a certainty, anyhow, that the Kazatova Mountains, from now onwards, will be perfectly safe for tourists. There'll be no more bandits—no more outlawry as there was in the old days."

"Taking it altogether," said Handforth cheerfully, "we seem to have done a bit of good to Caronia, eh?"

THE Grand Duke Rudolph insisted upon the party staying in Galvarad for a day or two; he wanted them to remain for three or four weeks, but Nelson Lee gently but firmly pointed out the impossibility of this. St. Frank's would be reopening soon, and it was necessary for the boys to be there on the first day of the term. And it would be better, perhaps, if they could spend a few days at their homes before returning to school.

So, for a glorious day or two, the party remained in Galvarad, to be feted and banqueted until they hardly knew whether they were on their heads or their heels.

The girls enjoyed themselves immensely—although the boys were not so keen on this sort of thing.

As for King Victor, a new decision had been made regarding him—in consequence of the collapse of the revolution, and the death of Prince Zeno.

As there was no longer any danger for the king, it was felt by all that it would be far better if he remained in Galvarad. Young Victor himself was torn; he wanted to stay, yet, at the same time, he was keen enough on going back to St. Frank's with all those merry juniors of the Remove.

However, Lord Dorrimore made things easier. He was so pleased with everything in general, that he decided to build a great Public School in Galvarad, on the lines of St. Frank's—almost identical with St. Frank's, in fact. It was to be a Public School on the English system. And Dorrie, being a millionaire, could indulge himself in this way.

So when this great school was built, King Victor would be one of the first scholars—and until then he would have a private tutor, with Paul Maddox, his lifelong chum, as constant companion.

So the adventure ended, and the St. Frank's fellows and the Moor View girls at last took their leave.

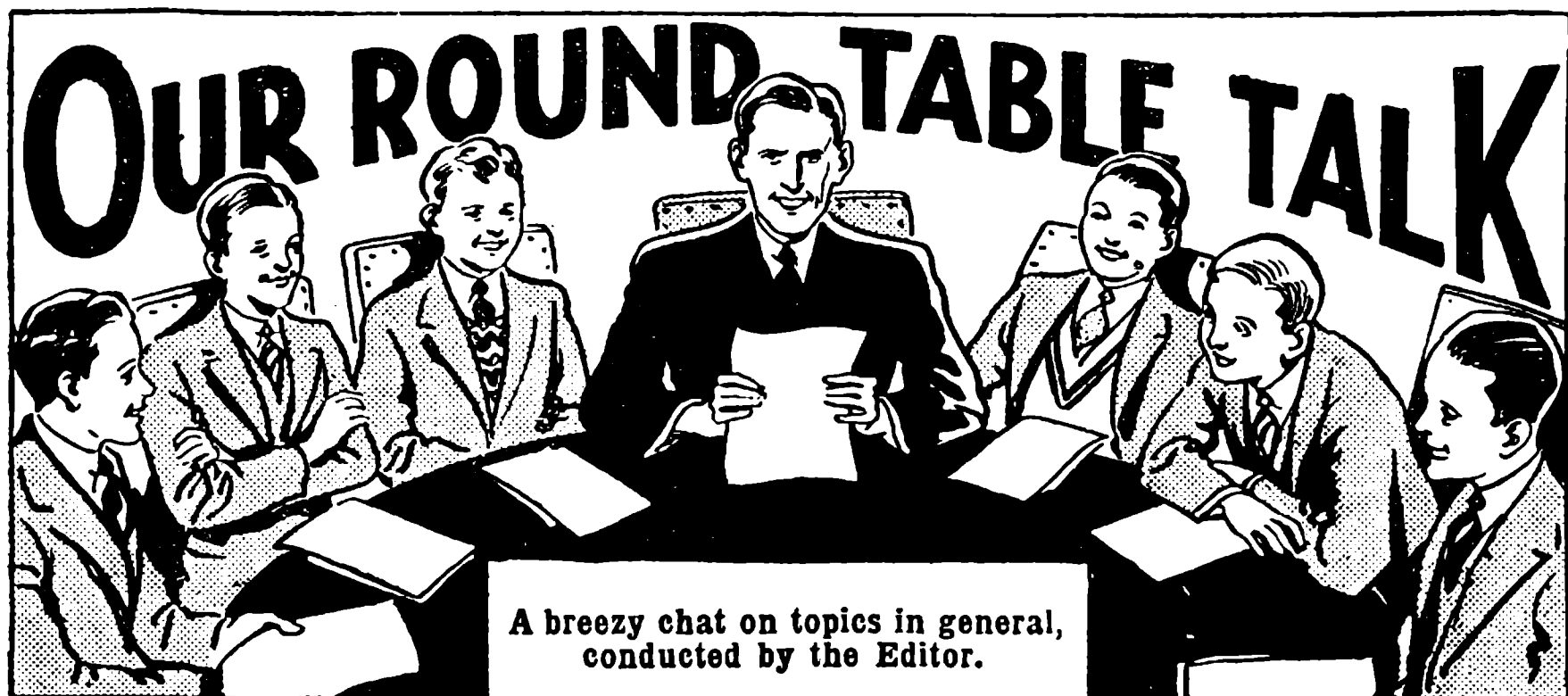
At heart, they were rather glad to be off—for they were longing for a sight of good old England again.

Back to St. Frank's, back for the beginning of the new term—to say nothing of the football season!

THE END.

(Grand new series of school and football yarns, with Nipper & Co. back at St. Frank's, starts next Wednesday. Opening story entitled: "For League and Cup!" Tell all your pals about this corking series, which is one of the finest and most sensational that has ever appeared in the Old Paper.)

Gather Round for a Cheery Chin-wag, Chums!



LETTERS acknowledged from: W. Reg. Osborne (Leicester), James Swindlehurst (Brixton), D. Hanlon (Geraldton, West Australia), Peter Mortis (London, Ontario), Cyril R. F. Amery (Beckom, N.S.W.), Jack Godden (Hilton, South Australia), I. Borts (Kenilworth, South Africa), Peter L. Gomm (Bristol), R. J. Dixon (Reading), Ernest S. Holman (Leyton), Valerie Dudley (Tallygaroopna), Ralph Clarry—three letters (Toronto), Alan Gordon (Melbourne).

Before dealing with this week's answers, three replies are given below to readers whose letters were acknowledged in last week's issue.

Barcliffe College is quite a big school, Ralph Leadbeater, and it often has cricket and football fixtures with St. Frank's. But there is no school in the district named Barfield. The Comte de Plessigny, who caused such trouble to Lord Dorrimore and the St. Frank's fellows in South America—in that wonderland of the Amazon region known as Eldorado, the land of the White Giants—was never fully accounted for. It was generally believed that he died, and that Eldorado itself was obliterated in a great earthquake. But that strange region lies beyond trackless swamps, and many people believe that the disaster was not half so serious as it seemed. Lord Dorrimore is convinced that many of those people of the White Giants escaped, and one day he means to return in an attempt to find out.

The title and date of publication of No. 1 of the Old Paper has been given many times on this page, Ben Eyton. However, here is the information once again: No. 1 was published on June 12th, 1915, and the story in it was called "The Mystery of Limehouse Reach."

The titles you require, K. R. Humphreys, are these: No. 1, Old Series, see paragraph above. No. 10—"Shadowed by Two"; No. 100—"The Clue of the Twisted Ring."

You remark in your letter, D. Hanlon, that Handforth used to punch many more noses than he does now, and that he also did sillier things. Perhaps this is true, and the most feasible explanation is that Handforth is unconsciously responding to the influence of Church and McClure. He doesn't know it, but they are making a more sensible chap of him.

William Napoleon Browne arrived at St. Frank's, Jack Godden, in a story called: "Fooling the School," which appeared in No. 513, Old Series, dated April 4th, 1925.

Bernard Forrest is certainly one of the most rascally youngsters St. Frank's has ever sheltered, R. J. Dixon. It is quite true that he played excellent football for the Junior XI when he spoofed the Remove into thinking that he had "changed his spots." But that's Forrest all over. He is such a clever rascal that he can do almost anything when he sets himself to do it. But the fact that he can play good football does not wipe away his bad qualities.

The greatest practical joker in the Remove, Ernest S. Holman, is probably Vivian Travers. It would be correct to call him *the* japer of the Remove. Nipper, naturally, is the leader of any Form jape, but Travers is the expert practical joker of the Form. If a day passes without his bagging a victim, he regards it as a blank.

So many readers have asked various questions about the occupants of the Junior studies that it will probably be to the general satisfaction if those are given in this chat. Valerie Dudley has asked two or three questions on this subject, but it will be more simple if all the occupants in the Remove studies are given below. Next week the occupants of the West House Remove

studies will be published—and after that the fourth.

* * *

Study A: Bernard Forrest, Albert Gulliver, George Bell. Study B: Claude Gore-Pearce, Arthur Hubbard, Edward Long. Study C: Dick Hamilton ("Nipper"), Sir Lancelot Montgomery Tregellis-West, Bart., Tommy Watson. Study D: Edward Oswald Handforth, Walter Church, Arnold McClure. Study E: Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne, Alfred Brent. Study F: Jerrold Dodd, Hubert Jarrow, Charley ("Boomerang") Bangs. Study G: Cecil De Valerie, The Duke of Somerton. Study H: Vivian Travers, Sir James Potts, Bart., Viscount ("Skeets") Bellton. Study I: Ralph Leslie Fullwood, Clive Russell, Stanley Waldo. Study J: Harry Gresham, Alec Duncan, Ulysses Spencer Adams. Studies K, L, M, N, occupied for some time by Kirby Keeble Parkington and his chums, since gone to Carlton College, are empty.

* * *

Nipper's real chums, Valerie Dudley, are Tommy Watson and Sir Montie. Travers' bosom chum is Jimmy Potts; Archie Glen-thorne's is Alf Brent; Reggie Pitt's is Jack Grey; Fullwood's is Clive Russell. Although the Remove boys board in two Houses, there is

only one class-room for the remove, and this, of course, is situated in the School House.

* * *

The Triangle, Ralph Clarry, is mostly covered with gravel, but there are a number of paved paths—along which it would be quite easy to roller-skate. See the answer to Valerie Dudley above for the information you want regarding study occupants. Louis Griffith is in the East House. Yes, Griffith—not Griffiths. If you saw it as "Griffiths," it was a mistake. Billy Nation is going as strong as ever, and he seldom strings a couple of sentences together without including a proverb.

* * *

Perhaps you do not realise, Alan Gordon, that in the Arctic regions it is a commonplace thing for the sun to be shining at midnight. This is the Land of the Midnight Sun, even more so than such countries as Norway, since it is further North. This explains the passage you refer to in one of my stories concerning the Arctic land of Northestia.

* * *

All letters for discussion on this page must be addressed to The Editor, NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. To ensure a printed reply readers should include in their letters some point, or points, likely to interest other readers.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED

A Barlow, 53, Sturgeon Road, Walworth, S.E.17, wants members for his correspondence club.

Francis H. Watkins, Wemdon, 9, The Avenue, Whitchurch, nr. Cardiff, wants a correspondent in New York.

Thomas Charles Moran, 10, Yelvertoft Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, wants correspondents.

Malcolm Wark, 3, Thistle Place, Aberdeen, wants to hear from a reader in New York.

W. George Ginn, 831, Green Lane, Chadwell Heath, Essex, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere—especially those interested in Journalism.

Miss Kathleen Elder, 46, Silverdale Avenue, Tue-Brook, Liverpool, wants a girl correspondent in Scotland—Highlands, Montrose, or Inverkeithing.

Fred Evans, 43, Blessington Road, Lee, London, S.E.13, would like to hear from dirt track enthusiasts overseas.

Miss Angela McMahon, Hillcrest, 64, Raglan Street, Tamworth, N.S.W., Australia, wants girl correspondents; 17-18.

R. Morant, 8, Strada Molini, Valetta, Malta, wishes to hear from readers who are interested in the old series of the N. L. L.

Jack Brown, 8, Arthur Street, Ashfield, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants to hear from stamp collectors, also from readers interested in dirt track racing.

B. Footer, 34, Argyll Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, wants correspondents; ages 18-20.

Reg. J. Sandoz, 6, Waterloo Place, Bridge Street, West Hockley, Birmingham, wishes to hear from readers in all parts of the world, particularly Egypt, Tasmania, Spain and Gold Coast. All letters answered immediately.

Miss Cynthia E. Young, c/o Mrs. C. Duncan, Cullen Street, Lane Cove, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wants girl correspondents especially in Gloucestershire and India.

Ernest E. Booth, 11, Devonshire Street, Woodstock, Cape Town, South Africa, wants to hear from readers.

J. Hayes, 72, Marsden Street, Kentish Town, London, N.W.5, wants correspondents in the Royal Air Force.

P. Downie, 41, Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with stamp collectors.

Miss Iris Williams, 106, Coventry Road, Queen's Park, Bedford, wants to hear from girl readers in U.S.A. and Europe.

John McNeill, 6, Williams Road, Windsor-Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wants correspondents in America and Africa.

Harry Millson 2, Hereford Villas, Leinster Road, Green Point, Cape Town, South Africa, would like correspondents interested in stamps, especially in India and Canada.

Ralph Rudoff, 15, West Bank, Stamford Hill, London, N.16, wants correspondents overseas who are keen on sport.

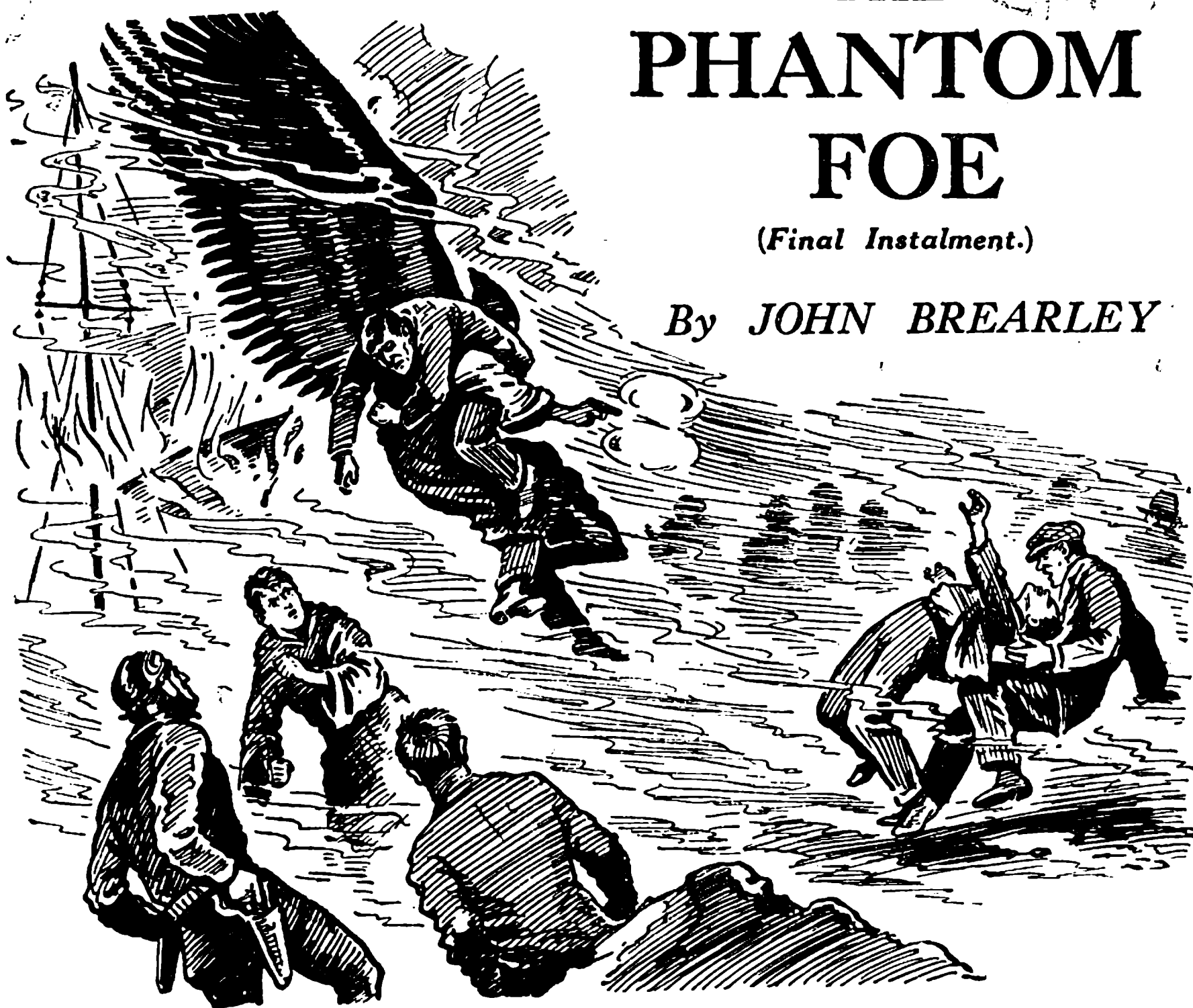
Ronald W. Hunter, 37a, Goddard Avenue, Swindon, Wilts, wants correspondents interested in stamp and matchbox brand collecting.

The End of the Ruthless Phantom Foe!

THE PHANTOM FOE

(Final Instalment.)

By JOHN BREARLEY



Snub Saved!

THE garrison's opposition crumpled before the Night Hawk's lightning attack.

Out of the rocks rose all that were left of them, seven haggard men, dumb with fear. Their rifles clattered to the ground as they raised their arms slowly in dazed surrender. The Night Hawk ceased firing at once.

Then a great shadow sliding over him made Snub look up once more with a wild wave of his hands. Slowly, majestically, the victorious Thunderer came to within thirty feet of the shore, the smoke from her burning victim curling past her hull. There under the great helicopters, she "anchored" in mid-air; while Scraper Huggins from the air-lock bellowed a roaring welcome and the faces of the Kittens grinned down at him through the port windows.

A moment later a strong arm hauled him out of the water, and Thurston Kyle's hand met his in a tight, grateful grip.

"Snub! Thank heaven you are safe, my boy! Gad, these last few hours have been nightmares for us all!"

Shaking himself like a terrier, Snub grinned affectionately at the tall winged figure in flying-costume who gripped his shoulder so warmly.

"Gosh, and I haven't had such pleasant dreams either, sir!" he chuckled. "Ten minutes ago, behind that good old boat, I thought little Snub was due to pass out, mourned and regretted by all—I don't think!"

But despite his forced cheeriness, the strain of the long captivity and nerve-wracking fight showed in his homely pleasant face. Without warning his legs buckled under him, and he sagged to the ground in a tired heap.

"No, I'm all right, guv'nor—bit groggy!" he panted hastily as the Night Hawk bent down with a harsh exclamation. "How—how did you get here? How did you corner the Phantom's ship? My hat, his lieutenant tried like blazes to make me tell where you and the Thunderer were hidin'. Then later, I heard their ship go pelting off—must have got a message or somethin'—and—and——"

Exhaustedly he mumbled all that had happened to him since his capture over Porthampton, while the Night Hawk stood

watching him silently and the great Thunderer hovered protectively overhead. He finished at length; and after a pause broken by the roar of flames and clatter of subsiding metal, came back to his original question.

“**A**ND now, how the dickens did *you* find this place and get here, sir?”

The Night Hawk smiled without humour.

“We captured the Phantom Foe!” he said quietly.

“Oh!” Snub’s eyes flashed in excitement. “Then Jenkins and the boys got him last night all right?”

“They got him. He’s aboard the Thunderer now!” replied Thurston Kyle in the same quiet way. “They caught him as he was leaving London and Scotland Yard for good. I confronted him in our airship; played my cards one by one until eventually he broke and gave in. He confessed to being the Phantom Foe—Captain Frank Arthurs, C.I.D. And then I asked him where his headquarters were!”

“And he *told* you, *guv’nor*?” gasped Snub.

“Yes, he told me—in the end!” was the steely reply. “At first he proved difficult; he was a very determined rogue. But”—a grim, sardonic note edged the Night Hawk’s voice then—“I persuaded him to talk. He told me everything, at last!”

Snub shot a quick glance at his master’s face, and looked away just as quickly. He nodded thoughtfully to himself.

“I’ll bet he talked. And then, sir?”

“Then we—or rather the Phantom, at my orders—sent a message to this island on our wireless. He was a very obedient man by that time, Snub. That message brought his airship sailing south on a definite course at once. Your guess was perfectly correct. And sailing on the opposite course we met her at twenty-five thousand feet!

“She saw us, naturally; but not quickly enough to escape. We hunted her over a tremendous area until her smoke-screen gave out, and one of our shots must have damaged her speed a little. In the end, she turned and ran—back for this island. I fancy this stronghold is fortified by some means—means that the airship’s commander, Hackwood, hoped to use if he could land. Unfortunately for him”—Thurston Kyle glanced indifferently at the smoking ruins—“in landing he smashed those defences, I fear!”

He lifted his chin in the faintest gesture of triumph.

“And that’s all, *guv’nor*—the end of the adventure, I suppose?” said Snub softly. But the Night Hawk shook his head with grim significance.

Without another word he raised his hand, beckoning to the Thunderer overhead. Snub watched, wonderingly; and wondered still

more to see the ship’s steel ladder snake down from the air-lock. Scrapper Huggins came out first, clambering down like a huge gorilla. Alf Jenkins followed. And after him—Snub, with a faint, tense gasp, sprang to his feet, weakness forgotten.

For, after Alf Jenkins, guided by the latter’s strong hand, and covered by a rifle from above, descended a man Snub scarcely recognised—a man who had once been strong, clever and alert, but who now was nothing.

Amid dead silence, Captain Frank Arthurs, alias “The Ace,” alias the Phantom Foe, landed hopelessly on his own island.

At a single glance his spirit and nerve were utterly broken. Days later, Snub heard the story of the terrible man-to-man battle between Night Hawk and Phantom, aboard the Thunderer; and winced in spite of himself at the Scrapper’s awestruck description.

In fair fight the two had struggled for mastery at last, and the whereabouts of the Phantom’s lair. Thurston Kyle had other and grimmer methods of making hated criminals talk, for he had no ideas of weak mercy when right depended on gaining the victory. But on this occasion he had abandoned those methods for the sheer, savage joy of tearing the truth from Arthurs with his bare hands.

Hedged by a circle of Kittens, the Phantom had fought like the expert rough-houser he was. Desperation had lent him added fury; but he had stood no chance. All the Night Hawk’s smouldering rage and tremendous strength had exploded then with a dynamic, white-hot force no man could have conquered. For ten minutes a primeval battle had raged, without rules of any kind. And at the end of that time the Phantom had gone to the deck, ruthlessly and scientifically smashed—man-handled into abject, pleading surrender. Even the Kittens stood dazed and silent at the spectacle of their leader’s fighting power.

Half an hour later the Thunderer had set out boldly for the Phantom’s secret lair.

— —

At the Eleventh Hour!

ERECT on the rock-strewn beach, arms folded across his great chest, the Night Hawk stared at his prisoner standing between the stalwart Kittens. Waves broke stealthily along the shore and the glow of flames from the pirate ship made a flickering, spectacular background. Two exponents of modern science had closed in a bitter crime-war. The stage was set for the final scene.

And at last the Phantom Foe raised beaten eyes and winced.

“Well? What—what now?” The strangled gasp seemed torn from him, but the Night Hawk made no reply. Suddenly flinging out his hands towards the flaming debris, the

great arch-criminal went on, wildly, desperately pleading. "Curse it, you devil, haven't you done enough to me? You've smashed my gang, my island, everything—smashed me, too. I'm down and out for ever. Isn't there such a thing as mercy now?"

His voice quavered shakily, and cracking, died away. Then Thurston Kyle answered in stony menace.

"What mercy have you shown, Phantom?" he asked. "For months you have terrorised a country. Your calmly-planned strokes have cost good lives. The loot you have stolen runs into thousands and thousands of pounds, and the damage you have done is still more. If I handed you over to Scotland Yard the men you duped there would place the noose round your neck within a month. There's no mercy for such as you, Captain Arthurs!"

a heap. And before anyone could recover, a masked figure in yellow, with wings the replica of the Night Hawk's, launched himself recklessly down, straight for the Phantom Foe.

The shock of the hissing onslaught was overwhelming. Right from the clutches of his enemies the Phantom Foe was whisked, into the air as his winged rescuer struggled aloft again. The daring coup was made in an instant; and in that brief space only Snub Hawkins instinctively guessed the identity of the swooping invader.

The Phantom's lieutenant—Hackwood, the crook inventor, the man who had thrashed him and seized his wings! Everyone had thought him under the ruins of the airship. But Snub realised what had happened even as he stood as though rooted to the ground.

Admiring the ornithopter so much, Hack-

OUTLAWED! By David Goodwin



Beset on all sides by Captain Sweeny's footpads, Dick Forrester and Turpin retreated, the speed of their rapier thrusts holding the ruffians at bay. . . . Side by side, with backs to the wall, the comrades prepared to sell their lives dearly. . . .

This is one of the many thrilling incidents from the first instalment of David Goodwin's powerful new serial which commences in next week's issue. The romance and glamour of the days when highwaymen roamed the roads, daring hold-ups, thrilling chases across country. . . . You will be enthralled beyond measure by David Goodwin's telling of old-time adventure. Make absolutely sure of reading the first chapters by ordering next Wednesday's issue well in advance.

The Phantom reeled so that Scraper Huggins had to hold him. Slipping out of the giant's grip, he tottered forward, lips twitching cravenly.

"Hand me over then. You—you can't kill me here!"

The Night Hawk drew a deep breath.

"I've taken the law into my own hands to catch you," he replied steadily. "And I'll carry it out myself to the bitter end. This is where you, the Phantom Foe——"

Crack, craa-ak. Crack!

The interruption burst with whirlwind speed and surprise. In a flash, lightning action came to the island. Madly-flung shots from the sky blazed down, Jenkins of the Kittens toppled into the Scraper's arms, snarling and clutching his side. Both men hit the sand in

wood must have taken it with him aboard the airship. Then, instead of plunging to his death amid the wreckage with the rest of his crew, he had donned the captured wings when the crisis came and abandoned the ship in mid-air: deserting, like a coward, the men he had officered in many a crime. But he was making amends now by a blind, daring dash into the midst of foes, borne by apparatus of which he knew little. And all to rescue the leader to whom, with all his faults, he had been true as steel throughout.

At the eleventh hour the Phantom Foe was escaping his just deserts.

Snatching him up, Hackwood rose sluggishly, impetus carrying him through. From the Thunderer came the crisp smack of rifles, and Thurston Kyle, recovering fiercely from his

"I'm glad it ended this way," muttered Snub after a long, tense silence; and Thurston Kyle nodded, too.

The mystery of the men who had shattered the menace was never solved either. Wild suspicions grew, investigations followed. But Thurston Kyle, scientist and Night Hawk, was "abroad" indefinitely. And the secret fate of Captain Arthurs, the Phantom Foe, went with him.

THE END

(Meet your old pal, Dick Forrester, in David Goodwin's magnificent new adventure serial, which commences next week. Look out for the title: "Outlaid!")

Printed and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian magazine post. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 11/- per annum; 5/6 for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.