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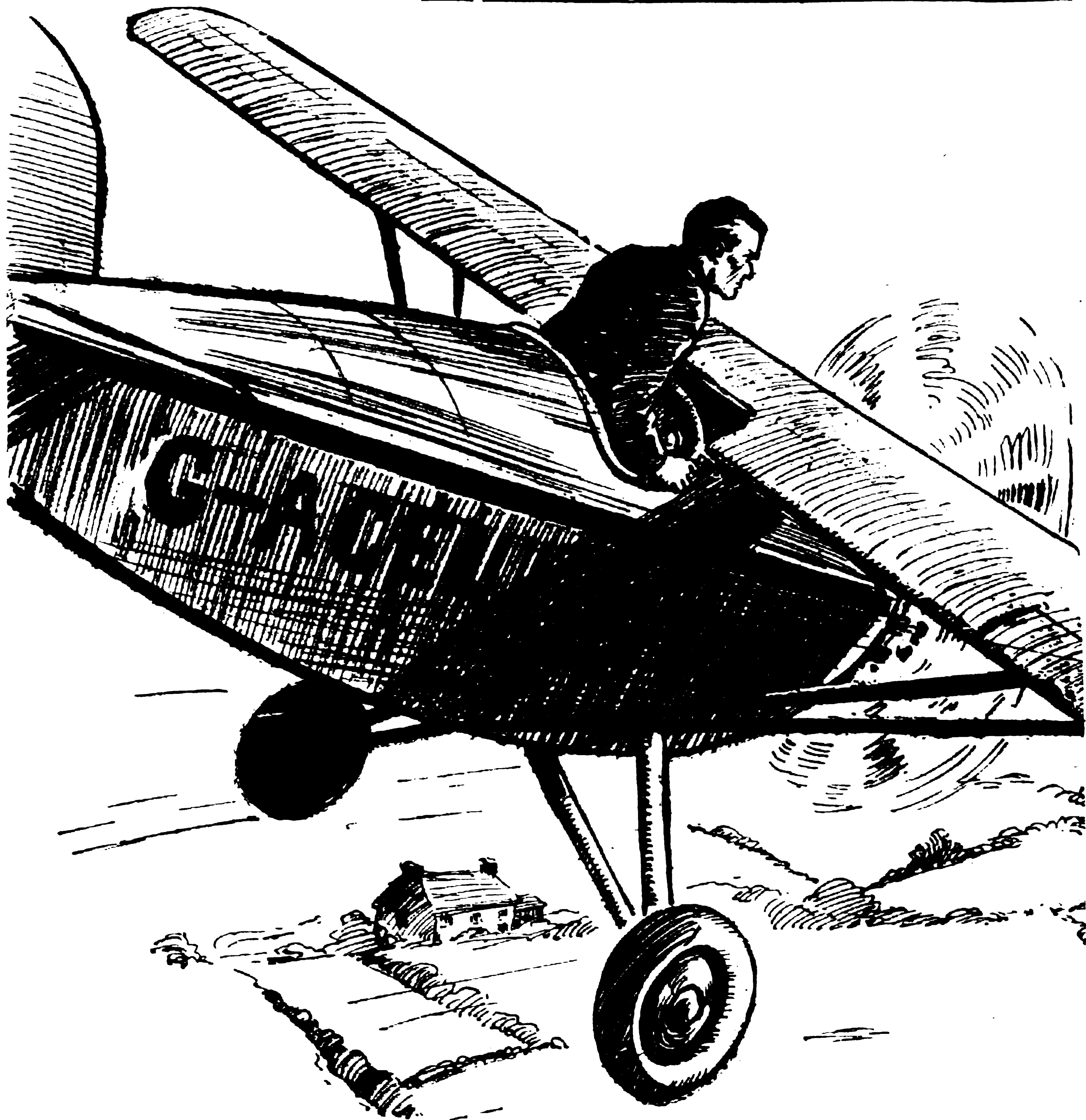
THE NELSON LEE

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ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE!



ON HIS MAJESTY'S

CHAPTER 1.

A Fresh Move!

LOCKWOOD BECK, alias the Shadow, sat in the sitting-room in his house at Lambeth Terrace, with the Scorpion, his chief lieutenant, opposite him.

"It is true that you and I are safe," growled the Scorpion, "but the Abbeydale scheme has been knocked on the head by that cursed Nelson Lee. For nearly six months we've been working and plotting and risking our lives, and now it all ends in smoke! It's enough to make a chap turn

honest. We shall never have another chance of bringing off such a glorious scoop."

"We have the chance now," said Lockwood Beck coolly. "In fact, we've an opportunity of making a much bigger haul of money than we should ever have made out of the Abbeydale scheme."

The Scorpion stared at him in incredulous amazement.

"You've got a new idea?" he asked.

Lockwood Beck nodded, and blew out a filmy cloud of smoke.

"The greatest idea I've ever struck," he drawled. "Listen. The other evening I was at a meeting of scientists at the Ront-

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Who is "The Shadow," mystery man and master-crook ? Once again Nelson Lee meets this elusive and daring figure of the Underworld in this Powerful Complete Story !



SERVICE!

gen Society's room when Lord Sydney, who, as you know, is the First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir Edward Armstrong, a consulting engineer, often called into advise the Government, came to me to ask my advice. I was taken to a private room and saw an amazing thing. There was a very large tank of water in this room, and in the water was what looked like a model of a submarine. A young inventor was there with his apparatus. The inventor's name was Richard Douglas, and the famous electrical engineer, Jack Langley, is financing the venture.

"On a table at the far end of the room was a wireless transmitting set, built for demonstration purposes, of course. From that table Douglas controlled the model submarine in the tank. He made it go ahead, astern, and turn, dive, move about below the surface at any depth he fancied, and even discharge torpedoes. I was asked to view the apparatus and say what I thought. I was enthusiastic over the whole idea. It certainly was wonderful.

"I was given to understand that Douglas has a secret workshop and dock down at Dead Man's Gap. He has a special armour-plated launch which tows the wireless submarine out to sea. The submarine is then sent away from the parent launch and can carry out any desired manœuvres, controlled all the time by wireless. Douglas' workshops are carefully guarded by sentries, and all that sort of thing. Lord Sydney and Sir Edward are going down privately to see the real thing. The British Government is seriously considering buying the invention."

"But what has all this to do with us?" queried the Scorpion.

"Why, simply this. I intend to steal the submarine and the plans," said Lockwood Beck calmly.

"But what for? What'll you do with it when you've stolen it?"

"Offer it to an interested foreign Government. In fact, I have already been making inquiries, and I can say that a certain Government, owing to the unsettled state of South America, desire to improve their navy, and would give half a million, probably more, for the invention. Isn't that worth running risks for?"

"Rather!" exclaimed the Scorpion. "But didn't you say that the workshops and private docks are guarded by sentries?"

"Yes—and armed sentries, too. But I have my plans. On the seventeenth of next month Lord Sydney and Sir Edward Armstrong are going to motor over from Newhaven to Dead Man's Gap in order to examine the vessel and inspect the plans. They are going at night in secret. Sir Edward will be driving the car. They'll arrive at the Gap about half-past eleven, and they'll be alone."

"I explored the neighbourhood of Dead Man's Gap very thoroughly on Sunday afternoon and evening. There's an empty house standing in a lonely situation by the side of the road, about three-quarters of a mile from the Gap. I have written to the landlord to-day—under an assumed name, of course—and I've taken this house for three months. On the morning of the seventeenth you and I will proceed to this house and take up our quarters there. At night we shall lie in wait for Lord Sydney and Sir Edward. We shall stun them and carry them into the house. We shall take possession of their clothes, and you will then disguise yourself as Lord Sydney, while I shall become Sir Edward."

"We shall then proceed to Dead Man's Gap, where Jack Langley and Dick Douglas will be awaiting our arrival. They will take us to the shed, and while they are showing us the wireless submarine, we shall knock them on the head, collar the boat, the launch, and the plans, and make our escape. There is no need for you to worry about the further details. I have gone into the matter thoroughly, and you simply have to do as I direct, and we'll pull the thing off and get clean away from Dead Man's Gap."

"And what then?" asked the Scorpion. "Where do we go to then?"

By way of reply Lockwood Beck pulled out a newspaper cutting.

"I cut this from yesterday's 'Times,' he said. "Read it."

The Scorpion read it. It was an advertisement of an island for sale—a small, uninhabited, rocky islet forming one of the Channel Islands, and lying in the Race between Alderney and the coast of France. The owner was a Frenchman named Jules Dupont, and the name of the island was La Tosca.

"Dupont," explained Lockwood Beck. "Is a French inventor who thought he had invented the finest submarine in the world. He purchased the island of La Tosca some years ago, and erected the necessary plant for building his vessel. But the invention proved a dead failure, and Dupont was ruined. All his machinery has been sold to defray his debts, but most of the buildings and sheds are intact, and now the island is for sale."

The Scorpion chuckled and rubbed his hands.

"What luck!" he exclaimed.

"Isn't it?" said Lockwood Beck. "Isn't it enough to make us believe that we are fated to succeed? We want some place in which to hide the submarine and the launch until we have time to communicate with the representative of this foreign government, Senor Quelletan, who is now in Paris; and here's an uninhabited island, with every accommodation for a submarine, not too far from Dead Man's Gap, and almost within a stone's throw of the French coast! It's the biggest slice of luck I've ever struck, and we're certain to succeed."

CHAPTER 2.

An Easy Triumph!

IT was night, and at the door of a lonely house on the road from Newhaven to Dead Man's Gap two men stood watching and waiting. The upper half of each man's face was concealed by a black crêpe mask. At their feet were cords all ready for binding something—or someone. One of the men was the Shadow, and the other was the Scorpion. They were waiting for Lord Sydney and Sir Edward Armstrong.

"Eleven o'clock," said Lockwood Beck, glancing at his watch. "I think I might venture to indulge in a cigarette. All our preparations are now complete, and they won't be here for another half-hour yet."

He pulled out his cigarette case, but even as he did so he started and caught his breath.

"Listen!" he whispered, holding up a warning finger. "Is that a car?"

He glided into the middle of the road and glanced in the direction of Newhaven.

The night was dark and starless. No sign of life was anywhere to be seen. But above the sighing of the wind as it rustled through the branches of the trees his quick ears caught the low throb of a motor.

A few moment later two lights suddenly flashed into view round a turn in the road about half a mile away.

"Here they come—half an hour before their time!" whispered Lockwood Beck, thrusting the cigarette case into his pocket and gliding back to his confederate. "It's lucky we're ready for them. Remember, everything depends on stunning them as quickly and as quietly as possible. There must be no firing on any consideration whatever, and no murder, if it can possibly be avoided."

"I'm ready," said the Scorpion, crouching under the dark shadow of the tall hedge.

Lockwood Beck went to the middle of the road and cast himself down, face downwards, with arms stretched out, while his revolver lay about a foot from his outstretched right hand. At first glance it looked as if someone had been killed in that lonely lane.

The car came on at a fair pace, the big headlights illuminating the widening road. The scene was peaceful enough until the glaring lamps settled on that outstretched figure in the middle of the road, then there was a startled exclamation and the hasty application of brakes.

It was a very old trick, but Sir Edward Armstrong, who was at the wheel of the powerful two-seater, and his companion, Lord Sydney, gave no thought to that side of the incident. It looked like dirty work—a crime—and as there was no room for the car to go round the motionless figure, they had to stop.

"It's murder, by the look of it!" gasped Lord Sydney, as he alighted.

"Or suicide," added Sir Edward tersely. "But he might have chosen a less inconvenient spot."

Lord Sydney approached the spot and picked up the revolver. Lockwood Beck had not expected that, but he made no move. His lordship carried the weapon to the light of the headlamp and examined it.

"No shot has been fired," he announced. "It's murder, I fancy."

Replacing the revolver as near as he could on the spot from which he had taken it, he went to the motionless figure and tried to raise the heavy head.

Then, with amazing celerity, Lockwood Beck sprang up and drove his fist with tremendous force into his lordship's face, striking him between the eyes so violently that he dropped like a log, unconscious.

There was a cry of rage from the car, and Sir Edward sprang to the ground, but from under the hedge came the Scorpion, in one bound. His clubbed revolver was in his hand, and he struck once, and stretched the baronet senseless on the ground.

"All right?" hissed the Shadow, peering through the darkness.

"Yes. He won't wake up for a long time. And you?"

"I've got my man. Into the house with them, quick!" said Lockwood Beck. "I'll pull the car into the side of the road."

He manipulated the car with ease, and having drawn it into the hedge, he rejoined the Scorpion and helped him to carry the two senseless men into the house and disrobe them.

The whole thing was carried out speedily, and with equal speed the two confederates arrayed themselves in their victim's clothes. Lord Sydney and Sir Edward were then securely bound and gagged, and carried into one of the rooms upstairs.

Then came the most difficult part of the two arch-schemers' task—to disguise themselves as the man they wished to impersonate. It was a task which any ordinary man would inevitably have bungled. But Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion were not ordinary men. The Shadow was notorious for his amazing skill in the art of disguise, and the Scorpion was but little inferior to his chief in this respect.

Needless to say, they had provided themselves with the necessary materials before leaving London, and with the aid of these materials and with their victims before them as copies, they speedily and skilfully transformed themselves into very passable imitations of Sir Edward and Lord Sydney.

"Time's getting on," said Beck. "We must start for the Gap."

He extinguished the lights and led the way downstairs. The Scorpion locked the door and pocketed the key, while Lockwood Beck got the car ready. A moment later the two men had taken their seats, Lockwood Beck driving, and were soon speeding off down the road in the direction of Dead Man's Gap.

And almost before they were out of sight of the house, two figures came swinging down the road from the direction of Newhaven. One of the figures was that of a man, and the other was that of a youngster. It was Nelson Lee and Nipper!

CHAPTER 3.

Dead Man's Gap!

WHEN one sailed into Dead Man's Gap from the sea, one passed through a deep but narrow entrance between two low, well wooded cliffs. These cliffs, however, rapidly sloped downwards on their land side, so that by the time one reached the end of the cove the shore was only a foot or two above high-water mark.

A little river—or, more accurately, a big stream—emptied itself into the cove, and close beside the mouth of this stream, on the very edge of the creek, stood a large wooden shed with a corrugated iron roof. Adjacent to the shed were an engine house,

a blacksmith's forge, and several smaller buildings. A little farther inland was a row of workmen's cottages, built of wood; and farther inland still, fronting the road which led from Newhaven to Dead Man's Gap, stood a gloomy-looking, red-brick house.

In one of the rooms of this house, at a quarter to twelve on the night when the Shadow carried out his nefarious scheme, two men were alternately glancing at their watches and trying to keep up a pretence of conversation. On the table was a bulky packet of papers tied with red tape. On each man's face was a feverish look of impatience, eagerness and suppressed excitement.

The papers on the table were the plans of the Dragonfly, the electric launch, and of the wireless submarine, which, in the words of Sir Edward Armstrong, were destined to revolutionise the naval warfare of the future.

One of the men was Dick Douglas, the clever young inventor who had planned and built this marvellous submarine. The other was Jack Langley, the famous electrical engineer, who had lent Dick Douglas the money to lease this red brick house and grounds, to erect the sheds and workshops and cottages, and to build and equip the launch and the submarine.

And they were waiting for Sir Edward Armstrong, the well-known expert, and Lord Sydney, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who had promised to come to Dead Man's Gap on this particular night in order to inspect the submarine with a view to its ultimate purchase by the British Government.

"They ought to have been here before now," said Jack Langley, glancing at his watch for the fiftieth time. "I hope nothing has occurred to prevent them coming. Sir Edward said they would be here about half-past eleven, and it's a quarter to twelve now."

Suddenly he paused, and at that moment the sound of a car was heard on the road outside.

"Here they are!" he cried, rushing to the window and drawing aside the blind. "Come along!"

Dick snatched up the plans of the submarine and followed Jack to the front door. By that time the car had pulled up, and the two men had alighted. One of them was Lockwood Beck, the Shadow, and the other was the Scorpion. But so perfectly were the scoundrels disguised, neither Jack nor Dick ever doubted for a single moment but that Lockwood Beck was Sir Edward Armstrong, and the Scorpion was Lord Sydney.

"Good-evening, Mr. Langley; good-evening, Mr. Douglas," said Lockwood Beck, shaking the two chums warmly by the hand. "Permit me to present you to Lord Sydney. But Mr. Douglas has met his lordship before, at the rooms of the Rontgen Society."

"Come inside," said Jack, waving his hand towards the front door.

"Into the house?" asked Lockwood Beck, who was anxious not to expose his disguise to the light before he was absolutely compelled.

"Yes," said Jack. "I presume you'll want to look at the plans of the boat before you go down to the shed?"

"Can't we examine the plans in the shed?"

"Certainly, if you wish. But I've had some supper laid in the dining-room. I thought you'd be hungry after your drive."

"Business first, and pleasure afterwards," said Lockwood Beck, with a light laugh. "What do you say, my lord?"

"I agree with you," said the Scorpion. "I'm consumed with impatience to see the original of the wonderful model I saw at the Rontgen Society, so that if Mr. Langley has no objection I should very much prefer to go to the shed now and return to the house later."

"Have you got the plans with you?" asked Jack, turning to Dick.

"Oh, yes!" replied Dick. "But what about the key of the shed?"

"I have that," Jack reassured him.

"Then lead the way."

The four men rounded the end of the house and passed through a wicket-gate, leading into a small plantation. They passed several sentries before they eventually arrived at the shed.

This shed was built on the very edge of the creek. As a matter of fact, it really projected over the edge, one end resting on the land and the main portion of the building resting on massive concrete foundations rising out of the ocean bed. There was a big wooden door at that end of the shed which fronted the land, and at the opposite end were the water-tight dock gates through which the submarine and the launch entered and left. At high tide the sea was level with the floor of the shed, and even when the tide was out there was always a sufficient depth of water at the dock gates to float the vessels.

As this was the place where the submarine was housed, the greatest precautions had been taken to prevent any outsider gaining a glimpse of the interior of the shed. The only windows were in the roof, and every night, from sunset to sunrise, an armed sentry patrolled in front of the door and along two narrow platforms at each side of the shed.

Having answered the sentry's challenge, Jack unlocked the door and led his three companions into the dark, deserted shed. After locking and bolting the door on the inside, he turned on an electric switch, and in the twinkling of an eye the shed was flooded with the dazzling light of a powerful arc lamp which hung suspended from the roof.

"Now, Dick, this is your show!" he said, with a good-natured laugh. "Lead the way!"

Swelling with pride, Dick piloted his three companions through a perfect maze of

machinery and pulley ropes, and finally came to a halt on the edge of a miniature dry dock, which practically monopolised the whole of the floor space at the far end of the shed.

Standing upright in this dock, supported by guy ropes, was the little submarine and its parent craft, the weird electric launch. Dick began his explanations. The launch was so constructed that the crew, which need only consist of one man to navigate, and one to control the wireless apparatus, were enclosed in a steel compartment, and thus sheltered from the fire of the enemy. Only a direct hit from a shell could damage them, and as the craft was so small that was difficult to accomplish.

The wireless submarine was lashed to the side of the powerful and speedy launch, which would, when required, dart out of the creek to the open sea at an amazing speed, taking its submarine with it. Having reached the desired spot, the submarine would be set adrift, and from thence its movements would be controlled by the man aboard the launch, who could cause the submarine to speed this way and that, or dive, discharge its torpedoes at any object and in any direction, finally returning to the side of the launch, to be lashed to the side once more and whisked back to harbour.

In this way, Dick explained—with several of such launches and submarines—a torpedo attack could be made on an enemy fleet without the human being controlling them being actually within the danger zone of the enemy's fire.

He went into figures, knots, distances, and many complicated technical matters.

"Mr. Douglas has a perfect genius for making things clear, hasn't he, my lord?" asked Lockwood Beck, turning to the Scorpion.

"He has," agreed the latter. "After listening to his explanations I really believe I could control that submarine myself."

"I'm sure you could," said Dick enthusiastically. "It is my boast that a couple of intelligent schoolboys, with half an hour's tuition, could navigate the Dragonfly and control the submarine with perfect ease. They couldn't put her through all her most complicated evolutions, of course, but they could make her dive and rise, and they could send her through the water in any direction they chose."

"And your boast is justified," said Lockwood Beck. "The manner in which you have reduced everything to its simplest possible form, whilst still retaining the highest degree of efficiency, is little short of miraculous. As I said before, there is no doubt whatever that your invention is destined to revolutionise the naval warfare of the future. By the way, would you mind showing us how you float the vessel?"

"Certainly," said Dick.

He escorted them to the edge of the dock.

"See this lever?" he said. "Well, you pull this lever—that's all. The moment you pull the lever the dock gates begin to open, and the sea begins to enter the dock. As the gates gradually open wider, the sea rushes to flow in in greater volume, and in five minutes' time the dock is full and the vessel is ready to start."

"Wonderful!" said Lockwood Beck. "Now, suppose that Lord Sydney and I were aboard the launch at the present moment, and the dock gates were open, do you think we could manage to navigate her, with the wireless submarine lashed to her side?"

"You're not thinking of trying, I hope?" said Dick, with a laugh.

"Oh dear no!" said Lockwood Beck. "I merely asked the question out of curiosity."

"Well, as a matter of fact, at this identical moment the wireless submarine is not actually lashed to the side of the launch. Still, I have no doubt you could do it, as the launch is charged and ready to take to the sea at any moment."

"And how far would she travel before her batteries gave out?"

"At her highest speed, about fifty miles. At her lowest speed, about two hundred."

Lockwood Beck glanced at the Scorpion. The latter gave an almost imperceptible nod.

Then, with the swiftness of a lightning flash, the Shadow whipped out a loaded cane and struck Dick Douglas a brutal blow between the eyes which felled him like an ox. At the same instant the Scorpion whipped out a similar weapon and sprang at Jack. His blow was not so well directed as Lockwood Beck's, but it brought Jack to his knees, and before he could scramble to his feet, before he could raise the alarm, the Scorpion dealt him a second blow that stretched him senseless on the ground.

"So far, so good!" said Lockwood Beck calmly. "Now for the plans, then for the lever!"

He thrust his hand into Dick's pocket and pulled out the plans of the submarine. He transferred them to his own pocket; then he pulled the lever.

The ponderous gates swung slowly open, and water began to pour into the dock. By the time the two confederates had cast off all the mooring ropes but one, the launch and the wireless submarine were afloat.

"Better get aboard and see to lashing the submarine to the launch," said Lockwood Beck. "In two more minutes the dock will be full, and—"

He broke off with a gasp of alarm, for at that moment the shed resounded with a thunderous knocking on the big wooden door.

"Langley—Langley, open the door at once!" cried a well-known voice.

"Nelson Lee!" gasped Lockwood Beck, turning deathly pale. "Quick—on board—before they batter the door down!"

The knocking and the summons were repeated with even greater insistence than before. But the two men made no reply. Quivering with excitement, they crossed the narrow plank which stretched from the edge of the dock to the open hatchway on the top of the closed-in launch.

"Only a minute, now," said Lockwood Beck, as he threw the plank ashore and proceeded to unfasten the last of the ropes by which the launch was moored. "You go down below and get the motors going. There'll be no time to lash the wireless submarine alongside, so we shall have to tow her astern. I'll make the tow rope fast."

The Scorpion dived below, and at the same instant a scrambling sound was heard on the outside of the corrugated iron roof. One of the windows immediately above the launch was open, and through this window there suddenly peered the head and shoulders of a youngster.

Then Nipper's voice rang out:

"They've murdered 'em! They're just going to——"

The sentence ended in a shout of alarm, and the next instant a whirling form came hurtling down through the air.

CHAPTER 4.

Nipper is Captured!

NELSON LEE could not bring himself to believe that at the end of the great Abbeydale sensation the Shadow had perished with the sinking of his motor launch. Although Nelson Lee had really triumphed over that case, he had failed to find out who the Shadow really was, and had failed to capture him and his right-hand man, the Scorpion. He knew that the Scorpion had escaped alive, and he wanted proof positive before he would believe in the death of the Shadow.

Therefore, on every chance he got, he haunted the south coast, especially in the neighbourhood of Eastbourne, hoping to find some clue that would throw some light on the mystery which surrounded the fate of the Shadow. And after several weeks of arduous work he heard of a French skipper of a motor barge who had babbled, when more than half drunk, of running contraband to England, and of a man he had picked up one dark night—a man who had asked for secrecy, asked to be landed secretly in France, and had paid handsomely for it all.

Naturally interested, Nelson Lee and Nipper, on foot, to avoid suspicion, and dressed as ordinary field workers, had gone to an out-of-the-way fishing village to interview this man, promising that no harm should come to him out of the confession. But it took longer to make the man talk than Lee had anticipated, with the result that they found themselves trying to walk back to Eastbourne after dark.

"So now we know, practically for certain, that the scoundrel wasn't drowned," said Nelson Lee to Nipper, as they left the village. "As this took place some weeks back there's no chance of tracing him any further; but it's something to have ascertained that he's still alive. Forewarned is forearmed. We return to London to-morrow."

"And where do we go to now?" asked Nipper. "Back to Abbeydale, or to Eastbourne?"

"Neither," said Nelson Lee. "Both are too far, and it's too late. A very old chum of mine—Jack Langley by name—has rented a house at Dead Man's Gap, and has set up a lot of buildings in which a friend of his named Dick Douglas is at work on some new invention or other. I don't know Douglas very intimately, and I haven't a ghost of an idea what his invention is, but I'm pretty sure that I've only to mention Jack Langley's name, and Douglas will willingly give us board and lodging until to-morrow morning. Anyhow, we'll try him."

This was the self-same night when Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion waylaid Sir Edward Armstrong and Lord Sydney, imprisoned them, and then impersonated them. As a matter of fact, the two arch scoundrels were actually engaged on their plot when Nelson Lee was interviewing the French skipper at the fishing village barely a mile away.

"Is it very far from here to Dead Man's Gap?" asked Nipper, as they were passing the house where Sir Edward and Lord Sydney were imprisoned.

"About three quarters of a mile," said Nelson Lee. "It's just gone half-past eleven now, so we ought to be there before——Hallo! What's up?"

Nipper had caught his foot against something on the ground.

"It felt like a pocket-book," said Nipper. "I kicked it with my toe, and it's slithered away. Got your torch, guv'nor?"

The detective pulled out his pocket torch and switched on its brilliant light. No sooner had he done so than he not only saw the pocket-book—which had fallen from Lord Sydney's pocket when he had been felled by the Shadow—but he also saw the marks on the road where the Shadow had stretched himself out as though he were dead, and two broad trails in the dust where the two unconscious men had been dragged into the empty house.

"There has evidently been an accident of some sort here, and within the last half-hour, too," he said, as Nipper stooped down to pick up the pocket-book. "It seems strange that two men should have been dragged across the road and into an empty house, too. If there is no one living in that house, who dragged the injured men across the road? Who admitted them into the house? This looks suspiciously like foul play. Let me see that pocket-book."

He took the book from Nipper's hand and glanced at its contents.



Nipper tied the improvised rope to one of the bars in the prison window. Then, with grim determination, he swarmed down the face of the house to the rocks below.

"This belongs to Lord Sydney, the First Lord of the Admiralty," he said. "I feel more convinced than ever that these marks in the road point to foul play, and not to an accident."

He glanced at the door of the house and then at the road again.

"Do you see this, Nipper?" he went on. "A car came along—here. A man lay in the road—here. The car stopped—here—and one of the occupants alighted and came to the side of the fallen man, who seems to have sprung to his feet. H'm! An old trick, but it has worked. There were two men in the car, however, and—wait a moment. Here we are! Someone was crouching under this hedge and rushed out—and the other fellow dropped here. Somebody dragged his lordship and his companion

into the empty house, robbed them, and probably murdered them. Let's investigate."

Finding that the house was apparently unoccupied, the detective took the liberty of forcing an entrance through one of the lower windows. In one of the rooms he found an actor's make-up box, two suits of clothes, and several fragments of hair, which told him that two men had recently changed their clothes and disguised themselves. And in another room he discovered the half-clad forms of Sir Edward and Lord Sydney—both of whom he recognised at a glance—bound and gagged, and in a state of complete unconsciousness.

"This looks like a sample of the work of the Shadow!" said Nelson Lee in tones of profound conviction. "He and the Scorpion have apparently waylaid these two, donned their clothes, and then driven off to some

place or other to pass themselves off as Sir Edward Armstrong and Lord Sydney."

With Nipper's assistance he unbound the two men, and thanks to his attention, at the end of half an hour Sir Edward began to show signs of coming round, though Lord Sydney still remained profoundly unconscious. A quarter of an hour later Sir Edward was able to sit up and tell his tale.

"We were motoring to Dead Man's Gap to keep an appointment with Mr. Langley," he said. "As we passed this house we saw a man lying prone in the road, in such a position that we had to stop or run over him. We stopped, and his lordship went to find out what the trouble was. But the casualty came to life and stunned his lordship. I was about to go to his lordship's assistance when another masked man rushed out from under the hedge, aimed a crashing blow at me, and I'm afraid I remember no more."

"Why were you going to Dead Man's Gap?" asked Nelson Lee.

"That is a secret," said Sir Edward.

"But that is a secret which I must instantly know," said the detective almost fiercely. "I am Nelson Lee, and this is my assistant. The two men who attacked you were the Shadow and his chief confederate. They had disguised themselves as you and Lord Sydney, and they have gone now to Dead Man's Gap, no doubt with the intention of passing themselves off to Langley and Douglas as you and his lordship. What is their object? Why do they wish to go to Dead Man's Gap and masquerade as you and Lord Sydney? Why were you and his lordship going to the Gap?"

Sir Edward was in a quandary. For a little while longer he hesitated to tell the detective about the wireless submarine—for he had pledged himself to secrecy—but in the end he yielded to Nelson Lee's demands and told him everything. He had hardly finished his tale when Nelson Lee was on his way to the door.

"I'll send someone to relieve you as soon as I get to Dead Man's Gap," he said to Nipper. "In the meantime, you had better stay here and look after these two."

"But you'll want help, guv'nor, against those two, and I'm no nurse," retorted Nipper bluntly.

"He is right," declared Sir Edward. "I'm sufficiently recovered now to take care of Lord Sydney until you send me help. Take the youngster with you."

"All right! Come along," said Nelson Lee.

THEY left the house and ran every foot of the way to Dead Man's Gap. The detective rang the bell of the red brick house, and his ring was answered by Dick's housekeeper, who had formerly been in Jack Langley's employ and knew the detective well.

"Where are Mr. Douglas and Mr. Langley?" panted Nelson Lee.

"Down at the shed, sir," replied the astonished housekeeper.

"Who's with them?"

"Lord Sydney and Sir Edward Armstrong."

"Send for the head foreman, instantly!"

The foreman came, and in a few brief, hurried sentences the detective explained the situation. The foreman dashed off to communicate the news to the rest of the workmen and the sentries.

Five minutes later a band of twenty or thirty men, most of them armed, headed by Nelson Lee and Nipper, marched up to the door of the big wooden shed. Revolver in hand, the detective thundered on the door.

"Langley—Langley, open the door at once!" he cried.

"We're too late!" groaned Nelson Lee. "Langley and Douglas have either been stunned or murdered. We shall have to batter down the door, and when we do so I fully expect we shall find the submarine has disappeared."

He tried to peer through the keyhole.

"You can't see nothing through there, sir," said the foreman. "The only way you can see inside is to climb up on the roof and peep through one of the windows, if any of 'em happen to be open."

The detective turned to Nipper.

"Up you go!" he said. "You're nimbler and lighter than any of us! Sing out if you see anything suspicious."

Willing hands soon hoisted Nipper on to the roof. The windows were glazed with thick ground glass, and all but one were tightly shut. The one that was open was at the far end of the roof, immediately above the dock in which the launch and the submarine were berthed.

He crawled to this window and eagerly peered down into the brilliantly lighted shed. Jack Langley and Dick Douglas were lying side by side, motionless and rigid, on the edge of the little dock. The dock gates were widely open, and the submarine and launch were afloat. The Scorpion had vanished into the depths of the closed-in launch, but Lockwood Beck was on the sloping deck astern, fastening a rope with which to tow the submarine from the dock.

He had just thrown down the gangway and was fumbling with the tow rope when Nipper saw him.

"They've murdered 'em!" yelled Nipper at the top of his voice. "They're just going to——"

The sentence was never completed, for at that moment he overbalanced himself in his excitement and tumbled headlong through the open window. The next instant he crashed on to the top of Lockwood Beck and slid down the open hatch into the covered-in launch together with the Shadow.

Unluckily for Nipper, Lockwood Beck was the first to recover his wits. Seizing the plucky youngster by the throat, he hurled him into the little cabin and hurriedly turned the key. Then he darted up the

hatchway, cast off the last of the ropes, made sure the tow rope which secured the wireless submarine was fast, when—

Crash!

The big wooden door at the other end of the shed was suddenly burst open, and Nelson Lee dashed into the shed, with a crowd of excited men at his heels.

Crack!

The detective's bullet glanced off the iron deck close to Lockwood Beck's head.

Clang!

The iron hatch of the launch was closed, the churning of her screw was heard, and by the time the detective reached the edge of the dock the launch had shot forward with amazing speed, towing the invaluable wireless submarine astern of her, and was out in the cove, had turned and was racing away towards the open sea.

CHAPTER 5.

A Prisoner of War!

NIPPER was more or less dazed by his fall into the launch, and before he had time to regain his scattered senses the Shadow seized him by the throat, flung him into the little cabin, and hurriedly locked the door on the outside.

Breathless and bewildered, but game to the last, the plucky youngster staggered to his feet and hurled himself against the door; but it was made of steel, thin and light but tremendously strong, and for all the effect he produced he might as well have hurled himself against the armour-plating of a battle cruiser.

Presently he heard the muffled report of a revolver shot, followed by a ringing sound on the iron deck of the launch. It was the shot which Nelson Lee had fired when he and his allies had rushed into the shed.

Though Nipper could not see what was happening—for there was no porthole in the cabin, which was lighted both in day-time and night by electricity—he guessed that the detective and the workmen had burst into the shed, and he instantly raised his voice in a lusty shout for help.

But the sound of his voice was drowned by the purring roar of the powerful motors and the churning of the screw, and a moment later a peculiar vibration of the cabin walls and floor told him that the detective had been beaten and the launch and submarine were leaving the dock.

In the meantime Lockwood Beck was standing beneath the look-out dome which rose above the iron deck of the little launch like the conning tower of a submarine. He directed the vessel's course cleverly enough, and got her out to sea. There was not another vessel anywhere in sight, and even if there were it was doubtful if any craft afloat could have caught up with the Dragonfly and the wireless submarine, so fast were they travelling over the waves.

The cove was soon left far astern and the shore lights faded out of sight and finally dropped below the dim horizon. Then Lockwood Beck slacked speed and brought the submarine alongside, lashing her in position so that they could travel even faster, out into mid-Channel.

The launch and the submarine rode so low in the water that they would have been difficult to see at a distance even in the day-time. At night, and moving fast, they were almost invisible, and certainly no gunner could have hit them with a shell, except by pure chance.

Speed was cracked on again, but having got twenty to thirty miles from the English coast, Lockwood Beck deemed it best to slacken to half-speed in order to save the batteries as far as he could. And then he called the Scorpion to the look-out tower in order to discuss matters.

"So far, so good," he said. "But what do you make of that scene in the shed? How do you suppose Nelson Lee tracked us to Dead Man's Gap?"

"I can't even guess," said the Scorpion. "I've been wondering and wondering ever since we heard his voice at the door. He must have got wind of what we were after in some way or other, but I can't imagine how. What's your theory?"

"I haven't one," said Lockwood Beck. "The whole thing is an absolute mystery which I have every hope of solving, and before very long, too!"

"How?" asked the Scorpion.

"By questioning Nipper," said Lockwood Beck.

"Nipper?" said the Scorpion. "Isn't he dead? I haven't heard him making any row for the last half-hour, so I concluded you'd thrown him overboard!"

"I haven't, and don't intend to," said Lockwood Beck. "So long as Nipper is in our power we've a certain hold on Nelson Lee. He'd do anything in the world to save that youngster's life, so I mean to keep the lad a prisoner, and use him as a means of forcing Nelson Lee to slacken off his net if ever he draws it too tightly round me to be pleasant."

"I see," said the Scorpion. "Hands off. Mr. Nelson Lee, or I'll kill your assistant! That's the idea, isn't it?"

"In a nutshell," said Lockwood Beck.

"And where will you keep the lad?"

"At La Tosca, for the present, at any rate," said Lockwood Beck. "In the meantime, as we've nothing better to do, we may as well have him out and question him."

"Where is he?"

"Locked up in the cabin. Keep one eye on that dial for a minute or two. So long as the finger points to S.W. she's steering all right. Keep your other eye on this glass, and if you see any lights ahead sing out to me at once."

He tossed his half-smoked cigarette through the open hatchway and whipped out his

revolver. Then he stepped to the cabin door, unlocked it and threw it open.

"Now, young man," he began, covering Nipper with his revolver. "What brought Nelson Lee to Dead Man's Gap? Did he know before he arrived that I was there?"

"You'd better ask him," said Nipper coolly.

"I prefer to ask you," said Lockwood Beck. "It's easier."

"Think so?" said Nipper. "Well, maybe you're right. It's easy enough to ask, but you'll find it isn't quite so easy to get an answer."

"Do you realise that you are completely in our power?" asked Lockwood Beck in threatening tones. "I've only to say the word, and my friend will gladly carry you up on deck and drop you overboard. You know what would happen then?"

"Oh, yes!" said Nipper cheerfully. "I should get a cheap funeral. No grave to pay for, no tombstones, and no flowers, by

request. 'Ain't it grand to be blooming well dead!'" he sang mockingly.

The Scorpion raised his hand to cuff the youngster, but Lockwood Beck arrested the blow.

"Are you going to answer my questions or are you not?" he asked.

"I'm not going to," said Nipper. "And I'm a champion at saying nothing, when I've made up my mind to it!"

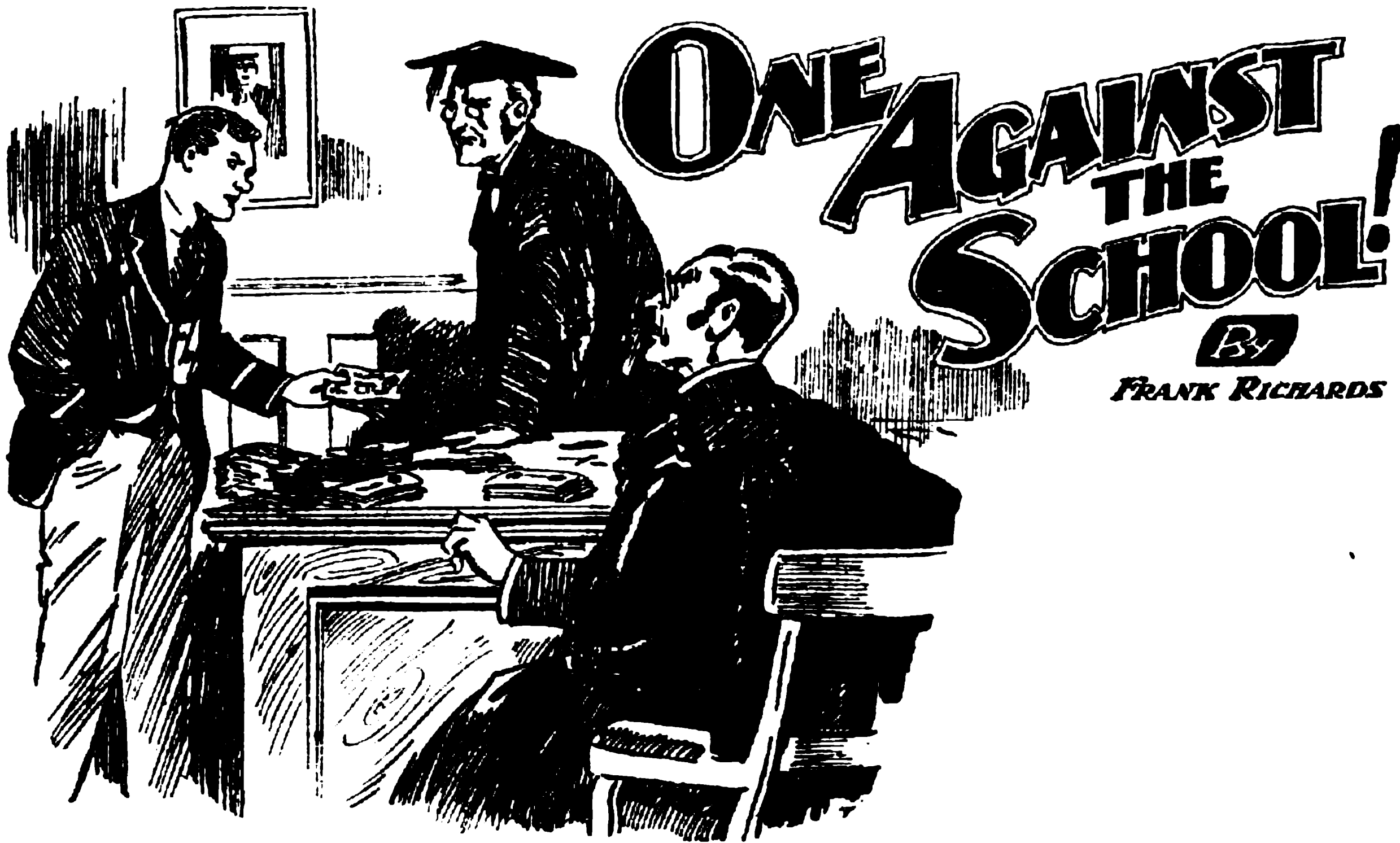
"I don't want to bandy words with you," said Lockwood Beck.

"Then don't do it," retorted Nipper. "Let's talk about something else. This discussion doesn't interest me a ha'porth!"

"It would interest you if I had my way!" growled the Scorpion. "I'd jolly soon find a way of making you open your mouth."

"Lock him in the cabin," the Shadow said. "I'll talk to him later, when confinement and short rations have brought him into a more reasonable frame of mind."

Without another glance at the boy, the



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Shadow turned on his heel. The Scorpion drew the door to and carefully locked it.

It was then about two o'clock on the Tuesday morning. Four hours later the grey light of the dawn began to creep across the sky, and the Shadow took care to keep his low-lying craft out of the track of shipping as far as he could, but shortly after sunset he shaped a course for La Tosca, and a few minutes after nine o'clock on Tuesday night he arrived at the island.

La Tosca was a little rocky islet, about five miles from the coast of France. It had formerly belonged to a Frenchman who had ruined himself in trying to invent and build just such a submarine as Lockwood Beck now brought there. Many of the buildings which he had erected had been pulled down, but several were still standing, and amongst them the house in which he had lived.

This house—which had been partly furnished by Lockwood Beck—stood on the summit of a bare, rugged cliff, which formed the most prominent feature of the island. At the foot of the cliff, which jutted out into the sea, was a spacious cave, the floor of which had been excavated to form a sort of natural dock.

In one of the walls of the cave a passage had been tunnelled leading to the beach on the south side of the cliff. Overlooking this part of the beach was a low-lying rocky plateau on which stood several half-ruined sheds and workshops. The rest of the island—which was not more than half a square mile in area—was a desolate, barren, rocky crag.

After the launch and the submarine had been berthed in the cave, Nipper was taken out of the cabin and carried up the narrow, winding path which led from the beach to the house on the top of the cliff. His arms having been unbound, he was given food and drink, and was then locked up in one of the upper rooms. Two hours later everybody in the house was fast asleep.

CHAPTER 6.

On His Majesty's Service!

ONCE more Nelson Lee was baffled. Once more, in his long and desperate duel with the Shadow, the latter had beaten him. And on this occasion to the bitterness of defeat was added the sting of private grief.

For Nipper, his assistant, the boy he cherished with a father's affection, had disappeared. From the moment when the plucky youngster had climbed on to the roof of the shed at Dead Man's Gap nothing had been seen of him. From the moment when his excited shout of alarm had rung out across the darkness nothing had been heard of him. He had vanished as completely and mysteriously as if he had melted into the air.

The detective was distracted. After the escape of the launch and the wireless sub-

marine he had ordered the dock to be drained, and had afterwards superintended dragging operations in the cove. But nothing had come of the search. Nobody had been found, and whether Nipper had been killed and thrown into the sea, or whether he had been carried off in the Dragonfly was a problem no one could solve.

But Nipper's fate was not the only mystery which baffled Nelson Lee. Jack Langley's injuries were so severe that several days elapsed before he recovered consciousness, and many weeks passed by before he was able to leave his bed. Dick Douglas, on the other hand, recovered consciousness a few hours after the theft; but although he told the detective everything that had happened, he really told him little more than Nelson Lee already knew.

How the Shadow and his confederate had heard of the submarine's existence, how they had known that Lord Sydney and Sir Edward Armstrong were coming to inspect on that particular night and at that particular hour, where they had hidden the stolen boat, what they intended to do with her—these were questions on which Dick Douglas was unable to shed the faintest glimmer of light.

Telegrams and 'phone messages were sent immediately after the theft to all the towns and villages along the south coast, warning all coastguards and coast-watchers to be on the look-out for the stolen vessels. By day-break a number of destroyers were patrolling the English Channel. By Tuesday night every secret agent of the British Government in every city of importance on the Continent had received a cipher message telling him what had happened, and asking for immediate news of any attempt on the part of the thieves to dispose of their prize.

For a week the country simply seethed with excitement. Then a new sensation arose, and in two days' time the fickle public had practically ceased to take any interest in the matter.

Not so Nelson Lee! During the week which followed the theft of the launch and the submarine the detective worked as he had never worked in his life before, searching in vain for some clue to Nipper's fate and the whereabouts of the Dragonfly and the wireless submarine. But it was all in vain. Nelson Lee was baffled—utterly baffled—and on the verge of despair.

There is an old saying that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. It proved so in this case.

Ten days after the theft of the submarine Nelson Lee retired to rest, after a hard day's work, hopeless, weary, and disheartened. At eight o'clock the following morning his landlady roused him from his nightmare-haunted sleep with the news that a messenger from the Admiralty wished to see him.

He jumped into his clothes and hurried into his sitting-room. The messenger handed him an official-looking envelope, sealed with a couple of seals. He broke the seals, drew

out a sheet of Government paper, and read the following brief note:

"Dear Mr Lee,—Can you come to the Admiralty at once? The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are both here. We have just received important news, and we need your help and advice.—Yours,
"SYDNEY."

It did not take Nelson Lee long to comply with this request, and he was soon at the Admiralty listening attentively to all that Lord Sydney had to tell him. It appeared that a British Secret Service agent had discovered someone was negotiating with Senor Quelletan, the representative in Europe of a certain South American government, to sell a wireless submarine such as Dick Douglas had invented.

Whether this wireless submarine was actually the one that had been stolen from Dead Man's Gap it was difficult to say, but the coincidence was certainly remarkable enough. The negotiator had given his name as Mr. Smith, which could easily be a fictitious name. It was learned that Senor Quelletan had a house at Cherbourg, and the meeting had been arranged to take place there.

Lord Sydney looked upon the matter as an imperial affair, and wanted Nelson Lee to tackle the matter, with orders to destroy both the plans and the wireless submarine unless he could recover them intact.

The outcome of it all was that Nelson Lee was given permission to use Jack Langley's yacht, the Dolphin, and set out on the track of the mysterious Mr. Smith at once, armed with full credentials from the Admiralty.

Steaming at full speed, the Dolphin arrived at Cherbourg about half-past seven on Sunday morning. Every man aboard, from the skipper to the cabin boy, knew that there was something in the wind, but only Nelson Lee and Dick Douglas, who had joined the expedition, knew what that something was.

The detective had brought a number of suitcases aboard, containing such things as he thought he might need. With the aid of the contents of these cases he employed his time during the voyage across the Channel in disguising himself as a middle-aged Scottish engineer, with iron-grey hair. Under his skilful tuition Dick Douglas was transformed into a very fair imitation of a rather seedy-looking sailor.

These preparations roused the curiosity of the crew to fever heat; but neither Nelson Lee nor Dick Douglas vouchsafed any explanation.

"Now, remember," said Nelson Lee to Dick, while the vessel was being berthed, "if any questions are asked, I'm Angus McGregor, chief engineer of the Dolphin, and you're one of her crew. The yacht has come to Cherbourg to await instructions from her owner, who is in Paris; and while she's waiting for those instructions, you and I are going to stretch our legs on shore."

"In other words we're going to spy out the land," said Dick.

"Quite so," said Nelson Lee. "But there's no need to tell that to anyone else."

A few minutes later the Custom House officers came aboard to examine the Dolphin's papers. When they had taken their departure the detective donned his cap and stuck a pipe between his teeth. Dick followed suit, and the two men went ashore, after leaving the strictest instructions that nobody was to leave the yacht, and that everything was to be kept in such a state of preparation that the vessel could put to sea, if required, at a moment's notice.

By means of cautious inquiries the detective ascertained that Senor Quelletan's house, which was known as the Chateau Neuf, was three miles to the west of Cherbourg, and on the road to Cape de la Hague. Having obtained this information, the two men turned their faces towards the west, and by half-past eight were strolling past the house where the Shadow was due to interview the minister, as the Secret Service man had said, at ten o'clock that night.

THE Chateau Neuf was not a large house, but what it lacked in size it made up for in beauty. It stood back from the road a matter of two or three hundred yards, and was surrounded by neatly kept grounds.

The front of the house was at right angles to the road, and was approached by a carriage drive which started at a pair of big iron gates, abutting on the road, and ran in a perfectly straight line right across the front of the house. Between the front of the house and the carriage drive was a slightly raised terrace, which was intercepted by a broad flight of steps in front of the front door. On the other side of the drive was a narrow strip of lawn, sloping down to a shrubbery.

"Which do you think is the study, where the interview will take place?" asked Dick, as they paused outside the open gates and gazed along the front of the house.

"I've no idea at present," said Nelson Lee. "Lord Sydney said it was on the ground floor, and overlooking the lawn, so it must be one of those rooms at the front. However, I'll soon find out which room it is."

A stiffish breeze was blowing towards the house. The detective glanced around to make sure that he was unobserved, then he calmly took off his cap and threw it through the gates.

"When a man's cap is blown off by the wind," he murmured, "don't you think he's justified in running after it, even though he may be trespassing?"

"I think so," said Dick, laughing.

"Then here goes," said Nelson Lee.

Driven by the wind, the cap was dancing up the drive like a thing bewitched. He scurried after it, and appeared to make frantic efforts to recapture it; but, strange

to say, it eluded his grasp until it had been blown right across the front of the house.

"Upon my word, you take the cake!" laughed Dick, when the detective returned to the gates. "That's the coolest and most impudent dodge for obtaining information that I've ever seen! Did you find out which was the study window?"

"I did," said Nelson Lee. "I glanced through all the windows as I sprinted after my cap, and the study window is the second past the door. I've seen all I want to see here. Let us now find out how far we are from the sea."

They sauntered along the road for another half-mile and came to a road branching off towards the north.

"Unless I've lost my bearings," said Nelson Lee, "this ought to lead us to the sea. Let's explore."

lowed the line of the coast for nearly four hours, at the end of which time they decided to retrace their steps and return to Cherbourg.

"There's a neat little villa!" said Dick, as they paused for a moment to enjoy the scenery before turning back.

He pointed to a picturesque red-brick house, the grounds of which ran down to the sea. Almost exactly opposite the house, but five miles out to sea, was a little rocky island.

The house was the Villa Marina, and its tenant was Lockwood Beck. The island was La Tosca, where Nipper was imprisoned, and where the submarine was hidden.

"That's one of the Channel Islands, I suppose," said Dick, pointing to La Tosca.

"Yes," said Nelson Lee. "It's called La Tosca, I believe. By the way, you ought to

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The detective was right. Half an hour's walk along this branching road brought them to the edge of the cliffs. Below them lay a little land-locked bay, and running down the face of the cliff was a narrow, zigzag path leading to the beach.

"The very spot," said Nelson Lee. "We'll bring the Dolphin round to this bay about nine o'clock to-night and anchor here as near the shore as possible. Some of the crew shall row us ashore, and wait on the beach while you and I go to the Chateau Neuf. We'll hide in the shrubbery until the Shadow arrives, and as soon as he's entered the house we'll steal up to the outside of the study window. When he produces the plans for Senor Quelletan's inspection we'll break in through the window, collar the plans, and take to our heels. You shall then return to this bay, and take the plans aboard the yacht, while I remain ashore and follow the Shadow until he leads me to the place where the submarine is hidden."

He glanced at his watch. It was half-past nine.

"I don't feel inclined to kick my heels on board all day," he said. "Neither am I taken with the idea of loafing about the streets of Cherbourg all day. If we're back aboard the yacht by seven o'clock it will be quite soon enough. What do you say—shall we go for a long walk?"

Dick agreed, and they trudged off in the direction of Cape de la Hague. There was nothing extraordinary or remarkable about their walk or their conversation. They fol-

lowed the line of the coast for nearly four hours, at the end of which time they decided to retrace their steps and return to Cherbourg.

"The fellow who ruined himself by trying to build a wireless submarine?"

"Yes. He bought La Tosca, and erected all his workshops and machinery there. As you know, his invention proved an utter failure and he was ruined. All the machinery was sold, most of the workshops were pulled down, and the island itself passed into other hands."

"Who bought it?" asked Dick.

"I never heard," said Nelson Lee. "I saw it advertised for sale only a few weeks ago, but I never heard who bought it. Perhaps this chap will know."

"This chap" was a French peasant, who at that moment came sauntering down the road.

"To whom does La Tosca belong, m'sieur?" said the peasant, repeating the detective's question. "To M'sieur Lafarge. They say that he is a rich banker of Paris, but I do not know if it is true, for nobody here knows much about him. He only bought the island a few weeks ago, and he hasn't been here very often since. He has rented that house"—pointing to the Villa Marina—"and when he wishes to visit the island he crosses in a beautiful motor pinnace. Without a doubt he is very rich."

"Why did he buy the island?" asked the detective. "What's he going to do with it?"

"I do not know, m'sieur," replied the peasant.

At that moment, with a blaring of the horn, a car came down the road. It passed them in a flash and vanished through the gates of the Villa Marina.

"That was M'sieur Lafarge—the gentleman in the car," said the peasant. "An island, a motor-launch and a motor-car. Without a doubt he is very rich."

Then he raised his tattered hat and sauntered on, while Nelson Lee and his companion faced about and started back for Cherbourg, little dreaming that the man who had just passed them in the car was the Shadow!

CHAPTER 7.

At the Chateau Neuf!

IT was half-past six when Nelson Lee and Dick reached Cherbourg, and at seven o'clock the Dolphin slipped her moorings and steamed out of the harbour. She was compelled to take a pilot,—of course, until she had passed the breakwater, and so long as this pilot remained on board she headed for the north as though she were making for Southampton. Shortly after the pilot had taken his departure, however, she swung round towards the west, and about half-past eight, with all her lights extinguished, she dropped anchor in the little land-locked bay.

"Can't you anchor a little bit nearer the shore?" asked Nelson Lee. "It's a good half-hour's row from here to the beach."

"I know that, sir," said the skipper. "But it can't be helped. I know this coast as well as anybody, and there's a sandbank running across this bay, only about two lengths ahead of where we're anchored. There's enough water over that sandbank to take a rowing boat, or even a small-sized fishing smack, but not a vessel this size. We should be stranded if we tried."

"Then we'll have to put up with it," said Nelson Lee. "And now I want four steady and reliable men to row Mr. Douglas and myself ashore."

The men were selected and the boat was lowered. By Nelson Lee's orders the oars were muffled.

"You will remain here until the boat returns," said Nelson Lee to the skipper. "Steam must be kept up at full pressure, and everything must be kept in readiness to up anchor and put to sea at a moment's notice."

"How long will you be away?" asked the skipper.

"In all probability I shan't return to the yacht at all," said Nelson Lee. "Mr. Douglas will return in about two hours and a half or three hours. He will give you further orders when he arrives."

He embarked in the boat, and Dick followed suit. Half an hour later they stepped ashore on the dark, deserted beach.

"Mr. Douglas and I are now going to make a short excursion inland," said Nelson

Lee to the four men who had rowed them ashore. "You will stay here until Mr. Douglas returns, which will probably be in about an hour and a half or two hours. Draw the boat up at just beyond reach of the waves, and when you hear a whistle on the top of the cliff, run the boat down to the water's edge, and be ready to launch her and row back to the yacht the instant Mr. Douglas arrives."

He repeated these instructions to make sure that the four men understood them, then he and Dick scrambled up the sloping beach, climbed to the top of the cliff, and started out for the Chateau Neuf.

The clock of a neighbouring church was chiming half-past nine as they stole through the big iron gates at the end of the carriage drive. The waning moon was just rising in the east, but the sky was thickly overcast with clouds, so that the night was not too dark nor yet too light.

All the windows on the ground floor were what are known as french windows—that is to say, each window consisted of two long, upright panes of glass, opening in the middle like a pair of folding doors. Two of the windows were brilliantly illuminated—the window of the drawing-room and the window of the dining-room. The study window was in darkness, save for the flicker of firelight on the white cotton blind. In front of the front door was a broad flight of steps, and over these steps was a handsome portico, from the roof of which hung a dazzling electric light.

Nelson Lee and Dick crept across the lawn and concealed themselves in the shrubbery, from where they had an uninterrupted view of the whole front of the house.

A quarter of an hour passed; then the study window was suddenly flooded with light. Somebody inside the room had switched on the electric light.

"Now we shan't be long!" whispered Nelson Lee. "Senor Quelletan has just gone into his study to await the arrival of his visitor."

Another quarter of an hour passed. The clock of the church hard by began to chime ten. Then the hooting of a motor-horn mingled with the chiming of the church bells. A moment later a speedy-looking car, with a single occupant, dashed through the open gates, glided up the drive, and pulled up in front of the door in the full glare of the electric light.

"Dick"—the detective laid his hand on Dick's arm, and his voice vibrated with intense excitement—"do you recognise that car? It's the one we saw this morning, and the man who's driving it is the man who passed us on the road!"

"Jove, I see it all now!" he continued in rapid, feverish tones. "The submarine is hidden at La Tosca. The man who bought the island, and who rented the Villa Marina, is the Shadow. At the Villa Marina he is known as M'sieur Lafarge, and is supposed to be a Parisian banker. When he comes to

see Senor Quelletan, he calls himself Mr. Smith. There's no need to shadow him now. As soon as we've collared the plans we'll rush back to the yacht and steam at full speed to La Tosca."

By the time he had finished speaking the Shadow had vanished into the house, leaving the car standing outside.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Nelson Lee and Dick crawled across the lawn on their hands and knees, hauled themselves on to the terrace—which was only a few feet above the level of the drive—and crept to the outside of the study window.

On each side of the window, between the edge of the blind and the window frame, was a narrow slit through which they were able to obtain a limited view of the interior of the room. The detective peered through one slit and Dick through the other.

Senor Quelletan was seated at a knee-hole desk, with his back to the fire. Lockwood Beck—the Shadow—had just been ushered into the room, and was standing on the other side of the desk, drawing off his gloves.

"I have reported the result of our last interview to my colleagues," the Minister was saying in French, "and they have authorised me to say that if your vessel bears out your description of her, we shall be quite prepared to give you your price."

Lockwood Beck bowed.

"And no questions will be asked?" he murmured.

"And no questions will be asked," said the Minister, with a significant shrug of his shoulders. "In the meantime, I understand that you are willing to show me the plans of the vessel and briefly explain her workings."

"Certainly," said Lockwood Beck.

"And if I consider the plans justify your description of the vessel's wonderful capabilities," continued the Minister, "you will be willing to fix a date when a committee of naval experts can inspect her?"

"Certainly," said Lockwood Beck again.

"Meanwhile, you prefer to keep her whereabouts a secret?"

"Yes."

"You have bought the plans with you, I presume?"

"Of course."

"Then let us get to business."

Lockwood Beck took off his overcoat and dropped into a chair. He thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a bulky packet of papers tied with red tape. He laid the packet on the table, and began to unfasten the tape.

"It's now or never!" whispered Dick in agitated tones. "If Senor Quelletan once sees the plan, all is lost!"

"Right!" said Nelson Lee, pulling out his revolver. "I'm ready. You keep Senor Quelletan at bay, while I secure the plans, then we'll take the liberty of borrowing the car."

As he uttered the last word he raised his hand and smashed one of the panes of glass with the butt end of his revolver.

AT the sound of breaking glass Lockwood Beck and the Minister leaped to their feet with shouts of alarm.

At the same instant Nelson Lee slipped his hand through the hole in the pane and forced back the catch. Then he and Dick tore down the blind and bounded into the room.

Dick sprang at the Minister, toppled him over like a ninepin, and pinned him to the ground.

Lockwood Beck, with matchless presence of mind, snatched up the plans and whipped out his revolver.

Crack! The bullet shaved the tip of Nelson Lee's ear and buried itself in the wall of the room. The next instant the detective's fist crashed into Lockwood Beck's face and sent him sprawling on his back. Before he could pick himself up the detective threw himself upon him and wrested the plans from his grasp. Then he leaped to his feet and darted to the window.

"Come along!" he cried.

Dick loosed his hold on the Minister and darted after Nelson Lee. Crack! Crack! Crack! Three random shots sped after Dick, but all of them flew harmlessly past his head, and an instant later he and Nelson Lee were seated in the car. The horn sounded, almost in derision, then the car whizzed madly down the drive and through the open gates.

Then a shout of alarm burst from the detective's lips. A heavily-laden wagon was passing the gates. There was no time to pull up—no room to pass. Crash! The car dashed into the side of the wagon, and Nelson Lee and Dick were shot through the air like stones out of a catapult. Luckily they cleared the wagon and landed unhurt in the moss-lined ditch on the other side of the road, but even as they scrambled to their feet a crowd of yelling servants, headed by Senor Quelletan and Lockwood Beck, came tearing down the drive in hot pursuit.

"The plans!" gasped Dick.

"They're all right," said Nelson Lee, tapping the outside of his breast pocket. "I've got 'em. Come along. we shall have to run for it now."

Side by side they raced down the road, and had covered nearly fifty yards before their pursuers reached the gates. For a little while they heard their pursuers thundering after them; then suddenly the sounds died away, and by the time they reached the edge of the cliffs their own footsteps were the only sounds that broke the stillness of the night.

"I think we may flatter ourselves that we've shaken them off," said Nelson Lee, after whistling to the sailors below, to warn them of their coming.

"I think so, too," said Dick.

But almost before the words were out of his mouth a furious barking was heard not more than a hundred yards behind them.

"Dogs!" gasped Nelson Lee. "That's the Shadow's idea, I'll bet. Yes, Listen! I can hear his voice encouraging the dogs to find us. It's a pity that Wolf isn't here, but he hasn't recovered from that bullet wound in the leg he received at Basinghall Street."

Quivering with excitement, Nelson Lee and Dick began to scramble down the narrow path which led to the beach. Just as they reached the foot of the cliff they heard the sound of voices at the top, and a moment later a dog came bounding down the path, with two men at his heels.

One of them was Senor Quelletan, the other was Lockwood Beck.

"Ahoy! Show a light!"

It was Nelson Lee who shouted. One of the sailors struck a match.

"There's the boat!" panted Nelson Lee. "And here's the dog!" he added, as a huge black mastiff leaped down on the beach. "Run! You jump into the boat and I'll deal with the dog."

Dick sprinted across the beach and scrambled into the boat. The detective ran after him for a little distance. Then he suddenly wheeled round, revolver in hand, and fired at two gleaming points of light that were rushing at him through the darkness.

The crack of the revolver was followed by a howl from the dog, and even as the brute rolled over, the detective dashed to the water's edge and threw himself into the boat. A moment later the sailors had

shoved her off, and she was speeding back to the Dolphin as fast as four muscular arms could drive her.

"Too late!" snarled Lockwood Beck, as he dashed up half a minute later. "Curse them, they've escaped!"

"Where have they gone?" panted Senor Quelletan, peering through the darkness.

"Rowing out to sea with muffled oars," said Lockwood Beck. "In all probability there's a vessel waiting for them in the bay."

"Have you any idea who they were?"

"I didn't recognise either of them, if that's what you mean," said Lockwood Beck. "But I haven't the slightest doubt that one of them was Nelson Lee."

"The famous English detective?"

"Yes. Nobody but he would have had the skill to track me to your house or the pluck to carry out a daring plot like this."

"Nelson Lee, the famous detective!" repeated Senor Quelletan, regarding his companion with a curious stare. "Then you must be——"

"The man who stole the submarine from Dead Man's Gap!" said Lockwood Beck boldly. "I am! I admit it. But what has that to do with you, or with your government? You agreed to ask no questions, and it doesn't make the invention any less valuable to you."

SKIMPOLE—THE INVENTOR!



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NOT at all," said the Minister. "To be quite frank with you, I suspected the truth from the first."

"I know you did," said Lockwood Beck calmly. "I may take it, then, that your government will still be willing to buy the invention if it proves to be as valuable as I have described?"

"Certainly. But we're wasting words. There's no chance of our securing the invention now."

"There's every chance," retorted Lockwood Beck. "What does the loss of the plans matter? Dick Douglas would have been able to make a fresh set of plans, even if the original ones had remained in our possession. And if you get the vessel, you'll be able to build as many more like it as you wish, won't you? The launch and the submarine are now at La Tosca. Have you a car at your house?"

"Yes—two, as a matter of fact. But you can't reach Tosca in a car!"

Lockwood Beck smiled.

"Of course not," he said. "But I've rented the Villa Marina, which is opposite the island, and I've a fast motor pinnace there. It is now twenty minutes to eleven. We can be back at your house by eleven. If you will lend me your car I can be at the Villa Marina by midnight, and at La Tosca half an hour later."

"For what reason?"

"To remove the submarine, of course, before Nelson Lee and his confederates arrive. As I've told you before, the vessel and the launch can be navigated by two men, so that my assistant and myself will have no difficulty on that score."

"But where will you take the vessel if you remove her from her hiding-place on La Tosca?"

"That is for you to settle," said Lockwood Beck. "Your government is anxious to secure the wireless submarine, therefore you must arrange with the French naval authorities at Cherbourg to lend you a dry dock for a time, and——"

"No, no, it will never do," said Senor Quelletan. "This is an international matter, and the French are averse to being mixed up with it. I have a better idea. Even now one of our cruisers is coming up Channel on a visit to Portsmouth—a sort of exchange of naval compliments, you understand. I will wireless her to stand by ten miles north of Cherbourg. You take the launch and the wireless submarine out to her, and there, beyond the three-mile limit, you will be safe."

"Excellent," said Lockwood Beck. "But that clinches the bargain, and forms a definite purchase on the part of your government."

"I will stand by that," said Senor Quelletan. "If the invention were not valuable, the British Government would not have taken all this trouble to keep it to themselves."

The two men retraced their steps up the cliff and hurried back to the Chateau Neuf. Less than five minutes sufficed to produce the car, and punctually on the stroke of eleven the Shadow took his seat in the car, bade the Minister adieu, and dashed off in the direction of the Villa Marina.

Punctually on the stroke of eleven, too, the nose of the Dolphin's boat bumped against the side of the yacht. A rope was thrown down, and a few seconds later Nelson Lee and Dick stepped aboard.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the skipper, on seeing the detective. "I thought you weren't coming back."

"I've changed my mind," said Nelson Lee briefly.

He turned to Dick.

"Get that boat aboard as quickly as possible," he said.

Then he turned to the skipper again.

"You said some time ago that you knew this coast as well as anybody," he said.

"Do you know the island of La Tosca?"

"Nobody better," said the skipper.

"You could take the Dolphin there?"

"Blindfolded!"

"How long will it take us?"

"Let me see," said the skipper, scratching his head. "It's about seventeen miles from here to La Tosca. Then there's the tide and—well, say about an hour."

"We can be there by midnight?"

The skipper consulted his watch. It was five minutes past eleven.

"Just about," he said.

"Then up with the anchor," said Nelson Lee.

The boat was hauled to the davits and the anchor raised.

"Now, full speed ahead for La Tosca!" cried Nelson Lee.

CHAPTER 8.

Nipper's Escape!

IT was nine o'clock on the Tuesday night when the launch and the wireless submarine reached the island of La Tosca.

After the little vessels had been berthed in the cave, Nipper was removed from the cabin of the covered-in launch and carried up the narrow, winding path which led to the gloomy house on the summit of the cliff. Here his hands were unbound, and he was given food and drink, after which he was locked up in one of the upper rooms and left to his own reflections.

The following day Lockwood Beck returned to England, after giving the Scorpion implicit instructions how to carry on in his absence.

After Lockwood Beck's departure, the Scorpion made his way to the room in which Nipper was confined, in order to obey orders of which he, himself, did not altogether approve.

It was not a large room—probably twelve feet square—and was situated on the second

floor. It was lighted in the daytime by a single window which overlooked the sea, and which was guarded on the outside by three stout iron bars. There was no paper on the walls, and no carpet on the floor, and the only furniture was a small camp bedstead and a combination dressing table and washstand.

Nipper was lying on the bed, with his hands tied behind his back with one rope, and his ankles lashed together with another.

"Now, Nipper," said the Scorpion, unlocking the door and entering the room, "you've got to remain on this island for a week or ten days at least, possibly more. How do you like the idea?"

"Don't mind, so long as I don't see your ugly face too often," said Nipper.

The Scorpion scowled.

"I don't want any of your insolence," he retorted angrily. "I've come to make you an offer; but first of all let me remove these ropes."

He locked the door on the inside and pocketed the key. Then he untied the ropes by which Nipper was bound and assisted the youngster to rise.

"That's better, isn't it?" he asked, as Nipper limped up and down the room to ease his cramped and stiffened limbs.

"Much better," said Nipper, wondering what was coming next.

"Well, now," continued the Scorpion, "although I've given you the use of your limbs, it won't be very nice for you to be cooped up in this room for a week or ten days, will it? It would be much nicer if you could run about the island and amuse yourself by fishing and bathing, and all that kind of thing, wouldn't it?"

Nipper stared at him suspiciously.

"Out with it!" he said. "What's the little game?"

"If I set you free and give you the run of the island," said the Scorpion, "will you give me your word of honour that you won't try to escape or to communicate with any passing vessel?"

With a scornful laugh Nipper limped across the room, lay down on the bed and put his hands behind his back.

"Tie me up again," he said curtly. "I'm making no promises of that sort. If I get half a chance of bolting I'll be off like a shot. So now you know!"

The Scorpion shrugged his shoulders. He was not surprised, for this was the answer he had expected. He unlocked the door and prepared to leave the room.

"Here—come back!" cried Nipper. "I don't want to have any misunderstanding over this. I shall do my best to get away."

"I'm not afraid," said the Scorpion calmly. "You're quite welcome to try. It'll give you something to do, and it won't hurt anybody. Good-bye for the present. I'll bring you some tea in about an hour's time."

He closed the door, locked it behind him, and went downstairs. When the echoing sound of his footsteps had died away Nipper

rolled out of bed and set to work to take stock of his surroundings.

First, he examined the door. Nelson Lee had taught him how to pick a lock with no more complicated instrument than a bit of wire or a bent nail, but seeing that he had neither a bit of wire nor a bent nail, and as nothing of the kind was to be found in the room, and as his pockets had been rifled of all their contents, his skill was not of much avail on the present occasion.

Moreover, although he did not know it, the door was not only locked, but was also secured on the outside by two massive iron bolts, so that even if he had succeeded in picking the lock he would not have improved his chances of escape in the slightest degree. As for bursting the door open or breaking it down, he had only to glance at its thick oak panels to see that such a proceeding was utterly impossible.

"So much for the door," he muttered, when he had concluded his examination. "Now for the window."

He examined the window. In construction it was an ordinary bed-room window, rather small, with an upper and lower sash. The upper sash was fixed, but the lower could be raised at will. Outside were three stout iron bars, so closely set together that nothing bigger than a cat could have squeezed through. Below the window were thirty feet of smooth, bare wall, at the bottom of which was the narrow strip of turf between the front of the house and the edge of the cliff.

He slipped back the catch, raised the lower sash and managed to squeeze his head between two of the bars. He surveyed the scene below; then drew in his head and tested each of the bars by tugging at them with his hands.

"No go!" he muttered ruefully. "The Scorpion was quite right. He's nothing to be afraid of. I'm quite safe here!"

He continued in this frame of mind until the following afternoon, when, on examining the bars again, he discovered, or thought he discovered, that one of them was slightly loose. He grasped it with both hands, and pulled and pushed and jerked it until his muscles cracked. Then his thought became a certainty. The bar was loose, and so was the one next to it.

Overjoyed by this discovery, he promptly set to work to loosen the bar still more. He stuck to his task until he heard the Scorpion coming upstairs with his tea, and he resumed his labours after the Scorpion had departed. But when he tumbled into bed, thoroughly worn out, shortly after midnight, he was bound to confess that the bar was very little, if any, looser than when he began.

It was then Friday night. He tackled the bar again on Saturday, and again on Sunday, always desisting when he heard the Scorpion coming upstairs, or when he saw him outside the house, and always carefully removing all traces of his handiwork when he had finished.

SLOWLY but surely success crowned his patient efforts. By Monday night the lower end of one of the bars was free; by Tuesday night the upper end was also free; by Saturday night the lower end of the second bar was loose; and by Sunday afternoon a couple of lusty jerks were all that were required to wrench the two bars out of their sockets.

About half-past four in the afternoon the Scorpion brought Nipper his tea, remaining in the room until he had finished the meal, and then departing with the cup and plate. Four hours later he repeated this performance with Nipper's supper, and at nine o'clock he bade his prisoner good-night, left the room, and went downstairs, locking and bolting the door behind him.

For the best part of an hour Nipper heard his jailer moving about the house. Then a brooding silence fell on the gloomy house, and Nipper concluded that the Scorpion had gone to bed. But Nipper was mistaken. Earlier in the day a man had rowed across from the mainland and had handed the Scorpion a letter from Lockwood Beck.

"Shall be with you to-night," the letter had said. "All goes well. Am to interview the Minister to-night and show him the plans. His house is only about an hour's run from the Villa Marina, so, as soon as the interview is over, I shall motor back to the villa and slip across to La Tosca in the pinnace."

"He doesn't say what time he'll be here," the Scorpion had mused, after he had perused this note. "But he'll hardly go to the Minister's house before eight o'clock, and the interview is sure to last about an hour, so he won't be here before half-past ten at the earliest. However, to be on the safe side, I'll go down to the cave about ten, and wait there till he comes."

The gloomy house stood on the summit of the cliff which jutted out into the sea. At the foot of the cliff was a spacious cave, the mouth of which opened directly on to the sea. A portion of the floor of this cave had been hollowed out to form a sort of natural dock, and a channel had been excavated in the floor, leading from the dock to the sea. Even at low tide the dock was never absolutely empty; at high tide the sea was level with the floor of the cave.

As the mouth of the cave opened directly on to the sea it had originally been impossible to enter the cave except by means of a boat. Monsieur Dupont—the former owner of the island, who had built his ill-fated submarine in the cave—had found this very inconvenient, for he had erected his workshop on the rocky plateau which overlooked the beach on the south side of the cliff, and when the sea had been rough it had been well-nigh impossible to transport his workmen and his building materials into the cave. To remedy this defect he had caused a passage to be tunnelled through the side of the cliff, one end of the passage opening on the beach and the other in the cave.

In accordance with his decision, the Scorpion left the house a few minutes before ten o'clock on Sunday night, and sauntered down the steep and winding path which led to the beach. Passing through the tunnel, he entered the cave and switched on one of the electric arc lamps. It wanted still two hours and a half to high tide, but the dock was more than half full of water, and the launch and wireless submarine were swinging lazily at their moorings, their bows pointing towards the mouth of the cave.

The Scorpion glanced at the little vessels and thought of the half a million pounds which was shortly to be theirs. Then he seated himself on an empty sea chest, lit his pipe, and settled down to await the coming of the Shadow.

This, then, was the secret of the silence which had fallen on the gloomy house at the top of the cliff. The Scorpion had not gone to bed; he had gone down to the cave to meet Lockwood Beck.

Nipper, of course, knew nothing of this. He concluded that the Scorpion had retired for the night; and after waiting half an hour, "to give the beggar time to get to sleep," he stole out of bed, and set to work to put the finishing touches to his plan of escape.

Nipper had no idea where he was. That is to say, he only knew he was on an island; but where the island was situated he could not even guess. From the window of his room, however, he could see the lights on the opposite shore, so that he knew he was only a few miles from the mainland.

He also knew—for he had seen it on the night of his arrival—that there was a small boat, in addition to the launch and the wireless submarine, in the cave. His intention, therefore, was to steal down to the cave, secure this boat and row to the mainland.

In pursuance of this plan, he first tore up the sheets and blankets on his bed, and knotted the strips together. This occupied him nearly half an hour. Then he wrenched away the two loose bars, tied one end of his improvised rope to the remaining bar, and threw the other end out of the window. Five minutes later he had swarmed down the rope, and stood on the ground below!

It was then eleven o'clock. Lockwood Beck was just starting out from the Château Neuf in Senor Quelletan's car. Nelson Leo and Dick Douglas were just clambering aboard the Dolphin. The waning moon was high in the sky, but was still obscured by a sable pall of slowly-drifting clouds.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Nipper stole to the top of the path and began to descend. He had nearly reached the foot of the cliff, when suddenly he paused and caught his breath. Somebody was walking across the beach. A moment later the unseen man began to climb up the narrow path.

IT was the Scorpion. He had come to the end of his tobacco, and was returning to the house for a fresh supply.

There was no time for Nipper to turn back, no room to step aside and let the man

pass in the darkness. To advance or to remain where he was meant certain capture; to retreat meant giving up all hope of escape. What should he do?

For a moment the plucky youngster hesitated how to act. Then his eyes fell on a massive boulder lying by the side of the path. Quick as thought he fell on his knees and applied his shoulder to the ponderous mass of rock. Once, twice, thrice, he pushed in vain; then the boulder tilted over and went rolling down the path.

The Scorpion heard it coming, and hastily wheeled round with the intention of leaping back to the beach. But the action came too late, for just as he was about to jump, the boulder leaped upon him from behind and struck him between the shoulders. The next instant, bruised and bewildered, he was lying face downwards on the beach, firmly convinced that an earthquake had occurred.

A half-cry, half-gasp of triumph, which Nipper was unable to repress, dispelled this delusion as if by magic. Livid with rage, he scrambled to his feet; but even as he did so Nipper darted past him and made a dash for the mouth of the tunnel.

So far, the darkness had proved an advantage to Nipper—now, it proved a disadvantage. He had only once been through the tunnel—on the night of his arrival on the island—and in the darkness he could not find the entrance. He could have found it in time, no doubt, but with the Scorpion thundering at his heels he had no time for a lengthy search.

He raced to the spot where he calculated the entrance would be, and then, finding that the entrance was not there, he spun round on his heel, dodged the Scorpion's outstretched hands, and scurried away in the opposite direction.

Again, the Scorpion thundered after him across the rocky beach, but again the darkness came to Nipper's aid, and he was just flattering himself that he had given his pursuer the slip, when suddenly his feet slipped on the wet and slippery rock, and he measured his length on the ground.

As he fell his hands shot out in front of him, and one of them slid into a crevice between two massive, moss-grown boulders. Then a strange thing happened!

The instant his hand slid into the crevice it was seized in a powerful, vice-like grip, for all the world as though it had been grasped by a pair of iron pincers. Suppressing a cry of pain, he strove with might and main to pull his hand away; but the thing, whatever it was, only tightened its grip, and held him even firmer than before.

As a matter of fact, what had happened was this: Lurking in the crevice was one of those gigantic crabs with which the Channel Islands abound. Some of these crabs attain enormous dimensions, and when once they had fastened their powerful claws on any object it is almost impossible to drag it from their clutches.

Nipper had unwittingly thrust his hand into the crevice where one of these colossal crabs was lurking, and instantly the startled

crab had snapped his pincers on the youngster's hand.

If Nipper had been standing up, and the crab had been out in the open, there is just a chance—not a very great chance—that he might have been able to force the brute to relax its grip. At any rate, he could have tried to batter the crab to death with one of the many loose stones that lay scattered



The Shadow and his confederate sprang desperately to the corner. Next moment there was a splintering crash: pants flying head first

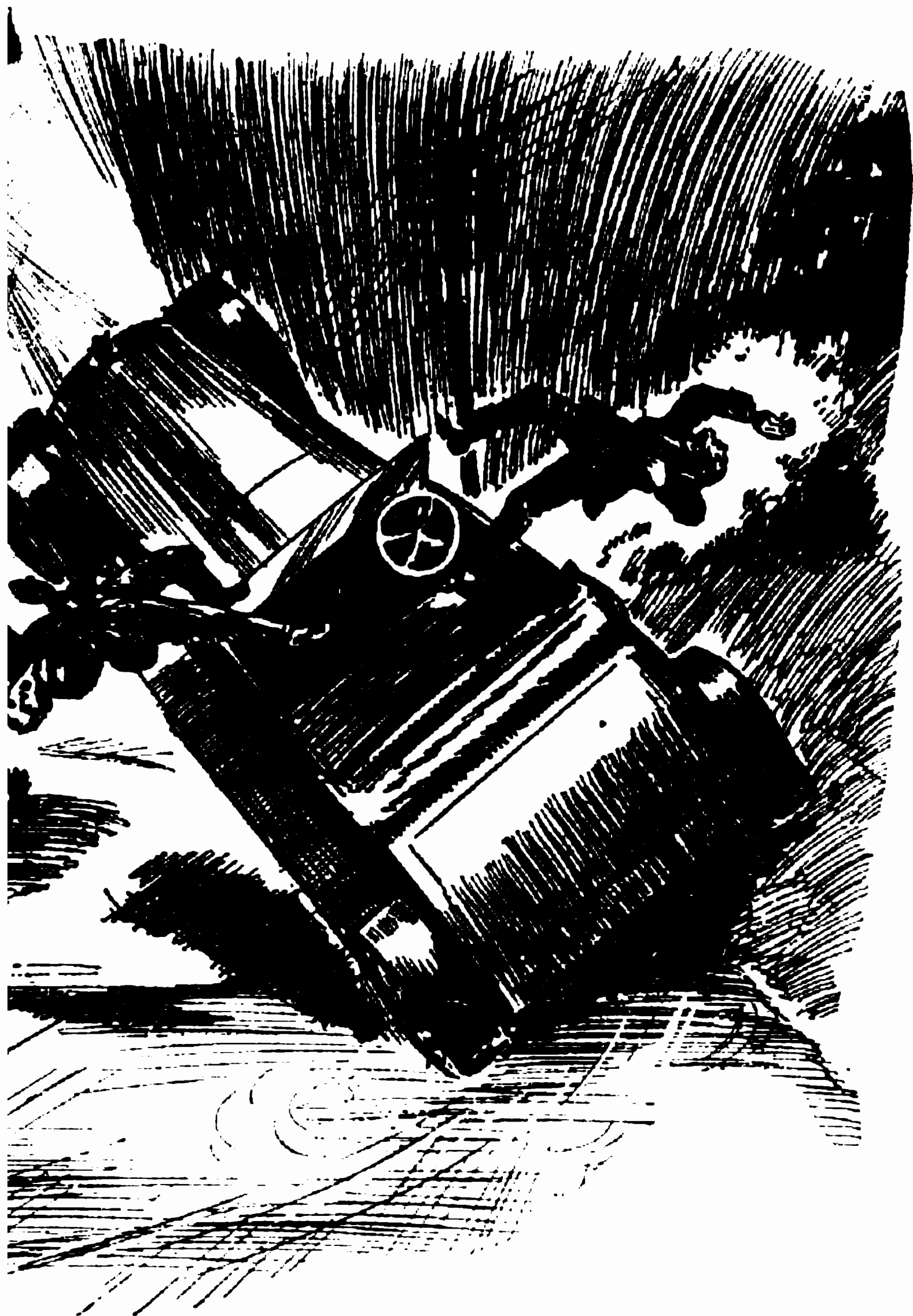
around. But, with his hand held fast beneath the rock, he could only raise himself into a kneeling position, and in this constrained posture he was naturally unable to use his strength to the best advantage.

He pulled and tugged until he nearly wrenched his hand off at the wrist. But it was all in vain. He could neither free his hand, nor drag the crab out of its hiding-place. In a word, he was a prisoner, a few yards from the water's edge, and the tide was coming in.

He heard the Scorpion roaming about the beach, trying to find him. It would have been an easy matter to have shouted to the Scorpion, who would then have rolled the boulders aside, and speedily made an end of the crab. But Nipper never even thought of doing this. He had escaped from the

clutches of the Shadow and his confederate, and he was determined at all costs that he would not put himself in their power again. Death itself was preferable to that, in Nipper's eyes.

And nothing seemed more likely than that death would be his fate. By half-past eleven the incoming sea was lapping his ankles; by midnight it was up to his waist; but half-



side of the road as the powerful car hurtled round as it overturned completely, and sent its two occupants through the air!

past twelve it had nearly risen to his chin. "Ten minutes more!" he muttered between his clenched teeth. "Ten more minutes, and then——"

Suddenly he paused, for at that moment the moon burst through a rift in the drifting clouds. It was only for an instant. Then the clouds closed over the moon again and all was darkness.

But in that brief instant Nipper had seen a motor pinnacle making for the mouth of the cave. And in the stern of the pinnacle sat Lockwood Beck.

The Shadow saw Nipper at the same instant as the youngster saw him. With a shout of bewildered surprise, he altered the course of the pinnacle, steered her to the water's edge, and waded through the surf to the spot where Nipper was imprisoned.

Hearing Lockwood Beck's shout of surprise, the Scorpion came running down the beach in a state of seething excitement.

"What's happened? What's the youngster doing here? Are you trying to drown him?" gasped Lockwood Beck, peering into Nipper's white, scared face, then into the Scorpion's.

In rapid, excited tones, the Scorpion related all he knew of Nipper's escape, and the latter, in reply to Lockwood Beck's questions, explained how and why he was imprisoned.

"Caught by a crab, eh?" said the Shadow, with a cruel laugh. "Ah, well, perhaps it's better so. It will save us the trouble of shooting you."

"Aren't you going to release me?" gasped Nipper, scarcely believing his ears.

"Why should I?" said Lockwood Beck coldly.

Even the Scorpion was surprised.

"I thought you meant to keep him a prisoner," he said.

"So I did," returned Lockwood Beck. "But certain things have happened to-night which make it imperative that you and I should leave La Tosca at once, and never come back. For instance, unless I'm greatly mistaken, Nelson Lee and Dick Douglas are now on their way to the island."

"Then the sooner we quit the better," said the Scorpion, in alarm.

"We're taking the launch and the wireless submarine out to sea to meet with a cruiser," said Lockwood Beck. "Come along. We'll leave the pinnacle here. She's of no further use to us now. Lead the way to the cave, and I'll tell you what's happened on the way."

They turned to go. Such incredible barbarity stung Nipper to the quick, and as they turned their backs on him a wild, despairing cry for help burst from his lips.

CHAPTER 9.

Victory and Defeat!

LA TOSCA was seventeen miles from the little land-locked bay where Nelson Lee and Dick Douglas found refuge from their pursuers on board Jack Langley's yacht, the Dolphin. It was eleven o'clock when they scrambled aboard; it was a few minutes later when Nelson Lee gave the order, "Full steam ahead for La Tosca!" and it was a quarter-past eleven when the vessel weighed her anchor and commenced the voyage.

Steaming at the rate of eighteen knots, she reached the little island, with all her lights extinguished, just within the hour, and at a quarter-past twelve she dropped her anchor on the east side of the island about half a mile from the beach. Owing to the darkness the island itself was invisible from the deck of the yacht, but a lighted window in the house on the summit of the cliff was sufficient indication of its whereabouts.

During the voyage Nelson Lee and Dick held a long and earnest consultation. They both agreed, but they were both wrong, that the Shadow could not possibly reach the island before they did; but, seeing that they had no idea how many men were on the island, they decided that their wisest plan would be to row ashore as quietly as possible, find out where the wireless submarine and her parent launch were concealed, and then endeavour to arrange some plan for carrying them off before the Shadow arrived.

In accordance with this agreement, a boat was lowered and manned, and, as before, they chose a long boat in preference to the motor-launch, on account of the noise of the engine. The long boat was manned, as before, by four of the Dolphin's crew. The detective and Dick embarked in this boat, which then, with muffled oars, headed for the island.

Scarcely had they started, when Nelson Lee held up his hand as a sign to the men to stop rowing. His quick ears had caught the faint, far-off churning of a propeller. The men lay on their oars and waited. Nearer and nearer came the churning of the screw; then an unseen vessel shot past them in the darkness. It was the pinnace with Lockwood Beck aboard.

"Who the dickens can that be?" growled Nelson Lee, as he signed to the men to resume rowing. "Is it possible that the——"

Having said so much, he suddenly paused, and quivered from head to foot with suppressed excitement. For it was at this moment that the moon burst through the clouds, and in that momentary gleam of light the detective saw the motor pinnace and recognised the man in her stern sheets as the Shadow.

Lockwood Beck was gazing at Nipper and saw nothing of the Dolphin or her long boat. Nelson Lee and the rest of the occupants of the boat were gazing at the Shadow and saw nothing of Nipper.

"Did you recognise him?" whispered Nelson Lee excitedly, as the moon retired behind the clouds and darkness once more swallowed up the scene.

"Yes," said Dick. "It was the man we saw at the Château Neuf—the Shadow! How on earth has he managed to get here in this short space of time?"

"Motor from the Château Neuf, the motor pinnace from the Villa Marina," said the detective laconically. Then he turned to the four sailors. "Send her along, boys," he said. "It's a matter of minutes, now."

The men bent to their oars, and the boat shot through the darkness like a thing alive. Ten minutes passed. It was twenty minutes to one. Once more the detective held up his hand, and again the men ceased rowing.

"I can hear voices," said Nelson Lee. "We must be quite close to the beach. Listen!"

He had scarcely finished speaking before a wild, despairing cry for help pealed out across the darkness.

"That's Nipper!" roared Nelson Lee, leaping to his feet as though he had been shot.

And almost before the words had crossed his lips the moon sailed from behind the clouds, revealing the head of Nipper projecting from the surface of the waves, less than half a dozen lengths away, and the figures of Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion running in mad haste along the beach.

Half-crazy with excitement, the detective leaped out of the boat and waded to Nipper's side. Dick and three of the sailors followed suit.

"After 'em, guv'nor—after 'em!" gasped Nipper, forgetting his own peril in his lust for revenge. "The launch and the submarine are in a cave at the end of that tunnel in the cliff. They'll make off with her if you're not quick! Never mind about me. I've only got my hand fast between these rocks. These other chaps'll set me free. You go after those chaps, before it is too late. See! They've got into the tunnel now. They'll be on board the launch in another jiffy. Away you go!"

The detective took him at his word.

"Liberate him, and then follow me," he said to the three sailors. Then he turned to Dick. "Come on!" he cried.

The next instant he and Dick were racing along the moonlit beach with the swiftness of the wind.

By that time, however, Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion had vanished into the passage which Monsieur Dupont had tunnelled through the side of the cliff. How long this passage was the detective did not know, of course, but he knew, from the size and shape of the cliff, that it could not be very long.

IN the meantime, Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion had reached the cave. The Scorpion had previously switched on one of the electric arc lamps which hung from the roof, so that the cave was flooded with dazzling light. The wireless submarine floated on one side of the dock, while the parent launch floated on the other side. They were not lashed side by side, as Lockwood Beck thought that if he had kept them thus, the gentle friction caused by the restless water would have scratched the paint on the sides of the vessels, and he had come away from Dead Man's Gap without the necessary fenders.

The circular hatch on the top of the lookout dome in the centre of the deck of the covered-in, iron-plated launch was thrown back like a big hinged iron lid.

"You go first," gasped Lockwood Beck, as they raced into the cave. "It's a matter of seconds now, but I think we shall win. Dive down into the engine-room and be ready to start the motors the moment I give the signal. We'll have to tow the submarine out as we did at the Gap. I'll cut the mooring ropes."

Almost before he had finished speaking the Scorpion had leaped aboard the launch and had vanished through the opening at the top of the dome. Lockwood Beck sprang after him and hurriedly cut the ropes that held the vessel fast to the side of the dock.

He did the same to the ropes that held the submarine, then made her fast to a cleat in the stern of the launch, all ready for towing. Then he leaped down into the interior of the closed-in launch. He grasped the heavy iron hatch and was just about to heave it up to close it when Nelson Lee, revolver in hand, dashed into the cave.

Crack! Again the detective fired, and Lockwood Beck had barely time to duck down through the opening in the top of the dome—leaving the hatch still open—when a second bullet whizzed over his head.

The next instant the detective took a flying leap as the vessels began to shoot forward towards the open sea. He was unable to reach the launch, but he landed on the outside of the wireless submarine, where he clung like grim death, and with his revolver covered the open hatch on the launch which towed the submarine at a terrific speed out of the cave to the sea.

"I win, I think!" he cried exultingly.

To all appearances he was triumphant. The Shadow dared not attempt to close the hatch nor yet to show his head. The launch was not a submarine, and could not dive. The opening in the top of the dome was so small that only one man at a time could squeeze himself through. If there had been a regiment of soldiers inside the covered-in launch, one man sitting outside, covering the hatch with his revolver, could have kept them at bay with the greatest ease.

But the triumph was not altogether so complete as it appeared, and Nelson Lee understood this as clearly as the Shadow. While the launch was compelled to tow the wireless submarine clear of the shallows and away from La Tosca, the detective could keep the two rogues cooped up inside the launch. It was more than they dared do to show their heads through the hatch, and wherever they went Nelson Lee would go with them.

The trouble was that Nelson Lee had no idea where they were going. They might take him to a place where they had many confederates, who would alter the position by shooting Nelson Lee from his perch.

If the submarine had been cast adrift anyone within the launch could control the vessel by means of the wireless apparatus, and cause it to dive and submerge itself, with the result that the detective would be drowned. Therefore, if Nelson Lee had the two rogues cooped up in the launch they had him a virtual prisoner on the top of the submarine, and they could not make use of the wireless control because the launch was towing the submarine on the end of a stout cable.

THE launch had gathered speed now, and four sailors, as they dashed into the cave could only stand and stare at the sight of Nelson Lee riding a submarine in the thick of the surf outside.

Two of the sailors pluckily plunged into the sea and swam after her, but were soon

forced to give up. At the same instant the detective sang out at the top of his voice and tried to attract the attention of those on board the Dolphin, which was anchored about three-quarters of a mile away.

But those on the Dolphin neither saw nor heard him, and as for the two sailors, they were soon left far behind, until at last the moon retired behind the clouds again, plunging the scene into inky darkness.

The Shadow steered a course that took him far from the Dolphin, and then when Nelson Lee half expected him to head for Cherbourg, he brought the vessels round in a wide arc and steered due north. This suggested that he had a definite destination in view, and probably one where he would find helpers to shift the dogged detective from his perch on the wireless submarine.

If that happened, then Nelson Lee would not only risk defeat but also death, and he racked his brains to know what to do. At intervals the men in the launch made attempts to fire at him blindly, but as soon as their hands appeared at the open hatch he let fly a bullet that sent them dodging down again.

The launch towed the submarine with ease north-east up the English Channel, and the land fell away astern until it was lost to sight altogether. Then Nelson Lee began to try another move. He wriggled his way to the bows of the submarine and began to haul on the tow-rope. He intended to bring the submarine close enough to the launch to enable him to scramble aboard and thus be in a better position to keep the two rogues prisoners down below.

But as he was working at this almost super-human task his leg came into contact with a knob that protruded from the plates of the submarine. He guessed at once what it was. It was the means by which the wireless waves from the launch entered the submarine and controlled the various manœuvres. It occurred to him then that if he destroyed all these knobs on the surface of the submarine, those aboard the launch would be unable to control the vessel even if she were cut adrift from the parent launch.

After all, the apparatus aboard the launch would mean nothing to the Shadow or anyone else, without either the submarine and her engines and apparatus, or the plans. If Nelson Lee now secured, or destroyed the submarine, having already secured the plans, he would at any rate have succeeded in his aim of preventing the invention falling into the hands of a foreign power.

It was certainly annoying to have to let the Shadow escape, but in the face of it there was nothing else to be done. Accordingly he scrambled over the treacherous surface of the submarine, smashing at every knob he found with the butt of his revolver.

When that was done he wriggled his way forward again, and taking out his clasp-knife, hacked away at the stout tow-rope. It was a long and tedious job, and not devoid of risk, for the act of towing held the sub-

marine's prow low in the trough of the waves, which were consequently sweeping over her.

But eventually it was done, and the covered-in launch, relieved of the weight, shot ahead at a surprising speed, leaving the precious wireless submarine, with Nelson Lee astride her, far astern.

The two rogues aboard the launch soon realised what had happened, and cautiously poked their heads above the hatch of the observation dome. Nelson Lee fired at them, but they had passed out of range, and remained there for a time, staring at him.

Then Lockwood Beck laughed and turned to the Scorpion.

"I thought that Nelson Lee had more wit than to do a thing like that," he chuckled grimly. "We can manoeuvre that submarine now just as we like. Do you think you could handle the controls?"

"I studied the plans so as to be able to do it when we had to exhibit the submarine to Senor Quelletan," replied the Scorpion.

"Good," said Lockwood Beck. "Now go below and make that submarine submerge and dive. And we'll see Nelson Lee swimming for his life in a few minutes!"

There was a puzzled expression on the Scorpion's face as he descended the iron ladder to obey. He could not believe that Nelson Lee would have delivered himself into their hands so completely.

He soon found out where the trouble lay. He worked the controls feverishly, throwing over the switches and setting the dynamos humming. But nothing happened.

"You're a long time," complained Lockwood Beck. "The submarine hasn't moved yet."

"Then it never will move for me," growled the Scorpion. "I've done all I can. Nelson Lee must have tampered with the receiving apparatus on the submarine, and the wireless waves are not having any effect on the mechanism at the other end."

Lockwood Beck rapped out a savage oath.

"He's got the better of us, has he?" he cried. "We'll see about that! I'll steer the launch closer and shoot it out with him!"

"Wait a bit!" cried the Scorpion. "Is that the cruiser coming up?"

Lockwood Beck snatched at a pair of binoculars and stared through them for a moment. When he cast them down his face was as black as thunder.

"Get to the motors, quickly!" he cried. "It's a British destroyer, and we'll have to get out of this. It's a good thing Dick Douglas gave this launch a terrific speed. We'll need every ounce of it now. We must abandon the wireless submarine! So far, Nelson Lee has beaten us, but I'll be even with him yet!"

They descended into the launch and closed the hatch, then the low-lying craft shot away in a shower of spray, and was soon lost to sight to the north, while Nelson Lee sat astride the recaptured wireless submarine,

waving to attract the attention of those aboard the oncoming destroyer.

Eventually he was seen and taken aboard, while the submarine was taken in tow. The wireless began to talk and a search was at once made throughout the Channel for the launch; but it was never seen again, although Nelson Lee refused to believe that the Shadow and the Scorpion were dead.

AS Lockwood Beck had said, he had, so far, won; but while the Shadow remained at large he could not regard himself as victorious. It was a strange mixture of defeat and victory for Nelson Lee, and the only real triumph he had was in knowing that Nipper was still alive and safe.

As for his intuition that the Shadow still lived, he was right. Lockwood Beck had sighted a yacht just when the launch, driven through the choppy seas at a tremendous speed, had sprung a leak. It was true that the leak was not serious, and Dick Douglas had made the launch capable of great buoyancy by means of special air-tight tanks. But the Shadow had no further use for the launch, and the leak gave him an idea. He simply made the leak worse and opened the sea-cocks, with the result that the launch quickly filled and sank. Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion fixed lifebelts round themselves and took to the water, but before a quarter of an hour had passed they had been picked up and were safely aboard the strange yacht.

CHAPTER 10.

Something Turns Up!

THE yacht proved to be a Belgian boat—a private yacht with the most luxurious appointments, and capable of remarkable speed. Her name was the Rodenstein.

The captain advanced to Lockwood Beck when he and the Scorpion stepped aboard and warmly congratulated them on their safety. In his best French Lockwood Beck explained that his name was Armitage; that he and his friend had been attempting to cross the Channel in their little motor-launch, which had sprung a leak and foundered beneath them. He was very grateful to the captain for having rescued them; and if the latter would add to his kindness by putting them ashore at the nearest English port—

"I'm afraid I can't do that," said the captain, interrupting him. "I'm overdue already. And much as I should like to oblige you, I'm afraid I cannot afford the necessary time to put into an English port."

"A French port, then?" suggested Lockwood Beck.

Again the captain shook his head.

"You will think I am very disobliging, M'sieur Armitage," he said. "But let me explain my position, and then you will under-

stand why I cannot accede to your request. This vessel is the Rodenstein. She belongs to M'sieur Henri Duprez. You will have heard of the financier, M'sieur Duprez."

Lockwood Beck bowed.

"Who has not heard of Henri Duprez, with financial interests all over the world, the worker for world peace, the man who is behind so many of the activities of the League of Nations?"

"M'sieur Duprez is now at his Belgian villa, near Ostend," continued the captain.

"I saw something about it in the papers," said Lockwood Beck, nodding his head. "Sir Maurice Powell, the British iron and steel magnate, is staying with him. The papers hinted that there was some business move afoot."

"There is," agreed the captain. "I do not know exactly what it is, of course. I may say, as between man and man, that M'sieur Duprez is interested in the League

"What are we going to do when we get to Ostend?" asked the Scorpion, when they were changing their things, alone, in the captain's cabin.

"Go to Pierre Leon's," said Lockwood Beck. "He'll give us shelter for a day or two and provide us with the means of returning to England."

"And who the dickens is Pierre Leon?" asked the Scorpion.

Lockwood Beck explained that Leon was one of his Continental "agents." The Shadow derived a considerable portion of his ill-gotten income from the forgery of banknotes and letters of credit. Many of his forgeries were on Continental banks, and in order to put these bogus notes into circulation he employed a number of agents all over Europe. Such an agent was Pierre Leon.

"It is hard to be rescued by the yacht of Henri Duprez," said Lockwood Beck. "From

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of Nations only in so far as it pays him to support that body. I have heard hints of some new invention that will revolutionise naval warfare. It is said that if this new invention is adopted it will be useless for the governments of the world to build destroyers, cruisers or battleships, and that they will concentrate on even smaller craft. Naturally, M'sieur Duprez, who has so much money locked up in the iron and steel works of Europe, and in the ship-building industry, does not want this to come about, neither does Sir Maurice Powell, and so the two of them have been agitating with the League of Nations to suppress this invention, about which there is much mystery, and is even financing someone to find out what the invention is, where it is, and so on, with a view to destroying it. Of course, all this is just rumour that is rife on the Continent just now. In any case, my orders are to be at Ostend before midnight to-night, and Ostend is four hundred miles from here. You will see, therefore, that it is quite impossible for me to alter our course and put into any port, either English or French."

"Quite so," said Lockwood Beck. "In the circumstances I should never dream of asking you to do such a thing. But you have no objection, I suppose, to taking us with you to Ostend?"

"Not the slightest," said the captain. "I shall be very pleased indeed to provide you with a change of clothes while your own are drying, and to put you ashore at Ostend."

"Thanks very much," said Lockwood Beck. "That will suit me admirably."

what the captain has told me I gather that Duprez, the world financier, and Sir Maurice Powell, the iron and steel magnate, are the men behind the suppression of the wireless submarine. They are afraid that if that invention succeeds fewer big warships will be required, and therefore there will be less money for them."

"Leon does not know my real name," Lockwood Beck continued. "You are the only one of my confederates who knows my real name and where I live. But he has acted as my agent for nearly three years. He knows me well enough by sight, and he'll readily do all I ask of him."

"Where does he live?" asked the Scorpion.

"About five miles outside Ostend," said Lockwood Beck, "on the road to Bruges. His house is in a nice secluded situation; so that even if we were traced as far as Ostend we shall be quite safe at Leon's."

"But if we drive from Ostend to Leon's—" began the Scorpion.

"But we shan't," interrupted Lockwood Beck. "We shall walk. It will be quite dark when we reach Ostend, so it won't be a difficult matter to get to Leon's without leaving any trail. We are pretty well at the end of our resources—but something else is sure to turn up before long."

He was right. Something else did turn up, and sooner than he had dared to hope. Steaming at full speed, the Rodenstein arrived at Ostend at eleven o'clock at night. Lockwood Beck, on behalf of himself and his friend, distributed twenty pounds amongst the crew; then he and the Scorpion shook

hands with the captain, thanked him for his kindness, went ashore, and started out for Pierre Leon's.

IT was a clear, starlit night, with the faintest of faint breezes blowing off the sea. The moon—a thin crescent of silver—was low down in the east, having risen just before they landed. The Casino and the big hotels were ablaze with light, but the streets of the town were comparatively deserted. Beyond the town, on the lonely road that led to Bruges, all was silent and deserted.

About a mile and a half outside the town they passed a handsome modern villa, standing back from the road, and surrounded by well-kept grounds. Through the open gates they caught a glimpse of a velvety lawn, in the centre of which stood a small aeroplane.

"This is Henri Duprez's villa," said Lockwood Beck, as they passed the gate. "This is where Sir Maurice Powell is staying. Sir Maurice has wide interests and gets about in his private 'plane, which you can see on the lawn. Sir Maurice rather fancies himself as an aviator and a motor-driver. He has often taken part in motor races. He's rather cranky on the subject, I believe, and always drives his own car, and other people's as well if they'll let him, though I fancy his skill is not quite so great as he likes to think it is."

Three miles past the villa the road took a sharp turn to the left.

"Leon's house is just round the corner," said Lockwood Beck. "You can't see the house from the road because——"

At that moment a horn blared, and a car with two men in it came whizzing round the corner at racing speed.

"Great Scott!"

Lockwood Beck uttered a startled cry of alarm. The man who was driving had taken the corner too sharply. The ponderous car lurched over to one side, and the next instant—almost before Lockwood Beck and the Scorpion had realised what was happening—the car completely overturned and flung the two men out into the road.

"They're killed!" gasped the Scorpion, seeing that neither of the two men attempted to rise.

"Looks like it," said Lockwood Beck coolly. "Anyhow, they're unconscious, which is just as good, from our point of view."

"From our point of view?" repeated the Scorpion. "I don't follow you."

Lockwood Beck laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"You're very dense lately," he said. "Nobody but ourselves has witnessed this accident. Nobody is about to see us. Those two men are unconscious. Without a doubt they will have money in their pockets. Probably they will have rings on their fingers, possibly diamond studs and cuff-links. That is a valuable car, anyway. We

are stony-broke, you and I. Why shouldn't we help ourselves? Come along."

They ran to the spot where the two men were lying. They were not dead; they were not even seriously injured. But they had both been stunned, and were quite unconscious.

Lockwood Beck knelt down beside them and rolled them over on their backs. The moonlight fell on their pallid upturned faces. Then a gasp of stupefaction, which quickly changed to a cry of triumph, burst from the lips of the Shadow. One of the men was Henri Duprez, the world-famous financier, and the other was Sir Maurice Powell, the iron and steel magnate.

"Didn't I say that something was sure to turn up before long?" cried Lockwood Beck exultingly. "And here it is! Here's a prize worth all the submarines in the world! Leon's house is only a couple of hundred yards away. We'll carry them there, and hide the car and remove all traces of the accident."

"And then, my boy"—he fairly hugged himself with delight at the prospect—"and then we'll spread a rumour that the British Government, who coveted the wireless submarine, has engineered their disappearance, and we'll get ransom for them from their families and the British Government as well before we're done! We'll make the world pay for all we've lost through the cursed interference of Nelson Lee, and it'll puzzle that detective to find us here, or even to connect us with this little business. No doubt he'll try—but let him try. This time, I fancy, Nelson Lee will fail utterly!"

CHAPTER 11.

Nelson Lee on the Trail!

IN the eyes of the British Government Nelson Lee had done everything that had been required of him. He had recovered the wireless submarine and he had prevented the plans falling into the hands of a foreign power. But still he was not satisfied.

It was true that he had done all the Government had asked him to do, and it was also true that he had rescued Nipper from the clutches of his enemies. But the Shadow had escaped. After so much herculean effort he was as far as ever from laying his hands on the man he had sworn to bring to justice. Even yet he did not know the master criminal's name.

It might be that the Shadow and his confederate had drowned, after all, but until Nelson Lee had undeniable proof of this, until it was absolutely and positively proved to him that his rival was dead, he declined to take up any new investigation or to abate one iota of his firm determination to rest neither night nor day until he had run the scoundrel to earth.

He sent Nipper back to London, much to that young gentleman's disgust. Nipper was as anxious to be in at the end as Nelson Lee himself. Then the detective spent a week in various southern English ports, hunting in vain for any news of any "shipwrecked yachtsmen" who had been picked up in the Channel and brought ashore. Eventually he abandoned this line of research and returned to London, only to re-

"Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell are my prisoners. You appreciate, of course, the complications that are bound to ensue while they remain 'disappeared.' What will you pay as ransom for their liberation? Write your answer on a slip of paper and insert it in the hollow quill beneath the pigeon's left wing; then set the pigeon free. On receipt of your reply I will state my final terms."



The launch towing the secret submarine was moving swiftly through the sea, when Nelson Lee took a flying leap off the rocky ledge and landed in the long silver shape!

ceive an urgent message from Downing Street. The Prime Minister wanted to see him.

He received a shock when he saw the Minister's face. It was only a little over a fortnight since he had seen him, but during those two weeks the Premier seemed to have aged ten years. Deep lines of care furrowed his pallid face, and in his eyes was a haunting look of helplessness and despair.

He was walking rapidly to and fro in his private room, with an open letter in his hand. On the table was a small wickerwork hamper containing a carrier pigeon.

"I ought to have sent for you before," he said, when Nelson Lee was ushered into the room.

He turned abruptly on his heel and thrust the letter into the detective's hand.

"Read that!" he said, sinking into a chair.

The letter was written on one side of a small sheet of paper and bore neither name, address nor date. It ran as follows:

"This is from the Shadow!" said Nelson Lee. "I recognise his handwriting! But what does it mean? Have M'sieur Duprez and Sir Maurice actually disappeared?"

"Yes," said the Minister. "The fact has been hushed up, but the news has now leaked out, and we are unable to find a trace of the two men. Sir Maurice was staying with Monsieur Duprez at the latter's villa near Ostend. They went motoring together, Sir Maurice driving. He is a keen motorist, as I dare say you know. And they just vanished—car and all! It happened between Bruges and Ostend. And that is all that anyone knows."

But surely the families of the two men—and their business connections—must know."

"They do know," replied the Minister. "And they have received similar communications to this one, demanding huge sums as ransom. But so far we have succeeded in keeping the news secret. You can imagine, Mr. Lee, that with men of the commercial

importance of Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell such a thing as this is disastrous. The news will cause a tremendous slump on the stock exchanges of the world, and the firms with which they are connected will possibly go bankrupt. Thousands of men will be thrown out of work. There is no end to what may happen."

"I understand all that," said Nelson Lee. "The world will think that their businesses are in a bad way, that the two principals have cleared out of their own accord, and the world will rush to sell out their shares and cause a run on the banks, possibly. But surely the Government must be more concerned than that, for the Shadow to communicate with you."

"You are right," said the Minister. "The matter goes even deeper than stocks and shares. It is all connected with the wireless submarine."

"In what way?"

"Why, at the time when you stumbled on the fact that the Shadow had stolen the submarine and the plans, the outside world knew nothing of Mr. Douglas' wonderful invention. After that, however, the news leaked out—no one can say precisely how. Maybe one of the workmen was indiscreet. Anyway, the news leaked out, and reached the ears of both Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell. Now these two gentlemen are greatly concerned, for the wireless submarine would be so dangerous to cruisers, battle-cruisers, battleships, and even destroyers, that naval authorities all over the world would soon cease to build submarines at all. There are few built now, but there would be less still if the wireless submarine became a commercial and wartime possibility."

"The [redacted] all they [redacted] of the [redacted] iron-clad [redacted] pockets. [redacted] with the League of [redacted] friction at Geneva against the British Government in the matter, and tried to force us to tell all we knew of the invention and where it was. This, of course, we refused to do. In fact, at the time, we didn't know ourselves that the submarine was at the island of La Touca. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," said Nelson Lee.

"It was then made clear in the business world what the intentions of Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell were, and people were waiting to see what would happen. We regained possession of the wireless submarine and the plans, and then these two influential men mysteriously disappeared. Somehow all this news leaked out, although not officially. A foreign government, smarting under the loss of the submarine, made a lot of it to the League of Nations. So far we have managed to keep the news out of the papers of this country, but to-morrow every newspaper in the country will publish the

news of the disappearance of these two financiers and what that disappearance may mean for Great Britain.

"In short, Mr. Lee, the diplomats of Europe are now openly accusing the British Government of having secured the disappearance of Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell in order that we can develop the wireless submarine, and so strengthen our Navy, while at Geneva our representatives are urging other powers to reduce their navies. They are trying to make out that we are hypocrites, and unless we can do something about it, every power in Europe will be heading straight for big navies, big armies—and war. The only way out would seem to be to pay the Shadow any fabulous sum he cares to ask, and to suggest that the prisoners' families and firms should do the same, for which the Government would have to compensate them in order to keep them quiet. But I hate the idea of letting a rogue like the Shadow triumph to such an extent. What would you advise?"

"Nothing for the present," said Nelson Lee. "It is evident that the Shadow and his confederate were picked up by some passing vessel, and were taken to Ostend. I do not think it possible for them to have arrived at Ostend before half-past ten or eleven at night. They cannot, therefore, have had much time to prepare their plans."

"M'sieur Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell, you say, are known to have passed through Bruges shortly after eleven o'clock. Bruges is about eighteen miles from Ostend. They left Bruges at eleven o'clock, and the Shadow and his confederate landed at Ostend about the same time. If the Shadow and his confederate left Ostend in a car, and travelled at the same speed as the two other men, they would meet them half-way between Ostend and Bruges. If they were on foot—which is much more likely—they would meet them much nearer Ostend than Bruges."

"The spot must be lonely and unfrequented, and nearer Ostend than Bruges. That is all we know at present. I will go to Ostend at once. By hook or crook I will contrive to get into every house for five miles at least along the road from Ostend to Bruges, and in one of these houses, unless I am vastly mistaken, I shall find our men. You say the Secret Service has so far failed, but without boasting, I fancy I know the Shadow better than anyone else in the world, and, with luck, this time I'll get him!"

BY four o'clock that afternoon Nelson Lee was at Ostend. For ten days, in various disguises, he carried out his plan of visiting all the houses in the vicinity of the road from Ostend to Bruges. Many and ingenious were the plans he adopted for getting into some of the houses, and on one or two occasions he had to commit a breach of the law and break in at dead of night.

But nothing came of these investigations during those ten days. Nowhere could he

find the slightest trace of the Shadow's two prisoners, and in the meantime he received two urgent messages from the Prime Minister, stating that the Shadow had written again on two occasions, threatening to take extreme measures if his terms were not accepted. And the news was spreading, to the harm of British prestige abroad, while Parliament at home was extremely uneasy over the matter.

By that time the detective had worked his way along the road towards Bruges as far as Leon's house. Any ordinary casual observer would have passed the house—which was screened from the road by a plantation of firs—without suspecting its existence. But Nelson Lee had armed himself with a large-scale map of the district on which every house was marked, so that, although he could not see the house from the road, he knew that it was there.

As he turned into the narrow lane which led to the house the front door opened and a man came out.

"All right, I'll not forget," he heard the man say to someone inside the house. "A 'Daily Mail' and half a pound of 'Navy Cut.' Right you are; I'll remember."

For an instant the detective stood rooted to the spot, and literally gasped for breath. Then he darted to the side of the lane and flung himself down behind a clump of bushes. He had recognised the voice of the Shadow!

Scarcely had the detective concealed himself before Lockwood Beck walked briskly down the lane. He was going into Ostend to make some purchases, and he was disguised as a middle-aged Belgian, with a heavy black moustache and beard to match. But for that accidental hearing of his voice the detective would have passed him twenty times without suspecting his identity.

Quivering with excitement, the detective waited until his quarry had turned the corner of the lane, then he swiftly emerged from his hiding-place and stealthily glided after him.

"I'll take no risks this time!" he muttered under his breath. "If I were to attempt to overpower him singlehanded on a lonely and deserted country road like this, he might manage to give me the slip. I'll shadow him to Ostend, and as soon as we meet a *gendarme* I'll give him in charge."

But he had reckoned without the uncanny skill of Lockwood Beck. That arch-impostor seemed to have eyes at the back of his head. Before he had been walking a mile he became aware that somebody had followed him from the house, and that it would not be long before Henri Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell were set at liberty. His plan had failed, and he himself was being shadowed by his greatest and most dreaded foe! How could he shake him off? How could he make his escape before they reached Ostend?

The sun had gone down, but it was still too light for him to have any chance of giving his pursuer the slip under cover of dark-

ness; and Ostend was only a mile and a half away. There was nobody in sight. Should he suddenly wheel round and fire at the man who trailed him.

But suppose he missed! What then?

At that moment he was passing Henri Duprez's villa, and on the lawn stood a small aeroplane. It was Sir Maurice Powell's private machine in which he had flown to Belgium from England.

"The very thing!" muttered Lockwood Beck.

He glanced back over his shoulder and saw that Nelson Lee was twenty yards behind him. Then he darted through the gates, rushed into the middle of the lawn, and with amazing celerity he swung the propeller and had the powerful engine roaring into life.

In a flash he was in the cockpit, having kicked the blocks away from the landing wheels. Nelson Lee shouted out and burst into a sprint, but before he could reach the machine it began to move. He spurted, and his finger actually touched the tail of the 'plane, but the next instant it seemed to be jerked away from him, the aeroplane taxied across the lawn, then took off gracefully, rising higher and higher, and Lockwood Beck waved his hand in ironic farewell before he piloted the machine over the tree-tops and out of sight.

"Beaten! The luck was with him!" growled Nelson Lee, as he turned.

And then the dark look on his face cleared as if by magic, for at the far side of the lawn stood another aeroplane. One of Sir Maurice Powell's business colleagues had flown over to investigate privately the disappearance of the steel magnate. The second 'plane had been hidden from the detective's view by a clump of shrubs.

It did not take long for him to board the 'plane and set off in pursuit. Servants in the house heard the staccato roar of the engine and came rushing out to interfere, but they were just too late, and the detective soared into the air as they came running, with angry cries, to capture him. But in order to set their minds at rest he managed to get one of his cards from his pocket and to drop it over the side of the cockpit, so that it fluttered down to the lawn. They would know then that Nelson Lee was in one of the 'planes, even if they did not know who had borrowed the first machine.

THE Shadow had a start of at least ten minutes. It did not seem much, but it was enough. If anything, his 'plane was a more up-to-date model and faster than the one Nelson Lee had commandeered. He had a lead, and he kept it, although the detective was doing all he could to catch up with his man.

It was difficult to tell what Nelson Lee could have done had he been able to over-haul the other aeroplane. The utmost that was possible was to keep Lockwood Beck in sight, to see where he landed, and, if possi-

ble, to land so close and so quickly as to catch him before he had time to get away to another hiding-place.

For the moment, however, the actual flight was enough for Nelson Lee to see to, without worrying about future plans. It was with dismay that he noted how little petrol there was in the tanks, but he hoped and prayed it would be sufficient. He coaxed every possible ounce of speed from the engines, and headed after the Shadow, striving to climb higher in order not to miss his quarry.

They reached the coast and passed over the sea. A mist was clinging to the water, and the Shadow saw his chance. He planed down to a lower level and the swirling wreaths of the sea swallowed him up.

He was really taking his life in his hand, for in that mist he was flying blind and might very well have flown slap into the sea. But fortune favoured him, and on he flew, without a sign of Nelson Lee. He altered his course to the southward, aiming, as far as he could calculate, to pass over the Kentish coast, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Deal.

Above the mist flew Nelson Lee. He was tempted to dive into the mist on the sky trail of his foe, but he knew that he could not find him that way. An altered course in the sky leaves no mark to follow.

• He did all there was to do. He came low over the fog bank and flew along it towards the dark line of the English coast, keeping his eyes open for the first sign of Lockwood Beck.

It was some time before he saw his foe again, and then, to the south-west of him, he saw the machine emerge from the mist. In a second he had altered his course and was off in pursuit. But the Shadow had actually increased his lead by this cunning and daring manœuvre.

They passed the coast line and flew over the serried fields of Kent. For a time Lockwood Beck held his own, then gradually Nelson Lee^a began to overhaul his foe. There was something wrong with the criminal's aeroplane, and as he watched Nelson Lee saw the machine stall, then drop some distance like a stone.

Somehow, Lockwood Beck regained control and flew on, but it was clear that his engine was missing, and he was anxious to land, planing down as if eager to lose height before the end came. And then Lockwood Beck's 'plane seemed to crumple and drop, finally pancaking on a field in a way that suggested its pilot must be either killed or terribly injured.

Nelson Lee brought his machine down into the same field, and hurriedly scrambled out, running towards the wrecked 'plane. But Lockwood Beck had escaped death. He was crouching there as if examining the engine of the 'plane. As the detective approached he rose to his feet, then ran to the side of the road that passed nearby, as though he intended to climb over the low stone wall and make his escape. But a moment's reflec-

tion seemed to show him that such a proceeding would be futile, for a charabanc crowded with men was coming down the road, and he came back into the field and again cast an anxious glance in Nelson Lee's direction.

"He has lost his head," muttered Nelson, who was then less than a hundred yards away. "The crash has thrown him into a state of panic—wrecked his nerves, in fact. He doesn't know what to do."

The Shadow whipped out his revolver.

"Ah! At last he has made up his mind!" thought Nelson Lee. "He's turned at bay. He's going to fight for it. All right! I've no objection. Two can play at that game!"

As he muttered these words he whipped out his own revolver. But even as he did so, a cry of stupefaction burst from his lips. For at that moment the Shadow raised his revolver to his head and pulled the trigger.

A flash of light—a sharp report—and Lockwood Beck pitched forward on his face and sank in a huddled heap on the ground!

CHAPTER 12.

The Final Clue!

THE flush of excitement on the detective's face, the light of battle in his eyes, the lust of the chase, which had hitherto possessed him—all these died down as if by magic, and a feeling of awed solemnity stole over him.

"So this is the end," he mused, as he thrust his revolver into his pocket, and advanced at a more leisurely rate. "Rather than be taken alive, he has blown out his brains! It was not the end I had looked forward to; but, after all, it seems he was not so 'game' as I gave him credit for being."

He stifled a sigh of regret, for this tame ending of the duel disappointed him. The charabanc went down the road without stopping, and no one in all her numerous company seemed to be aware of the tragedy that apparently had taken place. Maybe the noise of the engine had drowned the sound of the shot, and the Shadow lay concealed by the stone wall.

Nelson Lee glanced around. The great vehicle was speeding away in the distance, there was no house in sight, not a human being in sight to help him.

"This is awkward," he muttered under his breath. "I don't like to leave him lying here while I go for help, and yet—"

The sentence was never finished. While he had been musing he had gradually been drawing nearer to the spot where the Shadow was lying, and at this moment the supposed dead man leaped swiftly to his feet and flung out his hand.

Crack!

The bullet seared the detective's temple, and he pitched forward helplessly on his face, his senses going out in a red smother of forgetfulness.

When he came round half an hour later, the Shadow had vanished. He could hardly have expected anything else, and all that was left to him to do was to struggle into the nearest village and arouse the postmaster. This he did, only to find that a man answering to the description of the Shadow had been there before him and had sent a telegram to a house near Ostend—in cipher, of course—a message there was no time to decode.

When Nelson Lee sent a telegram the operator reported that something was wrong with the instrument, and a brief tour of inspection showed that the wires had been cut outside the village. But this obstacle was not insurmountable, although it meant a loss of valuable time. A car was procured, and the detective was soon whisked away to the next telegraph office, from which he sent his various messages.

After that he motored to Dover as hard as he could go, waiting only to have his wound dressed, and at three o'clock on the following morning he arrived at Ostend and was shaking hands with the chief of the Ostend police.

"A thousand welcomes, my brave comrade," cried that official. "You have put us all to shame! Alone, you have succeeded where the Secret Service agents of three Governments have failed. I salute you in the sacred name of the majesty of the law! You have covered yourself with glory."

"H'm, I rather thought I'd made a pretty considerable hash of the affair," growled Nelson Lee. "However, I gather from your words that M'sieur Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell are safe."

"But yes!" said the delighted chief. "They are now at M'sieur Duprez's villa, waiting to offer you the assurance of their most profound esteem."

"And the Shadow's confederates?" asked Nelson Lee. "Pierre Leon, who owned the house, and the Scorpion—what of them? You have arrested them? Or were you too late?"

"Alas, m'sieur, we were too late!" said the chief. "I received your wire about half-past ten, and motored at once to the villa, accompanied by a dozen of my men. There we found M'sieur Duprez and Sir Maurice Powell imprisoned in two of the upper rooms—but nobody else."

"From subsequent inquiries," he continued, "I learn that Leon received a telegram about nine o'clock, and—judging by the state of the house—he and his confederate must have jumped to their feet, clapped on their hats, and rushed away. A kettle was boiling on the fire, and on the table were the remains of an unfinished meal—two half-empty cups of coffee, some bread that had been partly eaten, half a sausage roll, and a half-eaten egg. Everything, in fact, pointed to the conclusion that they had rushed out of the house the moment they had read the telegram."

"You have tried to trace them, of course?"

"Yes, but with no result."

"You have set a watch on the frontiers and on all the steamers to and from Ostend?"

"My faith, yes! I am not a child, that I should neglect such obvious precautions."

"You have searched the house?"

"Yes."

"Any clue to the identity of the Shadow?"

"None whatever."

"You will permit me to search it again, I presume?"

"Certainly; we will go there together. But first you must come with me to the villa of M'sieur Duprez to receive the congratulations of your clients."

Nelson Lee was half-inclined to refuse to go. For one thing, the rescued men were not actually his clients, although he did not tell the Chief of Police that fact. He had no use for idle compliments and did not want thanking, but he went to the villa, just in case the rescued men were able to throw any light on the identity of the Shadow.

This hope, however, proved in vain, and the visit, prolonged rather unnecessarily by the exuberance of M'sieur Henri Duprez in his cordial thanks and offers of reward, did not come to an end until five o'clock.

HALF an hour later, Nelson Lee and the Chief of Police arrived at Leon's house, where almost the first thing that caught the detective's eye was a small red-backed notebook lying on the floor underneath the table on which the unfinished meal was spread.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, stooping down and picking up the book.

Then a cry of triumph burst from his lips.

"A clue at last!" he cried in a hoarse, excited voice.

"That thing a clue?" said the chief.

"Unless I'm greatly mistaken," said Nelson Lee, "this is Pierre Leon's private code-book—the book which contains the key to the secret cipher of the Shadow."

"Yes, it's a code-book, without a doubt," said the chief, glancing over the detective's shoulder. "But why do you call it a clue?"

"Because," said Nelson Lee, "I hope, with its aid, to decipher the telegram which the Shadow sent to Pierre Leon from Woodthorpe Post Office yesterday morning. I copied it out from the original. If we can do this we shall know, for a certainty, that this is the key to the Shadow's cipher."

"And also," said the chief, beginning to grow excited again, "if we can decipher that telegram, we shall know what instructions he gave to Leon and the Scorpion—where he told them to go to, what to do, where to meet him, and so forth. Shall I read out the letters and figures, while you refer to the code-book and write down the translation?"

"Not a bad idea," said Nelson Lee.

He tore out the page of his notebook on which he had copied the Shadow's telegram, and handed it to the chief. Then he tore out another page—a blank page—and announced that he was ready.

The chief read off the first batch of letters and figures. Nelson Lee consulted the code-book and wrote down on the blank page:

"LEEHOTONS."

The chief reeled off another group of letters and figures. Again the detective referred to the code-book, and again he wrote:

"CENTNOTAMON."

The chief sniggered. It had rather piqued his vanity that Nelson Lee should have found the code-book, which he and his men had overlooked, but this was balm to his wounded soul. The detective's vaunted clue had turned out to be no clue at all. The code-book was useless.

"Shall I read any more?" he asked, with a faint smile.

"Please," said the detective quietly.

The chief read out the next set of figures and letters. Once more the detective consulted the code-book, and then he wrote down:

"ENTTOBELOST."

The chief's merriment refused to be stifled any longer, and the room rang with his shout of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Nelson Lee, looking up.

"Leehotons Centnotamom Enttobolost!" chuckled the chief. "Wonderful, isn't it? Of course, you still believe that the code-book contains the key to this cipher?"

"Of course I do," said Nelson Lee. "These words are all jumbled together at present, but they only want rearranging. Since you seem unable to rearrange them yourself, let me do it for you."

He picked up his pencil and wrote:

"LEE HOT ON SCENT. NOT A MOMENT TO BE LOST."

The chief rose to his feet and bowed profoundly.

"Pardon, m'sieur," he said gravely. "I am a fool!"

The discomfited chief resumed his seat, and a few minutes later the rest of the telegram had been decoded. It then ran as follows:

"Lee hot on scent. Not a moment to be lost. Only hope of safety instant flight. Abandon prisoners and return England via Bruges, Antwerp, Harwich. Will meet you L.T. to-morrow."

"What does 'L.T.' mean?" asked the chief.

"Ask me another," said Nelson Lee. "I've no idea. I wish I had. But the rest of the message is clear enough. The Shadow warns Leon and the Scorpion that I am on their track, and he advises them to abandon their prisoners and take to instant flight. He orders them to proceed by train from Bruges to Antwerp, and by steamer from Antwerp to Harwich, and he promises to meet them at L.T.—wherever that may be—to-morrow."

"That's to-day, of course," said the chief. "But he left you for dead. Why should he have sent this message?"

"He hoped I was dead," replied Nelson Lee. "He could not be sure, and dared not stay to make sure. Besides, I might have dropped a message during my flight over Kent. I might have had wireless on that

aeroplane. He was not to know. But he knew that I had found him and had seen him come out of Leon's house, and that it would not be long before Leon's house was raided. So he played for safety, and it is to his credit that he thought of his confederates' safety, unless, of course, he feared that their capture might lead to his own unmaking. Still, they have got away now."

"But we may be able to capture them even yet," said the chief excitedly. "It's a long way round by Antwerp and Harwich. In all probability they won't have landed in England yet, so that if we get into touch with Harwich they'll arrest them when the boat arrives."

The detective shook his head.

"I'm afraid there's not much chance of that," he said. "They received this telegram at nine o'clock yesterday morning, and apparently they bolted off to Bruges the moment they had read it. When's the first train out of Bruges after nine o'clock?"

"Nine twenty-seven," said the chief.

"Well, they couldn't catch that one, that's certain," said Nelson Lee. "They couldn't do ten miles in twenty minutes. What's the next?"

"Twelve-thirteen."

"They'd catch that right enough. What time does it reach Antwerp?"

"At a quarter-past three in the afternoon."

"And the boat leaves Antwerp for Harwich at seven o'clock every evening," said Nelson Lee. "So they'd catch the boat all right."

"But what time does the steamer reach Harwich?" asked the chief. "That's the point."

"About half-past five in the morning," said Nelson Lee.

The chief whipped out his watch. He glanced at it, and rapped out an exclamation of chagrin.

"Malediction! Just too late!" he cried. "They landed in England a quarter of an hour ago. It's a quarter to six!"

"Is that all?" cried Nelson Lee, springing to his feet. "I thought it was very much later than that. If it's only a quarter to six, we've a chance of nabbing them even yet. Come along!"

He snatched up his hat, thrust the code-book and the telegram into his pocket, and darted from the room.

"Where are you going?" gasped the chief, as he panted after his more athletic confrère.

"To the telegraph office at Ostend, of course," said Nelson Lee. "The boat arrives at Harwich at half-past five, but the boat-train to London, by which Leon and the Scorpion are almost certain to travel, doesn't leave Harwich till six, and it will take an hour to an hour and a half to reach Liverpool Street."

"We motor madly to Ostend, and wire both Harwich and London. If we don't get them in the one place, we'll get them at Liverpool Street. At least, there is just a sporting chance, so we'll cable Scotland Yard a full description of Leon and the Scorpion,

(Continued on page 36.)

A Weekly Pow-Wow With The Editor!

My dear Chums,—
No doubt a good many of you, if not all of you, at some time or another, have seen a bat swooping and circling overhead at night. It's generally down a long country lane that you meet these eerie-looking creatures, and I bet you have been ready to hit them should they fly anywhere near you. There is something rather repulsive about bats, in spite of the fact that they are so small.

Now try to imagine for a moment meeting a bat, at night, well over two feet long. Gr-r-r-r! That's something to put the wind up you, what? And it certainly puts the wind up Nipper, for he meets one in next week's Detective-Thriller.

During his long association with Nelson Lee, the famous detective, Nipper has experienced some amazing adventures both at home and abroad. But I think he is ready to admit that facing the huge death bat just about caps the lot.

This adventure is only one of many that overtake both Nipper and his guv'nor when they set out to solve a sinister mystery which surrounds a fine old country manor. The story is entitled: "THE GREY BAT!" and it is simply packed with sensational adventures. Undoubtedly it is the best thriller yet.

"Waking Up St. Frank's!" E. S. Brooks' latest yarn of school life is a success. There's no doubt about that. Every letter I get from readers contains appreciation of this yarn.

Next week's chapters of "Waking Up St. Frank's!" is a whirlwind of action. The Fourth-Form is on the warpath with a vengeance. And they won't be satisfied until they have done something big. Well, you'll soon see what they can do when they try.

Here are a few more jokes sent in by readers which have won handsome prizes.

"I'm sorry to have to do this," said Johnny, as he spread the jam on the cat's face, "but I can't have suspicion pointing its finger at me!"

(J. Footer, 34, Argyll Street, Ryde, I.O.W.—a penknife.)

Small Boy (to Shopkeeper): "A pound of ochre, please."

Shopkeeper: "What, red ochre for painting bricks."

Small Boy: "No, tabby-ochre for my mother to make a pudding with."

(T. Lang, 86, London Road, South Stifford, Essex—a pocket wallet.)

Teacher: "The snake to which I refer is said to strike with mathematical precision."

Bright Pupil: "Do you mean an adder, sir?"

(C. Stampton, 23, Globe Road, Gravesend, Kent—a penknife.)



Letters to the Editor
should be addressed
to NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The old sailor was telling thrilling yarns to a small boy on the quay.

"It must be getting on for thirty years," he said, "when a bullet last grazed my head."

The boy smiled as he gazed up at the old man's bald head.

"Not much grazing left now, is there?" he ventured.

(E. Bamford, 185, Whitelees Road, Littleborough, Lancs—a pocket wallet.)

Angler: "Is there any chance of getting a bite, sonny?"

Sonny: "Yes, sir, if the farmer's dog comes along."

(P. G. Cope, 35, First Avenue, Carlton, Nottingham—a penknife.)

"So ye didna go awa' for a holiday this year, Mae."

"No, Sandy. The Macgregors wrote an' invited me to their place; and I'd like to have gone, but they forgot to enclose a stamped envelope for a reply."

(F. W. Minde, 100, Dalston Lane, E.8—a pocket wallet.)

**LOOK OUT FOR THIS COVER
NEXT WEEK!**



ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE!

(Continued from page 34.)

and with luck they'll be arrested as they step out of the train at Liverpool Street Station."

IT was a hope-inspiring plan, but nothing came of it. On reaching Ostend the detective wired both London and Harwich. From Harwich the answer came that the boat had arrived at five-thirty, and the boat-train had left for London at six; but none of the porters at the station remembered seeing any men answering to Nelson Lee's descriptions take their place in the train.

"So they haven't gone to London, it appears," said the chief, when Nelson Lee showed him the reply. "At least, they haven't gone by the boat-train."

"I'll wait till I hear from Scotland Yard before I give you my opinion on that point," said Nelson Lee. "They may have got into the boat-train at Harwich without the porters seeing them, or taking sufficient notice of them to remember them."

The answer came from Scotland Yard about half-past eight:

"Met train Liverpool Street. Saw and cross-examined every passenger. Men you describe certainly not on train. Have wired Harwich, ordering watch to be kept on all trains leaving for London later in day, and am arranging for similar watch to be kept at this end on all trains arriving from Harwich."

"Your inspector can set as many watches as he pleases," growled the chief. "But now that the scent has been lost you can take my word for it that it will never be picked up again."

"To a certain extent I agree with you," said Nelson Lee. "That is to say, I quite agree that Leon and the Scorpion have given us the slip for the present. But not for long, I hope. One thing we do know—they are heading for L.T. We must now find out what L.T. means."

"But how will you find out what L.T. means?" asked the chief.

"I have papers which I have captured from the Shadow's confederates," said Nelson Lee. "One letter was found in a house in Pimlico when we finished the great Abbeydale Sensation. The letter is in code and has never yet been deciphered. The clue may be there. In any case, I shall see. I must return to London immediately."

CHAPTER 13.

Unmasked!

THE letter, in cipher, which had been found in the house at Pimlico on the conclusion of the Abbeydale case had been scrutinised by a good many people, but no one had yet succeeded in unravelling its meaning. Nelson Lee himself

had spent a good many hours in trying to decipher the letter. But all his efforts had ended in failure, and, although he had preserved the letter, of course, he had long ago given up all hope of ever deciphering it.

But the discovery of Pierre Leon's code-book altered the whole situation, and he hastened to his rooms in the Gray's Inn Road as soon as he arrived in London. There was just the chance that the secret to the mystic letters, L.T., would be cleared up. And by six o'clock he had deciphered the letter, with the aid of Leon's code-book, and had copied out the translation in his notebook.

The gist of the letter was of very little importance, but what did interest Lee was the concluding sentence of the letter:

"The Scorpion will meet you at half-past eleven, at 15, Lambeth Terrace, and provide you with the necessary disguise."

Lambeth Terrace! That was what L.T. meant! That was where the Shadow had promised, in his cipher telegram, to meet his two confederates!

"Fifteen, Lambeth Terrace! That's the place, without a doubt!" muttered Nelson Lee, quivering with suppressed excitement. "And, now I come to think of it, Dr. Burton said, after the Abbeydale case, that the house to which he was taken to attend to the Shadow was somewhere in Lambeth. Yes, everything points to the same conclusion. Leon and the Scorpion are now at 15, Lambeth Terrace, and the Shadow is going to meet them there this very day—may even be there now!"

Ten minutes later the detective was in a taxi and on his way to Scotland Yard.

"Ah! Here you are at last!" said Inspector Deakin, when Nelson Lee burst into the latter's room, shortly after half-past six. "We're still keeping watch on the Harwich trains, but up to now——"

The detective cut him short, told him what had happened, and showed him the translation of the letter. The two men then adjourned to the Chief Commissioner's room, where a hasty and informal conference was held. And almost exactly on the stroke of seven Nelson Lee and Inspector Deakin, accompanied by half a dozen constables, left the "Yard" for Lambeth Terrace.

It was a quarter-past seven when the eight men turned into Lambeth Terrace. It was raining heavily, and, except for themselves, the dingy little street was quite deserted.

Under Nelson Lee's instructions, three of the constables stole round to the rear of the house, and posted themselves in the yard at the back. The other three stationed themselves in front of the house, prepared to rush in when Nelson Lee gave the signal. Then Nelson Lee and the inspector marched up to the front door and rang the bell.

Leon and the Scorpion were still sitting in the drawing-room, and discussing the probable nature of Lockwood Beck's next move, when they heard the bell.

"Who's that?" asked Leon.

"Don't know," said the Scorpion, laying down his pipe.

He shuffled to the end of the passage and opened the door. No sooner had he done so than he recognised the face of Nelson Lee. The next instant the detective had him by the throat, and in a flash he was lying on his back on the passage floor with a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

Alarmed by the Scorpion's cry, Leon leaped to his feet and rushed into the passage, into the arms of Inspector Deakin. And before the terrified Belgian had realised what was happening, he, too, had a pair of bracelets on!

Never was a victory more complete or more easily won. In two minutes the police were in possession of the house, and Leon and the Scorpion were in custody.

IT was a bitter disappointment to Nelson Lee to find that the Shadow was not in the house. He questioned Leon and the Scorpion; but, to their credit let it be said, they both indignantly refused to disclose the identity of the Shadow, or to say where he was.

"Then we must search the house," said Nelson Lee.

The search was begun forthwith, and great was the surprise of the police when they came across the marvellous collection of disguises and the equally marvellous assortment of up-to-date burglar's tools and implements.

But greater still—a thousand times greater still—was their surprise when Nelson Lee, at the end of half an hour's search, suddenly cried out in a voice that vibrated with excitement and triumph:

"I've got it! I know who he is! The Shadow is unmasked at last!"

"Who is he?" cried Inspector Deakin.

"Lockwood Beck!" cried Nelson Lee.

"Lockwood Beck, the eminent young scientist, of Albion Villa, Grove End Road!"

The detective's sensational announcement was greeted with cries of stupefied amazement, not unmixed with incredulity.

"But where's the proof?" asked the inspector.

The detective pointed to a heap of clothes which he had taken from one of the wardrobes.

"I've been through the pockets of these suits," he said, "in the hope of finding some clue to the Shadow's identity. And I've found one! You will remember, in the Abbeydale case, that one of the Shadow's favourite disguises was that of Otho Kontos, the Greek handwriting expert. You will also remember that a little over three months ago I paid a visit to Otho Kontos at his office in Basinghall Street, but he saw that I suspected him, and was about to murder me when I was rescued by Wolf, my Alsatian. The dog seized him by the arm, but he shot the dog in the leg, thus forcing him to relax his grip, and so made his escape."

He picked up a coat, the sleeve of which was torn in several places and stained with blood.

"This is the coat he was wearing on that occasion," he said. "And in one of the pockets I found this!"

He showed the inspector a half-sheet of notepaper, folded in four. On one side of the sheet was an embossed address, below which were several pencilled notes. The address was Albion Villa, Grove End Road, St. John's Wood, W. The notes were the notes of a chemico-electrical experiment relating to the effect of ultra-violet light on the vapour of methyl iodide.

"That is plain enough," admitted the inspector. "But scarcely proof."

"Turn the paper over," said Nelson Lee.

The inspector did so, and on the other side were the plans of Abbeydale Manor, with the position of the library, and the safe clearly marked. It was only a rough drawing and made to a small scale, and it showed the lie of the surrounding country, together with the position of the cottage in which, as Jean Lerouge, the French artist, the Shadow had stayed for a while before making his coup in that sensational case.

"Is that proof enough?" asked Nelson Lee.

"I need no more," said the inspector. "You're quite right. At last the mystery is solved. The Shadow is Lockwood Beck! He must have forgotten the existence of that paper and failed to destroy it. We must arrest him at once before he gets wind of our discoveries."

"Excuse me, sir," said one of the constables, stepping forward, "Mr. Beck is lecturing to-night at the rooms of the Royal Scientific Institution in Hanover Square."

"By Jove, so he is!" cried Nelson Lee. "I'd forgotten that! The lecture is advertised to begin at seven, and it's now a few minutes past eight. 'We'll drive to Hanover Square right away and arrest our man there!'"

THE lecture-room at the Royal Scientific Institution in Hanover Square was packed to suffocation. Lockwood Beck was popular and had a reputation amongst scientific folk, who had thronged to hear his lecture on "Ancient and Modern Explosives." As the lecturer proposed to illustrate his lecture with experiments, prudence had suggested that he should have the platform to himself; therefore Lockwood Beck was in sole possession of the rather small stage.

"And now, my lords, ladies and gentlemen," he said, shortly before nine o'clock, "I now pass on to an entirely new explosive, which differs in many respects from any of those of which I have already spoken. It is an explosive of my own invention, to which I have ventured to give the name of Beckite. The peculiarity of my new explosive is its extremely limited and concen-

(Continued on page 44.)

BUSTER BOOTS'



War to the Knife!

TRICKED, by George!" gurgled Handforth faintly.

He had managed to fight his way through the coating of whitewash which had smothered him, and now he was looking up and down the Remove passage in a dazed, breathless way. He saw a scene of indescribable chaos.

Travers and several other unfortunates were trying to pick themselves up round about the door of Study H, and they were all slithering and sliding in the flood of black motor-oil which had descended upon them, and which was now flowing thickly and stickily on the floor. Feathers were flying in all directions.

Further down the passage, Archie Glenthorne, bleating like a lost sheep, was sitting disconsolately in a pool of red paint; and he had transferred so much of this paint to his person that he was a truly fearsome object.

Forrest and Gulliver and Bell, of Study A, were festooned with kitchen refuse—potato peelings, cabbage leaves, fish heads, and similar

delicacies. Quite a number of fellows, warned in the nick of time, had pulled up short, before walking into the booby traps. But the Fourth Form jape could be called an unqualified success, nevertheless.

"My sons, let us give due praise to the enemy," said Vivian Travers, in a sad, if oily, voice. "We've got to hand it to Boots this time!"

"The—the miserable rotter!" roared Handforth. "Oh, my goodness! Look at all this mess!"

"No good looking at it—we'd better clear it up," said Church anxiously. "Jiggered if I can understand why a prefect hasn't come! If we're lucky, we might clear things up before a master spots us."

"I can't get over it!" said McClure dizzily. "Boots and his crowd were only spoofing us when they came on that raid! They were just drawing us away from our studies—so that another crowd of Fourth-Formers could come in and set these traps!"

"Brilliant, dear old fellows—you can't deny

CHALLENGE!

Fighting James Kingswood, the new headmaster of St. Frank's, who has very original ideas, is determined to put an end to all slackness. One morning insulting epithets are found painted on the doors of the Fourth-Former's studies. This arouses their wrath, and causes them to go on the warpath against the Remove, whom they accuse of being the culprits.

it,” said Travers. “It’s the sort of jape that we, ourselves, might have thought out! Well, well! My opinion of the Fourth is vastly changed!”

Apparently, Fighting Kingswood’s spirit roved in the school, even though he was absent. For in the height of the noise and commotion in the Junior quarters of the Ancient House, Mr. Alington Wilkes, strolling with Fenton, from the latter’s study in the Sixth Form passage, heard the echoes of the din. And the Housemaster and the Head Prefect looked at one another with mutual understanding. There could be no mistaking the meaning of the tumult.

“If you’ll excuse me, sir——” began Fenton.

“I think not, old chap,” said Mr. Wilkes gently. “I want you to come to the study with me.”

“But those youngsters seem to be——”

“I was telling you about my new wireless, Fenton,” went on Old Wilkey calmly. “I’m really proud of the set. It’s all electric, of course, and there are no less than seven valves. I can bring in such stations as Rome and Katowice and Prague at full loudspeaker strength with the greatest of ease.”

With the tumult swelling in their ears, the Housemaster and the prefect dived hastily into Mr. Wilkes’ study. Old Wilkey closed the door tightly, and then, without delay, he moved across to the radio and switched it on. But he did not attempt to get any foreign stations. He tuned in London Regional, and within a few moments the study was filled with the loud strains of a military band. So loud was the music, in fact, that every sound from outside was completely drowned.

“Good, isn’t it?” yelled Old Wilkey.

“Splendid, sir!” roared Fenton.

“Excellent tone, eh?” bellowed Mr. Wilkes.

“Never heard better!” roared Fenton.

To make absolutely sure, Old Wilkey increased the volume, and then he and Fenton calmly sat down and listened. They were both perfectly satisfied that they could not, in any circumstances, be aware of any trouble that might be occurring in the Junior quarters.

“I think this band will carry on for at least another twenty minutes!” shouted Mr. Wilkes significantly.

“Twenty minutes, sir!” bellowed Fenton, with a grin. “Yes, sir—I understand!”

And he did. Within twenty minutes the Junior scrap would not only be over, but any mess resulting from it would probably be cleared up.

Fenton came to the conclusion that there was something in the new Head’s idea of being unusually deaf and blind at certain periods.

The School Captain was only too well aware of the fact that the Fourth Form had been stagnant for many terms. To-day there was a new rivalry in the air; the Fourth had been jolted into action.

If the “beaks” came down heavily upon the Juniors now this welcome rivalry might well be killed on the spot. Leave the Juniors to themselves, however, and no real harm would be done—and, perhaps, quite a lot of good.

Exactly how right this view was can be judged by the amazing rapidity with which the Removites worked. Old Wilkey’s twenty minutes estimate was astonishingly near the mark.

For the Juniors, finding that nobody in authority jumped upon them, rose to the occasion. Working like Trojans, they cleared up the appalling mess in the Remove passage. It was a case of all hands to the pump—and all hands worked with a will.

There was no time for anger or indignation now. The main thing—the only thing—was to obliterate the traces of the recent trouble.

Having cleared up the Remove passage, the Juniors raced upstairs, and there was hectic activities in the bathrooms and the dormitories.

Less than half an hour later, when Mr. Wilkes happened to stroll into the Junior quarters, he found everything quiet and sedate. There were certainly a few traces of whitewash and oil smeared about the walls—and on the floor, too—but Mr. Wilkes was very unobservant. He found the boys apparently normal.

But they weren’t normal. Handforth, Watson Gresham and lots of others were seething with fury—they were spoiling for revenge.

And an impromptu meeting was held, immediately, in the Common-room.

"It's war to the knife now!" said Handforth breathlessly. "By George! We got out of that affair all right. One or two prefects have been strolling about, but they haven't noticed anything wrong—so we're safe. But what the dickens are we going to do about those giddy Fourth-Formers?"

"I don't think we can do anything this evening, dear old fellows," said Travers, shaking his head. "There's no sense in being precipitate."

"I'm jiggered if I can understand how we got away with it," went on Handforth. "I mean, all that mess in the passage! And not a master or a prefect came near us until it was all cleared up!"

"I rather think we've got to thank Fighting Kingswood for that," said Travers cheerfully. "I don't pretend to know how—but that man is a gift from the gods! Before he became Head, do you think we could have had all this din without prefects and Form-masters jumping on us?"

"Never mind that," said Handforth impatiently. "Why can't we go across to the Modern House——Hallo! What the——Hi!" he howled suddenly. "I—I'm stuck!"

"What!"

"This chair!" babbled Handforth, trying to pull himself out. "My bags! I'm stuck to the giddy seat!"

There was an ominous rending sound as he gave a sudden wrench. And at the same moment Travers, with a yelp of dismay, discovered that he was stuck, too! At least six other juniors were in a similar predicament—and they had all been sitting in the comfortable easy chairs with which the Junior Common-room was provided.

"And we might have known!" groaned Jimmy Potts. "Crumbs! Boots and his gang did the thing thoroughly, didn't they? Liquid glue all over these chairs."

It was a fact.

The glue, owing to the delay, had become glossy and hardened—so that when the victims had first sat down they had noticed nothing. But their natural warmth had very quickly had its effect—and the results were disastrous—leading to the hasty changing of trousers which had not only become exceedingly sticky but also exceedingly draughty!

The Challenge!

MEANWHILE, certain interesting events had come to pass in the West House.

This, another stronghold of the Remove, had not been left out of the Fourth-Former's plans for the evening. But the methods employed here were very different from those used in the Ancient House. Buster Boots, the Commander-in-Chief, had decided upon a series of hammer blows, so that the Remove would be stunned into a realisation of its inferiority.

Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey, in Study O, were busy with their prep. But once or twice they paused, listening. It was at this period that the trouble in the Ancient House was just commencing.

"Seems to be a lot of noise," commented Jack, frowning. "Don't you think we'd better

buzz out and have a look, Reggie? I believe those Fourth-Formers are up to something."

But Reggie, like the Ancient House Removites, had a supreme contempt for the Fourth.

"Boots and his gang are good at noise," he commented. "I don't see any reason why we should interrupt our prep——"

And then the door opened, and the Remove skipper and his study mates were astonished, not to say startled, to see the face of Len Clapson.

It was a plain face, even an ugly face, with a wide mouth and big ears. But it was relieved by a pleasant grin. Clapson was a Modern House Fourth-Former, and he shared Study No. 3 with Harry Oldfield and Billy Nation.

"Hallo, images!" said Clapson cheerily.

Pitt and Grey stared, speechless.

"Working?" asked Clapson. "I suppose you mouldy Removites do work occasionally. What's the matter with your face, Pitt?"

"My-my face?" repeated Pitt, unconsciously putting a hand up.

"It looks more like an underdone batter pudding than a face," continued Clapson critically. "In fact, I've seen better faces in the Chamber of Horrors!"

The novelty of the situation relieved Pitt and Grey of most of their breath. Never before, in their experience, had a Fourth-Former dared to come alone into a rival House, and make insulting remarks on the subject of people's faces.

"Look here——" began Pitt wrathfully, rising to his feet.

"You're not wearing a mask by any chance?" asked Clapson anxiously. "I can't really believe that this atrocious thing is actually your face. It's not even human. I once saw a chimpanzee, at the Zoo, with a much better face."

"You—you cheeky Fourth-Form fathead!" roared Pitt, robbed of his usual calmness. "Hi! Grab him, Jack!"

Both the Removites leapt round the table and dashed to the door. And Len Clapson, with a derisive chuckle, bolted. As he did so the door of Study P opened, and Nick Trotwood and Fatty Little came out. They were just a shade too late to stop the fugitive.

"After him!" yelled Pitt. "Buck up, Remove! There's a cheeky Fourth-Former over here!"

They tore down the passage in pursuit of Clapson, and it was remarkable that Clapson, instead of making for the nearest exit, was penetrating into the depths of the building.

He spun round a corner, hesitated in dismay, glanced fearfully at his pursuers, and raced on again.

He was evidently trapped. In his panic he had blundered, and—— He wrenched at a door, pulled it open, and vanished.

"We've got him now!" panted Reggie Pitt. "The fathead has gone down into the cellar, and he's in a trap! By jingo! We'll teach him!"

By this time Levi and Goodwin and Evans, of Study F, had joined in the chase, and they all plunged down into the cellar.

No sooner had they reached the bottom of the steps than disaster overtook them.

A football net, descending apparently from nowhere, enveloped them within its folds, and they were hopelessly entangled. Chuckles sounded from the gloomy corners of the cellar, and many figures ran quickly forward, grasping at the net, drawing it tighter.

"Seven of 'em here," said Clapson contentedly. "Not a bad catch to begin with!"

"We'll fish 'em out one by one," came the voice of Timothy Armstrong, of the East House.

The unfortunate Removites attempted to yell, but they were quickly silenced. Entangled in that net, they could not even put up a fight. Blindly, rashly, they had fallen into one of the simplest imaginable traps.

Full marks must be awarded to Len Clapson for his daring. If he had got into the hands of the enemy he would have been severely ill-used; but in the great name of the Cause he once again ventured forth—and repeated the process.

It was more dangerous now, for the West House Removites were becoming aroused. But Clapson again succeeded, and he brought another batch of unsuspected juniors to the cellar, where they were caught in the net, and speedily rendered helpless.

The whole thing was timed beautifully.

For these events in the West House were taking place simultaneously with the trouble in the Ancient House. Thus, Reggie Pitt and his followers were kept busy at the very time when their assistance would have been extremely useful in the Ancient House.

Three times, Clapson performed his venture-some stunt, and complete success crowned his efforts. Within ten minutes, in fact, the capture was complete.

Working swiftly, and with machine-like precision, the Fourth-Form raiders dealt with their victims. All this had been rehearsed; it had been planned to the last detail. So that when it came to the actual work, there was no hitch.

Having achieved their fell purpose, Armstrong and his assistants stole silently away. And only just in the nick of time. For by now a full half hour had slipped by, for much had been accomplished in the cellar. And over in the Ancient House all was quiet.

Changed once more, Handforth, Travers, and the other victims of the glue episode, gathered together in the Ancient House lobby. There was quite a crowd, in fact.

"Of course, we've got to do something—and we've got to do it at once," said Handforth grimly. "We can't let those fatheaded Fourth-Formers get away with a thing like this."

"I've been thinking, dear old fellows," said Travers, in a musing voice. "I wonder why Pitt and his crowd didn't come over to help us?"

The others stared.

"Perhaps they didn't know what was going on," suggested Watson.

"Bogad! Isn't that frightfully unlikely, dear boy?" asked Sir Montie. "Really, those West House lads aren't exactly deaf."

"H'm! It is funny," admitted Handforth. "I'd forgotten about Pitt and his crowd. Don't you think we'd better go over to the West House and make inquiries?"

"Just what I was about to suggest," nodded

Travers. "In any case, Pitt is the skipper, and it's up to him to decide what shall be done."

Handforth grunted. He cherished the delusion that he, and he alone, should be the Captain of the Remove. He saw no valid reason why Reggie Pitt should hold the reins. In any case, why a West House chap? Travers would have been a better skipper than Pitt! But Vivian Travers was quite content to follow Pitt's lead—Travers being an easy-going fellow with a distaste for responsibility.

"Come on—let's go over," said Watson, briskly.

They went in a body. They marched into West House lobby, into the Junior passages, and into the Common room. And, to their astonishment—and, indeed, to their rapidly growing suspicions—they found the Remove studies empty. The Common room was empty. The whole place had a barren, deserted look.

Reggie Pitt and his stalwarts were missing!

"Well, well! This looks uncommonly fishy, dear old fellows," said Travers, halting uncertainly. "I hate to think it, but everything indicates that our West House colleagues have met with disaster."

"Disaster!" ejaculated Handforth, startled. "You—you don't mean that the Fourth-Formers have— By George! It *does* look funny, though!"

De Valerie came running up.

"I say! There are some rummy noises down in the cellar!" he panted.

"My only hat!" breathed Travers, staring at the others. "I wonder?"

But neither he nor his companions wondered for long. They dashed for the cellar door at top speed. They wrenched it open, and tumbled down the steps. Somebody switched the light on—and then came the shock.

There, on the cellar floor, ranged in rows, were Reggie Pitt & Co. And all of them were roughly bound hand and foot—and they were literally foaming at the mouths.

"Great Scott!" yelled Handforth in horror. "What's—what's the matter with them?"

But there was really no need for alarm. Every prisoner was gagged by means of a scarf—and once these were removed, the victims commenced spluttering, coughing and gasping.

"Oh, my goodness!" gurgled Reggie Pitt, who was one of the first to be released. "The rotters! The blighters! They trapped us—and we were idiots enough to fall for it!"

"But—but what's all—all this foam?" asked Handforth in amazement.

"Soap!" said Pitt fiercely.

"What!"

"The bounders gagged us with chunks of soap before they bound the scarves round our faces," replied Pitt, making horrid grimaces. "Pah! Poooh! I shall taste soap for weeks!"

Their situation was even worse, for every West House Removite carried a cardboard label, and, daubed upon it were legends similar in character to those insulting epithets which had been the commencement of all the trouble.

John Busterfield Boots had issued his challenge. He had flung down the gauntlet—

and now, in very truth, it would be war to the knife between the Remove and the Fourth.

Mysterious!

"SOMETHING," said Reggie Pitt soberly, "has got to be done!"

The Removites were holding an impromptu mass-meeting in the West House Common room, and every face was serious. Many, indeed, were expressive of mingled wonder and incredulity.

"I can't believe it—even now," said Jack Grey. "I mean, those mouldy Fourth Form chaps. What's come over them?"

"We all know what started the trouble," replied Reggie Pitt. "We don't know who played that jape, though—the fellow who painted the Modern House and East House doors has kept his secret pretty well."

"We thought it was a good jape at the time—but now I'm not so sure," said Fullwood shaking his head.

"It was good enough," replied Reggie Pitt grimly. "So good, in fact, that the Fourth has awakened from its long, long sleep. And it's no good blinding ourselves to the fact, my children, that we've been dealt a kick in the slacks. Unless we do something—and do it quickly—to recover our prestige the Fourth will be top dogs."

"That's impossible," said Handforth gruffly. "The Fourth's no good—never has been, isn't now, and never will be! We all know that!"

"We thought we knew it—but now we're not so sure," replied Reggie quietly. "We'd better face this situation squarely, my sons. The Fourth has declared war."

"Well, let's get outside—it isn't quite dark yet," said Forrest. "Perhaps we shall see some of the bounders."

They all went crowding out. But there was no likelihood of any further trouble that evening. For Mr. Kingswood, the Head, was much in evidence in the Triangle. He was, in fact, chatting with a group of prefects near the fountain.

Buster Boots and a crowd of his supporters were gathered round the Modern House steps. Lionel Corcoran, surrounded by his own crowd, was to be seen in the East House doorway.

And as the Remove fellows came into the picture, loud chuckles sounded from all sides.

"The bounders!" said Pitt, glaring. "They know jolly well that we daren't take any action—with the Head looking on!"

Fighting Jim Kingswood was happy. His eyes were wide open—and his ears missed nothing. He knew perfectly well that there had been trouble in the Junior school during his absence—that there was ample evidence that the trouble was now over, and that the juniors had skilfully covered up the traces. And it was equally patent that the spirit of rivalry between the Fourth and the Remove was keener than ever.

"Games, of course, are exceedingly important Fenton," the Head was saying. "I like to see keenness between the boys of the different Houses—not only of the Senior School, but in the Junior School, too."

"Of course, sir," said Fenton.

"You tell me that most of the keenness here is between the Ancient House and the West House," continued Mr. Kingswood, speaking so loudly that Buster Boots & Co. could not fail to hear. "It's a pity that the boys of the Fourth Form should be so lacking in that fighting spirit which means so much to a Form."

"Ahem! They seem to have the fighting spirit all right, sir," said Fenton drily.

"I mean, with regard to games," said the Head. "In the matter of japes, I think the Fourth can take care of itself—and I am not opposed to japing, so long as it remains good-natured and free from spite. But it is even more important that the boys should vie with one another at games."

He strolled away towards Big Arch, still talking with the prefects. And Buster Boots, turning to Bray, Denny, Christine, and the others around him, had a new gleam in his eyes.

"You heard that, you chaps?" he asked grimly.

"What the Head was saying about games, you mean?" asked Bob Christine.

"Yes," said Boots. "And, do you know, I believe he meant us to hear it! He was saying it for our benefit, my bucks!"

"Well, I don't see that we can do anything," replied Bob. "We're not good enough at cricket to take on the Remove—"

"Not good enough!" interrupted Boots aggressively. "Who says so? Cut that out, Christine!"

"Eh?"

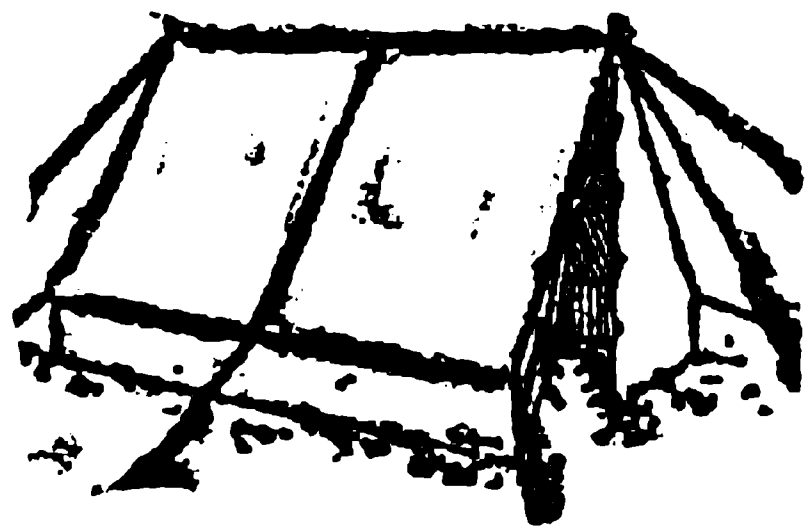
"From now onwards, we Fourth Form chaps are not going to say that we can't do this, or we can't do that!" went on Boots truculently. "We can do anything if we try—if we're determined! And, by thump, we're determined now!"

And, with a grim hunching of his shoulders, Boots strode across the Triangle until he came face to face with Reggie Pitt.

"Just a minute, Pitt!" said Boots loudly.

Instinctively, Handforth, Travers, and a number of other Removites gathered round, and most of them clenched their fists. In just the same way Fourth-Formers drifted up

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And the Headmaster still remained within sight.

"Very smart, Boots!" said Reggie calmly. "Congrattars, old man! Your stunts of this evening were quite good."

"That's jolly sporting of you!" said Boots, with sudden warmth. "By jingo! I'm glad that you Remove chaps are such sports!"

"You needn't think that you can get away with it, though," said Handforth darkly. "By the time we've finished with you——"

"We won't go into that now," interrupted Boots coolly. "I've just come over to say this—what's happened this evening is just the beginning."

"Oh!" said Reggie.

"It's a half-holiday to-morrow, and there is no regular fixture," continued Boots. "In the name of the Fourth I challenge the Remove to a single innings match."

"My poor innocent!" said Pitt sorrowfully. "Do you quite realise what you're doing? Do I hear aright? You, in the name of the Fourth, challenge the Remove to a game of cricket?"

"That's what I said!" nodded Boots.

"This is wondrous interesting," said Pitt. "Do you Fourth-Formers know what cricket is? It's a game. You play it with a ball—a leather ball—and there are instruments known as bats, and other instruments known as stumps——"

"You—you funny idiot!" roared Boots, flushing. "We know what cricket is—and we'll show you, to-morrow afternoon, that we can lick any moth-eaten eleven that you choose to select!"

And Boots, with his hands in his pockets, strolled back to his own side of the Triangle.

He left behind a group of amazing juniors.

"It's just their cocksureness," said Handforth, with a sniff. "They japed us this evening, and now they think they can whack us at cricket! By George! We'll take them down a peg or two to-morrow afternoon!"

And, as there was still some daylight, Handforth dashed off to the nets, with Church and McClure, to obtain a little practice. The Fourth Formers had already gone; for Boots' challenge had imbued them with fresh enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Biggleswade, and Conroy Major, two prefects of the Ancient House, happened to meet Sinclair and Parkin, of the East House. And Biggleswade complained somewhat bitterly.

"I wish you fellows would keep your kids in order!" he said. "I suppose you know that a crowd of them came over to our side this evening, and kicked up a terrific shindy?"

"Rather the pot calling the kettle black, isn't it?" asked Sinclair. "What did your kids do? Didn't they come over and paint our doors?"

"At least, they did it quietly," retorted Biggy. "They didn't disturb the peace."

A mild sort of argument resulted, and soon other seniors had joined the group.

Not unnaturally, the Ancient House and West House seniors took on a superior air—for what was true of the Junior School, was equally true of the Senior School. Everything

"big" was done by the fellows of the West Side.

"Well, it's going to be different, this term!" said Sinclair, with some truculence. "It's about time that the East Side put a stop to this sort of thing."

"It's in your own hands, old man," said Biggy. "But surely you don't think you can rob us of any of our honours, do you?"

Thus, subtly, the sense of rivalry was spreading to the seniors. The Sixth-Formers and Fifth-Formers of the East Side, who knew exactly what had been taking place that evening—although they all pretended not to—saw no reason why they should not brace themselves up, too.

* * * * *

"By George!" said Handforth, startled.

It was practically bed-time, and he and Church and McClure were just emerging from Study D. Handforth had turned back, and he was staring blankly into one of the corners of the room.

"What's up?" asked Church, glancing round.

"It's not there!" said Handforth.

"Eh? What's not there?"

"My cricket bat!"

"That's an easy one!" said Mac. "It must be somewhere else."

"Don't rot!" exclaimed Handforth anxiously. "You know jolly well that it's the best bat I've ever possessed. My pater gave it to me at the beginning of term, and—— My only sainted aunt! I've just remembered! I left it leaning against the Pav.!"

He hurried to the lobby, and luckily met Biggleswade, who was the most good-natured prefect in the Ancient House. Handforth quickly explained the trouble.

"All right," said Biggy. "You'd better cut off; but make it snappy, my lad!"

Handforth raced away, and his relief was great when, arriving at the Junior Pavilion, he found his precious cricket bat leaning against the wall where he had left it.

Hugging the bat under his arm, he ran lightly towards the gateway which led into the Triangle. But suddenly he paused. He had heard a scraping sound, comparatively near by. And now, glancing round he saw a figure rising against the skyline.

He checked, staring in wonder. For that figure was a man, and he was climbing over the wall from the Headmaster's private garden!

"Oh!" breathed Handforth, his detective instincts aroused. "A giddy sneak thief! A tramp, I suppose!"

He crouched near a neighbouring bush—for by now the figure had leapt lightly to the turf, and was actually coming in his direction, totally unconscious of his presence.

And then Handforth experienced a sudden shock. For in the moonlight he recognised the face. The man was Fighting Jim Kingswood himself!

(What is the meaning of the new headmaster's mysterious actions? See next week's sensational chapters of this Great School Story.)

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE!

(Continued from page 37.)

trated form. Although it is by far the most powerful explosive yet discovered, its action is confined to the spot where it explodes, or, at any rate, to an area of a few feet around that spot.

He bent over the table and picked up a small glass tube about the thickness of a lead pencil, which was rather more than half filled with a dark grey powder.

"This tube which I hold in my hand," he continued, "contains about five grammes of Beekite; that is to say, less than a quarter of an ounce. If I were to throw it to the ground at the feet of our worthy president, both he and the gentlemen on each side of him would instantly cease to exist, a large hole would be blown in the floor; but those on the row behind and I myself would experience nothing worse than a mild shock. But do not be alarmed. I propose to illustrate the properties of Beekite in a far less dramatic fashion. For instance, I will now—"

His voice died away in a low, hoarse whisper, and his face turned ashen grey. He had just caught sight of Nelson Lee, who was striding down the central aisle with Inspector Deakin at his heels!

It had come at last! The look of triumph on Nelson Lee's face and the businesslike air of the inspector told Lockwood Beck that at last he was unmasked. Quick as thought

he sprang towards the door on his left, then as quickly recoiled. There were six policemen in the ante-room. He darted to the door at the other end of the platform, then again recoiled. There were six policemen in that room, too!

At last he was trapped! Like a hunted animal at bay he stood in the centre of the platform, trembling in every limb, while the audience gazed at him in stupefaction. Then he thought he saw a way out. At least, if he could not escape, neither should Nelson Lee, the man to whom he owed this last humiliation!

The hand that gripped the tube of Beekite was suddenly raised in the air. But Nelson Lee had heard something of the last few words in the lecture.

"Stand back!" he cried, whipping out his revolver.

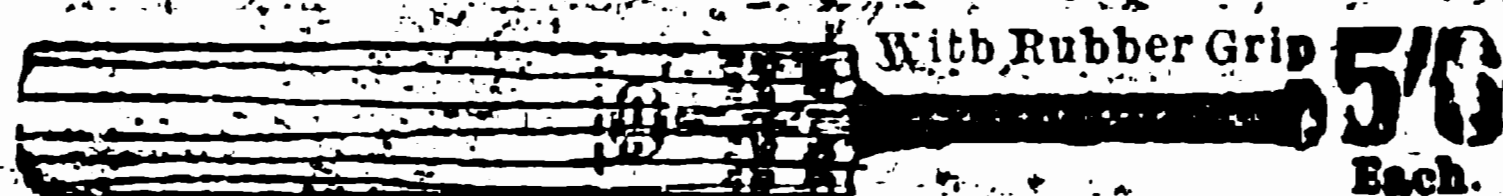
Crack! He fired, and the bullet struck Lockwood Beck's hand. The tube of Beekite dropped to the platform. There was an ear-splitting roar, a cloud of dust rose up, the air was full of sound, the splintering of glass, the rending of wood.

And then came silence! The dust and smoke cleared—a great hole was revealed in the platform, but the Shadow had gone to his last account!

THE END.

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