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**SEXTON BLAKE'S
OWN PAPER!**



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EVERY THURSDAY.

2^D



THE CASE OF THE STOLEN LOCOMOTIVES!

A Thrilling Story of Peril and Detective Adventure on Land and Sea, packed with fast-moving incident, featuring **SEXTON BLAKE** and **TINKER**, and **COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.**

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THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Tinker, in the days before he met Sexton Blake, comes into contact with a sinister criminal known as the Baron, whose plans, with the aid of a mysterious stranger—Mr. Allendale, or Nemo—he succeeds in thwarting on more than one occasion. Tinker is later captured by the Toff, one of the Baron's men. With the aid of some men from the "Wire" office, Mr. Allendale sets out to effect his rescue, and to capture the gang who are in an underground lair. They arrive there at about the time the Baron gets a secret message that the police are watching for him. The watchers see him turn to make his escape from the lair.

(Now read on.)

The Fight in the Dark!

“THERE is just this one more little surprise for our visitors,” said the Baron. He pulled out a square black tin box from which depended a length of insulated wire and an ordinary plug for fixing in the wall.

“There are ten sticks of dynamite in that,” he said. “I place it beneath the desk here, and mix the wall plug. By the time our inquisitive guests arrive and we are safely away and between the two pairs of armoured doors, I press a switch near one of the doors, and our friends get a lesson in high explosives. I think you will admit that I have forgotten nothing. Even at the height of my success I foresaw the possibility of some such device proving useful.”

“What next?” said the Toff. “What about trying to escape now through your private door?”

The Baron shook his head.

“When I went rattling as a boy, I always had a terrible warning one bell, whilst I watched the other, and what I missed the terrier got. There will be a whole pack of dogs sniffing round there by now. I have a better plan than that.”

“What about then?” The Toff nodded at Tinker.

“The boy must come with us, and for the time being, at any rate, he must come to no harm. To kill him now, though simpler in some ways, would be wasteful—extremely wasteful. It would be wiser, it would scarcely aggravate the danger of our position.”

“He has powerful friends. The owner of the ‘Wire,’ for instance, would spend a small fortune to avenge him, and incidentally fill his columns with more or less inaccurate reports of the steps taken to do so; and in the mean we know as the ‘Doctor’ I have noticed a certain sentimentality for the boy which would make him doubly dangerous if the youth were killed out of hand. If we can get away with him we can hold him to ransom—make terms. Our freedom and a liberal sum of money in exchange for his life. That once arranged, we can always start afresh in Paris or Brussels or Vienna. New York I regard as a bad field for criminal enterprise; one has to buy the police, and the police are too expensive. They eat up the greater share of the profits.”

The Toff nodded.

“But how is it to be done?” he asked.

“Leave it to me, and I will show you,” said the Baron, glancing at his watch. “It is time for us to be moving. Hardy, I can trust to your wife to look after my little friend, the little white rat, for me during our temporary absence.”

“Yes, yes, yes.”

“Good! I have given her instructions as to his bread and milk. A valuable animal that, Hardy—very valuable. Come, bring that brat with you!”

He crossed towards the door giving on to the secret passage, opened it, and stood listening intently.

“Hut!” he said warningly. “There is something going on below there; we must hurry.”

Hardy stooped to pick Tinker up and swing him over his shoulder, and Allendale pulled the thread once more—three quick jerks.

Instantly Hardy, the war correspondent, and two other men came dropping through the grating, and stumbling towards him in the darkness.

Allendale waited just long enough to hear their footsteps, and then, with a shout, he thrust open the door in front of him and charged in.

The Toff and the Baron turned like lightning, but could not see for the instant because Hardy's stooping form was directly in line.

The Baron was the quickest to act.

“Out of the way, you fool!” he roared to Hardy, and switched off all the lights as Hardy leapt aside.

Instantly a perfect hail of lead swept the darkness; but Allendale had been prepared for some such move. Almost before the Baron's hand had left the switch he had flung himself face downwards on the flagstones, and the storm of lead swept high above him, leaving him untouched, though he dare neither answer it nor call out in warning to those behind him.

He crept forward a foot or two, and his hand touched something. It was Tinker's left arm bound tightly to his side. He pulled, but the dead weight was hard to move in his recumbent position. He reached out farther and pulled again with both hands, one of which came in contact with a hairy face. Without wasting time in asking questions, he tumbled out at it severely, and yelled to Hardy and those behind him:

“Shoot—and shoot high!”

He had got a grip on Tinker, and that was all he cared about for the moment. The war correspondent flashed an electric torch, which showed up the whole scene vividly, and three revolvers rang out—err-ah!—just as Hardy, scrambling to his feet, caught Allendale a heavy kick on the head with his boot. The next instant Hardy himself gave a grunt and a lurch. The war correspondent had marked him somewhere, but not soverly enough to disable him, for there was the clang of a closing door, and the plink, plink, plink of bullets on the iron sheeting a fraction of a second too late. Hardy, the Baron, and the Toff were gone, leaving Allendale hanging on to Tinker's arm amidst the rocking smoke.

(Look out for the next instalment of this popular and exciting yarn!)

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

"We Meet His Royal Highness at Midnight!"



THIS great gilded ball-room of the palace of Prince Carlos of Mauretavia—that comely and trouble-laden principality situated on the borders of Bosnia and Austria, was thronged with a brilliant crowd, even though it was not the season, and the majority of the official and diplomatic world were absent from the gay city, in the hills or at the fashionable gambling houses of Vienna.

The brilliant uniforms, the glittering stars, and coloured ribbons of the men, and the beautiful toilettes of the women, combined to form a perfect kaleidoscope of colour beneath the crystal chandeliers. Yet the British diplomat, accustomed to the dignified atmosphere of the Courts of Europe, might have been excused in likening the scene to a scene from some gorgeously staged comic opera, rather than to a gathering of the men who held the destiny of a small but populous country in their hands.

Brilliant though the setting was, the scene was gross and sordid. On the dark-skinned faces of the men were etched the lines which come of hard drinking and dissolute living, whilst the daring dresses and bold glances of the women were more fitting to the shady haunts of the city than to a Court reception of Prince Carlos.

Above the soft strains of a hidden orchestra the shouts of the revellers rose high, ringing through the lofty salons, dazzling with their painted ceilings, gilt mirrors, and giant palms.

It was a night of enroual and abandonment. Men drank deeply, laughed, and sang. Sang the ballads of fair Mauretavia in mellow harmony, which, mingling with the fiercer cries of those who found no pleasure in their cups, set the echoes ringing. Here, it awakened bitter discontent in the breasts of the peasants in the valleys below, who, staring up at the brilliantly illuminated windows, stroked their creaking black mountachios, and pondered in their hearts what fresh taxations would be piled on their overburdened shoulders to pay for the orgies which, for so many weeks now, had taken place at the palace.

Yet to-night it would seem that the usually gay Prince Carlos was in no mood for gaiety.

He wandered aimlessly through the throng, exchanging an occasional salute with the men, every now and then lending his hand to a woman. In his gorgeous Court dress, his left breast flaming with jewelled orders, he presented a strikingly handsome figure, though his face was effeminate.

His every movement seemed studied, yet his stiff elegance was on the most approved model of the ball-room.

On other occasions he wore the most hideous goggles and the heaviest of fur coats, and drove his racing-car daily through the streets of the city. He indulged in sports in impossible get-ups, used scent, wore his hair parted and pomaded in the centre, and was proud of his white, almost waxen, hands.



A weak and irresolute ruler, with political adventures always scheming and plotting at his elbow, he had brought a prosperous country to decay; a contented and industrious little kingdom to discontent and ruin.

And all this had come of recent years.

The snows of ten winters alone had fallen since Prince Carlos, beloved father of his people, had been laid in his grave, and Carlos, his son, had ascended the throne.

In the days of Alexis no fevered winds of political intrigue had whirled about the throne or fabled moral atmosphere filled those cities, sickness and performed bonfires. Alexis of Maureavia had been a ruler wise and just, and "Peace and prosperity to Maureavia," not a woman's beauty, had been the only toast in the halls of the palace.

In those days the great tracts of wine-lands and olive gardens of Maureavia had satisfied the wants of a simple and industrious people. A just taxation, levied only for the expenses of administration, was alone levied, and fires had glowed on the hearths of the peasants' cottages, and their children been well-clothed and well-fed.

They would have given their lives for their royal master, Alexis, those swarthy sons of the desert, of tall men had controlled so perfectly and ruled so wisely.

Now, as they stood in the valleys, staring up at the lights and listening to the unrestrained laughter sounding from those gilded halls, heard the fretful whimper of their ill-nourished children, and thought of those fasciades of Carlos, who demanded more at the track of wine-lands and olive gardens, their pulses quickened, and muscular hands closed tightly over the hilts of daggers.

And many, too, had a grievance beyond Prince Carlos. They cursed the name of Anne Borselli, consort of Carlos, who swept aside the best of the nation's women, and, with her beautiful features, the unspeakable woman's beauty which had made their royal master as wax in her hands, and had driven him to inflict further unjust impositions upon them in order to satisfy her expensive whims.

Six months only had elapsed since Carlos had brought Anne Borselli to the palace as his bride. The woman had been little else but an adventuress of the old Vienna courts, and when on one of his frequent pleasure-expeditions to the gay capital, Carlos had fallen an easy victim to her beauty and wiles.

With her had come the spongers and riff-raff that had clung about the old Austrian throne, who, in the lean times following the war, had devoted little else to the sinking ship, and stuck like leeches about the salons of Carlos, where the wine flowed freely, and a portion of the public funds of poor, strangled Maureavia found its way into their pockets.

Now, however, ruled by his vice and shame, Anne Borselli moved with superb carriage through the continuous functions, official balls, and court receptions—the gay, irresponsible world of intrigue and scandal, of gaudy uniforms and glittering decorations, which to her was the breath of life.

To-night Count von Dreschler sat at her side, a stout, well-preserved Teuton of military swagger, who had followed in her train from Vienna.

Among the glittering orders on his breast was the plain black-and-silver Iron Cross, pinned there as was his badge, by the Emperor of Germany for his services in the German Secret Service.

Possessed of a wide knowledge of men, and a deep, wily cunning, Von Dreschler held the confidence of Carlos, and took care that nothing occurred to shake or imperil it. He was a power, and owed his position to the way he now held as Minister of War to his ingenious methods and plausible tongue.

His highly respectable exterior was inspiring, and the veneer of elegant refinement covering his portly carcass had opened to him the best social circles of Austria and Maureavia, political adventurer though he was, and, in many quarters, suspected to be.

Upon the stormy sea of intrigue and espionage his Excellency and Anne Borselli had often sailed together, and although many times they had run before the wind towards the shoals of exposure, they had somehow always managed to escape disaster.

To the most casual eye it was palpable that the beautiful Anne Borselli deflected this U. J.—No. 1,266.

gross Teuton; yet, held together by the bond of gain, they worked together constantly, both enjoying excellent, though unscrupulously earned remuneration in consequence.

"Well, your Highness, have you paved the way for our conference to-night?" said the minister, speaking without a trace of Teutonic accent. "I caught sight of his Highness in the crowd a few minutes ago. Evidently the usually gay Carlos is in no mood for revelry. Small wonder, either, considering the grave issues which hang in the balance."

Anne Borselli spread out her fan, waving it with affected laziness.

"I have done everything possible," she drawled, in a low and musical voice. "The only man in the kingdom with sufficient influence over his Highness to persuade him that we again his brother, Prince Carlos of Bolivia, is the only way to stir Maureavia clear of the rocks of financial disaster, is yourself, my dear count."

His Excellency Count von Dreschler smiled slyly.

"And rest assured, my beautiful Anne, that I shall exert that influence to the utmost," he said. "Never a wealthy, although always a prosperous country, Maureavia will soon crumple beneath the demands the joint extravagances of yourself and the gay Carlos make upon its coffers."

"Already there is a movement afoot among the people to drive your husband from the throne. The recent taxes imposed have crippled all industry, and unless they are speedily removed and financial grants made to the distressed, a revolution is imminent."

"And if war is declared is there not a great risk of outside intervention?"

Anne Borselli dropped her affected drawl, and as she turned, her sparkling blue eyes on the coarse face of her companion, his Excellency detected something of nervousness in their depths.

"None at all, my dear Anne," he said, smoothing his sabre-tasche with a plump, white hand. "Whatever the issue of the war, it would in its way affect all European Power. You know my plan. Victory is certain."

"An interview with the Minister of Finance this morning assured me of the fact that sufficient money could be scraped together to purchase a quantity of artillery equipment and ammunition from the War Surplus Department of the Power I mentioned to you in confidence."

"The Maureavian infantry is splendidly equipped as it is, and our army will march into the field without being offered resistance."

"Prince Carlos, in spite of the fact that he has little regard for his brother, who, through foolish extravagances, has brought a prosperous country to decay, is entirely unprepared for war, and except for a few remnants of industry, a troop of indifferently mounted cavalry, and a battery of obsolete field guns, is without forces or suitable equipment."

"And how do the finances of Bolivia stand?"

Count von Dreschler rubbed his plump hands together, and in his pig-like eyes was a light of satisfaction.

"I regret the model rule of Prince Carlos, worthy son of his dead father, Alexis, Bolivia is as wealthy and prosperous as it is possible for a small and purely agricultural country to be," he said. "You know the history of the two countries, I suppose, my dear Anne?"

"Did not Alexis marry Constance of Bolivia?"

"Yes. And you will remember that the gay Carlos and the worthy Charles were the only two children of the marriage. They were twins, and when Constance died, the countries, which had been ruled jointly during her married life, were by her will placed once more under separate rule. Charles, her favourite, had the throne of Bolivia, your husband, even in his youth a spendthrift and a prodigal—your husband, my dear Anne—ascending the throne of his father."

His Excellency inclined his square and close-cropped head nearer his companion.

"There is little doubt that an indemnity of half a million could be extracted from the coffers of Bolivia," he said, in a low voice. "We must play our cards carefully, my dear lady, for if our other plans mature, much of the money will find its way into

our pockets. It is the greatest stake we have yet played for, but it is not unwise for us to be seen so much together." He bent low over her beriged hand, raising it to his coarse lips. "Hard as it is for me to deprive myself of your charming company, I cannot prompt you to bid you adieu until we meet at his Highness's midnight."

With an extravagant bow, the arch-schemer left her, and Anne Borselli, betraying nothing in her beautiful and dark-shinned features of the cupid in her heart, joined her husband, who was to be her cat's-paw, and that of the gross Teuton and political adventurer, Count von Dreschler.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. "Why Hesitate Any Longer? It Shall Be War!"



AT midnight, when the vast of the guests had departed, and the sounds of revelry had died away, three people had audience of Prince Carlos of Maureavia in his private apartments.

They were Anne Borselli, Count von Dreschler, and General Arturo Cardena, commander of the Maureavian forces.

Prince Carlos was sitting beneath a green-shaded reading-lamp, and before him was a parchment document bearing a red seal and ribbon, which, should his signature be appended, would blur his way through the peaceful wine-lands and olive-gardens of his brother's prosperous country, Bolivia.

In extension, it may be said of him that he smiled, charmed by the silver tongues of those who sought to profit in a ghastly way as it was, would not permit him to do this without a fight against his conscience.

As he sat there, his dark, melancholy eyes wandering from face to face, he betrayed in his twisting and restless fingers signs of the battle he was warring against his better self.

"You are certain, Count von Dreschler, that there is no other way out of our difficulties?" said his Highness, his fingers toying nervously with his quill. "Remember, I place implicit confidence in your judgment."

His Excellency bowed low to hide the exultation in his crafty eyes. His keen, clear forehead and wide knowledge of men told him that in his Highness's nervous glances lay access to his way plans.

War against Bolivia is the only measure which can save Maureavia from bankruptcy and revolution, your Highness," he said. "The country is fast becoming strangled."

"I had audience with the Minister of Finance this morning, and his accounts show that the country has been squeezed dry. Disaster is imminent, unless you take the step I so strongly advocate."

His Highness sighed, and glanced wearily at the document before him.

"Yes! He longed to listen to the insistent voice of conscience within him, and yet, with a sigh, he signed the document, the expenses of his splendid palace, his maintenance villa at Monte Carlo, and palatial house at Vienna, how could he refuse the alluring prospect of half a million indemnity?"

He regarded the necessary for his very existence. He turned his eyes upon the beautiful face of Anne Borselli, and his haggard lines were smoothed as if by magic from his face.

"The war witchery in her eyes as she smiled upon him, her husband and cat's-paw—witchery to charm this monarch of a great little nation to trample upon his better self and let the evil in him work its will in order that he might lavish upon her the costly jewels and dresses which were to his only bonds holding her to him."

"And if I do this thing, are you certain that the Army will be with me, General Cardena?" he asked heavily.

The general, who by Count von Dreschler's clever manoeuvring had been given the rank of commander of the Maureavian forces, stepped briskly forward and saluted.

He was a soldierly, middle-aged man, dressed in the early uniforms of pale blue, gold, and crimson. He wore a sword, and a cane, and a livid red scar, acquired

in a dust in his cadet days, lent an evil expression to his yellow features.

"The Army is loyal, your Highness," he said, drawing himself erect. "Ten thousand men would bare their blades in any case you nominate to-morrow if necessary."

He went to the window and tore aside the curtains. In the courtyard below a hundred officers were drawn up.

"Come to the balcony, your Highness," he invited. "These men, my most trusted officers, whose fathers served your father, would die for you!"

Carlos went to the balcony. Somewhere a military band was playing the Mauretavian National Anthem. The music, martial and stirring, quickened his pulses, and flushed his cheeks.

Like an old war horse who long after the battle bears the scars of the battle, he flung back his head. In the light of a hundred torches a sea of upturned faces met his.

He went to the desk and dashed out a goblet of wine. As he returned to the window he held it high above his head, and it flashed with ruby-red gleams in the torch-light. In that moment he forgot his conscience.

"Mauretavia!" he cried. "Victory and prosperity for Mauretavia!"

A hundred voices gleamed like tongues of silver light. The answer was thundered back to him from a hundred throats.

"Carlos! Carlos! Carlos!"

He raised the goblet to his lips, drinking the red wine at a gulp, afterwards dashing the vessel to the floor. The officers were singing the National Anthem now, but had Carlos been more observant he would have noticed that those who had followed in the train of Count von Dreeschler from Vienna shouted the loudest, with more fire than the rest.

With a pleased and innate smile his Highness drew close the curtains, and returned to his desk. His cheeks were flushed with enthusiasm, and Count von Dreeschler went to him, placing a quill in his hands.

"Do you doubt now, your Highness, that the army is with you?" he said, in stately tones of public flattery. "Those men would lay down their lives for you, and are the cream of your forces. Why hesitate any longer? It shall be war! In a few weeks, probably less, you will be riding at the head of your victorious army into Bolivia."

Without hesitation the support of the wily Treston took up the quill, and with a quick flourish scribbled his signature at the foot of the document which would bring war and domination to his brother's kingdom.

With a gleam of elation he came close to the Minister took up the document, and folding it, placed it carefully in the breast of his tunic. Scarcely had he done so than a clatter of horses' hoofs sounded from the courtyard, and a few seconds later an under-secretary entered the room carrying a sealed envelope.

"For His Excellency Count von Dreeschler," he said, and left the room.

Breaking the seal, the Minister tore open the envelope. The contents were evidently deploring, for a frown crossed his heavy features.

"I am afraid, your Highness, this is bad news," he said. "The declaration of war will have to be postponed for some time."

"Postponed, Excellency," said General Cardena, with knit brows. "But the troops are in readiness!"

"It cannot be helped," Count von Dreeschler handed the document to the general. "You are aware that I entered into negotiations with a certain Central Power to purchase from their war surplus the equipment necessary to the success of our campaign. And our requirements were several locomotives."

He turned to his Highness and bent his partly firm in a low bow.

The railway running from Mauretavia to Bolivia was, as you know, built by your father to facilitate trade between the two countries. During the war, owing to the bombing effort made, your Highness disposed of them to Austria, who at that time required every engine they could get on their railways for transport work.

"I thought it would be possible to purchase them back, but apparently they were disposed of some months ago to a private company who now refuses to part with them."

"All other requirements can be supplied, but without locomotives to carry our guns, ammunition, and general baggage and field



Blake, Tinker and the police inspector cowered low in the boat while gigantic seas cast them alternately high in the air, only to suck them back into a black vortex of boiling water. "My heavens!" gasped the inspector. "It's the end, Blake, we can't live through it." (Chapter 4.)

equipment into Bolivia, war is practically impossible."

"But could they not be built to order?" suggested his Highness, note of assurance in his high-pitched and effeminate voice. "Delay to our plans might well bring disaster."

"They could not possibly be built under three months, your Highness," said the Minister.

Anne Borselli clasped her hands in impatience.

"Three months!" She flung back her handsome head and laughed scornfully. "Three months you say, Von Dreeschler? By that time revolutions will be upon us. Already champions are rising up in the cause of the people. San de Dios, already the wolves are snarling at our heels."

She paced the room with quick, graceful movements, and the others looked on in silence, knowing that behind the beauty of Anne Borselli was a wit and genius superior to their own.

Suddenly she swung round and faced them, and in her lovely eyes was the light of a coming idea.

"In a month—less—Mauretavia shall have all the locomotives she requires," she said. "You all know that I am familiar with England. During the war I resided in Southampton, within a stone's throw of the garrison, as a secret agent of my country."

"From the town a small and privately owned railway company run a goods service along the coast, and owing to the somewhat hilly nature of the district the engines are modern and powerful. Are the lines of the Mauretavian railway built to standard gauge?"

Count von Dreeschler nodded.

"Excellent. Then if suitable men can be found to carry out my plan," said her Highness, "the locomotives you require shall steam into Bolivia in less than a month's time."

"But will they sell?" protested his Excellency.

"Sell!" Anne Borselli laughed derisively. "And who is going to buy, my dear count? We are going to steal them."

"Gott in Himmel!" His Excellency stared at her as if he believed her to have suddenly become bereft of her senses. "Steal them—"

steal locomotives! You will, of course, bring them back in your handbag, your Highness, he added ironically, having recovered his composure.

Anne Borselli flung a contemptuous glance at the smiling Treston, and turning to the others, she spoke in low and hurried tones. Her dark eyes sparkled with excitement, and varying expressions of emotions crossed her vivacious features as she outlined her plans. The amazement which had been present on every face slowly changed to admiration for her ingenious brain.

Impossible as the theft sounded, her subtle wit made it not only possible, but safe and certain.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. In Which Sexton Blake Hears of the Curious Behavior of Three Locomotives.



THE consulting-room at Baker Street presented a peculiar scene.

Wrapped in a quilted dressing-gown, with a well-seasoned briar gripped between his teeth, Sexton Blake, the great London criminologist, reclined lazily back in a saddle-bag chair before a cheerful fire. His fingers idly plucked the great, happy ears of Pedro, the sagacious dog-detective, who stared up at him from humid and faithful brown eyes.

Tinker, capable and lion-hearted lieutenant of his master, was sprawled out in a comfortable though indignant attitude on the couch. His shrewd blue eyes were skimming the pages of a cheap novel, on the front-piece of which was depicted a bearded coachman in a bright red shirt and gigantic station hat, holding up a stage-coach with a pair of pistols of such dimensions that—

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they would have done duty as field-guns, at a pinch.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a thunderous and official rat-tat-tat! on the street door, which sent the echoes clattering along the adjacent house-tops.

Tinker closed the exiting chapters of the exploits of the red-shirted brigand with a wretched slam, and said to the floor.

"Well, the time has this he?" he grunted. "Joylee fine imitation of a one-man band, anyway!"

"Detective-Inspector Rollings, of New Scotland Yard, I believe, young 'un," said Blake coolly. "I expected him here five minutes ago. When can you tell me the details of the amazing facts of the case, it is not surprising that he is excited."

Tinker stared at his master in bewilderment.

"What case?" he said. "This is the first I've heard of it. And that you were expecting Mr. Rollings, either?"

Blake took up the evening paper from his knee and waved it in the air.

"This paper contains scanty but interesting news, an advertisement, and a series of thefts, rather," he said. "Three locomotives, the property of the Southampton & South Coast Railway, have been stolen on three consecutive nights. The affair savours about of a case of the kind."

"It was a foregone conclusion that the Southampton police would invite the co-operation of Scotland Yard, and that Rollings, one of the Yard's most able detective, would be given charge of the case."

"I also suspected that the police would be too intricate for Rollings to solve, and that he would leave Southampton to-night on the train which arrived at Victoria twenty minutes ago, in order to seek my opinion on the strange affair. The police have been here five minutes ago; but a delay in securing a taxi might account for that."

Tinker was too accustomed to his master's reasoning methods to evince any surprise at the Yard detective's interest. He put the question apocryphal in his mind.

"But how the dickens could anyone steal three locomotives?" he asked. "The affair seems impossible!"

Before Blake could reply the door opened, and a British detective's house-keeper, ushered in the detective's footman.

Stepping briskly into the room, the official peeled off his coat and gloves, and, handing them to the housekeeper, together with a heavily mounted malacca cane which must have cost the owner of it a considerable sum, he bowed himself in. He was Blake and Tinker. Then he flung himself into a chair.

"Pug" Rollings wholly merited his sobriquet.

His hair, which he wore close-cropped as a pug-dog's, was as red as fire, so was the short, wiry, aggressive moustache.

His complexion was red and tinged with purple, and from beneath his shaggy red eyebrows he surveyed the world from a pair of eyes which, steel-blue eyes, their harshness relieved at times by a twinkle of humour, fine cheekbones and prominent jaw muscles enhanced the truculence indicated by his chin.

In figure he was small and dapper. A faultlessly cut blue frock coat, encased his slim but muscular limbs. He had the shoulders of a prizefighter and the straight limbs and small feet of a dancing-master.

"Evening, Blake!" Tinker, Tinker! I'll bet the official detective, looking strangely into the stump of a policeman-looking cheroo."

"Beastly night—eh? Just got in from Southampton. Thought I'd give you a look up."

"I reckon you gave us a wake up, by the time you played on the knocker!" grunted Tinker. "What's bitten you?"

Rollings glared at the lad, but there was a suspicion of a smile on his firm lips.

"Blake's invited his visitor with quiet amusement. He fully knew the object of Rollings' visit, and he saw that the Yard man was trying hard to fight down his professional pride and admit himself beaten by the bewildering and seemingly impossible theft of the three locomotives."

"Any fresh details to hand concerning that mysterious railway affair down South?" asked the Baker Street man casually.

Rollings looked relieved for the opening.

"Only that another of the confounded things vanished into thin air precisely under my nose at dusk this evening!" he grunted, staring savagely at the glowing end of his cheroo, which feat, the cheroo himself in his month, sent him cross-eyed.

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With an impatient gesture, he tore the "smoke" from his lips, and slammed a hairy and muscular fist on the table.

"I've beaten! Stumped! Dished!" he bellowed. "If this affair goes on much longer I shall be the laughing-stock of the country! When I reported to the chief over the phone this evening he asked me if I thought the Yard paid me to stop dog-dog-dog. Me—stop dog-dog-dog!"

"Suppose you give me the details, old man," Blake said, strapping to repress a smile at the expression of savage indignation on the purpling countenance of his official friend. "It seems a very complicated and mysterious affair. One would have to look a long way to find the motive for the thefts, too."

"Except to the owners, the engines would have little value, and the thieves would be unable even to dispose of them as scrap-iron, every detachable piece of metal is numbered, and that would speedily lead to their detection."

Rollings' face brightened as he saw that the genius of Baker Street was interested in the case. He knew much of the capabilities which he believed in the great investigator's thought and placed confidence, and of the baffling and intricate problems that alert brain had so often unraveled by reason of his shrewd logic and cleverness.

"It is the lack of motive which first puzzled me," said the Yard man. "And then again, there is the confoundingly mysterious way in which they vanish. This evening the engines were detached full beam at half-past six, but at seven o'clock it was discovered, like a billiard-ball in the hand of a conjurer. It's uncanny, I tell you!"

"Any quicksands about?" The railway bugle the coast pretty well, I believe," said Tinker. "The police have the engines have jumped the rails at a weak point and become lost in the sands."

"That was my first theory, Tinker—that or something like it," Rollings said. "I have travelled over and searched every inch of the line, there and there isn't a quicksand within a hundred yards of the rails, private got to look for some deeper solution than that, young 'un. Another remarkable feature of the case is that the locomotives disappear somewhere on a five-mile stretch at exactly the same minute every night."

"I can't make head or tail of the business. How the dickens do they carry them off? They must weigh at least forty tons each, and a hundred men couldn't lift them. Yet there hasn't been a solitary footprint left in the sand. It makes one half inclined to believe in supernatural agencies."

Blake stared thoughtfully into the fire.

It was certainly a mysterious business, yet he knew there must be a solution somewhere, and a simple one at that. The short time when the engines disappeared did not permit of complicated and elaborate methods of stealing them.

"And the fireman and drivers. What of them?" he asked. "Do you think they were implicated?"

"The fireman and driver of each engine are also missing," said the Yard man. "The whole eight of them, two to each engine which has disappeared, were old and trusted servants of the company. I am convinced they have nothing in common with the thieves, and that they were being held prisoners." Rollings snuffed vigorously. "Dash it!" he grunted. "About the only thing I got the handcuffs on down there is a darned coil."

As he pulled out his handkerchief, something of silvery brightness relied along the carpet to the detective's feet. Blake bent down to pick it up; and as he glanced at it he regarded Rollings with slight surprise. "Don't know you had seen and collecting foreign coins, old man," said Tinker.

"What the deuce—Oh, I remember now," said the Yard man. "I found the thing lying on the sleepers as I was examining the line. First coin of the sort I've seen, so I stuck it in my pocket for one of my seppies who's started a collection. Made of silver and worth about tuppence, I expect. Must have dropped from a carriage of a passenger train. What country is it a coin of? I don't recognize it!"

Blake examined the coin carefully for a moment, and a quick gleam entered his grey eyes. It was a small coin of silver and silver alloy, and on one side it bore the head of Carlos, Prince of Mauretavia.

He took up the evening paper, and turned to the pictorial supplement on the back

page. In the centre of the sheet was a photograph of Prince Carlos of Mauretavia reviewing his troops.

The prince, with Count von Dresher at his side, was riding around the ranks of about two hundred infantry drawn up in the palace grounds. Beneath the photograph was the following:

"Prince Carlos of Mauretavia reviews his troops."

As it is rumored in Vienna that there is a possibility of war being declared between Mauretavia and Bolivia, the above photograph should be of interest to our readers.

Blake handed the paper to Rollings.

"Have you seen this?" he asked coolly. "Read it in the train coming up to town," grunted the Yard man. "Bolivia and Mauretavia are two poky, come-opera sort of kingdoms tucked away on the borders of Austria and Russia. I believe this photograph of Count von Dresher attracted my attention most. He's an cunning and crafty as they make 'em, and it'll be 'Heaven help Prince Carlos!' if he listens to Dresher's suggestions."

"Did not Prince Carlos marry Anne Borselli some months ago?" asked Blake. "The woman was suspected of being a secret agent of one of the Central Powers during the war, although nothing could be proved against her."

"The woman lived within a stone's throw of the Southampton garrison during the war; and although many suspected her of espionage, we could never get any evidence against her," said Rollings. "She and Count von Dresher have worked in harness for years, and a pretty pair of scoundrels they are."

"It was owing to her influence, of course, that Dresher was made Minister of War for Mauretavia as soon as the married Carlos. According to what I've heard, the prince is a weak-willed sort of fool, and Dresher and the woman are having it all their own way in the kingdom."

"If there is going to be war ever there, you can bet your bottom dollar that those two have been at it about with the hope of peevish from it somehow. But to get back to this railway affair—"

"And one of the most important requirements for an army is an efficient transport," Blake said thoughtfully. "A good railway service to bring food and ammunition to the army is essential to success."

Rollings stared at the private investigator in amazement.

"What the deuce are you driving at?" he asked blankly.

Blake did not at answer, but took up the coin. As he examined the date beneath the head a suggestion of a smile played about his lips.

"Have you noticed the date, Rollings?" he said, a trace of excitement in his usually unemotional voice. "It is nineteen-hundred-two, and by its clean and unscratched surface I should imagine it was struck late in the year—probably as recently as two months ago."

"That tells us conclusively that a Mauretavian subject, or someone who has visited Mauretavia, was in the vicinity of the railway lines this last few weeks. Tinker, bring me the atlas."

Rollings looked on from eyes expressing bewilderment, but Tinker was saying now. His nimble wits, set in the right channel by his master's remarks, were following the same trail as was Blake.

He turned a large atlas from the book-case and opened it at the detective.

"I believe you've hit it, you've hit it," said excitedly. "Great pip! It's a bit of a shocker, though."

Blake gave the lad a nod of approval, and opened the atlas at the page showing a map of Austria-Hungary and Bosnia.

On the border-line between the countries the two small principalities were shown in neutral colours. From Mauretavia into Bolivia ran a line denoting a railway, but on either side of the line were two red dotted ones, showing that the service had been abandoned.

"Was not Prince Carlos suspected of having German and Austrian sympathies during the war?" he asked quickly.

"Yes," grunted the Yard man, chewing at the butt of his cheroo. "But I can't see what the dickens it has to do with the case. We know for a fact that he disposed of all his locomotives—'Jumping Jimmy!'"

Hollings broke off with a sharp exclamation, and his red crop positively bristled with excitement.

"You think that—"
 "That the locomotives have been stolen for war purposes?" put in Blake quietly. "It is certainly a staggering theory, but the only one I can put forward at present which will provide a motive for the thefts. The map shows, too, that the railway service between the two countries has been abandoned."

"If, as you were about to state, Mauretania disposed of her locomotives to one of the Central Powers during the war—and the abandoned service bears this out—it is imperative that she should obtain locomotives in order to conduct any contemplated war operations with success."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Hollings. "You're a wonder, Blake! I never thought of connecting the ends with the thefts. There's something about your theory that is true."
 "Ever known the gov'nor to be wrong?" Tanker said, with a grin. "My stars, there'll be some complications! I reckon you'll be the only giddy sleuth, Mr. Hollings, who's ever clapped the dories on a real, live, ruling prince!"

"And you'll get a run for your money, too," Blake said. "Curios is set the big nose in this affair, although, if my theory is true, he is implicated. You'll find you are up against Count von Droschler and the elusive Anne Borselli. No mean combination of brains that."

"We have proof of their ingenuity in the theft of the locomotives. Give me all the details you know concerning the thefts. I staid running down to Southampton and investigating the case in the morning. There is one other thing in favour of my theory."

HOW TO MAKE FINGER-PRINTS

A Few Simple and Practical Hints that will enable you to make a good showing in our New Competition

Prints can be made in several ways.

(1) By spreading a small quantity of printer's ink on a flat piece of tin by means of a rubber roller.

(2) By impressing the finger-tip on an ordinary stamp-pad, such as is used for rubber stamps.

The finger should previously be washed free of greasiness or perspiration, and wiped clean and dry. The stamp-pad or inked tin, whichever is used, should also be perfectly free from dirt or hairs.

The finger should be pressed lightly but firmly on the paper. Too heavy a pressure will cause the lines to smudge.

Almost any paper will do, but ordinary semi-glossed paper is as good as any. You may experiment till you get the best result, and then cut out the print and stick it to the coupon.

The clearest prints received will be reproduced as the prize-winning efforts.

"You say that Anne Borselli was a resident of Southampton during the war? It would be essential that a person who knew the district should be in charge of the operation, and it would not surprise me to know that she is in the country. Get her description circulated along the South Coast. She might fall into the net."

Hollings positively beamed upon the man from Baker Street.

"I've a druced lot to thank you for," he said. "I'll also get the Channel watched for any suspicious shipping. If your theory is correct they must get the engines across to Mauretania by water!"

Blake shot him a glance of mock-serious approval.

"Good man!" he said. "I shouldn't be surprised but what they do."

The detective proffered his cigar-case, and then they settled down in their chairs.

"I arrived in Southampton this morning, and set to work straightaway," said the Yard man. "First of all, I interviewed the men in the signal-boxes along the section of the line from which the engines disappeared. Soon I narrowed the field of investigation down to the five-mile stretch of the line—the distance between two boxes only."

"It appears that each night the stolen engines had passed these two boxes correct to time, but only passed the one known as Moreton signal-box coming back on the down line. Therefore, I knew the engines had disappeared at some point between the two boxes."

"How is it that the engines were not attached to a train?" asked Tanker. "Were they freighted?"

"Yes, young 'un. Each engine stolen was (Continued overleaf.)"



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When the reproductions appear, compare your finger-print with them. If any are identical—NOT SIMILAR—send up another copy of the print, with your name and address. The print will be checked with the original, and the prize you have won will be forwarded.

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(6) Coupons must be received at this office by Thursday, January 15th, 1925. Any arriving after that date will be disqualified.

(7) Address your entries to: The Editor, UNION JACK, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

(8) The Editor's decision must be considered as final. This is a condition of entry.

(9) No employees of the proprietors of this journal are eligible to compete.

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The UNION JACK

"SEXTON BLAKE'S OWN PAPER"

an extra one added to the rear of a certain goods-train which journeys from Southampton to Weymouth every night," said Rollings. "Owing to the lumpy nature of the countryside this is necessary."

After Moreton signal-box is passed, however, the track runs more level, permitting the spare engine to be uncoupled, and reversing. It gets on the down line at the points, and runs back to the locomotive-sheds.

"Between Moreton signal-box and the next one down the line, the engines switch. The theft happened in exactly the same way tonight as those of the three preceding nights. I was in the first box myself this evening. The engine passed our box coupled to the rear of the train, correct to time, and a quarter of an hour later Moreton box rang through with the information that it had uncoupled, and was ready to reverse on to the down line for the sheds."

"The driver and fireman were questioned, and reported they had seen nothing of a suspicious nature on the journey."

"I then waited for the engine to pass us on its return journey. After a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and it failed to put in an appearance, I knew that something was wrong. You can imagine my feelings when I tell you I tramped along the line to Moreton six without a glimpse of it. It had apparently vanished into thin air. The affair boded all reason."

"And yet there must be a natural solution to it," Blake said quietly. "It is, however, useless to sit up and guess at the affair. Tinker and I will join you at Southampton some time to-morrow afternoon. To-morrow night we will drive the engine ourselves, and see what happens. That will be the quickest way of getting to the root of the mystery. I'll leave you to arrange everything with the railway people."

"Fine, guv'nor!" said Tinker, enthusiastic at the prospect of the promised excitement. "You can do the coal-shovelling while I drive it."

Blake cheerfully sang the "Ade at the lad, which, catching him on the chest, put the chaper on his enthusiasm for a moment."

"I'll get the whole line studded with police," Rollings said. "I'll stake my neck on they don't get away with another of the darned things!"

But Blake shook his head. "That would be fatal to success, Rollings," he said. "We must carry this thing through on our own. If the line is policed, the gang would not be foolish enough to show themselves, and we should have our trouble for nothing. We must allay their suspicions at all costs."

Rollings rose to his feet, and gripped the detective's hand.

"That's true enough," he admitted. "Very well, then, we'll play a loose hand. It sounds a bit like running our necks into a noose, but, as you say, it is the quickest way of nailing the puzzle together. I'll get round to

the Chief now, and let him in on this. If he mentions anything more about dog-fight, I'll be gone."

Words failed the choicest police official, and, jamming on his hand felt hat, he snatched up his coat and stick, and stomped from the room.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Night of Adventure.



"SHE'S a daisy, guv'nor!" Tinker said, looking over a brightly-painted and glittering locomotive standing outside the engine-sheds of the Southampton & South Coast Railway. "Make her rip on the home run! She'd do over sixty an hour without a grunt."

Blake smiled at the enthusiasm in the lad's voice. It was dusk on the evening following Rollings' visit to Baker Street. The private investigator, the Yard man, and Tinker were all clad in blue overalls and peaked caps, and stood in the presence of one of the traffic managers.

"The goods train will be ready to depart in a few minutes, Mr. Blake," said the railway official. "The company are very grateful for the interest you are taking in the affair. If we lose any more of our engines we shall have to curtail the service. The whole thing is inexplicable."

Blake nodded and examined the regulator, Westinghouse air-brake, and other controls to see if they were in proper working order.

"I am hoping that to-night will see the mystery solved," he said. "Come on, Tinker, you lark beggar. Back up the furnace. You'll be as lean as a greyhound after to-night's work."

With a cheery grin, Tinker rolled up his sleeve and set to work with his will on the small mountain of coal in the tender. Round ticked the needle on the steam-gauge to seventy pounds pressure to the square inch, and Blake closed the blower with his foot.

"Ready, Rollings!" he cried, making his voice heard with difficulty above the hiss of escaping steam. "The goods train has just run out of the siding, and they are signalling us to couple up."

After they had bid the traffic manager a cheery good-night, Rollings clambered up beside them on the platform.

Blake gently pulled down the regulator, and a shower of sparks danced into the air. As a slowly increasing speed the engine started its way to the tail-light of the goods train ahead, and a few minutes later they had attacked the coupling links and were

thundering along at a good speed behind the goods train into the night.

"This is topping stuff, Tinker, snatching a brief respite from my labours. It's a pretty black night, though, and if there's going to be any danger, we shall be in it before we realise where we are. Come on, Mr. Watson! This job'll save you quite in Antipoon. Shove a shovel, or I'll report you to the union for slacking! Phew! I shall be a grease-spot in a minute!"

"I'd give a liver for a couple of 'hours' more of this, Tinker, chasing the dangers, and wiping the sweat from his forehead with a piece of cotton-waste. "To make things worse there's a confounded fog blowing in from the Channel."

Away in the distance lights twinkled mistily on the Isle of Wight. From the Channel came the boof of fog sirens, and a keen, salt wind, laden with yellow, clinging mist, which formed a halo about the ready flow from the furnace. An unearthly howl rained, and whenever they reached Moreton signal-box and uncoupled from the goods, each experienced a little thrill of excitement.

"I wonder in what uncanny manner we're going to be spirited away," Tinker said, peering into the darkness, which was like a curtain, your bottom dollar that something is going to happen. The night is too favourable for the job for the gang to let the opportunity slip. Right away, guv'nor! There's a green light on the down signal, and the points have shifted. Reverse her, and let her rip!"

Blake fugged over the reversing lever, gave a turn to the regulator, and they rattled over the points on to the down line.

The darkness was now like a curtain, and scarcely few yards of the line ahead was visible in the yellow glow of the lamps. Shutting the blower, Blake motioned Tinker to cease feeding the fire.

"We're on to ten miles," he said, peering through the circular observation window. "It would be madness to venture at a greater speed. Get your automatic ready, and keep your eyes skinned. Hallo, what's that? Someone signalling from a vessel in the Channel is off the fog."

Out in the Channel a red light flashed a message, which at times was blotted from the detective's view by the rolling banks of fog.

Blake gritted his teeth. Five hundred yards down the line another powerful light had leapt into view, disclosing in its brilliant glow a large gang of men, who carried something which glittered like long strips of silver.

Came the clang of heavy hammers on metal, and from the shore the shrieks of startled gulls.

So near were they to the coast at this point that the hiss of the surf distinctly reached their ears. Every man and then there sounded dull but reverberating thuds, as of some mighty bird flapping the cliffs with monstrous wings, as the larger waves wrecked their fury on the rocks.

"We seem to be surrounded, Rollings," Blake muttered. "Hold on like grim death! There's plenty of reserve power regulated on the gauge, and I'm going to attempt to run through the danger area and return to investigate on foot, if I succeed."

"I have a good idea now as to how the engines have been stolen, so it would serve no useful purpose now for us to fall into their hands. Open up, drivers, young 'un!"

Blake opened the regulator to its widest extent. A fountain of sparks danced and showered about them, and the engine leapt forward with a mighty roar. The scream of metal tearing over metal deafened them, and the needle of the speed-indicator flickered at between fifty and sixty miles an hour.

Then, above the din, rose the startled voice of Tinker.

"Look out, guv'nor! Someone's waving a red light ahead!" It means danger! The signals are against us, too!"

Blake swung up the regulating lever and sprang to the Westinghouse air-brake. Was it trickery? He paused for a moment, undecided as to whether to act or to adapt. The engine was slowing down now.

Suddenly it gave a violent jerk towards the sea, bumping and rocking perilously in its mad passage.

Rollings and Tinker were flung to the hot plates, but with a desperate effort Blake managed to keep his feet and to apply the brake.

As the engine came to a standstill, he had a sudden glimpse of shadowy forms crouching up the sides of the tender. The next moment something descended with stunning

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ADVENTURE

force upon his head, and with a green he shipped to the plates, his world becoming a sea of whirling red, in which he sank down, down into oblivion.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
 "It Was No Play-acting—No Bluff."



IN the breathless stillness of a southern afternoon, when the air was hot and heavy, and the sky brazen and cloudless, the shadow of the Golden Crest lay solitary on the surface of the glittering sea.

A few birds flew round about the vessel, and seemed to pass under her stern windows only to appear again at her bows.

A lady albatross, with the white water flashing from with a dabbling sound to leeward, and in the place where he had been glided the hideous face of a silently-swimming shark.

The seams of the dirty deck were sticky with matted pitch, and the brass plate of the compass-case on the bridge sparkled in the sun like a jewel.

There was no breeze, and as the clumsy ship rolled and lurched on the heaving sea, her idle sails flapped against her masts with a regularly recurring noise, and her topsails would seem to rise higher with the water's swell, to dip again with a jerk which made each rope tremble and tauten.

On the fore-castle some half-dozen foreign sailors, in all varieties of undress, were playing at cards, smoking, or watching the fishermen which hung over the catheads.

Outwardly the appearance of the vessel differed little from that of an ordinary sailing ship. It was just one of the many treasuries of fortune which might be found on any of the Seven Seas to the casual eye, except that at her mainmast flapped the little known flag of Mauritius.

But in the waist a curious sight presented itself. Between the foot of the foremast and the first hold two men and a boy were roped together in a sort of barricade, and outside an armed sentry stood on guard.

The prisoners were Sexton Blake, Tinker, and Detective-Inspector Rollings of New Scotland Yard.

The sun poured its hot rays upon their heads, and although every cranny and seam in the deck sweated hot and rocking pitch under the fierce heat, no awning had been erected over them, the slightest attempt being made to relieve their sufferings.

They had lain thus, in one position or another, ever since the grossing vessel had escaped from the rollers of the Bay of Biscay, for over a week had elapsed since their adventures ride upon the locomotive had terminated in their finding themselves in the hands of the enemy.

"If I ever come to grips with that square-headed son of Satan, Count von Droschler, I'll—I'll break him in half," growled out Sexton, lying motionless and staring, staring fierce-eyed at the sparkling sea. How the dense did they get up aboard the confounded boat in the first place?

"The whole affair is as simple as I first supposed it to be," Blake said wearily, changing his position on the unbearably hot deck. "You will recollect how we suddenly swerved off from the main track towards the sea?"

"The gang must have taken up a section of the rails, and substituted a curved section on sleepers which ran down to the water's edge."

"This deck, which you will see is detachable and curiously constructed, can be taken up and fitted out as a huge raft. It was towed right up to the beach, and the engine, running down the rail they had attached under cover of the darkness, would naturally carry on under its own impetus on to the raft."

"The raft and engine must then have been towed out into the Channel. I can see no signs of anything in the nature of a crane on the ship, and as it would be impossible to get the engine into the holds in a whole condition without one, it is pretty certain they must have disassembled them on the raft, and carried them aboard in sections, after-



So great was the glare thrown off by the flames that Blake and his companions could see the vessel distinctly. "Poor devils!" muttered Rollings, "They'll roast like hot chestnuts! Thank Heaven they set us adrift!" (Chapter 6.)

wards fitting the deck back into position on the ship.

"Many of the crew are obviously not sailors. I am inclined to think they are a gang of skilled mechanics shipped for the job. To such men the task of substituting the curved track, and dismantling the engines would present little difficulty, and could be done in a short space of time."

Tinker nodded, and turned his sun-blistered face towards his master.

And soon as they had the engine on the raft they must have removed all traces of the theft, and left the track in its original condition," the lad said. "It was a clever stunt! At that point we were so near to the sea that the larger waves would roll up over the sands and obliterate any foot-prints except those near the line."

"It would be a simple matter for them to get rid of those remaining with a few buckets of water. And as you say, gov'nor, the work would be simple to a gang of mechanics. Twenty of them could easily get the engine aboard the raft, and relay the rails in their original position in a quarter of an hour. But where are we heading for now, I wonder?"

Blake stared out over the shimmering water. Away off the port bow was a black smudge.

"That will be Sicily," he said. "I believe it is the captain's intention to work round the south coast of Italy into the Adriatic, and land at either Zara or Spalato on the Dalmatian coast. From either of these ports the engines could be taken by rail into Mantrevaia."

Rollings gave vent to his feelings in a dismal groan.

"What the deuce will they think at the Yard?" he said. "The Chief'll go crackers. It's peculiar we are the only prisoners aboard. That will be Sicily," he said. "I believe what's happened to the drivers and firemen of the other engines?"

"I believe they were liberated before the boat left England," Blake said quietly.

"Then why the deuce should we still be held prisoners," Tinker said. "Having gained possession of the locomotives I should have thought they would have rid themselves of us at the first opportunity. Our presence aboard does not add to their safety. Should

the cautious officers take it into their heads to search the ship at any port we should take a lot of explaining away."

"We are being held prisoners because our true identities are known to someone aboard the ship," Blake said quietly. "That is the only conclusion I can come to. I—"

Blake broke off with a slight start as he became aware that someone was standing outside the porthole. The three turned their eyes and saw that a tall and well-developed woman, dressed in a loose-sleeved robe of white silk through which all the supple grace of her body strained like an impassioned fire, was regarding them with a peculiar smile on her lips.

"Words of wisdom, Sexton Blake!" she said mockingly.

"Anne Borelli!" snapped out Rollings. "Your theory was correct, Blake."

The Yard man turned his fierce blue eyes on the woman. "It will be as well if you release us at once, madam. The punishment for forcibly detaining an official of Scotland Yard is by no means light. It would be hard if such beauty as yours has to blacken women in an English prison for a few years."

Anne Borelli laughed low and musically.

"So we meet again, M'iss Rollings," she said. "The last time I had the pleasure of your company was when you searched my flat at Southampton, I believe. What a pity you did not think to examine the clothes lines hanging out in the garden!"

"They were disguised aerials of a very efficient wireless receiving and transmitting set, the mechanism of which I had in the bonnet of my car instead of an engine. Nam de Dieu! But surely you are joking, M'iss!"

The Yard man turned a delicate shade of purple, and muttered something between his clenched teeth. The adventures turned her vivacious eyes on the composed features of Sexton Blake.

"But you, M'iss Blake, are a stranger to me except in reputation," she said. "You were quite right. I recognised the three of you as soon as my men brought you aboard, and when I found the Murexvian coin in

your pocket I realised how foolish it would be to let you free.

"In other words, you are my unwilling guests aboard this ship—because I fear you!" said the man, his eyes gleaming, madly. "Blake said he'll. 'Your decision was a wise one. Had I my liberty I should lose no time in getting you under lock and key. A woman at whose door might soon be the responsibility of a terrible war is dangerous to society.'"

"And you, m'ieur, are dangerous to my liberty," said her Highness, with a toss of her shapely head and a low laugh. But as the laugh died away her eyes filled with a happier light.

"Since I value my own liberty greatly I am prepared to take any step which will ensure its safety. There is one way, m'ieurs, which silences a man's lips for ever."

Into the silence following the threat broke the strong voice of Rolings.

"You talk bravely, madame."

"I play for big stakes, m'ieur Rolings. For money soaked with the blood of the manhood of Bolivia," Blake said; and the contempt in his voice stung the adventures like a lash.

The beautiful face of the woman set cold and impassive.

"Then you know everything!" she said calmly. But it was like the calm when the storm is to burst.

"When knowledge may well be a man's death-warrant it is unwise to flaunt it, m'ieur Blake."

Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"Since he thought that my schemes may bring death to my wife, he has no repugnance for you, I do not doubt your intention to carry out your threat," he said quietly.

"You are correct, madame; I know everything. The Mauretavian coin was a most convincing argument."

Anne Borelli gave vent to her feelings in a little French oath, and a venomous sparkle came to her black eyes.

"And if I should be foolish enough to grant you your freedom—what then, m'ieur?"

"We stand where we did," Blake said quietly. "You can't bribe me with my life against the lives of an army!"

At a sign from the woman the sentry unbolting the door of the palisade, and she came close to him. It seemed to Blake that he was in the presence of some strange tropical flower, which exhaled a heavy and intoxicating perfume.

His crimson lips parted in a smile which held nothing of mirth, and beneath her straight black brows her eyes sparkled like stars, if stars for mischief's sake could ever be wicked.

"What a game bantam-cock you are, m'ieur," she said; but the music of her voice could not hide its venom. "I would have perhaps given you your liberty in return for a promise that you would cease to interest yourself in the affairs of Anne Borelli. Now you must die."

It was no play-acting—no bluff. The woman meant what she said, although her eyes and lips were smiling, her tones light.

Blake said nothing. He was wondering how well an evil genius would found harbourage in so beautiful a form.

"And die very soon, m'ieur," added the woman. "See, the waters are rippling. A breeze is coming up from the west which will fill the sails and bear us swiftly to Spalato."

"Then the Borelli and her crew will board the ship, and we should find your presence embarrassing. The engines, so necessary to our war operations, are dismantled, and the parts stored in piano cases. These cases contain genuine pianos from Hamburg in case the officials decide to open one."

"You will at once see that our plans are well laid. You and your companions are now our only stumbling-block. Since you are so determined to play against me I must silence your lips."

"At dusk you and your companions will be sent adrift in an open boat. This is not bluff, m'ieur. Once more I offer you a chance for life and liberty—what? You English term the 'sporting chance.' Do you accept?"

"Between you and I, Anne Borelli, there can never be a truce," Blake said steadily. "My companions must speak for themselves."

"It's no for the last trip on offer here," Tinker said, a grin on his sun-blistered lips. "I reckon it won't be much more than this. U. K.—No. 1,005."

Considering we're the guests of her Highness the Princess of Mauretavia I don't reckon we're in clever."

Blake flung the cheery youngster a glance of appreciation.

"And as for me, madame," snapped out the banty Rolings, "I shall never consider the account between us squared until I see you gracing the Old Bailey dock!"

"Then I shall carry out my threat," said the woman, without a node of passion in her voice. "Bastid dock, mon preux chevalier, adieu!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. "This is the End, Blake—The End!"



The shining sun lay like a gigantic torch over the silent sea, an unknown depth of black, fathomless water. As it slipped in a blaze of glory behind the western horizon the water became inky and smooth, rising into huge formless billows, the more terrible because they were silent.

When the sea blows it speaks, and speech breaks the spell of terror; when it is inert, heaving noiselessly, it is dumb, and seems to brood of death and disaster.

The ocean is as calm as a silky giant—one dreams that it might be meditating evil. Moreover, an angry sea looks less vast than a calm one. Its mounting waves break the horizon nearer, and one does not discern how many leagues of pitiless billows repeat themselves. To appreciate the mighty vastness of the ocean one must see it when it sleeps.

The great sky uprose from this silent sea without a cloud. The stars hung low in its expansive burning in a violet soft, and the ship rolled and creaked on the dreamy swell. A faint breeze now filled the sails, sending her slipping along at about five knots.

Blake and his companions still lay in the saloons, motionless and listless-eyed, thankful for the cool breath of the night, almost indifferent as to their fate, so great were their present sufferings.

They were aroused from the lethargy into which they had fallen by the tramp of many feet coming down the deck towards them. The door of the palisade swung open, and Anne Borelli, with a dozen low-browed ruffians from the fore-cabin, entered the enclosure.

"Stand there, and get the boat lowered at once," she commanded. "Get the two stewards to provision the boat, but see that it contains nothing in the nature of oars or sail which might enable them to reach the coast."

As some of the men hurried away, others cut through the prisoners' bonds. Fretfully by muscular arms, they were rushed to the taffrail.

The starboard quarter-boat was lowered, cut off with a loud pop on the still water. A barrel of water and a small sack of slugs, biscuits were placed in by one of the crew, and the three detectives were pushed down the rope ladder aboard her.

"Get them loose!" Anne Borelli leaned against the taffrail and spoke in a disparaging voice. "They have had a little sinistre voyage, and, like fools, prefer death rather than to come to terms. And that fat, stupid policeman talks so glibly of seeing me in the Old Bailey dock. Non de Dieu, but you are so very dull, m'ieur."

Kelves flashed in the starlight, and cut swift, the boat rocked on the dreamy swell. With the wind in her sails, beautified by the glimmer of the stars, the Golden Crest slipped past them like a great white swan.

And then they were alone on the vast expanse of black water.

"We're in a pretty pickle," grunted Rolings, staring at the bridge lights which twinkled like jewels in the bulk of the fast retreating ship. "What's going to happen now?"

"Why, we're going to be picked up at daylight, you grunting old pessimist," Tinker said. This is a pretty sturdy old tub, and couldn't sink in a hurry."

Tinker specifically made an attack on the biscuits and water, and each strove gamely to hide the apprehension which grows in the

hearts of the bravest when alone on the breast of a mighty and fathomless ocean.

The Golden Crest had now dwindled to a vague blur, and yet beside her bulk grew faint the dark shape of the coast.

The black hull in the distance seemed a tower of strength, built to defy the utmost violence of wind and wave; but there was a slip of wood floating on an unknown depth of brooding water.

The moon wore on and the moon climbed high, lighting up with silver radiance the vast vault of the heavens. The dull ripple of the water as the boat rocked on the slow swell made a melancholy sound which found an echo in their breast.

Then, from out of the violet haze which hung over the horizon, a strange glow of light broke.

"Hallo!" cried Rolings, "did you see that?"

He had seen it, but they looked for its repetition in vain.

"I saw it," Tinker said. "It was like a flash of fire."

They strained their eyes to pierce the obscurity. At that instant a thin streak of light shot up and then sank again.

There was no mistaking it this time. From out the gloom which hung over the horizon rose a column of fire which lighted up the night for half a mile, and then sank, leaving a trail of red sparks upon the water.

"It's a ship on fire!" cried Tinker.

"The Golden Crest," Blake said quietly. "The fire burns in the direction she went. Some red-hot ashes from the railway engines must have been considered in the holds. Heaven help them!"

They looked again. The tiny speck still burned, and immediately over it there grew out of the darkness a crimson spot, which hung like a red spark in the air. As each ripple broke the surface of the water it flashed fire, and the track of the burning vessel resembled a sea-anemone writing with silent undulations across a sea of quicksilver.

"Poor devil!" muttered Rolings. "They'll roast like chestnuts. Thank Heaven they sent us adrift!"

So great was the glare thrown off by the flames that they could now see the vessel with tolerable distinctness.

The chief hold of the fire appeared to be amidships, and the lower deck was a mass of flames. Here and there were great blazing rifts and gaps in her side, and the red-hot fire glowed through these as through the bars of a grate.

The mainmast had fallen on the starboard side, and trailed a glowing wreck in the water, causing the unwieldy vessel to lean over heavily. The fire reared like a catamaran, and huge volumes of flame and smoke poured out of her holds, and rolled away in a low-lying black cloud over the sea.

"Look, they are taking to the boats!" Tinker said.

The glare of light which dyed the water blood-red struck out every rock and spur distinct and clear. They saw the gleam of knives as the downfall ropes were hacked through, and the boats put off from the doomed vessel, with each oar, as it struck the water, flinging liquid fire.

And only just in time!

Already the flames had lapped the flag of Mauretavia, already the stern-carriage were hurled by the fire.

Neither boat nor life would be over.

It came at last. A dull, rumbling sound, the burning ship parted asunder, a pillar of fire, flecked with black masses that were beams and planks, rose out of the ocean, then slowly sank into the deeper red water. Then came darkness, and a silence like that of the tomb.

On board the quarter-boat the three detectives waited for dawn.

It came at last. The sky brightened, the mist melted away, and then a long, low, far-off streak of pale yellow light floated on the eastern horizon. Soon the water sparkled, and the sea changed colour, turning from black to yellow, and from yellow to lucid green.

Blake rose to his feet, and shading his eyes with his hands, searched the ocean.

"Not a sign of them," he said. "Either some current has carried them out of our range, or they perished. The heat of the fire would crack the caulking in their boats

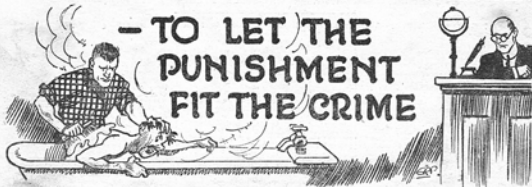
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THE U. J. DETECTIVE MAGAZINE Supplement



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- TO LET THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME



THE sentence of the court is that you shall have a hot bath."

This novel sentence was recently imposed on a man who appeared in a New York court-room. He was a baker, and he was in court on a charge of keeping an unclean bakery.

He emphatically disapproved of such a charge being brought against him, and waved his hands in broad gestures to say so. The case began to look very black against him in more ways than one when the judge noticed his hands. They were very unclean, too—black almost.

The judge put two and two together, and assumed that a man with black hands was not unclean to keep a black bakehouse. As an inspector of the Municipal Health Department had already testified to that effect, the judge passed the sentence quoted above.

The baker duly had his hot bath (presided over by the aforesaid inspector), and thus Justice was vindicated.

There is an increasing tendency nowadays for judges and magistrates to give sentences which are designed to fit, in some way or other, the crimes which they are designed to punish. Particularly is this the case in America.

There was also another case in New York, this time that of a man who was charged with showing his filial piety by assaulting his sixty-seven-year-old father.

He gave vent to his affection by dealing his paternal parent several blows, and dragging him around the floor. The young man was found guilty, and, as the result of a very novel sentence, will probably not forget that in future his father should be immune from such playfulness, for the judge ordered him to paste into his hat a text.



Every time that this gentleman takes off his hat nowadays, he sees the words

"To let the punishment fit the crime" is a principle that has, until recently, been confined to comic opera. But nowadays certain Justices—having a sense of humour as well as justice—have begun to bring it into real life. Here you will read of some instances of it—all quite true.

confronting him: "Remember thy father and thy mother."

A few months ago, three enterprising boys of Tampa, Florida, broke into and entered a cutlery store in the town.

They were captured, however, and brought up at the Juvenile Court.

The case was proved against them, and the judge inflicted a punishment whose justice is novel as it is poetic.

The judge ordered that the three young prisoners should save their money and buy a pocket-knife for each child in the local children's home. Where the poetic part of the justice came in was that they were ordered to buy the knives from the shop-keeper that they had already robbed.

It is fairly certain that the unique sentence given them will have a greater and far more memorable effect on the prisoners' minds than if the money spent on the knives were paid into court in the prosaic way of a fine.

A rather humorous touch was given to a case in North Carolina. Five negroes were in the dock, charged with gambling—playing dice in the public streets. They were duly found guilty, and the judge had then to pronounce sentence on them.

He took it for granted that as they were gamblers they would not mind gambling for their sentences. He therefore sent for dice, handed them to the prisoners, and told them to throw dice for their sentences.

The luckiest of the five threw himself three months' imprisonment, and the others varying terms as indicated by the dice. The unluckiest threw a double-six—twelve months.

Erring husbands who like the delights of

the club rather than those of the home had better take warning from the horrible example of William Wheeler, of Peoria, Illinois.

It was his wife's complaint that he refused to come home at nights. The judge, in finding him guilty, determined on a sentence that would improve matters.

He therefore decreed that the luckless William Wheeler should observe the following twelve rules:

1. That for an hour each day he should take care of the children.
2. That he should help his wife prepare the family breakfast every morning.
3. That he must get a job at once.
4. That he must stay at home at least five nights every week.
5. That he must take his family out for walks, not only during the week, but also on Sundays.
6. That he must start a savings bank account.
7. That, instead of letting his wife wait on him at meals, he must wait on her.
8. That every evening he must repeat to his wife his marriage vows.
9. That he must wash the plates and dishes every evening.
10. That he must hand over his money to his wife and allow her to be the cashier of the family exchequer.
11. That he must go to church every Sunday and take his wife and family with him.
12. That he must stop drink.

In passing this novel sentence, the judge gave it as his opinion that it would give an example to other husbands who were the same way inclined. Very probably he was right.

If he is not, however, and others are brought before him for similar offences, he says he will send them to goal and give them the same sort of work in goal as William Wheeler was set to do out of it.

In other words, they will have to wash the dishes and the windows, sweep and scrub the floor, and other menial tasks of a household nature.

It will be good news to lovers of animals that one of those beasts who are so habitually and savagely cruel to the defenceless horses under their charge, and who hog them to their heart's content and get off with the usual fine, has at last met with his real deserts.

(Continued at foot of next page.)

THE CRIME MUSEUM OF THE VIENNA POLICE

By JOSEPH GOLLOMB.

Mr. Gollomb's intensely interesting article on the Man-Hunting Machine of Berlin (in No. 35 of this Supplement) was but the prelude to a series from his vivid pen. This series is the outcome of a Continental tour, during which he investigated the police system of several countries. This article tells what he saw in the Crime Museum of the Austrian Capital—an institution which corresponds with Scotland Yard's "Black Museum."

A Piece of Bone, and Its Story—Amateur Counterfeiting—ES Bank Notes in Austria—Up-to-Date Burglars' Tools—The Model Ear.

UNDER the head of a certain class of crimes catalogued by the police of Vienna—and a hard time they had classifying it—there is only one case—that of Julius Vogelbang, Ph.D.

I don't if there has been another crime quite like it. It would have been an interesting test for amateur Sexton Blake, and for many professionals, to spy on Dr. Vogelbang when he was preparing his crime, and to try to guess from the scene what there was criminal connected with it.

A scholar's study filled with books on anthropology, archaeology, ancient history; most of the books open at the chapters dealing with prehistoric man.

On a table near the window, which was carefully shaded to admit a maximum of light and keep out neighboring observation, a few sheep bones, a piece of flint, a tile of two, and a magnifying glass. Working over these was a man of the sensitive scholar-artist type.

Now and then as he worked he referred to some dusty volume. He spent more time consulting books than chipping on the sheep bones.

That was all there was to the scene.

Several weeks later an intelligent peasant, in smock and wooden shoes, appeared at the gate of a great Austrian university carrying something tied in a bandana handkerchief.

"I should like to see some professor," he requested.

"Which?" he was asked.

The peasant scratched his head.

"Blissed if I know," he grinned perplexedly. "And I am not sure that it is not

the rag-and-bone peddler I'd want. But I was digging for a new well on my farm—'s near Gwand—when I dug up these bones deep down under my beet patch."

He held his bandana and showed a dozen odd-shaped bones, badly discolored by soil.

"I thought they were ordinary sheep bones at first, and was about to throw them away. On second thought they were more interesting. They look more like a rough kind of axe-heads, some of them; others like arrow-heads; and this one looks like a spoon. So I thought I'd bring them here and see what the professors make of them."

The professor examined the bones with increasing interest. Finally, one of them, the greatest authority in the world on his subject, said seriously:

"Gentlemen, these are prehistoric implements of tremendous importance. If my conclusions are correct, they are the work of man—ship—and I am convinced that further study will support them—as at all correct, whole chapters of firmly-established history of our prehistoric ancestors will have to be erased and rewritten, entirely differently. He turned to the peasant. "We will be glad to take these from you, my man, and to pay you for your trouble in bringing them to us."

A crafty, greedy look had come into the peasant's face.

"From what you say they must be worth a lot of money?"

The professor offered a generous compensation for a peasant's discovery from work. The peasant's face darkened.

all convicted of driving at an excessive and dangerous speed. They were not sentenced, but put aside one by one for further action to be taken as regards their cases.

This action took the form of a visit to the local morgue. Here there were lying the mutilated remains of one woman, five men and one child. They had all been killed by motors.

The ten motorists who had been brought up for furious driving were made to look at these remains, and then the judge, to further impress on the minds the danger of reckless driving, ordered them to raise their right hands above their heads.

Then, in the presence of the dead, he made them swear to observe the rules of the road and drive carefully and safely, and to urge all their friends to do likewise.

There are now at least ten motorists in the United States who have a greater respect for the rights of the pedestrian.

A man who was sentenced in an Ohio court for killing his father probably did not realize the enormity of his offense.

At least this was apparently the judge's impression, for, having sentenced him to a life term of imprisonment, he decreed an added penalty calculated to bring the crime home to the criminal.

The partridge, who is only twenty-two years old, is to be isolated from his fellow convicts for five days in every year. For five days in every year for the remainder of his life the prisoner will sit in solitary confinement meditating over his crime.

A shopbreaker in Urbana, Illinois, who got away with six hundred dollars, and was afterwards arrested, had the alternative offered

"Give me them back!" he exclaimed, gathering up his find. "You think because I am a tiller of the soil that I'm a fool. I have found something worth a fortune, and you offer me a drink for it!"

When, after weeks of negotiations with the obstinate fellow, the university bought the collection, it was at a cost of about £2,500.

Then began a minute scientific study of the bone implements by the professors. Buried in the same hole where the "peasant" had "found" these bones there must have been deposited implements made in three epochs thousands of years apart. There had either been an astounding coincidence in these individual deposits, or—the collection brought by the peasant were fakes.

Finally, the fake was proved beyond doubt.

The peasant had fled. But the science of criminal-hunting in Austria—which means in Vienna, which does the police work for the whole country—has been developed to its point of wizardry, thanks to Professor Fritz Gons, the greatest scientist in criminology in the world, and developed after him in the faculties and laboratories of the universities of Austria.

Dr. Julius Vogelbang, who had painstakingly manufactured a clever imitation of prehistoric bone implements, was traced and imprisoned by scholars cleverer than he.

The faked "prehistoric" bone implements were placed in the Crime Museum of the Vienna police department, where I saw them, which is used as a school for its detectives.

They were shown to me by Inspector Johann Rapp, who had organized the museum, and

(Continued on top of next page.)

This was a certain individual who was driving through Zion City, and lashing his horse incessantly because he did not think it went so fast as he thought it ought to do.

He was arrested and taken before a local magistrate. The case was proved, and the sentence passed.



"Ten lashes with your own whip." This is now at least one horse-thrasher who knows what a horse-whip feels like from his own experience.

The police official who did the flogging did not spare the whip!

The problem of the speed-hogging motorist is becoming a great one, not only in this country but in America.

There is a judge in America who hopes to put down this danger by very unique means. Whether they will be effective remains to be seen, but, anyhow, they have the merit of being novel.

Ten motorists were brought before him,

him of serving ten years in prison or obeying ten rules which the judge drew up.

1. Go to a place of worship at least once each week.

2. Give up smoking cigarettes for twelve months.

3. Stay away from gambling-houses one year.

4. Read books selected by the public library and report to the probation officer what he reads.

5. Keep employed constantly and keep account of the money he spends, and how he spends it.

6. Stay off the streets at night except on business.

7. Keep all laws of the State, city or village.

8. Drink no intoxicating liquor.

9. Pay all Court costs in five dollar monthly installments.

10. Report to circuit judge the first day of each court term.

He chose the rules!

(Continued at foot of next page.)



was head of the detective school. I have spoken of this particular exhibit not because it is the most interesting thing in the museum—it is not—but because it seemed to me so typical.

I have studied the crime museums of London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, and from each I have carried away the feeling of its typical criminal.

The museum in Scotland Yard made me see a sullen, heavy, unimaginative criminal who steeked down his prey with a bludgeon and was not too clever either in crime or in escape.

In Paris I felt a keen, highly-imaginative, temperamental genius at work.

In Berlin it was again a heavy, ruthless type, but working with ponderous intelligence.

The Vienna crime museum reflected a light touch in crime, skilful, subtle, highly modern in accomplishment, delighting in evincing something absolutely new in the way of dishonesty—something based on the laws of science and preferring to avoid physical cruelty if possible.

Dr. Julius Vogelhaus and his crime, while unique in their particular category, seemed to me entirely of a kind with the rest of the museum. Inspector Johann Rapp exhibited to me.

"Observe, for instance, the exhibit of counterfeiting." Inspector Rapp said, his bearded and speckled face alive with interest. "Here is an outfit one hundred years old. The game that used it consisted of a schoolmaster, a printer, a lithographer, and a sporting man, who distributed the false bank notes. They even imitated the watermark with this intricate device."

I must not describe the device, lest its simplicity and effectiveness even to-day be a suggestion. Nor must I describe another exhibit I saw, there—a counterfeiting outfit carried alive in the waistcoat pocket of its inventor.

I shall take a chance, however, in telling of the simplest conceivable counterfeiting device, the product of a farmer-boy's ingenious, clever crime. He was caught in his first effort—made by anyone else who tried to use his crude device. Nevertheless, there was imagination in his method.

He took a coin and heated it until it was hot enough to burn wood. Then he pressed it on a small piece of wood until the pattern of the coin was burned into it half the depth of the coin. He did the same with the reverse side of the coin on another piece of wood.

Clamping the two pieces of wood together with the burned parts facing and exactly opposite each other, he cut a funnel-shaped channel leading to the resulting mold.

Then, in a tray and melted pot of solder, he poured in a mixture of lead and tin that flowed into the mould, and, hardening, be-



The Crime Museum in Vienna is a school for detectives as well as a museum. Here is shown a class receiving instruction on the comparative modelling of criminals' footprints. The model car referred to in this article is seen on the instructor's right.

(Photo: Daily Mirror)

came a replica of the coin he was counterfeiting. There was left only to spin the mould and repeat the performance indefinitely.

"The crime impulse in itself sometimes fascinates people," Inspector Rapp said, taking out of the glass case what I took at first glances to be a fifty-kroner note.

"Such people will go to enough trouble and employ more talent to commit a crime than would have earned for them a hundred times the reward they expected, had they used the same effort and talent in legitimate channels. This counterfeiting note was done by a talented boy of sixteen, and it took him nearly a week to make it. Look closely at it."

I did, and was startled to find the note had been entirely drawn by hand with the finest pen-work imaginable in ink of several colours, the whole intricate engraved pattern most faithfully copied.

"Here is another case almost like it," Inspector Rapp said, showing me a hundred-kroner note. "It was done by a medical student, who also made a study of photo-

graphy. As you see, he has photographed a genuine bill with extraordinary care, several times on the same piece of sensitized paper, printing each time in another corner. By the eyes the reproduction is, of course, perfect."

"But he was compelled to print it on paper so different from that on which genuine bills are printed that he was caught at once."

Many of the souvenirs in the museum are interesting for their stories. There is a cleverly counterfeited five-pound (five pound sterling, English) note.

The Austrian who made it and many others like it, reasoned wisely. In Vienna it would be much easier to pass counterfeited English money than Austrian money.

So he made English money, and succeeded in getting the five boys to Vienna to give him Austrian money in exchange. In time the bank was notified from England that the bills were false.

The bank in Vienna, on the advice of the police, kept quiet. The counterfeiter, who

(Continued on page 292.)

Punishments by ridicule is another great weapon in the hands of the reformer.

In the Frankfurt Penitentiary, Kentucky, as in most of the other great penal establishments of America, the inmates are allowed much more licence than is the case in English convict prisons.

Card playing is one of the privileges they enjoy. So much so in fact, that the thing has become so scandalous, that gambling and quarrels arising out of card games became quite a usual thing in the prison. None of the usual punishments seemed to have any effect.

The governor of the Penitentiary then hit on a very good idea. Every man now who disobeyed prison regulations, has to wear a pair of trousers coloured a brilliant shade of red. This splash of colour in the grey prison surroundings advertises the man as no other thing would do, and arouses his fellow-prisoners' mirth and ridicule.

No man wearing the vivid red seditious garments can take part in the many privileges of the prison. This is bad enough, as there are many privileges, but worst of all is the incessant leg-pulling the red trousers provoke. The gambling has now become a very rare occurrence.

A very practical way of making the punishment fit the crime is practiced by a certain body of the American police. This again concerns motorists. In the ordinary way the policeman is a very hard person to catch, except by the unsatisfactory method of chasing him on a motor-bike and side-car.

Here they have a better method, and one which never fails to bring results.

When they see the speed-bog approaching



the waiting policeman throw across the road a large plank studded with very sharp nails. The nails are point upwards. If the man is a speed-bog he is going too fast to pull up in time, and consequently his tyres go over the pointed nails.

Naturally there are four sets of punctures, and he has to pull up quickly to prevent an accident. Before he can change even one tyre the waiting police are on the spot.

He is then safely gathered in. He has no excuse, for if he were not going at above the legal limit, he could easily have pulled up in time to avoid the nail-studded plank. The normal-speed man always avoids trouble and the road-bog always runs into it.

Even should the speed man get away there is no difficulty whatever afterwards on the part of the police in identifying the car that has gone over the nail-studded plank, for the tyres are practically gashed to ribbons, and marks are even left on the rim.

Five boys were recently charged at a New York Court of Justice with doing damage on the railway. They were lucky indeed to have come before Recorder Barbour, who has

modern and humane ideas with regard to the punishment of juvenile offenders.

He is not a believer in gad as a place to reform young boys. He thinks that much more can be accomplished by good, humanitarian treatment than by the imposition of fines or imprisonment.

His treatment in this case took the form of sentencing the five boys to learn and study a great piece of extorty whose appeal is lofty and inspiring—Abraham Lincoln's address before the battle of Gettysburg.

"I want you," he said, "to study it. Four weeks from to-day I want you all to come before me and report. The extent of you is to recite the address, having learned it by heart. The others are to be ready to answer any questions I may put to them about you. Now you may go. Be ready to report to me in four weeks' time."

When he was asked to explain the reason for this novel sentence he replied:

"I am certain that the whole five of them will be here when the weeks are up. Moreover, they will register slight marks out of a hundred. They will learn something. They will keep out of trouble in the meantime, too. Boys will be boys. Is it not better they should learn this than be thrown among real criminals in jail and have their first lessons in training in real crime? A little real education, a little encouragement and a pat on the back at the right time, will start almost any so-called 'bad' boy along the road to 'good' boy."

There will be few to disagree with him. Making the punishment to fit the crime has a great deal to be said for it.



THE "GLORIOUS" NORTH- WEST MOUNTED.

By L. RICE.



ALL ABOUT THE MOST WONDERFUL BODY OF MEN ON EARTH—THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

This is an article that you have long been wanting to read. It is an authoritative account of the famous "North-West Mounted," whose deeds and valour are the pride of its members and the envy of the world. The men who make it up have a pet name for it—they call it the "Great Outfit." And so it is—the greatest that ever happened! Here are some little-known details about the conditions of life in it.

WHEN King George was crowned every country owing allegiance to the British throne sent a number of men, representative of its best, to be a guard of honour at the ceremonies.

There were the tall, haughty rajahs from India, and the lean, browned Australian constabulary; the magnificent Highlanders, and a selected number of the most famous English regiments.

Among them all one squad of men attracted universal attention. Of all those wonderful specimens of manhood they were the most wonderful.

They were black knee-breeches with yellow stripes, a red tunic, broad picturesque Stetson hats, spurs, and a carbine.

They were representative members of the North-West Mounted Police of Canada, to whom, in admiration, the King afterwards gave the appellation "Royal." It is now known, therefore, as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

That is, it is called by that title officially. But its members have a "pet" name for it, a name which denotes their unshakable pride in the most wonderful organization in the world.

They call it "The Great Outfit."

The uniform mentioned above is the one in which the men are usually seen, but they have another uniform—a full-dress affair—which is only worn on great occasions.

It very much resembles that of the full dress of the Dragoons, and consists of a bright red coat, dark blue trousers with a yellow stripe, and a white helmet in place of the broad-brimmed slouch hat.

In winter these uniforms are replaced by short coats of shaggy buffalo skin, with a fur cap to complete the picture. Moccasins are also worn in the bitter Canadian winter in place of the ordinary boots, as the latter would freeze hard and injure the feet of men wearing them in the extremely low temperatures that prevail in the bleak solitudes of the "North-West Mounted's" beat.

It is probable that more detective stories, and stories of heroism, have been written around this unique body of men than about all the other police bodies in the world, with the possible exception of the members of Scotland Yard.

The reluctance of the "North-West Mounted" is proverbial. Its single-handed bravery is known from one end of the world to the other.

Our magazines and our cinema pictures are full of the brave, cheerful, smiling, dead-

shot-never-give-up chap, and his wonderful and beautiful horse.

What is more, these stories, though fiction, could be overmatched any time by the cold facts as set down in the "Mounted's" records.

From the cinema pictures and from stories we know the North-West territories, too,

with their brief spring and their long and cruel winter.

And we are perfectly familiar with the solitary horseman on whom the life and safety of his inhabitants hang, and hardly anyone knows of the very precise and exact life which that horseman leads.

Physical Perfection.

The force was first mobilized in the 'seventies. At that time the territories were not provinces of Canada, as they are now, nor had the Indians and half-breeds been put on reservations.

McCloud, on the border between the United States and Canada, was a place at which innumerable fugitives from the United States of America slipped through into the practically lawless country.

Ranchers, already trying to establish homesteads on the fertile plains, were at the mercy of thieves and bandits, both red and white.

There were no railways in the whole country.

Officers of the law from Quebec Province made efforts to secure the persons of notorious criminals known to be hiding in the territories, but any man with a knowledge of outdoor life could easily evade them.

The Canadian Government, therefore, determined to put a mounted force in the territories, and called for volunteers, the same to be subject to the most rigorous physical examination.

The standard set has not only been maintained, but made higher.

Every man, to have even a chance of becoming a member of the "Mounted" must be at least five feet seven inches tall.

Many of the men put this by a full foot. The health of the applicant must be perfect, not only at the time of application, but previously.

Teeth, eyes, hearing, heart, lungs, feet, spine—all must receive that iconic symbol, which has passed into our language from Lloyd's—"A.I."

First Big Innings.

The year 1874 saw the first muster roll of the force, which was soon up to the full number of one thousand, at which it has always remained, except for a brief period during the late war.

The first place at which a post was established was Battleford, then the capital of the territories, and the next was Fort Telly, Edmonton Post, that of the important border town of McCloud, and then of Prince Albert, were established in rapid succession.

When, three years later, Regina became the capital, the territorial headquarters of



GLORIOUS MEN ON GLORIOUS

HORSES.—Saddled horsemanship is only one of the requirements of the "Mounted" man. This sort of thing is merely a trifle for both horse and rider.

(Photo: Special Press.)

the force were removed to that place, then little more than a hamlet.

The official headquarters of the force has always been at Ottawa, the seat of the Canadian Government.

The reason for this has never been brought out so far as I know, in any tale of the North-West Mounted Police.

This body is a most singular one, in that it is both military and civil, and operates under both authorities.

The form of life led is strictly military, as is the training and the discipline; but the powers are civil. The "powers that be" in Ottawa have to do with all civil matters, while the commanding officer in the territories has to do with all matters military.

Organization.

Any man of the force has the right to arrest an offender against the law; and all commanding officers are sworn in as justices of the peace, and sit in regular courts, at the posts, whenever necessary.

They are the magistrates for that locality, as well as for any cases brought before them by a man of the force.

All the force must attend lectures, given every week by the commanding officer, upon the interpretation of the law, and upon the interchange of relationships between Canada and the United States.

Every man of the force must know exactly how far his authority extends, how and when to use it, and what are his limitations. In all matters of daily living the details are the same as those of military life.

There are barracks, cantenies, parade grounds, officers of the day, guards at night, morning inspection, and so on and so on.

A British cavalry regiment would be quite at home with a post of the Mounted. The privates are called constables. The non-commissioned officers are known by the corresponding military titles.

Next to them are inspectors. Above them are superintendents, who are always commanders of posts.

Above them all are the chief commissioner and his assistant.

Conditions in the "Mounted"

A constable begins his work at the wage of fifty cents a day. It must be borne in mind, however, that absolutely the only things any man or officer of the Mounted needs to spend money for are tobacco and books.

Everything is furnished—and that of the best—down to sponges and toothbrushes. The food in the mess is of the best that can be procured, and is more than abundant.

Every constable that civilization has invented belongs to the ordinary private of the force, without a cent of cost to himself.

The recreation halls have billiard tables and games of every possible description. There is a great field day twice a year, in which any one may participate, and for which ample leisure is given for training. Polo, lacrosse, boxing, swimming, winter sports are all given a place, and valuable prizes are awarded.

Every post has a quadrille club, and meets twice a week in winter and gives a dance at least once a month, to which all the people of the section are invited.

And Pay

The following is a list of the rates of pay of the various ranks. The actual payment is, of course, in dollars, but the amounts have been put into sterling, also, for purposes of comparison. The English equivalents are approximate, fluctuating with the prevailing rate of exchange:

Constable... 30 cents per day (about 2s. 5d.)
Corporal... 1 dol. 25 cts. per day (about 5s. 6d.)
Sergeant... 45 dollars per month (about £39)
Serg. Major 60 dollars per month (about £53)
Inspectors 1,800 dollars per year (about £235)
Superintendent 2,500 dollars per year (about £312)
Asst. Commr. 2,800 dollars per year (about £350)
Chief Commr. 3,500 dollars per year (about £437)

These salaries do not sound a great deal, but remember that every dollar of them is clear profit.

No married officers need spend a penny except for the clothes his family needs. Every item of his household, always of the very best, is supplied.

The furnishings are kept up-to-date. The grounds of his house receive attention. He

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ROMANCES OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

(A Series.)

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(A True Crime-Story.)

THE CRIME MUSEUM OF THE BERLIN POLICE.

IS YOUR HOUSE BURGLAR-PROOF?

MORE GREAT ESCAPES, etc., etc.

need pay nothing for food, light, heat, or service. Transportation is given him.

His grocery bill is not audited. High cost of living need have no terrors for him. He can bring up a large family, and still every hungry young mouth without a penny of expense.

He will never be discharged, except for a gross neglect of duty. Even to mention the possibility of such a thing to a Mounted will make his turn pale. It has never happened.

Real Detective Work.

Promotion comes only on an evidence of unusual fitness, but is sure, once that evidence is produced.

The work of the men is of a nature to

give unusual opportunities for bringing out the superior caliber of individuals. It is detective work, often of the most difficult kind.

Frequently it requires the constable to put his own skin and courage against the hardest of criminals, for no man will seek refuge in the Territories who is a physical coward.

The country is too rigorous to attract the sneak and the weakling. The men who seek to evade the law either of Canada or the United States by losing themselves in this still almost trackless country are the men who have superlative cunning, and who are not afraid to kill, with their bare hands, if need be.

The Indian population, always getting out of bounds, is another problem, and the half-breeds, with the vices of both white and red predominating, are among the most "difficult" of the earth's criminals.

Besides the coarse, thieving men are many men belonging to the force who are "extras." These are men who are expert at some trade.

Odd-Job Men.

A carpenter, for instance, will join. He, as well as the regular constables, must fulfill the physical requirements. He will be taught horsemanship along with the active force. And he will be paid, and have all the perquisites and allowances of the regular man. In addition, he will be paid the regular wage per day for all work he does belonging to his trade.

These "extras" are numerous, since each post is a complete little world in itself. Everything possible is made there. Every bit of artisan's craft needed will find a man for it.

These men are not required to do full military duty, except that they must take their turn at standing guard, and must, in the event of a posse being formed to hunt down some particular criminal, be prepared to do active service.

If married, they are given homes just outside the post, for their families. This is true also of the constables; the official houses of the post are reserved for officers.

The Prairie Beat.

Every post has its well-defined area of jurisdiction. Every constable has a well-defined "beat" as an ordinary London policeman.

Each Monday morning the force scatters from the post, each man with such provision as he will need, and with himself and his horse in the best of condition.

His route always lies along the route of ranches. At each ranch or homestead of little hamlet, he stops, asks for complaints, and inquires if any suspicious characters have been seen.

Receiving his report, some responsible person at that place signs a card, testifying that the constable has been at that place at the appointed time, and fulfilled his duties.

This is repeated until the full round is completed and the constable returns to his post at the end of the week.

Constables or inspectors who are sent out to "set" certain criminals are given a free hand. They are to come home when they get their man.

At present there is a good deal of talk about greatly increasing the force, and putting part of it into the Province of Quebec.

This is due to the many strikes and great labour agitation there, as well as to the fact that the local police of many cities and towns have struck from time to time, along with other less important bodies.

The Mounted, being sworn in for a period of five years under the Crown, cannot go on strike.

Nor can anyone who knows its history or its morale imagine it doing anything of the kind.

At the present time the "North-West Mounted"—or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to give it its new official title—numbers about five thousand men.

Between them they patrol a territory larger than Australia. There are about a hundred men to a stretch of country about the size of England and Scotland combined.

Think what that means!

Not only do they patrol it, but they control it. Crime knows better than to cross the path of the Mounted, for the same conveys the traditions and the fame of the most wonderful of policemen-soldiers on earth!



IN WINTER DRESS.—This picture shows the buffalo skin uniform and fur cap described in this article. It is hard to say which of their outfits is the more picturesque. [Reproduced.]



By H. W. TWYMAN.

PART 6.

Here is another selection of fine, easy ciphers for you to get to work on. This series is designed so that all complications and mystification is cut out. They are written in a clear, easily-followed way, and you will find that cipher-making is a much more attractive thing than appears at first sight.

Last Week's Problem Answered—The Misspelling Code—A Cute Morse Code Cipher—Baffling Transposition—The Key-Number, One of the Best Cryptograms Extant.

VERY probably you had not more than a few minutes' work in deciphering the little problem that was set for your amusement and mental exercise last week.

You will recall that it was a code which depended on a key letter. Every word in the text of the message which followed another that began or ended with a certain letter was a significant word.

The cryptic jumble that awaited your attention ran as follows:

On Saturday, January 11th, at the New Empire Hall, a ticket-holders' meeting will take place in aid of our local Society for Providing Braces for Eskimos.

Refreshments and Orchestral Department arranged for on a lavish scale by our Trustees. Will friends kindly attend early and avoid crowding.

Please also note that phone number is changed, being now 131 Little Shoreham.

Carrriages prompt at six p.m.

A rather foolish, but apparently honest, announcement of a forthcoming meeting in aid of a more or less worthy object, at first sight. But nothing of the kind! It contained important information from the head of a gang of crooks whose headquarters had been discovered, and who wished to convey to an accomplice the latest development in the search for a new, safe place to meet in.

The all-important letter in the message was the letter T.

Here is the message again, but with all those words that follow others having T as an initial or final letter set in capitals:

On Saturday, January 11th, at THE New Empire Hall, a ticket-holders' MEETING will take PLACE in aid of our local Society for Providing Braces for Eskimos.

Refreshments and Orchestral Department ARRANGED for on a lavish scale by our Trustees. WILL friends kindly attend early and avoid crowding.

Please also note that PHONE number is changed, being now 131 Little Shoreham.

Carrriages prompt AT SIX p.m.

This puts an altogether different complexion on the alleged activities of the Society so curiously interested in brace-less Eskimos. The news the chief of the gang has for his followers is plainly:

The new meeting-place arranged. WILL phone at six.

An instance was given in a previous article in this series of how an innocent-looking letter can be made to carry a secret message in cipher. This was done by means of drawing diagonal lines across the paper in a pre-arranged way, and noting what words came under the intersection of lines.

This is only one of the ways in which an ordinary message can be made use of to convey a cipher.

The method above mentioned—the "Initial-and-Final" Cipher—for instance, can just as readily be incorporated into a letter as into an announcement about Eskimos. And there are various other ways.

One of these depends on mis-spelling.

The significant letters of the message are conveyed by noting the initial letter of each mispelt word. All the recipient has to do is to make a note of the words containing errors in spelling, and to jot down the first letters of each.

Take, for instance, the case of a convict wishing to arrange the help of accomplices on the "outside" in a contemplated attempt at an escape. His letter would first of all have to pass the keen eyes of the prison governor—always on the look-out for possible secret constructions in apparently innocent letters.

NEXT WEEK!

This series of chats on Ciphers and Secret Writing will conclude next week with a splendid article on

INVISIBLE INKS.

You should make a special note to get next week's copy, for the facts which will be given are seldom come by, and will not be repeated.

ORDER YOUR COPY TO-DAY!

Therefore it would have to be above suspicion on the face of it. Supposing the convict's letter was as follows:

"Dear Sam,

"It is almost a month since I was told you had sent me a letter. But for some reason or other which you have to guess, for I can't, it was held up for nigh on a week.

"The excuse was that somebody of that name was known here, but I got it at last, and read it with every sign of joy. I confess that your news of Arthur was a surprise to me, particularly his being so easy to get on with. I shuddered at the thought he would get into trouble with the police after what I took the trouble to explain to him the last time I had a talk with him.

"I admit I have made mistakes in my time, but then I didn't have anyone to make me understand which was the best thing to do. He is good natured as a rule, but he deserved what he got if he attacked the young man like you said he did.

"Hervon help him if he can't arrange to keep out of the way of the police in future. He don't know what a valuable thing liberty is.

"Since coming to this place I have seen the error of my ways. This is not just put in to convince the Governor, or to amuse myself. I really mean it. Crime does not pay, as I have found. It is not a matter of right and wrong, but I mean exactly what I say. It is unprofitable.

"When I come out of here I am going straight. I am going to America if I can, where I don't know me. There is more chance there to get a decent job.

"My time is nearly up, and I have got only two more years to do, and then I am done with this sort of life for good.

"Remember me to all, and the best of luck,

"Yours,

"Bill."

There is nothing very intimidating in that letter, is there? Nothing for the Governor to worry about except to hope that the man's honest intentions will pan out better than his efforts at spelling.

But there is another side to the picture.

The accomplice at the other end who is "wise" to the game, will pick out the mispelt words and notes down the first letter in each of them.

The A in "almost"; the M in "month"; the T in "told"; and so on, one by one. Presently it revealed this information, quite in disagreement with the convict's yarn about being done with the old game for good, that

Am trying escape next Monday. Here car ready.

For the success of this stratagem it would of course be necessary for the writer to be a notoriously bad speller, whereas he would have to be in actually a good one. Also, the person to whom he sent it would have to be able to pick out spelling errors too.

Another very ingenious and very puzzling cipher—purported to be outside, that is—is the Morse code cipher.

It is based on the dot and dash signs used in the Morse code, but you needn't worry about learning that code, for it isn't necessary at all. It also has to do with the numerical value of the alphabetical letters. That is, A being the first letter of the alphabet, it is known as 1. B is 2, C is 3, D is 4—and so on throughout the twenty-six.

The idea is that we render these values into Morse dots and dashes, but

take no notice of the dots and dashes themselves, but only the SPACES between them. Each line's spaces will represent one letter of the message, according to how many spaces there are in it.

Supposing, for instance, we want to convey the information:

PASSWORD, PICKLES.

The pseudo Morse message would appear as given on the opposite page.

Should anyone other than the person for whom it was intended get hold of it, he would have a fine little job in front of him if he wanted to decipher it.

Seeing the dots and dashes, he would, of course, immediately conclude that it was a message in Morse code, and try to solve it on those lines. Even if he eventually discovered it was not, it would need a bit of puzzling to hit on the fact that it was the SPACES that mattered, and not the dots and dashes.

Even then, should a lot of brains have resulted in his getting on to this fact, the number of spaces need not necessarily represent the more or less obvious numerical sequence of A, B, C, etc. Any arbitrary number could be given to the letters, and the searcher's solution would result in a fresh jumble that it would need more work to discover.

It would, in fact, be a cipher within a cipher, and an easy one at that.

A rather baffling cryptogram that we have not as yet touched upon is known as the Transposition Cipher.

The secret of this is in writing down the message to be sent into columns of a given number of words in depth, instead of straight across the paper from left to right.

To make this clear, let us assume that the following well-known sentence is to be the message:

"It is not the hammer that hurts the horse, but the hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard high road."

We write it down thus:

IT	THAT	THE	THE
IS	HURTS	HAMMER	HARD
NOT	THE	HAMMER	HIGH
HUNTING	THE	HAMMER	ROAD
	BUT	ON	

Having done this, we proceed to copy it out line by line in the ordinary way without any breaks.

What will result is this:

IT HARD THAT THE THE IS HURTS HAMMER
NOT THE HAMMER HIGH THE
HUNTING THE HAMMER ROAD
ON

You can easily imagine that any unauthorized person who gets hold of a jumble like that will have a fine time unravelling it, especially as there are quite literally thousands of millions of different orders in which the nineteen words can be put before they make sense.

As a matter of actual fact the exact number of ways those nineteen words can be rearranged in entirely different combinations is

121,645,100,408,832,000.

The chief merit of this cipher is the ease with which it can be enciphered and deciphered. You have seen how it is put into its secret form. Here is how you get it back into sense.

The recipient divides the total of words by five, knowing as he does that there are five words in each column. Five into nineteen—the total words in the message—is three and four over.

There will thus be three full columns of five and a column with only four words—four columns in all. Very well, then. Write them in four from left to right, placing them in columns. Then read down the columns, and you have the message.

Constitutions can be introduced, if desired. The message can be read from the bottom of the columns to the top from left to right, or from right to left. Punctuation marks can also be added for further bafflement.

With the example given, it would then read:

(Left to right.)
HUNTING THE NOT! IS IT! BUT THE
HORSE HURTS THAT ON HAMMER!
HAMMER! HAMMER THE ROAD HIGH.
HARD THE

(Right to left.)
ROAD HIGH, HARD! THE ON HAMMER.
HAMMER! HAMMER THE BUT HORSE!
THE HURTS—THAT HUNTING! THE NOT
IS. IT?

A very large branch of the science of cryptography has not been touched on in these chats as yet—and that is numerical ciphers.

This has been avoided entirely, for in the great majority of these ciphers the great

advantage of simplicity is lacking to a marked extent. Moreover, none of them are so much secret as the ciphers which use plain letters as cipher-symbols, in spite of the added work that is necessary to turn letters into their figure equivalents.

There is one outstanding exception to this rule, however, and it comes as near being the perfect cipher as any.

In a previous article the writer has given it as his opinion that the ideally perfect system of secret writing has the following advantages in its favour:

It should be

Easy to put into secret code.

Easy to translate back again.

Impossible or difficult of decipherment by outsiders, even experts.

Worked without any mechanical device.

Not be apparent as a cipher on the face of it.

The ideally perfect cipher—like everything else ideally perfect—has yet to be discovered, however. At least, the writer confesses that he knows of none that fulfils all the above conditions.

There is one, however, which probably best fulfils four of the five—and that is the

The message will then read like this:

MGYTTCCQPHQYSOKLNU
or
LETUSALLGOTONIGHT

You will see that one of the L's in "all" is represented as Q and the other as P. So with every other letter; each is represented by a different symbol practically every time it appears.

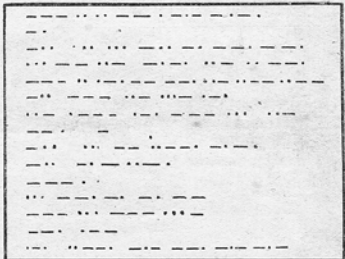
This simple fact is an almost insuperable obstacle in the way of the would-be decipherer. Together with the easily memorized number and the lack of complications, it is what makes this system of secret writing such a good one.

When decoding, the recipient of the message only has to write the memorized number above the cipher letters, and they count backwards instead of forwards.

Of the making of ciphers there is no end. They are old and new, simple and complicated, easy and difficult.

There are hundreds of variations of this fascinating game of cipher-making that have not been even mentioned in these articles. To do so would be only to make for confusion.

Only those which have the merit of



Those who know the dots and dashes of the Morse Code would have a puzzling time trying to read sense into this—until they knew that it is the SPACES that matter, and not the dots and dashes. (See accompanying article.)

Key-Number Cipher. The one thing against it is that it is obviously a secret message on the face of it.

It is simple, easy to work, both forwards and backwards, has no mechanical device to get lost or stolen, and is practically impossible to solve except by those in the secret.

It is even explained.

First of all, a key number is selected, and memorized by the correspondents who will use the cipher. The number can run into as many figures as you like, but the less there are the less chance there is of the number being forgotten.

Suppose we fix on four figures as being easily remembered, and on the number 1254 as the key-number.

Suppose, also, we want to send the message,

LET US ALL GO TO-NIGHT.

We then write the key-number over it, repeating it as many times as may be necessary. Thus:

1 2 5 4 1 2 5 4 1 2 5 4 1 2 5 4
L E T U S A L L G O T O N I G H T

All that remains to be done is to count onwards from the letters according to the number above each individual letter. Thus L will be one letter after it in the alphabet, E two letters after it, T five letters, and so forth.

simplicity, of being easily understood by the ordinary person, and worked by him, have been included.

With the two or three dozen examples of cryptograms that have been given in these pages you will be able to select one or more that best fit your needs. You may even adapt or evolve your own private system from those specimens given that take your fancy.

Ciphers and secret writings have been used throughout the history of the world, right from the earliest times. Their history is not yet done; the future will have as great a use for them as has the past.

And, as regards the present—it is a fascinating hobby for anyone to take up. There is fun in it; the thrill of really secret correspondence, and the knowledge that you are providing yourself with a bit of useful mental gymnastics.

So far we have dealt with the cipher and cryptogram aspect of the subject. The only part of secret writing that has not yet been given is one of the most interesting of all—and that will be given in next week's Supplement, decoding the series.

It will deal with secret writing in invisible inks.

Look Out for Next Week's
Unique Article.
PAGE 17. U. J.—No. 1,603.

THE CASE OF THE STOLEN LOCOMOTIVES.

(Continued from page 18.)

seems they escaped one fate only to meet with another."

Then as Blake turned his face northwards he shot a quick glance at Tinker and the Yard man. The sky to the northward was streaked with a belt of livid green, above which rose a mighty black cloud, whose shape was ever changing.

Becoming aware that darkness was falling upon them, Tinker and Rollings looked up at the sky.

"Great thump!" cried Tinker. "What are we in for now?"

"A bit of a storm—nothing much," Blake said. But in spite of the easiness of his tones his lips had tightened, and a strained expression had crept into his grey eyes. "You chaps get busy and worry the biscuits. I'll keep a look-out in case a vessel should pass by."

Assured by the lightness of Blake's voice, Tinker and Rollings started their frugal breakfast. The detective fixed his eyes on that ominous black and yellow cloud, and his face became tense and drawn as he recognized in it the meteoric herald of danger.

The unnatural calm which had brooded over the sea for the past few days had given place to a smart breeze from the north-east. The sight, though awesome, was one of wild grandeur.

The huge black cloud which hung in the horizon had changed its shape. Instead of a curtain it was an arch, and beneath the vast portal gleamed a dull phosphoric light. Across the livid space pale flashes of sheet-lightning passed palely. Behind it was a dull and threatening murmur, made up of the grumbling of thunder, the falling of rain, and the roar of wind and water.

"What the deuce is it, old man?" Rollings said uneasily. "Good heavens! There's a lot of old witches' broth brewing in that cauldron. Out with the truth, old friend! What are we in for? Cyclone, hurricane, or what?"

"I'm afraid we're in for a pretty severe gale," Blake said quietly. "One that I doubt has cockleshell will weather. We must place our faith in a higher power than frail timbers."

A solemn silence fell between them. As they gazed apprehensive eyes across that gloomy expanse they observed a strange phenomenon—lightning appeared to burst upwards from the million bosoms of the sea. At intervals the darkly-rolling waves flashed fire, and streaks of forked flame shot upwards. The wind increased in violence, and the arch of light was fringed with rain.

"Let us inch ourselves to the boat," cried Blake, striving to make his voice heard above the fury of the storm. "It is our only chance. The wily sloopmen, though, so that you can quickly unfasten yourselves should she sink."

A coil of rope lay in the stern locker, and, cutting it into lengths, they lashed themselves to the thwart.

A dull red glow hung around, like the reflection of a great fire. Suddenly a tremendous peal of thunder, accompanied by a terrible cascade of rain, rattled across the sky. The arch of light disappeared, as though some invisible hand had snatched the slide of a giant magic lantern.

A great wall of water rushed roaring over the level plain of the sea, and with indescribable medley of sound, in which tones of horror, triumph, and torture were blended, the gale swooped upon them.

"My heavens!" Rollings said, through teeth that chattered with fear. "This is the end—Blake's end!"

Blake did not answer, but glanced at Tinker. The youngster had cowered down, seeking protection from the roaring wind, but as his eyes met his master's, the traveller of a grim came to his lips.

"Cheer up, my friend! Cheer up, my friend!" he said. And only Tinker knew what an effort that cheeriness cost him.

Rollings glared at the lad for a moment, then a deep-throated chuckle left his lips. "Young man," he said, "You're made of the right stuff! But I happen to have a wife and kiddies, you see, and it's all different then."



Sexton Blake, his clothes torn to shreds and glistening with white brine from the sea, staggered into the little cottage. His drapery of a living seaweed caused the woman who was working there to swing round and stare at him in amazed alarm. (Chapter 7.)

Blake flung his old friend a glance of silent sympathy. Further conversation became impossible between them, so great was the roaring of the wind. The boat bobbed up and down on the waves like a cork.

The arch of light had entirely disappeared, and all was a dull, wind-swept blackness. Gigantic seas seemed to mount in the horizon and sweep towards and upon them. It seemed to them that the boat lay in the vortex of a whirlpool, so high on either side of her were piled the colossal pyramidal masses of sea. Mighty gusts arose—claps of wind which sounded like strokes of thunder.

It was impossible to raise the hand to look to windward. The cyclids were driven together, and the face stung by the swift and biting spray.

Soon the gale reached its height. The heavens showered out rain and lightning—rain which the wind blew away before it reached the ocean, lightning which the mountainous waves swallowed before they could pierce the gloom, so high did they appear around the tiny craft.

At one moment the boat seemed to soar upwards on the bosom of a raging sea, the next to be returned into a pit of liquid blackness.

The boat was a mere labouring, crazy wreck, half filled with foamy water, that might sink at any moment. Save when lighted by occasional flashes of sheet-lightning, which revealed to them each other's awe-stricken faces, the tragedy of the elements was performed in a darkness which was almost palpable.

The boat lay practically on her side, held there by the madly-rushing wind, which now seemed to flatten down the sea, cutting off the tops of the waves, and breaking them into a fine white spray, which covered the ocean like a cloud.

Suddenly the pressure lessened, and, with one awful shock, the wind dropped to a calm. The boat, no longer steadied by the wind, was at the mercy of every sea. Presently she heeled over, for, with a triumphant scream, the wind leapt on her from a fresh quarter. Following its usual course, the storm retraced upon its track. The hurricane was about to repeat itself from the north-west.

Borne before the returning whirlwind, an immense wave, which glimmered in the darkness, spouted up, and towered above the wreck. They looked shudderingly up into the impending greenness, and wondered if the end was come.

At midday on the morning of the storm, the rays of the sun fell on an object which floated on the surface of the water not far from the rocks of Cape Spartivento on the "toe" of South Italy.

The object was the quarter-boat from the ill-fated Golden Crest. Lashed in the stern were three lashed figures—two men and a youth. The hand of the lad was firmly clasped by one of the men, and his pallid head lay on the man's knee.

The tempest was over. As the sun rose higher the air grew balmy, the ocean placid. And, golden in the rays of the new risen morning, the boat and its burden drifted towards the rocks.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. A Dangerous Mission.



THE wonderful courage and strength which had sustained the three detectives through their terrible ordeal had exhausted itself and merged into stupor.

Blake was the first to arouse. He felt the salt spray sting his face, and the wrathful tide lick the hand that hung over the edge of the boat.

But that was all! They were out of danger as the boat floated!

Alone! The air-tight lockers of the lifeboat alone had saved them!

As the thought blessed his senses he lifted his smarting eyes.

High above his head he beheld a roof of

rock, on which the reflection of the sunbeams, thrown upwards from the water, cast flickering columns.

Before him was a jagged and gaping hole—the mouth of some cave into which they had drifted—and about him was the lapping and whistling sound of the sea.

He unfastened the knots of the rope which lashed him to the boat, and, raising himself, stretched his stiffened limbs.

Tinker and Rollings lay inert heaps in the stern. He went to them, and as he detected signs of faint animation in their pulses, a silent prayer of thankfulness left him.

It was imperative that he should bestir himself. To preserve the lives of his companions had torn from the sea, they must have food and fire.

Painfully clambering out of the boat, he crept to reach the mouth of the cave. The first movement caused him to give aloud. His left arm, which he had used to brace himself against the side of the boat, had been torn from the sea, they must have food and fire.

Arrived at the mouth of the cavern, Blake peered out over the sea.

Great rocks, red and split into a thousand fissures by the action of the sea, and as thick as stacked logs, formed the bay, forming a natural breakwater behind which he could see the sullenly frothing water, surging, spouting, and creaming in huge swirling eddies, occasionally leaping forwards as though it sought for another storm to send it raging up to the north which had escaped its fury.

Craning his neck, he saw that great, inaccessible cliffs towered above him, barren of vegetation, and affording not the slightest foothold. Yet where it met the sea the surface was honeycombed and water-perforated. Not a sign of the recent tempest marred the exquisite harmony of the picture.

A cloudless heaven expanded above him: a fresh breeze kissed his cheek, and, within the breakwater, the sea, under its tiny length, sparkling in a myriad wavelets beneath the bright beams of morning. There was not a sign of human life.

From the recess out of which he peered pebbles and small coral rocks and a sky of turquoise smiling upon a sea of sapphire.

Escape was impossible that way. His injured arm taboored an attempt to scale the cliffs—there was any help which might be beyond. Sexton Blake turned back into the cavern, and began to explore in that direction.

Before him lay a great grey shadow which was impenetrable. faintly illumined by the sunlight reflected upwards from the surface of the water, above which rose a wilderness of waving seaweeds. He recognized in the moist and weed-bearded edges of the cave signs of frequent submersion.

"I must get them out of this as soon as possible," he muttered. "The tide appears to be fast rising, and in an hour the cave will be flooded, and we shall die like rats in a trap. It seems we have escaped one danger only to fall into another."

Conscious of their peril, he pushed and sloshed onwards through the thick deep water into the bowels of the cliff. He had covered some sixty feet, and had lost, in the desolate windings of his path, all recollection of light, and was rewarded by a glimpse of sunshine striking downwards from the roof of the cave.

He parted two enormous masses of seaweed, whose bubble-headed fronds hung lazily across his path, and found himself in the base of a great cliff, the water terminated in a patch of sky high above his head.

The sides inclined upwards at an angle which would perhaps permit ascent. Clinging to the rough and rock-like sides that fringed the slopes, Blake slowly and painfully climbed upwards, and half an hour later stood on top of the cliff.

He turned feet below him lay the sea. To his left he saw the rocky promontory of Cape Spartivento, a sight of rugged grandeur, resembling a great slab of cheese at which fish have been nibbling.

Faint fragments of islands lay scattered about the straight-shaped point of land—the

Italian boat with its low boat upwards—and it seemed as though Nature, jealous of the beauties of her sunny Italy, had made the approach to it as dangerous as possible.

Blake turned from the scene and looked inland. A group of cottages, colour-washed yellow, blue, and pink, stood in the low hills among emerald foliage. With a sigh of relief he made his way towards them.

The door of the first was open. Peering inside he saw a fat Italian woman, engaged in stirring a pot of polenta which long wooden chairs over as open fire.

A black-eyed, curly-headed baby gurgled and played with seaweed, while the woman, with a look on the hearth, and as the detective's shadow fell across the floor, the child looked up and wrinkled its plump cheeks in a cluck of delight.

The sound attracted the mother's attention. As her big dark eyes fell upon the detective, she uttered a startled cry.

Blake did not at that moment present a pleasing spectacle.

His clothing, torn almost to shreds, was covered with sparkling white brine from the sea. His cheeks were pale and haggard, and his eyes bloodshot and red-rimmed by the action of the salt spray.

Some one who would aid him, the woman, with a shaggy drapery of seaweed, clung round his knees, he must have intruded upon her startled senses as some monster arising from the depths of that illimitable sea.

"I beg you not to be alarmed, madame," Blake said, in his native tongue. He stepped into the kitchen, the sparkling black eyes of the baby opened in wonderment, as shipwrecked in the gale last evening, and my two companions lie helpless in a cave at the bottom of the cliffs. Have you a husband, some one who will aid me to rescue them? I would pay them well for their trouble."

"Why, yes, signor," said the woman, recognizing the urgency in the detective's voice. "A thousand pardons that I should have gaped at you so foolishly. See, I will go and fetch my sons, for they are at work in the fields of the fattoria."

Wiping her hands on her apron, the woman went to the door.

"Camillo! Angelo!" she cried. "Hurry quickly, for there are men in danger who seek your aid!"

Two sturdy and picturesque Italian youths came running from the vineyards which surrounded the tiny village. Blake explained the situation briefly to them, and a few minutes later they were climbing down the sides of the blow-hole to the cave.

Tinker and the Yarn man still lay in a stupor, and the detective's face paled as he realized that he had returned only just in time.

The darkness rapidly grew darker as the rising tide covered the mouth of the cave, and the water slapped and gurgled about their faces as they returned to the base of the blow-hole with their unconscious burdens, and prepared the ropes they had slung from the lip of the cliff for the laborious task of getting them to the top.

When they reached the cottage a blinding fire crackled on the hearth, and, wrapping them in blankets, which Madame placed at his disposal, Blake laid the unconscious pair on the matting before it.

Cognac and hot water were mixed, and the fiery spirit induced a tinge of color in their cheeks.

"Hallo!" Rollings was the first to open his eyes, and he stared about him blankly for a few seconds. "Where the deuce—? Oh, I remember now! So we got through it safely, eh, old man?" He rose, tottered a pace or two, sank into a chair, and stretched out his chilled hands to the fire. "Heavens, what an experience! I knew the meaning of fear last night, Blake. But what about, Tinker? The lad looks pretty sick!"

"He is coming round," Blake said, bending over his assistant and rubbing his temples.

"Thank the stars he has an iron constitution, or he would have succumbed with exposure. There will be a pretty heavy bill to be presented to someone for last night's work!"

"I believe that Anne Borealis went to her death last night, but her was not the only dead in the game. Count von Dresher will have much to answer for."

It was not until an anxious half-hour had passed that Tinker opened his eyes.

At first his brain was a mass of tangled thoughts, through which ran a thread of consciousness that he was in some deadly peril. But as the mists rolled away, and he saw the anxious features of his master

bending over him, the shadow of a grin came to his lined lips.

"Good old guy!" he muttered huskily. And immediately sank into a deep and exhausted sleep. Blake felt his pulse. His heart was stronger now, and he turned to Rollings with a sigh of relief.

"It will be so difficult to get him awake," he said. "The young fellow got a happy knack of going through things smiling, and that helps a lot. Now what about some food, caro mio?" he added, turning to one of the Italian youths. "We are famished."

"The signor is very welcome," said the youth addressed. "So you, too, have been shipwrecked! You will doubtless be pleased to know, signor, that several of your friends also reached the shore safely. They were well cared for by Vito Ricci, a peasant youth, who works with us in the vineyard. And he is so very droll. All morning has he talked about the beauty of the signorina."

"The signorina!" Blake said quickly. He turned to Rollings. "That must be Anne Borealis. She and the rest of the crew must have escaped from the ship in one of the boats."

"No, signor," said the youth. "They reached the shore at dawn—just before the storm broke. But perhaps you would like to question Vito yourself? Shall I bring him to you?"

Blake nodded, and the Italian hurried from the room, soon to return with a sweet-faced youth about his own age.

"You have some news concerning friends of ours who reached the shore this morning?" Blake said. "I would like to hear about them."

"With pleasure, signor," said the newcomer. "I was waiting along the cliff at dawn in search of survivors. I saw a small boat in difficulties in the bay. I aided the party to reach the shore, and they told me their ship had been wrecked, and the beautiful signorina wished for a conveyance to take them to the railway station at Reggio. As it was imperative they should reach Rome without delay."

"Have they left for Rome?" Rollings asked.

"Yes, signor. I took them to my mother's house, and as soon as they had calmed down, I drove them to Reggio in time to catch the morning mail train to Rome. They numbered six in all."

"And when does the next train leave?" asked Blake.

"At midnight, signor. Few trains leave from Reggio, which is only a branch line to Cosentia."

Then he bade with your conveyance in time to catch the midnight train," Blake said. "Do not fail us. We are anxious to overtake our friends, and will pay you well for your trouble."

"The signor is generous. I will not fail you," said the youth, and left the room.

"They and Satan's own inn," growled Rollings. "Still, furnished with cars and a sail they would have little difficulty in reaching the shore."

Blake nodded.

"By midnight Tinker will be fit, and we will journey to Macerata," he said. "That, of course, is the woman's objective. From Rome she will probably take another train through Venice to Klagenfurt in Austria, and so on into Macerata."

"Until I have a hot word-out and Count von Dresher under arrest, I shall not give up the trail."

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THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. In and Out of Trouble!



THE day following the events of the last chapter, Blake and his companions stood upon the departure platform of the Imperial Station at Klagenfurt.

"Not a trace of her so far," said Rollings, chewing the butt of a cigar, and anxiously searching the face of every woman who passed them on the crowded station.

"I reckon the beautiful Anne is too busy to let us

spot her," Tinker said, now fully recovered from the effects of his ordeal.



As the woman rose, Blake saw too late that he had been tricked. "Anne Borelli!" gasped Blake in a curious far away voice. The next moment the two Austrians sprang upon him as he sank into unconsciousness. (Chapter 8.)

"I'll see Maurelavia we might as well forget all about her. She had practically a day's start of us, and it is quite possible she has reached the place already."

"What's the programme when we arrive, guv'nor? This won't be an easy stunt. We can't walk up the steps of the palace and openly arrest the party. Besides, where's the evidence? With the burning of the ship containing the locomotives every scrap of evidence went down to Dary Jones' locker. Our story would appear so wild and improbable as to be laughed at."

"That's so, young 'un," assented Blake thoughtfully. "You could do nothing by wiring through to England for extradition papers, either, Rollings."

Rollings chewed savagely at the butt of his cigar.

"Not a damned thing," he said. "Without evidence of the theft to send to England we are helpless. Extradition papers, as you know, Blake, can only be granted after a magisterial examination, when, if the claim for extradition is justified, the Home Secretary issues the necessary warrant."

"Even if we could rake up a political offence against them we should be unable to act. Purely political offences are not extraditable in England."

The detective nodded.

"When we reach Maurelavia we must attempt to ferret out new evidence," he said. "If we can only gain entrance to the palace that should not be difficult. It might even be possible to obtain it through some of the crew who escaped with Anne Borelli from the Golden Crest."

"Men of that stamp always have their price. And we must work quickly if we are to prevent war. As long as Borelli and Count von Dreschler are at liberty, the lives and freedom of the subjects of Bolivia stand imperilled."

"But here comes our train. At midnight we reach Eseng. We can travel by rail no further than that, and from there we must cross by caravan a section of the Dinatle Alps into Maurelavia."

As the train rushed into the station all was confusion.

Neither Blake or his companions bestowed more than a passing glance upon an old Austrian woman, who, wrinkled and bent with apparent years, stood beside them, accompanied by two stalwart youths of the Austrian peasant type who might have been her sons.

As the detectives entered a carriage the woman followed them in, pushing her way through the throng with a force and agility surprising in one whose outward appearance betokened such decrepit old age.

The sons followed her, seated her in a corner with her back to the engine with solicitous care, wrapped a gaily-striped travelling rug about her knees, then seated themselves opposite her, burying their swart faces in Austrian newspapers.

As the train steamed out of the station she blinked her red-rimmed eyes, and peered into Blake's face.

"You are foreigners?" she croaked. "Do not my eyes tell me that?"

Blake smiled good-naturedly into the lean and wrinkled face.

"Yes, madame," he said. "We are from England, and journey to Maurelavia on business."

"Then beware how you travel, my foreigners, lest an evil fate befall you! Since you have just arrived the rumour of war may not have reached you yet?"

Blake began to take more interest in the conversation. Behind the newspaper the two Austrian youths passed a significant glance.

"I have heard there is a possibility of war between Maurelavia and Bolivia," Blake said, pressing a coin into her skinny palm. "Tell me more. Having business interests there I am naturally interested."

"Already the dogs of the accursed Carlos are mobilised for war," said the old woman. "Listen, strangers. I have sons who work in the vineyards of Bolivia. A few days ago I had a letter from them with the news that war might come upon them at any moment."

We are about to visit them. It may be that we shall see them for the last time!"

The old woman hugged herself, whispering curses on the head of Carlos whilst she claved her bearded chin.

"The good Prince Charles, beloved of his people," she croaked, "refuses to believe such ill of his brother, and is consequently still unprepared."

"Treachery—treachery! The poplars of fair Bolivia whisper it as they bend to each other. Across the olive gardens a wind carries it for all to hear its lament. The birds scream it as they take flight to other lands. Treachery—treachery! The star of Bolivia has already set—in blood!"

Witch-like she appeared now—this mother of sturdy peasants—whose voice rose shrill in red-like piping as she prophesied the fate of a beloved country. But there was little of motherhood left in the lean, wrinkled visage, the shrunken body of this apparent hag of a past generation.

Suddenly her manner changed. Her voice held the whining note of the mendicant.

"Pardon an old woman, strangers," she said. "You are true of heart, and there is sorrow in your eyes because of a fair country's doom. We are very poor, gentlemen, and the cost of our journey has taken all our savings. My sons be thought then that we should sell flowers on the way."

Uncovering a basket on her knees the old woman, with trembling eagerness, took out a large bunch of roses. "Selecting three she handed one each to Blake and his companions."

"Only fifty centimes each, sir! Smell them! Do they not carry the breath of fair Austria?"

As the detectives bent over the perfumed petals, the dark eyes of the old hag flashed with a brightness that gave the lie to her aged appearance.

Suddenly an intense drowsiness overtook the three. Blake realised the danger, and flung the flower down. But the drug must have been potent. Soon the carriage grew less bright, and the swart faces of the Austrian



be one step towards foiling the plans of Count von Dresher. Pack them in an empty kit-bag. We can dump them somewhere along the road.

In half an hour all the belts, essential to the firing of a rifle, were removed and packed in three kit-bags.

"Ready," whispered Blake. "If we are questioned at the barrack-gates leave the matter along to me. I am familiar with the patrol."

Switching off the lights, they shouldered the bags and left the building. At the barrack-gates two soldiers paced up and down, their bayonets gleaming like tongues of fire in the night.

"Halt, who goes there?" came the sharp command, uttered in the patois of the district, and palms marked smartly against stocks as the two rifles were brought down to the ready.

"Friends!" called out Blake quietly, in the same tongue, a mixture of Austrian and German. "See, we have our kits! We have been ordered to join a draft proceeding to the front."

"Ah, friends. All's well!" grunted the sentry in charge, and the two started once more to pace their beats, bestowing no further attention on the trio.

"We're well out of that," Rollings said, when they were clear of the gates. "We'd better dump these confounded belts somewhere. I was scared out of my wits in case they should rattle as we walked past."

"There's a garden over there," whispered Tinker, jerking his head in the direction of a row of white railings. "If we can lower them down a well they will be as safe as houses. I'll handle the ropes and ladders."

To his satisfaction Tinker found a large well at the bottom of the garden. In a few minutes the rifle belts had been lowered down in the great bucket, and, relieved of their burden, they stood in the road.

"That's that," Tinker said. "What next, guv'nor? Shall we make an attempt to get through the lines into Bolivia at once? It should not be difficult in this get-up. We might even be able to collect some useful information on the way the Bolivian general would."

Tinker broke off suddenly, and the three darted into a hedge.

Their ears had detected the tramp of martial feet. Round the corner swung a platoon of infantry, and in their midst stalked proudly a small party of officers, whose sky-blue tunics and scarlet breeches contrasted brilliantly with the drab grey of the Maurestavian forces, and at once denoted them to be officers of high rank.

"Bolivian prisoners," whispered Blake, as the three glanced past. "And what a band!"

Two generals, one of artillery, the other of infantry, besides several highly-placed staff-officers. I didn't know the Maurestavian forces had broken the line."

"They haven't," Tinker said. "I've read over official statements before."

"Then this affair smacks of foul play," Blake said, half to himself. "To capture the staff of an Army H. Q. the line has to be penetrated to a considerable depth. No general directs operations from a point less than three or fifteen miles behind the lines, especially a general of artillery."

"Then how the deuce have they fallen into the enemy's hands?" asked Rollings.

"It is possible they have been kidnapped," Blake said thoughtfully. "Some of the Maurestavian forces must have got behind the Bolivian lines and behind the lines, probably over the hills—and held up the general's car on a lonely road when the staff were returning back to H. Q. after an inspection of the lines."

"Without an efficient staff to direct operations the Bolivian force would be like a man without a backbone, a ship without a rudder. The thing has been done before. I feel convinced that it is Count von Dresher's work."

Rollings nodded. Blake's theory, starting though it was, and the line of truth.

"What's to be done?" he asked, scratching his bristling and curly hair, a habit when perplexed.

"We must follow them, and, if a chance should occur, enable them to escape," Blake said quickly. "Quick, keep them in sight."

As the trio left the shadow of the hedge they saw the party wheel round and enter the gates of the palace. Silently and swiftly they raced after them.

"Follow me," Blake whispered. Blake. "Arrange yourselves with me on the end of

the party. Those in front will not be aware of our presence, and any spectators will come to the conclusion that we are the rear guard."

With rifles at the slope, the intrepid three marched about fifteen yards behind the party into the palace, and the luck which generally favours a bold stroke was with them, for the guards at the gate bestowed but a casual glance upon them, and even smiling with a friendly smile.

"Into the palace," whispered Blake. "See, they are marching the prisoners there. Evidently Carlos and Count von Dresher wish to question them in the hope of obtaining useful information."

"Keep an iron front. This is the greatest bit of bluff ever! If that confounded officer at the head of the party looks round we are done."

Behind the party they marched straight up the marble steps into the palace, through a reception-room where lounged Maurestavian officers of all ranks, and into the private apartments of Prince Carlos beyond.

Here the corridor was deserted except for the men in front.

As they came abreast an open door the detective turned his assistant's sleeve, and they darted into the room, fortunately deserted, leaving the prisoners and escort to march on without them.

"Quiet," whispered Blake. "Listen! The private suite of Carlos must lie at the end of the corridor. They have halted."

"Order arms!" came the gruff voice of the officer in charge. "Fall out the escort! Prisoners, left turn, quick march!"

A door slammed, and the sound of subdued voices alone reached them. Half an hour passed, and the door opened. Orders were given, and the party marched back past the room in which they were concealed. Night was upon them now, and somewhere a single window lighted out. The palace was as silent as a tomb.

"Come, Blake," Rollings said. "Suppose we search Carlos' private suite. We might find evidence to convict them in there. The opportunity is too good to be lost. I intend nothing Count von Dresher and that abject, Anso Borsell, under lock and key, and without evidence that can only be a fond dream."

"I was going to suggest the same thing," Blake said softly. "Fread lightly. If we are discovered in this right, they are entitled to shoot us as spies. Dresher and his minions would not let the opportunity slip."

With cautious steps they left the room and crept along the passage to the private suite of Prince Carlos.

The door was unlocked, the room shrouded in silence and shadows.

In a few moments they were inside.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. A Knock-Out—And what came of it!



"THE curtains are drawn," Blake whispered, glancing down the door. "Switch on one of the lights, young 'un. We are fairly safe here. Intruders seldom enter the private suite of a monarch."

Tinker struck a match to find the switch. As the slow blue spurt of flame burnt up into a yellow flame, there came a startled gasp.

Tentative cough, and the next moment the square and close-cropped head of Count von Dresher rose above the back of a chair which had hidden his presence, and in which he had evidently been dozing.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the minister. "Why do you rascals intrude upon the privacy of your king?"

Blake's keen faculties grasped the situation. The Minister of War, deceived by their uniforms, did not suspect their identities, and believed them to be ordinary soldiers.

He saluted smartly, and stepped forward towards the unsuspecting count.

"A thousand pardons, Excellency," he said. "We have brought you urgent dispatches from the front, and received instructions to deliver them into your hands alone."

Count von Dresher nodded, and his face became more amiable in expression. Blake tumbled at the breast-pocket of his tunic as if to draw out some papers placed there for safety.

The minister came forward impatiently, and at that moment Blake's fist shot out straight from the shoulder, felling the foe like a pole-axed bull. With a queer grunt he crumbled to the floor, a soft, pile carpet covering it scarcely yielding a sound.

For a moment they listened intently, but, except for the laboured breathing of the unconscious man, no sound broke the stillness.

"Good shot, guv'nor!" whispered Tinker breathlessly. "Gee! I nearly had a fit when I saw his square napper sticking up. I reckon we gave him a bit of a fright ourselves. He'll be in shadow-land now for a couple of hours. I've seen the effects of straight-lefts of years before. Couldn't have done it better myself."

Blake smiled grimly and stood over the fallen Tinker. A bulky pocket, half-fallen out of a pocket in the man's tunic, and a gold-headed cane, attracted his attention. He reached down for it, and carried it beneath the light which Tinker had now switched on.

Looks like a sealed dispatch," Rollings said, gazing at the package curiously.

"That's exactly what it is," Blake said. "It is addressed to the general in command of the Maurestavian forces. Probably it is a detailed plan prepared by Dresher for future war operations. There is no man in Maurestavia more qualified than Dresher to prepare such a document. He is a man who has held high military commands in Germany."

Sealing the parchment envelope was a great job of work, bearing the seal of Prince Carlos. Blake was on the point of breaking the wax in order to open the envelope, when he paused, uncertain of action.

"Once Dresher recovers consciousness and finds the seal broken, he will cancel these plans and get out orders," he said.

"If we could cut off the enemy's supply and break the seal we might be able to turn the information to useful account, for we should then know every move of the Maurestavian forces without Dresher being aware of the fact."

"Get it," X-rayed," suggested Rollings lightly.

To his surprise Blake answered seriously: "There's genius in you, after all, Rollings. Quite a sound idea!"

Tinker and the Yard man stared at the Black Street man from amazed eyes.

"X-ray it!" Tinker said. "You're joking, guv'nor!"

"Not at all, young 'un," Blake said quietly. "The possibility of reading the contents of a sealed document has already been established by the two separate but identical radiographs of a very fine ambulance, such as a sheet of paper, an insect's body, or a leaf may be obtained. These substances, through which the rays formerly used to pass without leaving an impression, can now be quite easily radiographed."

"It sounds impossible," Rollings said.

"Any document written with ink having a material base can be radiographed," Blake said quietly. "Even when the sheet is folded in the usual way, it is possible, by taking a radiograph stereoscopically, for then every detail can be seen standing out in bold relief."

"We had better get over to the nearest hospital at once, and get busy with the X-ray apparatus. My plan is to get a shadowgraph of the contents, then retort the envelope intact to Count von Dresher. You will ally his suspicions and cause him to think we have overlooked it."

"There will be some bluff needed," Tear your sleeve, Tinker, and smear your arm and tunic with some of the blood running from friend Dresher's nose. I will explain later."

Turning out the light and preparing the Tontons to the chair, Blake and his companions left the room. They made their way noiselessly through the deserted corridors of the palace, and beyond challenging them at the gates, the royal guard did not question their movements. When they reached a quiet thoroughfare, Blake accosted a civilian who was walking along the street towards them.

"Can you direct me to the nearest hospital?" he asked politely. "My friend has a leg." J. No. 1,903.

met with an accident while cleaning his rifle, and I wish to get the bullet extracted."

Following the man's directions, Blake and his companions soon reached the hospital, which, to the doctor's relief, turned out to be a civilian one.

"Don't forget you are wounded, young 'un," Blake said, as they mounted the steps. "Play the part well, and leave the rest to me. Catch hold of him, Rollings. Give an impression that he is too weak to walk unaided."

In answer to their summons on the bell, a caretaker, dressed in a faded uniform, opened the door and peered at them. "I am a medical officer from the barracks," Blake said sharply. "The hospital is now under military control. I wish to X-ray this man's arm, and to extract a bullet. Please lead the way out to the operating theatre. Are there any other attendants to administer the anaesthetic?"

The man jumped alertly to attention. "The medical staff have retired, sir," he said. "Will you summon one, if you wish. We have the room that the hospital was to be turned into a military one for the wounded soldiers."

Blake gave an inward sigh of relief. His face had worked perfectly. "I don't wish any of them," he said quickly. "I shall be able to manage quite easily myself. Lead the way to the X-ray room at once, please. This man needs immediate attention."

He led the man led the way into the hospital. Tinker gave a very realistic groan, and Rollings supported him with solicitous care. Arrived at the theatre the man switched on the lights.

"What you need me, sir?" he asked. "You will find everything in order. Any instruments you require you will find in the steriliser. That is the door of the X-ray room. It leads out of this one."

Blake nodded. "I shall not require you," he said. "You may go. On no account trouble to disturb any of the staff. There is no sense in dragging them out of bed for a simple case like this."

The man saluted and withdrew. As soon as the door closed behind him, Tinker danced a silent jig of elation.

"You're a cool beggar, Blake!" Rollings said admiringly.

But Blake was already striding across the theatre to the X-ray room. As they entered he was stripping the great camera-like affair of its protective cover. In a trice he had slipped the latter into it, and, taking some tubes from a metal case lying beside the apparatus, he deftly fixed them into position.

"Excellent!" he said. "These are no tubes, which, giving out soft rays, will photograph the skiagraph much more clearly than the old type."

Something clicked, and a ray of powerful orange-red light shot across the darkness. He continued to work for several minutes, then took out the negative-like shadowgraph. In a quarter of an hour he had developed the plate, and, beneath a powerful lamp, they tent over it, studying it closely.

It was possible, following his guidance, to read many of the words inscribed on the sheets of the paper reproduced on the queer wall-maps. There was a mass of printed, written matter, and an admirably defined were all the details that even the edges of the sheets of paper could be discerned. Being taken stereoscopically, every sheet stood out in bold relief.

Together they traced out the map and several of the more legible paragraphs, the gist of which ran thus:

*Royal Palace, Mauretania.

"To the Commander-in-Chief of the Mauretanian Forces.

"Matters are progressing very favourably here, and recruits are coming in at the rate of about five hundred a day. In a few days I shall be able to send a draft of ten thousand men, and it is my wish that you should attempt an offensive all along your left wing.

"I enclose a map of the district which your left wing now occupies, and have marked out favourable positions for your artillery at the points marked by red lines, for my secret agents have brought me the intelligence that these points are the weakest spots in the Bolivian line."

"You will meet with little opposition, for our plans to kidnap the best military brains in U. J.—No. 1,003.

in Bolivia have matured. Both the generals and their staff are now being held prisoners of war at the palace.

"Paul Katona plays his part well, and so far some success has been gained."

Ernst von Dresher,

"Minister of War."

"So that's how the land lies," Blake said, as he read over the translation of the skiagraph. "Pretty, isn't it? And who the deuce is this Paul Katona? My tone of the despatch, he is obviously impersonating someone. That is the only inference we can draw. Heard of any crook or adventurer of that name? You keep pretty comprehensive records at the Yard."

Rollings pondered for a moment.

"Name seems familiar," he said. "Believe there was an Austrian actor of that name who was suspected of being very actively engaged in the Continental 'dope' traffic on a large scale. If it's the same man he has a bad record."

"One of these effeminate, foppish sort of big game on the outside, but as cunning and hard as they make 'em underneath."

"Probably the same man," said Blake. "Profession, nationality, and record point that way. But come, let us get back to the palace, and return the despatch to Count von Dresher intact. This will be exceedingly useful to the Bolivian forces, and we must hand the intelligence to them without delay. There will be plenty of time to figure out the fresh development afterwards. It is not worth the risk of the generals. They would be too closely guarded."

Taking up some cotton-wool, Blake washed the blood from Tinker's arm, threw the bloodstained material in the dressing-pail, disinfected the instruments in the steriliser, and made it seem apparent that the operating theatre had indeed been used for an operation.

The caretaker bowed them out, and they swiftly made their way to the palace, past the guards on the gates, and into the royal suite of Carlos. The Tintin had not stirred, and Blake carefully placed the despatch in the man's pocket, afterwards taking a silver cigarette case and a few trinkets, in order to give the count the impression that common theft had been the motive for the attack.

"Now for our journey through the lines into Bolivia," Blake said, switching off the light. "He cannot not to speak to Katona if we happen to be within the hearing of any of the Mauretanian soldiers. That would bring suspicion on us instantly."

Leaving the palace, they struck across the plain towards the distant boom of the guns. The desert was breaking up into ridges, the wagon-trails, and the shattering explosions of hidden batteries were deafening. Great dumps lined the roadside, and fatigue parties were leading up the ladders with their weary loads.

The hedges were white with a dust which bore silent witness to the passage of hundreds of horses and men, and white puffs of shrapnel smoke hung like fleecy clouds over the plain. He was looking down at the efficiency of Bolivia's small force of artillery.

As they approached the reserve trenches the whole Bolivian line belched death; rifles and machine-guns, heavy and light artillery blasted gaps in the Mauretanian ranks, cutting great lanes through the piled-up trenches.

Bang and counter-bang, shriek, curse, and groan, broke like pandemonium through the morning air. And that day the troops of Carlos learnt that the "contemptible little army" of which he could fight was no joke.

"Down this communication-trench," Blake said. "The infantry in the sections are fixing bayonets in readiness to go 'over the top.' Follow them over behind me. We must cut into a Bolivian trench, and give ourselves up as prisoners. We can explain afterwards."

"The whole blow for the Mauretanian soldiers to go over the parapet they were close upon their heels."

Machine-guns belched death, cutting great spaces in the Mauretanian ranks; but the living went on.

Then, as the Bolivian trenches; man grappled with man; steel crossed steel, and the shrieks of the wounded were terrible to hear.

Then, seeming to spring from the horizon like a flash, Bolivian soldiers charged with a rush. In one shattering chorus their rifles spoke, and the quick-firing guns spat destruction. Down went the foremost of the

charging Mauretanians, and the slender ranks faltered and were lost. In a trice the party were surrounded, and being marched up to the Bolivians cages as prisoners.

"We're through, anyway!" Rollings said, grinning good-humouredly into the face of a sorry Bolivian infantryman who snatched the rifle from his hands.

A puzzled expression crossed the soldier's swart face on hearing the unfamiliar language, and Blake hastened to explain.

"We are English," he said, in the patois, "and would like to be taken at once before your officers. We come to you, and wish to join the enemy in their attack, in order to cross the lines and reach you."

The man looked dubiously at them for a moment; but a subaltern officer standing near, who had heard the conversation, came forward.

"You shall have ample facilities to prove yourselves!" he said, somewhat curtly. "Follow me!"

A few minutes later they stood in the presence of a colonel of infantry, to whom Blake unfolded the strange story, and showed the copy of the despatches. The grizzled old veteran thanked them warmly, then said:

"I will see that you are taken to the G.H.Q. by car at once. His Highness Prince Charles is there, for since the loss of his generals he has been directing operations himself."

And a few minutes later they were speeding across the shell-swept countryside towards G.H.Q. The sun was well up when they arrived, and without loss of time they were ushered into the presence of the prince.

The prince, a tall, well-built young man, clad in a simple but business-like uniform, was heading over an ordnance-map, surrounded by members of his staff. He looked up from sharp and observant eyes as the conducting officer approached the table and checked his needs in a salute.

"These gentlemen, your Highness, say they are from England and are the leaders of important news."

His Highness bowed courteously, and Blake briefly gave the details of his amazing expedition, and his connection with the case of the stolen locomotives.

Prince Charles and his staff were attentive listeners, and when the detective came to the end of his narrative the ruler of Bolivia took all three warmly by the hand.

He was a clean-cut young man, an admirable first-class officer and a first-class soldier, and the politeness in his manner belated nothing from his manly bearing.

"I am deeply indebted to you and your companions, Mr. Blake," he said. "This despatch copy will prove invaluable to us, so my suspicions concerning the disappearance of my generals are removed. I am at least depths of infantry has my brother sunk."

"I believe him to be but the foot of others," your Highness," Blake said. "He is surrounded by political adventurers of the worst type—men who would stick at nothing to gain their own ends. We would have attempted to get your general's bodies, but the odds were far too heavy against us. Still, in the copy of that despatch lies victory—a bloodless victory—to your forces. Look at the map."

The prince looked down puzzled at the tracing. His brains had not the same keen powers of observation as had Blake's, and he took his head dubiously.

"They will be occupying a very strong and strategic position, Mr. Blake," he said. "From the hills on which they intend their artillery to get into action their guns will command the Bolivian plain."

Blake bent over the map.

"Kindly follow me in this, your Highness," he said. "Withdraw your forces across the plain, and what would happen?"

"The Mauretanian forces would naturally take possession, as it is their intention to make a sweeping advance into Bolivia, and thus form an enormous front."

"Exactly, prince," said Blake; "and in their advance would lie your success. Do not the River Save, a tributary of the Danube, border the plain, which is already low-lying and marshy?"

Blake paused for a moment, earnestly studying the map. The prince and his staff were silent, recognising in this calm-minded Englishman a man whose genius was superior to their own.



As his assailant recoiled Blake dashed his fist into the brawny throat. The German count staggered back, his sword clattering to the floor. (Chapter 10.)

"Had I charge of Bolivia's war operations my plan of campaign would be this, your Highness," Blake said: "I should draw my troops to the Bolivian end of the plains, simply leaving behind a few decoy regiments to make a show of resistance, and draw the Mauritanian forces on."

"It would be a simple matter to check their advance by a creeping barrage of artillery when they had reached the marshy centre of the plains, and at that moment I should blow up the bank of the river and flood the district."

"What would happen? When you made a sweeping offensive against them, the flooded and marshy land would not permit them to withdraw with their baggage and horses, and they would be lost. They would surrender without any serious resistance."

Into the silence which followed the calm and convincing statement of Sexton Blake broke the enthusiastic voice of the ruler of Bolivia.

"Mr. Blake, I place every faith in your judgment. Your plan shows you to be something of a military genius, and the loss of my generals has left me badly in need of such men. Will you accept a command in my army—serve beneath a foreign flag? I would like to place the command of these operations entirely in your hands."

Blake hesitated for a moment, then bowed.

"As in this case war is the only weapon with which to gain peace for Bolivia, I accept the honour, your Highness," he said simply. "It is a land of peace these armed marauders of Count Von Brieschler have hurried themselves upon, and my sympathies are entirely with you and your gallant forces. They are men I shall be proud to command."

The Prince of Bolivia took the crimson sash from his waist and slipped it over the detective's head.

General Sexton Blake clicked his heels in a military salute, and, raising the tips of his fingers to his cap, turned shining eyes upon the flag of gallant little Bolivia which fluttered overhead.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Tinker is Buried Alive!



WITHIN a week, under the fine generalship of Sexton Blake, the false retreat had been carried out with masterly skill, and not a life had been lost in the operation.

Faster than usual, with the strain of those eventful and anxious days written in the tired lines beneath his eyes, the great London detective sat at G.H.Q., an expressionless figure, yet the staff officers in the room had every faith in his judgment, and his every command was carried out without question.

Tinker should have been back by now, old man," Rollings said. "I hope nothing has happened to the lad. It was a dangerous mission you sent him on; but you were forced to it, of course."

Blake nodded somewhat wearily. "Tinker shows at his best when in a tight corner."

A staff officer, bearing on his breast the ribbons of many hard-fought campaigns, hurried into the room.

"Good news, sir," he said, saluting. "The field telephonists have just phoned through the intelligence that the bank of the river overlooking the plains has been dynamited. The plains are flooded."

"And what of my assistant?" Blake's voice trembled for a moment. "Is Lieutenant Tinker safe? His was the hand that did this."

"Of Lieutenant Tinker there is no news," said the officer slowly. "The explosion was greater than was expected. The officers who viewed the affair through field-glasses state—"

The old veteran broke off in uneasy confusion.

"Go on, colonel," Blake said quietly; but his lips twitched painfully.

"Well, sir, Lieutenant Tinker was buried under the debris. It is feared that he was buried alive."

Blake clutched the sides of the table as he rose to his feet. His face was very white, but his voice as firm as a rock as he said:

"Please see that my car is brought round immediately. I am going into the line to direct artillery operations. His Highness is personally leading his infantry. Ask him to follow up my barrage with an advance."

The officer saluted and left them.

"Rotten business about Tinker, old man," Rollings said gruffly; and there was a suspicious dimness in his eyes. "Goah, but the lad was made of the right stuff! Many a man would have fainted the job!"

Blake nodded, and swallowed hard at the growing constriction in his throat.

"You're right!" he said. "If I've lost him, Rollings, it will be the hardest hit I've ever had. Here's the car. Let us go to the gun pits. Afterwards I will investigate."

With Rollings as his aide-de-camp, Blake entered the car, and a few minutes later they had reached the gun pits.

"Send the order along to the battery commanders to get ready for action!" Blake said curtly, stepping from the car to the shell-torn earth. "Aiming-point, that red-tiled cottage on the left flank. Bring me a range-finder."

The aide-de-camp sped off on his errand, returning shortly with a range-finder and tripod. Blake clamped the instrument together, then stared out over the flooded plain with his field-glasses.

All was confusion. From a great gaping hole in the banks of the broad river the water poured in, a swift current in which men and horses were struggling desperately.

In serpentine constrictions it ran over the plain, covering it in the lowest lying hollows to a depth of several feet, effectively cutting off the retreat of the Mauritanian forces.

Ammunition-dumps stood up like fantastic

fragments of islands in the great pools, and Blake smiled grimly as he realised that none of the howitzer charges would prove effective, covered and damped as they were by the quickly rising floods.

In a few seconds he had the range. His batteries stood practically wheel to wheel in a formidable line, and the ground seemed to bristle with the long black muzzles.

Well-stocked limbers lay behind every gun, and the gunners stood alert in their pits—boys in the blush of youth, men in their manhood's might, and stalwart greybeards in the splendid autumn of their days, all alert and young, strong and true as steel, material with their worlds are conquerors.

Taking up his megaphone, the detective placed it to his lips.

"Batteries in action—batteries under cover. Ammunition, red-tipped cottage on the left flank, twenty degrees, fifteen minutes more right! Range, three thousand five hundred yards! Twenty rounds battery fire, ten seconds! Shrapnel load; raise fifteen yards each salvo!"

Great blocks of smoke above the click of the fuse-setters. Gun-layers set their instruments, and in a few seconds sounded the voices of the brigade-majors:

"All guns set and ready, sir!"

"Get 'em rip, Napoleon!" Rollings whispered admiringly; and his whole frame was trembling with excitement. "Gosh, Blake, you're a wonder! That'll put the breeze up 'em! You're not firing directly on the enemy, of course!"

"Just a creeping barrage a couple of hundred yards in front of them," Blake said. "Look out for the white flags. They are bound to surrender, their retreat being cut off, and when they're in the snare, creeping towards them they'll chuck up the sponge like sensible men."

Then, with the megaphone to his lips:

"All batteries—fire!"

Against the softness of the air was torn by the thunderous voice of the guns. The hills, taking up the sound, sent it booming and echoing in the valleys, the answer of gallant Bolivia to the hordes of Count von Dresher. Dense clouds of smoke, rising with the rush of the guns, hung like a misty veil over the field of war as a hurricane of shells, before which even the stoutest veteran in the Mauretafrican ranks might well quail, rained hot chaos of ruin on two hundred yards before the enemy's ranks, and made havoc of the rich red soil.

Ten seconds later the guns boomed out their message of destruction once again, and the shells fell nearer the foe this time. The gunners worked with the will. The soldiers of liberty these; gallant hearts who would have died to keep their beloved country clean and pure.

Through the dense clouds of smoke loomed the figure of Sexton Blake, calm and inscrutable, revealing nothing in his iron features of the grief in his heart born of the knowledge that his brave assistant must surely have gone to his doom.

As the atmosphere cleared between the times of firing, he caught fleeting glimpses of the disordered and panic-stricken ranks of the Bolivian forces; of men struggling to cross that racing flood of wildly plunging horses, unmanageable through the terror of those mighty crashes had bred in their hearts.

As Blake gave the order to cease fire a hoarse cry came over from the ranks of the Bolivians.

It was Prince Charles, and though his uniform was torn and covered with thick dust, no warrior in shining armour of the old crusading days looked a more knightly figure. His voice roared a command, and the flood of human life in the Bolivian trenches leapt to life. Onwards they sped, mightily yelped on their lips, as grim as death, down the valley, over a little detour, spiked and wire-entangled, the men who fought for liberty went like grey wolves, and neither rifle-fire, gun, nor steel could stay them.

In a few minutes it was over—the Mauretafrican forces had surrendered.

A few hours later, when the task of rounding up and disarming the forces of Carlos had been completed, Sexton Blake and Rollings stood in the presence of Prince Charles at G.H.Q.

"Mr. Blake, my country owes you a debt of gratitude we can never repay," said his Highness; and his voice, though pleasant and casual, conveyed all the deeper meaning.

Bolivia will mourn the death of your brave assistant, and the memory of his gallant deed will live for ever! He gave his life that Bolivia might be saved from the thraldom of my treacherous brother's ruler!"

His Highness paused for a moment, and opened a drawer in his desk. He drew out a diamond-studded star and handed it to the detective.

"The Star of Bolivia, Mr. Blake," he said kindly. "Accept it as a token of my country's respect for the memory of your gallant lad. It is the greatest honour Bolivia can bestow!"

Blake took the glittering star with hands that trembled.

"I thank you, your Highness," he said. "There can be no doubt that my assistant is dead. I had a hundred men searching the river-bank, but we could find no trace of him."

The door opened, and a party of staff officers marched into the room. In their midst stood Prince Carlos of Mauretafrica, a tattered and unshaven figure.

Football Competition No. 9.

Matches Played Saturday, December 2nd.

£500 WON.

In this competition six hundred and fifteen competitors sent in correct forecasts of the results of all the matches on the coupon. The prize of £500 has therefore been divided among the winners.

We regret that pressure on space precludes us from publishing the names and addresses of these winners; but a full list may be seen at the Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

"His Highness Prince Carlos of Mauretafrica, sir," said one of the officers. "His Highness and his staff were captured and brought in with the other prisoners."

The features of the ruler of Bolivia were as black as a night-storm. His brows were bent, and there was an ominous silence like the calm before the storm is to burst. Then Prince Charles rose to his feet, and an expression of astonishment crept into his eyes.

"My brother!" he cried, in amazement. "What is the meaning of this? The man you have here is my brother. There is some resemblance, but that is all."

Blake smiled grimly, and stepped forward. "He is Paul Katona, described as an Austrian actor, your Highness," he said. "I had had a suspicion that your brother was being impersonated since I took a copy of Count von Dresher's despatch. You will remember that the last sentence read, 'Paul Katona plays his part well, and so far none suspect the truth.'"

"But what was the object of the impersonation?" asked the bewildered prince.

"It was carried out because your brother repeated his action in declaring war upon your Highness," Blake said. He turned to the now trembling actor.

"I should advise you to make a clean breast of everything, Katona," he added coldly. "Your record is well known to my friend here who is a high official of New Scotland Yard."

"I will!" the actor said eagerly. "I was dragged into this business by Count von Dresher. He has a hold over me. Count von Dresher and Anne Borselli, with whom I used to act, persuaded the Prince of Mauretafrica to declare war on his brother in order to find money for their extravagances."

"After he had signed the declaration of war," Prince Carlos repeated his action, and Dresher, acting in this the downfall of

his plans, had him framed up and then sent to Vienna for me to impersonate him, and so hoodwink the people. The real prince is a prisoner at the palace."

Prince Charles had listened in astonishment to the surprising story. He cut short the actor's tale and said:

"Take him to the civil prison," he said curtly. "I place his punishment in the hands of Detective-Inspector Rollings. The man is evidently wanted by the English police."

"At the palace," said Katona sullenly. "He's got your bat, Tinker, in his power. The lad was dug out of the debris and taken prisoner after moving up the river bank. Dresher managed to escape by swimming the flood on horseback."

Blake turned white for a moment, then an expression of joy crossed his worn features. Rollings was beaming all over his rufous face.

"Is he badly injured?" asked Blake.

"No; but he soon will be if you don't get him out of Dresher's hands," Katona said ominously.

I will see you don't lose anything by this, Katona, Blake said coolly. He turned to his Highness. "I should like the fastest car you have placed at my disposal, please," he added. "I am going to Mauretafrica to get Tinker and your brother out of Count von Dresher's power."

In a few minutes the detective was at the wheel of a powerful car, Rollings beside him. They found the Mauretafrican capital in a state of wild disorder. The few troops who had been lucky enough to escape through the flood were running like a cloud of locusts over the city, pillaging and committing wild acts of anarchy.

They were going to teach a lesson, they said, to those who had exploited their patriotism for personal gain, and who had brought such ignominious defeat upon them. When Carlos saw the flames of his burning palace—saw tongues of fire licking the dark sky—when he saw his spendthrift ministers shot before his eyes, then he would know the lesson they had to teach.

At the palace gates they found a clamorous horde of soldiers and peasants. They scattered like sheep as Blake drove through their ranks and right up to the palace entrance.

A party of Civil Guards were defending the palace behind barricades of sandbags, but a few words from the officer in charge gained them admittance.

Together they raced through the corridors. Somewhere in the palace a shot rang out, followed by a woman's scream.

"Good heavens! Who's that?" Rollings said breathlessly.

"Probably Anne Borselli," was Blake's grim spoken reply. "The people regard her, and rightly, too, as the root of their troubles. She would receive scant mercy at their hands."

A long row of doors faced them. In which room was Tinker imprisoned?

"We'd better divide now," Blake said. "You take the passage on the right. There lies a moment's rest, Dresher, by now, must realise that the game is up, and his nature is such that he would try to exact vengeance on the lad before attempting to escape."

As Rollings disappeared down the branch corridor, Blake darted into a room facing him. Some sound came from within, a gasp eloquent of fear had attracted his attention. He passed on the threshold, a look of horror in his grey eyes.

Standing over the recumbent figure of his bound assistant was Count von Dresher.

The man was mad, and in his eyes was a look which could endure no further. The inhuman glare of the lust to kill. His stubby hair was on end, his bloodshot eyes glaring fury, and every now and then he bellowed like a wounded bull.

A sword was in his hand, and his hand went out from shoulder to flank, exposing the play of his great muscles. He was bleeding from a cut on the forehead, and the blood, trickling down his face, mingled with the foam on his lips, and dropped sluggishly on his hairy chest.

It was evident he had been badly handled by the mob, and that the reverse of his plans had disordered his brain.

Meeting the second of Blake's presence, he swung round with a beast-like snarl, and his eyes dilated with a fresh access of passion.

Across the room they crept, locked in a desperate embrace. The madman hooked his knee round the detective's thigh, clutched his throat in a great, hairy hand, and slowly turned him backwards across a table. As far as strength went, Blake was the equal of the madman in brute force, but with the fighting education of a pugilist, and in a personal encounter between two men of equal courage, science tells.

And science, though it cannot give strength, gives coolness.

Blake struggled desperately at his bonds in an attempt to get freer and lead his master a hand, but they did not yield an inch.

To the inexperienced eye, it would appear

that the frenzied madman, helped by the strength born of his insanity, gripping the throat of the man beneath him, must rise from the struggle an easy victor.

The sheer pressure of those hairy hands about his throat had caused Blake to lose his sight, owing to the increased blood-pressure in his head, and although he pressed with all the might of his muscles, striving to resist the leverage which the madman was applying in order to break his back on the edge of the table, he might as well have pushed against a stone wall.

With his eyes protruding, and every sinew strained to its uttermost, and he felt the German relax his grip in order to draw back and aim at him an effective blow with the sword.

Disengaging his left hand, Blake suddenly allowed himself to sink, and then, drawing up his right knee, struck the madman beneath the jaw.

As the close-cropped head was jerked backwards by the blow, the detective straightened himself, and dashed his fist into the heavy throat.

Count von Dreescher staggered back, and the sword clattered to the floor.

Then, with a mighty rush, a party of the mob entered the apartment. With a howl of rage they made for the German, who, snatching up his sword, sprang to the wall and placed his back against it.

"Back, men!" cried Blake sternly. "What madness is this? Leave Count von Dreescher in my hands. I will see that he meets his just deserts."

But the detective's words were unheeded, and there began another Homeric struggle—this time of one man against twenty, and it was none the less heroic because the Ajax was a traitor and the Trojans rebel soldiers.

(Continued overleaf.)

GREAT FOOTBALL COMPETITION

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Below you will find a coupon giving TEN matches to be played on SATURDAY, JANUARY 20th. We offer the sum of £500 for a correct or nearest forecast of the results of all these matches.

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and must reach that address not later than the FIRST POST on FRIDAY, JANUARY 19th.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Answers," "All Sports," "Sports Budget," "Answers' Library," "Family Journal," "Home Companion," "Woman's World," "Boys' Realm," "Pictorial Magazine," "The Champion," "Furk," and "Football Favourite."

RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

1. All forecasts must be made on coupons taken from this journal, or from any of the issues of the above journals which contain the announcement of the competition.
2. Any alteration or mutilation of the coupon will disqualify the effort.
3. If any match, or matches, on the coupon should be abandoned, or full time is not played for any reason, such match, or matches, will not be taken into consideration in the adjudication.
4. In the event of ties, the prize will be divided.
5. No correspondence may be enclosed with the coupon, and none will be entered into. Neither will interviews be granted.
6. When more than one effort is submitted, coupons must not be placed or in any way fastened together.
7. Competitors are entitled to enclose under the same cover coupons taken from any of the journals taking part in the contest.
8. No competitor will be awarded more than one share of the prize.
9. The Editor reserves the right to disqualify any coupon for what, in his opinion, is good and sufficient reason, and it is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision shall be accepted as final and legally binding in all matters concerning the competition.
10. All entries received after the first post on FRIDAY, JANUARY 19th, will be disqualified. No responsibility can be accepted for any effort, or efforts, lost, mislaid, or delayed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery. Unstamped or insufficiently stamped efforts will be refused. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

U. J.

Football Competition No. 14

Date of Matches, SATURDAY, JANUARY 20th.

Closing Date, FRIDAY, JANUARY 19th.

ARSENAL	v. MANCHESTER CITY
CHelsea	v. NEWCASTLE UNITED
OLDHAM ATHLETIC	v. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
DERBY COUNTY	v. FULHAM
PORT VALE	v. WEST HAM UNITED
SOUTHAMPTON	v. CRYSTAL PALACE
WOLVERHAMPTON W.	v. CLAPTON ORIENT
CHARLTON ATHLETIC	v. BRENTFORD
QUEEN'S P.K. RANGERS	v. MILLWALL
SOUTHEND UNITED	v. WATFORD

I enter Football Competition No. 14 in accordance with the Rules and Conditions announced above, and agree to accept the published decision as final and legally binding.

Name

Address

14

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