

THE GIANT GUN

engaged in mortal struggle. The whole country seemed to roar and blaze and innumerable manikins moved over the hills and valleys.

Above the thunder of this battle rose a mighty crash that sent the air rolling in circular waves. The *Arrow* quivered and then Lannes dropped it down several hundred yards, in order that they might get a better view.

"It's one of their giant guns, a 42 centimeter," he said, "and it's posted on that hill over to our right. I didn't think they could bring so big a gun in the pursuit, but it seems that they have been able to do so."

"And it's plumping shells more than a ton in weight, right into the middle of the Franco-British army."

"It would seem so, and doubtless they're doing terrible destruction."

John was silent for a moment or two. He had felt an inspiration. It was a terrible and dangerous impulse, but he meant to act upon it.

"Philip," he said, "have you any bombs with you?"

"A good supply, John. But why?"

"I propose that you and I fly over the mammoth gun and blow it up."

Lannes turned a little in his seat, and stared at his comrade.

"I hold that against you," he said.

"Why?"

"Because I didn't think of it first. I'm considered reckless, and it's the sort of enterprise that ought to have occurred to me. Instead the idea comes to you, a reserved and conservative sort of a fellow. But