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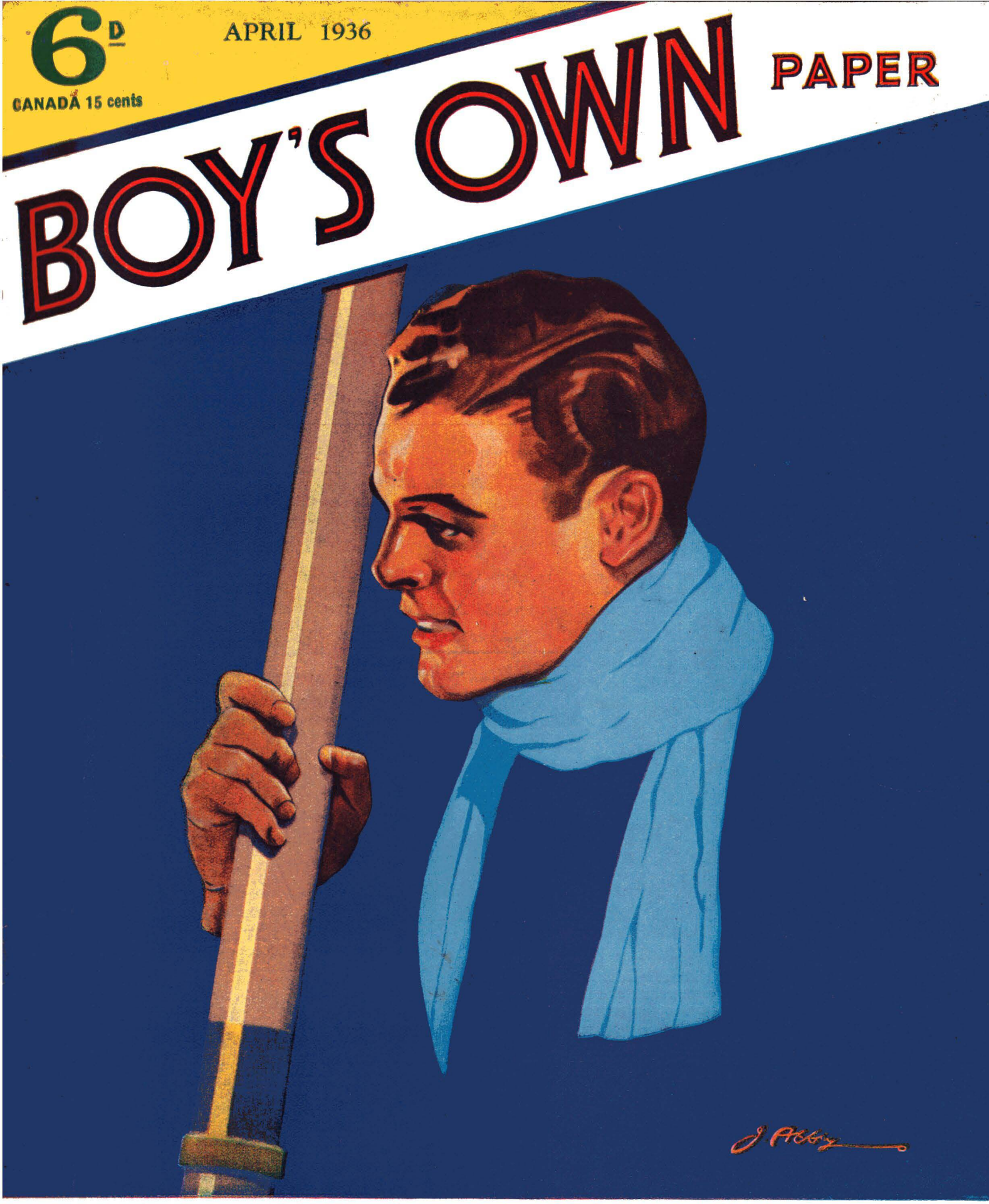

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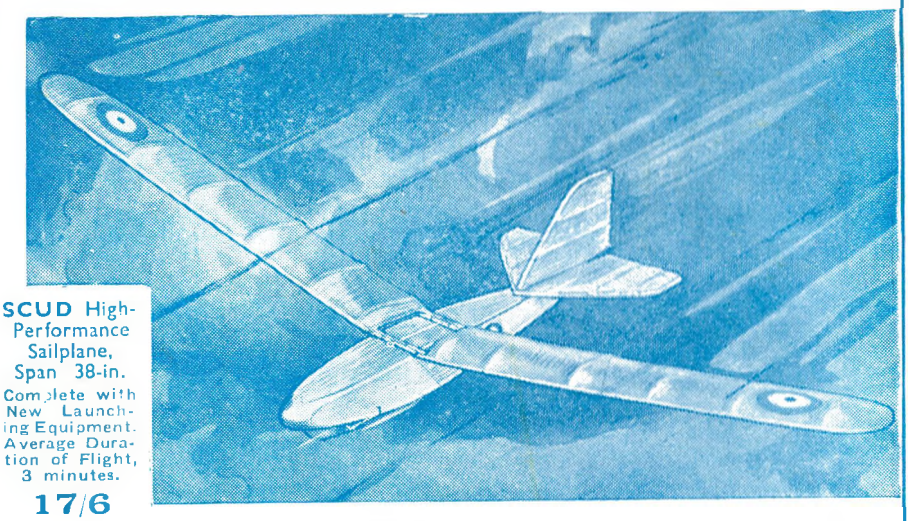

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This month

Quicquid agunt pueri nostri farrago libelli

(" Whatever boys do makes up the mixture of our little book.")

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—*All manuscripts must be sent to 4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. Contributions are not returned unless stamps are sent to cover postage. Payment for published manuscripts is made quarterly after publication, and, unless otherwise specified, the receipt conveys the copyright of manuscripts to the United Society of Christian Literature. The* Boy's Own Paper *is published on the 25th of each month. The annual subscription (including postage to any of the countries within the Postal Union) is 8s. 6d. (Canada and Newfoundland, 7s. 6d.).*

The Editor yarns

WHILE THE DIXIE BOILS

THE number you hold in your hands is all about the Boat Race and soccer ; but I'm thinking about cricket, swimming, camping, and long hikes over the countryside—whether bike-hike or fair heel and toe. It is the planning of the summer numbers that has done this. At the moment of yarning a shrill north-easter is biting us to the marrow, and the camp-fire warms only bits of us, and we're jolly glad to collar all the blankets we can find. Yet in secret I have been busy with summer pastimes : cricket, tennis, swimming, canoeing, both in article and story form ; and it is because Captain Mellor has written a thrilling account of his tramp across the High Atlas Mountains in order to visit a friend in the Foreign Legion, and Claude Fisher the first of a series of humorous articles on the delights of camping, that I can't get our May number out of my head. Hiking over High Atlas has stirred a wanderlust in me, too. Shades of the Pillars of Hercules ! How I am reminded of a tramp I once had across the Arabian desert.

* * * * *

From My Diary. It was in the early days of May some years ago that we were called upon to do the hardest trek in our lives. " We " were a territorial battalion, and, like many other regiments at that time, consisted of chaps who had gone to school together, played together on the same fields, and who knew each other's families. Therefore fellows who tramped with us over the downs were now our companions on this trek across the burning sands.

I kept a diary of that desert march. Just a minute, and I'll fish it out and read you a few extracts.

" We leave Basra. Our destination is two hundred miles away. Where, only the scouts know. Behind us plod the camels carrying kits and the few necessities of warfare, and controlled by Indian *drabis*. Loneliness closes around, creeping, sinister and comfortless. I am dying for a drink, but the allowance is a pint of chlorinated water a day, to be drunk when ordered.

" We trudge on, bowed beneath the weight of ammunition, equipment and rifle. The brazen sun burns, clothes become wet with sweat, topees heavy and big. At hourly halts we sink to the ground, and rise again with stiff joints and aching shoulders. At given times we drink. The column marches on.

" The sun has gone, camels are unloaded and fed, water tanks stacked together, and camp is made. Field-kitchens are soon brewing tea, and bully beef, biscuits and milkless tea are devoured.

* * * * *

" Camp awakes to a shrill voice bellowing : ' Camels ! Fetch the camels ! ' We stir in our blankets, stiff and weary. It is a little before dawn—a nasty sandy wind—the moon has sunk low. A roaring and the camels loom in the light mist. Blankets are rolled and packed on the beasts' backs, black tea and biscuits swallowed for brekker, then on again as the sun lifts itself over the horizon.

" Corporal Ben plays a tune on his mouth-organ to keep spirits up. Plucky devil ! He's as done as the rest of us. A chap collapses in a heap, sweat pouring from his pores. We just bathe his face with a moist handkerchief and march on. The small dome-shaped wagons with the Red Cross painted on the sides, and drawn by slow-moving oxen, are following up behind.

" Another halt. We see bones glistening in the sand—those of a camel ! . . . Welcome evening comes again."

* * * * *

There are many days of this kind of trekking. Then :

" Dawn once more. Our eyes are heavy, and limbs weary and limp. Nerves keyed high, so that a prickly bush to avoid, or a clump of hard earth irritates. My pal has fixed glazed eyes and cracked lips. My tongue is swollen and furry and leathery. Ben tries his mouth-organ again, but fails at the first notes, for his lips are blistered and cracked. Oh, for water ! A sparkling waterfall to lie and drown under—drinking, drinking . . . the tap at home . . . even green water in stagnant pools would be delicious.

" We come to an oasis, fast drying and black with insects and flies. We are warned ; but many sink on their knees and drink."

* * * * *

A later entry :

" An unexpected halt. The scouts ride into the horizon and are lost to sight We are told to dig trenches. The only sound the hacking and scraping of entrenching tools and the jingle of mule harness. One of the chaps falls to the floor of the trench, groaning and bent double, his knees pressed against his chest. Cholera ! That vile water we passed some time ago !

" Chaps fall quickly after that at the very thought of having swallowed the stuff. In our particular trench only Ben and I are left. . . ."

* * * * *

We reached our destination—an Arab town in the desert which had to be garrisoned and fortified. A thousand of us set out ; only three hundred arrived. We were just a cog in that mad scheme of things during 1914 and 1919. I trust that you chaps will never have a trek like that. And I pray that when you camp and hike together this summer you will never be called upon—like we were—to march with your pals into some unknown, far-away frontier.

(*Continued on page iv*).

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METHOD OF APPLICATION. Prospective candidates should apply (normally through the Headmaster) to the local education committee for the requisite nomination. Nominations are obtainable from other approved nominating authorities by applicants who are no longer at school.

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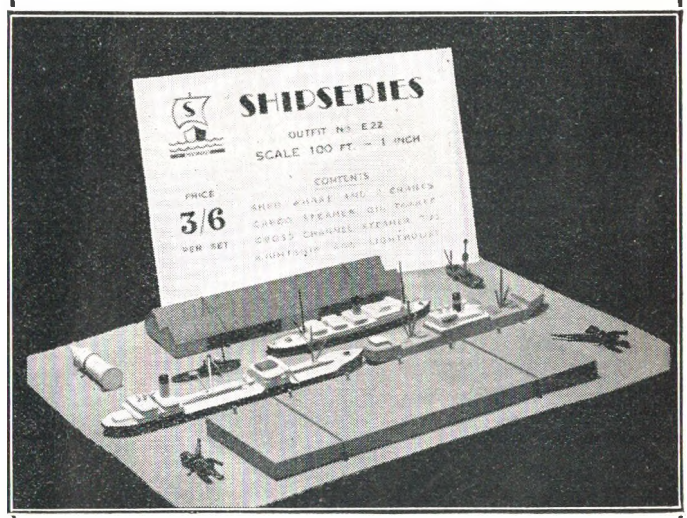

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Next Month. Crash! The burning end of a branch falls into the fire and sends up a shower of sparks. The dixie almost topples over, and not one of you comes to the rescue. Strike ten thousand policemen! My talk has so bored you that you're all asleep. Hi! Wake up! Rouse your jolly old selves. Here's better news, anyway. . . .

Our next month's number contains, besides the High Atlas and camping articles already referred to, an account of the Indian cricketers who are going to pit their skill against the best of England this summer. Mr. Sewell talks about the team as a whole, and gives his forecast as to whom he thinks will be picked to represent India. Hedley Hervey entertains you with some personal reminiscences and anecdotes about the Nawab of Pataudi, who has been robbed of the captaincy by ill-health.

You've read in the newspapers about the great Zeppelin LZ 129, now nearing completion. Mr. Harper gives a fine account of this, and other airships, in the brilliant and well-illustrated article, "Airships, Military and Commercial". Those of you who like Gibbard Jackson's guarding the seaways articles will delight in his latest one, "Adventures of Lighthouse Keepers".

Besides these "star" turns there are many more informative and amusing articles; and for fiction we have a rattling school story by R. E. Bailey called "Strickland Breaks Bounds"; then "Ambush," a thrilling gun-running yarn written by Hugh M'Cutcheon; and a tale of New Zealand, in which the hero descends into a boiling lake, to bring back the "Tiki of Tautauro". There's another Lionel Fletcher dog yarn, too, called "Up and Over!"

"Ransom spun round to face a huge baboon. . . . It stood stockstill in his pathway, showing great, long, discoloured teeth, and mouthing in a manner hideous to behold." That's just an extract from the next instalment of the serial, "The Quest of the Magical Herb".

The May number will also contain contributions from Geoffrey Prout, "Hedgerow", the Stamp Expert, and A. B. Cooper.

* * * * *

Farewell to an Old Friend. This is the last article you'll ever get from this old friend, boys. He died a few weeks ago. I remember reading his articles and stories in the "B.O.P." when I was a young shaver. They were always clean, virile and healthy. Mr. Cooper always preached the "B.O.P.'s" doctrine: "Play straight; and play the game"; and, besides the article, our Padre's Talk will bear the old, familiar initials "A. B. C." for the last time. His final words to you are these: "Right comes of right and wrong of wrong, and nothing can alter it. We may play fast and loose with principles, but principles will win in the end, and those who disregarded them, and took the line of least resistance, will be discredited."

Remember that, boys.

"The column marches on . . ."

Our camp in the desert.

* * * * *

R.M.S. "Queen Mary." "The liner she's a lady . . ." I have no doubt that this familiar statement of Rudyard Kipling's will be recalled in the minds of many a British lad next month. The *Queen Mary* is indeed grand and stately, like Her Gracious Majesty who, two years ago, christened the vessel after her own name and then launched her. Lucky the boys who will be able to see the great Cunarder when she is towed out of Southampton docks on Wednesday May 27th, on her maiden voyage to New York; for never before has such a ship gone down to the sea.

"And the good ship *Argo* heard Orpheus' magic song, and longed to be away and out at sea; till she stirred in every timber, and heaved from stem to stern, and plunged onward like a gallant horse . . . rushing into the whispering sea." Thus Kingsley wrote of the *Argo* as she left her native shore, and I like to think that the *Queen Mary's* setting forth will have much the same joyous urge.

She has two captains (a thing surely unique in the history of shipping!). Her tonnage is approximately 73,000, her length at waterline, 1,004 feet, and her beam 118 feet.

Will she win back the Blue Riband of the Atlantic for Britain—wrest those laurels which are now held by the French giant, *Normandie*? Waves and winds of the Atlantic, dreaded fog-bank and berg of the western sea, our mightiest and loveliest ship has come to face your unseen terrors. Treat her well, O immensities, and hear our wish that she may have many happy voyages, for she is indeed a goodly vessel.

In order to mark our God-speed to the *Queen Mary* on her first sailing, we are presenting with every copy of next month's number a magnificent colour-plate, showing the ship, her funnels steaming, being towed out to sea. As there is bound to be a rush on the newsagents for this special issue, I am—for your sakes—risking once again a repetition of that time-worn advice: ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!! *Verbum satis sapienti.*

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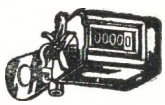

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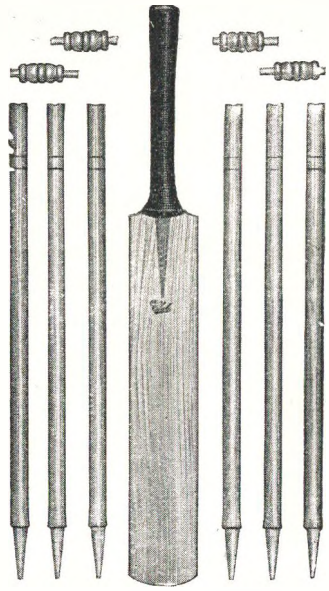

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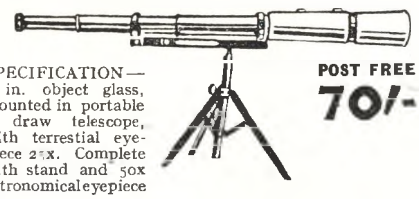

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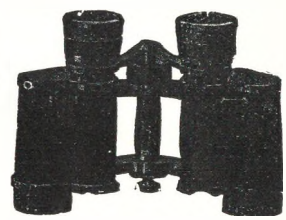

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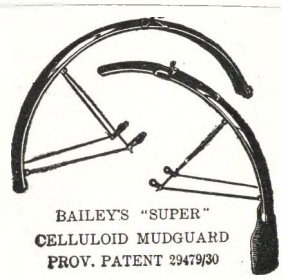

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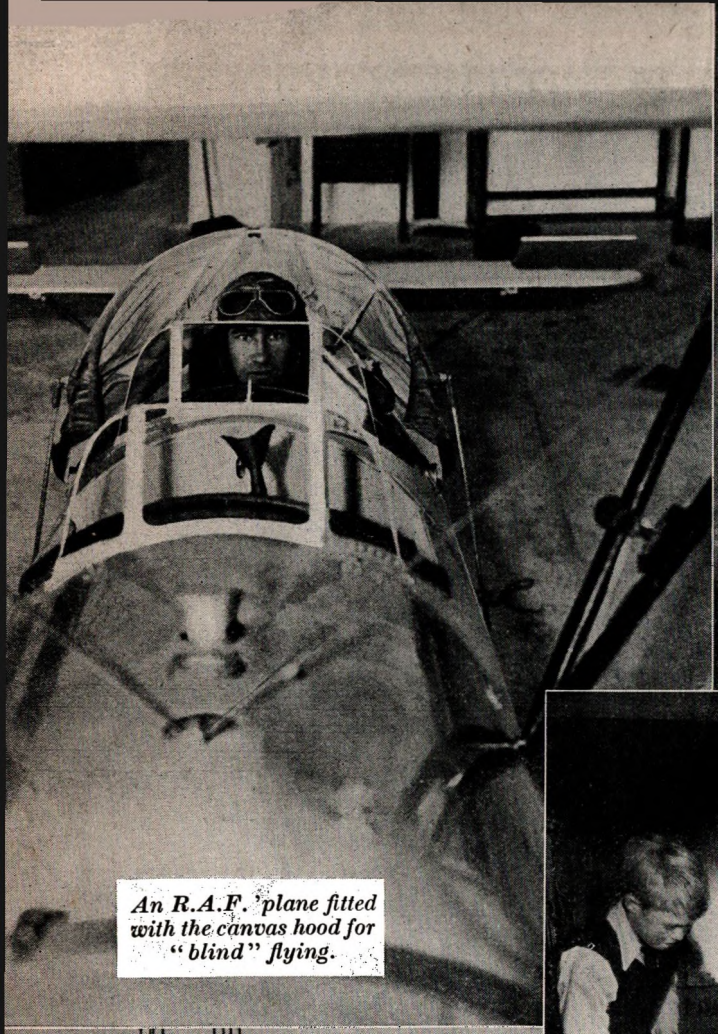
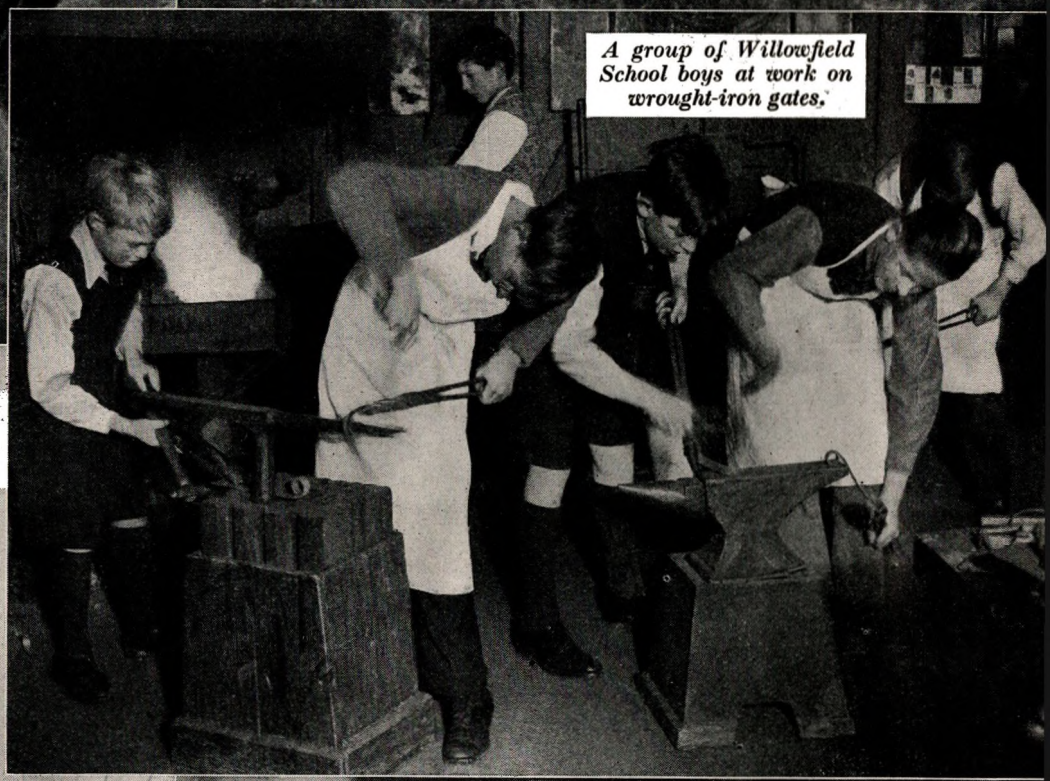
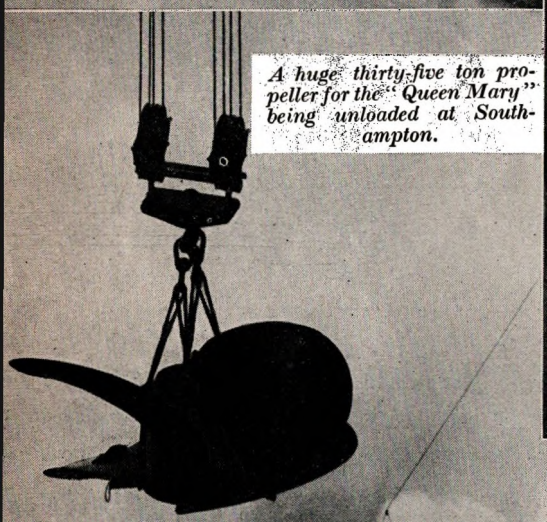


An R.A.F. 'plane fitted with the canvas hood for "blind" flying.

"Hi! No holding!"



A group of Willowfield School boys at work on wrought-iron gates.



A huge thirty-five ton propeller for the "Queen Mary" being unloaded at Southampton.

Puzzling out a teaser.

Messrs. Geo. Bassett & Co., Ltd., have the pleasure of announcing the winners of the **£10 Pic-Saw Competition** held at the Schoolboys' Exhibition at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington.

£5. Alan J. D. Poole, 47 Virginia Rd., Thornton Heath, Surrey.
£3. Alfred Hyde, 11 Alexandra Road, Wanstead, E.11.
10s. Stanley Carroll, 98 Eltham Green Road, Eltham, S.E.9.
10s. N. C. Warner, 10 Fortismere Avenue, N.10.
10s. John Howard Lacey, 52 Marchmont Street, W.C.1.
10s. Peter Hyde, 17 The Walk, Wainscott, Rochester.

PRIZE-WINNERS in the BULL JIGSAW and SLOGAN COMPETITION.

JANUARY 1936.

FIRST PRIZE: TWO GUINEAS.

Fixed Trust in Bovril is an Investment in Health.

Angus Robertson, 30 Glenagnes Road, Logie, Dundee.

SECOND PRIZE: ONE GUINEA.

Bovril Makes Boys Cheery and Never Weary.

R. A. S. Richards, Bushfield Road, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

THIRD PRIZES: 4 at 10s. 6d.

Good night, everybody—Don't forget your Bovril.
Billy Gaw, Bangor, Co. Down.

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If you want the *Best*, say BOVRIL.
Stanley Hunt, Easton Grey, Nr. Malmesbury.

To keep the Pace and Win the Race—Drink Bovril.
Sandy Veyssiere, 91 Rue Erlanger, Paris XVI.

THE BOY'S OWN NOTICE BOARD

This Notice Board is your affair. Pinned on it, as it were, will be items concerning your own activities. Club-ites who receive interesting letters from pen-pals abroad, Skywaymen who have broken records or machines, might send extracts to me. If of general interest—and if there's room, it will be pinned on the board. Mark all letters and postcards : " Notice Board", and address to " The Boy's Own Paper", 4, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

THE B.O.P. FLYING LEAGUE.

Next Month's Great Contest. Details of a grand new competition for Flying League members will be published in next month's issue of the " B.O.P." The competition will be graded so as to offer unlimited scope for the talent of each member, according to his bent. The prizes will include Silver and Bronze Medals and splendid Model Aeroplanes. Readers who are not already members of the Flying League are advised to JOIN NOW.

Questions and Answers. Q.—*How can the " centre-of-lift " of a model be found ?*

A.—The centre-of-lift of a model aeroplane depends on the shape of the section of the wing (that is, the shape of the slice cut through the wing) and also the angle of incidence at which the wing is placed. Generally speaking, when the model is flying level with the wing at a small angle of incidence, such as three or four degrees, the centre-of-lift is midway between the front and the rear edges (or, to use the technical terms, the leading and trailing edges). When the model aeroplane is climbing, the centre-of-lift is at about one-third of the distance from leading to trailing edges. The tail plane has to be fitted so as to balance the model for the varying movements of the centre-of-lift. The best way to fit this distance and the size of tail plane is to judge it by comparing your model with pictures of other ones and then get it correct by trial and error.

An Invitation. Members are invited to submit original aeronautical sketches (in Indian ink) and photographs for publication in this column. Two shillings and sixpence will be paid for each illustration published. Sketches and photographs may refer to any aspect of the air, but must be of general interest. Short explanatory notes would be welcomed.

Air Scrap Books. Skywayman-Rigger-Pilot Peter Davey has had a brainy idea. " I am going to make a scrap-book of past and present military planes, and illustrate it with drawings and sketches," he tells me. Other members might follow Peter's example with advantage. It would be an improvement if the scope of the book was enlarged so as to include civil planes and all matters of air interest.

A Curious Coincidence. " My friend Dick went flying with me about three weeks ago," writes Skywayman T. A. Bond. " We had many good flights, but, sad to say, Dick lost the rudder of his ' Nipper '. We hunted for it everywhere, but could not find it, so returned home rather depressed. The following Saturday, we went flying again at the place where the rudder was lost. I launched my plane, and it gave a fairly good flight. We ran to get it, and, to our great surprise, found that the missing rudder was lying under it ; and I am pleased to say that it was not damaged by the weather."

An Active Member. " Try, try, try again " is surely the motto of Skywayman-Rigger-Pilot R. Dimberline. " I have always been a flying enthusiast," he says. " I have two friends in the R.A.F. stationed at Halton, and I hope to join them in August. In all, I have twelve model planes, most of which I have built myself, and I have at present a D.H. Dragon 6 and a Boeing monoplane nearly ready for painting. It is rather hard to start a flying club in our district, as the boys are not very enthusiastic ; but I am persevering and hope to get a club started before long . . ." May your efforts meet with the success they deserve, O worthy member !

From An Australian Reader. W. Spearritt, of Cairns, Queensland, sends me an interesting letter, together with some nice snapshots. " I am in the Second Cairns Scout Troop," he says. " The Troop goes out camping as much as possible, and has built a hut at the Barron River. . . . The city of Cairns itself is a hot, fever-stricken place ; but it is hemmed in with mountains which contain delightful tropical scenery. Our hut is only nine miles from the town, but it is in the centre of this scenery." Thank you, Spearritt. I am glad you are a Scout, an open-air boy, and having been in fever-infested places myself, was interested in your account of what it is like in your part of the world. The snapshots help me to visualise your surroundings quite clearly. By the way, it is necessary that I have a parent's, guardian's or Scoutmaster's consent before your name can be published for correspondence with fellow members.

No Poet ! We thank P. R. Gray (5310) for his verses on the " Sixpenny B.O.P." You are no poet, Gray, but we greatly appreciate the spirit which inspired your effort.

JANUARY NATURE COMPETITION RESULT

Once again a large number of entries were received, *but*—as " Hedgerow " points out—the general tendency is to treat your subject second-hand. We would also point out that it is not playing the game by the boys who are real Nature enthusiasts when someone from Scotland submits a coloured print as an original effort, and Palmer's Green sends notes which we suspect are copied from a book.

Prizes are awarded as follows :

A MICROSCOPE to P. F. RIDDELL, Glasgow, for an excellent photographic study of a young thrush.

A NATURE BOOK to J. ROWE, Bexhill, for an original drawing of a song thrush.

A CAMERA to D. ABBOTT, Birmingham, for notes about bird life in the severe weather of early January.

" Hedgerow " makes these significant remarks : " Most entries were merely copies out of a book, in order to get any sort of prize, and by certain glaring mistakes it is evident that they were not submitted by Naturalists, but ' pot-hunters '."

You chaps must be more original !

The MISSING TITLES COMPETITION RESULT is on inside of back cover. You may be one of the 103 lucky prize-winners ! If not, turn to page xviii for this month's popular competitions, and perhaps next time . . . !

CO-OP. COCOAS INCLUDE SILVER BADGE....5½p • LUTONA MILD....5½p • MATURED....5½p • MALTED MILK WITH EGGS (4 IN 1)....7p

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THE B.O.P. NOTICE BOARD

Correspondence Section. This section is open only to Club members. Full details are sent to all new members; they will be sent to existing members post free upon request. The following wish to correspond with fellow members in the countries shown :—

CLUB NOTES.

2389. A. Cox (South Africa, 22.8) wants pen-pals in the U.S.A., Japan and France.

4210. R. A. Snow (England, 18) wants pen-pals in Canada, South Africa and New Zealand.

4593. J. Bissett (Scotland, 16) wants pen-pals anywhere.

5219. G. Howitt (Canada, 14.10) wants pen-pals in South Africa, Turkey and Burma.

5741. W. G. Drayton (Barbados, B.W.I., 18.3) wants pen-pals in England, Canada and Australia.

5925. P. H. Dickinson (England, 13.7) wants to correspond with cricket enthusiasts in South Africa and India.

6098. A. F. Finch (England, 18.6) would like to correspond with Shaftesbury Mission workers in East London.

6319. G. A. Danby (England, 14) wants pen-pals in France and Belgium.

6393. J. A. Stephenson (England, 14.2) wants pen-pals in Singapore, Egypt and Canada.

6536. C. W. Beckett (England, 15.5) wants pen-pals in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

6540. A. W. Pressdee (Wales, 13) wants to correspond with stamp collectors anywhere.

6576. H. M. Hassim (South Africa, 14) wants pen-pals in the U.S.A., British Isles and India (in English).

6586. J. Gulesserian (England, 15.2) wants to correspond with Natural History enthusiasts anywhere abroad.

6591. D. Collard (England, 14.6) wants pen-pals in Belgium, Egypt and Brazil.

6593. H. G. Collard (England, 16.1) wants pen-pals in Russia, Canada or Turkey.

6596. E. N. Jackson (England, 16) wants to correspond with stamp collectors in the British Empire.

6599. B. A. M. Wright (England, 13.6) wants to correspond with stamp collectors in the Malay States, India and Canada.

6602. B. H. Everts (Canada, 12) wants pen-pals in South Africa, India and Australia.

6604. R. P. Amyes (England, 14.4) wants pen-pals in Malta, India and Australia.

6636. R. L. Tiffany, Junr. (England, 15), wants pen-pals in Japan, South Sea Islands and the Continent (*except* Italy, France and Germany).

6643 A. S. MacEwan (Kedah, Malaya, 18) wants pen-pals anywhere.

6654. M. F. Atkinson (England, 14.9) wants pen-pals in Denmark, the U.S.A. and France.

6669. C. Milton (England, 14) wants pen-pals in Canada, Australia and India.

6676. G. A. Baxandall (England, 15.1) wants a pen-pal in Germany (to correspond in German).

6710. G. Lonsdale (England, 13.1) wants pen-pals in India, Canada and South Africa.

6711. J. A. Hawes (England, 13) wants to correspond with "novice stamp collectors" in Canada, France and Spain.

6712. R. G. Watts (England, 14) wants pen-pals anywhere *outside* the British Isles.

6723. F. Knifton (England, 15.6) wants to correspond with stamp collectors in New Zealand, Ceylon and Newfoundland.

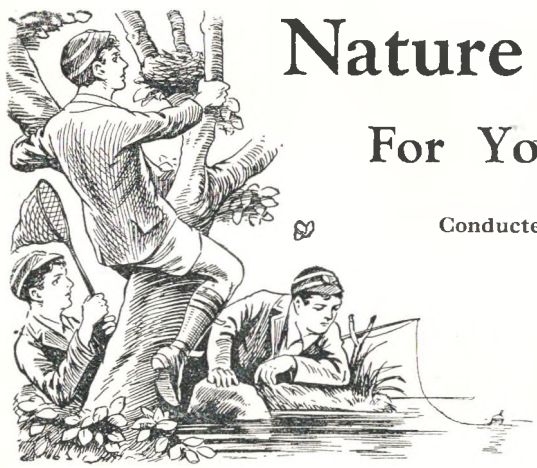
6738. D. Jager (Tasmania, Australia, 21) wants pen-pals anywhere.

6743. A. M. Frizzell (Scotland, 16) wants pen-pals in British Empire and Germany.

6749. J. L. Ellis (England, 16) wants pen-pals in Germany and North America.

6785. H. Motheelal (South Africa, 17) wants pen-pals in India, Australia and Federated Malay States.

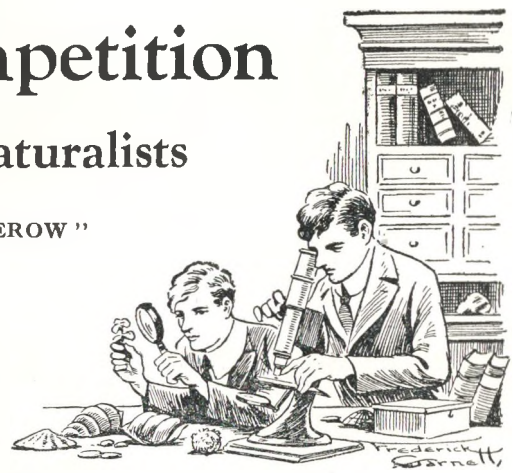
Members wishing to write to any of the above should write to the Editor, enclosing a stamped and sealed letter for their desired pen-pal (whose number, as well as their own, MUST be quoted), and he will then undertake to forward it direct. Members living abroad should enclose an Imperial or International Reply Coupon to cover postage.



Nature Competition

For Young Naturalists

Conducted by "HEDGEROW"



ARE YOU A NATURE LOVER?

Now then, you budding naturalists, here is an opportunity to win one of Three Grand Prizes we are offering in this month's Nature Competition.

Send in your best Nature Drawing, Nature Photograph, or Nature Note and win: a Jack-knife, a Fountain-pen, a Camera, a Model Aeroplane, a Nature Book, or an Electric Torch.

Rules: *The current Nature Competition coupon must accompany your entry.* No competitor may win more than one prize or submit more than one entry. The age limit is 18. *All work must be original.*

Address your entry, together with coupon, to "Hedgerow's" Nature Competition, c/o The Boy's Own Paper, 4, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. Closing date, April 6th, 1936.

THE MODEL RAILWAY CLUB'S EXHIBITION.

April 14th to 18th.

By RANDOLPH WILSON

THIS year the organisers of this Exhibition have chosen dates that will give all "B.O.P." readers an opportunity of visiting one of the most popular exhibitions of the year. It opens at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14th (the day following Easter Monday), and closes the following Saturday. On the days after the opening it is open from 11 to 10. So if readers do not include this show in their programme for this week, it will not be my fault. The cinema this year will again be a great attraction. Many new films have been taken, and it is confidently hoped they will be ready in time for the Exhibition. There is no extra charge for the cinema, by the way.

A special attraction will be a passenger-carrying model railway with a 100-feet track. The engine is 3 feet long, and an exact reproduction of the real thing, coal-fired and working, pulling a train-load of passengers. The other exhibits will be mainly work of members of the Club, and, as in the majority of cases they will be acting as stewards, you will be able to ask many questions.

This Exhibition will give our readers a chance of meeting a number of "B.O.P." advertisers. Messrs. Bonds, of Euston Road, who are very well known in the Model Railway world, will be incorporating a display of the Leeds Model Co., Ltd., goods in their exhibit. Messrs. Buck & Ryan, E. Gray & Sons, etc., will also be exhibiting, so you will see that the Model Railway world is completely represented. Bassett-Lowke, Ltd., will have a specially attractive exhibit this year. In addition to their well-known and well-tried gauge "0" locomotives "ROYAL SCOT", "FLYING SCOTSMAN", standard 6-coupled Tank and the semi-hand-made models of the "MOGULS" and the "SCHOOLS" class, they will also be exhibiting three entirely new locomotive types, the L.M.S. 4-6-0 Express Locomotive "5XP", L.M.S. 2-6-4 Tank and the G.W.R. 4-6-0 "KINGS".

In addition to these being supplied in clockwork, d.c. electric 8 volts, a.c. 20 volts, they can also be supplied fitted with the new Marklin distant control device for a.c., which gives the same directional control as if the locomotive were fitted with a d.c. motor, but with the additional power from 20 volts a.c.

They will be showing also a large number of new accessories, and last but not least their famous Twin Train Railway, which caused such a sensation in the model world, just before Christmas.

This is now being made in this country and remodelled on English lines, and advance samples will be on view.

You will also find a wonderful display of track parts and all the "bits and pieces" for those who like to construct their own track, wagons, coaches, etc. For all those interested in Model Railways a visit to this firm's stand will be well worth while. Messrs. Percival Marshall & Co., Ltd., will, of course, be there as usual with their interesting library of literature, and many others, who, though possibly not so well known to the general public, are every bit as well known to the keen model-maker. It is now very well known that the railways publish many interesting books, and all these will be on sale at the Exhibition. Look out for them.

500 JACK-KNIVES FREE!

Yes, it's true ! We are giving away 500 A.1 quality Sheffield steel Knives, with real horn handles, size as illustration. They are strongly made by British workers, and with each knife is given a nickelled chain with leather attachment.

GET YOURS TO-DAY ! All you are required to do to secure one of these magnificent jack-knives, for which will be found many uses, is to ask one of your pals who does not already read the paper, to take it for the next twelve months.

When you have done this, get him to complete the coupon below and his Newsagent to add his rubber stamp or Bill-head.

IMPORTANT: This offer is for a limited period; only 500 knives will be given away; and for the purposes of this offer a New Reader will be defined as a reader who has never taken the "BOY'S OWN PAPER" previous to April, 1936.

YOUR COUPON MUST BE COMPLETED IN BLOCK LETTERS AND NEWSAGENT'S ADDRESS PLAINLY DECIPHERABLE AS ALL ORDERS MUST BE CONFIRMED.

--COUPON------

I am a regular reader of the "BOY'S OWN PAPER," and claim a free Jack-Knife for introducing my pal, whose name appears below, who has never previously taken the "BOY'S OWN PAPER."

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ADDRESS .....

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New Reader.

I, ... of

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have this day given a firm order to my Newsagent for the monthly delivery of the "BOY'S OWN PAPER" for the next twelve months.

YOUR NEW READER'S NEWSAGENT MUST STAMP BACK OF COUPON WITH HIS RUBBER STAMP OR ELSE AFFIX ONE OF HIS OWN BILLHEADS.

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A	V	S	M	O	N	A	N
J	I	I	E	D	D	H	T
O	D	N	N	Y	N	O	O
Y	I	R	N	I	C	E	L
L	E	U	M	L	O	V	I

SOLVING THE PROBLEM

You will have no difficulty in finding the boys' and girls' names in this puzzle. You can move sideways, upwards, downwards or diagonally, but you cannot skip a square and must always progress from left to right. But your task is nothing like so hard as that of the Children's Home. The problem it has to solve is how to provide for its large family of nearly 4000 boys and girls.

You, in a good home, have no idea of the hardship these children have suffered. Will you, in appreciation of the good things you enjoy, help us to help those who have no one else to care for them ?

Why not join THE LEAGUE OF LIGHT ? The members of this promise to give or collect 10/6 a year, which is only 2½d. a week. On joining they are given a neat medal and a box for their gifts. Full particulars will be gladly sent if you write to the address below. Please mention you are a reader of the "Boy's Own Paper."

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME

(Founded by Dr. Stephenson 1869)

Chief Offices: **HIGHBURY PARK, LONDON N.5.**

Artek camp—between the Crimean Mountains and the Black Sea

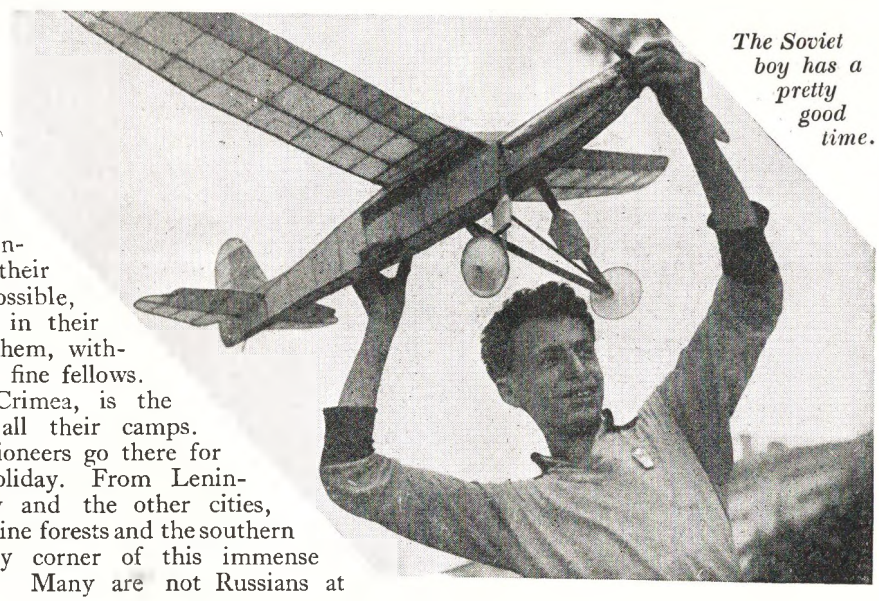
Camping with the Soviet Pioneers

By GEOFFREY TREASE

(Author of " BOWS AGAINST THE BARONS ", " CALL TO ARMS ", etc.)

RUSSIA has no Boy Scouts. But all her keenest youngsters are organised in a very similar body—the Young Pioneers. Like the Scouts, preparedness is their watchword, and fitness, both physical and mental, is their aim.

Last summer I spent five months in the Soviet Union and saw their activities for myself. I found that I had only to say what I was—an English writer for boys—and I was given a warm welcome everywhere. The Pioneers crowded round and plied me with questions about England. They invited me to share their meals and, when possible, to stay the night in their camps. I found them, without exception, very fine fellows.



The Soviet boy has a pretty good time.

Artek, in the Crimea, is the most famous of all their camps. The pick of the Pioneers go there for a month's free holiday. From Leningrad and Moscow and the other cities, from the northern pine forests and the southern deserts—from every corner of this immense country they come. Many are not Russians at all, but Georgians, Tartars, Turcomans, Finns, and other Soviet nationalities, girls as well as boys, for the Pioneers include both. It is a regular international rally.

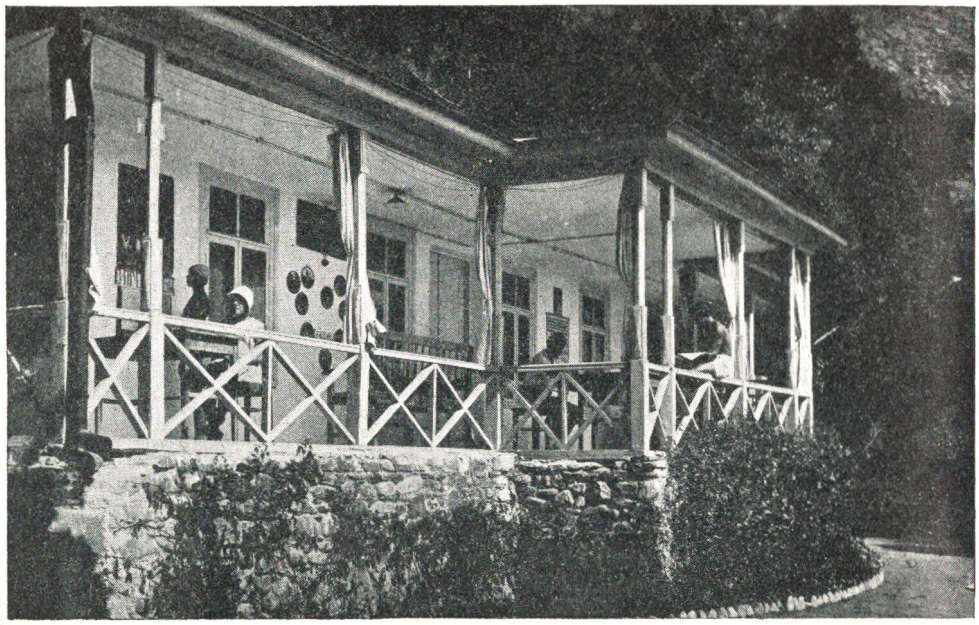
" Come over and see us," they telephoned to the hotel where I was staying, twelve miles away. So I seized a toothbrush and my pyjamas, and off we went.

It was a crazy, looping road, clinging precariously to the mountainside, while far below us sparkled the Black Sea. At last we topped the final rise and began to descend. " There, comrade," said the driver, pointing, and I looked down upon the loveliest camping site I had ever seen.

Bear Mountain—an immense mass of pine-clad rock exactly like a bear—seemed to crouch over the sea as though bending to drink. On its lowest slopes the mass

of green forest was broken by gleaming white huts. A jetty, gay with a hundred fluttering red flags, ran out into the sea, and the camp's own boats bobbed at their moorings beside it.

A group of Pioneers took charge of us and showed us round. In camp, they have a white and blue uniform—vest and shorts—but as often as not the boys leave the vest off, so that they are bronzed to the waist. But they always keep on their scarlet neckerchief, which is the real badge of a Pioneer and is taken away when necessary as a sign of disgrace.



The camp library.

Artek holds 600—but there is not a single tent! It is a permanent camp, fresh contingents coming every month each summer, so they have long, airy huts, open at the sides to the sea-breezes. Russians are not very keen on the English idea of " roughing it " for its own sake—probably because, after years of revolution and hardship, they would like a little more comfort for a change. They argue that it is better for the boys to have proper beds to sleep in, and meals cooked for them by proper cooks, than to sleep on the ground and cater for themselves.

" Get healthy—to face the long Russian winter." That is their idea. So there is a great deal of bathing and sun-bathing, and everyone gets wonderfully brown. As for food, it is fairly pushed down their throats every few hours! Some of the best meals I ate in Russia were at Artek camp.

What do they do all day, besides swimming?

There are hikes into the mountains, and excursions by bus and motor-launch. In the camp itself there are all sorts of facilities for amusement.

One hut is given over to hobbies. There is a woodwork shop, with an instructor in charge; an aviation shop, where they can make model planes and gliders—Soviet boys are very keen on aviation, and know a lot about it; Meccano and other model-making apparatus; photography, radio, and so on. The camp has its own miniature radio station, and broadcasts announcements to the different huts. Other buildings include a Natural History museum, collected by previous campers, and a library with magazines and newspapers.

Right down on the shore, with only a row of palms and flower-beds between it and the shingle, is the open-air display ground, with concrete seats rising in tiers up the mountainside. Here I saw a wonderful camp-fire entertainment.

There were acrobatics, singing, dancing, music. . . . A mountain-boy from the Caucasus danced one of his traditional native dances. The boys from Asia sang in their high-pitched nasal voices. Others grouped themselves as a " noise orchestra ", with combs and triangles and other weird instruments. Everyone played his part in the flickering glow of the huge fire.

I stayed two days and nights with the Artek campers and took part in their routine-life, from the ceremonial hoisting of the flag in the morning to its lowering before " lights out ". But there were other camps I visited for shorter periods—a camp of factory-workers' boys in the forest near Moscow, a camp in the sun-baked mountains outside Tiflis, and others. And there were hundreds of others I never saw.

What do Pioneers do for the other eleven months of the year, when they are at home?

They are organised in troops and, within these troops, they have circles for whatever interests them most. They have most of the same hobbies as English boys, especially everything to do with machinery and models. At Tiflis they have built a model railway—big enough to carry dozens of adult passengers. The engine-driver is a boy of fifteen, and there is a complete staff of boys and girls acting as guard, station-masters, ticket-collectors, and so on. Now they have a study-group to find out how to electrify the line!

In the city of Kharkov there is a Pioneers' Palace, a huge building with 280 rooms, where schoolboys can spend their evenings and holidays. It contains model railways, automatic telephone exchange, power station, radio transmitter, and dozens of workshops and laboratories, as well as a gymnasium, library, restaurant, puppet theatre, and music studios. Many other cities are now building themselves Pioneer Palaces in imitation.

Altogether, the Soviet boy has a pretty good time, and as he is usually a nice chap, he deserves all these things provided for his benefit.

The Cup Final

By JOHN GRAVES

AT some time or other I expect you have all seen photographs of old-time Cup-winners, with their side-whiskers, breeches, and enormous clumsy boots. But have you ever taken a look at the Cup itself? If so, you may have been surprised to see a cup of very different size and shape from that which has its picture in all the papers nowadays.

The history of the Cup, which started in 1871–2, is really the history of three Cups. Cup I was competed for until 1895, when it disappeared from a shop in Birmingham where it was on view after Aston Villa's second victory. Every effort was made to trace it, but it was never seen or heard of again. Perhaps it was melted down by someone who did not know its sentimental value. Or perhaps some football fan nabbed it and still takes it out of its secret hiding-place to gloat over it on Cup-Final day. I prefer the second theory myself.

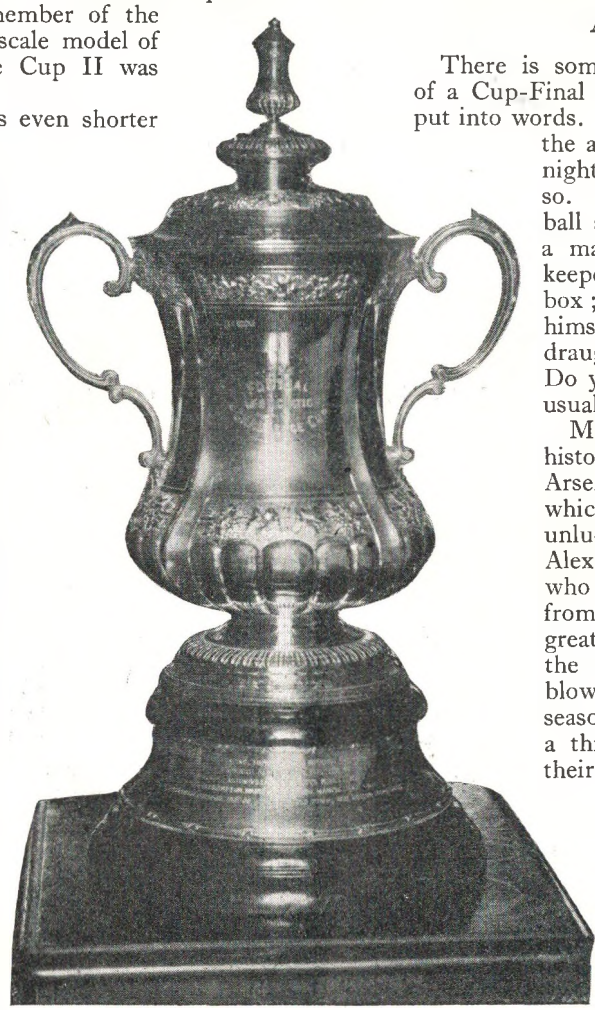
Whatever its fate, the Cup had gone for good, and a new one had to be procured in time for the following Final. The difficulty was to obtain an exact copy. Now it so happened that the grateful directors of Wolverhampton Wanderers had presented each member of the winning side of 1893 with a half-scale model of the Cup, and from one of these Cup II was copied.

But the active life of Cup II was even shorter than that of Cup I. Only sixteen years later it was withdrawn from competition and presented to Lord Kinnaird, the retiring President of the F.A. and owner of five Cup-winners' medals. I have often wondered why the Association chose this peculiar way of honouring its old President, and it was only quite recently that I received a satisfactory explanation. It may be entirely wrong, but for what it is worth, I will give it you.

During the years 1905–10 Newcastle United were the greatest team in the country. On three occasions they were League Champions, and they played in four Cup-Finals, but it was not until 1910 that they succeeded in winning the Cup, and then it was only as the result of a replay on a very muddy ground. According to this story, such was their relief and delight that they at once ordered a silversmith to make an exact copy of the original. This was to be no half-scale model, but a perfect replica.

Not unnaturally, the F.A. objected, and being determined that there should be one Cup and one only, and not two or even three (assuming that the original Cup still existed), they presented Cup II to Lord Kinnaird and gave orders for Cup III. This was a larger and more valuable trophy altogether, and has been competed for ever since. Cup III was made at Bradford, and Bradford City were the first to win it.

National interest in the destination of the Football Association Challenge Cup, to give Cup III its full title, starts mainly on about December 1st, when the professional clubs of the Third Division make their appearance in the first round proper of the competition. Yet, if we include the various qualifying rounds, this is already the seventh round. Amateur clubs of increasing importance have, in fact, been gobbling each other up ever since the first week of September. It is true that these teams have no chance of surviving until January, when the bigger professional teams enter the competition. Yet there is always hope, even in the smallest clubs, of reaching the first round proper, and thus earning the privilege of a battle with professionals. Individual amateurs have won Cup-winners' medals as recently as 1908, but we have to go back as far as 1885 to find a purely amateur side in the Final.



The Cup was made at Bradford and Bradford City were the first to win it.

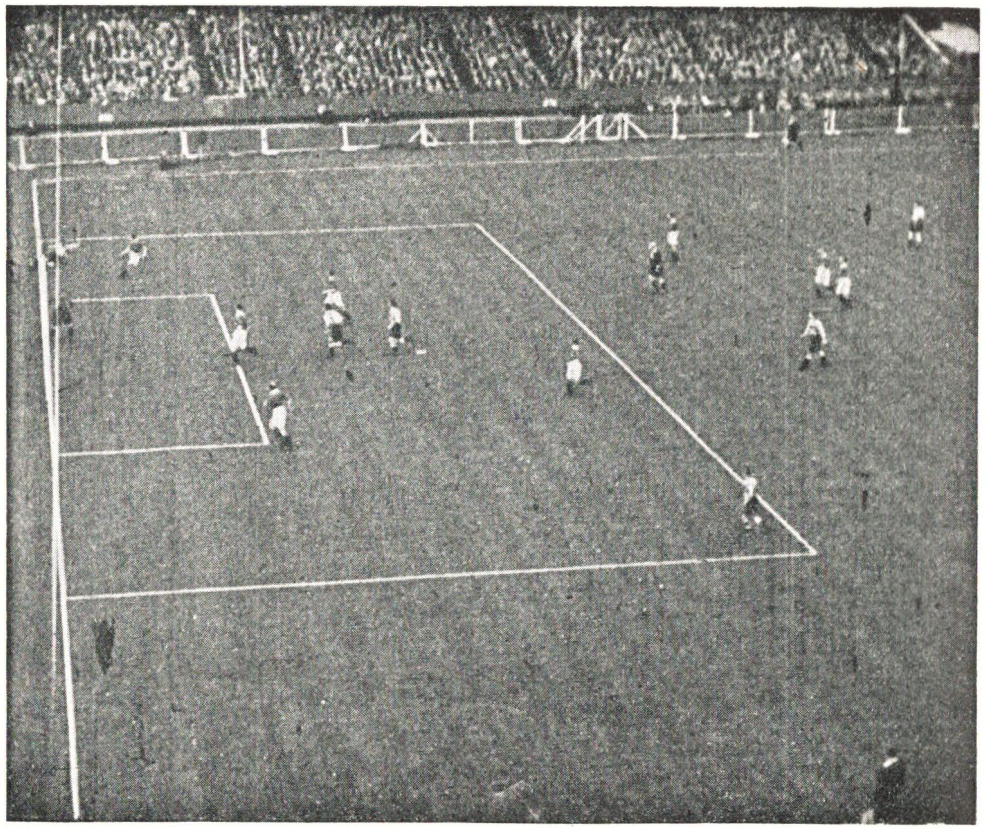
At Wembley

There is something about the atmosphere of a Cup-Final that is unique and cannot be put into words. I can only say that it is like the atmosphere of a theatrical first night, only a hundred times more so. In this tense atmosphere the ball seems to shrivel to the size of a marble, and the opposing goalkeeper to be standing in a sentry-box; while the goalkeeper feels himself to be occupying the draughty end of a Zeppelin hangar. Do you wonder that the first goal usually decides the match?

My first Cup-Final was the historic match of 1932 between Arsenal and Newcastle United, which Arsenal were desperately unlucky to lose. To start with, Alex James, their chief schemer, who was expected to have recovered from an injury in time for the great match, broke down again the day before. This was a cruel blow, for the Arsenal had only that season turned their centre-half into a third back, so as to strengthen their defence. In attack, therefore, they depended more than ever on the genius of James. Without James anything might happen.

Yet it was Arsenal who scored the vital first goal and, try as Newcastle would, they could not equalise. It was then that occurred the turning-point of the match. In one of Newcastle's raids,

their outside-right burst past the defence and raced towards the goal-line, intending to centre. But the ball was greasy and rolled too far ahead. As it crossed the line, he slid forward on the slippery turf in a great effort to hook the ball back into play. He succeeded, but only after it had crossed the line, and the Arsenal players, knowing the ball to have gone out, made no effort to prevent the Newcastle centre-forward from heading into the net. Imagine my astonishment, and that of 30,000 other spectators equally well placed, when the referee allowed the goal to stand. The score was now 1—1, and it was still anybody's game. But this gift goal put new life into Newcastle, and before long they had scored what proved to be the winning goal. Tough luck on the Arsenal, you will agree. Please do not imagine, however, that the referee was to blame. Play had shifted swiftly from mid-field, and it was impossible for him to be quite up with the play, while the linesman on the far side, who was really responsible, was unsighted by a crowd of players in the goal-mouth. The incident certainly rubbed in one lesson which the Arsenal are unlikely to forget—that you should always play to the referee's whistle.



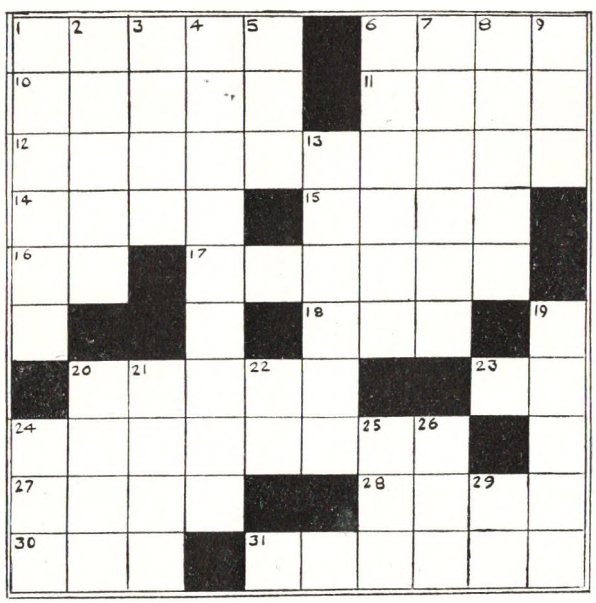
Newcastle's Outside-Right hooks the ball back into play.

"Boy's Own" Crossword—No. 5.

For amusement only. *Solution next month.*

ACROSS.

1. Month of showers.
6. Dull sound of blow.
10. Famous Scot.
11. Ceremonious custom.
12. Used in shadow play.
14. British Cabinet Minister.
15. Sickly-looking.
16. Compass point.
17. Religious festival.
18. Scottish town.
20. " Ship of the Desert."
23. Us.
24. Deliberate damage by strikers.
27. Unsealed.
28. Unravel.
30. Marry.
31. World's largest city.



DOWN.

1. Away.
2. Self-esteem.
3. To govern.
4. Species of " cannibal " fly.
5. 5th Sign of the Zodiac.
6. Formal agreement.
7. President of German Republic.
8. Speak.
9. " Jolly Miller " lived beside it.
13. Swedish city.
19. Malefactor.
20. A shoulder covering.
21. Best place on cold nights.
22. And (French).
24. Scatter seed.
25. Cannon.
26. Conclusion.
29. Act.

A.A.R.

The First-Aid Men

The Ancient Order to which they are Linked

By DUDLEY KEMP

WHEN an accident occurs on the football field, the enthusiast who roars for his favourite team is chiefly concerned with the fact that his side has lost its best man. The ambulance men who rush on to the field to render first-aid are only of interest to the average spectator in that the more efficiently they work, the sooner will the player be able to return to the field.

It seems a far cry from the battle yells of Saracen hordes in the Holy Land at the time of the Crusades to the shouts of enthusiastic football fans to-day, yet between the two the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, better known in these times as the St. John Ambulance Corps, affords an intimate link.

In the early days of the sixth century, the poor Brothers of St. John the Baptist established themselves in a small hospice at Jerusalem for the purpose of ministering to the needs of the many sick persons amongst the pilgrims who then thronged the Holy City. With the coming of the Crusades their work increased a hundredfold, the hospice being filled to overflowing with wounded soldiers.

Nothing, however, was beyond the help of the pious Brothers. They dealt with every kind of wound with cheerful care and assurance. The gashes from the scimitars of the infidels and bones crushed by the hoofs of milling horses were bandaged assiduously, and if not a very high percentage of the more seriously stricken patients recovered, this was accounted for rather by lack of scientific knowledge than by insufficient nursing.

The poor Brothers were the forerunners of the modern field dressing station, and they did their work with the most commendable efficiency, considering the times in which they lived.

In the year 1113 the sterling work of the hospice was recognised. Many knights and nobles remembered the benefits which they had received within its walls, and the institution was created an Order of Chivalry under the title of the " Order of St. John of Jerusalem ". A banner was selected, accordingly, on which a white cross was worked on a red ground.

Henceforward the Brothers, in their black robes with white eight-pointed crosses, became familiar figures in the Holy Land. The purity of their lives was denoted in the white of the design, while in the four arms of the badge were represented the four Christian virtues of fortitude, justice, temperance and prudence. The eight points of the insignia denoted the eight beatitudes.

Gradually the hospices of the Order were established throughout Europe, and under the name of the Knights Hospitallers the erstwhile poor brethren acquired wealth and vast estates. At the height of their power, however, their original purpose was not forgotten, and thousands of sick and needy, rich and poor, were cared for every year. In the desert of medieval Europe the hospitals of St. John stood out as green oases.

It was in 1145 that these samaritans first established themselves in this country. Glowing accounts of their generosity had been brought back to England by the Crusaders, and more particularly by the valiant Richard Cœur de Lion.

As a reward for their work, the knights were granted some land at Clerkenwell by one Jordan of Brissett, in Suffolk, and on it a priory was built within whose walls the first seeds were sown of an organisation which still flourishes richly in this country to-day.

Fire and Murder

Under successive Priors the Order made great strides in England, and by the year 1381 it had attained a position of great importance. In that year, however, disaster overtook it in the shape of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, leaders of the men of Kent. These madmen had, or thought they had, some grievance against the Prior, and in the intoxication of their fury they fired the institution.

Church, mansion and hospital (in which the rebels themselves had no doubt received benefit) were burned, and the gateway and crypt of the church were all that remained of the proud monastery when the rebels had passed.

Worse was to follow. When the rebel forces entered London it was with a bleeding head raised high on a pike in their foremost ranks. That head had once belonged to the Prior of the Clerkenwell Priory; the holy man had been executed amid the ashes of his home.

Nothing daunted, the hospitallers raised another priory upon the ashes of the former building, and their good work continued until the reign of Henry VIII, when it came to a temporary end at the dissolution of the monasteries. The order of dissolution from the money-grabbing monarch and the arrival of the royal minions to ravage the buildings proved too much for the then Prior, and he died of a broken heart, with the sound of the infidels' hammer ringing in his ears.

For over three hundred years the Order was extinct, until in 1831 it was restored to its original headquarters in Clerkenwell. That restoration was the beginning of the Ambulance Corps as we know it to-day.

Coincident with the renewal of their work in England, a wonderful eye hospital was established under their auspices in Jerusalem and now in the land of their birth the brethren care for the sight of thousands of all races and all tongues.

One of the greatest patrons of the new Order was Queen Victoria. In 1887 the Nation's Jubilee Offering was devoted to furthering the efforts of the Order by the founding of the District Nurses' Association, while in the following year the knights were granted a Royal Charter and the Queen became their Sovereign head.

LIKE A GREAT GENTLEMAN

By HYLTON CLEAVER

WARNER-BATES bore one of the best-known names in the rowing world. Five of his family had rowed in the Boat Race, and when he arrived at Oxford he was conscious at once that this would make all the difference to his chances, and he hated it.

In due course he got his Blue and he received it with gloom.

He was so frightfully sorry for Jobson.

Jobson had been at Redstow with him, and had been kept out of everything, so it seemed, by Warner-Bates, who was the same size and weight and better known, even if not a better man.

However, Jobson had not been allowed to row at school and it was not until he arrived at Oxford that he began, and having begun, showed an extraordinary determination to succeed in record time. Yet, as before, there were two men for one place, and Warner-Bates got in.

It was when the crews arrived at Putney that he met, for the first time, Jobson's father, who came up to congratulate him, and who, when he sympathised with Jobbo, said with a wistful smile :

" All his life he wanted to row in the Boat Race. It was a terrible disappointment not to be allowed to row at school."

" He'll do it next year easily," said Warner-Bates, but Jobbo's father shook his head.

" I'm afraid it was now or never. We aren't a family blessed with much money. In fact, my other children offered to give up their summer holidays this year so that their brother could be sent to Oxford to row in the Boat Race. I shall not be able to afford to keep him here another year. He knew it."

* * *

The crew were beginning to change for their outing and somebody called to Warner-Bates. He shook hands with Mr. Jobson and excused himself. Then he, too, went to change, and all that time he was thinking. Suddenly he heard the voice of Jobbo on the balcony. He had arrived from Oxford to meet his family and watch the practice, and an idea came to Warner-Bates. He went up to Gussman, the president, and said :

" I don't know what it is, Guss, but I feel distinctly seedy. Maybe it's some food has disagreed with me, or perhaps it's just a strain. I'm wondering if I could be excused this afternoon, and if anybody else could row in my place."

Gussman looked at him searchingly.

" I don't know who there is. Potter, of course, but he's not heavy enough for ' six '. He's a good spare man for most positions, but the idea was that if we wanted anyone for ' five ' or ' six ' we should send to Oxford for a sub."

" Jobbo's outside," said Warner-Bates.

Gussman slowly changed his expression.

" Oh . . . indeed ? "

" He could row in my place."

" And that, I suppose, would delight his family ? I saw you talking to his father. Yes, I know what you're thinking, and it's no doubt very generous and sportsmanlike, but it doesn't quite go down. If you can't row now, we will postpone the row until you can. The people on the balcony won't see the eight go out at all. And that will disappoint them, I expect."

Then he gave Warner-Bates another funny look and turned away.

" You lie down for a while. We'll wait."

Warner-Bates looked dourly after him. Then in a low, self-conscious voice he said :

" Very well. . . . I don't feel as bad as that. I'll row."

" I thought you would," said Gussman.

* * * * *

All through the rest of training Warner-Bates worried.

Twice Oxford rowed a full-course trial, but as the day of the race drew near there were no more long rows, and practice aimed solely at sharpening up the rate of striking.

Warner-Bates had by now got used to crowds and worriers for autographs, also to Press descriptions of his private life. Oxford were supposed to have a real chance at last. They were, that is to say, until two days before the race. Then Gussman, who had been looking overtrained for some few days, went down with 'flu. He was sent to bed and Potter, the spare man, took his place. The secretary of the Boat Club, Cartwright, assumed command, and he had a chat with Warner-Bates, who, if only on account of his great rowing name, was looked upon as an authority. He once again put forward Jobson's name. Potter, he said, was a useful all-round man, but not powerful enough to last out the race. Why not put Jobson in ? Jobson was always fit. The other shook his head.

" Not to row ' seven '. He isn't a good enough waterman, and he has no experience of the course. The only place to put Jobbo would be at ' five ' or ' six ', where engine-power is more important than anything else." And then he added : " It seems bad luck on Gussman. He will go down in history now as the president who didn't get his Blue. Potter—yes, it'll have to be Potter—will get a Blue instead."

Warner-Bates frowned. Why, yes, of course, he had forgotten that. No matter when you were given your Blue, you had to give it back if you did not row in the race. And the man who rowed in the race received it, even if he had not rowed once in practice.

Warner-Bates went away to think that over. It had given him a new idea.

All the next day he worried. Had he really believed himself to be the better man, he would have loyally abided by the decision of the authorities. He knew there was no room for sentiment in sport. But in this case he knew better than anybody else. He had been pushed ahead all his life because of what his brothers had done. He *knew* that he was really of little use. Gussman was out of the crew, and if it could be strengthened anywhere else, it ought to be. The fact that Jobson had not rowed in practice did not really matter. He had kept himself superbly fit. He was a better man than Warner-Bates ! And if nobody else could see that, he himself must make them realise it.

* * * * *

The day of the race had come. The crew had been out in the morning for just long enough to stretch their limbs. They had had an early lunch. Now the momentous afternoon had come ! Warner-Bates searched everywhere for Jobson, and at last he found him. That fixed, he went to look for Cartwright. *And he carried his right arm in a sling.* He said :

" I'm done for, Cartwright. I've done my shoulder in. I slipped and fell on it." He looked as sad as he could, but Cartwright was in dismay. He said :

" You clumsy idiot ! Have you seen a doctor ? "

" Yes, and I'm to have it X-rayed."

" Good gracious, there's no time for that," said Cartwright, aghast. " We're due on the water in fifteen minutes. Now what on earth are we to do ? Who can we get at this short notice ? "

" As a matter of fact," said Warner-Bates casually, " I've just seen Jobbo outside. He's with his people in the crowd."

Cartwright racked his brains ; then he looked at the clock again, and gestured helplessly.

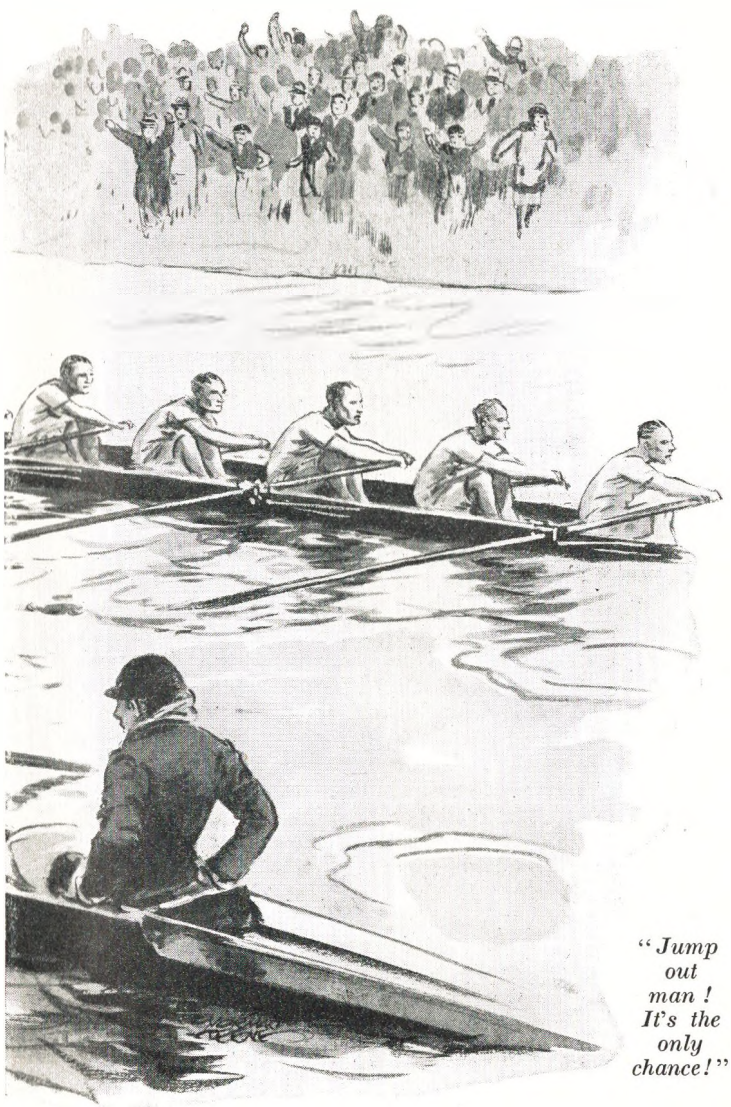
" He's the only hope . . . we can't wait for anybody else. You'd better get him here. Are you *sure* you can't row ? "

" Certain. You see," said Warner-Bates, " I can't use my shoulder."

He turned and went, but he didn't deliver the message to Jobson himself. He thought Jobbo might be suspicious and might argue. He sent another messenger, and then he disappeared. He couldn't row now, whether they discovered the truth or not.

* * * * *

No sooner was Jobson noticed in the Oxford boat, as it was launched, than the people as far away as Putney Bridge appeared to know what had happened, and they said this was going to finish Oxford's chances.



" Jump out man ! It's the only chance ! "

The news was telephoned to London and the papers got to work. Posters were announcing a Boat Race sensation in the city before the race had even started. Meanwhile the crews were making their way to the start. Lightly, confidently, and with swinging rhythm, they passed below the bridge, and turned. The crowd were already cheering.

At 'six' in the Oxford boat Jobson who, after all, was to get his Blue, was looking set and resolute. True, he was not in hard training; he had never before rowed behind this stroke; and if Oxford lost by a narrow margin, he would be blamed. He knew that, but he knew also that he must not save himself. It would be just as bad to take a breather to which he was not entitled early in the race as to be compelled by exhaustion to take one later. And besides, he had lived for this day.

The crowded launches chugged down, flanking the umpire's launch, which was in the centre. Steamers, moored a little up the course, waited for the race to start before they set off behind it. Both banks of the river were massed with people. And yet amid all that there was to see and to commit to undying memory, Jobbo caught sight of one face, and remembered only that. It was Warner-Bates on one of the launches. His arm was in a sling, and yet, though he had rowed all through the training and was now at the last moment to be denied his Blue, he showed no disappointment. He was watching Oxford as calmly as will a man who has got his way at last.

And Jobson realised the truth.

If Warner-Bates *wasn't disappointed*, he must have done this on purpose! His first impulse was to shout out . . . to object . . . and to explain. They must get Warner-Bates back into the crew. Yet to raise all that bother now would lead only to ridicule and anger. And, in addition, how could he be certain? He had, he now saw, little choice.

The crews swung round. They came to the staked boats and were held on the level mark. The launches turned. The umpire showed up, standing upright, with a megaphone and a flag. The crews took off their sweaters, and passed them up to stroke, who dumped them into the staked boats.

The tide was running strongly past them, and would have carried their blades under had they not reversed these on the surface of the water. Tense, expectant, without the flicker of a smile, the men who were to row now in the greatest boat race in the world swung forward and made ready. The umpire's voice was heard. The flag was raised, then dropped, and as a mighty cheer swelled from the crowd those blades squared in the water, and the cry came:

"They're off!"

The Oxford stroke went off at terrific pressure. It was all according to plan, but in that first minute they rowed forty strokes. It was no good to scratch at it, and there must be no rushing of slides or bucketing. This thing must be the poetry of action.

The eight dark-blue blades gripped the water, each dug a great lump out, leaving a hole behind it, and each blade kept its own lump bubbling and dancing till it was driven to the finish.

Jobbo, at 'six', was in that position in the boat which needs the greatest horse-power; his duty was to back up stroke and to relieve that worthy of as much weight as he could. And he was rowing like a Hercules. In front of him he saw the powerful shoulders of both stroke and 'seven'; and then the face of cox, wide with his shouting, and delirious with delight.

Because Oxford were up! Cambridge had been taken by surprise and the question now was whether Oxford could maintain that lead. At the end of the second minute they were passing the packed boat-houses; then came Fulham Football Ground, and Beverley Brook. The next mark was the mile post, and after that they reached the most exacting ordeal of the race . . . the end of the first mile, when every man must feel that he could not go on. Chests were strained, lungs were bursting, legs were numb and arms were cramped already. Nothing of that could be seen from the towpath. It looked as if both crews were rowing calmly, resolutely and together. It didn't feel like that to them. It only felt an agony of strain.

And now those on the launches concentrated their attention on the man called Jobson. They were expecting signs of weariness already in a man so untrained and unready. But, instead, Jobson was rowing like a man possessed. His gritted resolution was a picture. His jaw was out, his eyes were set ahead of him; he could see nothing but the shoulders that were setting him the time in front. Each time his blade gripped, Jobbo's legs drove hard. His arms were lithe, his head was up. And Warner-Bates heard something now that really thrilled him.

One of the finest judges of oarsmanship in the country had made this remark:

"'Six' is the best oar in that boat. He's better than the man whose place he took."

Warner-Bates could have hugged himself.

He had been justified. Oxford still led at Hammersmith and Jobbo was still doing two men's work. They passed the Sea Scouts' training ship, the *Stork*, and came to Chiswick Reach. Still Oxford kept their half-length. They had gained it in that opening minute, and spurt after spurt by Cambridge had failed to steal it from them. Sometimes it looked as if the strain was telling, but the Oxford stroke kept his eyes on his rival and he knew that at times they, too, faltered. Behind him he could feel all the effect of the magnificent blade pulled by the man who hadn't rowed at school. To-morrow that man would be famous, doubly so if they could only win. Now Barnes Bridge was in sight; now it was shot, and Oxford had the outside of the bend. Cambridge made their greatest spurt just here, and they gained for a time. As soon as Oxford answered they fell back again, and Oxford kept their precious half-length still.

The finish was in sight. Jobbo was unconscious now of anything in the world but the one thumping thought that Oxford were going to win this race at last, and that he would have rowed in a race that would therefore become historic. His breath was coming in great sobs; he could not feel his legs or arms—they seemed not to belong to him, or to be doing what he told them. And then with barely a quarter of a mile to go, and without warning, something happened. There sounded in Jobbo's ears an ominous crack; next moment he had overbalanced. He fell back on to the man behind him and was bumped forward by the swinging handle of the oar; not knowing for one instant what had happened, he realised immediately the appalling truth. At the very climax of the race *his oar had broken!* It was smashed in two, and absolutely useless. He sat bewildered, staggered, helpless, not knowing what to do. And then, as he realised that the other seven men were rowing on and that Cambridge had come up level, he heard a passionate cry from cox:

"Jump out! Jump out, man! It's the only chance!"

Jobbo heard and understood. They couldn't carry one man as a passenger. If he could not pull his weight,

he must get rid of it. He scrambled frantically from his slide, was bumped again by the handle of the oar behind him.

No one else knew what he knew !

The reason he had never rowed at school was that he couldn't swim ! It was forbidden for any boy to row until he had passed the swimming test, and Jobbo was one of those extraordinary people who can't learn to swim when they try. He alone knew what it meant if he was to jump over, but he also knew what it would mean if he stayed in the boat. Gallantly, he was gone. The swinging blade of stroke nearly decapitated him, and then, before the water closed above his sinking head, he caught a nightmare-like impression of five launches cutting down upon him as they churned the water with their bows, and of the paddle-steamers following, to suck him under.

His last thought was that Oxford might hold on without him, and then he sank from sight.

* * * * *

One of the launches had swerved as he jumped. The man at the wheel shouted, and swung his bows. But that manœuvre would take time, and on that boat was Warner-Bates. His arm was in a sling, but he knew what Jobbo knew . . . that Jobbo couldn't swim, and he had no time to think of consequences. He cast aside his sling, stripped himself of his overcoat, poised, and dived. A second later, booted and fully clothed, he was striking out dramatically in search of Jobbo.

* * * * *

The Boat Race is followed by a dinner.

Oxford, who had struggled home by six feet in the most sensational finish ever, and with only seven men, were celebrating. And now a very old man rose to speak.

" Gentlemen, I have seen fifty-five Boat Races and I remember none like this. There is a man now sitting at this table who must know as well as you and I know that *he* won this race to-day for Oxford *by giving up his place !* He could have kept his secret if he had cared to sacrifice a life. Jobson could have kept his if he had cared to sacrifice his crew. But Jobson made his gesture, and Warner-Bates made his. I raise my glass, gentlemen, to Jobson as a great oar and to Warner-Bates who did not get his own Blue as a freshman. It is one thing to bear a great name, and another to bear it like a great gentleman ! "

A Pair of Bellows

By HENRY BRAMFORD

I HAVE found bellows useful for a good many things besides making a fire go. I use them for cleaning the wireless set and for innumerable other purposes. The illustration shows how to make a really good pair in a very simple manner.

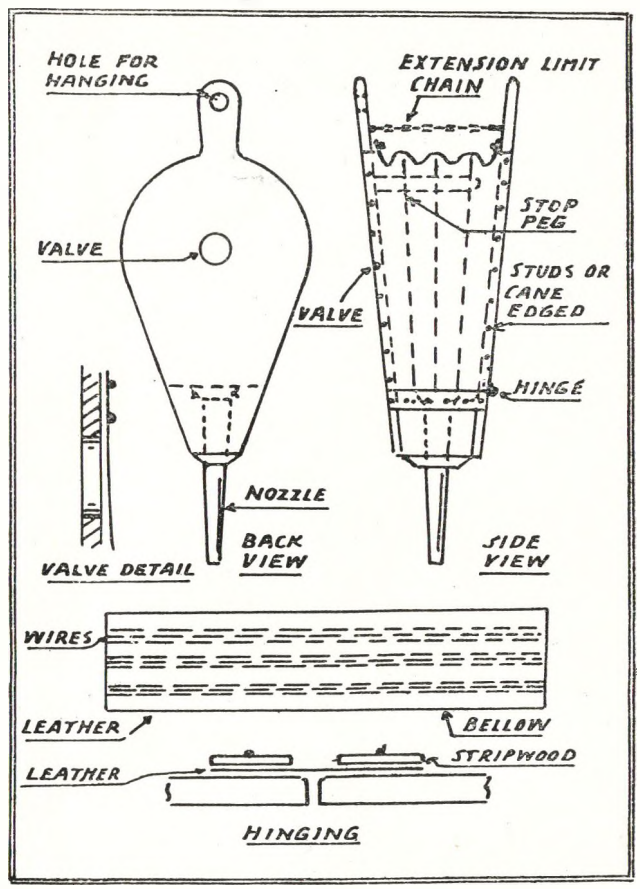
Making Up

Cut and bore the shoulder piece from a piece of solid wood. To this is inserted a nozzle cut from an old funnel. The method of doing this is shown. The back piece is next cut from multi-plywood and the nozzle section secured to it. In this piece a drilling is made for hanging purposes, and a further drilling for the valve inlet. Over the latter drilling a piece of gauze is gummed and then a spring piece of thin metal is screwed in position so that it covers the aperture.

Next prepare the front piece from similar wood and firmly hinge it to the nozzle with strong leather. The soundest way of doing this is detailed in the drawing.

The leather concertina section is the next part to prepare. A long rectangular piece of strong but pliable leather is cut. On the underside of this are equally spaced three springy wire strips, and these are held in position by covering with a further piece of strong but thin material, and sewing or machining, so that each wire is in a seam or pocket. Adjust the hoop so made and fix with wood strips to each side of the nozzle-shoulder, seeing that the hoop takes the shape of the front and back pieces. The overlap sides of the hoop are now fixed all round the edges of the front and back sections, and a perfect way of doing this is to hold with split cane and fix with pin-nails.

Examine your work very carefully and see that you have left no unnecessary air gaps. Fill in any cracks and crevices with plastic wood and finally fit a light chain where indicated. This serves the purpose of preventing one from forcing the bellows open too far and thus damaging the leather concertina hoop.



Decoration can be left to your own taste or particular hobby. You may like to affix a specimen of your carving to the front and then stain the work. Another suggestion is to execute a piece of embossed leatherwork. Alternatively you can stencil and varnish, or try your hand at painting, if you are skilled enough. If you are not particularly good at the more artistic crafts, just lacquer the work and it will look quite nice and be just as useful.

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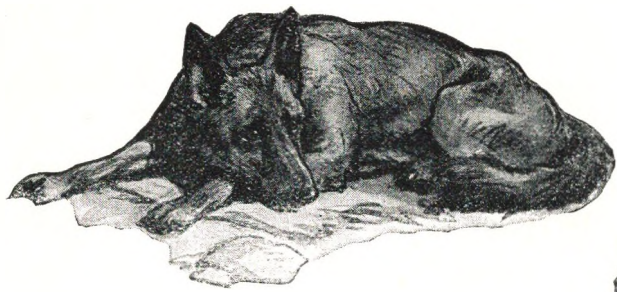
ILLUSTRATED BY
C. AMBLER



DOG YARNS. VII

Tales of their pranks, courage and never-failing loyalty

PILOT'S LONG WATCH

by

LIONEL FLETCHER

WHEN we decided to leave Charters Towers and move south, I discovered that we could not take Pilot with us, on account of some regulations then in operation, to prevent the conveying of cattle tick to other districts ; and dogs were carriers of ticks.

One of our great friends instantly accepted the offer of the dog, and we felt happy to know that he would have a splendid home and every kindness and understanding, for the family knew him well, and he was quite happy with them.

For six weeks before out departure, we stayed in an hotel, and Pilot was transferred to his new home ; twice he disappeared, and twice he was recovered and brought home again. Then the last Sunday came, and we promised to spend the day with our friends, and worship with them, and we looked forward to having Pilot with us for the day also. But when we went with them to their home after the morning service, we found that our dog had been missing for a fortnight. We had not been informed, because each time he had disappeared before they had recovered him, and this time they had hoped on, trusting that they might have him safely back before we visited them. But they had failed.

All through dinner that day we discussed where Pilot could be. All sorts of theories were put forward and examined. We were informed as to what steps had been taken to find him, and of a handsome reward which had been offered for his recovery, and of the search which had been made in all the streets near our old home. Finally, I decided that I would go to our house and see for myself, and, if necessary, ask questions of the present occupier. I would also visit the hospital, where he was a great favourite of the staff, in spite of the fact that he had stolen their Christmas ham.

Immediately after the meal, therefore, I mounted a bicycle and was soon at our former home, which was about two miles away. I examined the grounds from three sides, which I was well able to do, as I could walk the whole length of the Baptist Church yard and look right under the house, as the fence was very low, and I could see through the grounds from both the front and back streets.

I BEGAN my inspection from the back street, and then followed that by examining the situation from the front street ; this double view proved conclusively that I need not ask for him from the residents in the house. I knew he could not be there, for the simple reason that I saw a big, ugly, yellow dog lying contentedly in the shade of the house. I knew that he and Pilot could not possibly live in one yard, especially in the yard where Pilot had been supreme for so long.

Closer inspection of the house premises was now rendered unnecessary, and with a heavy heart I was about to mount my machine and go back to our friends when a sudden urge impelled me to examine the Baptist Church yard. I did this quite superficially from the front street, and saw nothing. Mounting the bicycle, I was on my journey when the inward urge came to me so strongly that I felt I could not go on without a closer examination of the church yard. So I now turned the machine and rode up the street at the back of the house, and entered the church front gate.

Leaning the bicycle against the church wall, I had a peep over the fence into my old yard and into the stables just on the off-chance that Pilot might be chained up there, but seeing nothing, I walked along with my gaze fixed under the house, hoping against hope that, in spite of the yellow dog, he might possibly be somewhere there. I had the same feeling that is experienced when something that you prize very highly is mislaid or lost. You search every pocket, and every corner, over and over again, and even then you return to the same pockets and the same corners, although you know quite well there is nothing there.

So I quietly walked through the church yard, not examining the yard, but uselessly examining the house yard where I knew Pilot could not be. Thus I came to the big clump of bamboos at the rear of the church, which also extended into the house yard and shaded the verandah of the room which had been our bedroom where Pilot always lay on guard when my wife was in bed, and I was away at the office.

I WAS forced now to watch my step, or I would collide with the bamboos, or trip over their roots, and as I thus looked in front of me, instead of to the side, I saw Pilot lying stretched out amongst the bamboos. His front legs were thrown out in front of him, and his hind legs were at full stretch behind him. His jaws were resting on his out-

stretched front legs, and I could see the ribs and thigh bones showing through his skin, and for the moment I thought he was dead. He was on watch, as close as he could get to the bedroom where his beloved mistress always slept, and where he had protected her through long nights, and watched over the baby through many days. He had been watching and waiting for her, and I knew by his condition that he had had nothing to eat or drink for days, possibly for the whole fortnight of his absence.

All my thoughts and feeling came and went in a flash, and I just said his name under my breath—for I was sure he was dead—"*Pilot!*" In an instant he turned his head and looked at me. There was no conviction in his glance at first; it was almost as if he had turned mechanically at the sound of his name, not at all sure that he was not dreaming. It is probable that he had turned many times during those days at some sound which he had hoped might be the steps or the voice of those he loved coming back to the old home, only to be disappointed with sickening regularity. There was a film over his eyes, and an expression on his face that I could not possibly describe—a look of resignation, and heart-break and utter hopelessness. I have seen that look on human faces; but I had never seen it before on the face of a dog.

He was alive! That was the first glad thought telegraphed through my eyes to my brain, and involuntarily I now shouted: "*Pilot!! Pilot!!*" and, stretching out my hands, I ran towards him, even as he tried to get to his feet. He seemed almost paralysed; but with an effort he rose, then staggered, his hind legs gave under him and he would have fallen, but I caught him and gathered him right into my arms. He was just a bag of bones, and as he pushed his nose under my chin, it was hot, and I knew he was in a fever.

I talked to him as if he were a child and could understand everything that I was saying, and as I talked he seemed to gain strength. He wriggled in my grasp, and pushed my chest with his paws, as if he wished to sit back and get a good look at my face. He then began to whine with delight; his eyes cleared and gleamed, and he beat a tattoo on the ground with his tail—for I was sitting on the ground under the bamboos holding him to me—and I knew that joy, which never kills, was restoring life to this poor creature.

Finally, I got to my feet, and he staggered after me like a drunken man; then for a time I walked, wheeling my bicycle slowly, with Pilot gradually getting the use of his limbs, until he could keep up with me; he kept giving my leg a little push with his nose to make sure that this was real, and not some dream from which he would awake.

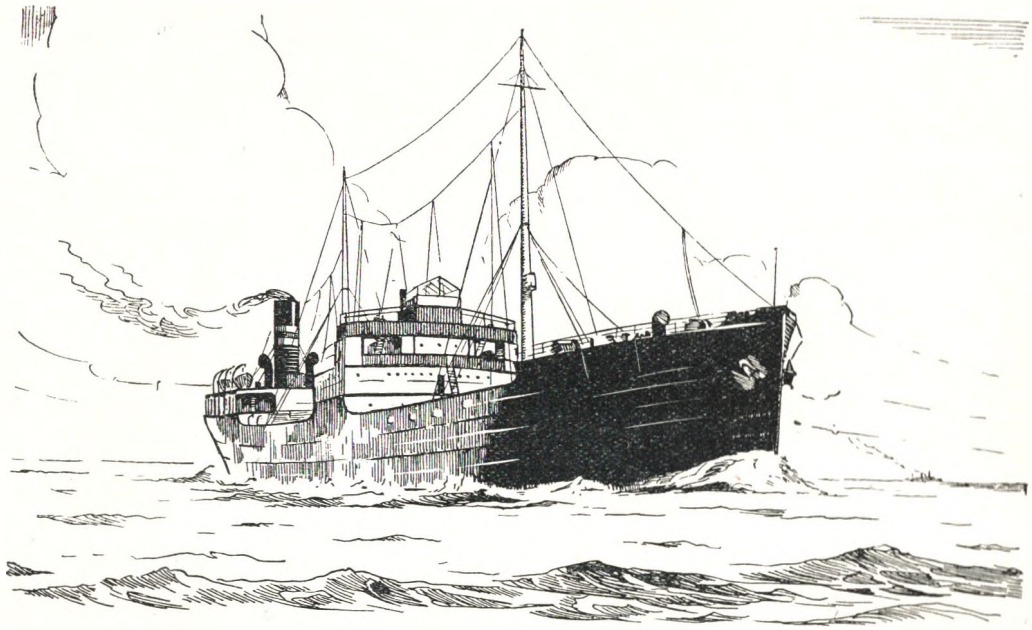
Then I got on the machine and rode very slowly, and he kept up with me, gaining strength as he progressed, until we reached the last hill, on which our friends' house stood. I could see a group of people on the verandah watching us coming, and then I distinguished my wife, but Pilot had also seen her, and with a strength which I did not think he could possibly possess, he bounded off in front of me, and, reaching the gate, he sailed over it like a bird, dashed up the steps, on to the verandah, and with cries which were pathetic to hear, he placed his forefeet on her shoulders and smothered her face with kisses—a thing he had never done in his life before. If ever a dog laughed and cried at the same time, he did, and when I told the story of how I had found him, there were several in that group of people—men and women—who did the same.

We fed him carefully for a little time, for he was starving; but even then he would leave his food and come to lick my wife's hand and to assure himself that she was really there, before he would go on with his meal.

He was now perfectly satisfied, and settled down with our friends from that day. His new master was a distinguished dental specialist, who made Pilot into a chum, and he remained with him until he died.

"I ran to him, even as he tried to get on his feet; but with an effort he rose, then staggered, as his hind legs gave under him."

ONE day some years after, he was enjoying himself by putting into operation the latent instincts of a sheep-dog, and was herding all the goats which he could gather—and there were thousands of them in that gold-mining town — when, in the midst of his frolic, he stumbled and fell, and when my friend picked him up he was dead. His heart evidently was overstrained and had ceased to function, and thus quietly and quickly the dog, who was so full of faults, and yet so rich in faithfulness and affection, finished his life. But we never think of him without realising what we owed to his protection in days when it was needed so badly.



" British Ambassador," 6,940 *tons, reciprocating engined tanker,* 435 *ft. long, owned by the British Tanker Company.*

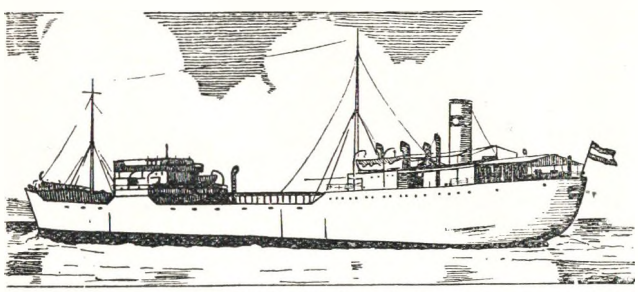
Modern Ships

By H. COBLE and A. R. PAYNE

Oil-Tank Steamers

THIS type of ship—usually called a " tanker "—is designed especially for the transport of petroleum in bulk, and presents rather a strange appearance, with the funnel placed right aft and the isolated bridge amidships.

Their cargo is, of course, highly inflammable ; this necessitates, in the case of a steam-driven ship, special precautions against the risk of fire. A space of about six



Dutch motor tanker.

feet across the full width of the ship separates the engine-room from the aftermost tank, this space being filled with water ; sometimes it is divided into two or three sections. This space is called a " coffer-dam ", and there is a similar one separating the fo'c'sle from the first tank.

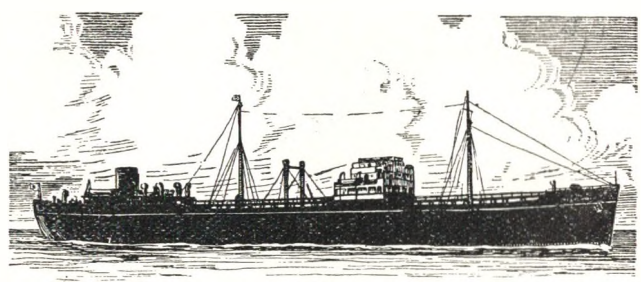
The tanks—of which there may be as many as twenty-five—are divided into three groups, separated by two pump-rooms. The pumps in these rooms, for the loading and discharging of the oil, are so arranged that either set can discharge or load any of the tanks, so that in the event of one set breaking down, the other could do the whole of the pumping necessary.

As the oil expands a great deal in hot weather and it is necessary to have the tanks full in order to prevent the oil rolling from side to side in heavy weather (which might cause the ship to capsize), a special small expansion tank is fitted, into which the oil may expand and roll only in a restricted space.

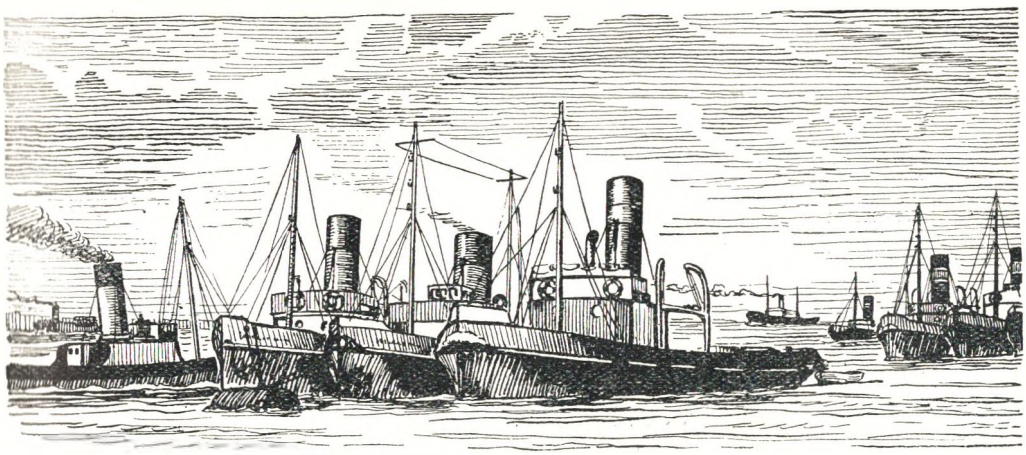
The very largest tankers have a dead-weight capacity of over twenty thousand tons ; the vessels to carry this enormous weight are over five hundred feet long and of thirteen to fourteen thousand tons gross. These ships are however, exceptional, and the average tanker is four to five thousand gross tons less.

The speed of most tankers is comparatively low, the average being a little under twelve knots. Motor tankers are gradually superseding steam-propelled tankers, not only on the grounds of economy, but because the risk of fire is greatly reduced.

The world's largest oil depots are at Thames Haven and Shell Haven, near the mouth of the Thames, and here there are about a hundred and sixty tanks, each with a capacity of two million five hundred thousand gallons. To this vast refinery and storage depot come tankers from Abadan on the Persian Gulf, Constantza and Batum on the Black Sea, Tampico and Puerto Mexico in the Gulf of



17½-*knot tanker.* *The Japanese " Teiyo Maker,"* 9850 *tons.*



Tugs at Gravesend.

Mexico, and Aruba and Curaçao in the Dutch West Indies.

It should be fairly obvious that tankers can carry a cargo only one way, and that they have to return light for another cargo. Water is used as ballast and is admitted to certain of the tanks to keep the vessel in proper trim.

It is extremely rarely that one sees a tanker in a dirty condition ; this is because the fumes given off by the oil very quickly discolour and destroy the paintwork, consequently they are always being repainted.

Apart from the big ocean-going tankers there are many others of a small size which distribute the oil from the big storage depots to small outlying ports.

Tugs and Their Work

Tugs are small and sturdy, but extremely powerful vessels, ranging from fifty to perhaps three hundred and fifty gross tons. The net tonnage of a tug is usually a very low figure ; in fact, in many cases *nil*, as she is not built for cargo carrying, most of her space being occupied by her engines, stores and crew's accommodation.

There are several classes into which tugs can be divided. First, there are those which manœuvre ships in and out of dock and assist them alongside landing-stages—a typical Thames tug of this class being the *Sun VII*, of two hundred and two tons gross, which is a hundred and five point two feet long by twenty-five point five feet beam. Then there are small river tugs, which tow lighters to and from ships which stay out in the river instead of going into dock. These lighters can be towed much farther up a river than an ocean-going ship could proceed.

There are also ocean-going tugs, which, as their name implies, can undertake long sea voyages. A notable example is of the towing of a monster floating dock capable of lifting the largest battleships, from the Tyne to Singapore. Other floating docks, not quite so big, have been taken from this country to South America and to New Zealand. These long voyages each occupied several months.

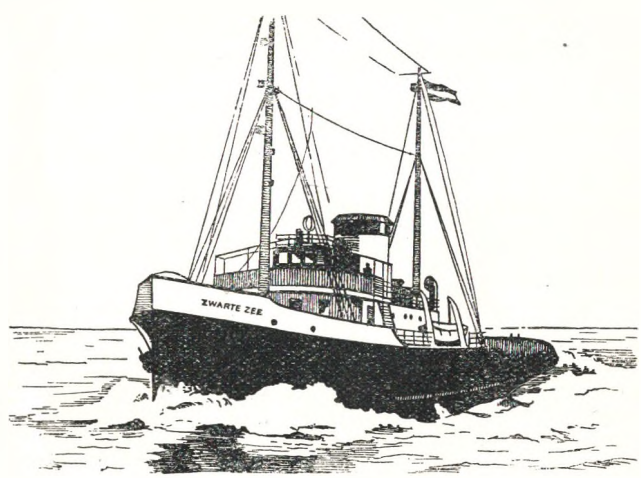
Turning to the Thames again, we find several tugs engaged in towing from one to three big lighters from London to Antwerp and Rotterdam, hardly a day passing without the arrival and departure of such a tug and its tow.

Yet another type are salvage tugs, which are always ready to go to the assistance of vessels in distress. Sometimes when a vessel has gone ashore—as, for instance, on the dreaded Goodwin Sands—several tugs of different owners and nationalities may arrive on the scene, and much haggling may take place before any attempt is made at moving the ship from her dangerous situation.

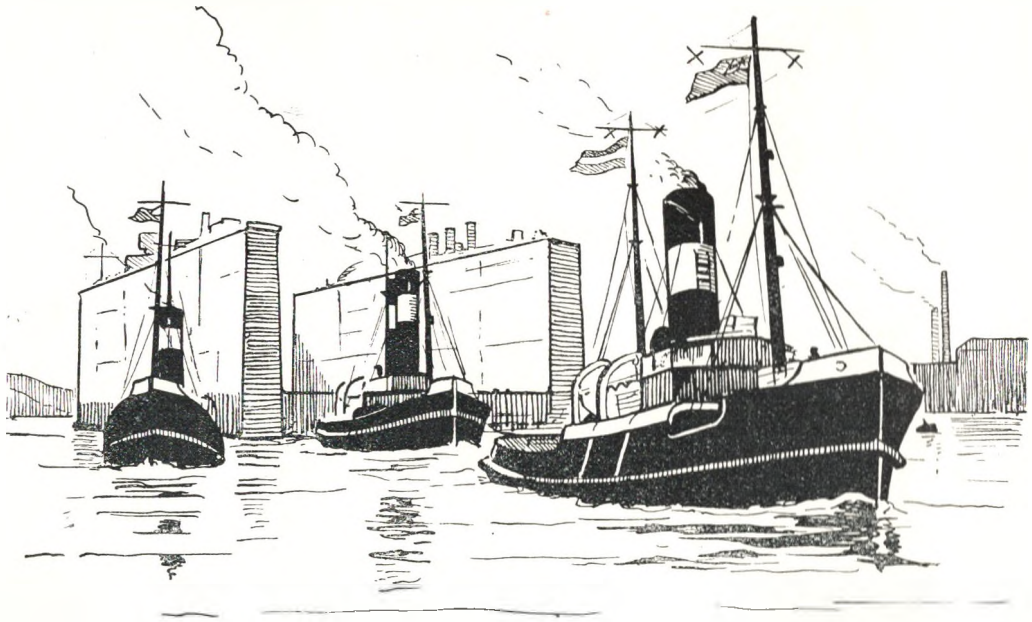
It is very interesting to spend a day at Tilbury or Gravesend and watch the ceaseless activity of the shipping passing up and down, and particularly that of the tugs which are stationed at Gravesend.

One may see as many as twelve or fourteen tugs waiting for ships to arrive, or for the time when a ship has to leave the docks or the landing-stage. On the approach of a ship requiring their aid (as, let us say, the *Georgic* arriving from New York), several tugs will detach themselves from the group and circle round the liner, to which they make fast by steel hawsers passed from the ship. The *Georgic* is a motor vessel of twenty-seven thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine tons, owned by the Cunard-White Star Line ; she is the largest vessel to use the Port of London. Even so, in less than twenty minutes from her arrival, she will be lying alongside the stage, made fast at bow and stern by several hawsers. So skilfully have the tugs done their job that, though there may be but a foot or two between the ship's side and the stage, she will not have touched it, even though there may be a high wind and a strongly running tide.

At Southampton, where dock the largest ships in the world, it is necessary to have bigger and even more powerful tugs than those used on the Thames. On a windy day a giant liner like the *Queen Mary* or *Normandie* will require the united efforts of eight or nine such tugs to manœuvre her safely into position. If a great ship should get out of control, considerable damage could be done in less time than it takes to mention the possibility of such a thing happening. On one occasion the old Cunarder *Berengaria* was caught by an unexpected gust of wind and, before anything could be done, she slewed round and her superstructure carried a dock crane bodily off the quay.



The Dutch salvage tug " Zwarte Zee."



The Singapore floating dock. Towed by Dutch tugs from the Tyne to Singapore.

The world's largest, fastest and most powerful tug and salvage vessel is the Diesel-engined *Zwarte Zee*, seven hundred and ninety-two tons gross and seventy-seven net, owned by the Dutch towing and salvage firm of P. Smit & Co. She was built in Holland by L. Smit & Zoon and placed in commission in 1933. The *Zwarte Zee* is a hundred and ninety-six feet long by thirty-two feet beam; she has a speed of seventeen and three-quarter knots when without a tow. This high speed is attained by the use of two engines giving a total h.p. of four thousand two hundred, coupled through reduction gearing to one propeller shaft. The salvage equipment of the *Zwarte Zee* is very comprehensive, including two pumps of two hundred and forty tons per hour capacity, and another specially constructed for sucking sand, of two hundred tons capacity. A complete diving equipment is carried. There are two fire pumps capable of discharging four hundred and forty-five gallons per minute; and a carbonic acid gas installation with special high pressure hoses to enable the gas (CO^2) to be pumped into the holds of a ship on fire. The wireless apparatus has a receiving and transmitting range of a thousand miles under good conditions, supplemented by a small spark transmitted with a range of three hundred miles; and, in addition, a wireless direction finder is carried.

How Long Could You Fast?

Living on One's Own Blood

STARVATION arises either from lack of food or water. When entirely deprived of both, human life in ordinary circumstances may not be maintained for more than a week. Thus in 1869 a certain South Wales "fasting girl" was subjected to this test. The parents asserting that she had eaten nothing for two years, some enthusiasts for truth had her watched by competent hospital nurses. The parents then displayed such obstinacy in support of their imposture that the girl's death was allowed to take place in eight days.

Subsequently her father and mother were tried and convicted for manslaughter, but the nurses and experimental physiologists were permitted to escape scot-free! It was thought by many that the unnatural quietude, the grave-like silence, and the dim religious light in which the girl was kept, helped to postpone her death.

A supply of water certainly prolongs life. Dogs, for instance, plentifully supplied with water, have been found to live three times as long as those deprived of both solids and liquids at the same time. Moreover, it has been recorded that men, when aided by water or some medicinal preparation, have been able to fast as long as fifty days.

Even the wetting of the skin by shipwrecked sailors has been found useful. When the "Medusa" frigate was wrecked in 1816, fifteen people contrived to keep alive on a raft without food for thirteen days by this means.

AGAIN, several men who in 1876 were entombed in a coal-mine for ten days without food were found to be alive and able to walk when released. The saturation with aqueous vapour of the narrow space in which they were confined and the presence of drain water in the cutting seem largely to have contributed to their preservation. These prisoners, instinctively feeling that darkness renders death more terrible, were apparently not tempted to eat their candles—which clearly indicates that they could not have experienced any of the keener pangs of hunger.

It is a curious fact that life may be prolonged through the stomach being supplied from the substance of the starving individual's body. In 1874 some men were exposed in an open boat for thirty-two days with only ten days' provisions, apart from old boots and jelly fish. One of them, being severely wounded in a delirious fight, lapped up the blood as it gushed from his own body. And, instead of suffering the fatal weakness which might be expected to have arisen from this hæmorrhage, he seems to have done quite well.

Similarly, it has been found possible to prolong the existence of starving dogs by feeding them on blood taken daily from their own veins. Such experiments have proved that when deprived of all food, dogs so treated are capable of living four days longer than other dogs which have not been bled in this way.

T. T.-B.

The Quest of the Magical Herb

By G. M. ROGERS

CHAPTER I

"IF the pater's going on this weird expedition, I'm jolly well going to work it so that I can go too. There's a sparkling old mystery about this tramp through the swamps and jungles of Africa. I'm the man to solve it!"

Raymond Phipps stepped on the accelerator as he spoke and his little two-seater flew along the rough native track as if a hundred lions were pursuing it.

His companion laughed. "Steady on," he said slowly. "I don't for a moment think you'll be able to wangle it. Your pater'll be away for the better part of two years, by the look of things. What about school and all those nice little atrocities called exams?"

"All that be hanged!" cried Raymond with a grin, steering through a dangerous bit of rocky road cut between a tall krantz and a plantation with the dexterity of a born expert with cars. "The pater's found out something besides this idea of searching for that medicinal herb. There's an ancient, lost tribe hidden away in those hills north of the Zambezi. They've got a secret shrine and when there's a full moon they get up to their tricks and perform strange ceremonies—human sacrifices and all that. Oh! I know! You can't diddle me!"

"You seem to have found out quite a good bit, if what you say is true," said Captain Tom Ransom, casting a quick sidelong glance at the boy's eager face. "Let's have the rest, Ray."

"There's a secret or sacred hill," breathed the boy quickly, his strong brown hands clutching the steering-wheel with a ferocity that told of the intensity and earnestness of his purpose. "I'll lay there's gold there or silver, and that's why they're so anxious to keep——"

"Go on," said his cousin, relighting his pipe. "Keep what?"

"You ask the pater," said Raymond suddenly. "And ask him to take you and me with him when he goes. Gosh! It's born in me, this longing to investigate. Bring up the subject at dinner, there's a decent old pal. I'm burning to go. What about you?"

"No good, man," returned Tom Ransom, opening the door as the car slowed up before a low, whitewashed, big, rambling house, standing in a perfect wilderness of a garden, where lived Professor Phipps, his only son Raymond, and his nephew, Captain Tom Ransom, late of His Majesty's Air Force.

"Why no good, Tom?" asked Ray anxiously as he followed his tall cousin up the grassy pathway to the house. "Think we'll be in the pater's way? Is he going by air?"

"If he was, he'd take me. He cannot fly alone. No, he's going by—but shut up, here he is."

A dapper little man stepped off the vine-covered veranda and came quickly towards them. He was sun-scorched and withered, but sharp in manner and in speech. He was dressed in an immaculate suit of tussore and wore a sun helmet on rather a large head. His eyes were bright and sparkling. His slight grey moustache seemed to bristle with excitement. In his brown hands he held a sheaf of papers.

"Ah! I'm glad you have returned," he said, leading the way into a roomy rondaval and drawing a rustic chair to the wicker table that stood in the centre, on which he carefully laid his papers, the biggest of which was a plan, drawn in green ink on a white ground. "They sent me these from the University at Cape Town. I have here such valuable information that I need lose no more time, but can start right away. Look here, Tom, see the hill marked there on the right? That's my destination. That's the land of the Eivonias. Their sacred plant grows there, and if I lose no time I can be there at the very season when it is in full flower. What luck, boys. I cannot but have success in this undertaking. This wonderful plant, though poisonous, has great medicinal properties. There is a tribe that worships the plant—and another that fights for it, using it as a medicine. These two tribes are always at war."

Raymond gave his cousin a nudge and winked one of his wicked-looking brown eyes. The airman understood and tackled the boy's father without hesitation.

"Ray and I are most anxious to join your expedition, uncle, we could both be of use to you, I am sure. We——"

Professor Phipps looked up in mild surprise and eyed the boy who stood facing him, trying to hide the wistful anxiety in his eyes and still his wildly beating heart.

"Did you mention Raymond's name, Tom?" asked the absent-minded father dreamily, as if for a boy of seventeen to desire to go on a wildly adventurous expedition was a thing undreamed of in the annals of the sensible-minded. "Ray to accompany me? Tom, you must be mad! Such a thing could not be entertained for a moment. What about his schooling? I shall leave him in your charge. Now, look at the way this river winds in and out. It goes right round this hill, it seems to me. It waters——"

Professor Phipps droned on and Captain Tom Ransom listened for the best part of an hour, but poor disappointed Ray took himself off and climbed up to an old loft that stood above the garage, which in bygone days had been a coach-house. There he lay, his head on his arms, full length on the dusty floor, with no one for company but a couple of meercats which crept out of a hole in the boards, and a silent old Zulu who was carving a weird face of some unknown god from a piece of wood.

Ray's disappointment was a real burden to him. He had been so keen on this new expedition of his father's. For hours he had pored over musty books in his father's dingy library, learning all he could about these secret tribes who dwelt in strange lands and unhealthy swamps, north of the great Zambezi. That his father

refused to entertain the idea of taking him this time was in the nature of a blow. It took him a long time to recover.

Yet at dinner he was first at the table, cheerful and gay as usual, and only Tom Ransom guessed what he had gone through.

The Professor was full of his new venture and could talk of little else. He did not notice that his son was unusually silent. Ray had no mother. She had died when he was just a small boy. All he could remember was a lovely face which came to him sometimes in a dream. He had a little coloured painting of her, but her name was never mentioned, so the boy asked no questions. Tom had told him once—oh, years ago, that his mother was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Ray harboured that delightful thought in his heart and knew it was true by the little coloured painting that hung over his bed.

"When I obtain a plant of this sacred flower," said the Professor, leaning over his plate in his eagerness, so that he dropped his table napkin in his soup, "I will send a sample by native runners to you, Tom. I may have some difficulty in getting back and may have to take a roundabout route, as I want to search for the sacred shrine in the Orco Valley. I have heard——"

He stopped suddenly, as if all at once aware that he had said more than was wise. Turning to Ray, he asked him if he had ever dipped into the secret history of these lost tribes of Africa.

"Yes, pater, I have," admitted the boy quietly. "I think I'm as interested in those old blighters as you are. Tom and I——"

A warning look from his cousin stopped the confession he was about to make concerning the bitter disappointment he and Captain Ransom had suffered. Tom's look told him it was no good bringing the subject up again. Evidently the Professor had never for a moment entertained the idea of taking the young men. He had a faithful old retainer, one Guido, who always accompanied him on his expeditions and helped him in every bit of research work he undertook.

"This sacred plant of which I am so anxious to obtain a specimen," said the eager Professor, forgetting Ray's presence and speaking to Captain Ransom in a low tone, "grows in the most God-forsaken part of Africa, I take it. I had thought of chartering a plane to take me to the swamps, but I have resolved to disguise myself as a native and go on foot, accompanied only by Guido, whom I shall pick up in Bulawayo. I have already sent to him. He will know exactly what we shall want on the journey and will make all arrangements. When I send a specimen of this rare and poisonous plant to you, Tom, I want you to send it at once to the University at Cape Town; to my old friend Stross. He is as much interested as I am in these little-known medicinal herbs."

"Right-o, uncle," returned Captain Ransom cheerfully. "And when do you expect to return? How long do you think you will be away?"

"The good Lord only knows," answered the Professor quietly. "You may see me in a matter of months. It may be years—or—"—

"Don't go and say never, pater," cried Raymond suddenly. "If you don't turn up within a decent spell, Tom and I will turn out and search for you. So that's a go! 'Ransom's Search Party,' we'll call ourselves—and be hanged to all the lost tribes of Africa and their sacred flowers and poisonous plants. I say death to them all—and their secret shrines as well. You're after that too, eh, pater? I've read all about 'em an' I know!"

"Bless the boy, I believe he does know," cried the mild Professor, admitting at last that his son had thoughts of his own and a personality that held a spice of interest. "What is the youth of to-day coming to? Lessons, sir, and sport. That is where your interest must lie. Leave the old dry-as-dusts like me to ferret out the unknown. You stick to what is seen, my lad. Time enough for you to probe and wallow, looking for lost tribes and secret places, when you've left the forties behind."

"Admit, pater, that you've got that blessed old secret hill on your mind, as well as that sacred plant. Then we'll know where to look for you if you're lost. We must have some sort of a guide."

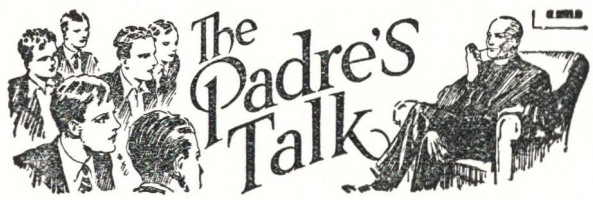
"I do admit it, boy. It is my ambition to find that hill of mystery," returned the Professor, wiping his glasses and settling them once more on his hooked nose. "It has long intrigued me. I believe there is a shrine there, where they offer up human sacrifices, even in these enlightened days. But I shall return, never fear. You will have no need to come and search for me, boys. Still, keep the plane in readiness, Tom. I shall get a message to you by some means or other if I find myself in real danger."

"Is that a promise, pater?" cried Raymond eagerly. "Do you really mean that?"

"A promise?" echoed Captain Tom Ransom, noting the underlying anxiety in the older man's tone. "Those blighters are a most treacherous lot, remember. They live in trees, don't they?"

"Some of them," answered the Professor lightly, rising and polishing his glasses once more, as he usually did when agitated. "All native tribes are treacherous. Some more than others, that's all. Yes, that's a promise. To you, Ray, and to Tom."

The following week saw the Professor start off on his wild jaunt. Captain Ransom had his way to a certain extent and Ray had the delight of flying



THE HEADMAN'S WISDOM

I have just heard a story that has made me think. I wonder how it will strike you.

It is about an old African headman in Northern Rhodesia. A certain Native Commissioner had a visitor in his office who turned out to be an English missionary. He had come in from a distance because of a regulation that no schools can be opened without Government permit, and he had received a request from a headman for a school. After some talk the Native Commissioner agreed to meet the missionary when next out on tour, so that they might visit the village.

They were met by an oldish man and his son, a young fellow who had been away at the Mines and wanted to get the white man's knowledge so that he might go back again and get a better-class job, not just labourer's work.

"Do you, then, desire the school here, my father?" the Native Commissioner asked.

"My son and the young men ask for it," replied the headman. "As for me, I wish to be told about it, so that I may decide. It is a new thing to me."

"Now, you carry on," said the Native Commissioner to the missionary. "Tell him about school." So the missionary began and spoke about the advantage of being able to read and write, to be able to send letters to distant friends, and so forth. Then he spoke about the Bible and tried to say something about Jesus.

"Oh yes," said the headman, "I have heard the young people speak about Him. But what is it that He has to say for us men?"

The missionary took out a Testament and wondered what part he would read. He chose the Sermon on the Mount, and read bits here and there that he thought would give an idea what Christ's teaching is. When he came to the bit that says: "If a man strike you on one cheek, turn to him the other also," the headman's son jumped up and shouted: "That's not what we want! We want the white man's knowledge, not words of foolishness."

But his father shut him up and sat silent, looking at the two white men and thinking. Then he put up a hand and patted first one cheek and then the other. Then he did it again, and said: "I have never heard a law like that in my life. But the man who said that knew us men. If that is a law of God, it is a great law. I agree to my children having school."

Do I think that an old African would really say that? It seems certain that he did. The son scoffed, not the old fellow. That is what struck me. I have been wondering if, after all, these Africans are more thoughtful than we give them credit for.

And one other thing struck me when I heard the story. You remember that other thing Jesus said, about things being "hidden from the wise and prudent," but being quite clear to "babes?" That rule about the other cheek seems against all wisdom and prudence, doesn't it? And yet that old African got some sudden light on it somehow, he said it was a great rule and that the One who made it "knew us men". I have been thinking and wondering about that ever since.

How does it strike you? *T. C. Y.*

with his father and cousin as far as Bulawayo. It was with great regret that they parted with the intrepid explorer and turned the nose of the Moth back to Cape Town. Raymond Phipps was as much a research worker in his own heart as his father, and made up his mind while on the journey back to his home that he would study the musty books in the Professor's library till he found out exactly the districts where this peculiar plant, which the wild Eivonia tribes worshipped and kept such a secret, flourished.

And study he did, till he was able to tell his cousin a great many details concerning the few spots where it was known to grow. Ray little knew, as he sat sprawling in his father's well-worn chair in the dingy library in the old house near Cape Town, how the knowledge of that strange, little-known, poisonous plant was going to help him and his airman cousin a few months later, when they set out to search for the Professor and rescue him from the hands of the Eivonias and other wild tribes.

The knowledge that Raymond had digested was to be his father's salvation. Not only that—Raymond was to save his own life with what he had devoured from the faded pages of those musty old books.

The July holidays came and went. Christmas was at hand, and yet no word came to the rambling old whitewashed house, where Ray and Tom waited so anxiously, from Professor Phipps.

The newspapers began to comment on his long silence, and at length the worst was feared. The Professor was counted as lost. Letters came from all parts of the country to Raymond and his cousin. Everyone seemed to take an interest in the lost Professor. Travellers wrote giving advice as to the best and quickest way to the Orco Valley, where, it was assumed, the old gentleman had last been heard of. Some of the letter-writers even offered to go in search of Professor Phipps if expenses were paid. Others sent sheaves of pages, including maps and hand-drawn plans, of the district where the Professor was supposed to be.

One dear old lady sent a short note which Raymond secretly kept, and it was the only one he personally answered. It ran :

" Dear Boy,

" I do not know your father, the brave Professor who has gone out into the wilds in search of this plant which has such wonderful healing powers, but day and night I will pray that the Lord will guide his footsteps and lead him safely home to you.

" A Mother".

That was all, but Ray thought more of that short letter than all the others, with their good advice and maps and plans.

The New Year dawned, but it was not a bright or happy one for either Tom or Raymond. No sign or word had come from the absent ones.

" That old Guido is with your father," said Tom one day as the two sat in the library, hoping against hope that the postman would bring them a letter. " There's that to be thankful for. He knows the jungle up in those parts as well as I know the streets of Cape Town. Told me so himself before they started. The public may count that your father is lost, but it's more than I do."

" He may be down with fever somewhere," said Ray gloomily, pulling out book after book on travel in Africa and putting each volume back in its wrong place. " Or he may have been attacked by those beastly savages. He may——"

" Shut up, Ray," said Tom, rising and going over to the window. " Don't whine like a bally girl with toothache, for mercy's sake. Suppose he has been attacked ? What of it ? He can fight like a turkey-cock. Suppose he's down with fever ? He knows exactly what to do. But look here, old man. If he has not sent word by the end of this month, or if there is no sign that he's alive or dead——"

" What, Tom ? What will you do ? " cried the boy eagerly, spinning round on his heel and sending the book that he had been so carefully scanning flying to the farthest end of the room. " Cough it up, man. Shall—we——? "

" Start to look for him," said Tom Ransom quietly, his eye on the garden gate and his hands deep in his trouser pockets. " Yes, Raymond Phipps. I have made up my mind that we can stand this beastly suspense no longer. It's making a nervy girl of you and a neurotic woman of me. Chuck a few things together and we'll be off, but not a word, mind, outside. Nothing must be known. We'll get away quietly. No one need be wise as to where we've gone—— Look—who's this coming ? "

CHAPTER II

IT was old Dr. Tomset, Professor Phipps's best friend. He came up the garden path almost at a run, in spite of his age and gammy foot.

" Boys," he shouted, before he had reached the front door, which generally stood wide open. " Boys ! Where are you ? What's this I hear ? The Professor missing ? Since when ? "

Dr. Tomset had been away from home for some months, having a trip to England for his health. He had only arrived back in Cape Town the previous day. Captain Ransom expected to hear from the blustering, hearty old fellow ; he knew the old friends were inseparable, but he hardly expected to see him tripping up the garden path like a two-year-old.

He leaned from the library window. " Come in, sir ; I'm glad to welcome you back again. Come right in."

Raymond darted along the passage to meet his father's chum. " Welcome home, doctor," he cried, leading the excited old gentleman into the room and pulling forward an easy chair, into which the doctor thankfully sank. " Heard any news ? "

" News, news ! " snorted the doctor wrathfully, pulling out a snowy handkerchief and mopping his wet forehead. " How and where should I hear news ? I've come here to get some. Didn't even know that old fool of a father of yours had gone off into the wilds all on his lonesome till an hour ago. Drat him ! Why didn't he wait for me ? He knew I was due back. Idiot ! Stark, staring mad, that's what. Now, tell me, boys, all there is to know."

Over tea and hot scones, baked by Jabus, the proud Zulu cook-boy, the three eager, anxious friends chatted and pondered how best they could serve the foolish Professor who had so daringly gone out into unknown country to search for the wonderful lobolo plant with its deadly yet healing properties.

" Where in wild Mahratta battle
Fell my father evil starr'd."
" Locksley Hall," Tennyson.

Captain Ransom at last mentioned the idea he and Ray had been speaking of a short time before.

" Take the plane and go and search the Eivonia swamps ? Just the thing ! " cried the doctor excitedly, thumping the table till the tea-tray jangled and an ash-tray fell on to the tiled hearth with a clang. " Tom, my boy, the very thing, and lay the cost at my door. I'll pay every blessed penny of the journey. Get my old fool friend out of the hands of those black devils, that's all."

" We're not sure he's in them, sir," said Tom with a smile, inwardly considering the old doctor was jumping too fast to conclusions. " He may be in some district where he cannot write or send a message of any sort. I hardly think he's a prisoner."

" Think nothing, lad. Make sure," said the doctor,

once more mopping his face and glaring round the room as if a few witch-doctors and native chiefs were concealed under the chairs and tables in the Professor's cosy library.

"Make sure—and get the old fool back." He drained his cup and passed it along to be refilled.

"I am just as big a fool," he said quietly, taking out his favourite brier and filling it. "I'd have gone with him if I'd been here."

Raymond threw down a map he had been studying and sat down heavily on the wide window-seat. "But is there such a plant, doctor?" he said gloomily, stretching out his legs and digging his hands deep into his pockets. "Suppose the pater's gone on a wild-goose chase? Suppose this——"

"Suppose nothing," snorted the doctor, jumping from his chair and pacing up and down the room in a wildly agitated manner. "Is your father a fool, boy?"

"You called him one a few minutes ago, sir," retorted Ray with a disarming grin that toned down the words. "You——"

"I am one myself for letting my feelings run away with me," returned the old man, stopping in front of Ray's chair and shaking a brown forefinger at him. "Your father's a born idiot to go off alone and leave me kicking my heels here in Cape Town, but you can take it from me, lad, that he's one of the best-informed men of his time on African poison-plants, and he must have had some first-hand, new information concerning this medicinal herb, to go off all of a sudden like this and leave me in the lurch."

"On the water, you mean, doctor," put in Captain Ransom dryly. "You were on the ocean when the Professor went off. He told me himself he had no idea when to expect you back. He's been gone months, you know, not days."

"I know, I know," retorted the doctor sharply. "The fault lies with me. I neglected to tell him when I was returning. As regards this plant the Professor has gone to find, it is real enough and rare enough to encourage fools like the Professor and myself to risk our silly lives in trying to find it. I have seen photos of the plant; it has a beautiful, wax-like flower and a somewhat overpowering, sweet scent which, if inhaled too deeply, causes death. There is no scent except when the flower is in full bloom. The juice from its stem is a deadly poison, but, used judiciously, has splendid medicinal powers. The witch-doctors of the various tribes who worship this plant keep the districts of its growth a sacred secret.

"It beats me why the pater wanted to go himself to search for the bally thing, all the same," muttered Ray disconsolately. "He could have sent Tom here——"

"We'd have taken the plane and made a holiday of it," put in Captain Ransom with a broad grin. "Anyway, we're ready to start right away, doctor. You don't think we should delay?"

The old man wheeled round quickly and, diving his hand into his breast pocket, brought out his cheque-book. "A pen, please, Tom," he said, turning the pages over with trembling hands. "A big fat cheque will help you on your way. Spare nothing in bribes, but keep your doings as secret and quiet as you can. Ray, I'll get you the finest little repeater on the market. Expect it at any moment."

The delighted boy did a war-whoop round the excited old doctor. "Gad!" he shouted in high glee. "You're a ripper, sir, a perfect ripper. I'll see that I use it to good advantage. Gosh!"

Captain Tom Ransom winked at his uncle's faithful old chum. "Seems as if my life won't be worth a penny's purchase," he said with a grin. "I'd better keep out of range."

"Good thing to have in the jungle, Tom," said the old man. "A tough pair of fists are an asset, too, when it comes to humans. Don't go potting native boys, Ray, or you might find yourself in the soup. There are policemen about, at times, even in the wildest jungles of Africa, in these good days. But now I must be off to the gunsmith's. I'll order some potted dog and tins of milk and things while I'm about it. Be perfectly ready for the word go. Something tells me no time should be lost. My old friend's been missing too long."

"We'll be ready in no time, doc," said Tom gravely. "I, too, feel that it is high time something was done, but as you say, mum's the word. We don't want our trip to become public property. The papers make so much of these adventures. Let's keep it out of the Press if we can."

"You're right, lad," said the doctor, cramming his soft hat at a rakish angle on to his bushy white hair and dashing down the garden path as if pursued by a whole tribe of witch-doctors. "I must go straight to the shops before they close. See you later."

CHAPTER III

NEXT morning Raymond Phipps was startled as he came slowly down the passage to the breakfast-room, by a loud shout from his cousin, who was seated at the breakfast-table, having been down a good half-hour, though it was then barely seven o'clock.

"Hooray! Hooray! your pater's found the sacred flower! Hear the news, Ray. Listen!"

He waved a letter in his hand as he spoke and Raymond found it hard not to look over his cousin's shoulder, but politeness made him sink down in his chair on the other side of the table and listen. "Go on, man, go on," he gasped, leaning over so that he almost dipped the front of his loose khaki shirt in his porridge. "A word from the pater at last. Holy Moses!—time, too."

"Shut up and listen," said Captain Tom Ransom quietly: "there's more in this than meets the eye. Hear what your pater says:

> "'DEAR TOM AND RAY,
>
> "'You will be glad to hear that I have at length achieved success with regard to the—you know—the daisy—I wished to get a root of.
>
> "'It is not quite in full bloom, but I have only procured it at great risk to life and limb. I may tell you, boys, that at any moment I expect to fall into the hands of—— If you do not hear again, lose no time in coming. I will send my faithful Guido with directions, if I still live—if I am able. Ah! Tom, if I do not return, I turn Ray over to you—— Be true—— Tell him——'"

"Tell him—what?" Ray almost hissed. "Spit it out, Tom, there's a good chap."

Captain Ransom stopped reading and swallowed hard, looking straight into the eyes of his anxious young cousin. "Old man," he said slowly, "the letter has no ending."

"No ending?" cried Raymond eagerly, taking the soiled piece of paper from the other's hand and glancing down at the shaky scrawl, so unlike the Professor's usual close handwriting. "But where is he? Not a prisoner, Tom? The blighters cannot have got him? Eh?"

He watched his cousin's calm, sunburnt face keenly for any sign of fear, but Tom Ransom had not been called "old poker-face" at school, and college, for nothing. He looked into his companion's eyes with strength and courage in his own glance, so that new hope came at once to the boy, as the airman meant it to.

"No need to hang out a white feather, Ray," he said quietly, taking out his old brier and filling it, not that he meant to smoke till he'd had his breakfast, but to give him something to do while the Zulu cook-boy placed bacon and kidneys before him. "Fall to, Raymond Phipps. My plane is all in order. We can start without delay. Bet the old doctor will be round with the morning newspaper. Your kit-bag packed?"

Raymond nodded; his mouth and his heart were both rather full. "Could start this very minute," he managed to murmur at last. "Those Eivonias ought to be blotted out—wiped off the face of the earth. I'd give—— Hullo, who's this? Some beggar blighter coming in at the front gate—— Guido! By all that's holy."

Ray sprang up, knocking over his chair, flinging his table napkin down into the bacon-gravy, and the silver ring, sent to him by his godfather when he was christened, into the empty fire-place. "Guido—with a message from the pater, or my name's Mac-Duff."

He was out in the garden before Captain Ransom had put down his empty coffee-cup.

"Tom, Tom," came his voice from outside and the captain hastened after him.

They hardly recognised the faithful Guido in the beggarly wretch who lay in Raymond's arms, his head lagging forward, his clothes in the last stages of rags and shreds, held together here and there with bits of wire and tough grass.

"Water, water," he moaned and fell in a heap on the gravel path.

"Carry him to the rondaval, Jabus," said Tom Ransom to the excited Kaffir boy, who had followed them to see the strange ragamuffin with the audacity to enter the white man's front gate. "Then get hot coffee and porridge. The poor fellow's starving. Look at his bones! Guido, wake up, man!"

"Got something in his hand, Tom," cried Raymond suddenly. "Look! I'll lay it's a message from the pater!"

Pushing Jabus aside, Ray lifted the emaciated man up in his strong young arms and carried him into the shade of the rondaval.

" You trip off and get food, slowcoach," he said to the wondering Kaffir. " Solid food and good hot coffee. Quick, unless you want to feel my toe."

Jabus sprinted towards the house and was not long in getting food for the starving man, who soon showed signs of recovering.

As soon as he opened his eyes he stretched out a thin, bony hand and gave a piece of ragged, soiled linen to Tom. " From the great Perfessor," he muttered and swooned off again.

It was a portion of a linen handkerchief, and printed in half-formed letters was one word—" bagged "—done in dark red.

" His own blood," Captain Ransom told himself, but said nothing aloud.

" His own blood," blurted out Raymond, and for a moment looked away.

Tom was the first to pull himself together. He laid a kindly hand on his young cousin's shoulder. " Look nippy," he said sharply. " We'll be off at once. Guido will give us some indication of the way when he has been fed. See to him, Jabus. Feed him well and prepare a hot bath. I will find him clothing. Ray, get him a couple of your shirts ; mine would hang on him like tents. Quick's the word, now, and sharp's the action. No time to lose."

The old doctor came down on them like a hurricane. When Tom told him over the phone about the appearance of the Professor's faithful follower, his excitement knew no bounds. He came with a bottle of brandy sticking out of his coat pocket, to revive the half-caste's drooping spirits.

" Guido's all right, sir," cried Raymond delightedly, as the old doctor called for a glass and took out the bottle. " He'll be as right as rain after a sleep."

" He was exhausted," said Tom ; " had made his way from goodness knows where to tell us the Professor is a captive in some unknown, God-forsaken spot. He can give us no information as to where the plant grew or where they were taken prisoners, but it was beyond the Zambezi. That much he knows for certain. Read the letter, doctor, and here is the message Guido brought. He's sleeping now, like a dog after a meal."

" Had a bath, too, and not too soon," put in Ray with a sly grin. " Used a whole bar of Lifebuoy soap in getting the dirt off." He was examining the glorious little repeater the doctor had brought him ; putting it away and taking it out a hundred times.

" Give me a chance of bringing down a bally Eivonia," he said with smug satisfaction. " Just a ghost of a chance. Golly, but he'll sing ! "

Before the doctor left Guido woke up. He was a half-caste Portuguese. A deformed hunchback whom the Professor had once befriended ; a peculiar, silent man of uncertain age. He seemed to find a difficulty in speaking of his adventure with the missing Professor in their search for the sacred flower.

" But the good man must die," he said again and again, as if trying to impress on these unexcited white men the tremendous importance of haste.

" The sacrifice will be made when the plant flourishes, and the flower is in full bloom. The Perfessor has found out the black man's secret. The white man must die. He wants help."

" He'll get it, never fear, Guido," said Captain Ransom quickly, replacing a map he had been studying in his pocket and stuffing some thick slabs of chocolate into his kit-bag. " It's not so easy in these days to offer up human sacrifices, if that's what you mean, and get off with it. The white man's arm stretches far. The witch-doctor's day is over. Now rest till we are ready to start. We must take you with us. You know the country of the Eivonias ? "

" Like—like my mother's face," muttered the hunchback ; " but to say the day of the witch-doctor is over is quite—quite wrong. He is powerful where the foot of the white man does not too often tread. The witch-doctor's power is great. The chiefs, even, do his bidding. 'Tis in his power the Perfessor lies. He needs help."

The white men were silent ; they knew the half-caste spoke the truth.

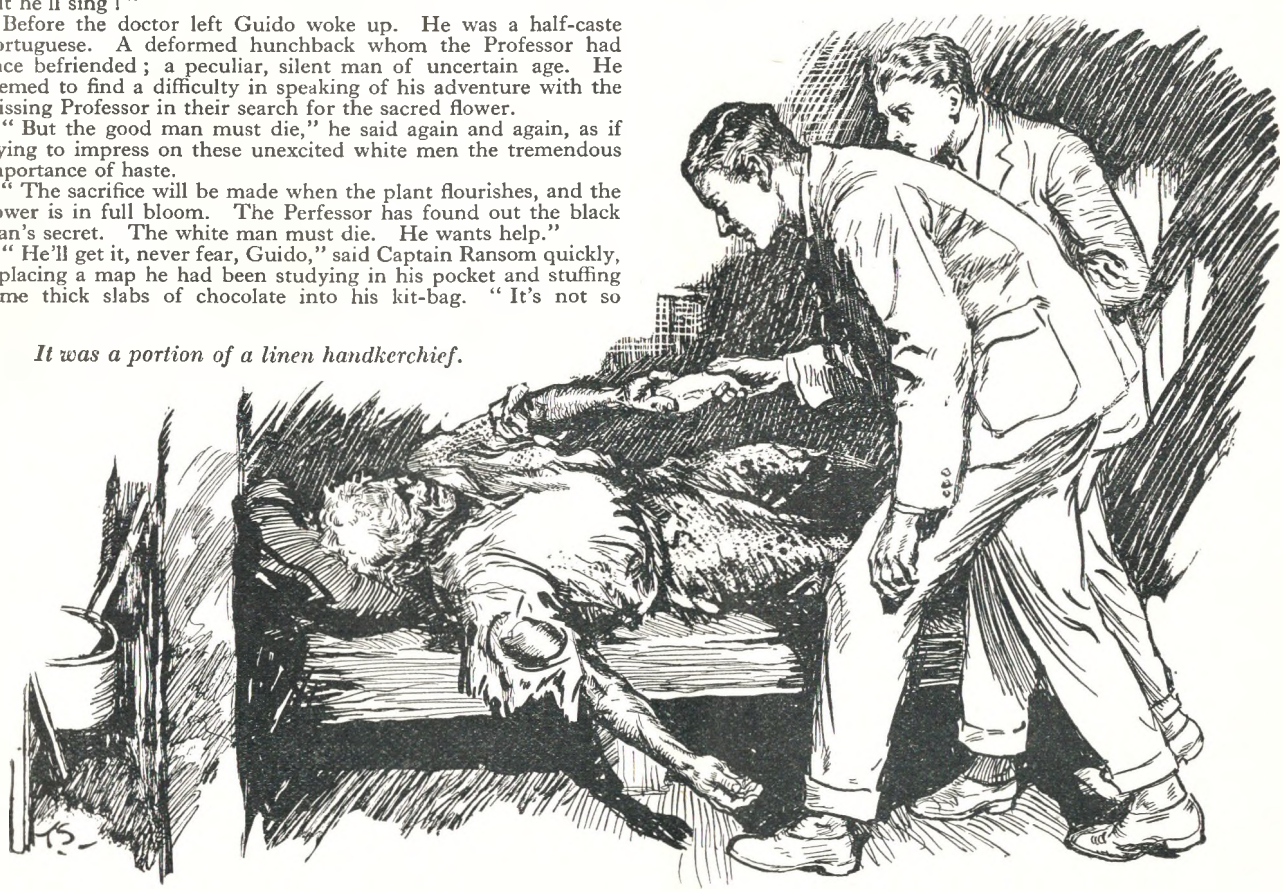
Over dinner that night the doctor told a story of the marvellous power of the witch-doctors. " Of course, it was some years ago that this thing happened," he said, sipping his port with relish and cracking his nuts with strong teeth, as if he were biting off a witch-doctor's head. " Africa was not then what it is to-day. It was not half so civilised."

" The natives did not dress in our old clothes in those good old days, doctor," laughed Raymond, thinking of the picture Jabus made in one of Captain Ransom's old khaki tunics and the Professor's baggy grey trousers, capped with one of his own school caps adorned with a feather from a rooster's tail. " Natives were natives, and not the rotten bounders some of these kitchen boys are to-day."

The old doctor laughed. " You'll find it will take centuries before the native is civilised," he replied dryly, rising to his feet and taking out a good cigar. " Wait till you meet some of these wilder tribes ; it will teach you many a good lesson, Ray, my boy. You will find that down at heart the native is still the same raw, wild animal he was in the days of your great-grandfather. Now, come, I must be toddling. You will want a good night's sleep, so as to be up betimes. What time do you start, Tom ? "

" With the dawn, doctor," said Captain Ransom gravely. Everything is ready. We make for Bulawayo. The plane is going like a swallow. Hold thumbs for us, sir, and wish us luck, and thanks for all the help you have given."

" Tut tut," said the old doctor testily. " All I want to see is a plant of that sacred flower. Think I care a tinker's cuss for the Professor ? Fool, he was, ever to have ventured on alone. Tell him so from me."



It was a portion of a linen handkerchief.

Blustering and fuming, Professor Phipps's best friend went from the house, and as Tom and Ray listened to his little car snorting down the road they looked at each other and grinned.

"Finest friend the pater ever had," muttered Ray, taking out the repeater once more and handling it lovingly.

"Good old doc," returned Captain Ransom. "I like the way he said it was the plant he was worrying about, not his chum. He cares far more than he'll ever admit. Now, are you sure you're ready to start? Then get to bed. Jabus will call us at dawn. Good night."

CHAPTER IV

THE plane came to earth like a bird.

"Sainted Sambo, but that was grand," cried Raymond, leaping out and looking about him, wondering what his class-mates would say when he told them of this great adventure of his. "What a gloomy place! That pool over there looks as dark as black cats. Is this the M'bambwe Swamp in front of us? A ghastly hole, if you ask me."

"No one asked you. Shut up and don't talk so much," retorted Captain Ransom, taking a quick survey of their immediate surroundings and consulting a small map in the quickly fading light of day. "Let's find out our bearings."

"I know just where we are," wheezed Guido in his peculiarly husky voice, taking out a soiled piece of cloth on which a rough plan was drawn. This he spread on his dusky palm and pointed with a bit of stick to the outline of a faintly drawn map. "The good Perfessor give this to me. We are here—and he is here." He looked up. "This is the great M'bambwe Swamp. We travel across this. I know the safe way—the path across. It lies just here to the right. Soon it will be dark. We must take much care. The Eivonias are now all around us. They are not a friendly tribe."

"They cannot do us much harm, surely," said Tom slowly, taking a parting glance at his beloved plane, which they had left on the edge of the swamp, looking like a great bird with outstretched wings. "The natives are not so hostile as a rule."

"These are," asserted the half-caste doggedly, plodding along in front. "The tribe is small and has little or no connection with the white man. They are religious fanatics, for the most part, and still perform their ancient rites and ceremonies, in spite of the white man's law. The law-abiding native does not put faith in the Eivonia."

"I'm getting to hate the very name of the blighters," cried Ray, who went second, Captain Ransom bringing up the rear. "Rotten eggs, I call them."

"Carefully, go carefully," called out Guido, who was on ahead. "There has been rain of late. Take care."

It was now quite dark. There is little or no twilight in Africa. A horrible stillness lay over the land, broken now and then by the raucous cry of a homeward-flying bird or a low, soft squelch beneath their feet.

"Beastly place," muttered Raymond huskily. "Wish we were on terra firma. I hate this dirty darkness."

"The dark is our friend, young sir," piped Guido, with a low laugh. "We are not seen in the dark. By an' by the moon will come. We may then be spotted. By an' by the enemy will smell us out."

"How long will it take us to cross the swamp, Guido?" called Tom in a carefully modulated voice. "All night?"

"No, oh no," replied the hunchback calmly. "One hour—maybe two. No more. Go carefully here, keep close. This cursed swamp has evil spirits in it. They drag a man down." As he spoke there was an anguished cry and a quiet splash, and to the consternation of his companions, the coloured man disappeared from view.

Ray shrieked aloud in his fright. "Tom! Tom!" he yelled in desperation. "He's gone! Drowned in this beastly swamp—and—and I'm—I'm going too! Ugh!"

"Steady, steady, boy," called out Captain Ransom, taking a firm grip on the lad's arm. "Don't get like a nervy girl! He's not drowned. See, there's his head. Hold hard while I get a grip on him. Carefully now. Carefully."

Kneeling down in the mire and slush of that terrible swamp, the airman reached out strong, powerful hands to the gasping half-caste, who clutched them eagerly. "My foot—slipped," he panted, scrambling to his feet and shaking himself like a half-drowned dog. "The spirits beneath, they shake the ground. Let us make all speed to the other side."

Raymond Phipps was a boy who thought quickly and acted quickly as a rule, but the power of this dreadful swamp seemed to have him in its grip, and he groaned aloud as his weary, aching feet dragged themselves one past the other.

"A beastly nightmare march, this," he moaned. "What poor old Guido feels like, I don't know—but——"

Suddenly a weird kind of chanting fell on their ears. It seemed to come from all around at the same time. Almost it sounded as if it came from the very swamp itself. It was not a song, but more like a heavy moaning made by many voices.

"Hark! What's that row?" cried Phipps, whose nerves seemed to be on edge. "This quagmire's haunted all right!"

The airman was on in front by this time, keeping a sharp watch on the half-caste, for fear he slipped again; he turned and spoke to his cousin in a low tone. "That's enough about ghosts and haunted places, Ray," he said a trifle sharply. "This poor fellow's near about gone in and you know these chaps believe in that sort of thing. It's human voices we can hear, not spirits. We must——"

Guido turned suddenly and held up a warning hand. The moon glided from behind a cloud and the others could see the hunchback's frightened face quite plainly. "The chant of the Eivonias," he said and shuddered. "It is the chant of death. They are far away. This clear air carries far. The priests are calling the faithful together. The flower must be in bloom. It is the time for sacrifices. We have far to go yet. We must hurry."

"The man's gone dotty," cried Raymond testily, stepping carefully along and wishing he was anywhere but where he was at that moment. "Eivonias! May they be jiggered! The idiot's gone potty over those niggers. I'll lay my new cricket bat they don't have human sacrifices these days."

The airman said nothing. He did not want to unduly alarm the youngster, but he knew well that some of these wild, little-known tribes still held to their ancient rites and customs.

With a cry of satisfaction the three suddenly found themselves on dry ground once more. It was a joy and a relief to feel the firm earth beneath their tired feet. They were now in the shelter of a dense forest. Far away the weird chant still went on, but they were too weary to heed it. The very trees around them seemed to echo the faint sound and added to the queer noises of the forest about them.

"I think we're safe enough here," said Captain Ransom, throwing himself down at the foot of a thickly branched tree, quickly followed by his young cousin. "We must camp here and get some rest and food. Can't go a step farther without either. What about it, Guido?"

"Yes, we must rest and eat, but light no fire," said the half-caste quickly. "To be seen, maybe, is to ask for death."

"Let's eat, then," muttered Ray, but almost before the words were spoken he had rolled on his side and was fast asleep.

Captain Ransom mounted guard. He ate and watched, but both of his companions were dead to the wide. Guido did his best to keep awake while he ate some food, but the bread and dried meat fell from his hands as his eyes closed, and with a smile the airman saw him lie down and surrender to the weariness that overcame him.

Towards dawn the watcher slept, too. He had listened to that horrible droning noise which seemed to re-echo through the whole forest till he detested it. The dirge of death, old Guido had called it. Ransom hoped it would not mean death to any of their little party. He was not superstitious, but the chant haunted him. It was to its moan that at length his weariness overcame him and he fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

RAY yawned. Someone was shaking him by the shoulder. He looked up into the face of the half-caste and grinned. The first light of dawn was creeping over the forest. Birds began to twitter in the branches of the tree under which he was lying. Noises were heard in the jungle. The youngster sat up suddenly and looked round him.

"Where's the captain?" he asked, finding himself alone with the hunchback, who had lit a fire and made some breakfast, in the shape of hot coffee and fried eggs, tipped out of a tin into a collapsible pan.

"Captain Ransom is on the look out," said Guido, handing the hungry boy some food. "We must lose no time, but must get on. The captain has already eaten while you slept."

Raymond was not wanting in pluck, but as he looked back over the way they had come and thought of the hideous night-

With a quick movement Ray tossed his gun over to his cousin.

mare march across the swamp, when Guido had nearly lost his life, he could hardly repress a shudder.

" I prefer any kind of road to picking one's way through a swamp," he said, gazing with something like consternation at the thick growth through the jungle behind him, where they would most likely have to cut a way. " Must we go through there, or is there a track of any sort ? "

" When the young baas has eaten I will show him," said the other with a grim smile. " The way is rough, but the old Perfessor is in great danger."

" The dickens he is ! " cried the boy, springing to his feet as his cousin appeared, cheerful and full of pep, as usual. "Hallo, Tom ! Found out anything ? Having a morning stroll ? "

" Don't speak with your mouth full," grinned the airman, taking a cup of steaming coffee from Guido. " 'Course I've found out something. One is that this place is swarming with snakes."

" My maiden aunt ! What a look-out for us ! " cried Ray, gulping down his coffee. " We're used to those johnnies, though. Snakes don't cause us to lose any sleep ; they—— Ho ! Tom ! Look out ! Above you, on that branch ! Python, man ! Don't move ! I'll get him ! Aunt Matilda ! Keep still ! "

Ray hissed the words. They were hardly above a whisper. He had caught sight of a still head in the leaves ; a slimy body lying along the branch over his cousin's head. Now was the time when the old doctor's gift would come in handy. Like a streak of lightning he had whipped it out and aimed, not too carefully, but hoping that at least it would give Tom time to jump aside. He shot upwards, hardly hoping the shot would go home, but the next moment a fifteen-foot python dropped to the ground. It was wounded, but only enough to make it more dangerous. With a hiss and a rapid movement it turned and, lashing its tail around a low branch of the tree, lunged with wide-open mouth at the half-caste, who happened to be nearest.

Nimbly the man leapt aside and Captain Ransom, having no time to get out his gun, met the reptile with a tremendous blow behind the head. This seemed to enrage it more and, gathering itself for another attack, it lunged again. With a quick movement Ray tossed his gun over to his cousin. Tom Ransom had once won the King's Prize at Bisley. He was taking no chances now. As the enraged snake, with wide-open jaws, came to the attack again, the airman took aim and the next moment the headless python was squirming faintly in the undergrowth.

" Phew ! Great guns ! " exclaimed Ray, hastily placing some distance between himself and the unsavoury sight. " Hot stuff, that gentleman. Gosh ! First python I've seen at close quarters ! Don't want to see another, either, in a hurry ! "

" He must have been just above us in the branches all night," said Tom Ransom with a wintry smile. " Where ignorance is bliss, you know—and all that ! "

He took off his helmet and wiped his damp forehead. " Some snake, that ! Where's old Guido disappeared to ? "

" Dunno ; let's move our quarters," said the lad with a sheepish grin. " Don't care for callers such as we've just dealt with. My giddy aunt ! That shot of yours ! Grand ! Hallo, I hear footsteps—— Who goes there ? "

It was only the half-caste returning from his look out. Raymond sighed with mock relief.

" Thought it might be a leopard this time," he said with a somewhat mirthless laugh, as he saw the brown face of the guide appear. " What now, old sport ? Do we get on ? "

" Yes, we must lose no time," said the Professor's faithful old servant. " We will go right ahead. I have found a native path. This we will follow."

So through the heat of the steaming day they kept to the jungle. They passed scattered native villages hidden on the outskirts of the forest and now and then they got a glimpse of the river.

Tom Ransom nursed his rifle and kept his eyes skinned for trouble. It was not that he was afraid of the natives, but they were now in a country far from civilisation. It was as well to be ready for any emergency. He wished now that he had flown over this part of the journey. The only reason that he had left his Moth on the farther edge of the swamp was the fact that its appearance might easily attract too much attention. If they wanted to rescue the Professor without delay, it seemed that secrecy was the best thing, lest fear of being found out might cause the natives, who had the old man in their power, to take his life and hide the crime.

With the coming of night they found themselves in a green, pleasant glade.

" Here is where we pitch the tent we haven't got," said Ray with a grin. " And, for Mike's sake, let's have some grub before I drop ! "

Guido took a look round, as usual, before making preparations for camping. He was just coming back to the place where Ray had chosen to outspan, and Tom Ransom had passed the remark that the day had gone by without trouble, when it came upon them like a flash of lightning.

Ray was standing carelessly by a big mtoto tree, watching the hunchback approach, when suddenly his careless attitude fled and his whole body stiffened. A cry escaped his lips as a low growl fell on his ears and he saw, behind Guido, a stealthy movement in the tall grass. There was a swift rustling sound and the next moment a sleek, striped body flew into the air, to fall on the shoulders of the half-caste, felling him to the ground, where he lay beneath the leopard, shrieking loudly for help.

Quick as thought Captain Ransom had his rifle levelled, but

the struggle between the man and beast made it a difficult job to get in a successful shot. They rolled over and over. Guido, for all his small size, seemed to have tremendous strength. The leopard was not having it all his own way. As luck would have it, the beast was not full-grown, but even so, it had great power. At one time it would be uppermost, then, by some agile movement, the hunchback would be getting the upper hand. Tom saw at last, with tremendous relief, that Guido had managed at length to turn so that the animal was beneath him and his two brown hands were buried deep in its throat. The airman watched his chance. At last it came, and taking careful aim, he fired—then again. Not a sound came from man or beast. The fight was over and both lay still.

For a moment the airman covered his face and shuddered. A great fear came over him. He had killed a good friend.

Raymond raced to the spot and together the cousins carefully disengaged the stiff brown fingers from the animal's throat.

"He's not dead, thank Heaven," said Ransom, sending up a prayer of thankfulness. "I thought my shot had finished him. Poor old Guido."

As if to prove the captain's statement, the brown man opened his eyes for a moment and feebly asked for water. But before his lips could be moistened he had swooned off again.

Tom Ransom tended the sick man as carefully as any nurse in a hospital might have done. "A brave man, Ray," he said, as he and the boy sat beside the sleeping hunchback while the night closed in upon them. "Plucky as they make 'em. It'll be a good many days before those torn legs can carry him. I felt sure he was finished. You and I must take turns to give him a lift when he's well enough to proceed. We may have to leave him behind, worse luck."

But in this Tom was wrong. With the dawn Guido awoke and declared himself ready and willing to depart. In vain Ransom and his cousin remonstrated with him. His mind was made up. "The Perfesssor needs us," he said stubbornly. "My feet, they are not hurt. My arms, yes—but my legs are whole. My back is torn, but I do not walk on my back. We must go. Delay is dangerous."

Raymond looked at the little brown man in awed surprise. "Sainted Sam, Guido!" he exclaimed in admiration. "How can you want to be on the move when you've just had a fierce tussle with a leopard? Can't be done, Moses. You must be left here in the shade of the old apple tree till we return."

"'Twas a mere cub," snorted the hunchback, rising painfully to his feet. "Only death will make me delay. Your father is in danger. Shall I stay for my scratches when——"

"Gad! you're more faithful than I am, Guido," said the boy. "Sure we'll go, right now. When your strength gives in, Tom and I will lend you our feet."

"And our backs," said Ransom, with his cheerful grin, though he did not think they would get on very fast with a sick man with them. Still, without Guido they were pretty helpless in this trackless district. They must take the better of two evils.

So once more they went on this seemingly endless journey. This time there was a clear pathway through the forest. Now and then the sound of human voices fell on their ears, but they met no one.

Then suddenly Guido stopped and went down on his knees. "Eivonias," he muttered. "Not far away. Get to cover! Quick! This way!"

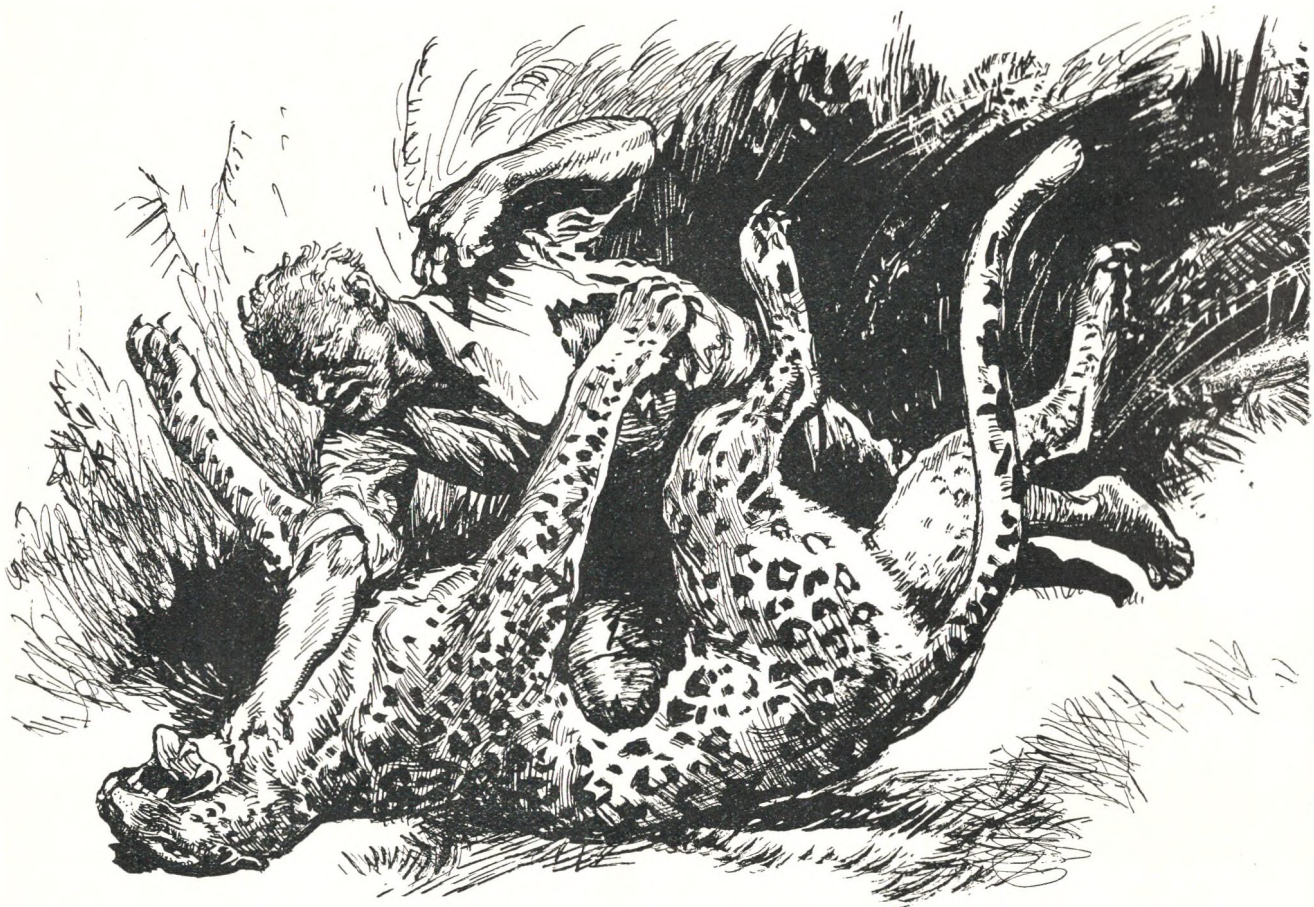
He crawled on hands and knees through the thick undergrowth, Tom and Ray, bending low, following. They were soon completely hidden, and not a moment too soon, for right down the path on which they had been walking came three wild-looking men, carrying between them the carcass of a dead buck. The men were naked but for dirty loincloths. In their hair they wore some strange arrangement made of quills and the horns of some small animal. Each had a thin-bladed knife in his closed teeth. Altogether, the small party appeared somewhat savage, and Ray fetched a deep sigh of relief when the trio had passed by.

"They prepare for the feasting." whispered Guido when the echo of their footsteps had died away. "The sacred flower is now in bloom."

"Savage old blighters," Ray retorted, watching the natives with interest. "Do they cook the meat, Guido, or eat it raw?"

"They make great fires, young baas," the man answered earnestly. "The meat they roast. They offer sacrifices, too, if there is a drought. This year the rain has been but little."

Raymond was about to pass a few more complimentary remarks about the customs of native tribes when the half-caste made motions to the others to remain quiet and still. He himself



The beast was not full-grown but even so it had great power.

rose to his feet and boldly walked forward up the native path to meet a fellow who approached, chanting quietly as he came.

Ransom and his young cousin watched in amazement as the Professor's faithful servant saluted the savage and spoke to him in a tongue he evidently understood. For some time the conversation continued ; then with another salute, Guido disappeared into the forest and the native went on his way.

The halfcaste returned and advised a rest till the sun should set. As they squatted in the forest they heard the sound of distant screams. It was not human, but seemed like an animal in pain.

" What the dickens ? " began Ray, getting out his repeater and gazing lovingly at it. " I think it's time for us to be ready for a fight. Seems to me these blokes are on the warpath."

The hunchback did not smile. He sat, serious and gloomy.

" The fellow I met on the pathway and talked to," he said at length, listening intently as he spoke, " was one of the headmen of the tribe of fanatics who keep up these sacred rites. He would not tell me anything at all, till he saw the wounds I had in my fight with the leopard. Then he took me for a fire-walker and spoke of the sacrifices which are now about to take place."

" Was that squealing anything to do with it ? " put in Ray quickly, looking all about him, as if he expected to see a brown face peer through the leafy shade that surrounded them. " Are they up to their monkey tricks already ? "

" The sacrifice of animals comes first," said Guido quietly. " The last sacrifice of all is human. If they cannot get a full-grown man they take some small boy."

" Hideous," muttered Ransom testily. " We were mistaken, perhaps, to come on this foolhardy expedition without making the police aware of our intention."

" But you're not afraid of a few Eivonias ? " queried Ray with a grin. " Golly, let me get a pot at one or two."

" It's not a case of being afraid," said his cousin, while the half-caste went forward to reconnoitre. " We're in somewhat uncivilised country here—without permission, remember. Still, we must make the best of things. So long as we're in time to rescue your pater, what matters if it blows or snows ? Come on, let's be moving. I see Guido beckoning. Wonder what he's found out now ? "

They crept forward quietly and cautiously, joining their companion where he stood in the shade of a tall tree.

" What now ? " whispered Ray excitedly. " We're ready for the fray. I can see——"

The hunchback darted back into cover without a word and the other two had the good sense to follow. Then he turned and said excitedly : " The good Perfessor. I know where he lies. These flower-worshippers, they have him as a prisoner. He is in a hut built high up in a tree. He awaits——"

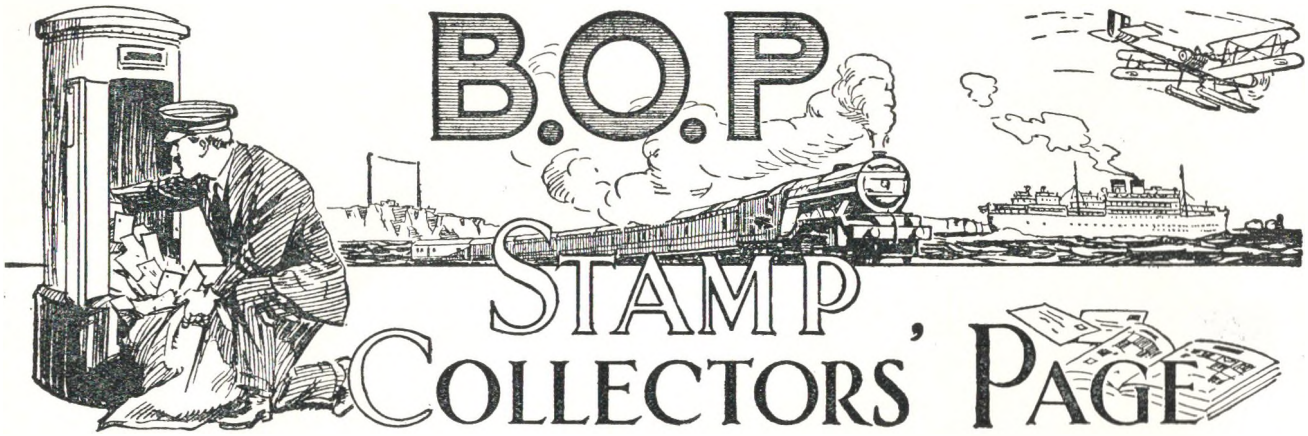
The captain silenced him with a fierce glance, stepping in between the half-caste and the eager boy. The other understood that he was not to mention his fear that the old man was to be offered up as a sacrifice when the time came. So, turning, he walked ahead with downcast eyes.

Tom Ransom was thunderstruck with the supposition that had been put to him. How could it be that his uncle was to be slain for the sake of a savage rite ? He called to mind another professor who had mysteriously disappeared some years before when on research work. No trace of him had ever come to light. Could it be that he and Professor Phipps were to share the same fate ?

It was too dastardly to think of. Ransom vowed, there and then, that his uncle should not be allowed to give up his life if he could prevent it.

He'd find out the Chief of these religious fanatics and have it out with him. He'd bring the law to bear upon these outrageous ceremonies. This was something outside the pale of decencies.

TO BE CONTINUED



Side-Lines in Stamp Collecting

By STANLEY PHILLIPS

A "SIDE-LINE", for the individual collector, is something which is not his main interest—a subsidiary collection to which he can turn when he is temporarily tired of the one to which he devotes most of his energies. There are many such side-lines and in choosing one it is best to select a subject which is as different as possible from your main collection, in order that in turning to it, you may get as much change as possible. The keener you are on collecting, the more likely you are to get stale if you stick at one subject too long.

Many collectors who want a side-line to-day are tempted to take up some study connected with postmarks. One of the most interesting of these is the collecting of *pre-stamp* covers; letters or envelopes bearing postal markings prior to the date when stamps were first used in the country concerned. Many of these pre-stamp covers are very quaint and fascinating and provide a good deal of information as to the postal methods of those days, the time taken for letters to travel between one country and another, and so on. If you are specialising in the stamps of one country, the pre-stamp covers of the same country will prove a useful side-line, but in some countries such covers are almost unobtainable and collectors pay high prices for them. On the other hand, there are many quite early covers of our own country which are easy to get.

A collection which might include postmarks of all dates, from the earliest pre-stamp cover to those of the present day, is one which covers your own county or district. It is possible, by tracing the postmarks of a district down to modern times, to find interesting evidence of changes in the spelling of names, and the opening of new post offices as new villages sprang up and what were previously villages became towns. If you are interested in the history of your county or district, you will find that such a collection can be noted up with details of local history in a way that will prove very attractive to your friends, even though the contents are only envelopes and postmarks.

I should be inclined to show the earlier items as complete covers, while the later postmarks could be neatly cut round to rectangular shape, where there is nothing interesting on the envelope except the postmark. Local history includes persons as well as places, however, and if you know the story of your district well, you may find that you have envelopes addressed to ex-mayors, M.P.s or other notabilities of the past, in which case you may well keep the whole envelope and add a note on your album page about the person to whom it was addressed.

For mounting small pieces of envelope showing a postmark, you will find ordinary hinges quite effective, but complete envelopes are best mounted with the little gummed corners which any stamp dealer or photographic dealer will supply you with very cheaply. A collection consisting entirely of covers can be housed very effectively in one of the new-style albums which are so much used to-day, each leaf of which consists of a stout transparent envelope, in which your cover is placed. The advantage of this type of album is that both sides of a cover can be seen, so that if there is anything interesting on the back it is not invisible, as it is when mounted in an ordinary blank album.

A type of collection which will not take you so far into the past as the one just described is that which deals with the "slogan" and announcement postmarks, which are such a feature of our present-day mail. The earliest of these dates from a good many years ago, but there was no general use of them until the present century. To-day there are advertising and slogan cancellations from all parts of the world. Some of them give postal instructions—telling where to stamp your letter, begging you to post early in the day, or asking you to address your correspondence clearly. Others remind you of an important exhibition which will shortly open, or advise you to take your next holiday at the seaside place which uses the postmark.

In some countries attempts have been made to sell the postmark space to business advertisers, but these have had to be dropped, as there was always the chance of mail from, say, one firm of shoe manufacturers being passed through the post with a postmark advertising the footgear made by a rival, which naturally led to trouble.

The simplest form of "slogan" collection would consist of one cancellation with each kind of wording you can find, but those who specialise will take the same slogan when it is in a different style of lettering, or even from every town from which it has been used. This, of course, greatly widens the scope of the collection, but if you get the same slogan from twenty different towns, it makes your display look very monotonous to other people.

Franking Machines.

If you see the mail which comes into any office nowadays, you will find that many of the letters bear no stamps. On some the place of the stamp is taken by a kind of postmark device which indicates the office of posting and the date. These are from official franking machines, which are used on correspondence posted in bulk. Business firms can hand in their circulars or lists or magazines in envelopes done up in bundles containing so many in each, send them unstamped to the post office, which puts them through the franking machine, and pay the postage in one sum.

Other marks which take the place of stamps will probably have emanated from the private franking machines with which many big firms are supplied nowadays. Instead of stamping your letters, the post clerk in your office simply feeds them into a small machine, and pulls one of several levers according to the postage required. The machine then prints something that looks like a crude stamp on the envelope and also an advertisement of your firm if you wish. When the machine has stamped postage to the value at which it was set it has to be taken to the post office for re-setting, when payment is made for the amount of postage it has stamped on your letters.

Every collector gets a number of revenue stamps mixed in with his postage stamps. These will form quite an attractive side-line if arranged separately in a small blank album. The best way to study them is to try and link them up with the postage stamps of the same period and country, seeing what they have in common, as regards design, watermark, perforation, printer or designer.

Telegraph stamps (stamps only available for use on telegrams) are even more interesting, and there are some quite neat designs to be found. The lightning flash was the stamp designer's best symbol for the telegraph, though some telegraph stamps show poles, wires and all.

I have a small collection of charity labels and " stickers " that have come my way during the past thirty years or so. These have nothing to do with postage stamps, of course, except that they are usually of the same size and shape and have often been perforated and gummed. It is extraordinary what a wide range of subjects can be found, from French generals during the war to modern philatelic exhibitions and congresses. The labels issued in connection with the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, which was held in London two or three years ago, were particularly interesting, as each label of the series was printed on a different kind of paper, so that, by buying the set, you had a guide which enabled you to distinguish wove paper from laid, and wove *batonné* from laid *batonné* or *pelure*. I believe these labels can still be obtained from some of the dealers.

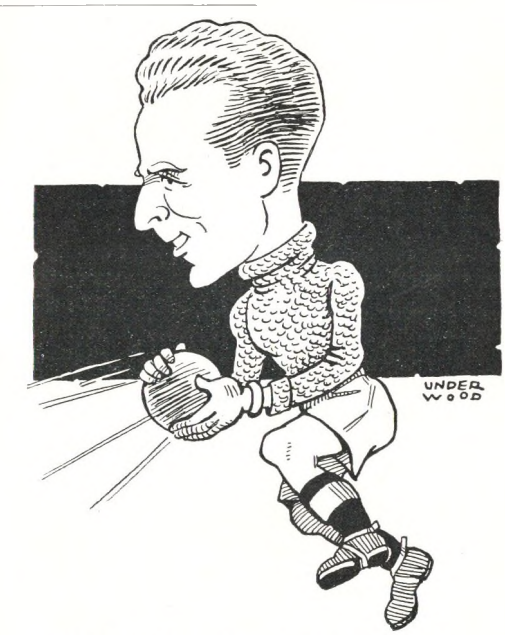
Stamped Stationery

Most collectors avoid postcards and envelopes which have stamps *printed on them*—stamped stationery, as it is called. This is a mistake, I think, as there are some very fine designs among these, especially some of the embossed envelope stamps. If you do not want to collect the whole cards, a manageable collection can be got together of " cut-squares ", i.e. the stamps neatly cut from the envelopes, wrappers or cards. If you want a guide for such a collection you will have to go to Germany for it, as there has been no such publication in England for many years. Of course, all these side-line collections must be kept in separate albums, so as not to interfere with your main collection. Don't mix " outcasts ", like envelope stamps, telegraphs, fiscals, or stickers, with your adhesive stamps, as so many beginners do. It is a bad mistake. If funds won't run to a half-crown loose-leaf album, then buy a cheap exercise book.

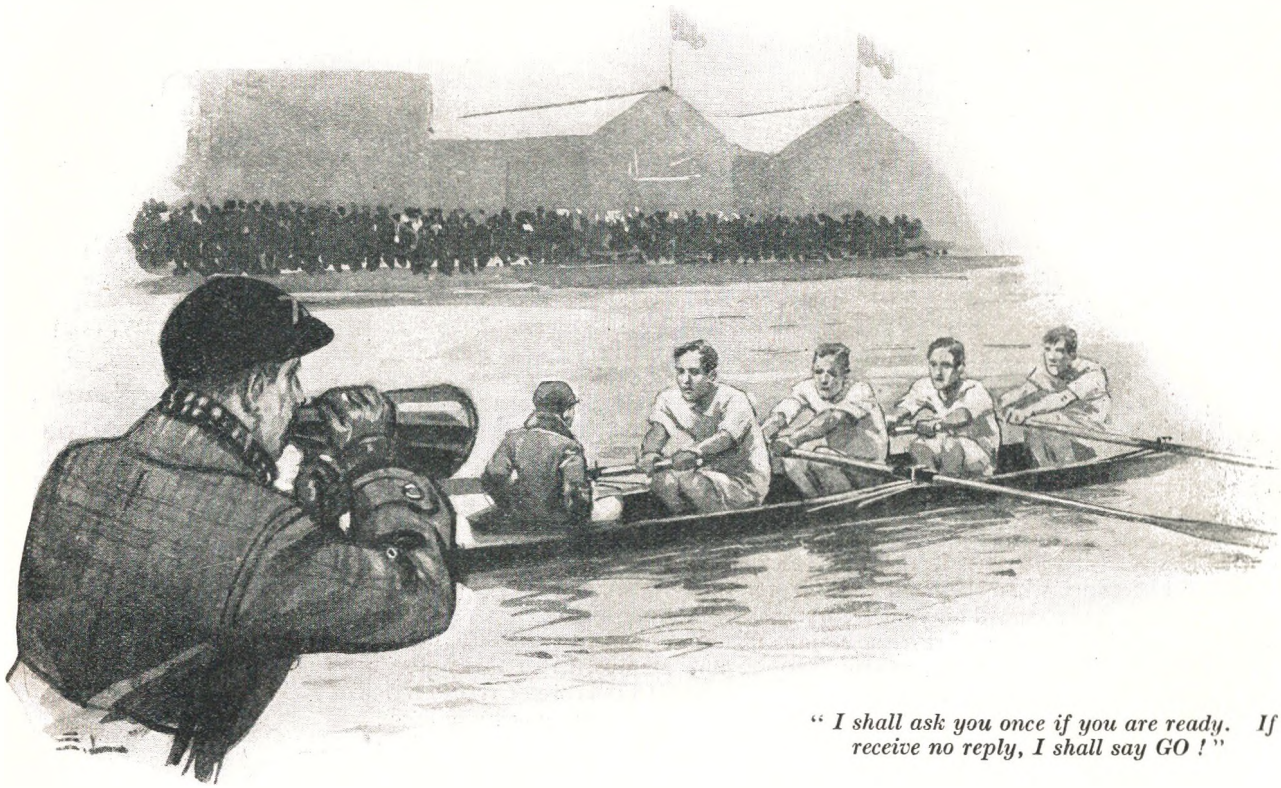
A collector I know has been getting together a display of stamps to illustrate the meaning of the various philatelic terms. On one page he has stamps showing all the different kinds of perforations and roulettes. The next will illustrate watermarks and watermark varieties, while a third will show errors of printing—*tête-bêche*, centre inverted and so on. Quite a big collection can be formed and most of the varieties can be represented by fairly cheap items if you know where to look.

Talking of watermarks, quite a good collection is one that shows the watermarks of the world. Choose cheap stamps, and hinge them back upwards, and where they do not show very clearly, pencil over them lightly to bring out the details. If the watermarks are grouped attractively, you will find this a surprisingly interesting collection.

Tom Cooper (Liverpool's right back).



Harry Hibbs (Birmingham's goalie).



" I shall ask you once if you are ready. If I receive no reply, I shall say GO ! "

Why the Boat-Race Fascinates Us

By " TIDEWAYMAN "

THERE are many thousands of boat races in this country every year, but only one that is " THE " Boat Race to the general public. Why ? What is this fascination felt even by people with no affection for either university and certainly no experience of rowing ?

The University Boat Race was first rowed a hundred and six years ago. Only those who rowed in it were originally entitled to call themselves " Blues". By degrees this privilege has been extended to all those who represent their university at any recognised sport (though some receive only a half-Blue), but the rowing Blue remains the senior and most important of them all.

What are these " Blues " which men become so very proud to wear ? Oxford take their colour from Christ Church, the college which supplied half the first Oxford crew, which, by the way, was victorious. Cambridge then rowed in white, with a pink stripe. It was seven years before another race took place, and on that occasion Cambridge were actually pushing off when it was realised that they carried no colours at all. Someone ran to a draper's for a piece of Etonian blue ribbon, which was then carried in the bows, and afterwards adopted as the official colour, with the result that nowadays, when the Eton crew row at Henley, people often ask why they have copied the Cambridge colours. The indignant answer is that Cambridge copied theirs !

The first race was not rowed from Putney to Mortlake, but at Henley. The next five were rowed from Westminster to Putney, and ever since 1845 the present course has been used, though on certain occasions the race has finished at Putney instead of starting there. Even now, however, it does not start from Putney Bridge itself, as it is often believed to do, but from a point well clear of it, and indicated by a kind of milestone marked U.B.R. (University Boat Race) on the towpath at Putney. Under the bridge there are far too many swirls and eddies for safety, and a year or two ago, when the bridge was being widened and was fenced in by piers and piles, these eddies spread to a wider area than usual and the starting-point was moved. The finish is marked by white posts opposite the " Ship " at Mortlake, the whole course being approximately four miles and a quarter, and taking about twenty minutes to row. It has sometimes been covered in less than nineteen, and sometimes in more than twenty-five ! The only other races for which this course is used are the amateur and professional sculling championships, and the Tideway Head of the River event.

From the time the race starts the coaches may say no more.

They must not even shout encouragement from the launches.

The captain of each crew is called the president of the Boat Club for that year, and he is in command, although tactics during the race are directed by stroke, from whom cox takes his orders, his only other duty, apart from steering, being to encourage the crew. He can, however, win or lose the race by steering.

The river winds like a snake and there is much to know about the course of the tide. It is fatal on some bends to cut corners, and just as fatal on others not to. Again, a gusty wind may be blowing head-on in one reach, and may be coming from one bank, or even from behind, in another reach. Cox must decide whether to seek shelter from the bank at the expense of losing the tide, which is

strongest out in the middle, or whether to use the tide and fight the headwind. And that is always a most exacting responsibility, since, if the course taken does not work well, cox will be blamed for not having taken the other!

The race is started not by pistol-shot, but by word of mouth and the dropping of a white flag. The umpire says: "I shall ask you once if you are ready. If I receive no reply I shall say GO!" It is permissible for either cox to raise one hand if his crew are not ready, otherwise the start takes place.

What happens is that two skiffs are moored alongside one another opposite the starting-point. The crews row below them, turn and drift back on the tide, crabwise, their rudders towards the staked boats. As they arrive a man leans out of each and seizes a rudder, and the boats swing straight and are held level until the word is given. Meanwhile the tide is running fast, and if the blades were rested on the water they would be dragged under. Accordingly they are reversed, or tipped up a little, the water passing under them, and they are only put into the water and squared when the word comes: "Are you ready?" The tide presses against them, keeping a steady forward drag on each man's arms, so that on the word "GO!" he has only to swing back. The aim is to get as near forty strokes into the first minute as possible, after which the rate drops to thirty or twenty-eight, except for occasional spurts, and is worked up again to something higher at the finish. Tactics are always to fight for the lead from the start, for the simple reason that the crew in front then has the advantage of being able to watch the other and answer every challenge; the crew behind cannot see the leading crew at all, once it has more than a length's lead.

The umpire has a very simple task; only four fouls are possible: (i) Starting before the word; (ii) Crossing and colliding; (iii) Accepting assistance if in trouble on the way; (iv) Failing to pass under the centre arch at either Hammersmith or Barnes Bridges.

Only once has there been a dead-heat. This was in 1877, and the race was not re-rowed. Some dispute arose as to the fairness of the decision, and this was the last occasion on which a professional was invited to judge, but what happened was that Oxford were leading by a length and a half when one man broke a bow-side oar. The four oars on the other side, pulling against three, fortunately helped take the bend at Barnes in the proper way, but Cambridge gradually crept up, and in a dramatic finish were judged to have drawn level.

The Oxford crew hotly denied that they had done so, but the difficulty was that in those days there was no actual finishing post on the other side of the river on which to draw an imaginary straight line, and opinions mostly depended on where a man was standing at the time.

Last year, when P. R. S. Bankes, of the Oxford crew, kept breaking oars in practice, fears arose that he might do so in the race.

The race has only once been won on a foul. This was in 1849, when the Cambridge crew consisted entirely of men from Trinity. Moreover, the race was rowed twice. Oxford first led their rivals for two miles, then cracked and were easily beaten. They felt that this was due solely to attempting too fast a stroke, and challenged Cambridge to row again, the second race taking place in December. Cambridge led this time, but crossed over and caused Oxford to bump them. Both crews rowed on, but the umpire rightly disqualified Cambridge. The rule is that each crew must keep its own station unless sufficiently far ahead to cross without causing a collision. Even if the crews meet in the middle and their blades strike one another, one crew is held to have left its proper course, and that crew is to blame; unless the umpire is satisfied that both crews have edged in to the same extent, in which case he may re-start the race from that point.

On one occasion the weather was so appalling that Cambridge protested against the race being rowed, and being overruled, filled with water and sank. The epic of this race is that they had had the worst station all the way, yet never flinched from rowing on even when awash. Making no attempt to reach shore, they went down bodily, still struggling to pull, and this is likely to stand for ever as the most gallant performance in the history of the race, considering that two of the crew, in fact, *could not swim*, and were rescued with difficulty from ice-cold water by the launches.

When the Eton crew row at Henley, people often ask why they have copied the Cambridge colours . . .

The modern custom is for the crew to go to the start in sweaters. They remove these and pass them down the boat to cox, who hands them to the man in the staked boat. But in those days the men wore blue coats, and trousers which they rolled up, and these blue coats had been folded and placed under each seat. As the boat filled, the water carried one great pulpy mass of material to one end of the boat, which naturally made matters worse. In another quarter of a mile Oxford would have sunk, too, but having the sheltered station, they got home in time.

There was another race in rough weather in which Cambridge filled with water soon after the start, and were beaten by the record distance of a quarter of a mile. In this case, once again, Oxford nearly sank, but were saved this time by having bladders under the seats, which had the effect of waterwings in keeping the boat afloat, even when full of water. In yet another year both boats filled. Cambridge landed, emptied their boat, launched it again, and set off through a perfect sea, whilst Oxford, who had nowhere to land on their side of the river, sank. Cambridge were disqualified, however, for accepting assistance from lookers-on.

The race was re-rowed on the following Monday.

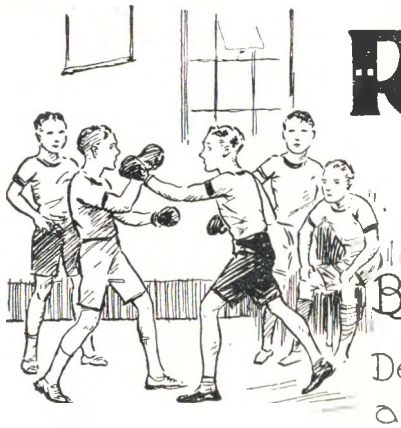
The whole question of rough weather cannot be appreciated until it is understood how very delicate and frail these racing eights are. They cost £110 to build. They are 61 ft. long and weigh 280 lb. The hull is of Honduras cedar and is less than a quarter of an inch thick, so that it can be imagined what damage can be done by striking anything afloat, such as a crate, whilst a clumsy oarsman may put his foot clean through, on getting into his seat, if he does not rest his foot in the right recess. The wood used at both ends is sycamore. The oars are of Quebec spruce, each costing £2 10*s*., and weighing about 9 lb. They are generally tubular. There is one hallucination about the blades. During the race it looks as if these are being driven through the water. A little thought will remind anybody that this cannot be so. *The boat is being driven past the blades*. Indeed, if one were able to mark the exact spot at which the blade entered the water, it would be found that it really only moved four inches, the extent of the water displaced. If the water were thick enough, the blade would not move at all. (And neither, in that caes, would the boat ! !)

We come, finally, to the *reason* for the popularity of this race with the man in the street.

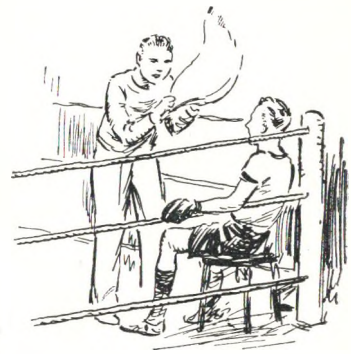
In the first place it is free to all, and he feels that it is as much his own as the Lord Mayor's Show, or the Changing of the Guard, something which visitors to the capital must be shown with pride. Furthermore, a foul in the Boat Race—as fouls are seen on the football and cricket field and in the boxing ring—is unknown. The men never come to grips, and thus tempers are not frayed. There is no prize, no betting. No professional interests are involved. Any member of the public can watch, from as close quarters as the most favoured few, the final stages of practice, when, after four or five months of stern preparation, the crews arrive at Putney. Nothing is hidden from the ordinary public, and in addition rowing is the easiest sport of all for the man who has never taken part in it to follow. There is nothing brutalising about it, no mud, blood or injuries. It is dead clean and absolutely fair.

Only two arguments are ever heard against the race.

One is that it strains the heart. This is a pure myth. The training given to each man is far too careful to permit any sort of strain likely to harm him, and no cases of such strain are known. The other is that rowing requires no brains. Yet Old Blues have held most of the leading positions in the world. One became Prime Minister of France, another was Lord Chief Justice of England. Famous soldiers, sailors, surgeons, bishops, diplomats, and lawyers have rowed in the Boat Race, which they would not have done had it required no mental exercise. The old rowing Blue is, indeed, the very best type of sportsman, for the simple reason that he has been taught to put the needs of his crew above his own to a greater extent than any cricketer or footballer. The pride an Englishman feels in the Boat Race is ultimately crystallised, however, in the one fact that throughout the hundred years of its tradition *no man has ever given up* ! This stoicism stands above that shown in any other sport, for in all of them men *have* given up through weariness, injury, sudden ill-health, or loss of will-power to go on. They have even surrendered at Henley. But in the Boat Race, *never*. No better explanation can be offered of the hold which this race has on the English people than the recollection of that day when Cambridge were sinking in a storm and knew that two men could not swim, yet would not turn for shore or rest for one moment to consider how to save themselves. It was as though each man felt himself on the bridge of his own ship, and so all sank as one, still gripping useless oars. They would not damage what was already a superb tradition, nor has any man sullied that golden record since. A crew beaten by ten lengths will, by the same unwritten law, still work up the rate of striking towards the end, beaten but unconquered. And that is why, even if Oxford never win again, this race will yet go on. Oxford *will never give up*, and the crowd will never, therefore, give up Oxford.



RINGCRAFT AT SCHOOL



By HYLTON CLEAVER
Deputy Captain, Belsize Boxing Club
and Author of "Boxing for Boys."

IN-FIGHTING

I POINTED out last month that attack and defence in boxing cannot be divided into two separate chapters. There is only one sort of fight in which one MUST be either attacking or defending, but cannot do both at once. Namely, a hopelessly unequal contest.

In any ordinary match the very fact that one is attacking implies that one is also taking care of oneself, in which respect boxing is different from football. At football you attack if in possession of the ball, and defend if not. In the case of cricket the bowler is attacking and the batsman defending. Yet the batsman can counter-attack by flogging the bowling and thus knocking the bowler off his length. Your boxer, then, is in the position of a batsman who may confine himself to defence pure and simple if the bowling is too good for him, but who will attack it if he thinks that by attacking he will win.

It is just as well to compare one game with another, because most people regard boxing as a totally distinct art. In reality the strategy of boxing is a mixture of football and cricket tactics, and the boy who is good at these games and understands their governing principles will be an apt pupil in the ring.

Short-range boxing is called in-fighting, and is only practised to perfection by short men.

Boxing matches are arranged by weight. Accordingly, so long as two boys are the same weight, one can be tall and thin and the other short and sturdy.

I explained last month that the long, thin boy will often find himself opposed by the short and sturdy one, and that, having a longer reach and a weaker tummy, he must keep his man away by adroit use of a straight left. Let us now consider the case from the point of view of the short man.

Usually he can take more punishment, because he is stronger.

In many cases he will cheerfully accept a hammering in the early rounds in the hopes that the long, thin man will tire. He may be justified. But all the time he is accepting punishment he is running up an account against himself. Matches are judged on *points scored*, and he may find himself behind on points when the vital last round begins. A knock-out will save him. But so far as points are concerned, even if he asserts a definite superiority now, he will be too late. The other man has won two rounds and he will scarcely be able even to draw level.

The short man should guard against losing a fight in this way, by scoring on his own account, even during the first period of a fight, and thus unsettling the calmer man. In-fighting provides him with his only means of doing so, and in-fighting does not mean holding or clinching.

Holding and clinching imply unfair attempts to prevent an opponent striking blows.

Holding and clinching imply unfair attempts to prevent an opponent from striking blows. They are on a par with pulling a football player back by the jersey when he is running for the ball, or deliberately obstructing a fielder at cricket.

In-fighting is the reverse.

As the field, at cricket, will close in round a patient batsman, and spread out for an adventurous one, so a short boxer best suits himself by getting close in to his opponent, while the tall man should keep away. Once in, the short man can hit from short range, and this is called in-fighting. The taller man will try to prevent him succeeding. The shorter man has therefore to duck, dodge, swerve and side-step, avoiding long-range fire, working inside, and then hitting as hard and as fast as he can at a man who is likely to be weak about the middle.

In-fighting is, indeed, nearly always directed at the middle, and it is not sufficiently realised that although it may be more spectacular to aim for the chin, as much real harm is done by aiming for the weak spots in the body. The weakest spot of all is the solar plexus. This comes just opposite the third button of the waistcoat, and immediately below the breast-bone. Men can be knocked out by a blow on this mark very effectively indeed, and the short man has no need to wonder whether he can reach the tall fellow's chin. Let him go for the solar plexus time and time again, and eventually he will finish the fight.

Although a knock-out to the chin is painless and leaves the victim knowing nothing about what happened, a blow to the solar plexus puts a man out of action, yet leaves him conscious. In other words it " winds " him, and as he falls, apparently in pain, there will always be people in the audience who will cry " Foul ". They will not have seen the blow and they will judge only by the effect. Take no notice. Should you succeed in a fight by this means, you must hope that later you will meet the man who cried " Foul ", and will be able to show him *how* you won the fight by striking for that spot opposite the third button of his waistcoat. This spot is *vastly* above the belt, and a simple poke there

The shorter man has to duck, swerve and sidestep.

with an outstretched finger will convince anyone that the blow in question was fair, yet painful.

To get in close, one has, as has been pointed out, to dodge, duck or side-step in order to avoid a straight left, and the short boxer *must* be adept at footwork. In ducking remember to keep the eyes towards the opponent, and never to turn the head *away*. Duck it *forward*, and *down*, but keep the eyes *up*. In side-stepping, do not cross the legs. Nothing is more fatal. Step to the right with the right foot first, and vice versa. In dodging, make your man lead when it suits *you* and not when it suits *him*. By offering him a target, draw his blow, and having drawn it, dodge it. The whole idea of ducking is to get close to your man, and not to step away to a position in which he will still have the advantage of reach. Having therefore gone forward and into battle, protect yourself from the right cross, which he may sling over once you have slipped his left. Do this by keeping your right glove up against the left side of your face. Keep both elbows close together, thus covering your own solar plexus. Shorten your own left arm. And when you are all bunched together, with shoulders lifted to protect your chin, and body well tucked together, you have little to fear from a tall, thin man. *You are in !* Release your battery !

There is one important tip to remember, and that arises when a short man opposes *another short man.* It is vital then to get the *inside position.* That is, to get your gloves inside the other man's arms, and not *outside*, for if they are outside you cannot reach his body at all. A struggle is likely to go on to secure this inside position, and the value of it will be seen if you rest your two fists on the biceps of a friend whilst your own elbows are close together ; then push his arms *outward.* He becomes helpless. Let him do this to you, and you will feel just as helpless yourself.

Protect yourself from the right cross.

Tall men will usually surrender the inside position, because they are sparring at long range. But if you find yourself with an opponent of your own size, do remember that in-fighting depends upon your getting inside, and *staying there.*

ABC of First Aid Hints

A sprained ankle should be bathed at once with hot water for ten minutes. If the pain is very severe apply a bran bag dipped into hot vinegar.

Burns should be dressed with a solution made by dissolving two teaspoonfuls of baking soda in a tumblerful of tepid water.

Cramp can be cured by rubbing the affected part with an embrocation, made as follows : One egg well beaten, half a pint of vinegar, one ounce of spirits of turpentine, and a quarter of an ounce of camphor.

Dislocation of the wrist can be treated by bending the patient's elbow to a right angle, grasp the hand as in handshaking, put your other hand against the upper arm, pull the hand and push the arm away.

Earache may generally be relieved by the application of a hot flannel to the side of the head.

For tired, aching, and swollen feet there is nothing so soothing as ordinary methylated spirits.

Gargle a sore throat after pouring half a tumblerful of warm water over two tablespoonfuls of honey, and adding a wineglassful of vinegar when dissolved.

Headache can be relieved by a cup of tea in which a slice of lemon has been added instead of sugar.

Itch should be treated by washing the affected part with hot water and soft soap and anointing with sulphur ointment.

Just use a reef knot for securing bandages and slings.

Keep a sprained ankle raised and supported on cushions.

Loosen everything round neck and chest in a case of an epileptic fit.

Most people go very pale when they faint, and this means the head must be kept low so that the blood will return. Should the face be red, however, keep the head raised.

Never on any account try to force liquid down the throat of an unconscious person. You may choke him.

Olive oil is good for burns.

Pimples should be washed with salt and water.

Quite a simple idea to remove a dust speck from the eye is to blow the nose.

Remove coat, bare chest, and loosen all other clothing before attempting artificial respiration.

Suck a sting well without swallowing.

Turn everybody out of the room, and don't allow anyone to sympathise with a patient recovering from a hysterical fit. Leave him well alone.

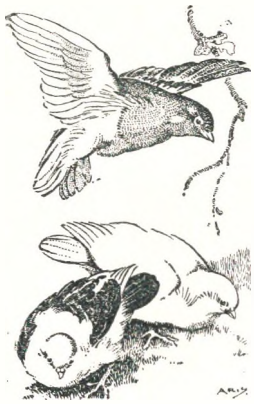
Use hot fomentations or bran poultices to relieve pain of a strain.

Vinegar and cold water can be applied to advantage in a case of concussion.

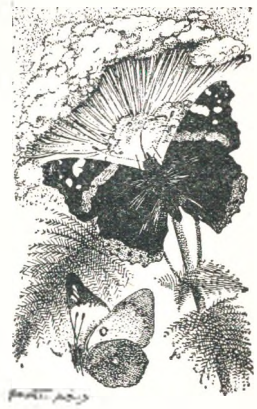
Wounds and cuts should always be carefully cleaned before bandaging.

You should remove a fish hook embedded in the skin by cutting off the line, and then forcing point onwards through the skin until it can be pulled out.

A. E. B.



B.O.P. Nature Study Circle



Conducted by "HEDGEROW"

APRIL'S FOOLERY

"OH to be in England now that April's there!" So said the poet Browning, but until April gets over her tantrums one might wish to be anywhere but England.

I thought perhaps this month I might interest you by quoting passages from my diary of last April, which you will see bears out the saying that "April isn't satisfied with one day's foolery".

From these records you will be able to see how last April will compare with this one. I doubt whether it will be any better or worse, for the months, generally speaking, behave in much the same manner as their predecessors. Each has its particular job to do, and part of April's job is to prepare the canvas for the pictures that the following months are to paint upon it.

WRITE TO "HEDGEROW" ABOUT IT

Here are my notes:

April 1st Cool winds, dull skies and a pretty legacy from March of blackthorn blossom.

" 2nd Icy winds, sleet and rain and sunny intervals. In spite of their coldness now, these rains seem to refresh the countryside after March has dried it.

" 3rd A day of even colder winds with snow and white plum blossom struggling to be cheerful under April's cold douche.

" 4th More snow, much cloud, bitterly cold, everything is in hiding or marking time.

" 5th Ice on the ponds. Daffodils and violets lying with their heads on the grass. The sun comes out and tenderly lifts up the stricken flowers. By noon the daffodils are able to nod their heads in the wind and the violets once more scent the garden border, and cats bask on cottage window-sills.

" 6th Sunny and windy and cold, but towards the afternoon it turns warmer and at night spurts of rain splash the windows.

" 7th A wet night is followed by a sunny morning, and in sheltered places it is warm and comfortable. The bees leave the hive and go foraging. Over the hedges a veil of green is spreading, and in the ditches and on the hedgebanks are shiny cuckoo-pint leaves and tufts of sheep's parsley. In the early afternoon the sun goes behind the clouds and rain falls heavily again far into the night.

" 8th A chiff-chaff calls in the larch. The air is keen, but the sun is driving winter back into the trenches. Chaffinches and greenfinches sing and every blade of grass glistens with raindrops. Pools of water lie in the hollows and there the starlings bathe. The birds are in lovely plumage, and even the sparrows look gay at close quarters in their new brown clothes. It is the time when birds are at the peak of physical fitness, which is Nature's way at mating-time.

April 9th A wet but warm day. In the garden you can smell growing lavender, violet leaves and the sweet briar. At night there is a gale with heavy rain. Nature has not yet finished her washing. In the evening, in the rain, a big bumble-bee passes me and goes down the little pink dead nettle flowers beneath the hedge, has a drink of nectar, and goes home singing.

April 10th Low clouds drift over and hide the sun. As the day advances rain falls, and the wind reaches gale force, ripping off the tender young leaves and the elm blossom. In the words of one writer: "England has a spring clean from Nature's Vacuum Cleaner." What a buffeting the blackbirds have had as their black nests were almost overturned.

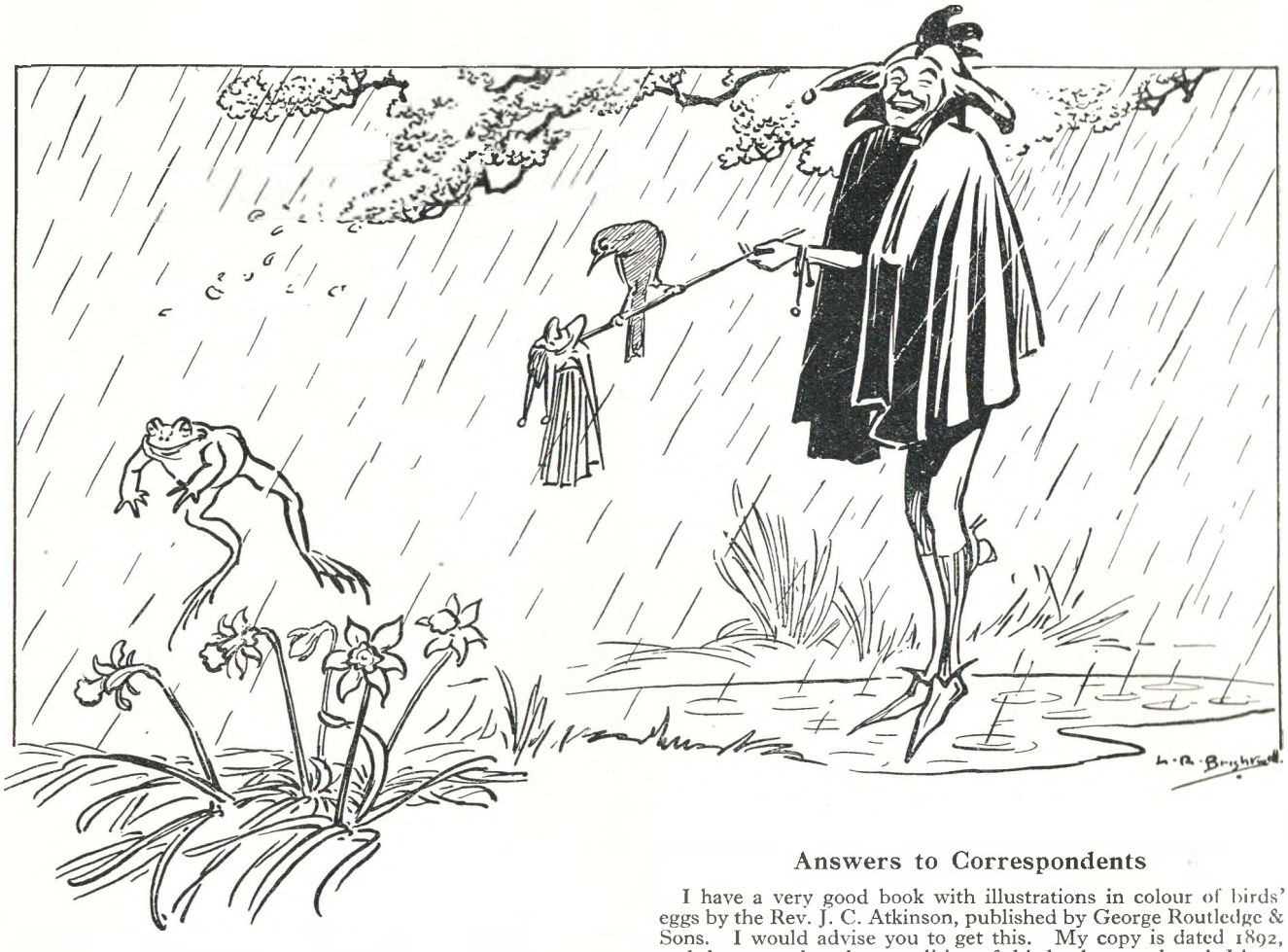
April 11th A bright morning, sunshine and showers, and a quiet evening with a red sunset sky and colour on the grass. The birds hurry on with their nesting, the chiff-chaff calls again, the larks are up and plovers wheel and cry on the farmer's lands.

" 12th A sunny day with a wind which stings your cheeks. At night the cold stiffens the mud in the lanes and a film of ice covers the water by the pond's edge.

" 13th Hail and rain, but the first swallow arrives and a blackcap sings in a thicket and the chiff-chaff calls all day long. The birds are getting on top of the weather and forcing the pace by song.

" 24th A gap of eleven days in my diary, but what a change since I last made an entry. Carpets of primroses in the woods, bluebells here and there, cowslips lifting yellow-scented heads above the grasses, and wild pale violets under each little bird-sown may bush in the meadow.

To meet a butterfly or bumble-bee is no longer a matter for comment, but a delight for all that. The curtain is up, the April players hold the stage, and in every spinney there is a nightingale to charm the nights to come. The air is fragrant; near at hand they are



cutting into a hayrick, and as the trusses are placed upon the wagon the scent of them drifts to my garden to mingle with other scents of pear blossom, lilac and wallflowers. Birds are on eggs in their nests in the hedges, tadpoles grow and wriggle around the shallow water of the pond, bees come to the sun-warmed mud to suck up the moisture, and the cuckoo calls incessantly.

Tree-pipits go up in lark-like flight from the elm-tops to drift back again singing, martins twitter about the eaves, and the marshes are golden with kingcups. April has got over her tantrums.

Take full advantage of all that April has to show you out of doors. Spend every spare moment you have in the fields and woods, for with many things this is the beginning of a most interesting story which you can read month by month, and if you miss the April sights and sounds, you may find it difficult afterwards to pick up the threads of many of Nature's little side-shows. Never mind the tantrums, and as you shelter beneath a cosy pine or yew whilst April has a tantrum of the worst kind, you may see at close quarters some little wild animal, and learn something about its private life. And when the storm is over and the sun comes out again in that smiling way it has in April, and all the raindrops glisten like jewels, and the earth steams and smells good, and the birds sing, and in flying from branch to branch make little showers of their own as they shake the raindrops off, then on you go down the lane or across the field, glad " to be in England now that April's there ".

Answers to Correspondents

I have a very good book with illustrations in colour of birds' eggs by the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, published by George Routledge & Sons. I would advise you to get this. My copy is dated 1892, and there may be a better edition of this book now, though I have always found in it all I want to know.

The title of the book is " British Birds' Eggs and Nests ". The first illustration is a page showing a Golden Eagle's egg, and the various hawks' eggs. The colours are very real. (*To* C. E., Ross.)

Bolting wires are wire rods hanging loosely from a cross-rod, and are hung at the entrance of the loft where the pigeons go in. The idea is that you can lift them up to let the pigeons out; then they are allowed to drop down again; the pigeons on returning push them up to get into the loft, and once they are in they cannot get out again, for these wires fall back into place after the bird has passed them, which means that your pigeons are automatically shut up as they come in, which saves you having to wait to shut them in yourself after their exercise flight.

Every pigeon loft should have these bolting wires fixed at the entrance. The pigeons very quickly get accustomed to them and will push through them without hesitation when they want to go in. (*To* R. M., CHESTER.)

Write to Mr. Newman, Butterfly Farm, Bexley, Kent. He will be able to supply all your needs, whether caterpillars, eggs, chrysalises, butterflies or moths. Ask for catalogue. (*To* H. H., KENLEY.)

You can get guinea pigs from Gamage's Zoo Department, Holborn, London. Guinea pigs vary in colour. Red, black, white, red and black, black and white, and there are short-haired and long-haired varieties. Oats, green food, carrots and good sweet hay. Put sawdust in the run and hay in the nest box and clean out the run frequently. (*To* L. S., STEVENAGE.)

For identification purposes birds are rung whilst still in the nest. Whether such rings can be supplied to anyone who wants to experiment with them I do not know, but I should rather doubt it, as they are used for the definite purpose of gaining information with regard to migration and I do not suppose the rings are intended to be used haphazardly. I think you can obtain information on the subject from British Birds, 326, High Holborn, London. (*To* T. E., BROXBOURNE.)

"PAHUA! PAHUA!!"

By SERCOMBE GRIFFIN

In the Sky

JOCK CAMPBELL was roaring forth in that rollicking voice of his, to the tune of "John Peel":

"If the prospect's fair
When prospecting from the air,
Don't expect to float there
If you'd ravish the pearl's lair,
But descend—descend—descend right noo'
To the shores of the bay down below you."

"Do you mean—" shouted Ronald Lenway, pointing over the side of the 'plane's rear cockpit—"that we have to make a landing on the desolate sand down there?"

Jock didn't answer; he picked up the speaking-tube and talked to Billy Tapping, the pilot, in the cockpit in front.

The aeroplane lost altitude, then swooped sandwards. Looking over the edge of the cockpit, Ronald saw the shore was not so desolate after all. There were small black dots there that might be men, and off the encircling horseshoe of rock about the bay he could detect a small lugger—a pearling lugger if Jock's doggerel was to be credited.

How the two prospectors came to be in the air may be told in few words.

After their wonderful haul of sapphires in the Never-Never Land of the Australian continent, Jack and Ronald had rested satisfied—for a short time only! Ronald sent his share of the spoils to his widowed mother in England, for it was for her sake he had come to seek his fortune in Australia. As for good-natured Jock, he never could keep money, and soon distributed the bulk of his new-found wealth in White Cliffs, where he made his home when he wasn't prospecting, which wasn't often. Fortunately, before Jock finished distributing his fortune—his "Fourteenth Fortune", he called it—he conceived the idea of prospecting for further fortunes from an aeroplane.

"Ronald lad," the seasoned prospector had told his young pal. "There are unexplored regions in Northern Australia crammed with mineral treasure, uncharted mountains stuff, with gold and, off the north-west coast, pearling grounds waiting for divers to lift the pearls. I read yesterday in the news sheet that the Cabinet has decided to take immediate steps to develop the unpopulated territories of Australia, but governments move slowly, Ronald lad, and we'll move faster. Months and months and months would it take us to foot it, and for all our blisters and other ills, we might only leave our skeletons as signposts for others. But how about prospecting from the air! Isn't that a brainy idea! I've found a wandering airman out of a job and have booked him for our stunt. We are going to fly across the continent till we reach the western sea somewhere about the Buccaneers' Archipelago. The pearlers' port of Broome will provide us with juice. What do you say to it, Ronald?"

"Right-o!" had been Ronald's response. Since that Christmas Eve when he had first fallen in with the Old Boy of his school in England, the almost penniless lad had found the reformed prospector a faithful comrade in whom to trust for his future.

At first Billy Tapping had protested that the rear cockpit was built for one only, but Ronald was a thin lathe of a lad and Jock a man of little beyond sinews and muscles,

without an ounce of superfluous flesh about him, so the two chums were allowed to scrum into the rear cockpit, their combined weight only equalling the weight of an ordinary adult.

Of their adventures during that flight I must not stay to tell, though they nearly crashed during a sand-wind and had to follow a fence for a hundred miles till they came to a tree which they left on the right till the next tree, fifty miles distant, gave them their direction for the following hundred miles. And their conference with the black-fellows was about as funny an affair as you could imagine !

Altogether their prospecting from the air hadn't proved of much service, however, and Jock decided to try his luck in pearls.

" There's a wonderful pearling ground away to the north-west known only to adventurers like ourselves," Jock declared. " It's avoided by the pale-faced slackers who hang round the big cities and complain of being unemployed. There are hundreds of miles of sandy beaches and shallow waters where pearls lie waiting to be lifted. There's other treasure, too, hidden amongst the coastal spurs of the Leopold Ranges—pirates' treasure hoarded there, gold and silver and precious gems and golden coin captured by Malay buccaneers in Java, Further India and China. But we'll leave the pirates' loot alone for the present ; we're after pearls. So we'll fill up our petrol tanks at Broome and go seek our fifteenth fortune."

On the Shore

So we find Jock and Ronald being piloted by Billy Tapping to a landing on an open stretch of sand alongside a lagoon almost encircled by cliffs.

" Surely we aren't going to collar another man's pitch ! " Ronald exclaimed as he noted the lugger and the men on the beach.

For answer Jock broke forth into doggerel to a tune that Ronald couldn't recognise :

> " When you catch sight of signals of distress,
> You guess and calc'late someone's in a mess.
> Your sympathy you plainly must express
> By 'planing down to them, oh ! yes, yes, yes."

The last three words were pumped out of the prospector by the skipping tactics of the aeroplane over the sands of the shore.

" Good for us it wasn't a quicksand," remarked Pilot Tapping when the plane came to a standstill. " I shouldn't like asking you, mister, for the price of a new plane."

" You're welcome to *ask*, Billy," responded Jock, " but till I locate my fifteenth fortune, you won't get an answer."

" What were you yowling about signals of distress, Jock ? " put in Ronald when the two of them had stepped out from the rear cockpit on to firm sand.

" Look at the masthead of yon pearling lugger, lad," Jock indicated certain flags flying in the breeze. " That's the S O S of the sea ; I twigged it through my binoculars."

Black men came running in the flying men's direction.

" Keep your eyes skinned ! " cried the airman. " Some of the Chinks and Malays in these untamed regions knife you first and see if you have been worth killing afterwards. I'm taking the air again if they look dangerous, and I shall leave it to you two pals to hop in behind. I'd rather not lose my passengers, but I'm dead sure not going to lose my plane."

" Nothing like being 'plane-spoken' Billy," chaffed

" What shell ? " Ronald queried, as he sat up.

Jock, and turned to meet the oncomers with a grin of friendliness.

" Malays ! " exclaimed Billy Tapping, stepping out of his cockpit. " But unarmed ! "

" Kicklee ! Kicklee ! ! " cried the foremost runner. " Tuan dying. Him white captain."

" Medicine chest ! " barked Jock Campbell. Whereat Billy Tapping dived into the depths of the pilot's cockpit and came forth with a black-japanned box.

Behind the Malay seamen came a stocky Japanese diver.

Jock with the medicine chest, and Ronald with a stout stick thrust in his hand by Billy, followed the Malays to a cave in the cliffs. The airman refused to leave his aeroplane.

Within the shadows of the cave lay a white man, babbling in delirium. " Get under ! Get under, can't you, you swine ! That's what I brought you here for. Dive, you Japanese image, dive." And then there came a volley of oaths.

" We could not go under, sar," explained the Japanese diver to Jock ; " neither I who dive in suit, nor Malay who dive in skin onlee. Pahua ! Pahua ! ! "

And before Jock could enquire what Pahua might mean, the Malays wailed in chorus : " Pahua ! Pahua ! ! " and pointed to the lagoon.

" What do the fellows mean ? " cried Jock who had no previous experience of pearling. He was kneeling and trying to get the sick man to swallow some tablets from the medicine chest—of amateur doctoring Jock had much experience.

" Pahua is debbil-debbil," explained the man from Japan. He, too, shuddered like the Malays, and pointed to the lagoon.

" Are there oysters there ? " asked practical Jock.

" Millions of pearls ! Millions of pearls ! ! " cried the delirious white man. " Pearls to make you all rich for life ; only you haven't the guts to go down after them, you white-livered dogs."

Jock picked up a hypodermic syringe from the japanned box. " Fetch Billy Tapping, Ronald," he said. " We've got to quieten this poor sick fellow somehow, and if there's mistakes to be made, I like an accomplice."

Whilst Ronald went to fetch the airman, Jock learned that the sick man was called Captain John Smith.

" Captain John Smith good 'Murrican man," explained Kurasawa, the Japanese diver. " He treat us well, sar, but how we go under ? Pahua there—debbil-debbil."

Billy Tapping arrived at that moment and the two white men conferred on the use of the hypodermic syringe. Ronald had been left in charge of the plane ; the pilot feared the natives might meddle with it.

By the time the two amateur doctors returned to the aeroplane Captain John Smith was sleeping peacefully, and Jock Campbell had made a decision.

" We're stopping here to-night, Ronald lad. The sick man is too ill to be moved, and we can't leave him alone with no other white man. It's only a case of coastal fever, and if he gets through the night, he will be on his feet again in a day or two."

Sure enough, next morning the captain of the pearling lugger was conscious and eager to thank his saviours. His language was flowery, and not fit for publication, but he seemed really grateful. He told them he had certain information that the lagoon was rich with pearl-producing shell, that he had invested all his savings in the outfit, but that the crew of divers on reaching the bay had refused to go under. Some blackfellows living nearby had told the Malays of the Pahua in the lagoon.

" My divers swore they would not go under—that the place was haunted by a Pahua—some sort of demon who objected to his privacy being disturbed," concluded Captain John Smith, though not exactly in these words. " And I've driven myself dotty trying to make the swine do the job for which I am paying them."

" I'll get them to go down," declared Jock. " I'll go down myself. And when I bring back an oyster with my fifteenth fortune inside, they'll follow after like sheep."

The Japanese diver had followed the conversation with interest—and horror at the climax. " Pahua ! Pahua ! ! " he screamed.

" Pahua ! Pahua ! ! Pahua ! ! ! " echoed the Malays outside the cave.

" Debbil-debbil—debbil-debbil—debbil-debbil," gabbled the black fellows who had joined the camp.

It wasn't a cheering send-off for Jock Campbell, but to go under he was determined, thinking that some superstition was at back of the reluctance to dive, and wanting to prove that diving was worth while.

An adjournment was made to the lugger, only the blackfellows and a couple of Malays remaining with the recovering captain, and Billy Tapping staying with his beloved aeroplane. The pearling craft, by means of its motor, was moved to the centre of the lagoon.

Soon Jock was encased in Kurasawa's diving-suit, though all the time the Malays kept up a dismal moan of " Pahua ! Pahua ! ! "

Ronald couldn't get the dismal chorus out of his mind, though he forced a laugh when he saw Jock in the monstrous rubber dress. He shuddered, however, as the helmet with its internal gadgets was screwed down over his chum's head.

As Jock was dropped over the side, Ronald couldn't help wondering if there really was some dreadful demon guarding the treasure below. He stood by the two Malays controlling the air-pump, with Kurasawa at hand to superintend that most important part of the gear.

The lowering-gear was in the hands of two competent Malays ; and anxiously watching the paying out of the connection between sea-bottom and boat, Ronald prayed for the safety of his pal.

It was anxious waiting there. Anyway, Jock would return soon with news—and a sample of shell. Jock had promised not to stay below longer than five minutes.

Watch on upturned wrist, Ronald stood intently watching whilst the lugger slowly drifted above the lagoon's depths where Jock explored.

Three minutes only had passed when there came three sharp tugs at the communication cord. It was the signal for immediate action by the men of the raising-gear.

" There's something wrong ! " cried Ronald.

Kurasawa nodded his head. " It is Pahua," he said with Oriental fatalism. " I know he get caught. All tell him not go."

Ronald rushed to the wheel of the windlass that raised the gear ; the Malays seemed to have difficulty. Though they hauled, it would not budge. There was terror in their eyes.

The line had fouled or——

" Pahua ! Pahua ! ! " cried the two Malays.

Ronald rushed to the side of the boat—peered down into the depths. He thought he could make out a blurred mass that must be Jock—at no very great depth !

The life-line, at least, was working, and that meant that Jock could still breathe. Ronald implored the frightened Malays to keep pumping.

Came desperate fainter tugs from undersea. Continuous. What was to be done?

Ronald shouted to the shore, where Billy Tapping sat reading in the shade of the aeroplane. But even had the airman consented to leave the beloved machine, he knew nothing of the science of diving—except from a plane by parachute! He read on, apparently not hearing Ronald's shouts.

"Can't you do anything, diver?" asked a desperate boy of Kurasawa.

The diver from Japan shook his head. "Pahua! Pahua!!" he said, as if there was nothing more to be done.

There was one thing, however, that Ronald *could* do. He could dive and had won the championship cup for diving during his last term at Cranborough, the public school which Jock and he claimed as their *Alma Mater*. One couldn't desert a fellow Cranburian. Now was his chance to dive for that which was more worth winning than a silver cup—a chum's life.

Ronald flung off his few clothes, and in less than a minute had dived overboard.

"Pahua have him, too," said Kurasawa calmly, though he still did his utmost to make the raising-gear function. Only his coolness kept the Malays from flinging down the gear and bolting from the dreaded Pahua who was undoubtedly at work, they were sure.

Beneath the Water

To Ronald that nightmare search in the waters of the lagoon seemed to last for hours, though it could have been counted in seconds. He found himself in a fairy forest of coral, the shifting currents and the imperfect focus of his eyes giving an effect of waving branches. Shellfish hung like plums on trees and weird fish whisked hither and thither. Fine oyster-shells covered the floor of the lagoon, which seemed to heave as if alive.

And then he caught sight of poor Jock.

Through the glass eyes of the helmet the desperate man in the trap caught sight of his young pal. His eyes beamed with gratitude, but he waved the boy off with tragic gestures. He himself was held by the foot, unable to get free. By what?

"Pahua! Pahua!!" Ronald thought he heard the Malays chorusing.

Ronald tried to focus his eyes on the spot where his pal struggled to escape. At first he saw little but a dark sinuous line amidst the sand. He himself was holding hard to a branch of coral, trying to keep his feet on the sea-floor.

And then, to his horror, he felt the very sea-floor heave beneath his feet. He was being slowly tilted backward.

It was all part of a nightmare from which he would awaken all of a sudden. And then he became aware of the fact that his life—and Jock's—depended on his prompt action.

Ronald was standing on the shell of a gigantic clam. And his chum's foot was fast caught between the two valves of another of these huge creatures of the undersea world!

Pahua was something living. Pahua could bring death to a man.

The arteries in Ronald's head beat like a hundred drums, his ears seemed on the point of bursting, his eyes started half out of their sockets, his lungs were like great loads of lead. He was suffocating; he could not stay under another second.

Yet he must make an effort to save his chum or die in the doing of it! His own position was precarious enough. One small slip and cruel crustacean lips might close down on an arm or leg. Though Ronald did not know it, many a Malay diver had died in the grip of a Pahua.

His brain was working with almost timeless speed. He told himself that if the shell of the giant clam opened in consequence of his weight upon it, then if he leaped upon that other clam which imprisoned Jock, the valves might open and allow his pal to escape. Yet he shuddered as he recalled how limpets closed still tighter at the slightest touch. If the clam which held Jock acted like a limpet, Ronald's leap might make matters still worse.

All these thoughts take time to put on record; actually they flashed through Ronald's brain as quickly as lightning flashes in the sky. The plucky youth swirled away from that great mouth which was some eight feet across, the cruel slit in which Jock's leg was prisoned. He came on the clam from behind and climbed on to the huge shell at the place where the two valves were hinged.

Horrified human eyes, magnified to an uncanny extent, watched the would-be rescuer through the glass of the diving helmet. Jock was suffering torment, not merely in his own person, but at thought of the fearful risk that his young pal was facing.

Ronald thought he had failed. With an agonising prayer he tried to stamp on the clam to make it open, but there strained Jock, still a prisoner and with an ominous red stain creeping about his knee.

"Thank God!" was Ronald's mental remark as suddenly Jock shook himself free and shot upwards, spinning round and round like a man on an untwisting rope.

Ronald, too, shot up to the surface. And remembered nothing more till he found himself lying flat on the lugger's deck with Kurasawa working his arms up and down in life-saving exercises.

"Jock!" Ronald murmured. "Jock?"

"Here I am!" cried a voice at his elbow. Jock was lying there swathed in blankets, drinking hot drinks.

"Your leg?" queried Ronald in a dreamy voice. "Pahua?"

"No, Ronald, dear lad, I haven't left my leg as a legacy to Pahua," joked Jock, overjoyed at seeing his brave rescuer come back to life. "I've treated the scratch with some iodine and had it bandaged. As soon as you're ready, we'll open the shell which contains our fifteenth fortune."

"What shell?" Ronald queried as he sat up, and had a blanket huddled about him by Kurasawa.

"This!" answered Jock, as he held up a huge oyster-shell which had been lying at his side. It was characteristic of that intrepid prospector Jock Campbell that even in his tragic predicament under the waters of the lagoon he should have kept a grip of the oyster he had found and bring it with him to the surface.

The Malays were crowding round, and one of them handed Jock a knife with a big flat blade.

"Now!" cried a confident prospector. "We'll prove that my choice of an oyster was a lucky one."

But Jock Campbell, even in his wildest dreams, didn't expect to find the wonderful pearl he did find amongst the meat of that opened shell—a pearl as big as a hazel-nut, and of the requisite pink hue that is so much prized.

"Our fifteenth fortune!" cried Jock, twirling it before Ronald's gleaming eyes. "But if there's another like it down there——"

"I won't let you go for it, Jock," cried Ronald, brought back to full consciousness by the wonderful find.

In the Sky Again

Billy Tapping insisted on leaving the pearler's pitch that

very day, and the trio said farewell to Captain John Smith, Kurasawa, the Malays and the blackfellows, Jock having a private talk with the captain before leaving, and persuading him to give up the quest.

Jock was strangely silent as they sped towards Broome, and kept looking sideways at his young companion in the cockpit.

Ronald was silent also. He was so sorry for the pearling skipper who had ventured all and was now faced with ruin.

" Why don't you sing, Jock ? " Ronald asked presently.

Jock looked unutterable things. Then snatched a writing-tablet, wrote sadly, tore off the strip of paper and handed it to Ronald.

" Please forgive me, partner," it read. " I gave our rose pearl to the skipper. But we'll find our fifteenth fortune before we've done with Billy Tapping."

" Topping ! " shouted Ronald Lenway and clapped Jock on the back.

I may add that the fifteenth fortune was duly found as Jock Campbell promised. But that's another story !

A Monk of St. Bernard

By F. LESLIE WITHERS

One of the St. Bernard monks out with a Hospice dog in the winter snows.

ON the crest of the Grand St. Bernard Pass and on the border of Switzerland and Italy is the world-famous Hospice, nestling 8,000 feet up under a snow-capped peak. It was founded in A.D. 962, and until less than a century ago was one of the loneliest outposts of civilisation.

Now the motor-car has invaded it and in the summer tourists run up to the Hospice. The sun shines on the sparkling peaks, the monks are seen at their recreations, and there is no trace of danger.

But when the tourists have left and winter brings blinding blizzards and incredible cold, there is little trace of the twentieth century. Peasants and other country folk whose necessities call for that hazardous journey still need the assistance of the brave monks and their amazing dogs.

Vow for Twenty-Five Years

The Hospice can accommodate eighty people with beds and can shelter another 300—and yet there are only sixteen monks. To take the vow of St. Bernard is one of the most supreme acts of self-sacrifice. The minimum length of time a monk can serve there is eight years. Most vow fifteen, twenty and even twenty-five years. Few, however, have ever lived long enough to fulfil these lengthy periods.

And no wonder, for the cold is often 29° below zero, while quite a normal winter brings the temperature down to 18° below. The days are not wholly given over to religious and philosophical study, for botany, geology and entomology are taught, too.

Two of the monks devote considerable attention to meteorological observations. These they communicate every day to the observatory at Geneva, which then passes them on, with observations from other centres, to Greenwich.

" Closing " the Mountain

Other monks are in charge of the magnificent dogs—not genuine St. Bernards, by the way, for the variety is now extinct, but cross-breeds with Swiss sheep-dogs.

This is the monks' procedure each winter. Immediately the snowfall is sufficiently heavy to create the risk of serious avalanches, the two cantons to the pass are advised by telephone and the whole mountain is " closed ". The Hospice is advised of any traveller or peasant who attempts to cross the peaks (they are allowed to do so only in cases of emergency) and a monk with dogs is sent to guide him.

All the peasants of the villages of Bosses and St. Rhemy are exempt from conscription on the understanding that they shall instantly put themselves at the command of the monks in searching for travellers and serving as guides.

From November 11th to May 1st, one of the monks told me the other day, two peasants called *marroniers* descend the perilous peaks each morning, one on the Italian side and the other on the Swiss side. Each carries bread, cheese and wine, for any chance traveller he may meet. This is a dangerous mission, having regard to the crevices, disguised with layers of snow, and the risk of that horror to every Swiss—avalanche.

So well has the monk and the peasant combination worked that only 200 people have lost their lives in these mountains since the dawning of the eighteenth century.

Feeding a Sawmill in Switzerland

By JOCELYN SAUNDERS DAVIES

THE snow-covered mountains of Vaud rise precipitously from the hamlet of Gérignoz, cliff upon rocky cliff, broken by ledges where the pines cling precariously to the shallow soil. Higher up the ground slopes away at an angle which allows the great forests of red and white pine (*Picea Exelsa* and *Abies Alba*) to gain the altitude of 7,350 ft. Here their upward march is stopped; the vanguard of this splendid army dwindles little by little, until only a few sentinels are left, keeping unceasing watch for the avalanches which thunder down from the icy walls of the Gumfluh and the Château Chamois. They mount guard with all the dignity of savage Nature, bearing eloquent testimony to the furious onslaughts of wind and snow in their gaunt branches and bent trunks.

The sawmills and timber-yards of Gérignoz are peacefully silent under their mantle of snow; they will not stir to activity until March, but 3,000 ft. above the village the forest is resounding with the rhythmic "O-O-Hé, O-O-Hé!" of the woodcutters, and the crash of falling trees as one giant after another topples over under the axe.

These are the men of one of the many wood-felling companies under contract to supply planks to the parquetry and flooring factory at Aigle.

Forests in Switzerland are the natural protection to life and property from avalanches in winter and cloudbursts in summer. The Federal Government allows only a certain number of trees to be felled in each district, and these are marked by the Forestry Inspector.

The work began by the construction of a slide on the mountainside, down which the logs are launched end on, arriving in the valley to be stacked. Supports were driven into the rock at right angles and logs laid along them to form a platform about two feet wide, the outer log raised some inches to prevent the timber leaving the slip on its mad descent. It is a mile and a half long, describing a giant graphic curve down the face of the rock.

The manager of the enterprise was our guide up this aerial way. Without heavily nailed boots it would have been impossible to gain a foothold! It is necessary to have a gradient of one in three to keep the logs moving, and we felt uncommonly like flies walking up a wall! The tree-tops swayed beneath us, and above towered all the dramatic splendour of the mountains.

We found the men finishing their midday meal in their headquarters, a chalet half buried in snow at the forest's edge. The gang numbers eighteen. They sleep in the stable on deep beds of hay, with any quantity of blankets provided by themselves. The hours are from dawn till dark, with an hour off at eleven o'clock and half an hour at two-thirty. Their evenings are spent in sharpening and repairing their tools.

Although the men are as fit and hard as it is possible to be, they are sometimes forced to cease work owing to the cold. During January and February the temperature often drops to fifteen or twenty degrees below zero, and not only their boots, but their food supplies are frozen to solid ice. In normal times the thermometer shows twenty degrees of frost, and axe and saw work keeps the men warm.

The foreman outside the headquarters.

When the trees are stripped of branches and bark they are dragged to the entrance of the slide and started off on their

adventurous descent to the valley. We watched the great train of logs thundering down, those that hesitated at the corners carried on irresistibly by the rush behind them. The logs are controlled as far as possible by long-handled iron hooks, the men running in their spiked boots on the outer edge of the slide with the agility and sang-froid of trained acrobats. Occasionally a log plunges over, and while we watched a man lost his footing, to crash head foremost into the deep snow thirty feet below. His mates flung him a length of rope and he swarmed up it to retake his place in the team with a grin.

Twice a week volunteers go down to the village for food supplies. They return heavily laden, climbing up through the night to start work again at sunrise.

The days they fear most are those which bring the "*foehn*", the dangerous warm wind from the south. It melts the snow and loosens the logs waiting their turn at the slip. Until the wind shifts, the slightest misjudgment may bring down an avalanche of logs and cost them their lives.

About 20,000 cubic feet of wood are sent down to Gérignoz each season, the best quality to be sawn into planks, the inferior quality and the bark to be sent to paper factories and tanneries.

The timber from these forests is of exceptionally fine grain, owing to their northern aspect and the shallowness of the soil on the steep rocky slopes. These, and the rigours of the climate at high altitudes, retard the growth of the trees, and in consequence the timber ripens more slowly and gains in fibre and strength.

The sap begins to rise in March, when felling operations cease. The great wheels of the sawmills begin to turn as the ice on the river thaws, and peace reigns in the forest until the first snowfall of autumn.

The Slide.

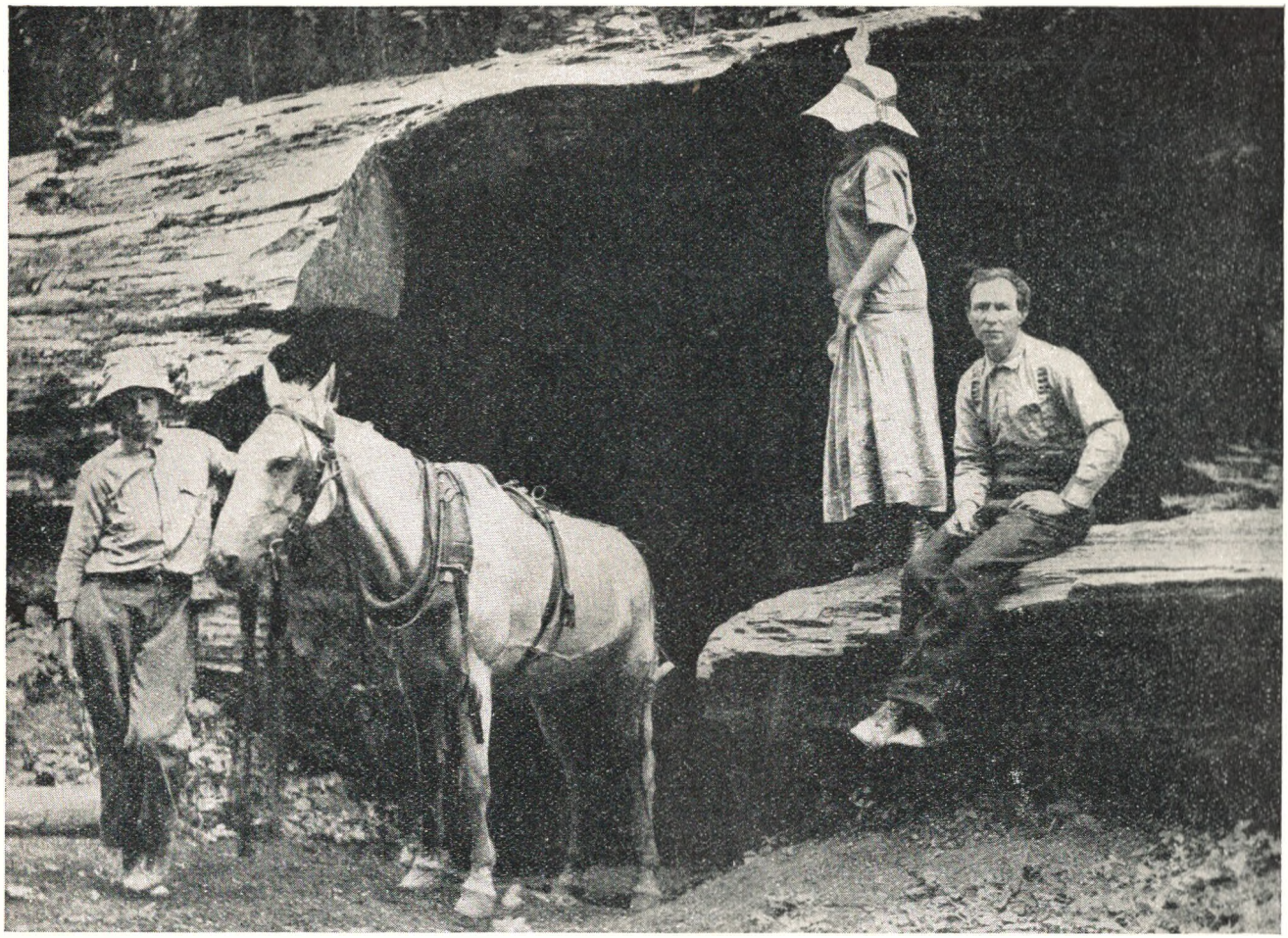
Camping Days

Patch your kits and tents again, O you sturdy rover men,
Polish up your cooking-pans and gear,
Push your baggage carts along with a merry-throated song,
For the Springtime camping days are here !
Pitch your camp on the cliff's white brow,
On the heath, or leafy wood :
Choose your spot right now, right now,
For the pure Spring air is good !

O the fresh and nippy breeze that bites your arms and knees—
It soon will make them leathery and brown ;
O the smell of hunter's stew on lone trails old and new,
Far from the noisy hum of town !
You've shed your collar and office kit,
Dungarees or chauffeur's blue :
You feel again so fit, so fit,
As the backwoods harden you !

Arise, O merry hearts, to the morning call of larks,
Hear the crackle of the log fire's blaze ;
Fill the camp with shouting as you do your jocund scouting,
Revel in the Spring sun's tonic rays !
Again the camp fire song, my boys,
And the taste of dixie stew :
You're free to make a wholesome noise
For a jolly week or two !

ROBERT HARDING



This giant tree has fallen. Part of interior has been burnt out and used as a stable by these hardy settlers.

Tree Trunk Dwellers in Australia

By AUSTRAL BOURNE

NATIVES of many countries build their homes in the branches of trees, but I have seen white men in the Australian bush make cosy homes in the hollows of giant gum trees.

There is nothing very remarkable in this when one sees these huge forest giants with a girth of anything from fifty to sixty feet.

" Giant eucalyptus or mountain ash make the best homes," a trunk dweller told me, " and Gippsland and the Cumberland Valley are the places for high gums ; many of them have quite a tidy girth. But the bush fires a few years ago played havoc with some of the best giants of the bush. Come in and have a look at my shanty."

And very comfortable it was, too. The kangaroo skins made fine rugs, and the walls were gay with pictures.

" Of course, it wasn't all plain sailing at first," my host informed me, " for I had to smoke out bull-dog ants and wild bees, who objected to my tenancy. But I won.

" These frames here I made from gum-pods, and the pictures inside of 'em are the covers of magazines. The furniture is knocked up from bush logs and roots, and my best furniture and cooking utensils are made from kerosene cases and tins some of the decent transport blokes leave on the road for me."

I commented on the roof.

" Yes ; it's a tidy height, but wattle makes it cosy. This tree must have been about three hundred feet before the top blew off. A storm often takes the top of a tree clean off, and sometimes it just hangs by a few splinters of wood."

" And how do you get water ? " was my next query.

" Oh, that. Well, rain-water—a couple of sheets of corrugated iron leaning against the ' house ', and a few kerosene pans, and I'm kept well supplied. Come and see my swimming pool."

I shuddered when I saw what was in it.

" Yes," he grinned. " Plenty of tadpoles for company. Cute little beggars. I used to have to drink that water once—of course, I strained it first."

" Are you lonely ? "

" Huh ! Wouldn't change places with the Governor-General," he replied. " How can a bloke be lonely when it's only a few miles to the main road ? And if I'm lucky the passengers in the passing cars chuck out a few papers and magazines for me. Then I've got wireless. Company ! Listen to those jackasses. They laugh most of the day. Who would be lonely ? "

" And what about snakes ? "

" Yes, plenty get knocking around in the warm weather. I take precautions, of course. Then I've got Jacky " [a kookaburra bird] " who helps by eating 'em up.

" Then as for grub," he continued, anticipating my next question, " the mail driver leaves provisions from the township on the road for me ; and the creeks are full of black-fish. No ; I never eat rabbits. I'm a trapper, and I'd as soon eat my dog as underground mutton.

" One of our ' white blackfellows ' was married in one of these trees," he went on reminiscently, " and as he was a Christian the Padre performed the service.

" Never shall I forget that Padre —dressed like any backwoodsman, about a yard wide across the shoulders, and a voice like thunder. His parish was many thousands of square miles, visiting lonely places like ours, and his transport consisted of two or three camels : the first bringing his own few belongings, and the rest loaded with twenty - two - inch heavy leather pack-bags containing medical supplies, books, baccy, and other stuff which we had come to look upon as real luxuries.

Tree trunks provide the only entirely free houses in the world.

" The altar consisted of a small table made of forked sticks stuck upright in the ground, crosspieces, and packing-cases. Just outside the doorway, it was, the bride and bridegroom being inside the tree and the Padre 't'other side the table.

" The groom wore a white shirt (one of mine !), grey moleskin trousers held up by a narrow belt, and elastic-side boots. His ' intended ' had a vivid-coloured dressing-gown tucked inside a white skirt, and the crown of a man's old felt hat over her dark hair."

" Did they live happy ever after ? " I asked.

" Rather. Joe's a great tracker, and never forgot how I arranged for him to be married properly. He calls in occasionally with news."

As I left him, he waved to me. " Come up and see me some time," he bawled. " There's always a bed of bush-feathers " [gum leaves] " for you. You'd like the life, matey.'' Who wouldn't ?

Little but Great—Beethoven

By L. B. RUSS

BEETHOVEN was born at Bonn, a little village on the Rhine near Cologne in December 1770. His full name was Ludwig van Beethoven. Notice the " van " in place of the German " von " which is accounted for by the fact that the composer's ancestors originally came from the Netherlands.

When he was quite young he learned both the piano and the organ. So talented was he at the piano that his father, who wanted him to be an infant prodigy like the young Mozart, pretended Ludwig was two years younger than he was actually. It was not until his fortieth year that Beethoven discovered his correct age.

Beethoven was not to become famous as a pianist, however, but by his immortal compositions, which are as fresh and beautiful to-day as they were the day he wrote them. Amongst the numbers of symphonies, quartets, concertos, sonatas, and so on, there are some delightful short and easy piano pieces quite within the reach of any earnest and admiring beginner.

Like all other " Great Little Men " there is something about Beethoven to be admired. Before he reached thirty, signs were showing of the deafness which grew gradually worse. Deafness does not prevent a composer from composing, because he can hear all his music in his mind ; but it prevented him from hearing his great works in the way that we do.

It is said that after he conducted one of his compositions the leader of the orchestra had to turn Beethoven round to see the audience clapping their hands in appreciation, because he couldn't hear them.

The tragedy of being unable to reap the rewards so greatly deserved must have been a hard one to bear. The courage with which he bore it is an example for all.

Beethoven for many years was reluctant to acknowledge his oncoming deafness even to his nearest friends, and although in his early days he loved to walk in the fields and so be with Nature for pleasure, later he sought consolation in Nature of necessity.

Usually when walking in the countryside he was hatless, and wandered about with his back bent and his hands clasped behind, all emphasising his smallness of stature.

He died in 1827, during a violent thunderstorm, at Vienna. It seemed as if the heavens were heralding the passing of a great soul who left us some of the greatest music ever written.

Marvels of the Moon

By F. W. TAPP

IMAGINE the ordeal of a goalkeeper on the Moon, standing up to a penalty from Brook of Manchester City, or Willie Evans of the Spurs. They hit a ball with terrific force under present conditions on earth, but on the Moon, where the force of gravity is only one-sixth that of the earth, and air resistance is negligible, the ball would speed towards the goal at more than 400 miles per hour. Such a player as Spence of Chelsea, who recently crashed a ball through the near-side rigging, across the goal and out at the far-side rigging, would indeed be a man to be feared.

If such conditions were suddenly obtained for us, we should flock in thousands to be thrilled by amazing exhibitions in every branch of sport. In tennis, such players as Allison and Von Cramm would smash over 700 mile-per-hour services ; in football and hockey, the ball would travel from one goal to another in a second or two ; cricket grounds would need to be about six times their present size, and body-line would mean quiet and sudden death. But if men do ever reach the Moon, will it be possible to live there and behave as we do on earth ?

Many methods of reaching the Moon have been suggested, one of the most popular being proposed by a German scientist, a year or two ago. He was going to be shot from a gun in a cigar-shaped, airtight vessel, made of heat-resisting metal. The driving power was to be obtained by gases issuing at enormous pressure from a small nozzle in the rear of the machine. By reversing the direction of these gases speed would later be slowed down, so as to make a gentle landing on the Moon. Distances and speeds were worked out with great mathematical accuracy, but you will at once ask how he was to return. If we suppose the journey to be successful, however, very interesting conditions would be found.

The Moon is 240,000 miles from us, and is the nearest of the heavenly bodies. An express train carrying you night and day at sixty miles an hour would take six months to reach it. Its diameter is 2,000 miles, so if you imagine a huge ball as far across as from London to Port Said, you have a fair idea of its size. For years now astronomers have been studying the surface of the Moon through the great Lick telescope. So greatly does this magnify that any great buildings or cities would be visible. No signs of life, however, have ever been observed, and, in fact, no life is possible even, for there is neither air nor water on the Moon. You can therefore put aside all romantic ideas of getting into wireless communication with some wireless enthusiast on the Moon.

There is complete silence and permanent dusk on the Moon, and in the black sky, where stars are always present, the earth would appear fourteen times as bright as the Moon appears to us. A strange fact is that the Moon turns once on its axis for every revolution round the earth, so it always turns the same face to us. We have no idea what the other side is like, for no one has ever seen it.

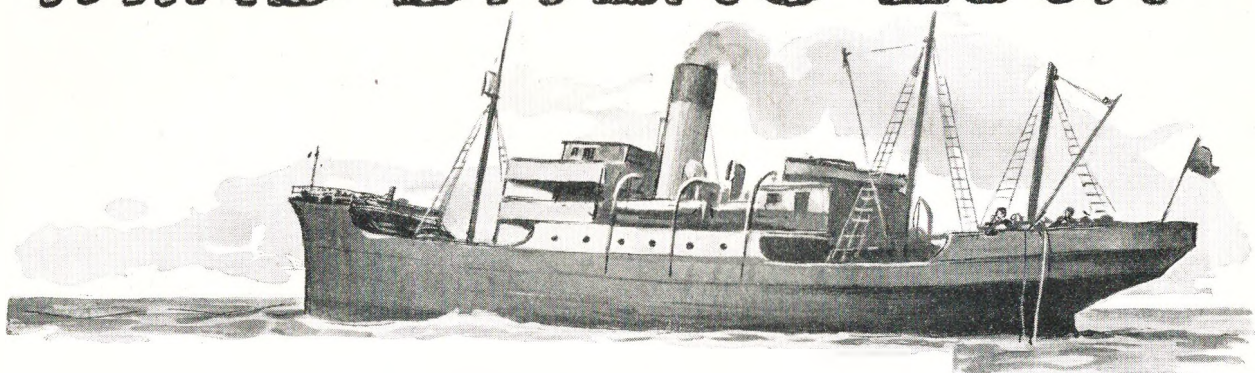
A day there is about a fortnight of our time, and during the long day it is thought that it is hundreds of degrees hotter than boiling water, while at night the temperature falls to more than two hundred degrees below zero. As I said before, gravity on the Moon is only one-sixth that of the earth, so that in such conditions all our achievements would be made so much easier, and cricketers would assume more of the appearance of baseball players.

We can realise, then, that life is absolutely impossible on the Moon, so that the question of how to return does not arise. But the imagination of men will always be fired by the romantic possibilities of such an adventure.

COVER a glass of water with a hat, and say that you will drink the water without touching the hat. Then get under the table and pretend to drink the water by sucking it through the table. After getting up, request some person to remove the hat in order to ascertain whether the water has disappeared. Immediately upon this being done take up the glass and swallow the contents, claiming to have drunk the water without lifting the hat.

A. E. B.

THIRD DIVER'S LUCK



By S. T. JAMES

SLOWLY, the big white diving-shell dropped through fifty fathoms of water, halting as Tom Bushel shouted through the telephone to the men at the winch aboard the salvage ship *Aurelas*.

Through the inch-thick glass before his face, Tom glimpsed with increasing clearness the outlines of the sunken wreck. He described his position, and John Rostern, chief diver of the *Aurelas*, answered him.

" How far do you see in front of you ? " Rostern enquired.

For a minute Tom waited without answering. Then, as a big eel passed in front of the observation glass, he was able to calculate and answer :

" Six to eight feet, I think ! "

" You're alongside the wreck, on the starboard side, if my reckoning is good. I'm going to lift you from the bottom and move you slowly towards the stern. When you're there, give me word ! "

The big steel shell moved slowly through the green water. Bits of seaweed, and a few fish, floated into view and vanished. A mast seemed to glide slowly past, then a funnel. Bit by bit, Tom picked out details of the wreck—hydraulic cranes, scuttles, rails. Then, suddenly, everything began to curve away and he let out a shout of warning. The shell ceased to move, except for the gentle swaying caused by an underseas current.

" Camera coming ! " Rostern called.

Tom's job to-day was to fix in position a special underwater camera designed to take pictures of the sunken ship's stern. Safely seated in a strong steel shell, with a new canister of oxygen-making chemicals at hand, Tom had no thought of difficulty or danger in his mind. He was barely eighteen, and considered himself lucky to get the appointment of third diver to this expedition, especially with an expert like John Rostern at the head of things. Schuster, the second diver, was bull-headed and impatient and Tom did not like him nearly so well.

Something big and bulky was swinging gently in the water a few feet away. Tom lifted the steel arm of the shell, with its hooked end, to get a grip.

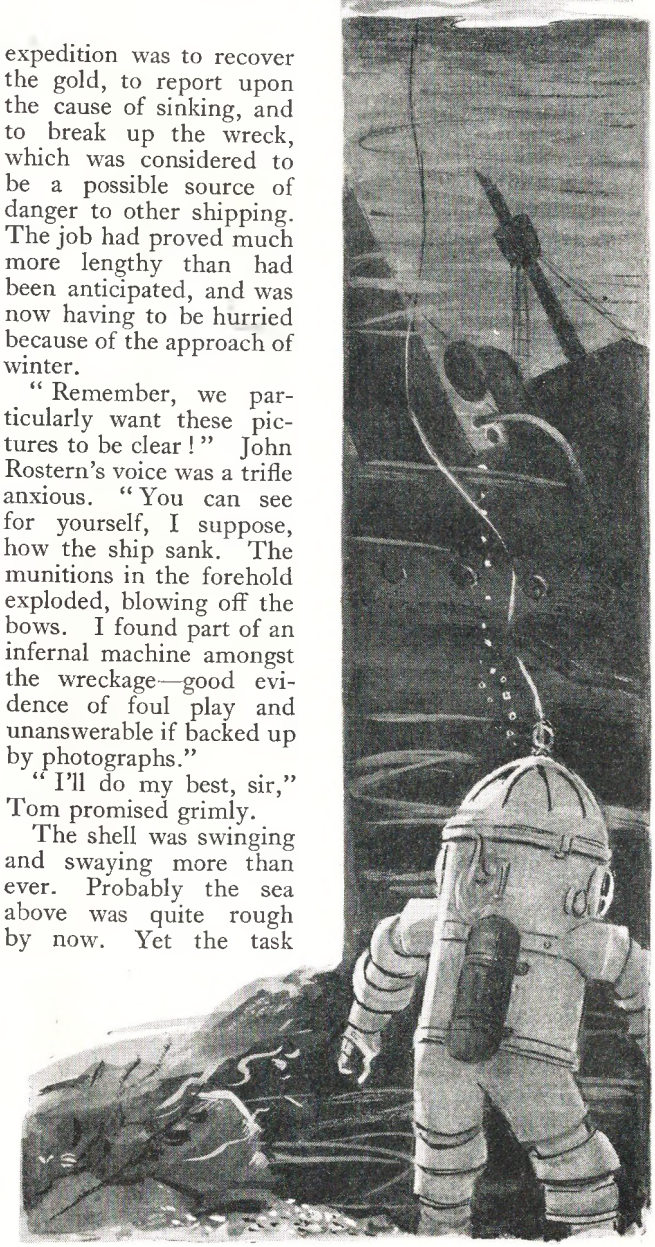
" Okay ! " he called and began the tedious task of fixing up ready for an exposure. A powerful electric bulb was with the camera, and soon the sea bottom was ablaze with light around the sunken ship's stern. Fish of strange shapes and sizes darted frantically about, scared and curious.

The *Lauric* had carried munitions of war, consigned to a South American Republic. She also carried a quantity of bar gold in her strong-room and the task of the salvage expedition was to recover the gold, to report upon the cause of sinking, and to break up the wreck, which was considered to be a possible source of danger to other shipping. The job had proved much more lengthy than had been anticipated, and was now having to be hurried because of the approach of winter.

" Remember, we particularly want these pictures to be clear ! " John Rostern's voice was a trifle anxious. " You can see for yourself, I suppose, how the ship sank. The munitions in the forehold exploded, blowing off the bows. I found part of an infernal machine amongst the wreckage—good evidence of foul play and unanswerable if backed up by photographs."

" I'll do my best, sir," Tom promised grimly.

The shell was swinging and swaying more than ever. Probably the sea above was quite rough by now. Yet the task



before him was one that Tom did not dare to hurry unduly.

He had almost finished, when of a sudden he felt the big shell lurch drunkenly, throwing him from his balance, hard against the steel sides. Bruised and bleeding, he attempted to pick himself up, only to be thrown over again almost at once. He became aware that the shell was moving downward—it hit the sea bottom, jarring upon a rock and almost rolling over. The violence of the movement bruised Tom afresh and left him dazed for a minute. Then, with the wreck gone from view and with nothing at all visible but dark green sea, he reckoned up the situation and knew something almost like panic for a few fleeting seconds. Somehow the thick steel cable connecting the shell with the salvage ship had broken. He called frantically into the telephone, but no answer came to him.

One chance he had. In a clip just over his head hung a key with which to cast loose the broken cable; otherwise this might entangle him with the wreckage. Hurriedly he reached for the key, and cast loose the cable, swiftly plugging the gland through which it entered the shell. Then he paused, cool and calm now that the first thrill was over, but conscious nevertheless of a loud-thumping heart. Upon the next few seconds, life and death depended.

He smiled grimly to himself as he thought of the commotion up above. They would know by now that the cable had broken and that the shell was adrift. They would know, too, that the only chance of escape was for the ballast tanks of the derelict shell to be blown, enabling it to rise to the surface. But the strong currents and the heavy sea would make the task of spotting and reaching the shell far from easy.

Tight-lipped, Tom stooped to blow the tanks. Then he waited, tensely, to see whether anything happened. For a moment he noticed no change at all; then, abruptly, he saw a handful of weed glide past the glass windows, seeming to move downward!

As the shell broke surface, it rolled over, and a big wave smashed upon it, throwing Tom against the steel sides with stunning force. Savage pain tore at him until consciousness slipped away.

Rostern Leaves the Ship

The smell of lint and iodine filled the stuffy little cabin. Tom found himself bandaged about the head and the chest and felt a queer pain when he tried to breathe deeply.

"Rib badly bruised or else busted," he told himself.

Voices sounded. Schuster, the second diver, was arguing with Captain Bargon. His excited gutturals contrasted with the rather thin voice of the skipper.

"I tell you, never would we have been in this plight had my advice been taken! Your John Rostern may be head diver, but he is too timid. Now we face the winter, and there is still so much to be done."

By an effort, Tom moved and called out. Captain Bargon came over to him. "Glad you're better, young man. You're badly bruised, but there's nothing broken. Unluckily, the wave that snapped your cable threw your chief against the winch and broke his arm as well as his head! We're in a pretty mess, I'm afraid."

Schuster came along. "This salvage job is up to me now, captain. It shall be done in the way I wanted from the first. Instead of Rostern's cutting operations we will try just a little explosive, I think."

"But the munitions—the *Lauric* carried munitions," Tom protested.

"Some of them blew up when she sank. The rest have been long since killed by the sea water," was Schuster's confident rejoinder.

They left Tom to himself presently. But his thoughts were far from pleasant. He remembered that John Rostern had refused to make use of explosives, but had instead attempted the longer and more troublesome task of cutting away the *Lauric's* strong-room. The idea was to bring it to the surface, intact, before any attempt was made to destroy the *Lauric* by explosives.

Schuster's idea was to get at the strong-room by blasting away the deck and the cabins surrounding it. Such a method certainly had the advantage of speed, always providing the *Lauric's* munitions really were innocuous, and would serve the additional purpose of partly demolishing the wreckage.

Later in the day Schuster came in again for a few minutes. He was more cheerful than Tom had ever seen him.

"Those photographs of yours will turn out failures, I'm afraid, youngster," he said, rather maliciously. "We've recovered the camera, but in my opinion there's not too much hope of good pictures. You're inexperienced for such a job, and Rostern shouldn't have let you tackle it. We'll not have time to bother with any further photographs, I'm afraid. Handicapped like we are, our only chance is to make a move quickly. We've lost a confounded sight too much time already."

"John Rostern won't like it," Tom pointed out. "He particularly wanted those pictures in support of the report he is making."

"He's out of action, with a dented skull," Schuster grinned. "An ill wind that blows nobody good, kid! My own reputation is going to have a good boost over this little job."

Early next morning Schuster went down to fix his first charges. Tom insisted upon getting on deck, to watch whatever might be seen. John Rostern was there, too, white and grim, with his skull thickly bandaged and his arm in a sling.

"Mark you, captain, if Schuster really does use explosives, I'm leaving this ship before he fires them!" Rostern said determinedly. "He's far too ambitious, is Schuster. He doesn't mind who he hurts or overrides if there's a chance for him to appear clever. You're a fool to listen to him."

Bargon was worried. He tried to argue, then to persuade, but Rostern was adamant. "There's one of your company's boats, the *Severn*, at work only half a dozen miles away!" Rostern pointed out. "You can put me aboard the *Severn*, sir, before a single shot is made! Neither yon fool down below nor you yourself can have any idea of the effect of modern munitions. If you had—you wouldn't seriously contemplate such a risk as you're taking."

"I'll get in touch with the *Severn* by wireless," Bargon promised irritably.

Tom watched the preparation of the explosive with professional interest. It was yellow-white greasy stuff, like hard tallow, manufactured in thick circular pieces like slices of pineapple. A hole at the centre held the detonators, grey lead tubes with two thin wires hanging from one end.

Carefully, Schuster fixed the detonators into the explosive, sealing them with a thin layer of melted wax. He screwed them down in a metal cylinder, fastened the cylinder to iron hooks for lowering, and connected the whole with an electric charging wire.

"Been in touch with the *Severn* yet?" Rostern

Teeth gritted against the pain . . . he came to where Schuster's arms and head were bobbing up.

demanded, grimly as Schuster moved towards the big white shell that was hanging suspended above the ship's hold. " How soon do I transfer, captain ? "

" As soon as I can manage it ! " Bargon promised. He turned to Tom. " You leaving us too ? "

Tom hesitated. He had a great respect for John Rostern's judgment, but the senior diver's present attitude worried him.

" I'll stay on," he decided grimly.

The arms and legs of the diving-shell were being screwed on. The joints had been oiled and tightened, the air connections tested. Now the telephones were adjusted and tried, and a new canister of chemicals was brought out for use. Grinning, Schuster drew on his three thick sweaters and his respirator and stepped into the shell.

Slowly the big shell swung outboard. It disappeared gradually, swallowed by the green waters, but Schuster's voice came through steadily to the men at the winch.

" Send down the explosives," he called presently, and with almost exaggerated caution the grim metal containers went over on the end of their chain.

" You'll be wise to come with me to the *Severn*, youngster," John Rostern said, coming up to Tom. " The captain and Schuster are taking a risk they don't appreciate. They are likely to overreach themselves at it. This funny business with explosive is deadly dangerous."

" I—I think I ought to stay, all the same," Tom said. " I'm sorry those photographs didn't turn out well, sir."

" They'll serve my purpose, I think. Neither I nor Schuster could have got them better in the circumstances," Rostern consoled.

Schuster came from below in just over half an hour. He was smiling confidently, evidently well pleased with himself.

" We'll steam away for a mile or so—just as a precaution, before I fire those charges," he told the captain.

" Steam towards the *Severn*, then, and let me get clear," Rostern insisted. " I'm taking the underseas camera and the photographs with me."

" The *Severn* is standing towards us. You'll be aboard her in an hour," Bargon promised rather curtly.

" I've put two small charges inside her hull to begin with," Schuster explained. " Somebody's reputation is going to get damaged over this little job, I'm afraid." He looked pointedly at John Rostern.

" Not mine," Rostern answered grimly. " And dead men don't trouble about reputations, anyway ! "

Fixing the Charges

The *Severn*, with Rostern aboard, was a receding speck when at last Schuster brought together the two ends of the wires he held. One was connected with the wreck, the other with a dynamo in the engine-room.

There followed a sharp " knock " upon the salvage ship's keel, and presently a few dead fish flocked to the surface. But when Schuster went below, an hour later, he found the *Lauric* almost as before apart from two small holes in her sides. He came up for a fresh load of explosives, slightly more powerful this time. Two days later, having made four unsuccessful attempts, he suggested that Tom might like to fix the next lot of charges.

" You can see for yourself just how easy the job is ! " he said. " If you did ever think it dangerous, you'll be undeceived by now, I guess ! "

" I'd like very much to go down again," Tom admitted. His chances during the entire job had been few enough.

He took with him four canisters of the explosive, and

as the shell was moved slowly alongside the *Lauric*, he observed that surprisingly little damage had been done to her by Schuster's previous charges.

"Put these shots of yours together, as near as you can get to the ship's centre," Schuster advised over the telephones. "Drill them fairly deep——"

Slowly and laboriously, Tom directed the working of the electric drill. As each hole was made large enough, he wedged a canister inside it.

Curious fish swam past to inspect his work. Presently, when the charges were fired, these same fish would probably float to the surface, belly uppermost, dead.

"All fixed," Tom reported, at length. "Move me round to the other side."

As the shell progressed slowly along the ship and round its stern, Tom caught fresh glimpses of John Rostern's surgery upon the strong-room, surgery which another week at most would have brought to a triumphant conclusion. It would have been a marvel of deep-sea salvage work, as clever and effective as the surgeon's removal of a diseased appendix. More and more Tom regretted Rostern's departure, upon which Schuster was unfailingly commenting in no flattering manner.

He spoke to Schuster over the telephone.

"Will these charges I'm fixing be sufficient, do you think? There's precious little to be seen from the previous shots!"

"We mustn't be rash. Don't want to blow up the strong-room and the gold," Schuster pointed out. "We'll gradually increase the charge till we get the effect we want."

The shell ceased its motion, and once more Tom fell to work with the drill. When everything was completed, he took a final look round to be sure all was in order. Then he had himself drawn back to the surface.

When the first charges were fixed, Schuster and the captain had taken the *Aurelas* nearly two miles from the wreck before firing. Over three thousand yards of electric wire had been paid out from a drum in the ship's stern. Naturally, this occupied a good deal of valuable time, and Schuster's impatience was great. Consequently, the distance had been reduced upon each subsequent trip, and to-day the salvage ship had steamed a bare half-mile when Schuster took action.

"Perhaps you'll fire the charges yourself to-day, youngster?" he enquired.

"Okay," Tom agreed, and began at once to strip the end of the wire that led to the *Lauric*. Then, as Schuster handed him a wire leading to the engine-room dynamo, he began to peel the end of that also. Afterwards, he stood watchfully, awaiting Schuster's signal, with a stripped wire in each hand, the ends less than a foot apart.

"Get ready!" Schuster warned, and shouted down a tube to the engine-room. The dynamo whirred and spun.

"Contact!" Schuster called sharply, and at the word Tom brought together the two bared ends of wire.

A sound like the boiling hiss of a million kettles filled the air. The salvage ship shuddered for a second, and then the sea beneath her shifted bodily. Came the crash and shock of an explosion more frightful and terrible than any nightmare.

Flung headlong from his feet, Tom glimpsed vaguely a huge umbrella of smoke hanging in the sky above him. He felt the ship go up on the crest of a gigantic wave, halting there for a moment, high above the surrounding water, and then dropping back until the seas reared on every hand like huge grey walls, about to crash like the walls of Jericho.

As the seas rushed in, the salvage ship's deck was swept clean, and Tom felt himself lifted by a mighty, irresistible force. Vainly he tried to cling to the rail: with all the breath pounded from him, he went down into the raging waters. They closed over his head, and kept him down until his lungs were almost bursting. Consciousness had almost slipped before he touched the surface, and at first his strokes were feeble. Then, as he grew a little stronger, he glimpsed a piece of floating wreckage, and struggled towards it.

All around, the sea was dotted with debris. The dismantled hulk of the *Aurelas* rolled sluggishly half a mile away, with a heavy list to port. Obviously, she was very badly damaged, and had shipped a good deal of water.

Fifty yards away a head bobbed up: two arms were flung high, despairingly, only to be swallowed instantly by the greedy green seas. The distorted, agonised face was that of Schuster. And Schuster was drowning.

For a moment Tom hesitated. He felt weak and sick, and his body was a mass of aches and pains that told of nasty bruises, perhaps something worse. Even if he reached Schuster, there would be little chance of keeping afloat for long. And he didn't like Schuster very much, anyhow.

Then, shamed by his own cowardice and selfishness, Tom threw away hesitation and launched himself towards the spot where Schuster had sunk. He kicked off his boots and wriggled free of his coat. Teeth gritted against the pain screaming through his tortured body, he came to where Schuster's arms and head were bobbing up once again.

For a minute the second diver fought savagely, and Tom did the only thing possible, hitting out for Schuster's jaw. The effort cost red-hot stabs of agony, but Schuster collapsed utterly and lay very still as Tom turned over to the back stroke, hands grasping Schuster's biceps, legs kicking their way back, foot by foot, to the big spar floating a hundred yards away. Lifted by the waves, Tom glimpsed the S.S. *Severn* approaching, black smoke pouring from her funnel. Then, almost exhausted, he reached the spar, and hung on grimly.

* * * * *

"I saw it all through binoculars from the deck of the *Severn*," John Rostern said gravely. "That last charge exploded all the munitions aboard the *Lauric* and blew a crater a hundred yards wide in the water. The *Aurelas* was on the edge of the crater. Only a miracle kept her from going down like a stone."

Tom groaned, and tried to move.

"You're lucky, you and Schuster," Rostern added. "Especially Schuster. We saw you fetch him over to that floating spar. Grand work, laddie. Schuster thinks so, too. The pair of you were almost black as niggers from your bruises. Schuster has a cracked rib into the bargain! Forty-eight hours since we pulled you on board! You were out to the wide world, youngster. And while you were resting I've been down below to look at the *Lauric*, broken arm notwithstanding. We'll get the gold all right, but it will need collecting piece by piece!"

"It was me who fired that last charge," Tom confessed, and Rostern nodded.

"Forget about that, youngster. Schuster was in charge and he's already told me he takes full responsibility. He just didn't understand what munitions can do. Me, I've seen them at work before. It wasn't funk, but just plain common sense that took me away from the *Aurelas* when Schuster weighed in with his hustling. More haste, less speed, you know!"

He turned as a heavily bandaged figure entered the cabin.

" Sorry, Schuster," he said. " I'm not meaning to rub in things, really ! "

The second diver nodded. " Okay with me," he said quietly. " I deserve all I get, and more. I was just a darned sight too ambitious—wanted to make a name for myself, I guess, regardless of who I pushed aside or damaged. Well, I was wrong, an' I'm cured ! "

He reached out for Tom's hand. " You've a lot more than the average pluck, Tom ! I owe you more thanks than I'll be able to give."

" Forget it," Tom urged. " Let's work together, from now on, and get the job successfully finished ! "

He took Schuster's hand, and then watched as the second diver turned to John Rostern.

" Well ? " Rostern enquired, but as Schuster's hand came out he took it heartily.

" Cheers ! " Tom said, and struggled to a sitting position. " Look here, I'm hungry," he said. " What about some grub ? "

The World's Wonder Tree

By EDWARD E. LONG, C.B.E., F.R.G.S.

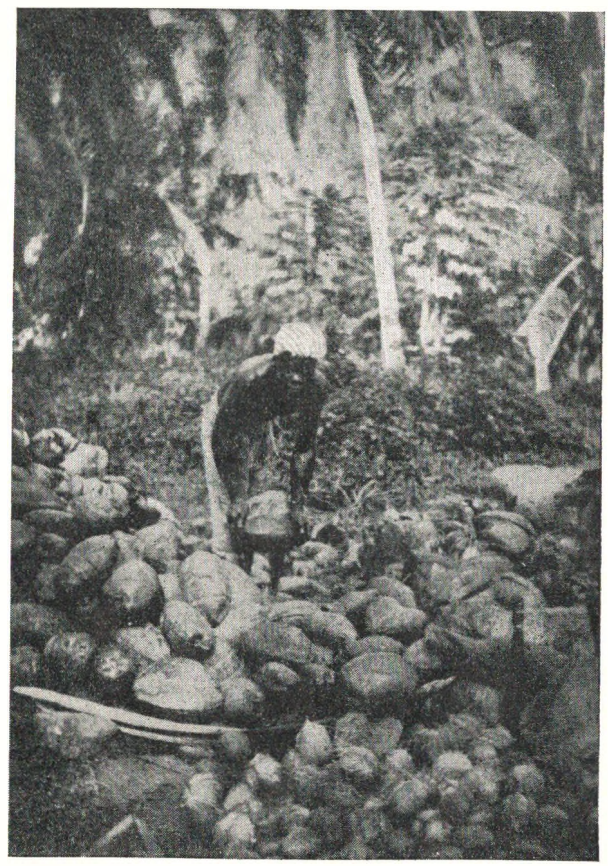
THE coconut palm, which grows almost everywhere in the tropics, can certainly lay claim to the title of the World's Wonder Tree, for it furnishes the lucky people who live where it flourishes with clothing, food and shelter.

While the nut is ripening, it is eaten, for its " flesh " is then a delicious creamy pulp, very unlike the hard substance it becomes later. The milk of the nut is then at its best, and you may drink quantities of it during the heat of the day without any ill effect. It is looked upon, in fact, as a very good health tonic.

When it is ripe, the nut is extracted from the hard shell, broken into pieces, and placed in the sun to dry. The nut, dried, is known as copra, which is exported to Europe, to be crushed for the valuable oil it contains. Some nuts are exported whole, and many are stored by the natives and used when required for food purposes. Coconut forms one of the chief ingredients of a curry ! The flesh is pounded up finely and then pressed, and the liquor which exudes gives the curry its richness. The nut is also used chopped up and mixed with cooked rice and sugar and eaten thus, or pounded up and mixed with flour and sugar and then baked into crisp, brown cakes.

The nut is not the only edible part of the coconut palm. High up in the tree, above the clusters of nuts, is a large growth of green leaves termed the " cabbage ", which vegetable it resembles. This is cooked, and eaten hot, or pickled and used as an " appetiser ", but it must be used sparingly, for if a tree were to be deprived of all its " cabbages ", it would die. Sometimes during a violent gale hundreds of coconut palms are uprooted, and then is the opportunity for a good feast of coconut cabbages. On these occasions, too, there is the chance of obtaining the pith from the trunk, which runs from the base of the tree to the crown. This is carefully extracted and eaten raw, and you may often see it being retailed by itinerant native vendors at so much a slice. Small boys in the tropics prize it as much as a European boy would an orange or an apple.

The roots of the coconut are sometimes chewed. Chopped up and mixed with ginger and sugar, they form a medicine for fever, and the addition of oil makes the mixture a gargle for sore throats, while from the bristles on the roots small paint-brushes and tooth-brushes are made. On the lower part of the large leaves which branch out from the tree trunk is a light-brown fibrous substance resembling cotton ; this is invaluable for staunching the



flow of blood from wounds, and it is also woven into wearing apparel. From the thick fibrous casing with which the nut is surrounded a coarse rope yarn is made, also sheaths for knives and swords, and hats. It is also used for net- and mat-making, and for thatching houses.

The leaves of the coconut have many uses. From the " ribs " of the smaller ones lathes for blinds are made, pins and combs for the hair, and other ornaments, and from the larger leaf-ribs, boat-paddles. Portions of the leaves plaited together serve as plates and dishes, as roofing for houses, and leaf-fibre yields a superior form of rope. Dried and tied in bundles, the leaves are used as torches, the oil they contain giving a strong, bright light.

The shell of the nut provides kitchen and drinking utensils, buttons, and, as it is hard and takes a high polish, it is carved and used for ornamentation. Finally, the trunk of the coconut palm yields excellent timber, which is used for house-building, box-making, and in a variety of ways, including that of coffins ! Certainly the coconut sees the man of the tropics through life—to the end !

The Editor will be glad to receive jokes and humorous stories from readers for this page. They need not be original, but where they are selected, the source must be stated. Small prizes will be given for any that are used. Address, The Editor, " BOY'S OWN PAPER, *" 4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4, and mark the envelope or postcard " Chestnuts."*

IN THE SOUP

AMERICAN (to captain of English ship) : " In America our ships are so large that the captain has to go round the deck in a Rolls-Royce to command the crew."

ENGLISH CAPTAIN (proudly) : " That's nothing. On our ship the cook has to go down in the soup in a submarine to see if the ' spuds ' are done."

(*From* A. F. LOCK, Upminster.)

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NOWHERE IN SIGHT

MOTHER : " Do you know where my Jimmy is ? "

BOY : " Yes, we've been giving him a ride."

MOTHER : " Well, where is he, then ? "

BOY : " In this 'ere snowball ! "

(*From* T. NEWTON, Colchester.)

* * * * *

READY TO OBLIGE

TRAMP (entering garden) : " Could you give a poor fellow a bite, sir ? "

HOUSE-OWNER : " Well, I don't bite myself, but if you'll wait a moment, I'll call the dog."

(*From* J. R. TIPPETT, St. Columb Minor, Cornwall.)

* * * * *

ORDERS ARE ORDERS

LANDLADY (to boarder who had been running and skipping round his room every night) : " Why do you act so childishly every night ? "

BOARDER : " Well, madam—the doctor told me to take my medicine two nights running and then skip a night."

(*From* G. BAMBER, Preston.)

* * * * *

MINDING HIS OWN BUSINESS

" Hi ! didn't you read that notice at the end of the field ? "

" No, sir ! It said ' Private ', so I didn't like to read it."

(*From* A. MCDONALD, Rugby.)

* * * * *

THE RETORT

OLD GENTLEMAN : " You shouldn't laugh when anybody falls down ! "

BOY : " I wasn't, sir. I was laughing at the way you were trying to keep up."

(*From* J. STEWART, Bedlington.)

ONLY BENT

LADY (who has fallen into a basket of eggs in a grocer's shop) : " Oh dear, Mr. Jones, I do hope I have not broken any."

MR. JONES : " Oh no, madam—only bent 'em ! "

(*From* J. GREENFIELD, Parkstone.)

* * * * *

IN THE SPIRIT

BUSINESS MAN : " I am very sorry that my engagements prevent my attending your charity concert, but I shall be with you in spirit."

TICKET-SELLER : " Splendid ! And where would you like your spirit to sit ? I have tickets here for half a crown, five shillings, and ten shillings."

(*From* E. R. DAWES, Whitton.)

* * * * *

VITAMINS

The diner found a fly in his soup and said crossly : " Waiter, what is this ? "

WAITER : " That, sir, is a Vitamin Bee."

(*From* A. WILKINSON, Barnard Castle.)

* * * * *

VERY DRY

The tourist was enjoying the dry climate of Arizona. " Doesn't it ever rain here ? " he asked.

" Rain ? " replied the native. " Why, there are ten-year-old frogs in this town that haven't learnt to swim yet."

(*From* H. R. HELLINES, Bath.)

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EGGS-ASPERATING

FRIEND : " How did you get on at the show last night ? "

ACTOR : " Rotten ! The manager kept egging me on, and the audience kept egging me off ! "

(*From* A. THOMAS, Ilford.)

* * * * *

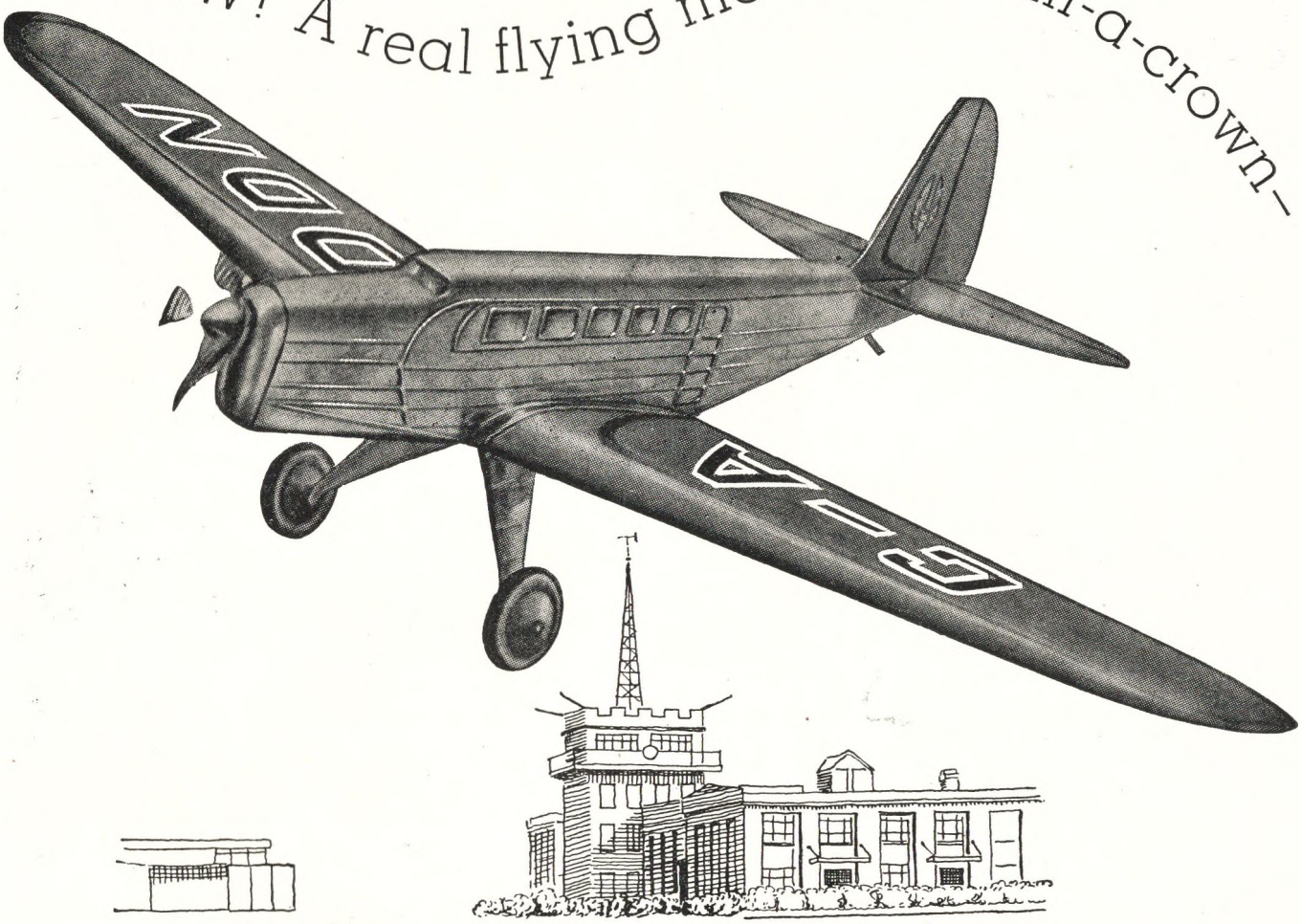
WHERE O WHERE ?

DOCTOR : " One of these pills has to be taken after each meal."

TRAMP : " Yes, but where do I get the meals ? "

(*From* G. A. MACNAB, Northwood.)

NEW! A real flying model for half-a-crown—



SILVER ARROW

LOW WING MONOPLANE SINGLE ENGINE AIR LINER

PRICE **2/6** EACH

For the first time, air-minded men can buy a real flying model for half-a-crown: true to type, with a good performance, the Silver Arrow reproduces latest developments in Air Liners. Its price has deliberately been fixed at half-a-crown to enable a small fleet to be acquired, and to encourage the study of the theory and practice of flight.

SPECIFICATION

Aluminium Fuselage: Propeller and Nose Piece detach in a crash: Accurate pitched Propeller: Adjustable Controls: Transparent Windows: Wing Span 16½ ins.: Spare Motor and Insertor Rod: Double surface detachable Wings.

Designed and made by International Model Aircraft Ltd. Patented throughout the world. Sole concessionaires:—
Lines Bros. Ltd., Triang Works, Morden Road, S.W.19.

COUPON To Lines Bros. Ltd. (Dept. 6), Morden Road, London, S.W.19.

Please send me your "Frog" coloured leaflet with particulars of the "Frog" Flying Club and of how to obtain handsome enamelled Air Force pilot badges.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Please write in block letters. 4/36

"Your saddle's fine, Jim,"

"I know that well enough Ron, but how did you find out?"

"Oh, I thought I told you, the skipper sent me to the village with a telegram and my tyre was flat so I borrowed your grid, and thanks very much."

"Cool nerve yours, Ron, why don't you take a pride in your own machine and keep it in good trim? Start now by writing to BROOKS for their Saddle and Kit Book, its full of good things and there are dozens of sketches by the famous B. O. P. artist F. Patterson."

BROOKS
REGISTERED TRADE MARK

SADDLES **BEST FOR RIDING**

J. B. BROOKS & Co. Ltd., 182 Criterion Works, Birmingham 3

RECRUITS WANTED FOR LINDBERG FLYING SQUAD

Air-minded boys! Join the Lindberg Flying Squad. Build your own models of the famous American planes. S.E.5., Curtiss Goshawk, Boeing P.26A., U.S. Navy Racer, Monocoupe. All models exact to scale, everything you need to assemble grand models that fly like real planes. Price 1s. 6d. each. Postage 3d.

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TELE: REGENT 3161. OUR ONLY ADDRESS.

"I'm having one this EASTER"

Double the interest and pleasure of cycling by fitting this Speedometer. Shows how FAST and how FAR you go. Not a toy, but a real instrument of precision made by the famous Cooper-Stewart Speedometer firm. It is fixed on your handle-bar and driven from the front wheel by means of a flexible shaft. Fitted easily and quickly. Full instructions included. Read all about it in Illustrated Descriptive Folder. Post free.

Model C. 1. Shows how FAST you ride **12/6**

Model C. 5. *(illus. below)* Shows how FAST and how FAR you ride **19/6**

When ordering specify 26″ or 28″ wheel and for C. 5. for right or left hand fitting.

Cooper Stewart BICYCLE SPEEDOMETER

Ask your Cycle dealer to fit one on your Bicycle NOW or send his name and 12/6, or 19/6, according to model required, and we will see you get one by return.

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SPECIAL EASTER CYCLING CAMPING FEATURE

At this time of the year we receive so many enquiries for advice about cycling and camping that we specially commissioned this article, and as this number is published a week or two before Easter, this feature will be particularly useful to readers planning to go cycle camping during the holidays.

ALREADY the days are lengthening, and the warmer weather is calling enthusiastic campers to the open spaces. Easter is probably the first chance you will get to make a long week-end of it, and those of you who are planning to turn your wheels towards the out-of-the way spots of England, are now busy with your preparations.

Out comes the trusty mount that has done such yeoman service for the past few years, and there is a general dismantling preparatory to the spring overhaul. Most of the defects can be easily remedied at little cost by the practical-minded, but don't make the mistake of saving a few pence by buying cheap materials. Get your new accessories from a well-known, reputable firm, and you'll find that it pays in the long run.

First of all thoroughly clean and oil your cycle, and then examine the enamel for chips and rust. A fine grade emery cloth will smooth down the affected area and leave it ready for a coat of new enamel. Use a reliable enamel and if this is smoothly applied with a fine camel-hair brush, the machine can be made to look as good as new.

The chain should be removed, cleaned in paraffin, and then thoroughly oiled. Brakes must be carefully tested and if they show signs of weakness a few pence invested in brake-blocks which you can easily adjust yourself. Perished and badly worn tyres must be ruthlessly discarded and replaced by new ones ; nothing is more annoying on a long run than constant enforced halts to mend punctures in old tyres. Don't make the mistake of thinking you won't need your lamps through the summer months ; you may be delayed on an unfamiliar road and to dispense with them is a folly which has spoilt many a good run. A good pocket-torch is also an asset, and often needed for reading signposts.

The tool-kit should be carefully overhauled, and defective tools replaced with new ones. It is not necessary to carry a miniature workshop with you or to clutter up your machine with heavy equipment, but you must carry a good double-edged spanner, a cone-spanner, screwdriver, tyre-lever and first-grade small adjustable spanner.

Your puncture repair outfit will need careful inspection. These lie about in the tool-kit for months without being used, and too often when they are required you find the patches perished and the solution congealed. If you have any qualms about its efficacy, invest in a new outfit.

Having made quite sure the means of transport is in good working order check up your camping outfit and see that all the necessary equipment is spick and span. Your kit must be chosen with a view to lightness, and kept down to bare essentials. If you are touring with a party, the load is considerably lightened and the weight each cyclist has to carry considerably reduced. The tent is of first importance and must not be selected at random. A perusal of the catalogues of the various firms advertising in our pages during the season will facilitate your choice.

The ground-sheet must, of course, be absolutely reliable. The most suitable material is an oiled fabric ; you will find this more trustworthy than the old rubber-proofed variety, and it has the added advantage of being a lighter

(*Continued on page xvi.*)

weight and non-perishable. Oiled fabric such as "Groymac" will withstand such accidents as dropped oil and grease, and will not crack when folded.

Night warmth is assured by a down-filled sleeping-bag, and besides being warm, this is far less bulky than a quilt and does not come untucked in the sma' hours of the morning. Blankets are definitely not satisfactory, for they are heavy to carry and difficult to pack, so if funds do not run to a sleeping-bag, you must make do with a quilt.

Cooking utensils should be of aluminium, and if you buy a nest of saucepans the varying shapes will fit easily one into the other, and occupy very little space. For cups and plates enamel-ware is a good choice. It is a trifle heavier than aluminium, but far more satisfactory, as it does not absorb the heat and make cup-handling a difficult process. Bandalastra-ware (if you can afford it) is the ideal choice, and is exceptionally light. Matches, of course, you will take in a waterproof container, and make sure you have a goodly supply of these, as your travels may land you many a mile from the nearest shop. You will also require a strong canvas bucket for drinking water.

The chef of the party will be mostly concerned with cooking facilities, especially if there are a large number of hungry campers to feed. The Monitor Minor makes a good standby in this respect; it withstands the strongest wind, boils a kettle in a few minutes, and cooks a complete dinner as well as the highly modernised gas stove.

Having collected your equipment the question of sites becomes of paramount importance. You need a good road map, but do not spend too much time on getting out a hard and fast itinerary, for once you're on the road you'll find the out-of-the-way places calling to you, and will probably forsake your schedule completely, and wander off on a tour of discovery.

Once you are off the main road, those of you who have remembered to find room for your camera or sketching outfits will have a splendid opportunity to capture an original idea for this month's Hedgerow Competition. The trees that line the road are a study in themselves in April, and the lanes and parklands are a riot of flowers of all kinds. Old trees that are famous landmarks, or village greens, with crows nesting in the elms, make delightful photographic studies, and the woodland and hedgerows are alive with opportunities. Keep a good look out while you are riding, for the winning picture may be just round the bend of the road.

The selection of the actual site is not usually a difficult problem. Most landowners will give you permission to use their field, provided you give an undertaking not to leave litter of any sort when you decamp. It is easy enough to fulfil this promise if you dig a small pit for your refuse as soon as you arrive, and, before leaving, fill it in and leave everything in good order. Failure to comply with this courtesy leaves resentment behind and makes it unpleasant for the next lot of campers who pass that way.

Wherever possible, make for high ground, as water and mist collect in the valleys. During the day, weather permitting, fix up a sun-line for the sleeping-gear, and give the tent a good airing.

And lastly, travel comfortably. Carry the kit in as compact a manner as you can; two fair-sized packages are better than a number of small parcels. Try to distribute the weight evenly, so that the steering is not affected. An ideal way is to employ a pair of front and a pair of rear panniers, and thus prevent that top-heavy feeling.

The success of your tour, apart from breakdown or accidents, will depend upon your own personal fitness, and your ability to ride with your party without speeding or lagging. When starting out it is unwise to put on pace immediately; it is much better to ride slowly for the first mile or so, gradually increasing the pace to a good average. Tightly fitting clothes must not be worn, and underwear should be of the network variety. Get away early and avoid the holiday traffic, and, if you stop for wayside refreshment, keep off aerated drinks and stick to water.

CHOOSE THE VILLAGE FOOTBALL TEAM!

A NOVEL COMPETITION FOR ALL READERS

1st Prize £3 2nd Prize £2 3rd Prize £1

And 20 Consolation Prizes

SPECIAL PRIZES FOR OVERSEAS READERS

There are great rejoicings at Ashby-cum-Parva, where the village football team is to play Boodleton Hotspurs in the Final of the Cup. Unfortunately, only the villagers whose numbered portraits appear above (they may be easily recognised) are available for the great game, and the captain is undecided as to how to place them in the field. **Can you help him?**

A list of the positions in the field and the Twelfth Man is given on the coupon below. All you have to do is to **place the appropriate number against each position** until the team is complete, with the addition of the Twelfth Man. Indicate your choice of captain by writing the letter " C " against one of the numbers. Thus the first position might read **Centre Forward—2 C.**

Complete the coupon and send it to " Football Team", THE BOY'S OWN PAPER, 4, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. Closing date for inland readers, **April 18th, 1936.** Results in June 1936 issue of the " B.O.P." **There will be ten special prizes for overseas entries** (received after April 18th), closing date for which is May 14th, 1936. Overseas results will appear in the July issue.

The team and positions, as finally chosen by the captain, will be deposited in the Editor's safe. The First Prize will be awarded to the sender of the neatest CORRECT COUPON, the Second Prize for the second neatest correct coupon, and the Third Prize for the third neatest correct coupon. Choice of captain will be considered before neatness. Twenty Consolation Prizes will also be awarded. *No correspondence may be entered into in connection with this Competition*, and the Editor's decision is final.

Cut round here

THE VILLAGE FOOTBALL TEAM

Centre Forward	Left Half.....
Inside Left	Right Half .....
Inside Right	Left Back .....
Outside Left	Right Back .....
Outside Right.....	Goalkeeper .....
Centre Half	*Twelfth Man* .....

(Name) .....

(Address) .....

.....

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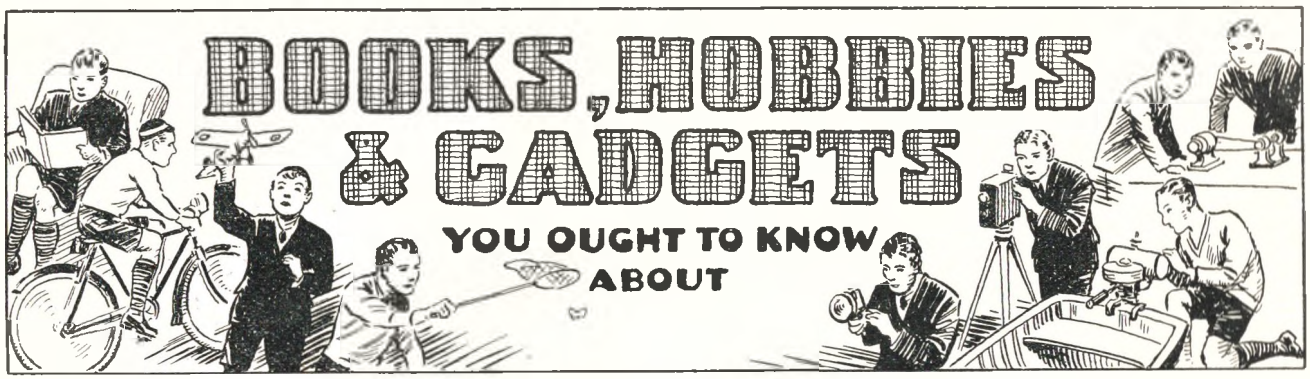
Cut round here



By THE EDITOR

When I started the Career Problem Bureau I expected a goodly number of enquiries, as I know many of you are just at the age when you are preparing to take your place in the commercial world. Letters requesting information about professions, training, etc., have far exceeded expectations, and some of you may think your letters have been overlooked. This is certainly not so; they are all being answered in strict rotation, so please don't be impatient.

In the meantime, I want to mention some books on careers which have recently been published, and which contain a fund of useful information for both parents and boys.

* * * * *

How to Choose Your Career, by W. Leslie-Ivey (Pitman, 3*s.* 6*d.* net), is written by a well-known London employment specialist, and in addition to dealing with the many opportunities which are available to the younger generation, gives much sensible and practical advice on how to discover your suitability for various jobs and the right way to tackle the necessary preliminaries. It is a common-sense book, full of useful information, and I commend it to all those who are looking for their first opening in the business world.

* * * * *

Careers for Our Sons is a practical handbook by D. W. Hughes (A. & C. Black, 3*s.* 6*d.*). The advice you will find in these pages is based on valuable occupational information which has been collected by one who has made a wide and intensive study of the prospects offered by the careers described. The carefully compiled information contained in this book will obviate the haphazard selection of a career, and prevent many a square peg finding its way into a round hole. I think every possible career is tabulated and you will find the fullest details about Accountancy, Agriculture, Architecture, Civil Service Posts, Engineering, Welfare Work, Journalism, Law, Medicine, the various Forces, and many other commercial and scientific careers.

* * * * *

Flying as a Career, by Major Oliver Stewart, M.C., A.F.C. (Pitman, 3*s.* 6*d.* net), will appeal to the majority of you, for I have received more enquiries from boys wishing to enter the Royal Air Force, or an aircraft manufacturing firm, than any other profession. It is a book which should be read by all would-be pilots, for in addition to giving general information as to the kind of work and pay, prospects and other matters likely to influence your choice in the direction of aviation, it contains interesting reading, explaining aerial evolutions, the use of instruments and the psychology of flying.

* * * * *

Two sixpenny handbooks which will appeal to the mechanically minded are "Electrical Engineering" and "Aeronautical Engineering". These are published in the "Your Start in Life" series by Geoffrey Rivington Publications, 50 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1. The aeronautical booklet has a Foreword by Captain Geoffrey de Havilland, and Lord Hirst of Witton, the Chairman of the General Electric Company, has written a Foreword for "Electrical Engineering". The prospects in both these professions are increasing daily, and to the boy who is prepared to devote himself whole-heartedly to his career they offer unlimited opportunities.

* * * * *

With the approach of the summer months canoes are again appearing on the rivers in large numbers. Most of the old hands know all about the Law of Waterways and have collected much general river information in the course of their travels, but both the novice and the experienced canoe enthusiast will find "The Book of Canoeing", by Alec R. Ellis (Brown, Son & Ferguson, 3*s.* 6*d.* net), an invaluable and indispensable guide. It gives all the up-to-date information on the canoeing possibilities of the British Isles, and will provide the canoeist with a comprehensive knowledge of this magnificent sport. For those who find the cost of a canoe prohibitive there is a chapter on the home-made boat, illustrated with diagrams and photographs which will greatly simplify the arduous task of constructing your own craft. The chapter on Canoe Camping contains some practical hints on what you should and should not do, and it also advises the best type of camping equipment and kit, and gives a tabulated list of the cost of necessities. Other chapters are devoted to the descriptions of lakes and rivers in the various districts of the British Isles, and the last two chapters deal with the Law of Waterways and General Information, the latter giving full particulars about the advantages available to members of the British Canoe Association. At the back of the book you will find maps of the North of England Waterways, Waterways of N.W. England, the Norfolk Broads, canoeing waters from the River Mersey to the Bristol Channel, Midland Waterways and Connections, Irish Waterways, South West Coast of Ireland, and the West Coast of Scotland.

* * * * *

The Bible Guide Book, by Mary Entwistle (Student Christian Movement Press, 6*s.* net), is a book for those whose imagination has found no satisfaction from the answers of religious teachers. The Bible is the most vividly interesting of all books, and many of us have tried to visualise the everyday life of Biblical characters. In this book Palestine is presented to us against the background of everyday life. The home, the market-place, school and synagogue are realistically portrayed, and the author describes the kind of houses the people lived in; the games the boys and girls played; and a thousand other things that will answer the questions to which you have been unable to gain a satisfactory answer. The illustrations and maps make these things clearer still. The book is of outstanding interest, and it is unique in its treatment. Much of the information it contains is from the author's own observation when visiting Palestine, and it therefore has the added attraction of being authentic. The valuable time chart of the Books of the Bible which is given at the end is also of absorbing interest, especially to those entrusted with religious teaching.

* * * * *

Model Railways. A practical handbook on the planning, building and operating of miniature railways, entitled "Railway Modelling in Miniature" (3*s.* 6*d.*), has just been published by Messrs. Percival Marshall & Co., Ltd. The author, Mr. Edward Beal, is described as "a real miniature-railway builder and owner, and a profound student of real railway practice in all its aspects". This description is amply borne out by the contents of his wonderfully instructive book. It deals especially with "OO" and "HO" gauges, and its whole object is to aid the railway enthusiast who, for reasons of restricted space, is unable to put down a lay-out in one of the larger gauges. There are chapters on the merits of the various "Scales", on Track and Lay-out Design, Modelling Railway Buildings, Building and Equipment Designs, Rolling Stock and Motive Power, and Scenery. Thus all aspects of model railways receive attention, and the merit of the work is greatly enhanced by the hundreds of fascinating dimensioned drawings, sketches from photographs, and actual photographs of miniature railways that make the meaning of the text doubly clear. Mr. Percival Marshall, C.I.Mech.E., contributes an interesting Foreword.

* * * * *

Bassett's Pic-Saw Competition. On page vii will be found the result of the above competition which was held at the Schoolboys' Exhibition, Imperial Institute, South Kensington. This competition was very successful and the large number of entries proves the immense popularity of Bassett's Liquorice Allsorts.

Good News for Amateur Film Enthusiasts! I have just heard that the Executive Committee of *Pax Films*, a voluntary organisation which sponsors and supports films likely to promote peace, have organised a competition and offer prizes for the two Amateur Films which have, in the opinion of a panel of independent adjudicators, a specific Peace appeal, and which would be of value to *Pax Films* in their endeavour to contribute towards international understanding. The prizes offered are a Silver Cup of the value of £10, and a Gold Medal for the runner-up.

The competition is open to all amateur cinematographers and Ciné clubs, and the length of the film and its treatment are left entirely to the discretion of the competitors. The entrance fee for each entry is 5*s*., and *Pax Films* reserve the right to make a copy of each of the winning films and to exhibit each of them as they see fit. If there are insufficient entries, the Silver Cup may not be awarded—subject to the approval of the independent adjudicators. In this case the Gold Medal alone will be awarded. *Pax Films* does not accept responsibility for any films submitted, though they undertake to take all possible precautions for films entered and in their possession. Any size of sub-standard film may be used, and allowances will be made for the comparative qualities of the various sizes. Treatment and appeal will be the primary considerations in the judging. A detailed criticism will be returned to all competitors, together with the film they have submitted.

The closing date for entries is Monday, June 1st, 1936, and the completed film, ready for projection, must be delivered to the office of *Pax Films*, 4, *Bouverie Street*, on or before October 1st, 1936.

* * * * *

I have spent many enjoyable hours with the amateurs, and some of their work, especially the nature studies and topical films, compares favourably with that of the professional. This is your opportunity to prove that a small group of amateurs can produce a film which will stand up to constructive criticism, and the theme is one which is dear to the heart of every Briton, for the maintenance of peace and the spirit of brotherhood is the ideal of the younger generation throughout the world.

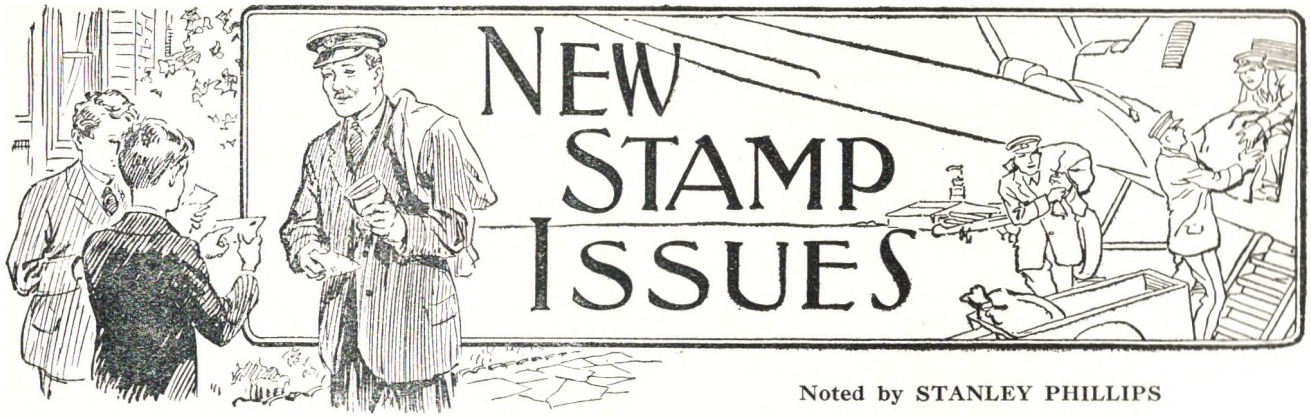
* * * * *

Physical Training: I welcome "Free Exercises for Physical Development," by S. L. Walker, M.A., M.B., and P. A. Goldsmith, on sale at The Scout Shop, 25, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1, and branches, price 2*s*. 6*d*. The authors—a doctor and a qualified physical educationist—are especially interested in the development of boys, and advocate "exercises which will give real freedom of movement of the muscles and joints in every part of the body". The book aims particularly at Balance and Control of the Whole Body, Correction of Minor Deformities, an Increase in Neatness and Gracefulness, and the Development of Contracted and Unused Muscles, by means of 118 graded exercises, all of which are fully illustrated with sketches. Hints on Rhythm, Breathing, Clothing and Hygiene, and Correct Carriage are also given, and it is obvious that by carefully following the course of exercises prescribed increased physical and mental alertness must result.

APPROVAL SHEETS OF STAMPS

OUR readers must clearly understand that if Sheets of Stamps are sent to them *unasked*, **they should at once be returned to the stamp dealer who sends them,** with cash for any stamps taken from the sheets. A careful note should also be made as to when and where the returned stamps were posted. If our readers *ask* the stamp dealer for an Approval Sheet **they make themselves responsible for the safe return of the stamps to the dealer, or for their cash value.** It is a great advantage to the Stamp Collector to have these sheets from which to fill in blanks in the Album, but **collectors must clearly recognise that they are responsible to the dealer for the cash value of the Stamps.**

Dealers offering Free Gifts **must not** send approvals with same **unless** it is stipulated that the Free Gift is given only to applicants for approvals, and where they ask for postage they MUST reply to the Reader within a reasonable time.



NEW STAMP ISSUES

Noted by STANLEY PHILLIPS

A FINE NIGERIAN SET. The British colony of Nigeria had a new series of stamps in preparation and nearly ready for issue when King George died and, as they were needed for use, they were put on sale in spite of the fact that they bore his portrait. There will probably be one or two similar cases from other parts of the Empire before the end of the year.

The values from ½*d.* to 1*s.* are all of upright shape, the stamps up to and including the 2*d.* having one type of frame design, and the others another pattern. The higher values up to the £1 (I wonder whether this value is really necessary for postal purposes?) are oblong and all have the same frame. The views differ on each stamp throughout the series.

A fitting introduction to the set is provided by the ½*d.* design, which shows a cargo boat loading the products of the colony for export. This is followed by the 1*d.*, which illustrates the cultivation of cocoa, and the 1½*d.*, which shows a tin "dredger". On the 2*d.* we are introduced to the timber industry. Two natives are shown felling a tree. They work on a platform built round the base of the tree, presumably to enable them to get clear of the spreading roots.

The 3*d.* does not deal with production or industry, but takes us into the wilds and shows us what a native fishing village looks like. On the 4*d.* another industry is shown, for it depicts a cotton ginnery, while the 1*s.* shows a fine herd of cattle. The intermediate value, the 6*d.*, bears a view of a very curious minaret, quite unlike the minarets to which we are accustomed in stamp views of mosques and other buildings in Turkey and Northern Africa.

The four high values have their centres in black. The 2*s.* 6*d.* gives a pretty view of the Victoria-Buea Road, a highway which is apparently flanked by palm trees of great height. On the 5*s.* there is a picture of a native girl and an oil palm. The 10*s.*, rather an expensive item for an engineering collection, illustrates a very fine bridge over the River Niger at Jebba, while the subject of the £1 stamp is entitled "canoe pulling", and introduces the type of canoe in use locally. The one shown has a heavy load and a crew of five. They are not "pulling" in the sense in which we use the word, but are paddling as one would expect with a canoe.

The portraits of King George on these stamps are not particularly good. The one on the high values is if anything clearer than the one on the vertical stamps, but I do not think any stamp designer has made the late King look his best.

Tin Dredger.

Cotton ginnery.

Argentina annexes the Falklands!

The Stamp that was not Withdrawn. Soon after it first appeared there were rumours that the 6-cent stamp of Ceylon, which has for design an aerial view of Colombo Harbour, had been withdrawn for strategic reasons. The absurdity of withdrawing a stamp of which some thousands were already in the hands of the public in order that it might not give information to a prospective enemy is obvious. If the design did convey any information, one specimen of the stamp would be sufficient for enemy purposes. Apparently those who spread the rumour had visions of enemy spies running round with specimens of the stamp hidden in the backs of their watches and using them as a kind of key to the fortifications, if any! Actually what happened was that a stamp was to have been issued which showed an aerial view of something which might have been useful to spies, but this stamp was never issued. The best stamp of the new Ceylon set is the 50-cent (not a dear one), which is the finest elephant stamp we have yet had.

An International Incident. The Argentine Republic has never recognised the British occupation of the Falkland Islands, though this has now been going on for over a hundred years, and when the islands issued their fine Centenary series in 1933, the Republic refused to recognise that postage had been paid on letters franked with the stamps and insisted on the addressees paying a fine.

Now the Argentine postal authorities have carried the "war" a stage farther, for in their latest series of stamps there is a design which shows a map of South America. On this map Argentina is coloured brown and *so are the Falkland Islands*! Questions have been asked in Parliament about it, and the British representative has been asked to point out to our friends in South America that the Falkland Islands are ours and are going to remain so, and that there is no use trying to make a fuss about it, even on a postage stamp.

Another attractive stamp in this set is one which bears the portrait of a prize bull which sold for an enormous sum some years ago.

Belgium's New Stamps. The Belgian lion makes a fresh appearance on some new low-value postage stamps for that country. The design is a much better one than any that have been issued for ordinary postal purposes in Belgium for some time past, though there have, of course, been many (too many!) attractive charity stamps.

A German Air Commemorative. A single 40-pf. stamp has been issued in Germany to commemorate the tenth birthday of the famous Lufthansa air company. The stamp is blue and the design is a striking one of a plane against a background of towering clouds.

A Flood of Forgeries. A large stock of forgeries has been dumped on the English market and many of these have found their way into cheap lots, so that readers should be on their guard. The following are some of the issues I have seen: *Albania*, 1913 Independence issue. *Armenia*, the quaint pictorials of 1923, with and without surcharge. *Belgium*, parcel post, 25-cent, green, 1887. *Crete*, the big stamps of 1905, showing a woman with a gun, or portrait of King of Greece. *Hayti*, 1904, Independence issue. *Honduras*, 1896, President Aria's portrait. *Lithuanian Occupation of Memel*, 1923, lighthouse, ship and anchor designs, with and without surcharge. *Paraguay*, air stamps, 1931, gun-boat design. *Poland*, 1925, air stamps. *Roumania*, charity stamps showing Queen weaving or wounded soldier. *Russia*, stamps of Northern, North-Western and Western Armies. *Serbia*, "Death Mask" issue, 1904. *Silesia (Upper)*, "C.G.H.S." overprint on German stamps. *Thessaly*, octagonal stamps.

New Belgian design.

Lufthansa stamp.

GREAT NEW (FOURTH) EDITION

OF

STANLEY GIBBONS' SIMPLIFIED STAMP CATALOGUE

Owing to the enormous demand for the third edition of our Simplified Stamp Catalogue, stocks have run out and we have had to print a new edition.

The new volume is the most up-to-date stamp catalogue in existence and includes all Empire stamps issued in King George's reign, all foreign issues to about mid-January, and Silver Jubilee prices up to time of going to press.

Even if you have the Third Edition, you will want the fine, new, up-to-date Fourth Edition.

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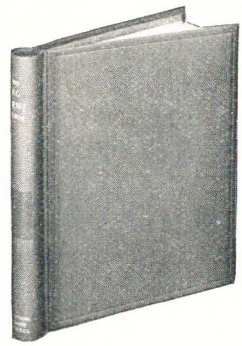

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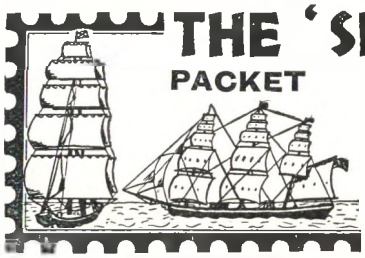

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SAMOA EXPRESS

We are giving free to all genuine applicants for approvals, a complete set of the very rare **SAMOA 'Express'** stamps unused. Face value alone amounts to 9s. 9d. and originals are catalogued at over £20 the set. This set is sent you absolutely free if you send for one of our famous 'Grey' booklets containing a selection of stamps on approval. Don't forget to include 2d. for post. Remember, our gift contains guaranteed genuine reprints from original plates. SPECIAL OFFERS: 5 Abyssinia 6d.; 25 Columbia 1s.; 5 Eritrea 6d.; 5 Fiume 4d.; 5 Iceland 3d.; 5 Macao 3d.; 5 Paraguay 3d.; 5 Philippines 3d.; 10 Vatican 1s. Post extra.

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200,000 STAMPS, what a pity we have no time to sort them through! We have purchased a huge accumulation, formed, for goodness knows what purpose, by an elderly collector. The collection dates back to the early days of Stamp Collecting. Even in the very brief glance we have allowed ourselves, we have noticed many high catalogue, some rarely seen nowadays. This is at a glance, we have no time at all to gauge the perforation, colour and other varieties which must abound. There is nothing to equal the pleasure of sorting a large accumulation such as this, so, as we are denied the pleasure ourselves, we are making it over to our customers. We have weighed the mixture into bags, and offer it just as it stands, at 6d. (there's a chance for you boys and girls), 2/9, 5/3, 10/3, and 25/- a bag, postage extra. There is both the chance of some pleasant finds (we ourselves have seen three stamps catalogued at over £4, while turning the mixture over, also some penny blacks and early Colonial Imperfs), and the certainty of some real philatelic enjoyment. We especially urge our own customers to take as big a bag as possible, as we should not like them to miss it, and there will be insufficient stock for repeat orders.

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SKYBIRDS AT THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE
THIRD ANNUAL SKYBIRD LEAGUE RALLY AND MODEL COMPETITION

The biggest event of the Skybird year bids well to be bigger and better than ever before. On Friday, April 17th, Skyleaguers will rally at the Imperial Institute, where the Jehangir Hall, University of London, has been reserved for the occasion.

Great efforts have been made to make this event an outstanding one. Once again the chair will be taken by our President, Sir Harry Brittain, and he will be supported on the platform by Air Commodore Chamier, Secretary-General of the Air League of the British Empire, and, among others, Mr. W. O. Manning, F.R.Ae.S., and, it is hoped, Lord Mottistone, one-time Under-Secretary of State for Air and the present Chairman of the Air League of the British Empire.

The Rally is timed to start at 3 p.m. sharp, and we strongly recommend Skyleaguers to make a special effort to come along on this day, which has been specially chosen at a time when the Easter holidays have commenced.

The full programme is not yet completed, but there is to be a talk by Air Commodore Chamier, and later, of course, the various trophies and prizes will be presented to the fortunate winners.

MISSING TITLES COMPETITION No. 1 RESULT

This novel competition attracted world-wide attention among our readers, entries being submitted from Chile, Uruguay, South Africa, China, India, Malaya, and—nearer home—France, Austria, Turkey, Spain, and, of course, the British Isles. Many overseas competitors figure in the prize-list, which follows :—

FIRST PRIZE of £3 for the NEATEST CORRECT COUPON :—
NORMAN E. R. VAUS, Station House, BELVEDERE, Kent.

SECOND PRIZE of £2 for second neatest correct coupon :—
RONALD HUNT, 37, Wordsworth Avenue, MANOR PARK, London, E.12.

THIRD PRIZE of £1 for third neatest correct coupon :—
HO GUAN HAI, 465, Tranquerah Road, Malacca, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

Correct coupons were also submitted by the following 70 competitors, to whom Consolation BOOK PRIZES have been awarded :—

J. W. Agar, Henley-in-Arden ; A. Aikman, Canada ; L. J. Baker, Greenford ; F. Barker, Bury St. Edmunds ; L. Basham, Newport (Essex) ; J. A. Beadon, Brixton ; P. C. Bergh, South Africa ; P. Boulton, Nottingham ; B. W. Boyd, Finchley ; H. Bruce, Canada ; E. Buckley, Plumstead ; T. Burns, London, S.E.1 ; S. Bush, Manor Park ; T. Cambourne, Malmesbury ; E. Chamberlain, Ramsey (Huntingdon) ; F. Cooper, Burnley ; E. Crabtree, Rochdale ; E. Crane, Warley ; G. H. Crosbie, Glasgow ; W. Davies, Chester ; K. Davis, Newark ; K. Dean, Louth ; D. Drew, Oxford ; W. Ellis, Montevideo, Uruguay ; F. W. Faulkner, N. Finchley ; D. Fletcher, Lossiemouth ; A. Gilbert, St. Neots ; R. Haslewood, Nottingham ; C. Hebenton, Uddingston ; A. Hooper, Colyton ; J. Hutchence, Frinton-on-Sea ; R. Greenbank, Canada ; M. James, Bath ; K. G. Jarrett, Brentwood ; J. A. Kidd, Berwick-on-Tweed ; H. Larmour, Cork ; E. Leach, Wallasey ; J. A. Lewin, Birmingham ; R. G. F. Lloyd, Sherborne ; R. Lockie, Bromsgrove ; H. Logan, Edinburgh ; R. E. McKerrow, Northwood ; P. Marsh, Stockport ; N. Martin, Dublin ; P. Marvin, Richmond ; H. Mason, Rawnsley ; A. E. Mosley, Dronfield ; G. Murray, Belfast ; F. Nice, Bury St. Edmunds ; D. Oliffe, Neasden ; D. Patterson, South Africa ; E. Pattinson, New Brancepeth ; J. Pearson, Banbury ; H. Pegum, Whitby (Wirral) ; K. Perkins, Basingstoke ; L. V. dos Remedios, Austria ; H. N. Rickard, Leytonstone ; C. Sargeaunt, Parkstone ; R. H. Sharman, Rochester ; G. Shepherd, Edinburgh ; J. Sinclair, Glasgow ; E. G. Smith, Chatham ; B. M. Smith, Marlborough ; A. W. Taylor, Sutton ; K. H. Toms, Merton Park ; A. Unwin, Mylor ; P. Waite, Harrogate ; M. A. Weiss, North Harrow ; V. Williams, Porthleven ; M. A. Wilson, Bushey Heath.

The remaining Consolation Prizes have been awarded to the senders of the 30 neatest two-error coupons :—

S. Abbott, London, N.W.3 ; P. Boniface, Portland ; K. Breach, Lowestoft ; A. T. Buchanan, Glasgow ; F. Bright, Aldershot ; R. J. Chatfield, St. Albans ; E. Clarke, Santiago, Chile ; D. Collinson, Stockport ; C. W. Eden, Ruddington ; P. K. Ellis, Consett ; H. Henson, Bletchley ; N. Hewitt, Malvern Link ; R. Hortin, Willesden ; H. Jamison, Portadown ; I. McCulloch, East Barnet ; I. McFadyen, Glasgow ; A. Paton, Shoeburyness ; M. Pocock, Oxford ; J. L. Randall, London, W.1 ; J. Scoble, Stokenham ; J. H. Smith, Gilmerton ; L. Strong, South Africa ; R. Taylor, Mill Hill ; A. Thain, Dundee ; D. J. Webb, Fulham ; J. B. Whinnerah, Carnforth ; K. E. White, Caterham ; E. J. Williams, Lechlade ; J. Wilson, Beauley ; D. Yates, Stoke-on-Trent.

THE CORRECT TITLES

1. "Something's About to Happen."
2. "A Story with No End."
3. "The Worst is Yet to Come."
4. "Dinner is Served."
5. "Having a Stirring Time."
6. "Someone's In for It!"

No further correspondence with regard to this competition may be entered into

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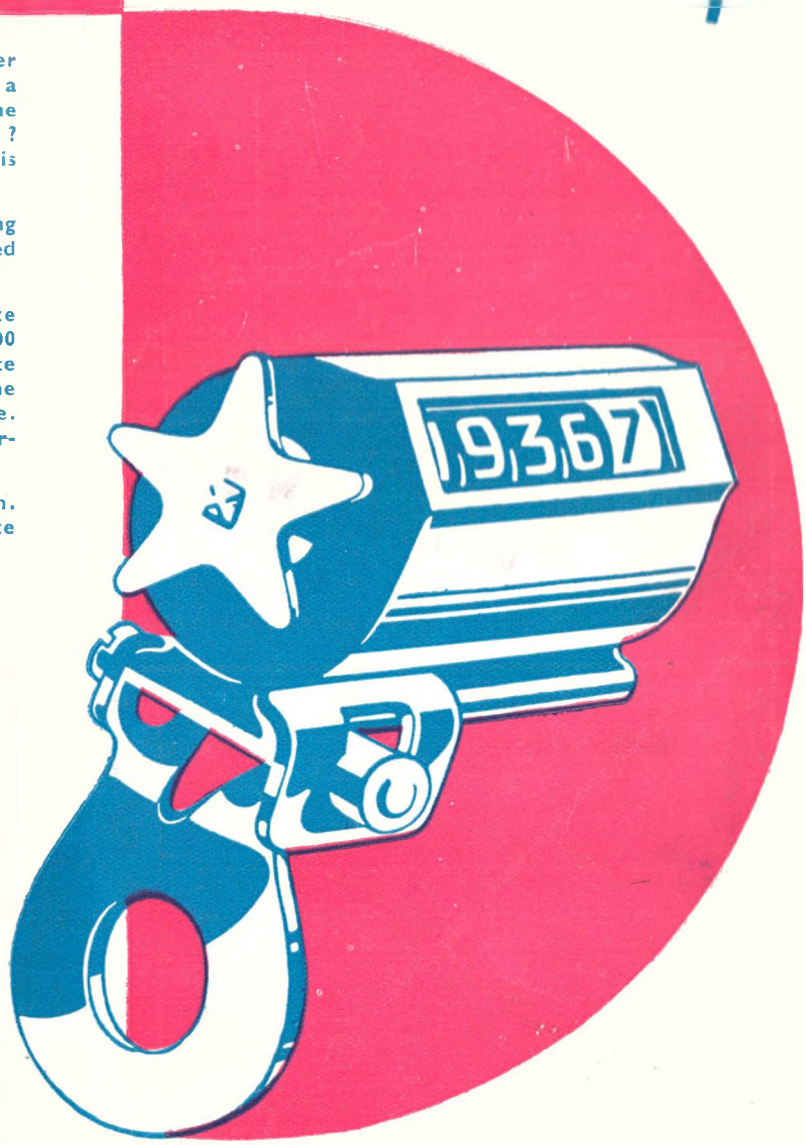

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