

COMET

DON'T MISS THE
NEW FOUR-PAGE
KIT CARSON YARN.
STARTING INSIDE
TODAY!

3⁰ EVERY
MONDAY

No. 236, January 24, 1953

THE SKY EXPLORERS

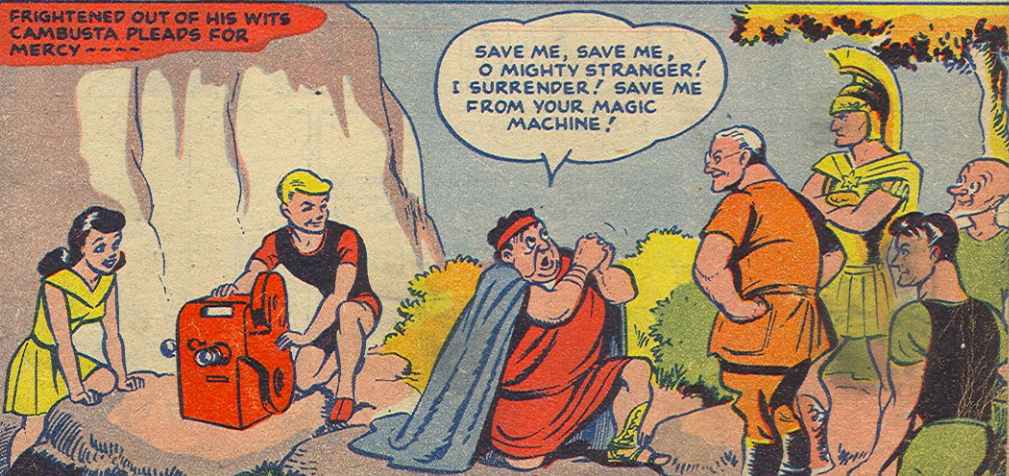


CAMBUSTA STARTS THE
MACHINE HE HAS FOUND
NOT KNOWING THAT IT IS
PROFESSOR JOLLY'S
CINEMA PROJECTOR!

HELP! MERCY!
SAVE ME!

PROFESSOR JOLLY, ANN, PETER AND THEIR FRIEND KOSMO HAVE LANDED ON THE PLANET ROMA. HERE THEY WERE CAPTURED BY THE WICKED EMPEROR CAMBUSTA, BUT ESCAPED WITH THE AID OF FIDDYCAT, AN INVENTOR. AFTER MANY EXCITING ADVENTURES THEY MET THE GOOD EMPEROR NESCITOR AND AGREED TO HELP HIM TO OVERTHROW CAMBUSTA. PROFESSOR JOLLY MANAGED TO DO THIS WITH THE HELP OF A CINEMA MACHINE. HE THREW A FILM OF SOME SOLDIERS ON THE CLIFF FACE. CAMBUSTA'S SOLDIERS SOON KNOCKED THEMSELVES OUT ON THE CLIFF AND WERE EASILY CAPTURED BY NESCITOR'S FORCES. BUT CAMBUSTA ESCAPED AND FOUND THE MACHINE WHICH HE SAW THE PROFESSOR USING!

FRIGHTENED OUT OF HIS WITS
CAMBUSTA PLEADS FOR
MERCY ----

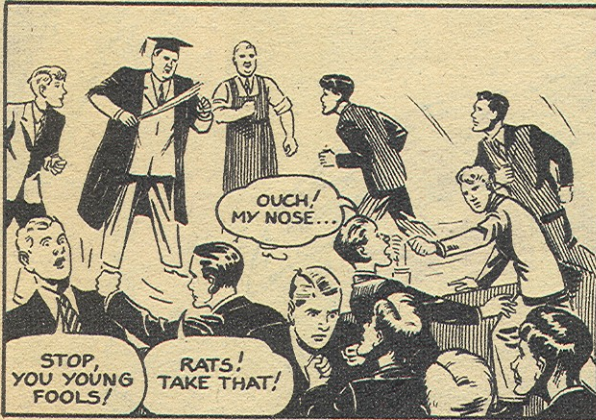


SAVE ME, SAVE ME,
O MIGHTY STRANGER!
I SURRENDER! SAVE ME
FROM YOUR MAGIC
MACHINE!

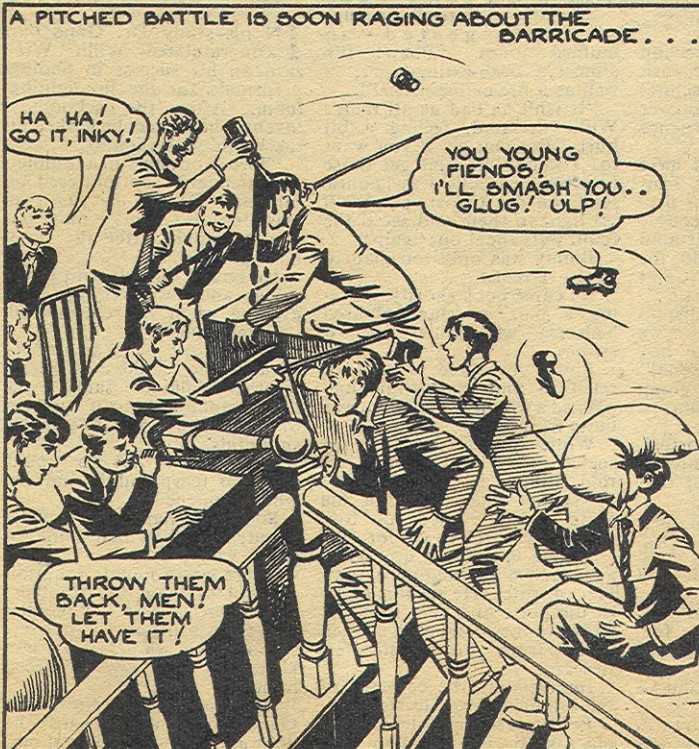
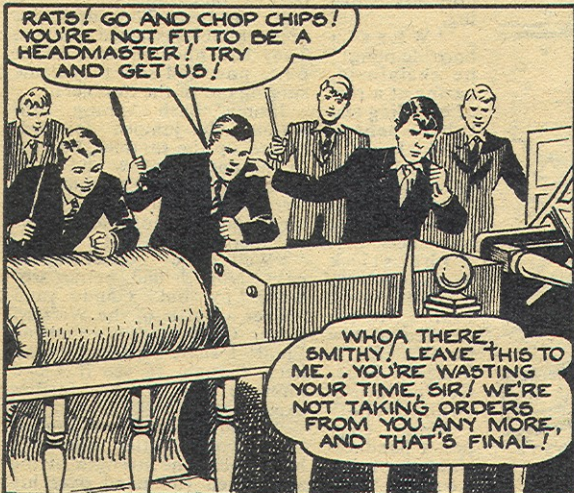
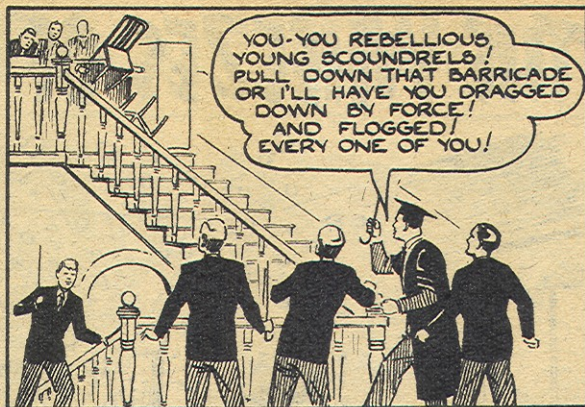
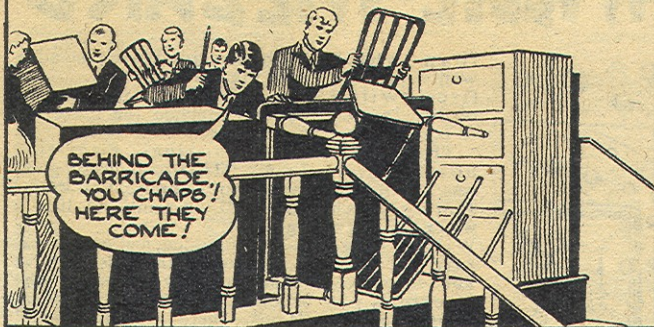
(More pictures on the centre pages)

Dr. Locke, headmaster of Greyfriars, is in Scotland recovering from an attack of 'flu. Meanwhile, Dr. Grimstone has taken his place. He unjustly accused Bob Cherry of lying and, because Bob stuck up for himself, threatened to flog him before the school. But Harry Wharton shouted his disapproval. . . .

The GREYFRIARS REBELLION!

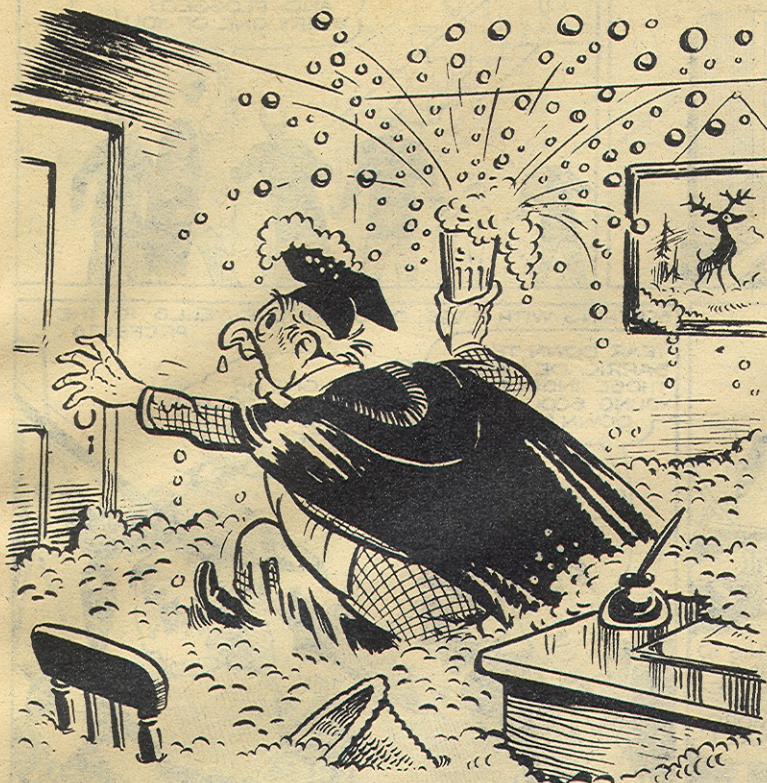


AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS
OUTSIDE THE DORMITORY,
THE JUNIORS BUILD A BARRICADE . .



Next week: A very hungry Bunter breaks the siege! But he gets a load of trouble—not food!

THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD



Dr. Gandybar had been a bit too liberal with Willie's fire-extinguishing foam. With a terrified howl he plunged towards the door.

WILLIE'S SUPER FIRE-FIGHTING FOAM

ONE of the kitchen maids at Gandybar School accidentally set fire to her apron one day. She tore off the flaming garment with a squawk.

The blazing apron set the curtains afire!

Luckily several of the boys heard her shouts and rushed into the kitchen to see what was wrong. They flung a couple of buckets of water on the curtains and saved further damage.

The matter was reported to the headmaster, Dr. Gandybar. He said, "Tut, tut!" and decided that the school must form a fire brigade to deal promptly with any similar mishaps in future.

A few days later Mr. Halfspun, the assistant headmaster, told Dr. Gandybar that dozens of boys had gladly volunteered to join a fire-fighting squad.

Then he coughed awkwardly. "Er," he said, "we shall—er—need some money from the funds, sir."

"Eh!" ejaculated Dr. Gandybar in alarm. "Money? What for?"

"We must have hoses and a ladder and some hatchets," his assistant pointed out. "All firemen have such things, I believe."

Dr. Gandybar tried to reckon up in his head how much cash he might spare from the school funds. He made the answer about three and fourpence halfpenny.

"H'm!" he scowled. "I have a ladder for pruning my fruit trees. We can use that for fire-fighting. And there are a couple of firewood choppers around somewhere which will do for hatchets. But hoses, eh? Can't you make do with buckets?"

"Well, sir," Mr. Halfspun pointed out uncomfortably, "we shall still need money to buy buckets. We've only got one!"

Dr. Gandybar looked glum. Then his face broke into a smile.

"I have it!" he chortled. "We don't have to use water at all! We will use some of that fire-extinguisher foam!"

Mr. Halfspun was still worried.

"Yes, sir," he said. "A good idea, sir. But—we shall still need money to buy that!"

"Nonsense!" chuckled Dr. Gandybar. "Have you forgotten that we have an inventor in the school? I shall ask Wizzard to concoct a kind of foam stuff!"

In due course Willie Wizzard, the schoolboy inventor, was asked if he could make some

foam which would put out fires. Willie readily agreed to try.

That afternoon, which was a half-day, Jimmy Bash walked into Willie Wizzard's room. The schoolboy inventor's pal recoiled at the doorway, sniffing.

"What a horrible pong!" he exclaimed, gazing at a row of bubbling test tubes, behind which his friend was working.

"Come in!" Willie hailed him cheerfully.

"The stink won't last long, I promise you! I think I've discovered a new formula for a Wizzard Super Conflagration-quelling Fluid!"

Jimmy clapped a handkerchief across his nose. "I'll come back later," he suggested in

muffled tones. "Phew! It's almost a Bash-extinguisher, as well as a fire-extinguisher!"

"It isn't as bad as all that," Willie declared, feeling a bit hurt. "But you go, if you want to! I know—go and get those horrible bedsocks your auntie sent you for Christmas! We'll set light to them and see if the foam puts them out again!"

Jimmy was only too glad to beat a retreat.

He came back shortly, carrying a pair of plum-coloured bedsocks with canary yellow stripes.

Jimmy breathed a sigh of relief to find that Willie had opened a window. The room was quite fresh now!

Willie looked up, saw the socks and said, "Good!" He told Jimmy to get a bit of newspaper and put it in the grate with the socks on top, then set a match to the lot.

As the fire blazed up, Willie approached it, holding a tumbler of water. He set this down in the grate and very carefully added to it two drops of a green liquid from one of his test tubes.

Immediately the contents of the tumbler turned to foam!

Bright green bubbles started quickly to rise and flop over the sides of the tumbler. Soon

bubbles were flowing steadily over the burning socks.

At the very instant the bubbles touched the blaze the fire went out!

"Astonishing!" ejaculated Jimmy. "That was a pretty good little indoor bonfire, you know, but—well, it went out like a light!"

Willie nodded, feeling pleased. "The only thing is, I have made it very strong," the schoolboy inventor declared. "Look—there are bubbles all over the place!"

It was true. The supply of green bubbles seemed endless. They had filled the entire fireplace now and still they came surging out of the tumbler!

Jimmy Bash sprang into action. He jumped forward, picked up the tumbler, hurried to the open window and flung it out into the quadrangle!

"There!" he cried. "It can go on foaming as long as it likes out there!"

"Well done!" chuckled his pal. "Now I had better trot along to old Gandy and deliver a bottle of the Wizzard Super Conflagration-quelling Fluid! I shall keep one bottle here, though, to see if I can improve on it by further experiment."

"I should," agreed Jimmy. "And you'd better warn the head about the strength of the stuff when you hand over his bottle!"

IN his study Dr. Gandybar congratulated Willie Wizzard on his success in finding a formula for the fire-fighting foam. After the schoolboy inventor had gone, he looked at the bottle with interest.

"Two drops only in a tumbler of water, eh?" he muttered to himself. "Or did he say two teaspoonfuls? H'm! I must try it out tonight after the boys have gone to bed."

He busied himself with other things, and it was very late that evening when he remembered the green fluid.

By this time, being so absent-minded, he could not recall whether Willie had said: "Add two teaspoonfuls to a tumbler of water," or "Add two tablespoonfuls."

He decided that he would add two teaspoonfuls and see what happened.

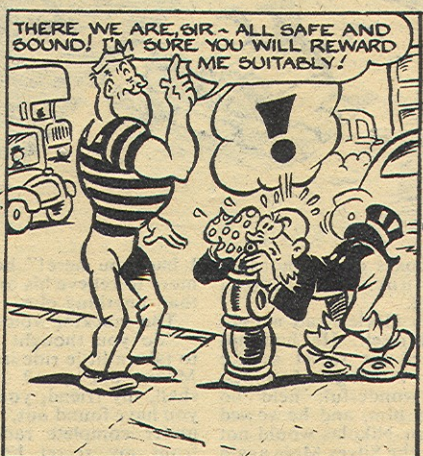
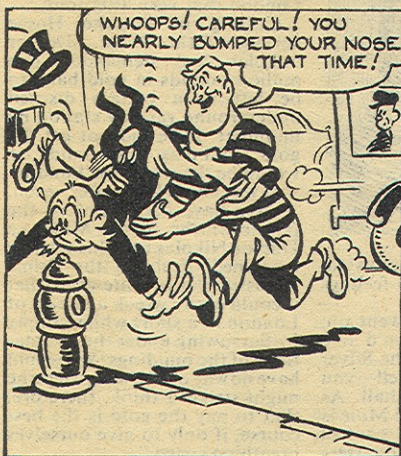
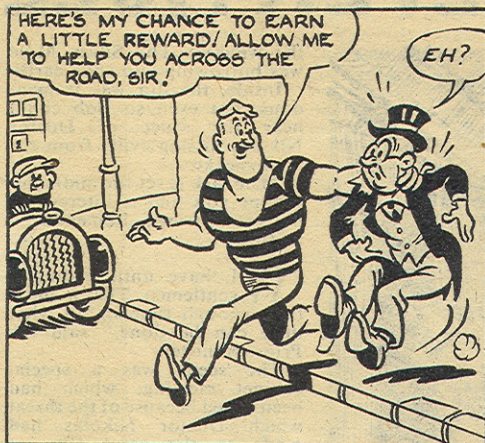
Something happened, but Dr. Gandybar hardly had a chance to see what!

There was a mighty eruption of bubbles from the tumbler! They spouted out like golden rain from a firework! In a few seconds the whole study was knee-deep in a sea of green foam!

With a terrified howl Dr. Gandybar plunged towards the door and threw himself out into

(Continued opposite)

TOUGH TEX THE GENTLE TOUGH GUY



THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD (Continued from page 4)

the corridor.

In his panic he shouted the first words of alarm he could think of.

"Fire!" he bellowed. "Help! Fire!"

In the dormitory Jimmy Bash awoke suddenly.

"Fire!" he heard. "Fire!"

Jimmy acted promptly. He bounded out of bed and tore off towards Willie Wizzard's room to get the other bottle of Conflagration-quelling Fluid!

Running out of Willie's room, clutching the bottle, Jimmy grabbed a fire bucket full of water from a corner of the corridor. As he galloped towards the Head's study he uncorked the bottle.

"I'm coming, Dr. Gandybar, sir!" he shouted as he ran. "I'll put out the fire!"

He turned a corner and ran full tilt into the frantic headmaster!

Bottle and bucket flew from Jimmy's hands. They went sailing through the air and

crashed on the floor!

At once green bubbles formed in their millions! The corridor was alive with green bubbles! They rolled like a fog after Dr. Gandybar and Jimmy Bash as those worthies scampered upstairs!

Soon the bubbles were floating into every room and every study and every dorm! They found their way into fireplaces, up chimneys and out of the top!

They went through keyholes and into cupboards! They bounded out of windows and formed in a foggy mass in the quadrangle!

Meanwhile, boys and masters had been hurriedly dragging on their clothes and were frantically rushing out of the bubble-bound building.

Jimmy Bash had been scurrying around, finding a few garments to put on before dashing out into the quad with everyone else. He had long ago lost Dr. Gandybar in the scramble.

As Jimmy ploughed his way out into the fresh air he saw Willie Wizzard. A drifting cloud of bubbles then cut off his pal

from view again. But he groped forward and grabbed Willie's arm.

"Golly!" gasped Jimmy as the fog of bubbles sailed by, "I am glad to see you! What are we going to do?"

Willie groaned. "The only way I can think of to get rid of 'em is to set fire to the building!" he wailed.

"That's it!" yelled Jimmy. "Set fire to the building!"

"That's what I said," Willie agreed, looking at him in alarm. "I didn't really mean it, though!"

"Neither do I," explained his excited chum. "But if we rushed into the village of Mugwump Magna, five miles away, and said the place was on fire, they would send the fire engine, wouldn't they?"

"Yes," agreed Willie, still puzzled. "But how would that help?"

"Hoses!" cried Jimmy. "Strong jets of water from their hoses would dispel all these bubbles. That's what I think!"

"You're absolutely right!" chortled Willie. "Let's find Gandy and get him to drive us

to Mugwump Magna!"

The two chums blundered across the dark and bubble-fogged quad to try to find the headmaster. They discovered him inside his car, trying to keep warm.

Dr. Gandybar scowled when he saw them. He was inclined to blame Willie for everything that had happened. But he perked up on hearing Jimmy's idea.

He agreed that the three of them should drive into Mugwump Magna to get the fire engine.

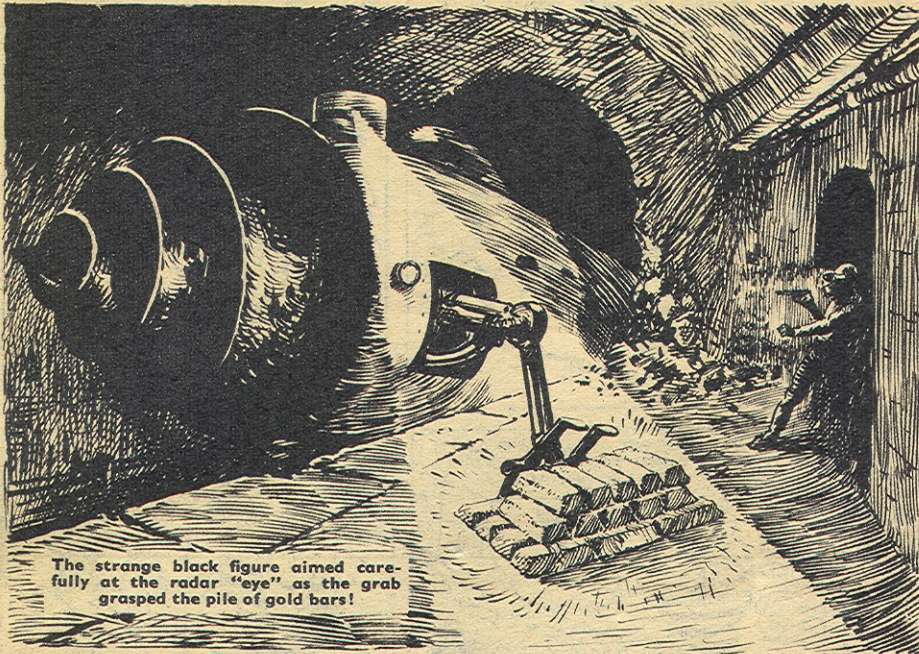
The car chugged its way slowly through the fog of bubbles. But as soon as clear air was reached Dr. Gandybar trod hard on the accelerator.

The village of Mugwump Magna was soon reached. With a screech of brakes the car jolted to a stop outside the fire station.

Dr. Gandybar jumped from the driving seat and ran inside the fire station. There wasn't a soul about!

Next week: Dr. Gandybar "borrows" a fire-engine! Don't miss the fireworks!

BOB HARLEY AND THE SILVER MOLE



The strange black figure aimed carefully at the radar "eye" as the grab grasped the pile of gold bars!

The Silver Mole is an earth-burrowing machine invented by Doctor Nikolas, a traitor scientist. It is driven by an atomic engine stolen from the British Government.

At the moment the Mole is in a huge underground cavern which is the workshop of Doctor Nikolas.

At the controls of the Mole is young Bob Harley of Scotland Yard. He has been captured by Doctor Nikolas and has tried to escape in the steel monster.

BUT now as Bob Harley sat at the controls, he was as helpless as a baby. The great machine seemed to have a will of its own. The twin steering levers moved on their own, and nothing Bob could do could stop them. They moved back and forth, responding to some invisible power, and as they moved the great machine changed its direction in step with them!

"It's no—use!" Bob gasped out the words as he wrestled vainly with the levers. All the power of his arms, his back and his legs was going into a mighty tug to steer the Silver Mole round, to head it the way he wanted to go.

But it was about as much use as trying to stop the "Flying Scotsman" with one finger.

The Silver Mole ground to a halt in the cavern and stood there with the great engines throbbing gently. Bob watched wide-eyed, as the twin clutch pedals moved downwards of their own accord to disengage

the gear-boxes of the monster. It was uncanny—almost frightening.

But Bob Harley had a tight grip on himself. He had not been picked for secret service work for nothing. Machines, however wonderful, held no terrors for him, and he vowed that Doctor Nikolas would not set foot in the Silver Mole again without a battle.

It didn't occur to Bob that Doctor Nikolas might not want to do so!

At that instant a sinister chuckle echoed through the steel hull of the Mole. Bob started. He had heard that laugh before. It belonged to Doctor Nikolas!

"No, no, my young friend—do not look for me!" The voice of the doctor followed his laugh. "I am not with you in the Silver Mole. My voice is reaching you by radio!"

Bob relaxed and looked swiftly around for the loud-speaker. But it was well hidden and, anyway, there was probably more than one.

"You are a resourceful young fellow," purred the mocking voice. "The way you escaped from the dungeon where I left you, bound hand and foot, was very clever. But you are not clever enough. You surely did not think that you could snatch the Silver Mole from under my very nose, did you?"

The voice in the loud-speakers chuckled again, and Bob clenched his fists in helpless anger.

"I'd punch your very nose if

I had you here!" he growled, more to relieve his own feelings than anything else.

The mocking voice went on. "So you thought you'd like to take a little ride in the Silver Mole, did you? Well—you shall, my friend, you shall. As you have found out, the Mole is under complete radio control from my secret headquarters here. It can go anywhere I wish it to go—I can steer it without ever getting up out of my easy chair here. You see, it is sometimes best that the Mole should do its job without anyone being on board. Sometimes the Mole has work to do involving great danger. . . ."

Doctor Nikolas dropped his voice until it was little above a whisper.

"It has such a task to do tonight—a task which *might* prove very dangerous. At midnight! I hope you enjoy your little jaunt, my young friend! . . . Au revoir!"

With these words, the idling engines roared up to full revs. The clutch pedals snapped upwards into working position, and the Silver Mole thundered forward across the floor of the cavern. It swerved round and Bob saw through the thick armoured window that the whirling steel nose was pointed straight at the wall of solid rock.

The shimmering cone of steel blades sliced into the cave wall and a great plume of powdered granite sprayed back over the torpedo-shaped body.

Then blackness blotted out

the window. The Silver Mole was burrowing into solid earth.

Inside, the din was tremendous, but even so Bob could hear the voice of Doctor Nikolas hissing evilly from the loud-speakers.

"The task is set for midnight. I hope you find it interesting, my young friend. Remember—midnight!"

"**W**E have until midnight, gentlemen. That is more than enough time to do what little can be done," said the Prime Minister.

The scene was a special cabinet meeting, which had been called because of the threat which Doctor Nikolas had made to the great City of London that very afternoon.

Cutting in on the Home Service of the B.B.C., Doctor Nikolas had demanded one million pounds in gold bars, to be left in a certain disused underground railway station by midnight. If he did not get the gold, Nikolas had said, it would be the worse for London.

It was now a little after seven.

"We have had proof of the power of the Silver Mole, as Doctor Nikolas calls his terrible machine," declared the Prime Minister. "It is quite clear that it could easily wreck any part of London in a short while, simply by burrowing under the foundations of the buildings. We would have no way of knowing where he might strike. I think, therefore, that to pay the gold is the best course, if only to give ourselves breathing space."

The Chancellor cleared his throat and spoke:

"The gold left the Bank of England in an armoured car half an hour ago. By now it will have been placed upon the platform at Fellowes Hill Station."

The Prime Minister nodded.

"For the moment, at any rate, we must submit to this blackmail. Meanwhile, the best brains in the country are working upon the problem of fighting Doctor Nikolas and his Silver Mole. Malcolm Franklin, for one, has offered his valuable services for this task. Soon, I hope, we shall be in a position to fight this menace. But for tonight we shall give Nikolas the gold he demands. It will be left for him as he asks—unguarded."

THE hour of midnight drew near.

The old underground station at Fellowes Hill was dark as pitch. It had not been used for years—not since the old North Circular loop-line had been closed down.

Upon the empty platform, where now only the rats scuttled and hurried, was a stack of brick-shaped objects.

They were gold bars—a million pounds' worth of them. Then, in the darkness, something bigger than a rat stirred. Anyone with eyes to see in that pitchy murk would have made out the figure of a man, clad from head to foot in black, and wearing upon his head what appeared to be a gas-mask.

But the goggle eye-pieces of this mask were bigger, and stuck out more than those of an ordinary mask. As a matter of fact, they were very specially made, so that with their help the wearer could see in the dark.

For upon the masked man's forehead was an infra-red lamp which shone out invisible rays. The goggles could change this invisible, "black" light into light by which the wearer's eyes could see.

The man was on foot. He had walked a long way to get here, through many tunnels, from a spot where the line plunged underground in the countryside beyond London. He had crouched back against the walls of tunnels, unseen in his black garb, as speeding underground trains had thundered past him.

Now he had reached the platform, and clambered up. For a moment he stood gazing at the gold stacked up in the darkness. Then he tensed.

From somewhere beneath his feet came the first mutterings of a distant, thunderous rumble.

The Silver Mole was coming! Doctor-Nikolas was keeping his midnight appointment!

The man in black took up a position from which he could watch the gold, and drew a gun from a holster at his side. He slid back the safety catch, and checked the action, so as to be sure that the weapon would not fail him. Possibly, he might not need it at all. But he had no way of knowing. His only plan was to be ready for anything.

The rumbling grew louder—louder. The floor under his feet shook and trembled. But for the tubular metal lining of the tunnel, the roof would have come crashing down.

The eyes of the man in black darted this way and that. He could not guess where the whirling steel blades of the Mole would break through. He might have to jump for his life. . . .

Then up towards one end, the paving of the old platform heaved and split, and flew asunder as the Mole burst into view. The edge of the platform wilted and crumbled under its weight. Then the monster rolled along the disused rails, and came to rest near the pile of gold bars.

The man in black crouched tensely, ready for anything.

A beam of greenish light shot from the side of the monster, probed around, and focused upon the gold. A steel shutter slid aside, and a dull, round "eye" of black glass seemed to peer out at the treasure.

The watcher guessed that this was some kind of radar or television gear, such as is used for looking at sunken wrecks, and that by its means, the people in the Mole could see what lay in the light of the green ray.

What the watcher did not know was that the things lit by that eerie green light were being seen by Doctor Nikolas in his secret lair, over a hundred miles to the north!

Next, a second panel slid open just beside the first, but much larger. From within came the whine of machinery, and a big steel grab slid into sight.

The grab was like a strange hand of steel, with four big jointed fingers. The fingers were flattened and spade-like at the ends, and the whole affair moved upon the end of a jointed, telescopic arm.

The grab moved over, and scooped up a bunch of the gold bars. It slid back into the hull of the Mole, and there came the rattle of the bars being unloaded. Then it shot out again for a second grab "handful".

The watcher in black frowned under his mask. He had hoped to see doors open in the Mole, and men step out, and he had been prepared to fight his way in. But this was different.

He meant to get into the Mole, however. And there was only one way that his swift-moving brain could see to do it.

He raised his gun, and aimed carefully at the radar "eye". He would stand a slightly better chance if that were out of action—if his enemies were "blind".

He waited a few seconds, until the grab was again poised to take up bars of gold—and then he fired. The eye shattered with a "plop" like a big electric light bulb exploding, and the black watcher took a running leap across the platform.

He scattered gold bars in all directions, and swiftly took their place in the hand of the steel grab. He crouched down, as small as he could make himself, and a second later was drawn swiftly into the inside of the Mole. The grab turned over, and he was dumped on the steel floor of a small well-lit compartment. He came swiftly to his feet among the scattered bars of gold, and swung around, his gun at the ready.

There was nobody near. Then a flicker of movement at the far end of a steel gangway caught his eye.

Like lightning his gun flashed, and the electric light in the gang-

way went out, shattered by the bullets. He took two leaping strides along the length of the gangway, and grappled with the figure that lurked there in the shadows.

His clubbed gun swung up, and crashed down upon the other's head. The man in black stood up, and swung tensely around.

There was nobody else in sight.

Like a shadow, he darted here and there, until he had searched the whole hull of the Mole.

Not another living soul could he find.

Somewhat puzzled, he made his way back to the limp form of the man he had fought with, and dragged him into the light of the empty control cabin. Then he turned his face upward.

An exclamation broke from under the man's mask.

"Ye Gods! Bob Harley!"

Swiftly the man in black loosened Bob's collar, and made him as comfortable as might be. Then he ripped off his own mask and goggles, to reveal the lean, tanned features of Malcolm Franklin, the millionaire inventor.

Next week: Disaster in the bowels of the earth!

ENGINE-SPOTTERS CLUB

TAKE a look at your Album numbers, Spotters! If yours is one of the thousand below, you may send up for a free present.

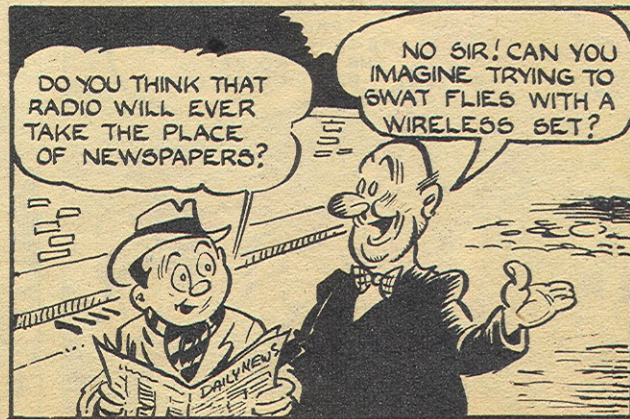
All those with numbers between 7,000 and 7,500 inclusive, and between 16,000 and 16,500 inclusive, may send up and claim.

If your number is here, first of all choose one of the following presents: Cowboy Belt and Holster, Water Pistol, Wrist Compass, Ball-point Pen, Jack-knife, Autograph Album, Box Game, or a Charm Bracelet. Write its name in the space in your Album marked "For Official Use"—and at the same time make sure that your name and address are filled in on the Membership page. Then, on a postcard or a piece of paper, write the name of the character or story you like most in COMET—and in a few words say why. Post Album and postcard in a 2½d. stamped envelope to:

COMET E.S. CLUB, 3 Pilgrim Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

All claims must arrive by Tuesday, February 3. Presents will be sent out about a week after this and Albums returned at the same time.

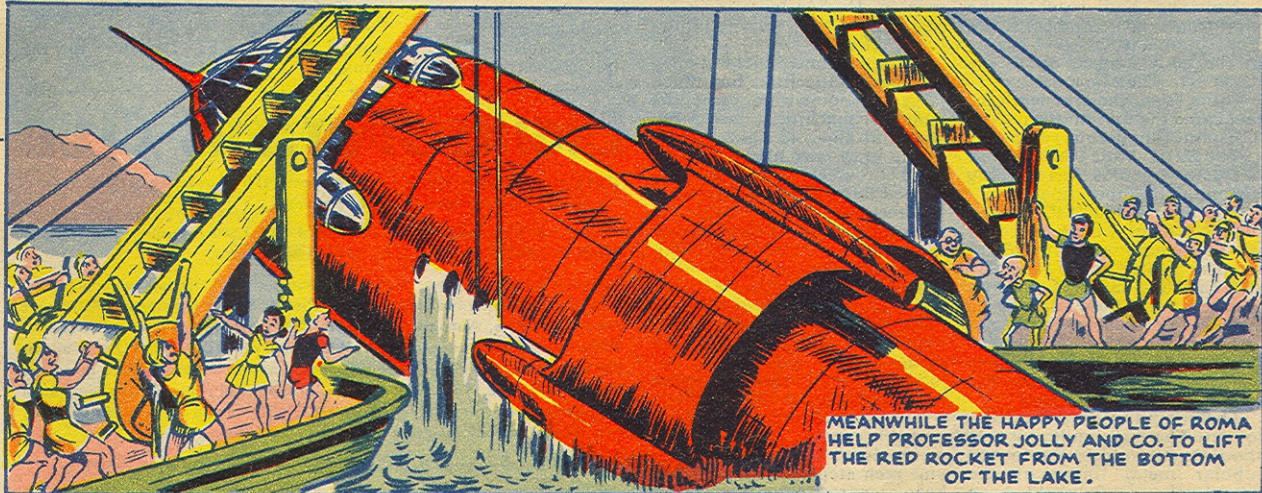
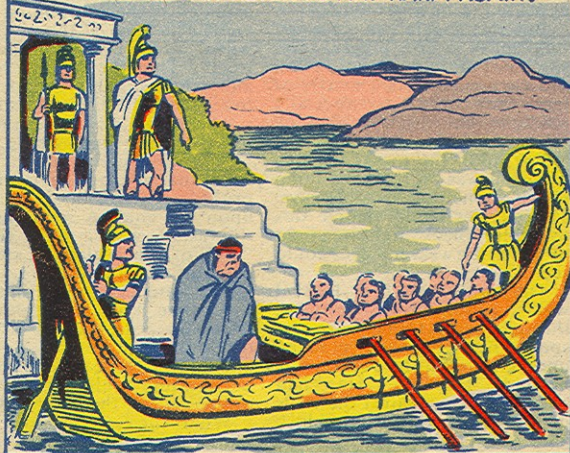
CHUCKLE TIME - Some jokes to keep you laughing!



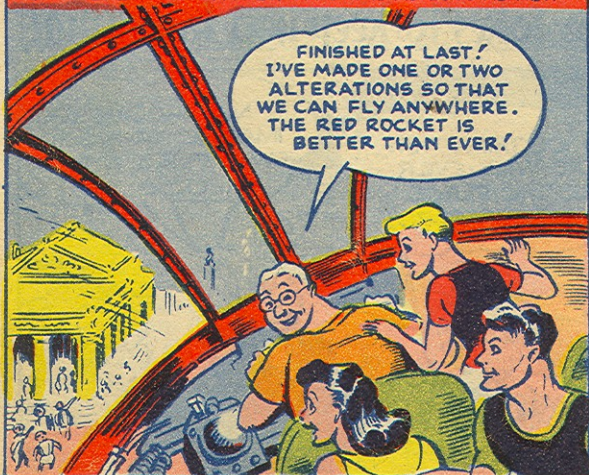
THAT NIGHT NESCITOR GIVES A VICTORY BANQUET IN HONOUR OF THE EARTH PEOPLE.



THE NEXT DAY CAMBUSTA IS BANISHED FOREVER AND TAKEN TO AN ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE, WHERE HE CAN NEVER DO ANY HARM AGAIN!



PROFESSOR JOLLY WORKS HARD REPAIRING THE RED ROCKET AND IN A FEW DAYS IT IS AS GOOD AS NEW ~



A WEEK LATER OUR FRIENDS SAY FAREWELL TO THE PEOPLE OF ROMA AND SPEED AWAY THROUGH THE FIERY SKY OF THE STRANGE PLANET, HEADING HOME FOR THE EARTH ~~~

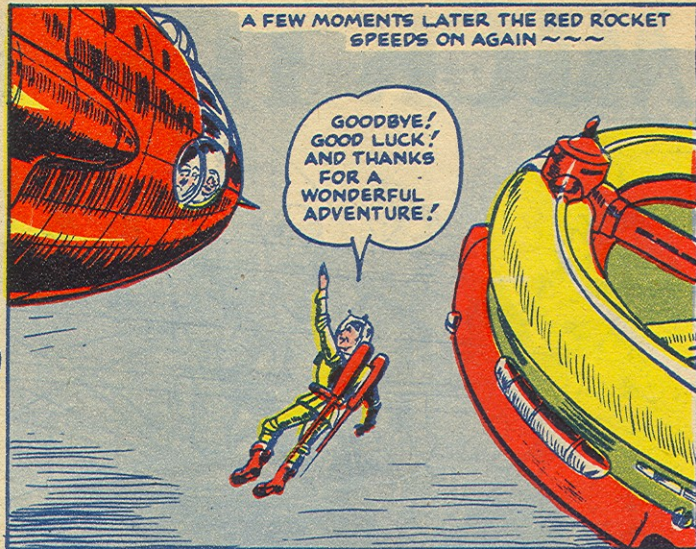


ON THEIR WAY THEY STOP AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SPACE PATROLMEN, TO LEAVE KOSMO ~

ISN'T IT WONDERFUL TO BE ON THE WAY HOME? HERE'S YOUR HOME ALREADY!

YES, BUT REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE TO COME AND VISIT ME FOR I'M GOING TO MISS YOU ALL!

DON'T WORRY, KOSMO, WE'LL REMEMBER!

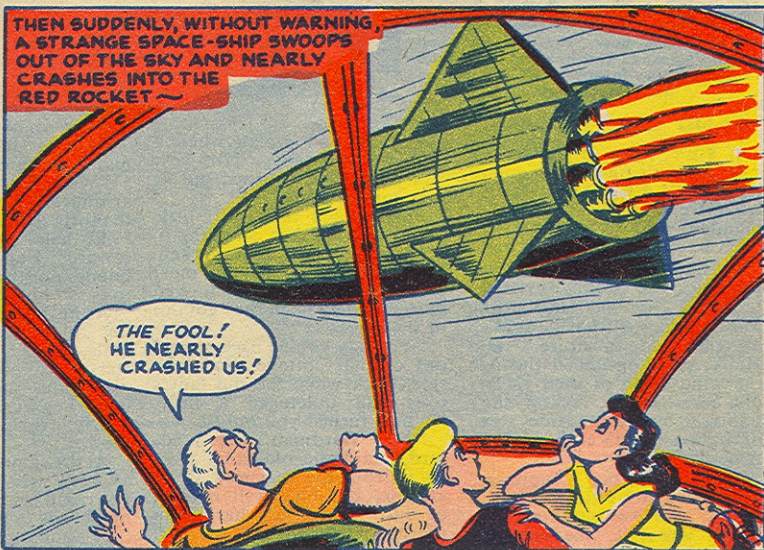


A FEW MOMENTS LATER THE RED ROCKET SPEEDS ON AGAIN ~ ~ ~

GOODBYE! GOOD LUCK! AND THANKS FOR A WONDERFUL ADVENTURE!

AFTER LEAVING KOSMO, PROFESSOR JOLLY AND CO. FLY HAPPILY ON ~ ~ ~

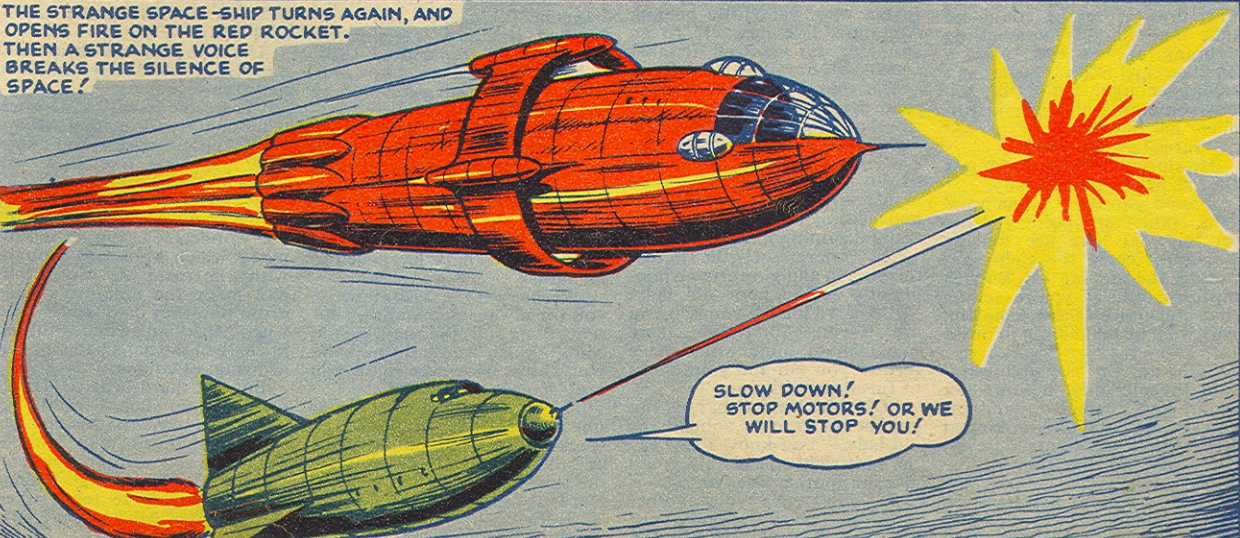
THERE'S NOT FAR TO GO NOW. IN ABOUT TWO DAYS WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE EARTH!



THEN SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING, A STRANGE SPACE-SHIP SWOOPS OUT OF THE SKY AND NEARLY CRASHES INTO THE RED ROCKET ~

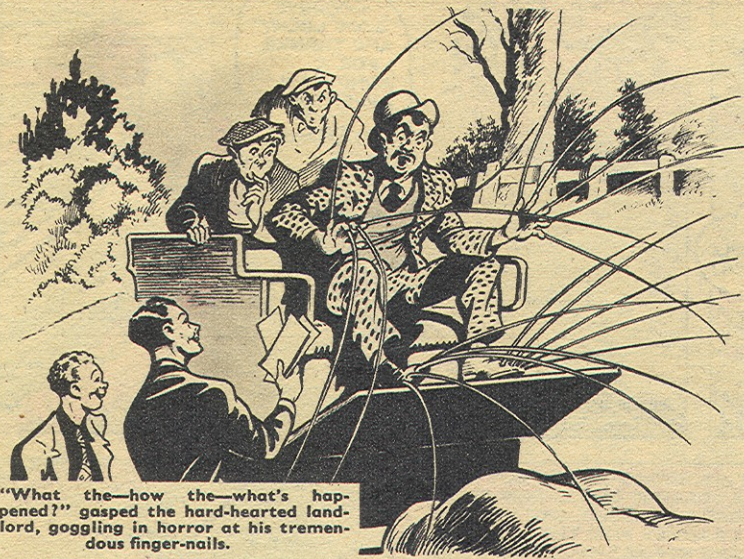
THE FOOL! HE NEARLY CRASHED US!

THE STRANGE SPACE-SHIP TURNS AGAIN, AND OPENS FIRE ON THE RED ROCKET. THEN A STRANGE VOICE BREAKS THE SILENCE OF SPACE!



SLOW DOWN! STOP MOTORS! OR WE WILL STOP YOU!

MICK THE MOON BOY



"What the—how the—what's happened?" gasped the hard-hearted landlord, goggling in horror at his tremendous finger-nails.

BANG ON THE NAIL

"HEY, Mick, d'you reckon that's one of the quaint ol' English customs what we've read about?" demanded Hank Luckner, the twelve-year-old American boy.

"Which, Hank?" asked his pal Mick the Moon Boy.

"Why, that old lady sitting there by the roadside along with all that old furniture," said Hank, pointing ahead through the windscreen of their rickety old car. "D'you reckon she's selling it by the roadside 'stead of in a shop like they do in America?"

"She could be, I suppose," said Mick doubtfully. "But if she is, she isn't looking very happy about it. She seems to me to be crying."

"She is," said Hank, for as they drew closer he could see that the old lady was sitting dabbling at her eyes with a handkerchief. "P'raps she isn't selling enough. Let's stop an' buy something off'n her just to cheer her up, hey?"

"Sure," agreed Mick. He slowed down and stopped the car beside the old lady.

"Good mornin', ma'am," said Hank very politely. "Me an' my pal here are touring England, seeing the sights an' noting the quaint ol' English customs, and if you're selling that furniture there, ma'am, why we'll be real happy to buy a bit."

"Oh, no, I'm not selling it," said the old lady, holding her damp and crumpled handkerchief in her hand and looking at him with tear-dimmed eyes. "It's—it's all I've got in the world."

"But you don't live here, do you?" demanded Hank, perplexed. "Not by the roadside, I

mean?"

"No, I don't live anywhere," wept the old lady. "Not now I've j-j-just been turned out of that cottage there."

She pointed to a neat little cottage behind her, standing in a trim, well-kept little garden. Then she started to sob most pitifully. Hank and Mick looked at each other. Then they got out of the car.

"You say you've been turned out of that cottage, ma'am?" said Mick when the old lady's sobs had quietened a little. "Who's turned you out?"

"Mr. Hardman, the landlord," said the old lady. "Far be it from me to speak ill of anyone, but he's well named, because he's a very hard man indeed. He's turned me out because I've been ill and got just a little behind with my rent. Just a very, very little behind. And now I've nowhere to go and I've lur-lur-lived in that cottage all my life."

The sound of wheels on the road made them turn. A two-wheeled buggy was approaching. There were three men in it. The man driving was a big, broad-shouldered, red-faced man wearing a bowler hat. He had a thin, tight-lipped mouth and a drooping moustache.

"So you're out!" he jeered, reigning in and glowering triumphantly at the poor old lady. "It's a good job for you that you are. If you hadn't been, these two men of mine would have thrown you out and your sticks of furniture with you."

"Oh, Mr. Hardman, how can you be so cruel?" sobbed the old lady. "You know I can pay the rent right up, if only you'll give me another week or two—"

"I won't give you another week or two!" shouted the flinty-hearted Hardman. "I

want my rent bang on the nail, or out you go. And that applies to all my other tenants. The rent bang on the nail, or out they go!"

"How much rent does this lady owe you?" asked Mick mildly, slipping a tiny glittering instrument from his pocket and keeping it hidden in his hand.

"Two pounds ten shillings!" snapped Hardman, glowering down at him from the driving seat of the buggy.

"And you want it bang on the nail, you say?"

"Yes, I do!" roared Hardman. "Bang on the nail!"

"Well, I think that can be arranged," said Mick, keeping the little instrument still hidden in his hand and pointing it first towards Hardman's great red hands on the reins and then towards his boots.

As he did so, a most astonishing thing happened. For the nails on Hardman's hands started to grow with sudden, prodigious speed, shooting out until they were so long that they nearly reached down to the road.

At the same time his toe-nails, afflicted with the same mysterious rapid growth, burst through his boots and shot out until they almost reached the horse's ears.

"What the—how the—what's happened?" gasped the hard-hearted landlord, goggling in horror at his tremendous nails.

Mick had taken two one-pound notes and a ten-shilling note from his pocket.

"Here's the lady's rent," he said pleasantly. "You want it bang on the nail, you say? Any particular nail?"

The horrified, goggle-eyed Hardman didn't answer him.

"What's happened to me?" he screamed. "What's happened to me nails?"

"Perhaps it's a visitation on you for always demanding your rent bang on the nail," said Mick. "Such things do happen, you know. However, here you are—bang on the nail!"

There came three loud bangs one after the other as he stuck the two one-pound notes and then the ten-shilling note on the tips of three of the terrified Hardman's enormous toenails. "Help!" howled that individual, nearly going over

backwards in the buggy. "Aw, dear, this is awful. It's what he says—it's what that lad says—it's a visitation on me for being greedy and hard-hearted and always demanding me rent bang on the nail. But I'll never do it again. I'll never do it again," screamed he, "if only I can get rid of these awful long nails!"

The two men who had been with him in the buggy had jumped out and were standing looking very frightened indeed.

"Try cutting 'em, Mister Hardman," suggested one of them. He wheeled on the old lady. "Got any garden shears?" he demanded.

"Yes, there's a pair there among the furniture," she said.

The man found them, snatched them up and climbed back into the buggy with them.

"Steady now, Mister Hardman," he said, setting to work on the nails of the terrified landlord. "I'll soon cut 'em for you!"

But quickly as he cut them, as quickly they grew again, until finally he flung down the shears in despair and cried:

"There ain't nothing can be done with 'em. It's an affliction that ye'll have to go through life with, I reckon."

"But I can't!" screamed the terrified landlord. "Aw, dear, this is terrible. Can't nothing be done?"

"Perhaps if you swore aloud not to be so hard-hearted and grasping in future and to let this lady stay in her cottage, that might work the trick," suggested Mick. "You can try it, anyway."

The terrified landlord was in such a state that he'd have tried anything. So he swore aloud that he'd be kinder and more considerate in future and that the old lady could stay in her cottage for the rest of her life.

"Now try cutting the nails," said Mick.

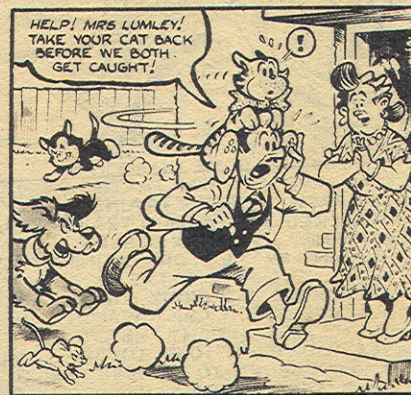
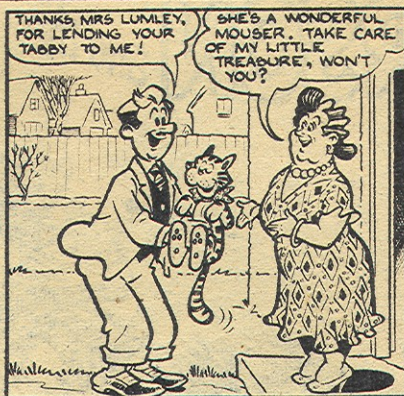
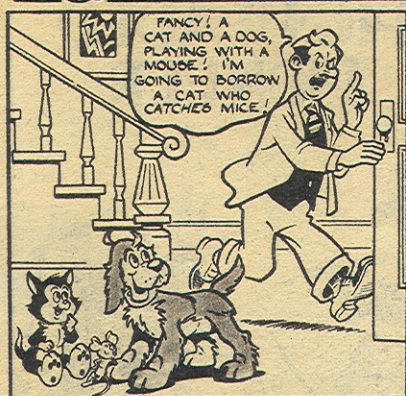
The man with the shears had another go and this time the nails remained cut.

"There, you see!" said Mick triumphantly. "So long as you keep your promise I don't suppose anything like that will happen to you again."

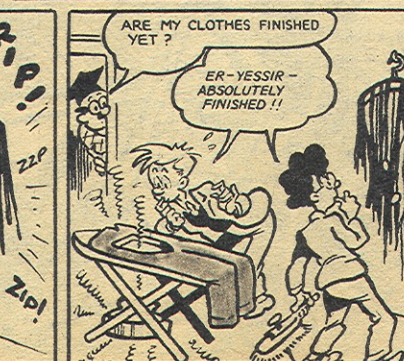
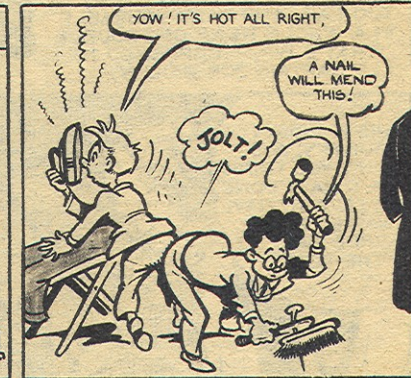
It hasn't, either. But only Hank knew that it was one of the wonderful scientific instruments which Mick had brought with him from the Moon that had made the landlord's nails grow like they had done. And when Mick had switched off the juice, then the nails had stopped growing, of course.

But the hard-hearted Hardman had got such a fright that from that day to this he has been a changed man and so kind that you wouldn't believe. Next week: Two tough tramps find they're not so tough when they threaten Mick! Don't miss the laughs!

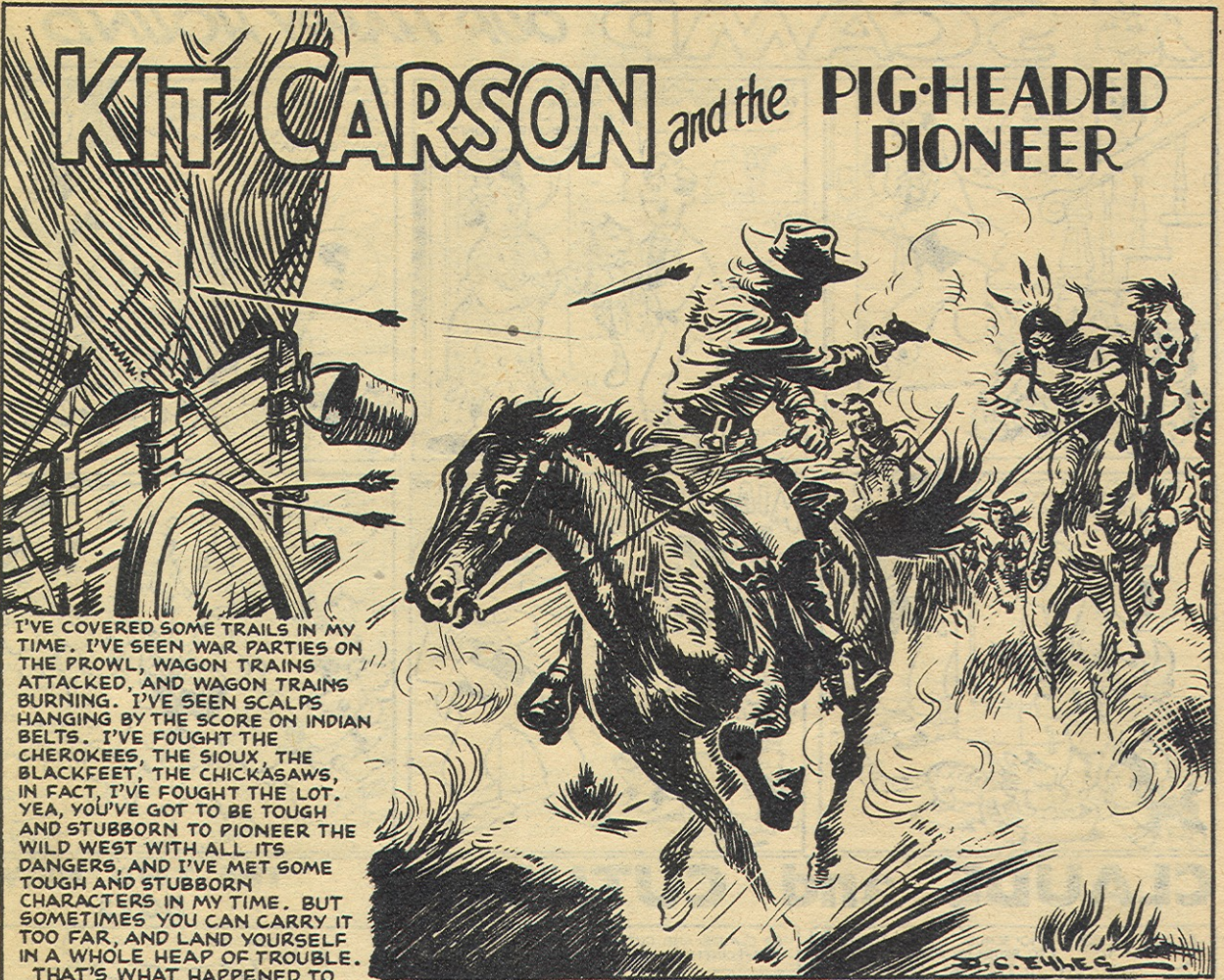
SCAMP OUR HAPPY HOUND



CLAUDE and CUTHBERT THE TWO NEW BOYS



KIT CARSON and the PIG-HEADED PIONEER



I'VE COVERED SOME TRAILS IN MY TIME. I'VE SEEN WAR PARTIES ON THE PROWL, WAGON TRAINS ATTACKED, AND WAGON TRAINS BURNING. I'VE SEEN SCALPS HANGING BY THE SCORE ON INDIAN BELTS. I'VE FOUGHT THE CHEROKEES, THE SIOUX, THE BLACKFEET, THE CHICKASAWS, IN FACT, I'VE FOUGHT THE LOT. YEA, YOU'VE GOT TO BE TOUGH AND STUBBORN TO PIONEER THE WILD WEST WITH ALL ITS DANGERS, AND I'VE MET SOME TOUGH AND STUBBORN CHARACTERS IN MY TIME. BUT SOMETIMES YOU CAN CARRY IT TOO FAR, AND LAND YOURSELF IN A WHOLE HEAP OF TROUBLE. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO OLD CAPTAIN JOB BAILEY.

MY STORY STARTS WHEN CAPTAIN JOB, WITH HIS DAUGHTER, SON-IN-LAW AND GRANDSON WERE TREKKING WESTWARDS, SEEKING A NEW HOME BEYOND THE ROCKIES ~~~~



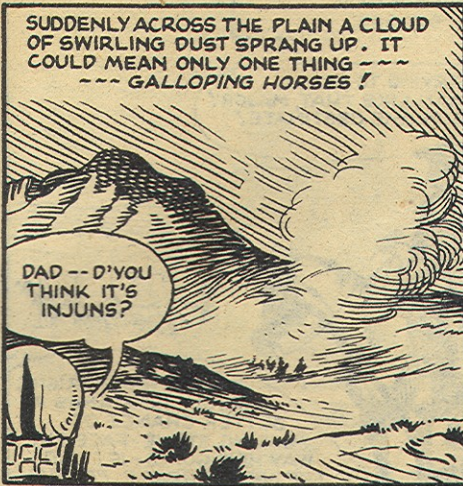
THIS IS INDIAN COUNTRY, DAD-- DON'T YOU THINK WE'D HAVE DONE BETTER TO HAVE WAITED FOR A GUIDE BACK AT THE FORT?

NONSENSE, NAN, ME DEAR. BELAY ME-- I'VE FOUND ME WAY ACROSS THOUSANDS OF MILES OF WATER WITHOUT HELP-- I'M NOT LIKELY TO GET LOST IN A FEW MILES OF DRY LAND!

LOOK, DAD-- WHAT'S THAT DUST CLOUD UP AHEAD THERE?

SUDDENLY ACROSS THE PLAIN A CLOUD OF SWIRLING DUST SPRANG UP. IT COULD MEAN ONLY ONE THING --- GALLOPING HORSES!

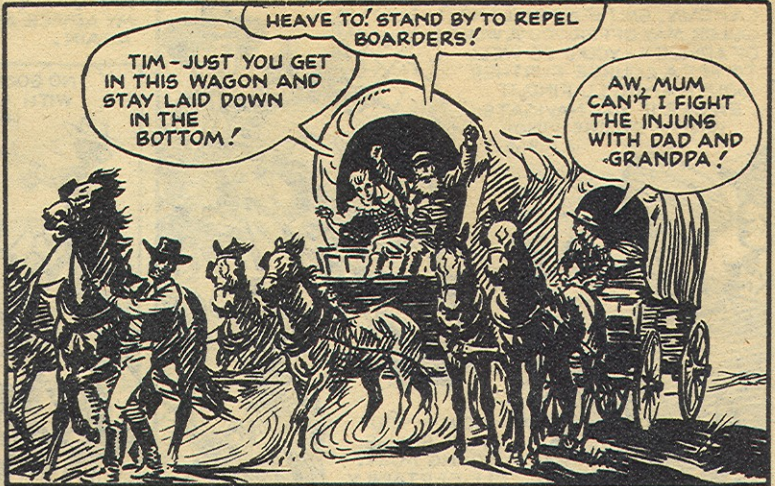
DAD -- D'YOU THINK IT'S INJUNS?



HEAVE TO! STAND BY TO REPEL BOARDERS!

TIM - JUST YOU GET IN THIS WAGON AND STAY LAID DOWN IN THE BOTTOM!

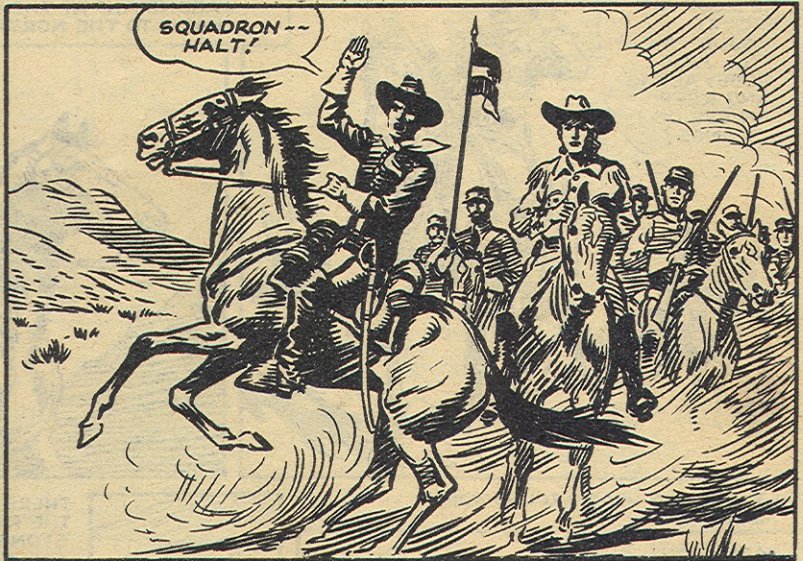
AW, MUM CAN'T I FIGHT THE INJUNS WITH DAD AND GRANDPPA!



SHIVER MY TIMBERS -- THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE INDIANS! BUT I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST THEM TO SAIL UNDER FALSE COLOURS - DON'T TRUST 'EM!

LUCKILY FOR CAPTAIN BAILEY, THE "INDIANS" PROVED TO BE A PATROL OF THE SEVENTH CAVALRY UNDER MAJOR LINT, AND I WAS WITH THEM.

SQUADRON -- HALT!



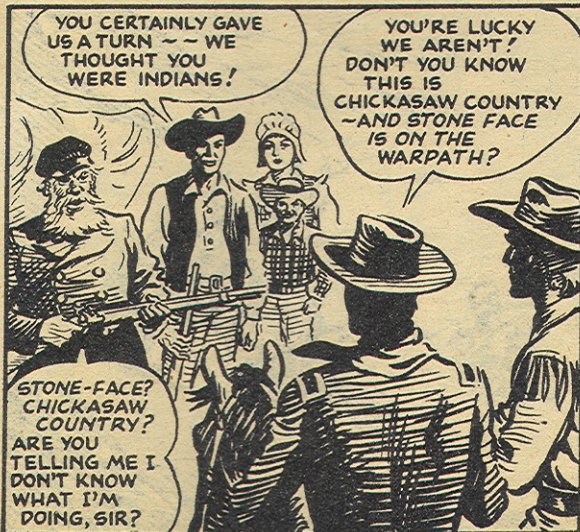
YOU CERTAINLY GAVE US A TURN -- WE THOUGHT YOU WERE INDIANS!

YOU'RE LUCKY WE AREN'T! DON'T YOU KNOW THIS IS CHICKASAW COUNTRY -- AND STONE FACE IS ON THE WARPATH?

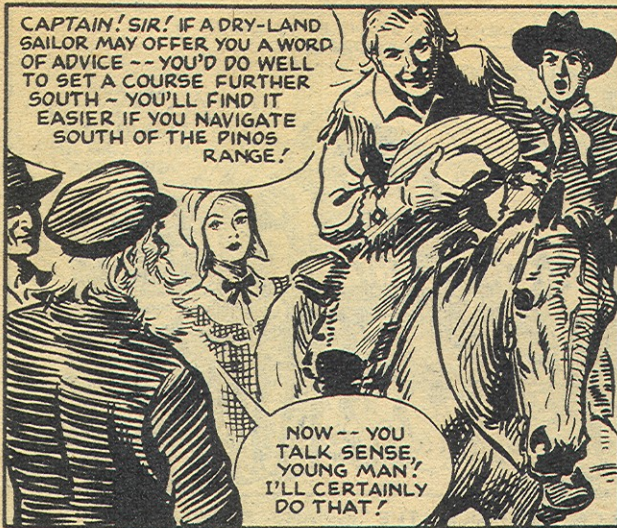
STONE-FACE? CHICKASAW COUNTRY? ARE YOU TELLING ME I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, SIR?

OF COURSE - IF YOU WANT TO RUN YOUR FOOL HEAD INTO DANGER THERE'S NO LAW TO STOP YOU -- THIS IS A FREE COUNTRY!

WHY -- WHY -- YOU IMPUDENT YOUNG LAND-LUBBER -- LET ME TELL YOU --

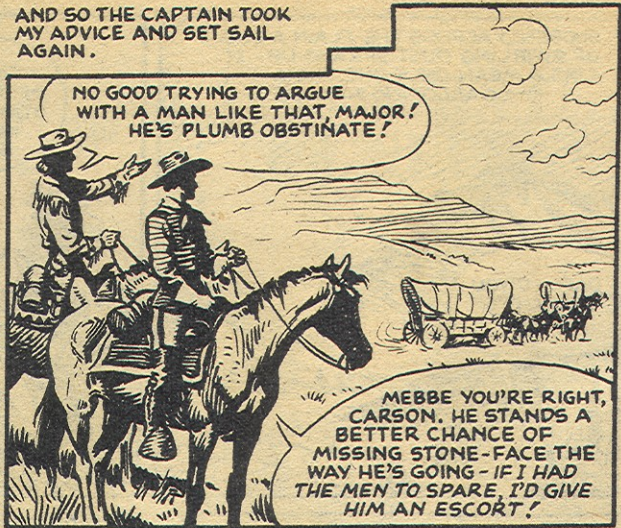


(Continued on next page)



CAPTAIN! SIR! IF A DRY-LAND SAILOR MAY OFFER YOU A WORD OF ADVICE -- YOU'D DO WELL TO SET A COURSE FURTHER SOUTH - YOU'LL FIND IT EASIER IF YOU NAVIGATE SOUTH OF THE PINOS RANGE!

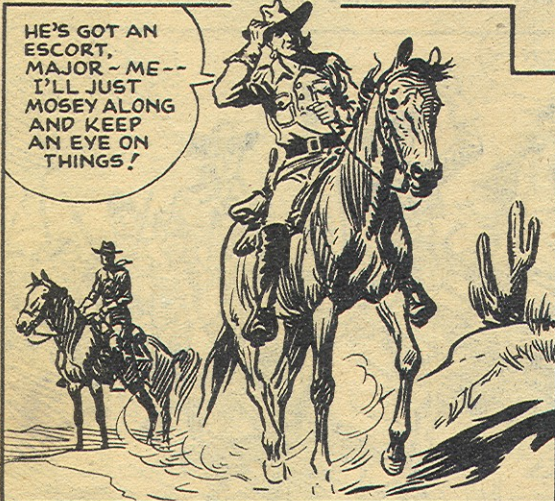
NOW -- YOU TALK SENSE, YOUNG MAN! I'LL CERTAINLY DO THAT!



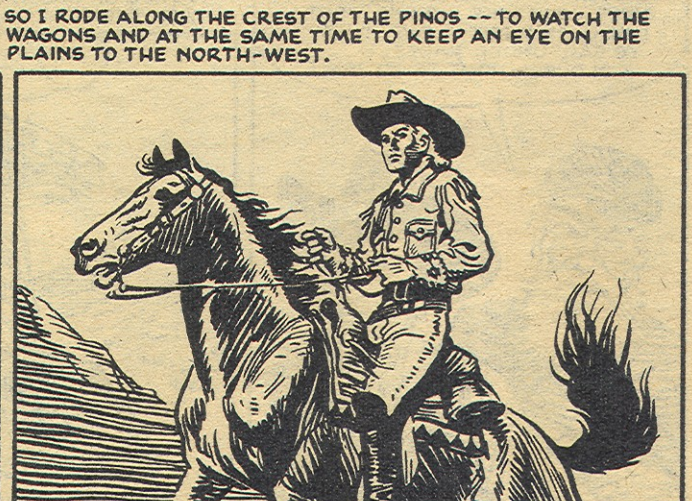
AND SO THE CAPTAIN TOOK MY ADVICE AND SET SAIL AGAIN.

NO GOOD TRYING TO ARGUE WITH A MAN LIKE THAT, MAJOR! HE'S PLUMB OBSTINATE!

MEBBE YOU'RE RIGHT, CARSON. HE STANDS A BETTER CHANCE OF MISSING STONE-FACE THE WAY HE'S GOING - IF I HAD THE MEN TO SPARE, I'D GIVE HIM AN ESCORT!



HE'S GOT AN ESCORT, MAJOR - ME -- I'LL JUST MOSEY ALONG AND KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS!



SO I RODE ALONG THE CREST OF THE PINOS -- TO WATCH THE WAGONS AND AT THE SAME TIME TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE PLAINS TO THE NORTH-WEST.



I TURNED MY HEAD AROUND FOR A MOMENT!

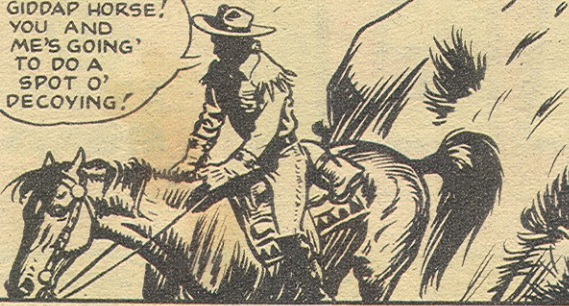
TARNATION! THAT'S STONE-FACE COMING!



THERE THEY WERE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RANGE. A WAR PARTY LED BY STONE-FACE --- THE FEROCIOUS CHIEFTAIN OF THE CHICKASAWS.

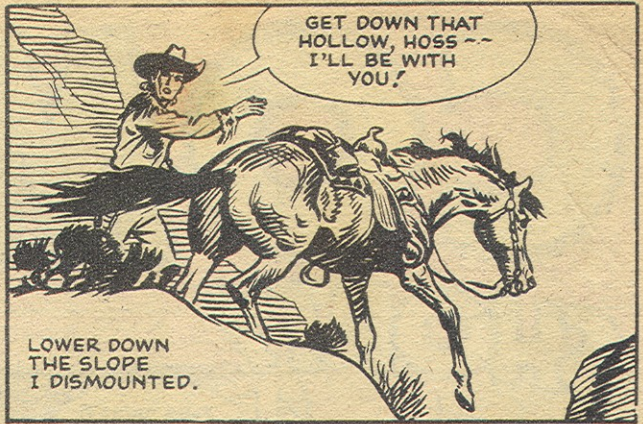
STONE-FACE WAS HEADING FOR NACHEZ PASS, A GAP IN THE PINOS RANGE THAT WOULD BRING HIM RIGHT ON TOP OF CAPTAIN JOB AND HIS FAMILY --- THERE WASN'T A MINUTE TO LOSE!

GIDDAP HORSE!
YOU AND
ME'S GOING
TO DO A
SPOT O'
DECOYING!



GET DOWN THAT
HOLLOW, HOSS ---
I'LL BE WITH
YOU!

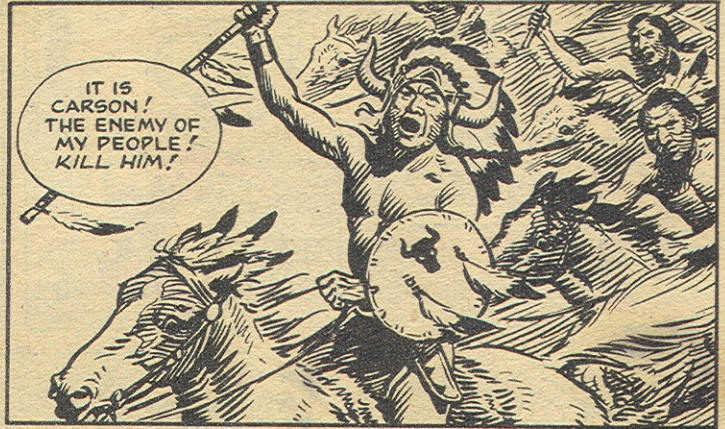
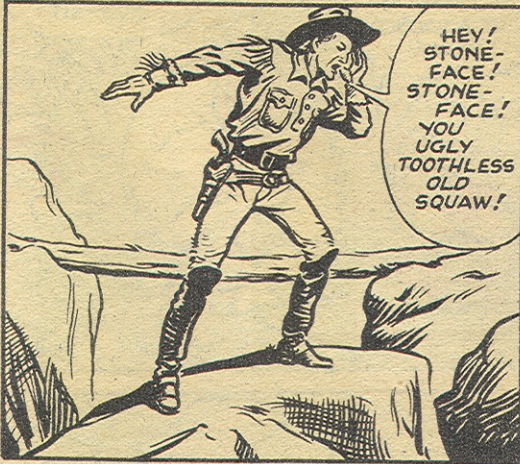
LOWER DOWN
THE SLOPE
I DISMOUNTED.



HEY!
STONE-
FACE!
STONE-
FACE!
YOU
UGLY
TOOTHLESS
OLD
SQUAW!

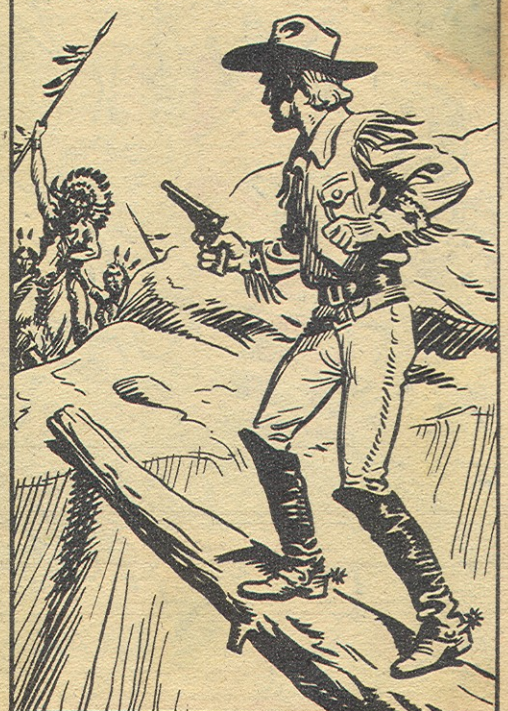
MY INSULTS ~ IN CHICKASAW ~ WERE SOON HEARD!

IT IS
CARSON!
THE ENEMY OF
MY PEOPLE!
KILL HIM!



--- YELLOW SON
OF A
RING-TAILED
POLE-CAT!

AS THEY CAME OVER THE RISE I WAS
ALREADY HALF WAY ACROSS THE
LOG BRIDGE!



Next week: Captain Job changes course and lands everyone in real trouble!

COMET

3^d
EVERY
MONDAY

SHORTY

