

On the other side of the road was a double-fronted shop called Lord Panton's Stores.

Terhune was quite startled until he realised that "Lord" was merely a christian name. The windows were packed with a variety of goods, everything from cheap jewellery to wireless sets. Terhune guessed the place was a gold mine in the holiday season.

It looked as though the local citizens made enough sales in the summer to keep them in money during the long winter months, when the grey mists rolled in from the North Sea.

By the time he had finished his meal the sun was shining palely, and the street looked quite attractive. He asked the landlord what time lunch would be.

"One o'clock," said Jim Windle, "but will you be here? You won't be going on as soon as the tide is out?"

Windle spoke with suspicious eagerness, and before he quite realised what he was saying, Terhune had growled—

"No, I shall be here for some days."

A look of fury flashed into the man's small eyes, then they

were quickly veiled and he gave a quick bow.

"You'll be very welcome, sir."

As he turned away, Terhune knew he was lying.

Terhune went to his room to get his overcoat and gloves before going for a walk round the town walls.

With the sunlight shining into the room it was hard to imagine that someone had mysteriously entered there when the door was locked and had cracked him on the head.

There were seven doors in the room, and once again he assured himself that six of these led to big, dark cupboards.

A few minutes later he was striding up the main street, being stared at by these queer people of this queer town.

He reached the northern wall, and from there got a full view of the situation of Holden-wall.

It was as he came down from the wall and re-entered one of the main streets that he was hailed by Inspector Thacker.

"Good morning, Mr Terhune! I hope they made you comfortable at the inn?"

Terhune decided to speak of

his adventure. Although he was not officially connected with the police, he liked to help them whenever possible.

He had taken a violent dislike to the innkeeper, and if the man was up to any dirty game, Terhune meant to put the police wise, especially after the way he had been treated.

"Some queer things happened last night," began Terhune.

He walked along beside Thacker and told him everything.

To his surprise the inspector began to laugh. He blew his long nose and wiped his eyes.

"Excuse me, Mr Terhune, but that's the wildest tale I've ever heard."

Terhune went red. He was not accustomed to being treated as though he was an imbecile.

"Listen," he snapped. "At the present moment I've a lump on my skull that was made by the blow that put me to sleep. Feel for yourself."

The inspector propped his cycle against the wall and duly fingered the sore place.

"I feel nothing," he declared. "But I'll tell you what we'll do, Mr Terhune. We'll call in a doctor to examine you, other-

wise you'll be having this illusion for the rest of your life.

"Come across to the police station and I'll phone either Dr Temple or Dr Bell."

Inwardly fuming, Paul Terhune crossed the square and entered the police station, an ancient-looking building with barred windows.

He was shown into an empty waiting-room while the inspector went away to phone the doctor.

Terhune walked up and down the cold room. The door had been left partially open, and on the other side of the corridor he saw another door. He was curious about this place.

At the far end of the corridor Terhune could hear Thacker on the phone. There appeared to be nobody else about.

On impulse he crossed the corridor and opened the door of the opposite room. It was a small office, quite empty.

He closed the door and returned to the waiting room. Very soon the inspector returned to say Dr Temple was on his way.

Not five minutes later a grey-haired, sunken-checked man

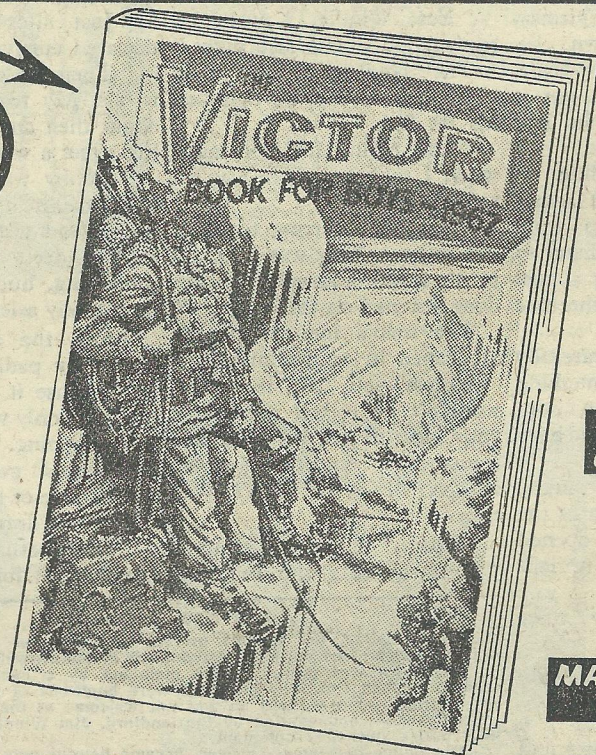
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