

By KEITH ORME

*Untold wealth lies in the
Valley of Tlantin—and
untold terror for those
that dare to trespass
there!*

THE FIRST CHAPTER Sinister Sounds!

ONE hundred miles south of Basoko. Fifty miles west of the turgid Congo at the point where it crosses the Equator. A week's trek from the last outpost of civilisation—and the temperature so high that it was not advisable to touch the rifle barrel with bare hands.

John Saunders caught the eye of his companion, Jerry Braimes, and twisted his glistening features into a wry grin.

"'Sno good, Jerry," he gasped; "must—rest a bit. This atmosphere's enough to poach a fellow!"

With that he eased the pack from his scantily-clad shoulder and sank limply to the moist ground, where he was presently joined by Jerry and the guide, a huge cheery negro whom they called Vulcan, who had been striding on a few yards in advance. This trio completed the party who were pushing their way into the steaming, low-lying centre of

uncharted Africa, the place of mysteries and sudden death, where Nature was still the undisputed monarch, and white man had not as yet attempted to foil the elements with his bridges and tunnels and irrigation systems.

John Saunders was carrying on the great quest in the pursuance of which his father and his father's father had lost their lives—the quest of the Ivory Ring. Sixty years before, Robert Saunders, investigating the ruins of the Temple of Tar-el-Kabir, on the Nile, discovered an inscription in hieroglyphics which told of a great treasure hoard, and which gave as the key to the treasure a ring carved in ivory, covered with ancient writing. But the ring was not to be found.

The old scientist made a copy of the inscription, and with the indomitable spirit that marked the true Briton, proceeded to search for the little circle of ivory which had been lost for thousands of years.

He traced it right up the Kagera into the

Victoria Nyanza Basin, whence it had been taken by the ancient priests; but there all trace of it seemed to be lost. When he died—mysteriously—his son, John Saunders' father, took up the search and was fortunate enough to discover that the descendants of the priests of the temple, having degenerated through the ages into savages of the weakest type, had been conquered by the Bantus and driven westward into the equatorial forests, taking with them the Ivory Ring along with the other few remaining relics of the ancient Egyptian civilisation.

John Saunders, accompanied by the one and only Jerry, had taken up the quest at the place where his father died—also mysteriously—near the Stanley Falls.

By good fortune they had fallen in with a tribe, who told a legend handed down by their forefathers.

Many years ago, said the legend, the tribe in its wanderings had come upon a race of strange light-skinned people in the jungle, and had promptly attempted to wipe them off the face of the earth.

They were more or less successful, so the legend had it, inasmuch as they managed to loot nearly everything, although quite half of the strange tribe escaped. John Saunders proved the story to be correct in the main, for in the witch-doctor's possession he actually found some ancient Egyptian relics—without a shadow of a doubt the same as were brought from the temple on the Nile by the priests thousands of years ago. He had inquired about the Ivory Ring, and his hopes had been raised and smashed again in five minutes.

Yes, they had had a yellow ring, made from the tusk of an elephant, about as wide across as half the span of a man's hand, and covered with strange charms; but it had been stolen one night from Mtedi, their previous witch-doctor, who had been trampled to death by a mighty elephant.

Saunders had excavated unsuccessfully for days at the place where Mtedi died, and decided that either the ring was lost for ever in the undergrowth, or had been picked up by a passing native before the body was discovered by the tribe. And so he found himself at a dead end.

Having nothing more tangible to work on, John Saunders decided to follow the very thin thread of a clue suggested in the ancient hieroglyphics handed down by his grandfather, and push still further westward.

And so the party eventually reached the place where they were resting in the furnace heat of the Congo, scarcely above sea-level. Vulcan, the negro, had now ceased to serve as a guide, since he knew no more of this part of the country than Saunders and Jerry; but he proved himself invaluable by his strength and stamina and his unfailing good humour, and was regarded by the white men as more a friend than a servant.

Saunders produced the much-fingered parchment from the leather pocket on his belt for the thousandth time, and read it half aloud:

"And thou, O searcher for the Sacred Ring, shalt be led by thy quest into a foul land where abound huge and awful creatures, where the heat is like that of a furnace, and the air is heavy with moisture. And there thou shalt find the Secret of the Tomb, in the heart of a traitor."

He pondered over the parchment for a while, and then spoke.

"It's that last bit that puzzles me, Jerry," he said. "This is the place they mean, from the description. It's hot and moist enough at any rate; but I can't for the life of me make out what's meant by that bit about finding the Ivory Ring in the heart of a traitor."

"Sounds like the melodramatic meanderings of some ancient Egyptian poet!" commented Jerry. "I fail to see the faintest glimmering of sanity in it, anyway."

"Well, only the future will show us, I suppose," said Saunders philosophically. "Ah, Vulcan, you're a pal! I'm dying for some tea."

The three adventurers settled down to the meal which the big negro had been preparing while they talked. This over, they turned in, leaving Vulcan to take the first watch, and slept like logs on the hot ground.

Three hours later Jerry was awakened by the negro, and took up his stand by the camp fire, rifle on the ready. Vulcan whispered to him before he stretched his great limbs on the ground.

All was silent for a few minutes ; the fire, in an occasional burst of flame, lit up the three recumbent forms of Saunders, Vulcan and Jerry, and—something else !

From the blackness, into the circle of the firelight, snakelike, without sound, slunk a

Silently the sinister figures slunk towards the three adventurers. Suddenly a knobkerrie whizzed through the air, followed by a dull thud, and Jerry Braimes, the sentry, went to the ground and lay still.



"Baas, dere am some ter'ble big animals movin' about in de bush, so keep yo' eyes peeled jest in case dey come too close !"

Jerry chuckled, and settled down for a three hours' vigil.

For an hour or more Jerry Braimes concentrated on the strange, sinister noises coming from the bush to the west, apparently a good distance away. There were deep reverberating grunts and high-pitched squeals, and occasionally the unmistakable sound of breaking timber as some enormous body forced its way through the trees.

He was pondering whether they were elephants or prehistoric animals, of which latter he had heard many vague rumours, but had always scorned the possibility of their existence, when something out of the velvety blackness of the night crashed with terrific force on his head. He toppled over sideways without a sound, and lay still.

lithe brown form, crouching, like an ape, with knuckles on the ground. It was followed by another, and yet another, until roughly twenty of them crouched silently round the three adventurers and watched. They were men, but very small in stature, and with long, greasy, black hair straggling over their eyes like skye-terriers.

Presently one of them glided forward, straightened up, and dealt the sleeping negro a fearful blow on his unprotected head with a long, slender knobkerrie.

Saunders, who always slept with one eye open, began to stir, although the only sound had been the crack of the club on Vulcan's skull. The weapon circled viciously, and the third of the trio joined his two friends in oblivion.

"By George! I say—has there been a blinkin' earthquake?"

Jerry muttered the words through a haze of semi-consciousness, and promptly faded away again. Half an hour later he recovered sufficiently to open his eyes and try—painfully—to focus them on objects round about him. After a while he was successful in making out the recumbent forms of Saunders and Vulcan, one on either side. They were still unconscious.

His eyes wandered past them, and fell on white stone walls. He closed them, and tried to tell himself that he was dreaming, but he could not convince himself, and when he opened his eyes again, the white walls still persisted.

His head was rapidly clearing, notwithstanding the awful throbbing pain in it, and gazing round, he found that they were in a small but lofty room, lit by means of several slits in the wall near the ceiling. It dawned on him that somehow or other they had been made captive by somebody, and his mind, groping blindly in the dulled recesses of his memory, at length recalled the camp fire and the crushing blow from the darkness.

For a long time he lay still with closed eyes, half-unconscious; then, feeling a little stronger, he tried to move and make an attempt to revive the other two, but found that he could not budge an inch. He was trussed up like a chicken from head to foot, as were also Saunders and the negro.

An hour later the others began to show signs of life, to Jerry's relief, and in a little while they were revived sufficiently to discuss the situation; although, naturally, they could do little but guess, for not one had known what hit him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Sentence of Death I

THE three adventurers lay there for what seemed an eternity before a small door was pushed cautiously open, and a lean, brown,

primitively-clad figure entered with bowls of some kind of slushy substance and a pitcher of water. He was followed by others, and the captives were raised into a sitting posture, and fed like children. No attempt was made to release their hands. Evidently their captors were taking no chances!

They suffered the ignominy of having the vile stuff fed to them in this manner only because they knew that their one chance of escape lay in keeping their strength up. Nevertheless, their blood boiled, and Vulcan strained at his bonds furiously in a vain effort to get at the little brown men, of whom he could have lifted one in each hand and crashed them together like eggs. But he had been well tied.

Saunders tried to converse with them, using nearly every language from the Nile to the Zambesi, but all to no avail; either they did not understand or they would not. The gabble they used among themselves was quite unintelligible.

Their captors left them, and for many more weary and painful hours they were alone. At length a party, armed with spears, came into the cell, and the captives' legs were released, and after much massaging to restore the circulation, they were led through passages and down long flights of stone steps, until they found themselves in a magnificent hall, at the farther end of which was a throne of sorts.

They were told to advance, and, on doing so, beheld on the throne a being as startling to look upon as he was different from the rest of the strange people who had captured them. He was of much bigger stature, and looked, to say the least of it, well nourished. His head, which was completely bald, was well developed and showed far greater intelligence than any they had seen so far in this strange place, and his wrinkled face contained altogether more strength of character. But it was his eyes which held the attention of the captives. They were set close together, and looked cunning and malicious beyond words, and strangest of all, they were of a distinct red colour.

Behind and on each side of the throne were files of warriors armed with spears and knobkerries.

The strange being was speaking. The words he used were quite without meaning to Jerry and Vulcan, but Saunders was listening intently. Presently the voice ceased, and Saunders replied haltingly in the same language, and then turned excitedly to Jerry.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "It is the language of the ancient Egyptians. He says we must give an explanation of our trespassing in the holy valley of Tlantín—whatever that might mean—what race we are of, and if there are any others of our party still outside the walls of the city."

"Tell the old oil merchant that we've as much right in Equatorial Africa as he!" exploded Jerry, whose temper was on a short fuse at the best of times. "Tell him we belong to a race of people who will blow his mouldy city off the face of the earth if he doesn't untie my wrists quickly!"

Saunders turned to the king—for such he seemed to be.

"We are of a race called the British," he said haltingly, "and we come in peace. We are searching for a certain thing which is of no value to any save ourselves, and we had no knowledge of your city until we found ourselves inside it, so that we cannot have come with hostile intentions. Moreover, I

Saunders, Jerry and Vulcan, their hands bound, were led before the ruler of the tribe, and never before had they seen such a startling person.



would demand an explanation of your assault upon us, and our capture."

"I do as I will with whomsoever trespasses in the holy valley of Tlantín," said the king impassively. "I have heard of your land, you white people, beyond the great barrier and the land of death, and I have heard of your mysteries and power. But see, you speak to the great Tu-Tlan, immortal and omnipotent, who has lived for ever, and to whom death cannot come. I, in my wisdom, know that I cannot release you, for should I do so you will hasten back to your people and tell of the wonderful city you have found, and of the gold and hard stones that you worship; and in a little while one will come who has a soft voice, and who will speak of strange gods, and when he is killed for blaspheming the gods my people worship, a

great army will come to avenge him. But that will only be an excuse, for their real motive will be to conquer the city and take the gold and hard stones which are their gods. Therefore, you must die."

Saunders translated the extraordinary speech.

"Well, I'm dashed!" exclaimed Jerry. "Tell the old pink-eyed Methuselah that if only he'll let me get hold of my four-fifty I'll blow a hole in him as big as the side of a house, an' then we'll see if he's immortal and omnipotent!"

The king's voice broke in.

"Tell your companion," he said to Saunders, "that no man may harbour thoughts of violence against the mighty Tu-Tlan and live. Though I know nought of your tongue, it is given to me to divine your thoughts, and whatever mercy I might have shown, now you shall surely die."

He went on to tell them how, when and where their end would come, and evidently enjoyed the telling, although if he anticipated a show of terror and pleadings for mercy, such as he was used to, he was disappointed.

"Thought reader, is he?" grunted Jerry, as Saunders translated. "Well, then, it's a wonder he doesn't blush. So we're to fight some kind of an animal in an arena outside the city walls, for the king's amusement, eh? Exciting, isn't it? I wonder where the Ivory Ring comes in. If it's to be found anywhere, I should imagine this would be the place."

Presently they were taken back to their cell, under heavy guard, and their arms released. Thereafter their food was passed through a narrow grid in the heavily bolted door, and they were free to walk about in the narrow confines of the cell.

Their rifles and ammunition, including Jerry's little automatic, had been left with Tu-Tlan. The probability was that the king had never seen firearms before, but no doubt he had associated death with the strange implements belonging to his captives. At the present moment he was probably examining them.

Days passed; long, wearisome days of broiling heat, and at length came the morning of the execution. They were escorted once

more to the throne, and saw that everything was in readiness for a journey. Tu-Tlan addressed Saunders from the throne.

"It grieves me that you have to die," he said, "but it must be, for reasons which you know. Nevertheless, you have one small chance. If you are able, through strength or strategy, to preserve your lives until nightfall, then, by the law of my city, you are entitled to live, albeit in strict captivity. Never yet has any man survived the arena, but I am impressed with your physique"—meaning Saunders—"and am favoured of the opinion that you will afford much amusement. I have discovered the secret of these weapons of yours, and when you have amused me enough, and I have seen the last of your capers, I will descend into the arena and hunt him yonder and the black man. See, I have had the weapons put into my sedan, and shall have them with me in the amphitheatre."

Having delivered himself of this callous speech, Tu-Tlan snapped out orders, and the journey to the arena was started.

The place where the three adventurers were to fight for their lives was an hour's march from the city, and was a natural amphitheatre at the end of a valley. High hills formed three sides of the arena, and the open side was barred by a tremendous wall of the same white stone as was used in the building of the city. There was one door set high up in the wall to one side, and approached by a broad flight of stone steps, and another, an enormous structure of logs, was set at ground level in the centre of the wall. Evidently this was through which the animals were driven when trapped in the valley.

The prisoners were taken into a dungeon-like place, which had a small barred door opening into the arena itself. Through this they looked, and seldom had they seen anything so awe-inspiring.

The arena was a huge circular flat-bottomed basin, hewn out of the rock, and from the floor, at intervals of about twenty yards, rose massive pillars of stone, some ten feet thick and fifteen feet high. The walls of the arena rose perpendicular to a height of ten to fifteen feet, and from the top upwards receded tier upon tier of coffee-coloured faces.

The whole of the city was assembled to watch the sport of the killing of the trespassers in the sacred valley ! At the farther end was Tu-Tlan and his bodyguard, seated nearest to the arena, that he might enjoy better the thrills of the fight.

Presently there was a signal from the king, and Saunders was seized by half a dozen warriors, his bonds were cut, and he was flung into the arena. Something clattered after him, and when he picked himself up he found it was a long bronze spear with a silvery-looking point, which, on closer examination, he found to be pure platinum. Truly there was great wealth in this valley of Tlantín !

Saunders had little time for conjecture. He stalked into the centre of the arena, feeling ridiculously puny, in spite of his splendid physique, under the concentrated gaze of the multitude above. He was there for these heathens' amusement, and the thought made him angry.

He turned to where Tu-Tlan sat in his gaily-decked stand, and bawled at him with all the strength of his lungs, regardless of the fact that the king could not hear a word of what he said, above the cumulative roar of the natives' voices, even had he been able to understand.

"You yellow-livered heathen ! " he roared. "Come down here and fight like a man, an' I'll give your subjects a bigger treat than they've had for years. I'll——"

Tu-Tlan raised his hand in a slow, significant gesture, and there was a sudden deathly silence, followed by a mighty roar as all eyes turned to a point behind the Englishman.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

At the Mercy of the Mammoth !

SAUNDERS swung round and faced the high wall from which he had entered the arena, and saw a great door being slowly raised. Through the growing space at the bottom he could see the shadowy form of some enormous animal moving about on the other side.

He gripped the spear until the knuckles of his hand shone white. Whatever it was, he was determined to give a good account of himself. He would give the people of Tlantín

something in the way of excitement that they would not forget in a hurry !

He saw Jerry's white face peering through the bars of the little door, and waved his hand. He watched the door, backing slowly away as the space widened. In a little while the great door was wide open, and from the black opening thundered the most gigantic beast Saunders had ever heard of. A mammoth !

It was a good three feet higher at the shoulder than the biggest bull elephant he had ever bagged, and its great curved tusks must each have weighed every ounce of a hundred pounds. Its ears, each measuring six feet across, were spread out in a great triangle on either side of its head, and its colossal trunk was curved high in the air, showing the pink of its open mouth. Unlike an elephant, it was thickly covered with long stringy hair, and altogether it was an unnerving spectacle as it charged with the speed of an express train straight down on the man standing in the centre of the arena.

Saunders was as cool as ice. He waited until the huge beast was almost on him ; then, when the breathless crowd above thought the fight was over before it had fairly begun, he sprang nimbly to one side, behind one of the stone pillars, and the huge bulk thundered past and slid to a standstill, the great toenails of its pile-driver-like feet striking sparks from the rock. The game had begun !

Saunders now saw the purpose of the stone pillars ; they were merely to make it more difficult for the animal to catch its victim, and so afford more amusement for the watcher. But for these no man could possibly last more than two minutes.

A deadly game of hide-and-seek. The brute spun round, screaming with anger, its trunk raised, trying to get the scent. Saunders knew it was hopeless. Dodge as he might, he knew that this fearful thing would wear him down and get him before long.

But something urged him to fight—to tantalise the beast, and keep it on the run. Accordingly, hardly knowing why he did it, the Britisher stood out in the open and faced the mammoth once more. Hardly able to believe its tiny, evil eyes, the monster paused for a moment, then, with a terrifying scream,

bore down again on the puny, tantalising thing before it.

Again Saunders leaped aside at the crucial moment, and again that fearful trunk flashed through the air a fraction of a second too late. In the few seconds that it took the mammoth to recover from the impetus of its rush, Saunders sprinted towards the other end of the arena, the king's end, and reached the shelter of another pillar just as the animal wheeled.

He balanced the platinum-tipped spear in his hand, and smiled whimsically. The king had a sense of humour, he thought. What earthly use would a thing like this be against such a monster, which must have a hide like armour-plating? Then it occurred to him that there was one soft spot, if he could hit it—the eye. He resolved to have a shot at it. He may as well die now as in an hour's time!

Once more he stepped out and saw, past the huge shape of the prehistoric beast, Jerry and Vulcan gazing through the little door. His hand waved a farewell, and then the mammoth charged.

But this time it changed its tactics. Instead of rushing blindly, as it had previously, it pulled up sharp when no more than fifteen feet from him, lowered its massive head, and advanced slowly, its great trunk stretched out in front, its wicked eyes gleaming cunningly.

The crowd above yelled. Saunders moved like lightning. Aiming for the right eye, he hurled the spear with every ounce of his great strength—and missed! As he threw, the monster raised its head in the act of crushing its puny antagonist with one sweep of its trunk, and the razor point of the spear sank deeply into the soft flesh under the base of the trunk, almost in the roof of its mouth.

Saunders sprang back as, with a deafening squeal, it ripped the spear from the wound with the tip of its trunk and whipped it to the floor with terrific force, crumpling it like a straw and trampling on it and squealing in a fearful rage.

The natives above were standing up and screaming their applause, and for the first time the maddened animal seemed to notice the audience and to forget the man in the arena. Lashing its injured trunk from side

to side in its fury, it wheeled two or three times, its inefficient eyes on the sea of seething humans above.

Suddenly something caught its eye—it was the brilliantly-decorated stand of Tu-Tlan and his bodyguard. The mammoth moved towards it, slowly at first, but with greater speed as the hazy brilliance of the king's decorated person took more definite shape in its eyes.

Tu-Tlan thought, reasonably enough, that the beast was still searching for Saunders, but not until it had passed the stone column behind which crouched the condemned man, and was thundering at full speed towards him, did the king suspect the truth, and then it was too late.

This was the largest beast the arena had ever contained, and they had not foreseen that it could reach a full twenty feet vertically with its trunk, when reared on its hind legs!

With a squeak of fright, the immortal and omnipotent one staggered to his feet, fumbling with one of Saunders' rifles, the mechanism of which he professed to have mastered, but he could do nothing. He was in the act of clumsily raising it when the monster crashed up to the wall directly beneath, and with one sweep of its mighty trunk, cleared the royal stand of its occupants, flinging them far into the arena.

Seizing the screaming Tu-Tlan round the middle, it hurled him high into the air, and caught him as he came down. Caught him fair and square on the point of one of the great tusks.

Then began the stampede proper. In the arena the frenzied animal heaved and threw its tremendous bulk here and there amongst the warriors it had knocked down, having thrown the king from its tusk with terrific force. Above, the natives panicked in their wild rush to get away from the demon that had killed their king, and altogether pandemonium reigned.

Meanwhile, Saunders watched his chance. His objective was the rifle which had fallen into the arena when Tu-Tlan was seized. Presently the mammoth, having satisfied itself that there was not an ounce of living matter near it, began trotting slowly round the walls, apparently searching for a way out. The

Englishman darted from behind the pillar, and reached the rifle—but not a second too soon !

The beast either heard or saw him, for it wheeled and charged back again. Dropping to his knee, Saunders took a lightning aim for the eye—this time with a weapon he knew. The report rang out, and the mammoth stopped dead. Another shot, and another, and slowly, majestically, the colossal brute sagged to its knees, rested its trunk on the floor, gave one great convulsive shudder, and rolled on to its side, dead.

Saunders felt pretty groggy, for the ordeal had been no light one; but with an effort he pulled himself together and hurried over to the little door in the wall.

In a few minutes he was shaking hands with Jerry Braimes, while Vulcan could scarcely contain himself in his jubilation. They made their way back to the dead mammoth, between the great pillars hewn out of the rock, which had stood there for centuries, and which bore dark, ominous stains—grim and silent evidence of countless fearful tussles with Death through the ages.

There was little chance of any of the Tlan-tinians returning to disturb the trio; they were probably in the city by now, with the gates bolted and double-bolted.

Saunders viewed the dead mammoth with an appreciative eye, and was suggesting that they set to work to take off the skin immediately, as he must at all costs preserve it for the British Museum, when Vulcan, who had been surveying the great tusks with an awed expression on his ebony face, suddenly bent down and peered closely at one of them.



Aiming for the right eye, Saunders hurled the spear with all his strength. The mammoth raised its head to crush him, and the spear sank deeply into the base of the trunk.

"Baas !" he called presently. "Dere am something funny about disyer tooth !"

Jerry, who was nearest, inspected the place pointed out by Vulcan, and saw a distinct mark encircling the blood-stained tusk.

"I say, Saunders, what do you make of this ?" he called, looking up. "Dashed strange, I call it."

Saunders came round and looked closely at

the mark that Jerry excitedly pointed out. "Queer," he muttered. "Looks as though something had been tied tightly round there at some time. Anyway, I don't suppose it will have damaged the ivory at all—"

Suddenly he stopped, and his face lit up. Swooping down, he studied the tusk closely, measuring the width of the mark with his finger and thumb. Then he straightened up, and without so much as a word, dashed over to the place where lay the mangled remains of Tu-Tlan and his bodyguard. Bending over the almost unrecognisable corpse of the king, he inspected the awful wound made by the mammoth's tusk in the centre of the chest.

Suddenly Jerry and Vulcan, by the mammoth, were startled by a great whoop from Saunders and, turning, they saw him dancing like a madman, brandishing a blood-stained circular object above his head.

"It's the Ivory Ring!" he yelled. "At last—the Ivory Ring!"

"By gad, in the heart of a traitor!" exclaimed Jerry hysterically. "Then the prophecy was true!"

"And this is the beast which gored Mtedi, the witch-doctor, years ago," added Saunders. "It must have caught the ring on its tusk, and there it remained, tightly wedged, until it was forced off between the ribs of that fat rascal, Tu-Tlan!"

The finding of the Ivory Ring ended at last the quest that had been started by Saunders' grandfather many years ago. For the carvings on the ring laid open the way to the great treasure hoard, which eventually Saunders and his companions discovered after a long search.

They went back to England with the intention of returning to explore further the Valley of Tlantín, but in the excitement of hunting for the treasure, neither Saunders nor Jerry Braimes kept a record of the direction in which Tlantín lay. The two adventurers returned after six months in the hope of remembering the route and finding the city again, but they were unsuccessful. Tlantín remained a hidden city, but no longer one of terror.

THE END

Sea-Bed Treasure-Hunters!

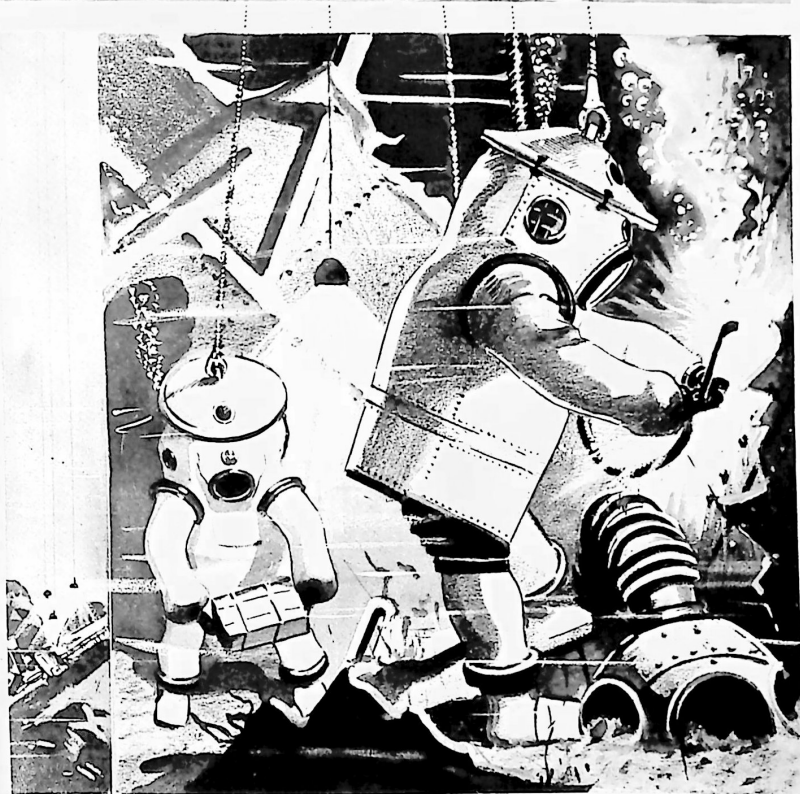
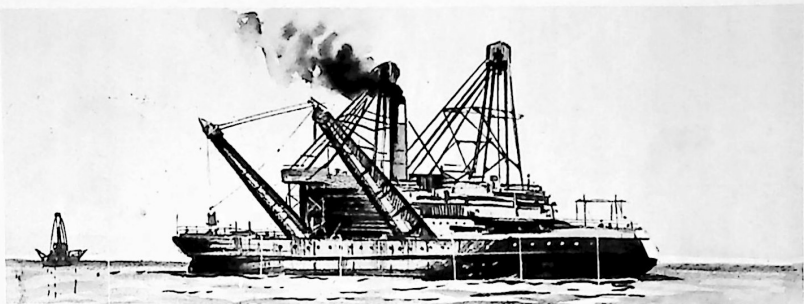
IF a native diver suddenly came face to face on the sea-bed with a diver equipped in the manner shown in the plate opposite, he—the native diver—would no doubt bolt to the surface in terror. For the up-to-the-minute diver is like nothing on earth or in the sea. In that enormous armour-plated diving dress, there is nothing whatever to be seen of him. He is bolted and screwed-up inside it completely.

These "self-contained" diving suits enable the man inside to go treasure-hunting 300 feet below the surface, which is the deepest that divers have ever been. Inside the massive head-covering of the modern diver are flasks of oxygen, the supply from which he is able to regulate by means of valves. There are thick plate-glass "windows" at the front and sides, enabling him to get as clear a vision as the depth of dusky water allows. Inside the great helmet also is a telephone, so that he can talk easily with the ship up above from which he is conducting operations.

He is connected to the ship by a steel rope, and when he wants to go down or come up a powerful winch aboard ship sees to that operation. At the ends of the diving suit arms are very ingenious pincers which are operated from inside and so enable the diver to lift and handle objects with ease.

The use of such a marvellous diving suit was practically demonstrated during the salvaging of a sunken treasure-ship, the *Egypt*, which went down off Ushant in 1922 and for years remained completely beyond the reach of any human beings.

But equipped with these suits, divers located the wreck and started to get at the treasure. It was extremely dark down there, so powerful electric lamps were lowered. The wreck had gradually sunk deeper and deeper in the grey slime of the sea-bed, and immense sucking-tubes had to be let down to suck the covering mud away. Then, with the aid of oxy-acetylene apparatus, the divers cut great holes in the vessel—and at long last the immense treasure was revealed.



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Facing page 112

SEA-BED TREASURE-HUNTERS !