

quay while the seafaring man lifted his grimy cap to scratch his head. The British were all mad, he told himself. One day Germany would fight them and destroy them completely, and that would be the best thing that could happen to them.

Lord Harry hailed a passing cab on the corner of the street.

"The square where the balloon is moored?" he shouted up to the bearded cab driver. "Do you know it?"

"Ja, mein herr, Not ten minutes' drive from here," was the reply.

"Then take us there, and drive like the wind. You will be well paid, I assure you!" snapped the Englishman.

They jumped inside, the cabby cracked his whip over his horse's rump, and they were off with the speed of—a horse-driven cab.

Eight minutes later the cabby heaved on the reins, and the horse came to a halt. Lord Harry jumped down, thrust a handful of notes into the happily surprised driver's fist, and pointed with the tip of his cane to where the balloon still floated lazily at its moorings.

Professor Heinz von Erghart, rather hoarse of voice now, was still endeavouring to persuade the very small crowd of idlers still left in the square to experience with him all the thrills of flying in a lighter-than-air balloon over the rooftops of Hamburg.

Lord Harry caught him by the sleeve of his checked jacket.

"Herr Professor, can you steer this thing in any direction?" he inquired.

"Why, of course," the professor assured him. "My creation will—"

"Then you have a passenger—"

He looked at Parsons, eyeing the monstrous canopy of coloured silk above him apprehensively.

"Two passengers. Climb aboard, Parsons, we are taking a balloon ride over the rooftops of Hamburg, and over the sea after those colliers!" he added.

Parsons climbed into the basket. His face wore a slight green tinge. He had never been off the ground in his life, and was certain that this was to be the end of everything.

Lord Harry was bundling the professor in without ceremony, and shouting to the

idlers to release the ropes so that they could be away.

The Germans in the square needed no urging. This was what they had been waiting for—to see someone crazy enough to go up in this weird contraption, and break their necks.

As the balloon rose out of the square Parsons groaned and sank down in a heap at the bottom of the basket. The professor, happy and wild with excitement was waving his arms at the rapidly falling away crowd.

Parsons roused himself sufficiently to poke his bowler-hatted head over the rim of the basket in time to see the sooty chimneys of the square drop away below him. It was all too much to be borne.

"Where would you like to go?" squealed the happy pro-

top of his black bowler. At this height the wind was strong. It howled through the ropes that attached the basket to the balloon.

"So, I have no choice," squeaked the professor. "So be it. If I drown, I will hold you responsible!"

The bright-coloured balloon soared over the harbour while seamen and dockers gathered to point their fingers up at it, to shout and cheer.

An hour later Lord Harry, gripping the sides of the basket and peering down on the grey wastes of the Baltic, gave a cry of triumph.

"There they are, by Jove!" he exclaimed. "Going full out, and no sign of the Russians yet, what!"

Parsons summoned up enough courage to pull himself

ing over them, some were waving their hands.

"Let us pray we are in time," said Lord Harry.

AERIAL ATTACK

HE took a notebook and pencil from a pocket inside his jacket, and wrote quickly. When the message was completed, he opened one of the ballast sacks lying at the bottom of the basket, took out a sizeable stone, wrapped the sheet of notepaper round it, and secured it with an elastic band.

The balloon was immediately above one of the colliers as Lord Harry leaned over the side of the basket, and opened his fist. He watched the descent of the stone bearing the message and breathed an audible sigh of relief as it fell on the deck, where it was retrieved by a member of the crew.

In answer to Professor von Erghart's unspoken question, the English nobleman explained—

"Infernal machines have been planted on the screw shafts of each of those colliers. My message is to warn the captain. If the thing is found in time a terrible explosion will be averted."

Acting under Lord Harry's instructions the professor now pulled on a couple of the balloon ropes to bring the airy vehicle round in a position to sail over the deck of the second ship.

Lord Harry was already busily writing his second message. Parsons, at last getting into the spirit of the venture, and was searching in one of the sacks for a suitable rock.

The second message was successfully dropped, and then the third.

One to go.

Parsons, clinging with one hand to his precious bowler, gave a howl and pointed with his free arm into the distance. Lord Harry stopped writing to follow the direction of the pointing finger, and his mouth hardened when he saw another lighter-than-air balloon drifting across the heavens in their direction.

The distance was already so close that Lord Harry made out the dark figures of two men inside the basket, both looking eagerly in his direction.

"Who—who are they?"

★ NEXT WEEK'S TOP TEAMS ★

NEXT week's "Top Teams" feature will include the following star sides:—

St Mary's Primary School Football XI, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

Monmouth Boy's School Under-14 Cricket XI, Chepstow.

Aberdeen Schools Select Football XI.

Horsham Wanderers Football Club, Sussex.

Write now about YOUR team to—"Top Teams," "Rover and Wizard," 18a Hollingsworth Street, London, N.7—and PICK A PRIZE from the list on Page 16.

fessor. "I can show you—" up to a crouching position, and peeped cautiously over the edge of the basket.

"Show us the sea, old chap," Lord Harry told him. "Out across the harbour, soar over the boiling grey waves!" There they were, indeed. Four grimy little German colliers with black smoke pouring from their funnels, heading farther out to sea, leaving a wide, white wash in their wake.

The professor rolled his eyes. "Donner und blitzten, that I cannot do!" he exclaimed. "Over the sea? What if we should be forced to descend, mein herr? My lovely lighter-than-air balloon down in the wild ocean. Himmel, we would all drown!"

Lord Harry unsheathed his sword from the ebony cane and showed the professor its still-bloodied tip.

"I have no time to argue with you, Professor," he said agreeably. "Obey my orders or I will throw you out and endeavour to control the thing myself!"

Parsons was on his knees with his hands clasped over the

Lord Harry was able to see the men on the decks of the colliers below. They were staring up at the balloon hover-