

K. Allan

BEATS ALL OTHERS—BUY A **KNOCKOUT!**



Knockout

21st JANUARY, 1961

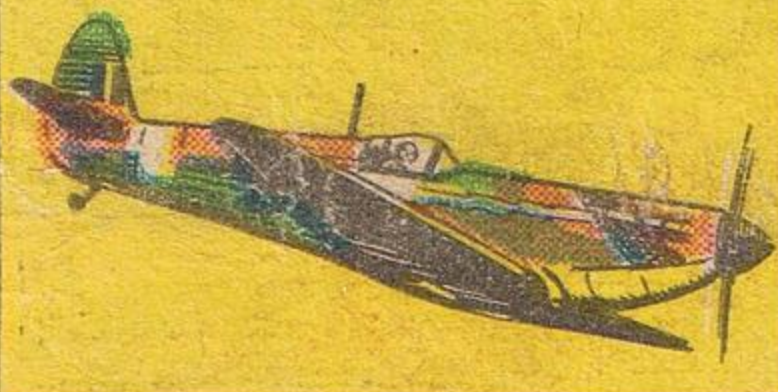
EVERY WEDNESDAY

4½^D

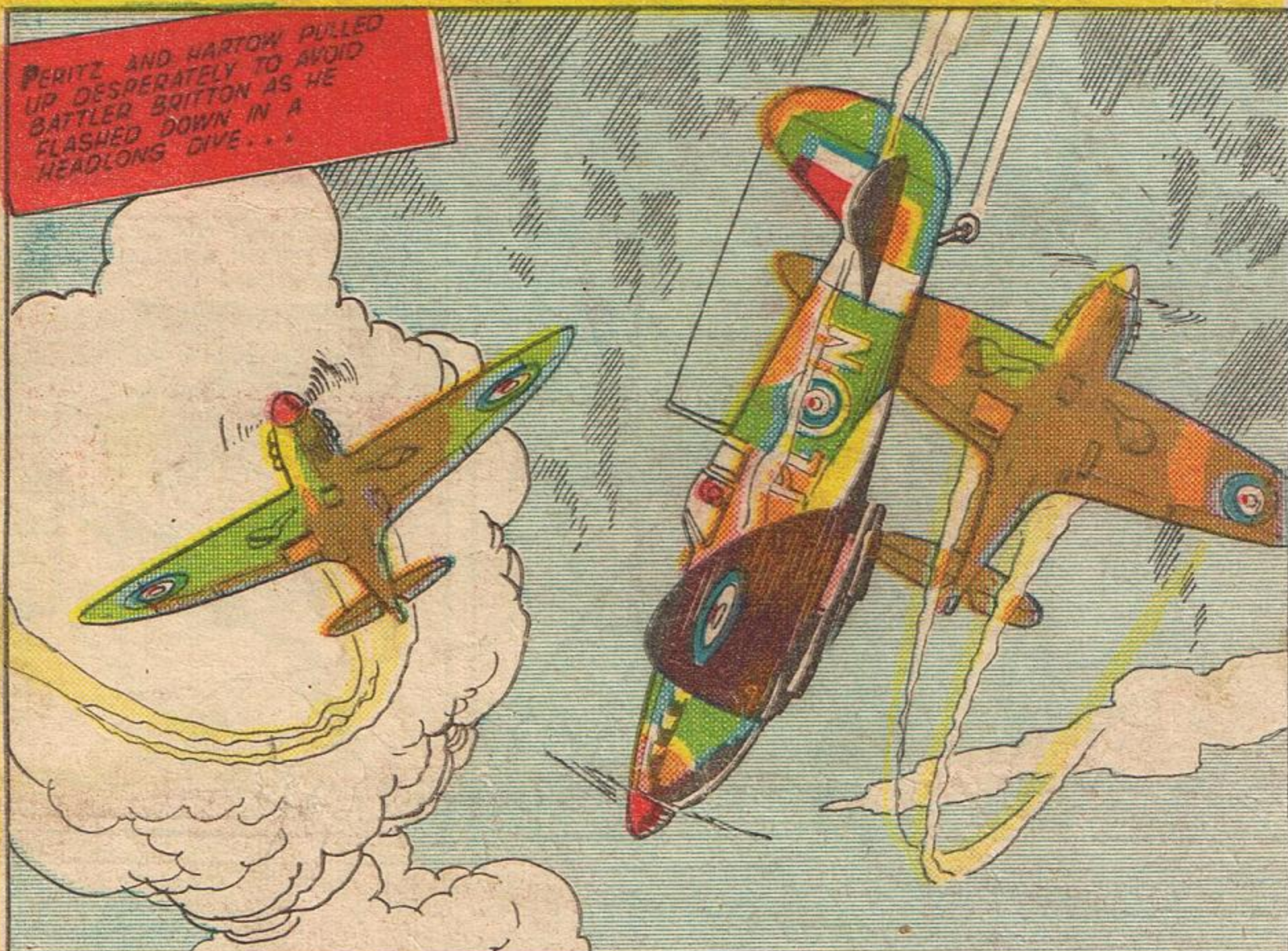
Battler Britton

FIGHTING ACE

Wing Commander Battler Britton took over command of a Polish fighter wing, to train them for a special mission. Though fanatically brave, the Poles were completely undisciplined. Battler took two of the pilots to help him escort home a crippled Lancaster bomber. The Poles flew off to attack some distant German fighters, ignoring the ace's orders. Battler chased them, diving down straight in front of their Spitfires' noses!



PERITZ AND HARTOW PULLED UP DESPERATELY TO AVOID BATTLE BRITTON AS HE FLASHED DOWN IN A HEADLONG DIVE...



IN A FANTASTIC EXHIBITION OF LIGHTNING AEROBATICS, BATTLE SWUNG UP IN A REVERSE LOOP AND HIS GUNS SENT A LIVID STREAM OF BULLETS IN FRONT OF THE POLES' SPITFIRES...



THAT'LL MAKE 'EM TURN BACK, BY THUNDER!

AND BEFORE PERITZ AND HARTOW RECOVERED THEIR WITS, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES SHEPHERDED OVER THE CRIPPLED LANCASTER BOMBER...



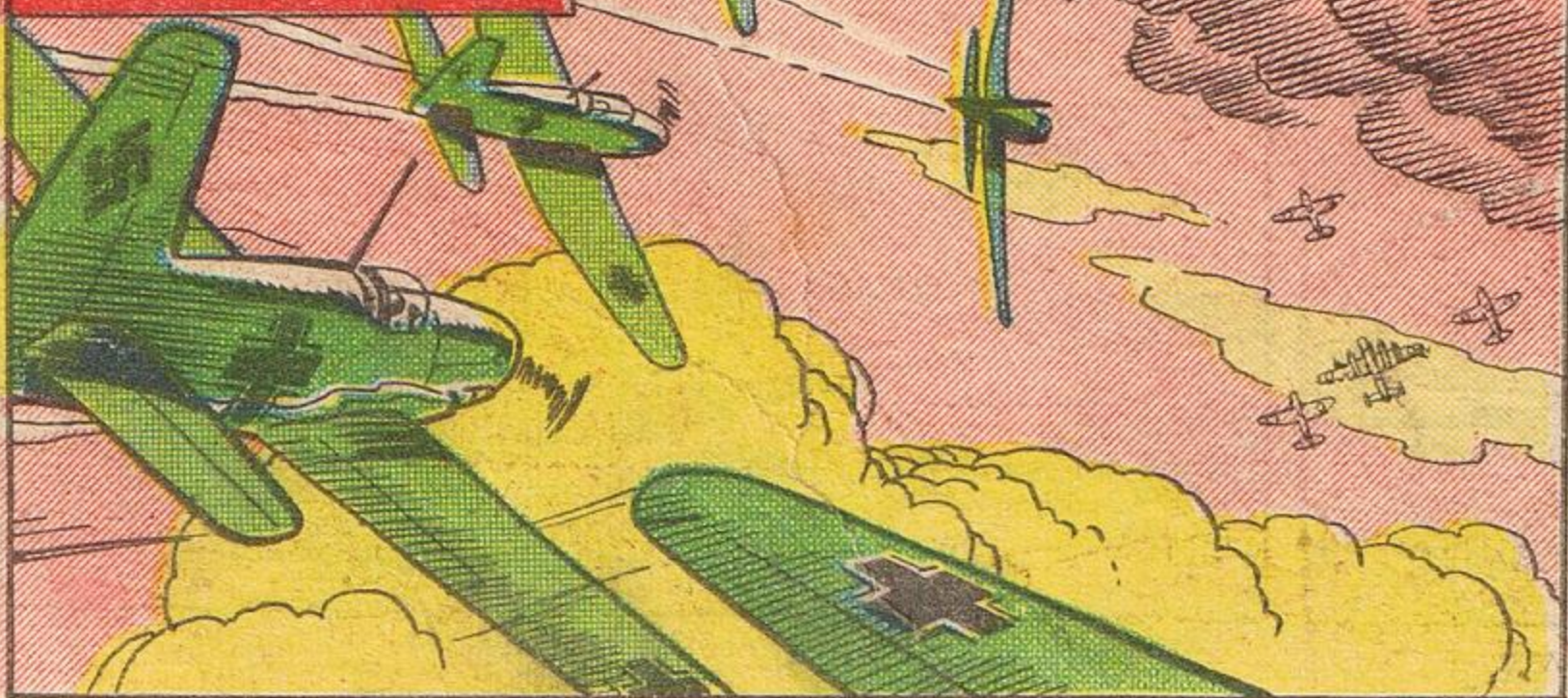
OKAY... PERHAPS YOU'LL OBEY ORDERS NEXT TIME. THOSE JERRIES YOU WERE AFTER WERE ONLY DECOYS. JUST LOOK UP! OVER!

SQUADRON LEADER PERITZ SHOT A GLANCE SKYWARDS... AND GASPED!



HE WAS RIGHT... THERE ARE SIX MORE HUNS UP THERE.

AND THE HEINKELS CAME SCREAMING DOWN TO THE ATTACK!

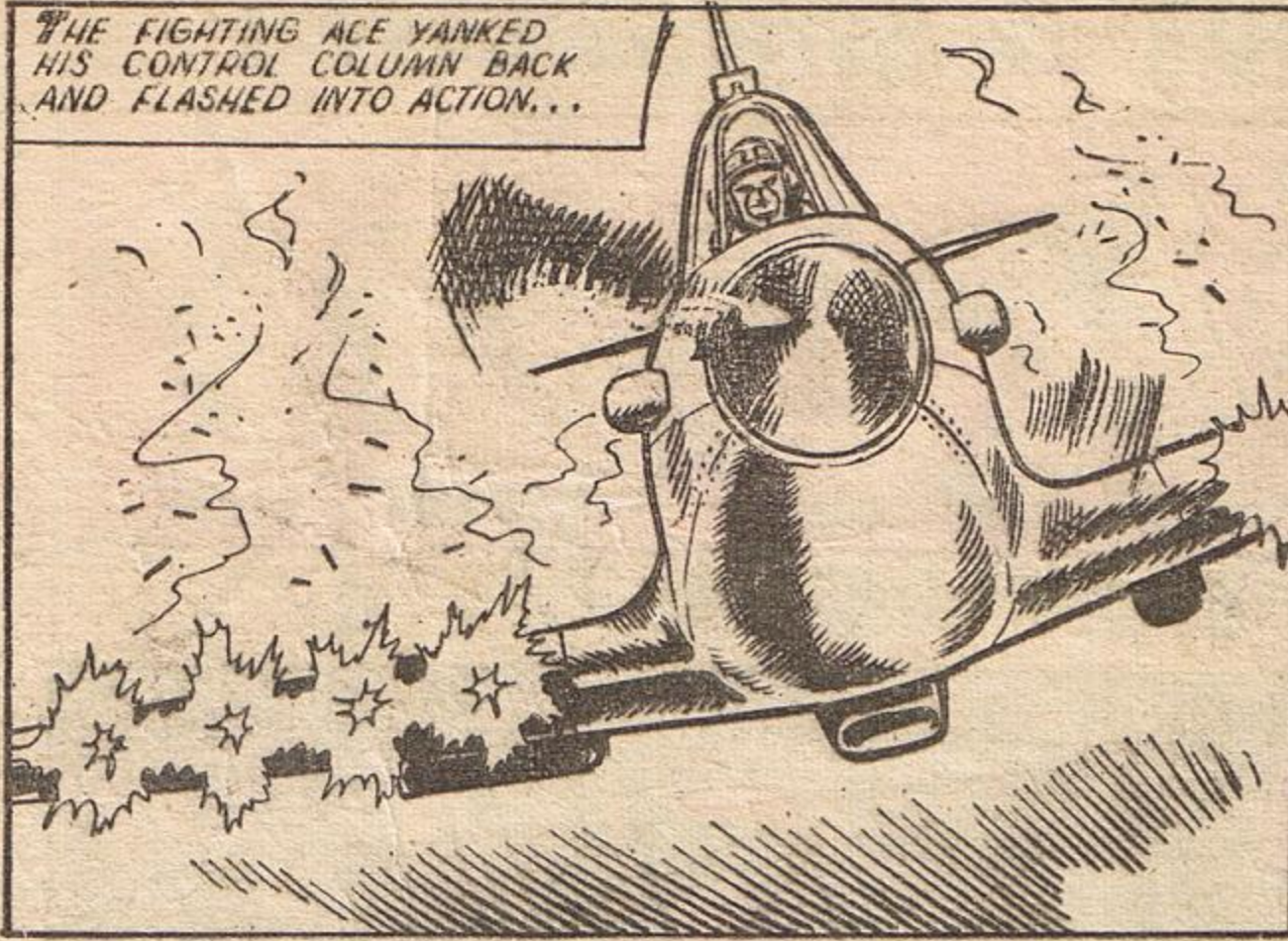


RIGHT... THIS TIME PICK YOUR OWN TARGETS... BUT DON'T LET 'EM GET NEAR THE LANCASTER... GOOD LUCK... OVER!

(Continued on next page.)

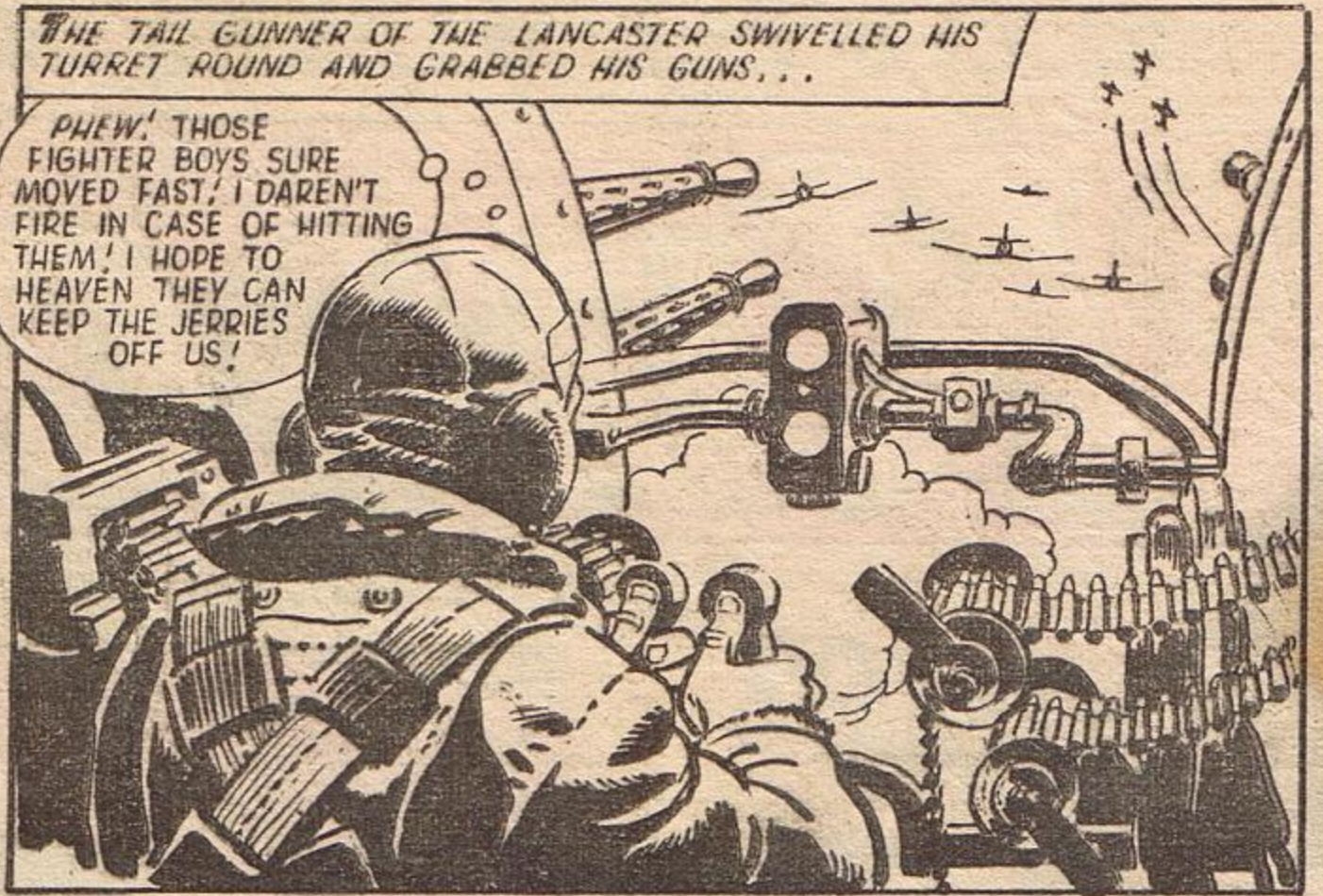
BATTLER AND HIS WATCH-DOGS OF THE SKIES HAD BROUGHT THE BOMBER HOME SAFELY!

THE FIGHTING ACE YANKED HIS CONTROL COLUMN BACK AND FLASHED INTO ACTION...



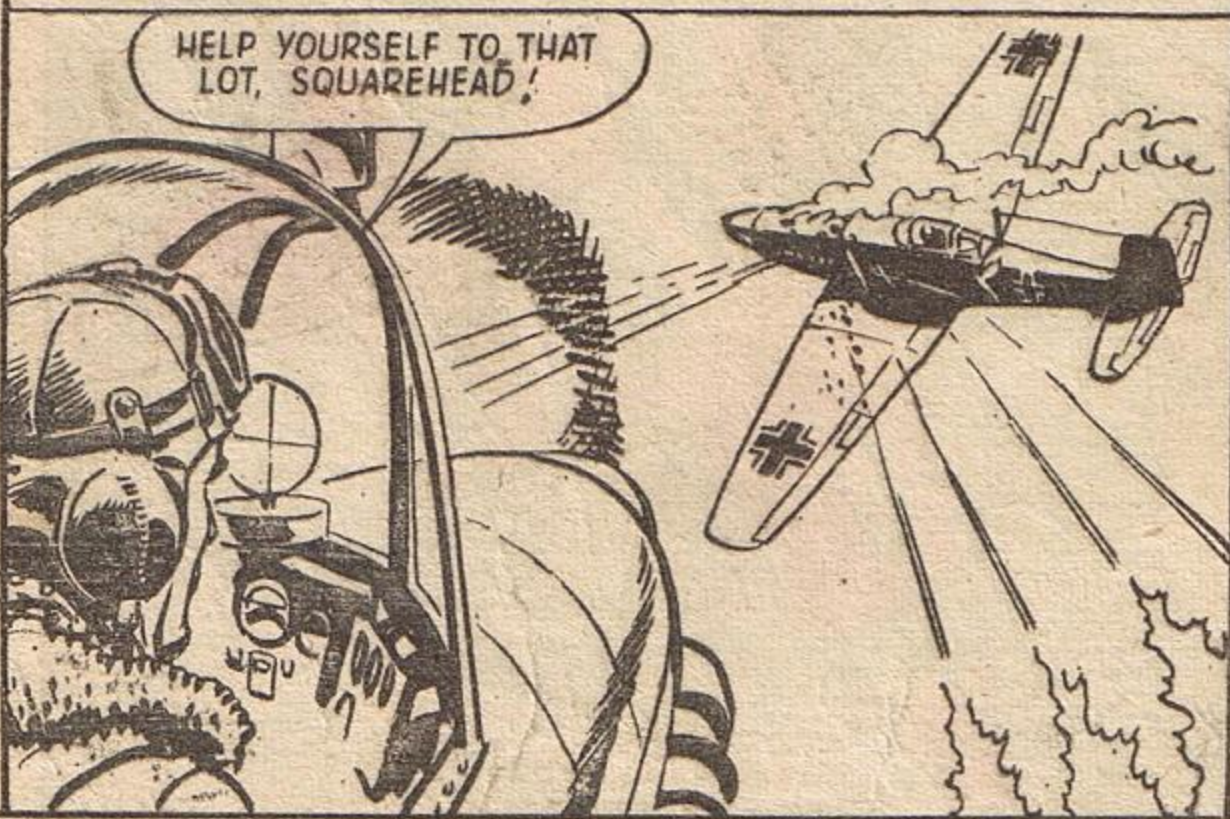
THE TAIL GUNNER OF THE LANCASTER SWIVELLED HIS TURRET ROUND AND GRABBED HIS GUNS...

PHEW! THOSE FIGHTER BOYS SURE MOVED FAST! I DAREN'T FIRE IN CASE OF HITTING THEM! I HOPE TO HEAVEN THEY CAN KEEP THE JERRIES OFF US!

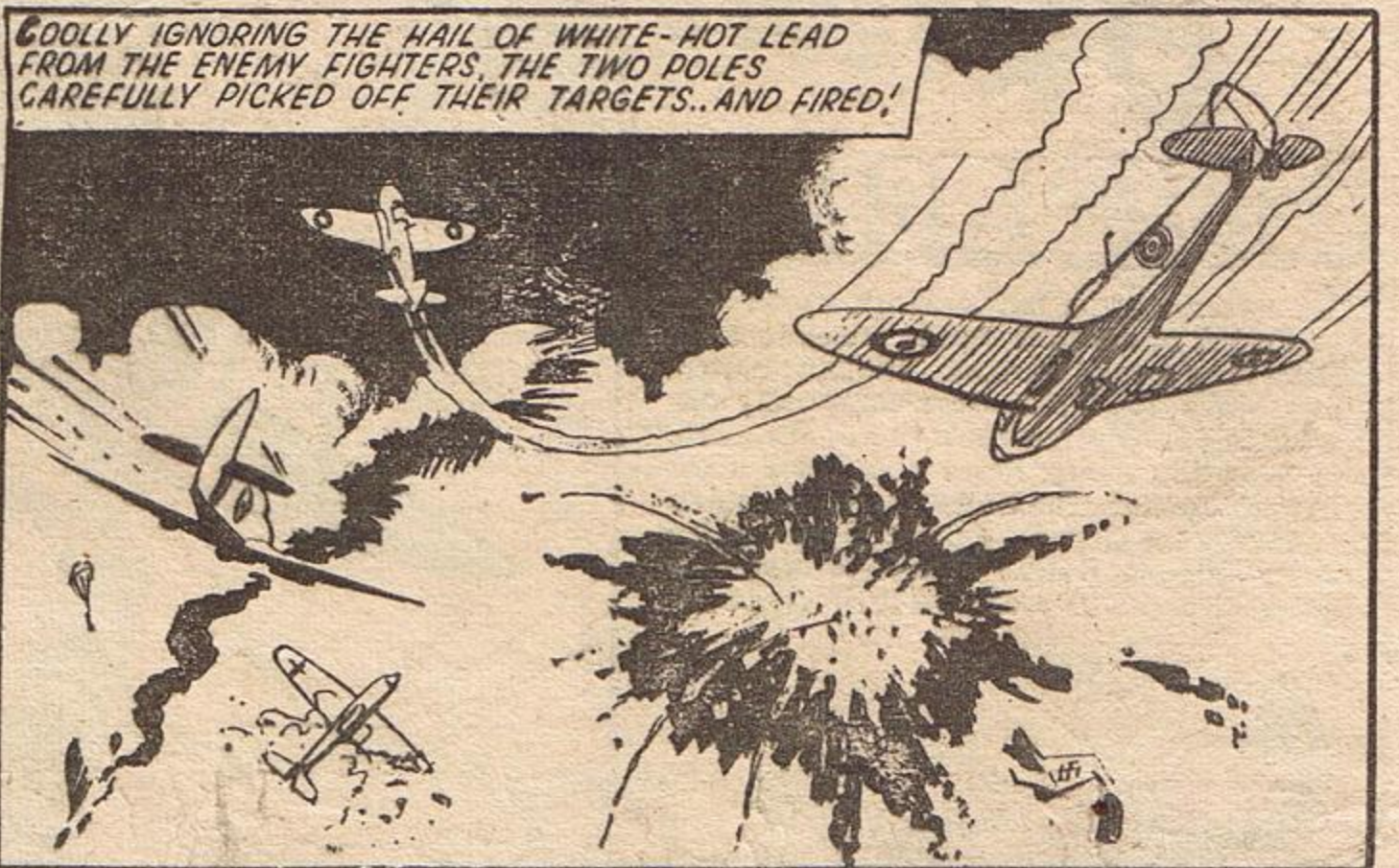


THE LEADING GERMAN PLANE FLEW INTO BATTLER'S SIGHTS AND HE SQUEEZED THE FIRING BUTTON...

HELP YOURSELF TO THAT LOT, SQUAREHEAD!



COOLLY IGNORING THE HAIL OF WHITE-HOT LEAD FROM THE ENEMY FIGHTERS, THE TWO POLES CAREFULLY PICKED OFF THEIR TARGETS..AND FIRED!



THEY WERE OVER THE NORTH SEA NOW AND NOT A SINGLE HEINKEL HAD REACHED THE LIMPING BOMBER WHICH WAS STRUGGLING TOWARDS ENGLAND...

WE'LL MAKE IT YET, BOB... THANKS TO THOSE BOYS!



WE CERTAINLY COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT THEM. THE HUNS WOULD HAVE HAD US IN THE DRINK BY NOW!

SUDDENLY, THE SURVIVING GERMAN PILOTS OPENED THEIR THROTTLES AND ROARED AWAY.. FLIGHT LIEUTENANT HARTOW WAVED WITH DELIGHT AND CALLED BATTLER ON THE RADIO...

THEY'RE RUNNING! WE'VE GOT THE SCUM BEATEN!

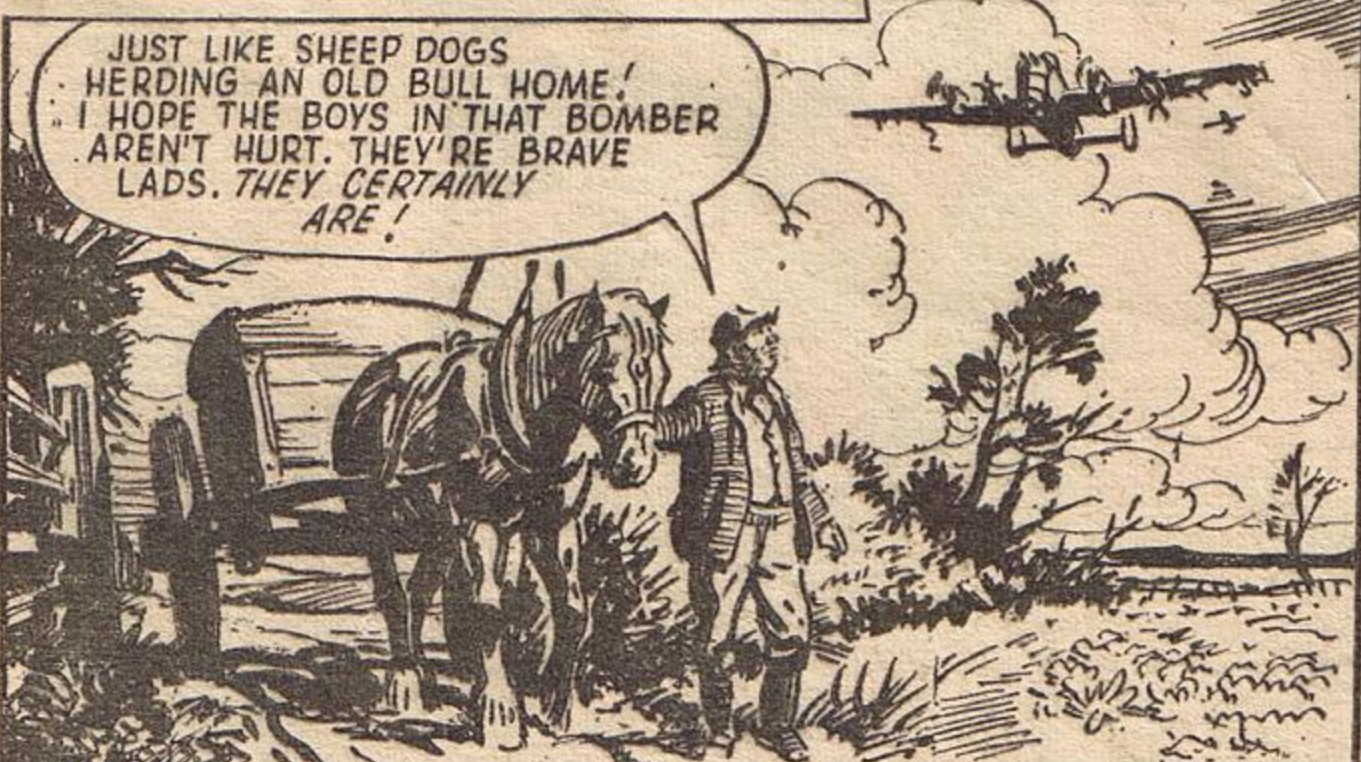


A GRIM SMILE OF SATISFACTION CROSSED THE FAMOUS ACE'S FACE AS HE CALLED BACK...

NICE WORK, CHAPS! THAT WAS A FIRST CLASS SHOW! WE SHOULD BE OKAY NOW! BUT KEEP WATCHING OUT! OVER!

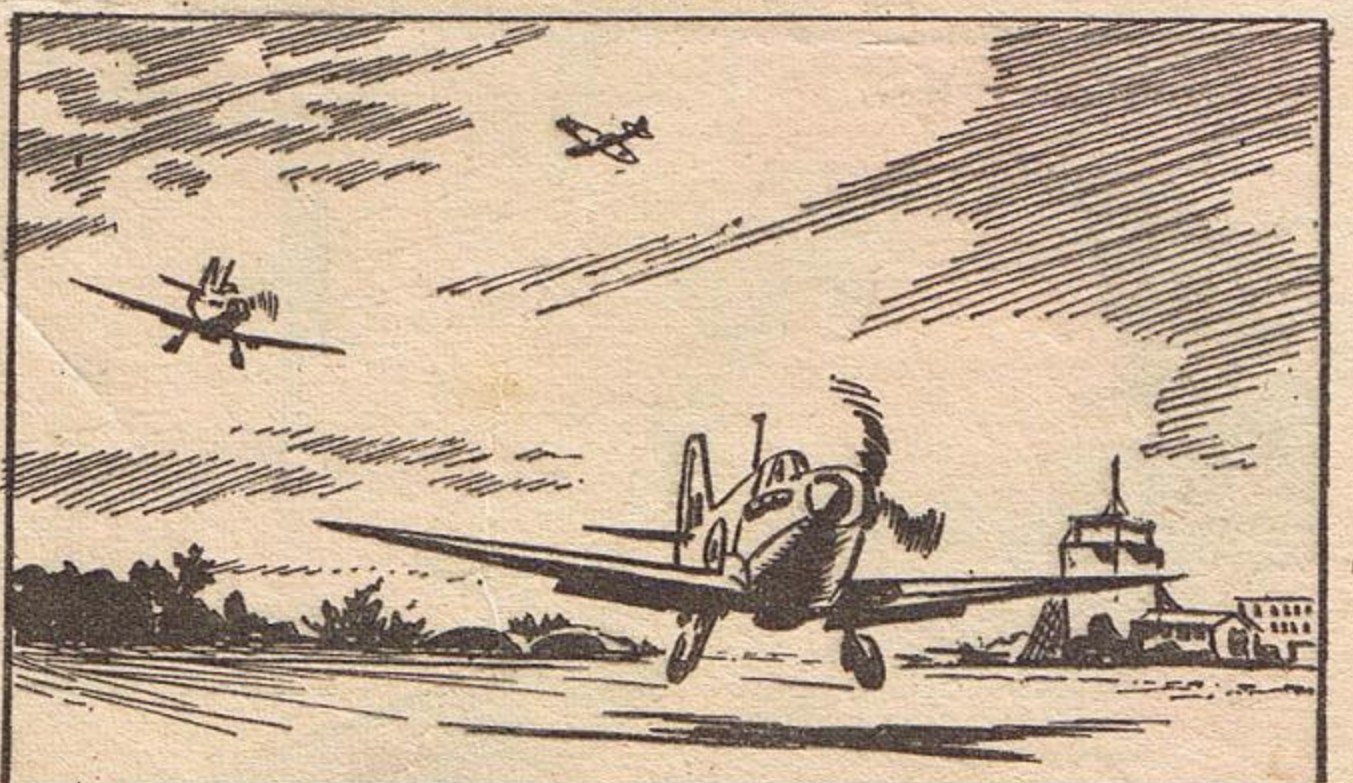


SOON AFTERWARDS, THE LANCASTER CROSSED THE FLAT EAST ANGLIAN COAST AT ABOUT A HUNDRED FEET...



JUST LIKE SHEEP DOGS HERDING AN OLD BULL HOME! I HOPE THE BOYS IN THAT BOMBER AREN'T HURT. THEY'RE BRAVE LADS. THEY CERTAINLY ARE!

TEN MINUTES LATER, BATTLER BRITTON AND THE TWO POLES CAME IN TO LAND AT THEIR BASE AT DALSON...



AS SOON AS THEY HAD REPORTED THE SUCCESS OF THEIR MISSION TO THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER THE THREE OF THEM WENT INTO THE MESS FOR A WELL EARNED BREAKFAST...

NOW, YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT FLYING DISCIPLINE AND OBEYING ORDERS? IF I HADN'T FORCED YOU CHAPS BACK TO THE LANCASTER, THE JERRIES WOULD HAVE SHOT IT TO RIBBONS!

LATER THAT DAY, ALL THE PILOTS WERE CALLED TO A MEETING IN THE BRIEFING ROOM AND SQUADRON LEADER PERITZ SPOKE TO THEM...

BEFORE WING COMMANDER BRITTON CAME, WE THOUGHT OUR MISSION IN LIFE WAS TO SHOOT DOWN AS MANY NAZIS AS POSSIBLE... REGARDLESS OF THE COST, BUT FROM TODAY, THAT'S ALL CHANGED! WE FIGHT FOR VICTORY... FOR POLAND... BUT TOGETHER!



WING COMMANDER, WE'RE SORRY... FROM NOW ON, WE'RE GOING TO WORK AS A TEAM.. AND THAT GOES FOR ALL THE BOYS!

WHEN PERITZ HAD FINISHED, BATTLEUR TOOK OVER. HE COULD SENSE AT ONCE THAT THE POLES PREVIOUS HOSTILITY TO HIM HAD GONE.

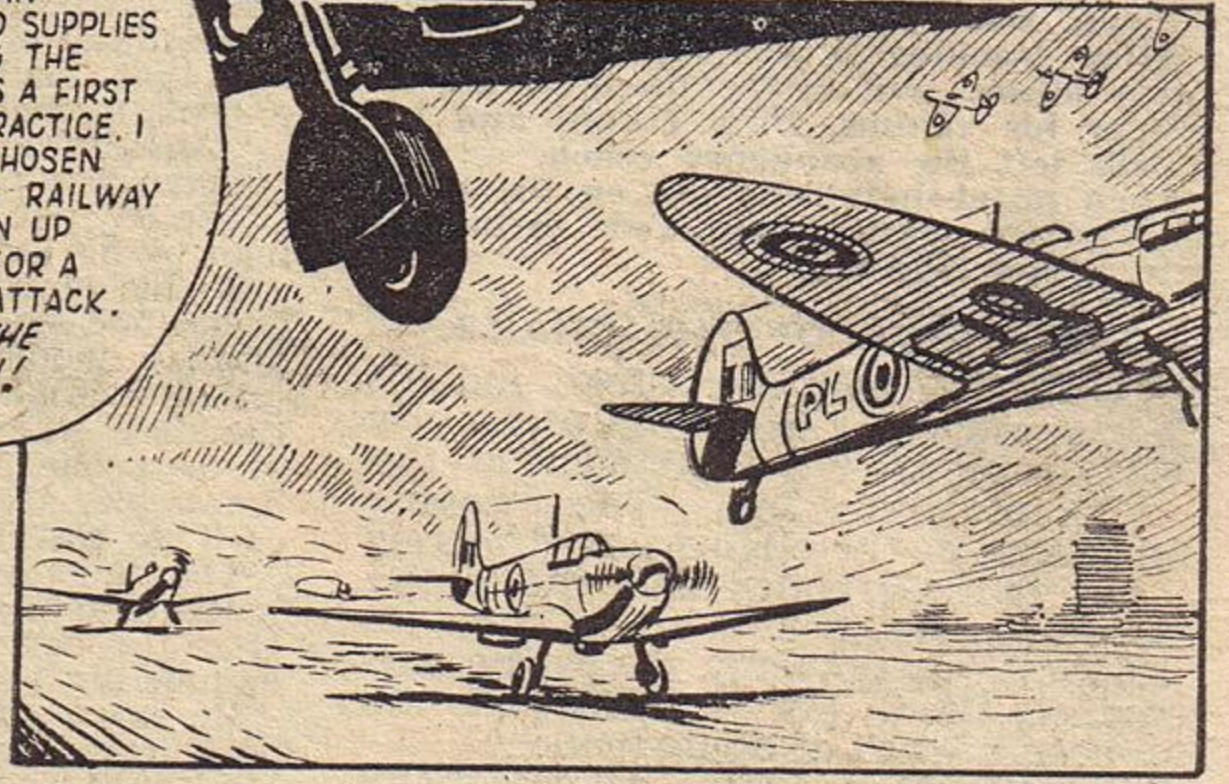


GENTLEMEN, I CAN NOW TELL YOU, YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR A SPECIAL MISSION. IT IS A TASK REQUIRING IRON DISCIPLINE AND NERVE.. IT'S SUCCESS WILL SAVE COUNTLESS LIVES IN THE FORTHCOMING ATTACK ON HITLER'S EUROPE!

A CERTAIN RAILWAY JUNCTION IN FRANCE HAS TO BE KNOCKED OUT, TO PREVENT GERMAN TROOPS AND SUPPLIES REACHING THE COAST. AS A FIRST TRIAL PRACTICE, I HAVE CHOSEN HARTON RAILWAY JUNCTION UP NORTH FOR A DUMMY ATTACK. THIS IS THE PLAN!



THEY SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY DISCUSSING DETAILS AND THE NEXT MORNING THEY TOOK OFF FOR THE PRACTICE ATTACK, WHICH WOULD ALSO TEST THE LOCAL AIR DEFENCES.



IN THE UNDERGROUND OPERATIONS ROOM AT FIGHTER COMMAND H.Q., THE DAY HAD STARTED QUIETLY, BUT THE POSITION SOON CHANGED!

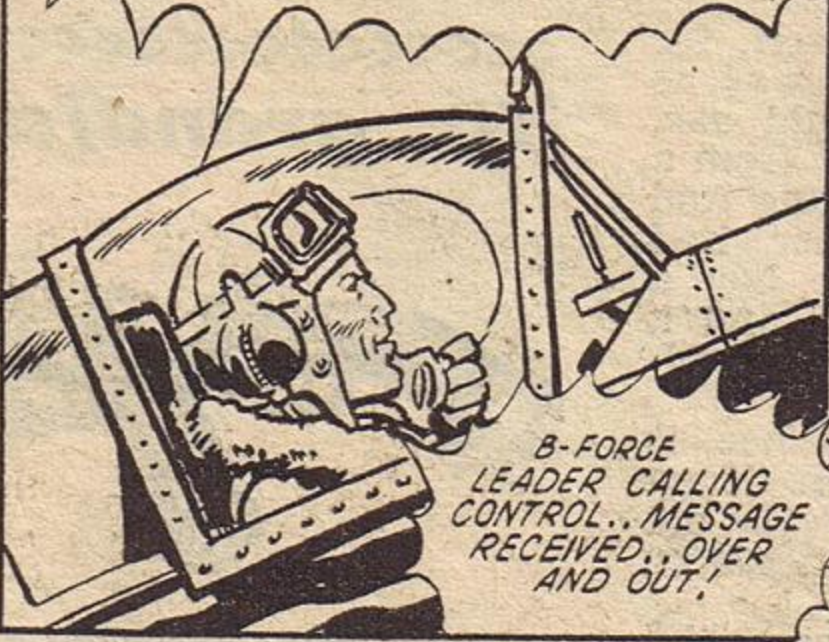
HULLO, THINGS ARE WARMING UP. BANDITS TWO-FIVE HEADING WEST IN SECTOR NINE. ORDER B-FORCE TO INTERCEPT. TRAINING MISSION CANCELLED!



RIGHT, SIR!

THE EAR PHONES IN BATTLEUR'S FLYING HELMET SUDDENLY CRACKLED INTO LIFE...

CONTROL CALLING B-FORCE LEADER.. BANDITS TWO-FIVE AT TWENTY THOUSAND.. COURSE TWO-FIVE ZERO.. INTERCEPT.. CANCEL MISSION.. OVER!



B-FORCE LEADER CALLING CONTROL.. MESSAGE RECEIVED.. OVER AND OUT!

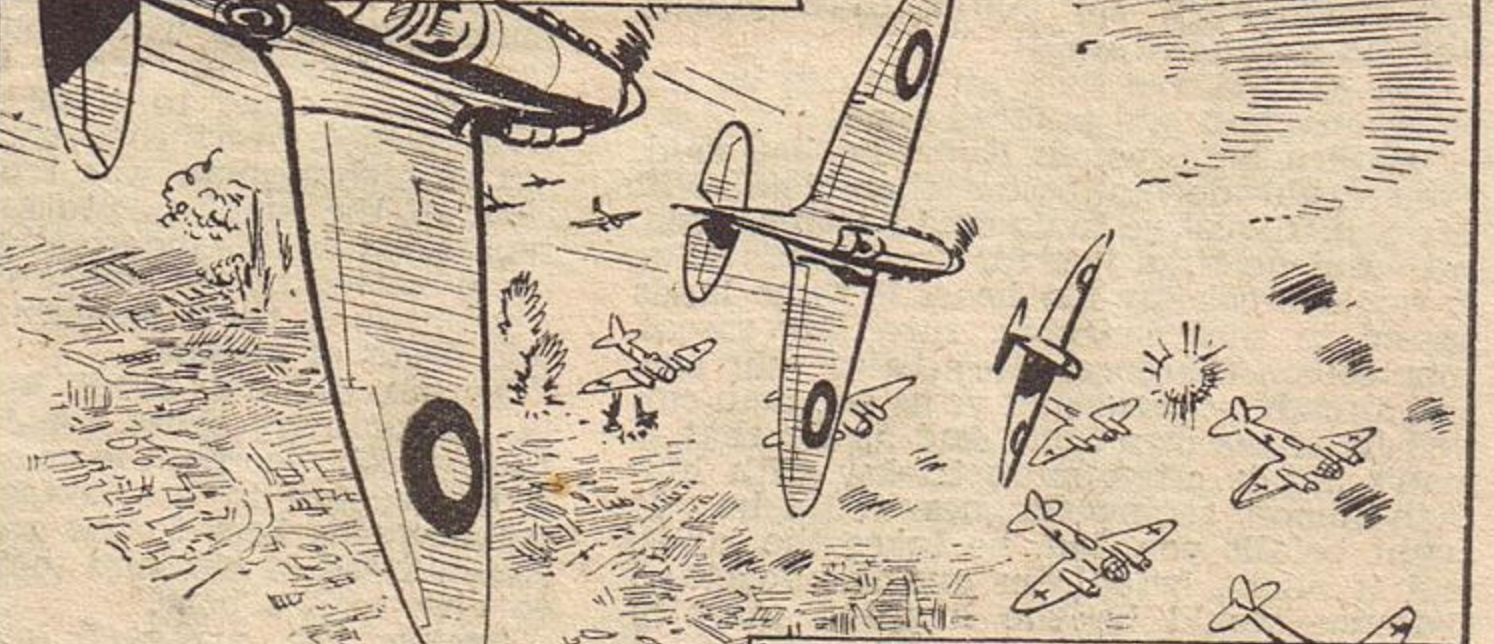
THE FAMOUS ACE GAVE HIS ORDERS SWIFTLY AND COOLLY..



B-FORCE LEADER CALLING.. YOU HEARD THE MESSAGE? WE'LL ATTACK BY SECTIONS.. BUT WATCH IT, CHAPS.. DON'T GO WILD! GOOD LUCK.. OVER!



A FEW MINUTES LATER THEY SIGHTED THE GERMAN BOMBER FORCE BELOW. BOMBS WERE ALREADY RAINING DOWN ON THEIR TARGET, WHICH WAS SHEFFIELD!



BATTLEUR DIVED DOWN STEEPLY.. HOPING FERVENTLY THAT THIS TIME THE POLES WOULD OBEY ORDERS...

Next week . . . into battle above bomb-scarred Sheffield! Super thrills with the fighting ace!

THIS STIRRING STORY OF DICK TURPIN HAS ONLY JUST STARTED! HERE ARE ALL THE BREATH-TAKING THRILLS OF HIS GALLANT BAND AS—

They Ride Again

By Colin Brooks

Twelve-year-old Rodney Revelstoke was travelling south in a post-chaise with his grandfather, old Captain Rattler Rodney. They had a meal at the Apple Tree Inn, then continued through the stormy night.

At that same time, Dick Turpin was holding up the York Mail with his loyal band of nightriders—Tom King, Pat O'Flynn, Jem Peters, and Beetles.

After teaching a rascally alderman a sharp lesson, and giving financial aid to two of his victims, Dick Turpin and his friends left the abandoned coach.

Then pistol-shots rang out on the night air, and the fearless band rode to investigate. (Now read on.)

THE WRECK OF THE CHAISE.

YOUNG Rodney Revelstoke and his grandfather were both pleasantly sleepy after a good meal at the Apple Tree Inn. The swaying and jolting of the chaise served merely to lull the old bones and the young into a deep slumber.

Rodney was not only sleepy, he was genuinely tired. For some days his life had been a whirl of excitement.

Left an orphan in his grandfather's care at the age of six, he had been bred on Captain Rodney's estate in North Lancashire, with no friends of his own age save the sons of a few local farmers, the two boys from the parsonage, and the occasional visitors who came North for the autumn shooting.

But old Rattler Rodney himself, for all his years by the calendar, was as good a friend as any boy could ask. While a young doctor of divinity from a Scots university had taught young Rod book learning, his grandfather had spared no pains to make the boy a crack shot with gun or pistol, and a fencer of skill with rapier and broadsword.

From his earliest remembrance it had been understood between them that he was one day to follow in the old man's footsteps and become an officer in the Navy.

On his twelfth birthday had come the news that a friend of his dead father, a Captain Leveson, had been appointed to a new command, and that, by arrangement with their lordships at the Admiralty, he could take young Rod as a midshipman.

The chance was such an opening as the old sea-captain had counted upon.

"Harkee here, young Rod," he had said, "you could do no better than join Will Leveson. I trust ye to do credit to the breed, lad. But no risks just for devilment's sake. It would break my old heart if these lands passed to that smirking, snivelling rascal, your cousin Clarence. He's twice your age, and already as jealous of ye as one man can well be of his own kin. And as for that, a man's kin is often more tricky with him than honest stranger-rogues would be. If aught befalls you, lad, he takes the lands, and if aught befell you and me together, Clarence would be the happiest man in these islands!"

But Rod was in no mood to worry about his cousin Clarence Revelstoke. He was far too happy in contemplating the adventure and the glory that were to be his when he signed the roll of Captain Leveson's frigate.

It was of just such adventure and glory that he dreamt as the two-horse chaise rolled and jolted him along the dark road. In his dream he was leading a boarding party aboard a French seventy-five, in a shower of lead from the canister shot.

One gun-fire seemed unduly loud and real, and he awoke with a start, to find the chaise rattling at a frightening pace under a small hail of pistol bullets.

In that small dark, swaying vehicle it was difficult to make out what was happening. "Grandfather!" cried Rod.

There was no reply.

The boy put out a hand to waken the old man by his side.

To his horror he found that his grandfather had slipped from the seat beside him and lay huddled on the floor of the chaise.

Rod was quick of wit. He realised that the shots which had been fired had found at least one mark, probably two, for the horses tore along now, down the dark road, as if no postilion guided them.

The shots had ceased. He listened intently, and heard hooves pounding the road after the chaise, and, more faintly, hooves hammering the road towards it.

He strove to interpret this double sound of approaching horsemen. The party behind must be, he knew, the assailants who had wounded or killed his grandfather. But the approaching party might be helpers and friends.

He had decided to risk a bullet by peering from the window when the wheels of the chaise struck an obstacle in the road and he was pitched violently forward. His

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**His grandfather lay huddled on the floor! The pistol-shots he had heard had found at least one mark!**



head struck the woodwork in front of him, and a great tide of blackness seemed to swell up around him and engulf him.

Dick Turpin came cantering along in time to see a flying chaise lacking its postilion, hurtle into a log which had clearly been thrown deliberately across the road. The two horses came to their knees and the crazy vehicle overturned with a crash.

The highwayman was too experienced a rider of the night not to know of the evil reputation of this moorland way. He had a black hatred of the gangs of evil footpads who made it their playground for robbery and deeds of violence.

Turpin did not count himself a robber in the ordinary sense. A Jacobite, he felt that to rob George, the so-called King, was a virtue, and in his takings from private travellers he kept to the great tradition of Robin Hood of old, and took from the rich to give to the poor.

Seeing the arranged catastrophe into which the chaise had fallen, Dick Turpin dismounted, and held Black Bess quiet by the roadside, motioning the others of his band into the same still watchfulness as they joined him.

"Phwat is it, captain dear?" asked Pat

O'Flynn. "Is it the murdering rapsallions of footpads again?"

"I thought so, but methinks not now," Dick responded. "Who ever heard of footpads riding cattle like these approaching? But stay! Here are the footpads, slinking out from the shadows. And these horsemen—there are but three—are their temporary masters. They must have hired them for this work, and black work it looks! What say you, boys, do we join the game now or wait till it develops a little?"

"No time like now, Dick," said the steady voice of Tom King in his ear. "What do we do, think you? Give them a few balls of lead, or a touch of the good, cold steel?"

"Wait but a moment until the horsemen come up," Dick replied. "The minute the foremost mounted man halts or dismounts, let the party have a broadside of bullets, and then without pause we'll into them with our hangers. They are too intent upon the wreckage to be wary of us. Ready. Now!"

Five pistols rang out as one. There came from the group of footpads about the wrecked chaise yelps and groans of anguish to show that some at least of the leaden balls had found billets.

The three mounted men steadied their rearing horses, and peered into the darkness whence the flashes and the bullets had come. Hardly had they recovered from the sudden shock than the five highwaymen were upon them with drawn rapiers.

"By gad! The Rattler has had an escort!" screamed a high-pitched voice. "Back for your lives, boys!"

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The three horsemen wheeled round their horses and retreated the way they had come. The footpads, dazed and demoralised by the charge of the five comrades after the shower of pistol-balls, scrambled off into the darkness of the moor, dragging their wounded with them, while Beetles and Peters assisted their awkward flight with their riding-whips.

Dick Turpin walked over and examined the wreckage of the chaise, whose two horses were now still and cold.

"The brutes had at least the mercy to put a couple of balls into these poor beasts, and release them from their misery of broken legs," he said. "What damage has been sustained within? Gadzooks, but 'tis dark, and there is no hope of relighting these shattered lamps. Oh, there Tom, give me a hand. There is someone here sore hurt. Why, 'tis but a boy! He is stunned, but he moans. There is life in him! I warrant you the postilion was shot and thrown a mile back."

As Turpin peered into the dark interior of the wrecked chaise, and dragged out from it the senseless body of young Rodney Revelstoke, the gathering rain began to fall heavily. There were some flashes of lightning

"Hurry, Dick," said Tom King, "or the storm will be on us. Is there any other there?"

"Nay, plague me, but I cannot see," Dick answered. "All the travelling gear is thrown into the utmost confusion. We cannot leave this young shaver in the highway, and we dare not stop, for if the storm held off, there would be a fine body of searchers out for us from the Apple Tree Inn once the coach-horses arrive there without the Mail behind them."

Dick Turpin hoisted the prostrate form of Rod on to his saddle-tree, and himself remounted his mare.

"Tis odd that so young a boy should be travelling alone," he said. "My heart mis-gives me that some other has been taken from the chaise. But we dare not wait. Away, bonnie boys, bearing southward! There's more than ordinary thunder in this dark and rainy air."

The five of them put their horses to a canter and, leaving the road, took to the moorland.

Beetles. "I fought dat de red whiskerers ob Massa Peterers had set de world on fire!"

"A thunderbolt!" said Dick, raising his voice above the storm which had now thoroughly broken. "Gadzooks, one can smell the sulphur of it, 'twas so near! Methinks it has fallen where the chaise was wrecked, drawn there, doubtless, by the iron-shod pole. They tell me that iron has a rare magic for attracting the electric fluid from the clouds. This is an ill-omened spot, lads, let us away from it with all speed. We are in for a rare soaking!"

"Ah, well, captain, me darlint," said O'Flynn philosophically, "I doubt not we have enough of German George's guineas to pay for brandy to keep the cold from our bones. Where do we rest?"

"If we can make it before full dawn, we'll take to the old quarry. That is a safe lair for a day's sleep, and well found, withal, if I know Dame Stukeey."

"And the boy, Dick?"

"Faith, I know not now whether he be

interview with a great Minister of State in Whitehall.

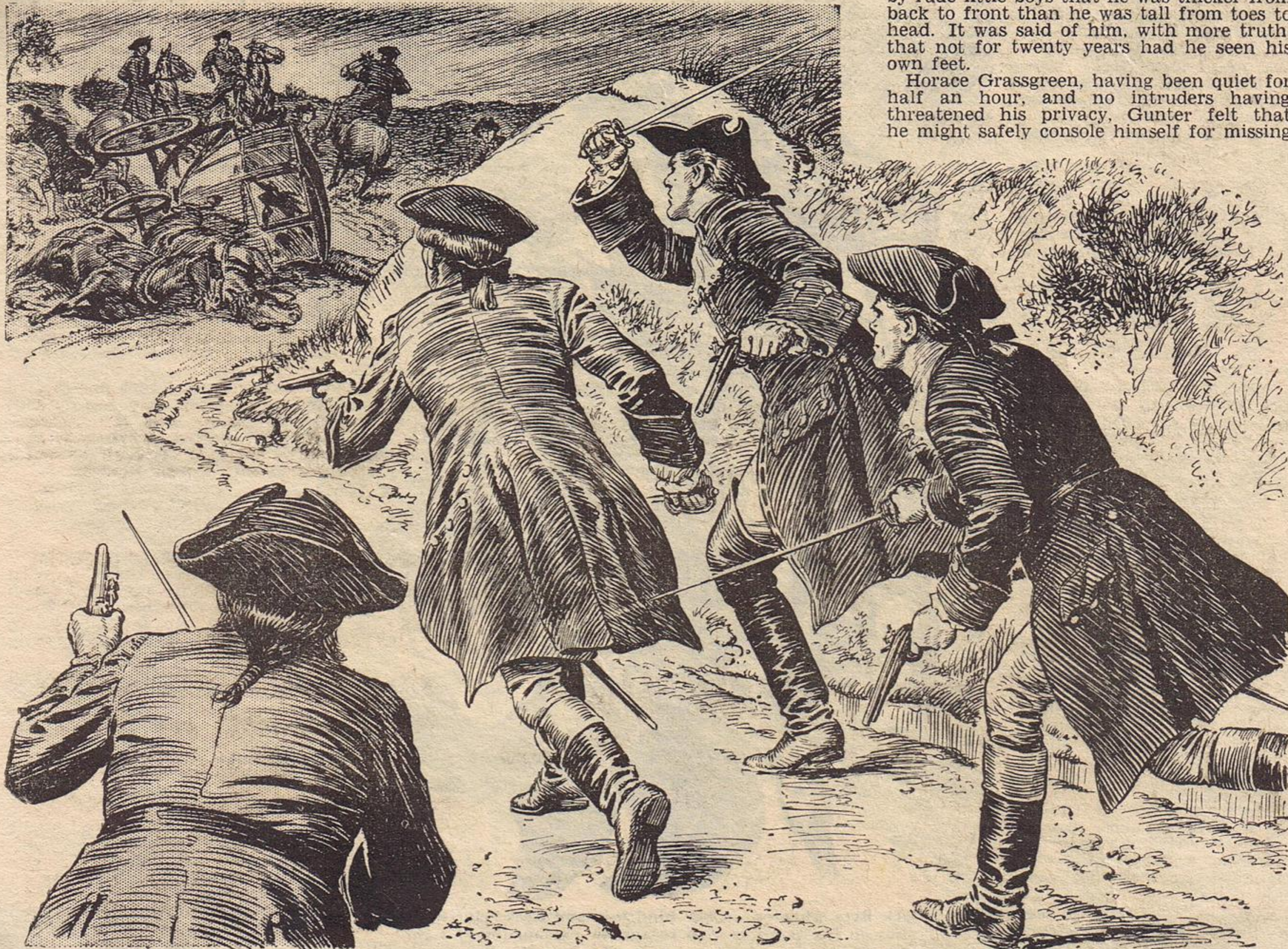
Unless the villain, Richard Turpin, was safe under lock and key before the month's end, the Runners would have a new chief! That was the essence of the talk, although many hot and sneering words had been flung at the head of the discomfited police-officer.

The Runner charged with guarding the privacy of the irate Grassgreen had had no easy morning. Because he particularly wished to be alone, it seemed that all the fools in London were determined to intrude upon him.

Peter Gunter, who was the unfortunate officer on duty, had not even had time to walk round to his favourite hostelry in Drury Lane, and now that it was early afternoon he felt ruefully that his chance of a good meal, which he held to be essential to a full performance of his duties, was remote.

Gunter was not an ideal man for the work of thief taking. It was said of him by rude little boys that he was thicker from back to front than he was tall from toes to head. It was said of him, with more truth, that not for twenty years had he seen his own feet.

Horace Grassgreen, having been quiet for half an hour, and no intruders having threatened his privacy, Gunter felt that he might safely console himself for missing



There came from the group of footpads about the wrecked chaise yelps and groans of anguish, and, as the three mounted men steadied their rearing horses, the nightriders appeared, with drawn rapiers!

Hardly had they ridden a furlong when the darkness was rent by a triple fork of lightning that seemed as if the very heavens themselves had opened to spit down a blue flame. Barely had the ragged forks flashed to the earth than a burst of thunder seemed to volley over their heads.

The five horses pranced like mad things. Had the comrades not been first-class horsemen they must have been flung from their saddles. Black Bess wheeled about and curveted on her hind legs, Dick gripping her tightly with his knees while he held the still form of Rodney before him.

His eyes, part blinded by the lightning, seemed to see an extraordinary sight. From the dark vault of the heavens a ball of blue fire dropped to the very spot on the high road where they had abandoned the wrecked chaise.

"Golly!" said the doleful voice of

alive or dead. But we'll look at him when we reach the caves."

And with no further words spoken, the members of the gallant little band bent to the tempest and rode stoutly through the night, the injured boy clasped fast to the breast of Dick Turpin.

A VISIT TO BOW STREET.

HORACE GRASSGREEN, chief of the Bow Street Runners, was in an ill temper. News in those days travelled slowly, but bad news seemed to travel fast enough.

A horseman from York garrison had posted south to tell the authorities that their cunning had gone for naught, and that the pay for the troops for the third time on record, had been taken by highwaymen.

Horace Grassgreen had had a stormy

his dinner by taking forty winks with his feet propped on the top of his desk.

Hardly had his eyes closed when his composure was disturbed by a series of hollow groans. He tried to disregard them, but they doubled in tone and intensity.

Gunter looked up to the ceiling, but there was nothing there. He turned his gooseberry-like eyes to the left of him, and there was nothing there. He turned his gaze to the right, and there was nothing there.

Then, as any full-witted man would have done at the first, he looked straight in front of him—and almost fell off his chair in surprise mingled with fright.

Opposite to him, looking as if it had been newly severed, was a coal-black head, with staring eyes and flashing white teeth. From the wide mouth of this head the hollow groans were coming.

(Continued on next page.)

"Ooo-er!" said Gunter.

"Ooooooooooooooooooooo!" said the head, like some calf that had lost its mother.

Gunter dropped his legs from the desk and prepared to run for help. But as he swung himself round a hand gripped his shoulder.

Gunter turned to face the terrible thing, and found that the owner of the head had now risen from his stooping posture in front of the desk and was standing upright. It was a tall negro dressed in the gorgeous blue livery of a footman.

"Am dis de home ob de Bow Street Runnerers?" asked the negro.

"Ere, wot do you mean bellowing at me like that?" said Gunter.

"Me, sah! Bellow, sah? You must have been dreaming, sah. In dat innocent restin's dat you treat yourself to after your dinner, you must hab fallen asleep and been dreaming ob de cows in de fields."

"Dinner! Bust me if I've 'ad any dinner," said Gunter.

"Me should say it would more likely bust you if you did have any dinner, sah! But, tell me sah, am dis de home ob de Bow Street Runnerers?"

"Yus—it am—I mean are—bust me, I mean is!"

"Den I tell my massa to come in," said the negro, turning to the door.

"Ere, not so quick, Sambo. Who is your master?"

"Me not Sambo, sah. Me gentleman ob colour called Caesar Pompey Nero Scipio Hannibal Dingo. My massa a great gentleman. Him Sir Lucifer de Bourbon Casteja le Mot."

"A Frenchman?"

"Im ob French consent."

"French consent! Bust me, what's that?"

"Im grandfather was a Frenchman."

"Oh, you mean descent. Not consent, you black crow. You mean he springs from the French," said Officer Gunter pompously.

"No, sah. My massa springs from nobody, sah. Im springs at 'em!"

"I can't waste all day talking to a fool. What does this Sir Lucifer what'sname want 'ere, eh?"

"Im come to call on Horace Grassgreen, de boss ob de Bow Street Runnerers."

"Tell your master that Horace Grassgreen can see nobody today," retorted Gunter. "If he wants any advice, tell him that Officer Gunter, Officer Peter Gunter, will be most 'appy to advise him."

"Very good, sah. Me tell massa dat."

The negro departed through the door, and Officer Gunter anxiously straightened his uniform and scraped his scanty locks over his rosy, bald pate.

The next moment he was bowing low before a handsome young man dressed in a coat of the most dainty lavender blue, who entered the dingy room bearing under his arm a gold-laced hat that was obviously for mere show, since it would not have fitted the elaborate wig that its owner wore.

A large diamond ring sparkled on the hand which balanced a tall cane, which was set at the head with glittering stones.

"So Horace Grassgreen is not at home, fellow, eh?" said this imposing person.

"No, m'lord duke—I mean m'lord—I mean your sir-ship!"

"How fatiguing. I particularly wished to hold converse with him."

The young dandy daintily dusted the office chair and then settled himself down with a mixture of languid comfort and lazy dignity.

Officer Gunter watched him with respectful amazement.

"I particularly wanted to hold converse with Grassgreen, because I am anxious to travel north with some old family plate. Now you look an intelligent man, officer, if

I may say so. Do you think I should be safe to travel with all these dreadful highwaymen abroad in the land, or should I hire an escort of Runners?"

"Which part of the North was you a-thinking of going to, your grace—I mean, your sirship?"

"Into Yorkshire."

"Well, you'll be quite safe up there, your sirship," Gunter assured him. "Why, Grassgreen himself and half the force leaves 'ere tomorrow morning for them very parts. They're a-going to capture this fellow Turpin. Grassgreen's inside there this very moment making arrangements, and they've increased the reward from three hundred to five hundred guineas for Turpin's capture. Bust me, if I'm not going myself!"

"Oh, well, if Grassgreen and half the Runners are going to be in those very parts, I shall not worry any further, but post up there on Thursday," said the visitor. "Where might your headquarters be in the North, in case—just in case—anything did

"Now, Gunter, here are the orders for tomorrow," he said, impatiently. "Have them copied and put up on the notice boards. And be ready to ride with me at eight o'clock."

"Yes, sir."

The fat Runner turned to leave the room. "What foolery is this, Gunter?" said Grassgreen's high-pitched querulous voice.

"Foolery, sir?" gasped Gunter in hurt surprise.

"What is that pinned to your uniform at the back?" roared Grassgreen.

"Pinned to me uniform, sir?" said the fat man, turning round and round like a puppy-dog chasing his tail in a vain attempt to see what Grassgreen was pointing at.

"Come here, fool!"

Officer Gunter advanced to the table where his superior sat, and turned to allow that irascible chief to detach the offending paper.

"Why, man, it's a letter. And addressed to me! Listen here, fool," snorted his chief, reading the note:

"Dear and Most Honoured Grassgreen.—It was a poor trick to send an empty coach to York. However, it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good, and your stratagem has enabled me to relieve the York Mail of enough guineas to keep me and my friends in comfort for a season on the Yorkshire moors. Tell your master, German George, that his guineas will not be safe until his paymaster ceases from employing German mercenaries to discipline British lads, who are good soldiers enough without Hanoverian ruffians to flog them to their duties. And if you should come North yourself, good Grassgreen, to investigate the sad affair of the York Mail, forget not to give my regards to one Alderman Jackman, who is a nastier thief than was ever—"

"Your Obligated and Obedient Servant,

"DICK TURPIN."

Horace Grassgreen almost exploded with rage as he finished reading.

"This—this is in the very handwriting of the blackguard himself!" he howled. "Who brought it? How came it on your fat back? Whom have you had in that den of yours this hour or two past?"

"Why, nobody, sir!" panted poor Gunter. "Nobody, that is, but a young lordling of a knight, who came to see me about the need of an escort of Runners to take his family plate to the North."

"A young knight! Was he alone?"

"He wasn't what you might call alone, sir. He had a manservant with him. He was the blackest blackamoor I ever did see."

Horace Grassgreen seemed likely to choke with rage.

"Fool! Dolt!" he roared.

Peter Gunter had rarely seen his present chief in such a black rage.

"Why, sir, who might they have been?" he gulped.

"Who might they have been, idiot! Why you've had in your hands and let slip Dick Turpin's second-lieutenant and that knave Beetles! Had you held them, fool, you'd have been richer by a hundred and fifty guineas—fifty for Beetles and a hundred for that cool rogue, Flick, Turpin's young friend. And you let them walk in, pin an insulting message for me on to your coat-tails while you were bowing and scraping—and walk coolly out again—"

Officer Peter Gunter scratched a puzzled head. At length the enormity of his folly broke in upon his dull wits.

"Well—bust me!" he gasped.

(Continue this grand story in your next **KNOCKOUT**. Learn more about the boy, **Rodney Revelstoke**, and share new stirring adventures with **Dick Turpin** and his band of gallant nightriders.)



Black Bess wheeled on her hind legs and Dick, clutching the boy in his arms, turned to see an extraordinary sight!

happen to me and my family plate?"

"Grassgreen and me, your highness, will be found at the old Apple Tree Inn, between York and Brigham," answered Gunter. "We've got to question some witnesses there. Grassgreen's belief is that the old woman who keeps that there hostelry is in league with these highwaymen. He's a terror for nosing out guilt, is Grassgreen. Almost as good a hand at it as your 'umble servant."

"Well, thank you, officer. You have been most helpful. Perhaps you wouldn't object to drinking my health and safe journey with this crown-piece."

"Onoured, sir, I'm sure. Let me see you to your chair, your grace."

"No, I thank you. My man, Pompey, will help me in. Good morning, officer."

The fat Runner almost bent double in his attempt to bid the generous visitor a fitting farewell.

Three minutes later Horace Grassgreen bawled for his fat henchman.

THE TROUBLE-SHOOTERS

Matt Marriott, Powder Horn and Chalk McTigue were all buffalo hunters at the railhead of the Santa Fe railroad. Chalk was an Indian hater, which infuriated the peace-loving Matt. While out one day they found a wounded man, who said he had been attacked by Indians. Chalk wanted speedy revenge, but Matt argued against this, and Chalk grabbed him threateningly. Angrily Matt pushed McTigue away . . .



YOU'RE ALL WORKED UP, MARRIOTT

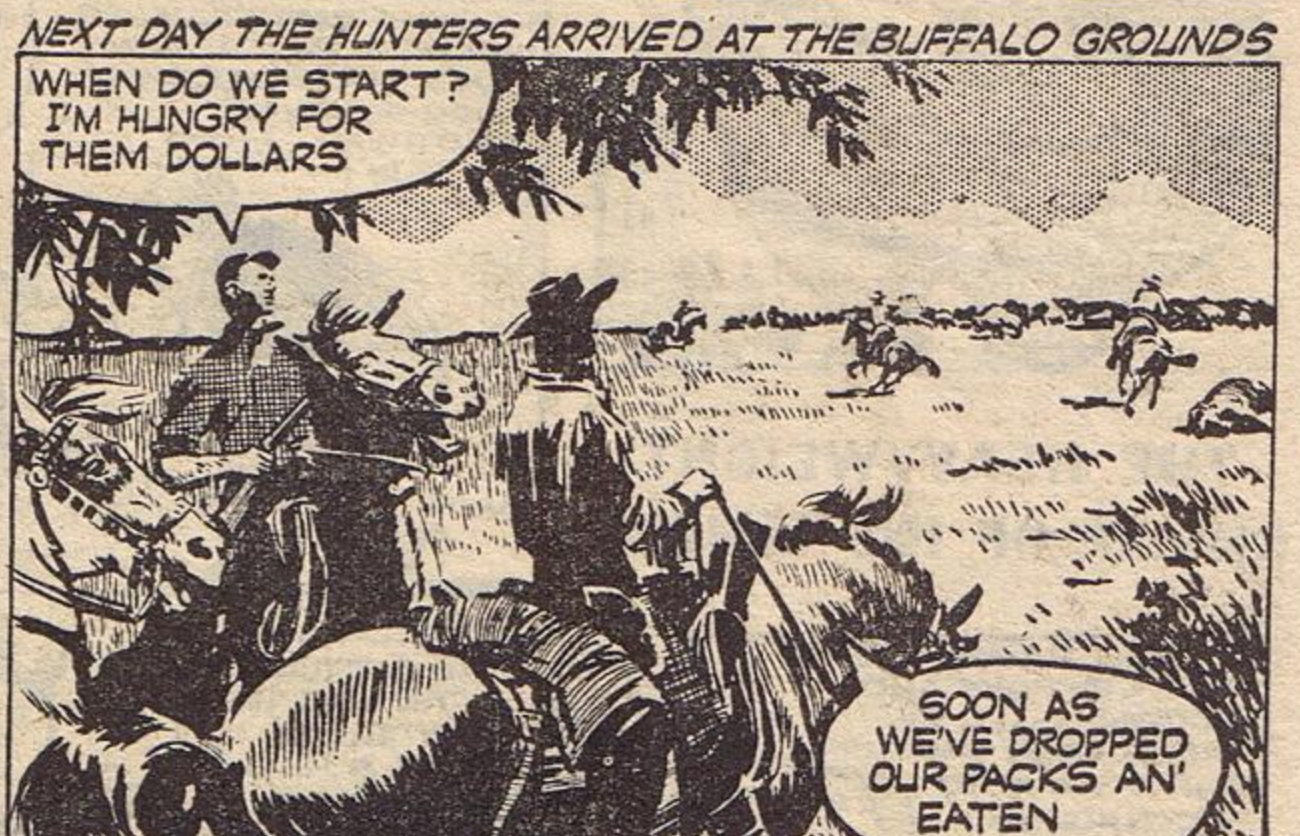
HECK! LET'S GET HIM BURIED! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO



MAYBE I DID SPARK UP A LITTLE, CHALK. I WAS SORE, THAT'S ALL

DON'T TALK! JUST DON'T TALK!

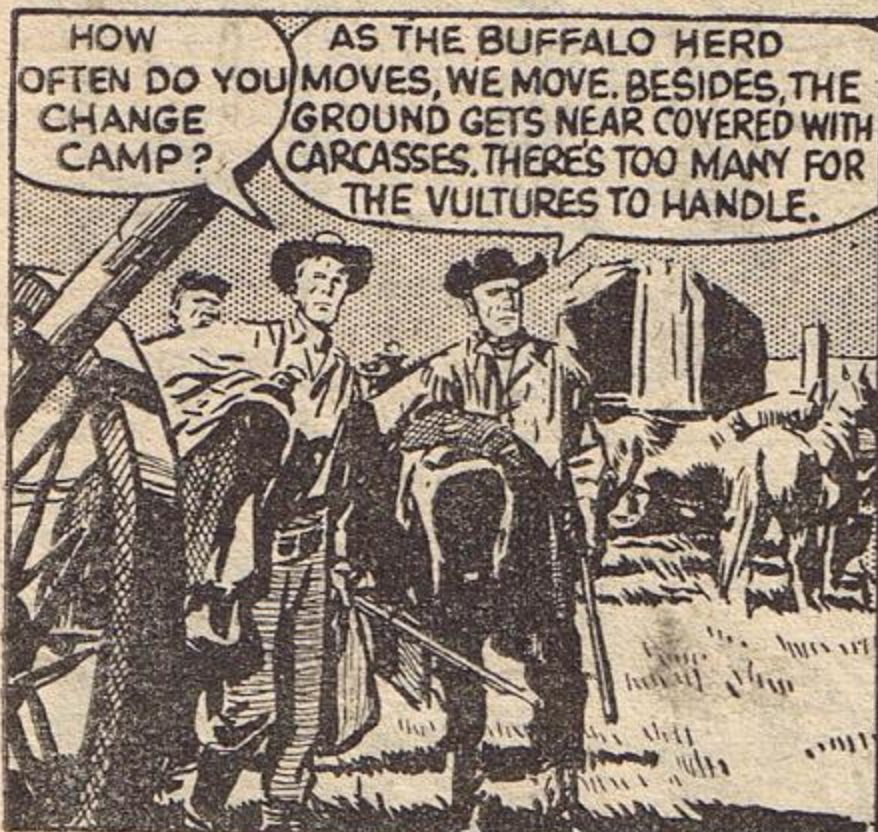
BUT THE SEEDS HAD BEEN PLANTED. MCTIGUE WAS SUSPICIOUS OF MARRIOTT, AND MCTIGUE NEVER FORGOT



NEXT DAY THE HUNTERS ARRIVED AT THE BUFFALO GROUNDS

WHEN DO WE START? I'M HUNGRY FOR THEM DOLLARS

SOON AS WE'VE DROPPED OUR PACKS AN' EATEN



HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHANGE CAMP?

AS THE BUFFALO HERD MOVES, WE MOVE. BESIDES, THE GROUND GETS NEAR COVERED WITH CARCASSES. THERE'S TOO MANY FOR THE VULTURES TO HANDLE.

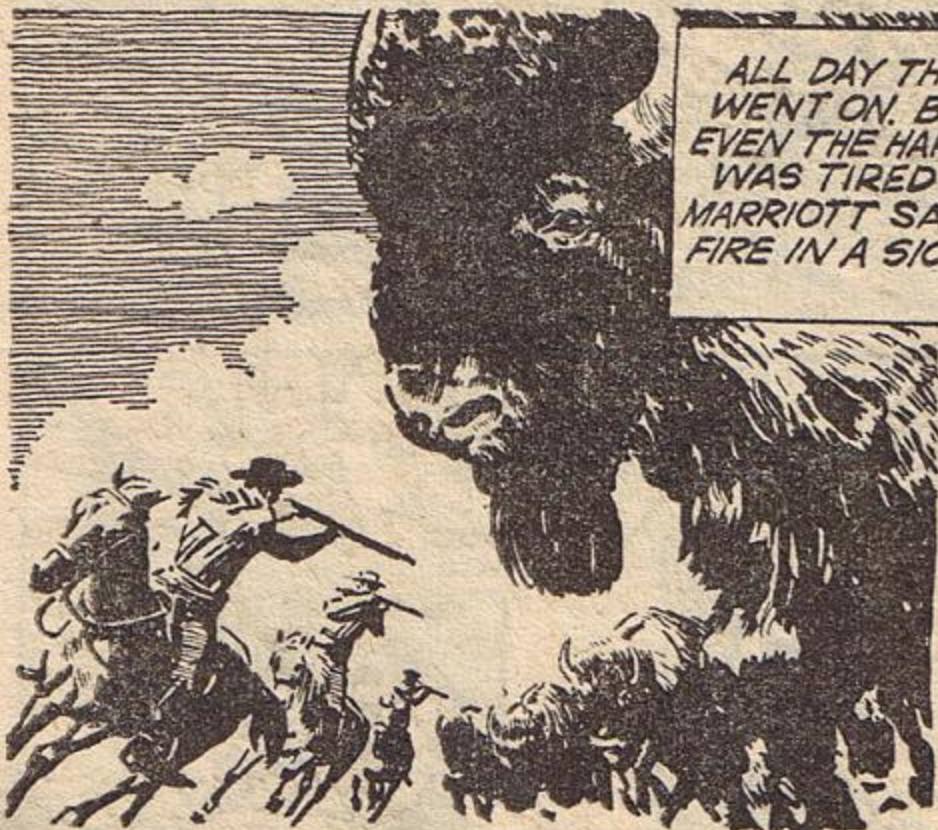


I THOUGHT WE WERE ONLY TO KILL ENOUGH FOR THE RAILROAD GANGS.

THAT'S ONLY A SIDELINE. WE CAN KILL ENOUGH IN A DAY TO FEED THE GANG FOR A MONTH. IT'S THE HIDES WE'RE AFTER!



NEARBY WAS ONE OF THE GREAT HERDS WHICH GRAZED THE PLAINS. YEARS OF HUNTING BY INDIANS, TOURISTS AND DOLLAR-CRAZY HIDE-HUNTERS HAD SCARCELY THINNED THEM.



ALL DAY THE SLAUGHTER WENT ON. BY NIGHTFALL EVEN THE HARDENED MCTIGUE WAS TIRED OF HUNTING. MARRIOTT SAT BY THE CAMP-FIRE IN A SICKENED DAZE



MY GOLDARNED SHOULDER! THEM SHARPS GUNS GOT A KICK LIKE A LEAD-MULE

IT'LL HARDEN UP IN TIME



WHERE YOU GOIN', MATT?

I GUESS I'LL WALK AROUND FOR AWHILE



AIN'T NOTHIN' IN KILLIN' BUFFALO MATT'LL GET USED TO IT

I KNOW HIS TROUBLE. MARRIOTT'S GONE SOLE ON THIS GAME ALREADY. YOU'LL SEE

WELL, I'M TURNIN' IN



THE PAY'S GOOD, MATT. DURN IT, WHERE ELSE CAN YOU PICK UP A HUNDRED BUCKS A DAY JUST FOR--?

DOLLARS! MONEY! WELL, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF BUFFALO-KILLIN'. I'M GETTIN' OUT!



WELL, WHEN DO WE START?

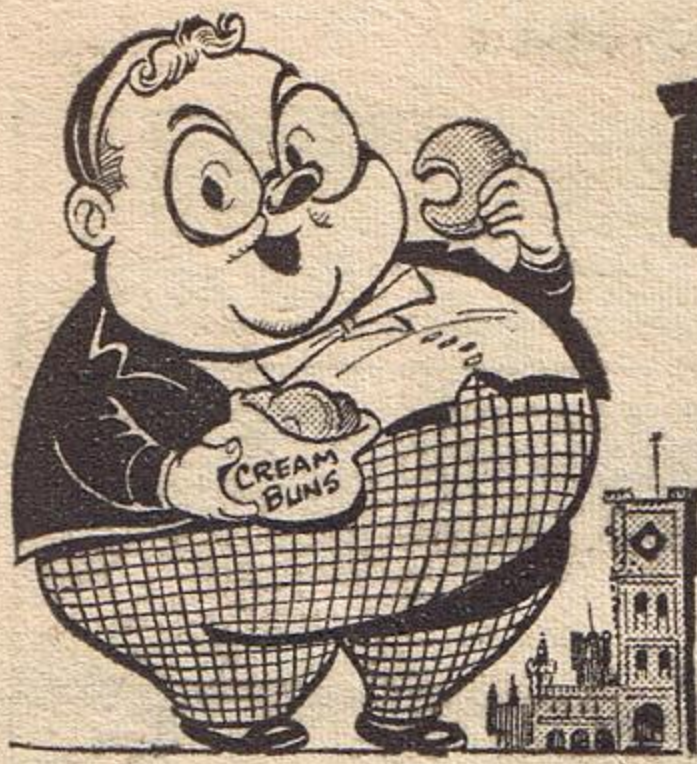


MCTIGUE HAD OVERHEARD MARRIOTT AND HORN MAKING THEIR DECISION TO QUIT

SO YOU'RE QUITTIN', EH? THIS LIFE TOO TOUGH FOR YOU, MEBBE?

YOU COULD CALL IT THAT. I'M SORRY, CHALK - BUT I GOT TO DO IT

Don't miss the continuation of this super Western story in next Wednesday's **KNOCKOUT!**



BILLY BUNTER



THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHUMP OF HIS SCHOOL



BUNTER'S SISTER BESSIE WAS MAD ON INDIAN STORIES!
BAH! HARK AT HER READING THAT SILLY INDIAN RUBBISH! WHY CAN'T SHE OFFER HER POOR STARVING BROTHER A BUN?
~ AND BIG CHIEF SITTING BULL STOOD UP AND CRIED, "BEWARE THE VENGEANCE OF THE INDIANS!"



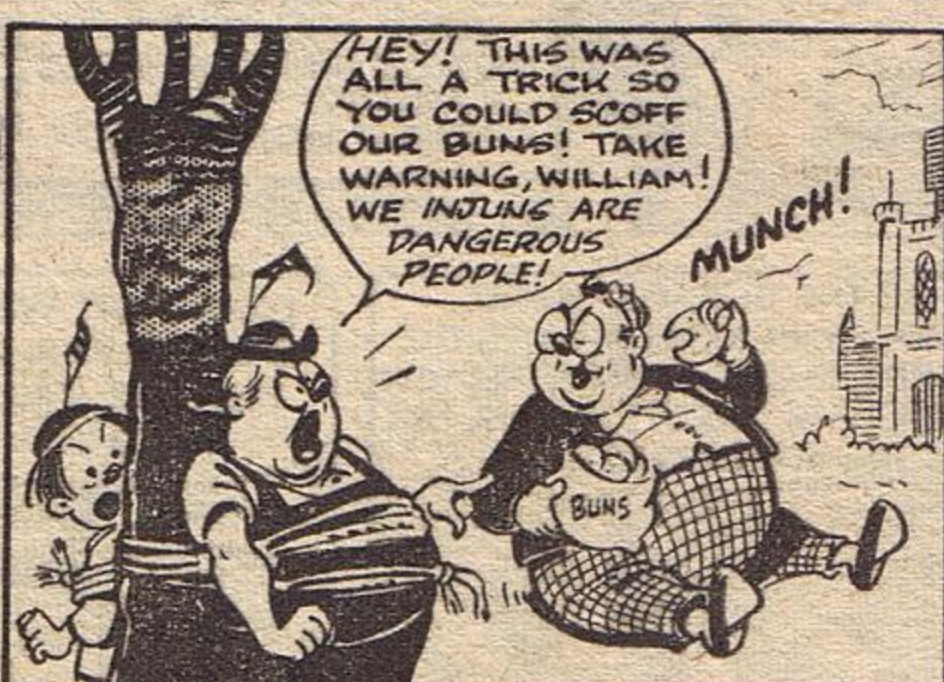
NEVER MIND ABOUT YOUR SOPPY INDIAN VENGEANCE! I WANT A BUN!
LEGGO, WILLIAM YOU BEAST! ~ THEY ARE FOR OUR WAR FEAST!



I KNOW BESSIE! LET'S PLAY COWBOYS AND INDIANS! ~ I'LL BE THE COWBOY SHERIFF AND I HAVE TO CAPTURE YOU INDIANS ~
SOUNDS JOLLY EXCITING!



NOW I'VE CAPTURED YOU I TIE YOU TWO UP TO A TREE! JUST LIKE A REAL WESTERN ISN'T IT, BESSIE?
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



HEY! THIS WAS ALL A TRICK SO YOU COULD SCOFF OUR BUNS! TAKE WARNING, WILLIAM! WE INJUNS ARE DANGEROUS PEOPLE!
MUNCH!



YAH! I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU SOPPY INJUNS! HEE! HEE!



GR! WILLIAM WILL SUFFER FOR THIS! INJUNS VOW HEAP BIG VENGEANCE ON FAT PALEFACE BUN SNATCHER!



COO! COOK IS GIVING OLD WHARTON A FEED OF JAM TARTS FOR SAWING A FEW LOGS!
ALL FOR YOU, WHARTON!



I SAY, COOK! I'LL SAW UP SOME LOGS FOR YOU IF YOU GIVE ME SOME CAKES!
NICE BOY!



SAW THAT OLD TREE UP INTO LOGS AND I'LL GIVE YOU SOME CAKES!
THAT?



I SAY! THIS IS A BIT THICK! I'LL BE JOLLY GLAD WHEN I'VE GOT THROUGH THIS BEASTLY JOB! PHEW!
SKR-R!



PHOO! FINISHED AT LAST! NOW TO CLAIM MY CAKES FROM COOK!
PILE 'EM BACK ON THE STUMP, QUICK!



I'VE COME FOR MY CAKES! I'VE SAWN THAT OLD TREE INTO LOVELY LOGS FOR YOU, COOKIE!
LET ME SEE FIRST!



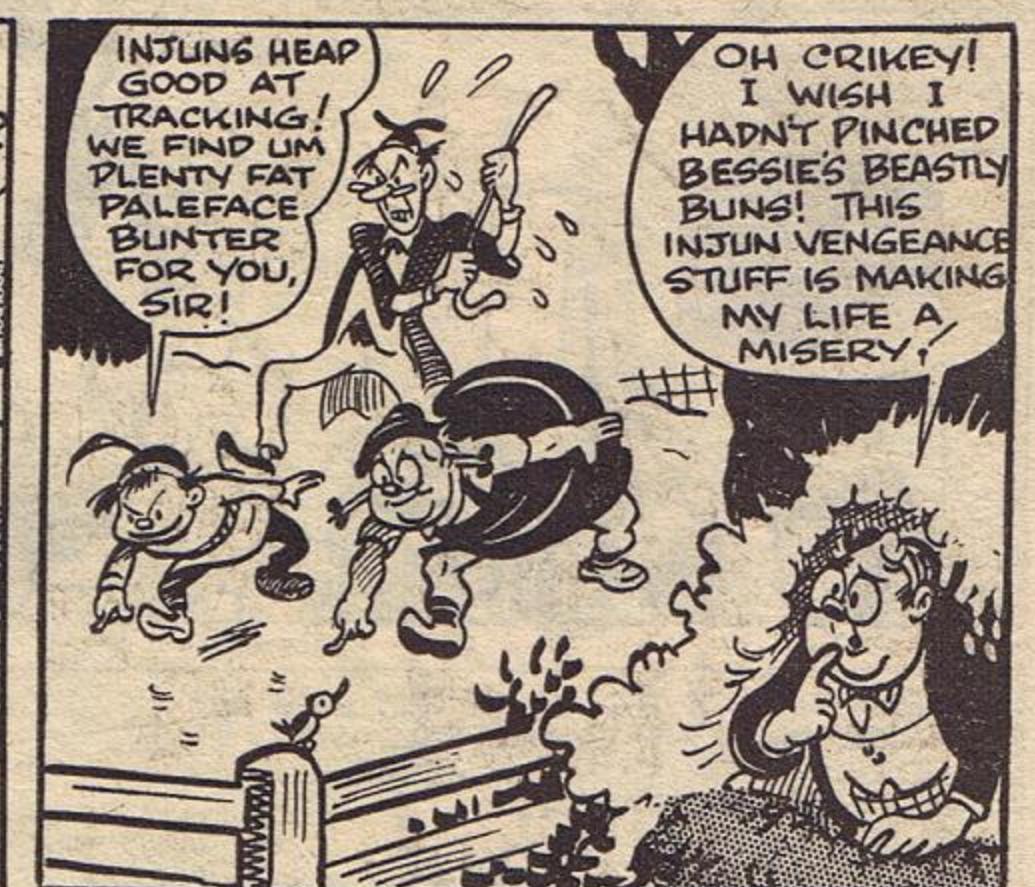
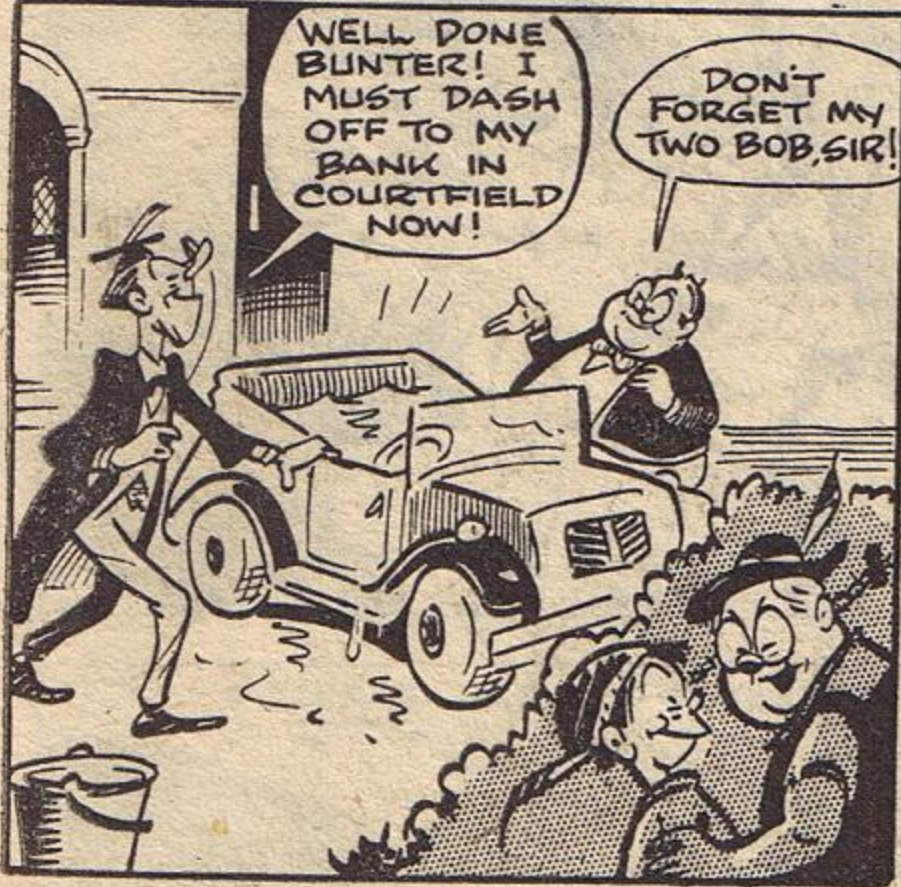
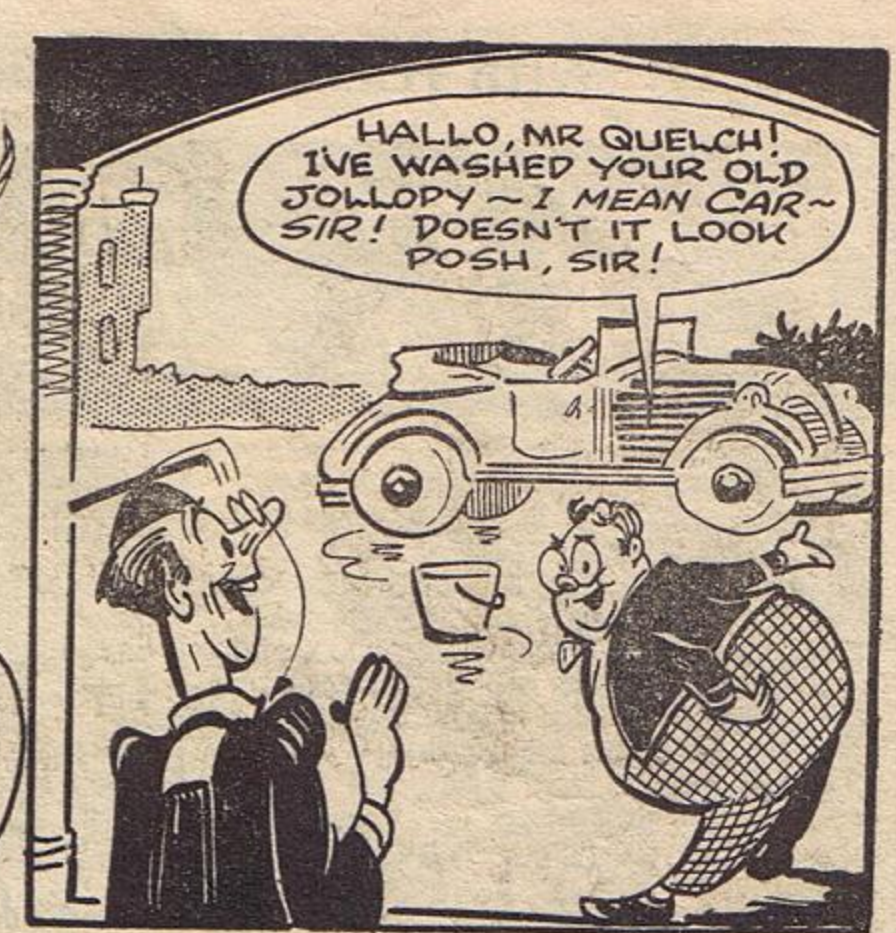
WHY, YOU ARTFUL DODGER! YOU HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED THE JOB!
OW! HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?



HEE! HEE! WOULDN'T HE LIKE TO KNOW!
COO! THERE'S SOME TRICKERY GOING ON SOMEWHERE!



MUNCH! MUNCH! WE HAVEN'T FINISHED WITH BILLY YET, HAVE WE?
BUNTER, WASH MY CAR DOWN AND I WILL GIVE YOU TWO SHILLINGS IF YOU MAKE A GOOD JOB OF IT!



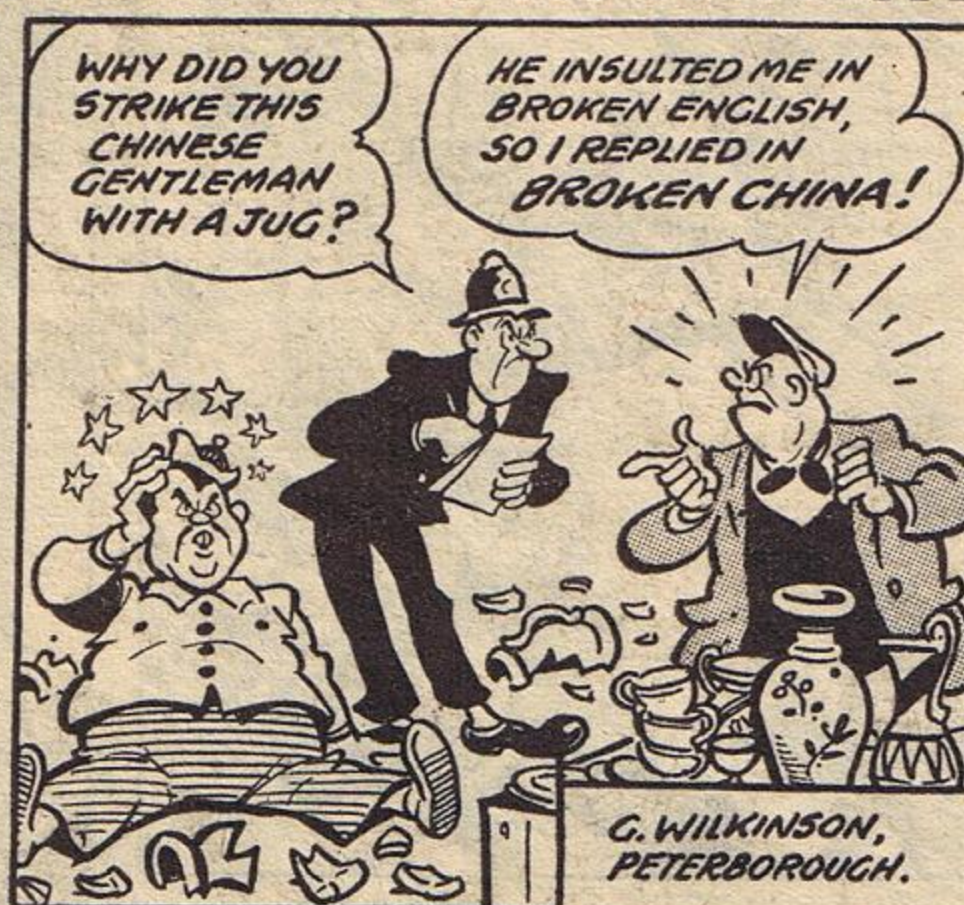
Take another laugh-lesson from the fattest schoolboy on earth in next week's **KNOCKOUT!**

BILLY BUNTER'S SIX OF THE BEST

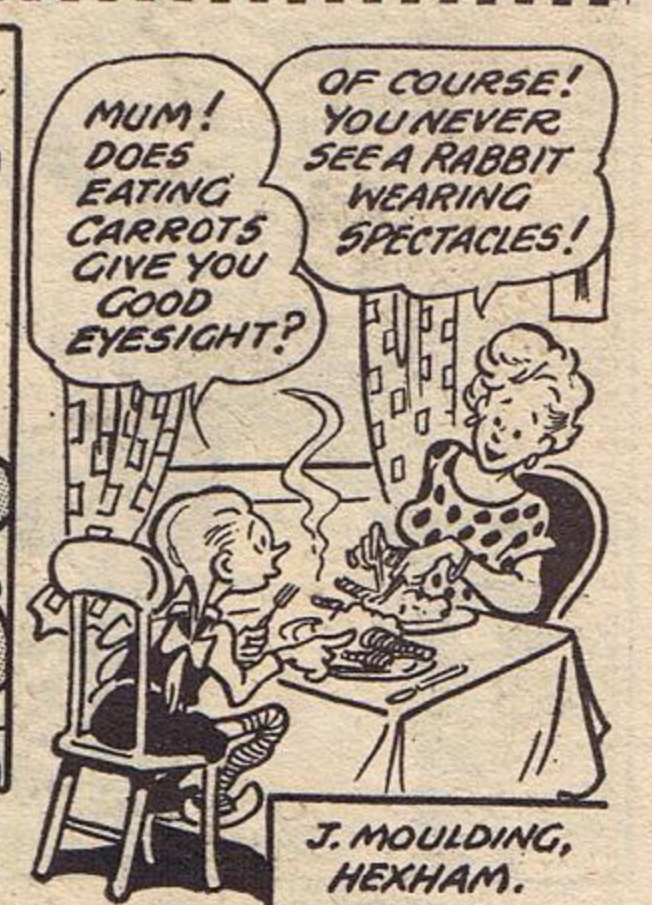
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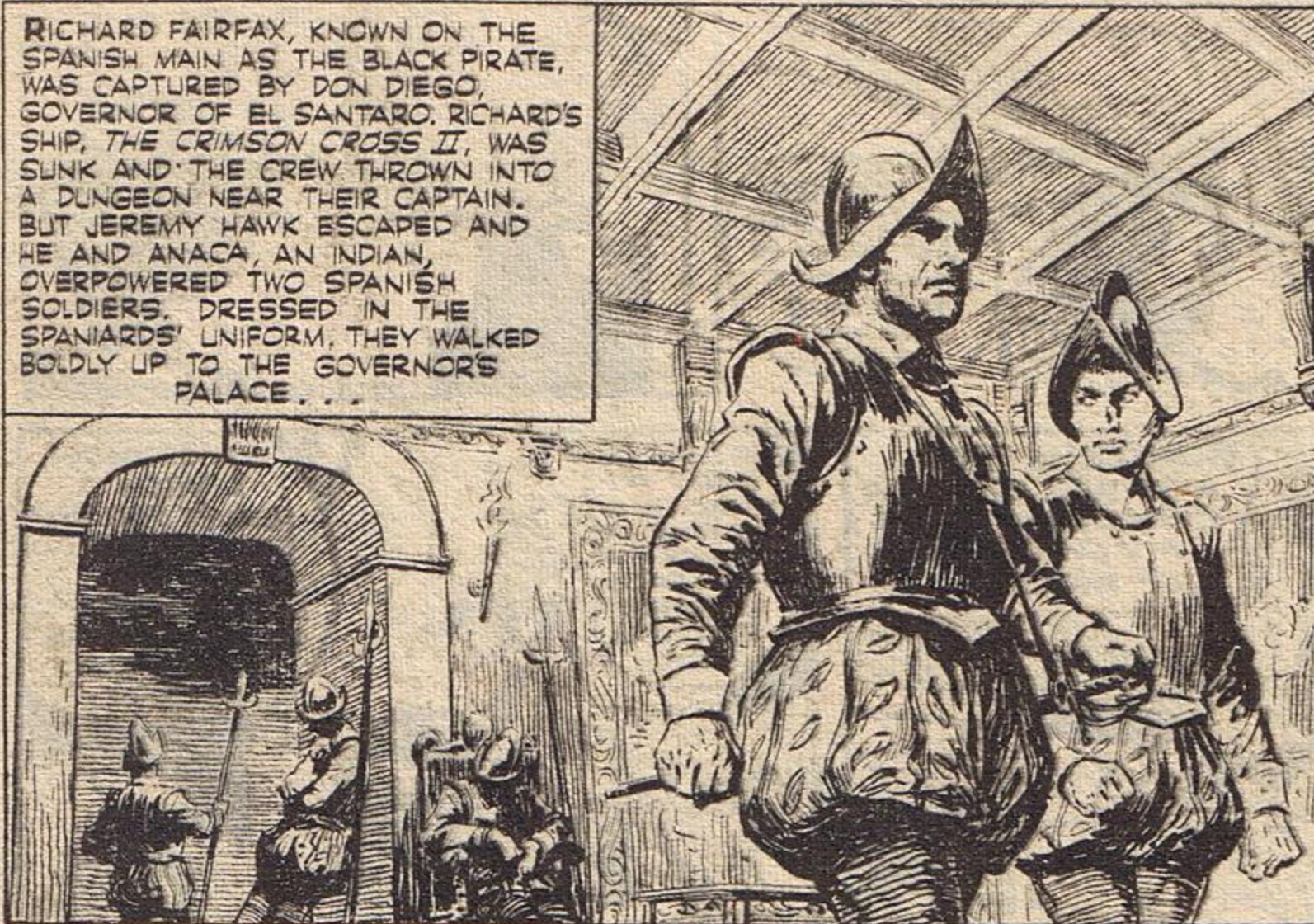
Write your joke on a postcard, with your full name and address, add the names of your two favourite stories in KNOCKOUT, and attach this coupon

BILLY BUNTER'S SIX OF THE BEST

YOU, TOO, MAY WIN A TUCK-BOX IF YOU SEND US YOUR BEST JOKES! HAVE A GO!

THEY WENT TO THE DUNGEONS!

RICHARD FAIRFAX, KNOWN ON THE SPANISH MAIN AS THE BLACK PIRATE, WAS CAPTURED BY DON DIEGO, GOVERNOR OF EL SANTARO. RICHARD'S SHIP, THE CRIMSON CROSS II, WAS SUNK AND THE CREW THROWN INTO A DUNGEON NEAR THEIR CAPTAIN. BUT JEREMY HAWK ESCAPED AND HE AND ANACA, AN INDIAN, OVERPOWERED TWO SPANISH SOLDIERS, DRESSED IN THE SPANIARDS' UNIFORM, THEY WALKED BOLDLY UP TO THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE...



"QUICK!" HISSED JEREMY. "TO THE DUNGEONS. IF THE GUARDS HAVE THE KEYS, WE WILL FREE THE CAPTAIN AND OUR LADS BEFORE THE SCURVY DONS REALISE WHAT IS HAPPENING!" TWO SENTRY'S STOOD GUARD JUST INSIDE THE STONE ARCH LEADING TO THE DUNGEONS AND FORBADE THEM ENTRANCE...



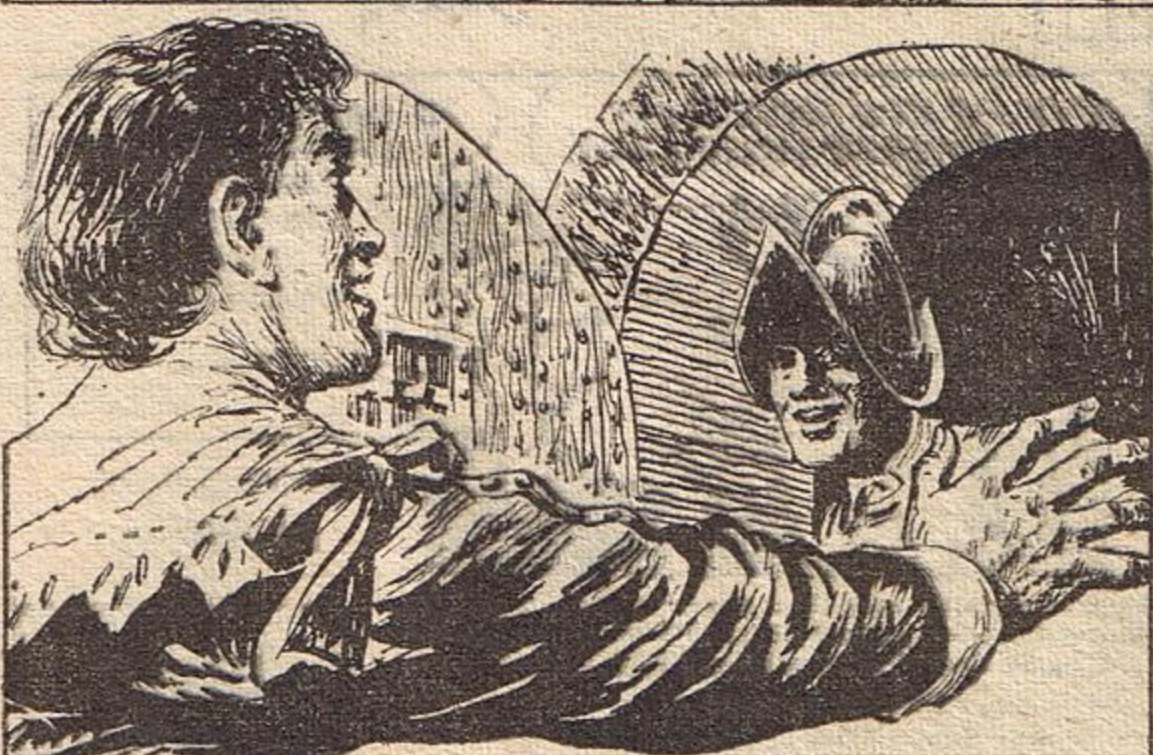
JEREMY HAWK'S FIST SHOT OUT LIKE A RAMROD AND ONE GUARD FELL WITH A MOAN. ANACA FLUNG HIMSELF ON THE OTHER SPANIARD AND DRAGGED HIM TO THE GROUND...



LUCKILY, NOBODY SEEMED TO HAVE HEARD THE SHORT SWIFT FIGHT AND JEREMY SNATCHED THE KEYS FROM THE BELT OF THE UNCONSCIOUS GUARD. THEN WITH ANACA BY HIS SIDE, HE RAN DOWN THE STONE STEPS TO THE DANK DUNGEONS BELOW.



MEANWHILE, ANACA HAD UNLOCKED THE DOOR OF THE BIG CELL AND THE CREW OF THE CRIMSON CROSS II CAME RUSHING OUT. "BY NEPTUNE!" RUMBLED A BIG DEVON SAILOR, "I NEVER THOUGHT TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN!" "AND LOOK!" CRIED ANOTHER SAILOR. "THE CAPTAIN STILL LIVES... AND JEREMY HAWK!"



RICHARD FAIRFAX GASPED WITH SURPRISE AS HIS CELL DOOR WAS FLUNG OPEN AND THE BURLY FIGURE OF JEREMY HAWK STOOD THERE, HIS BEAMING FACE FRAMED IN A STEEL SPANISH HELMET. "COME, CAPTAIN, THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!" CRIED JEREMY. "THE SPANIARDS ARE STILL CELEBRATING THEIR VICTORY... WITH LUCK IT'LL BE SHORT LIVED".



RICHARD QUICKLY TOLD THEM TO BE QUIET LEST THEY AROUSE THE SPANIARDS ABOVE. "THROW THE GUARDS INTO A DUNGEON AND FOLLOW ME, LADS," HE SAID. "I STILL HAVE TO DRAG THE TRUTH FROM THE GOVERNOR, DON DIEGO. FOR I DO NOT YET KNOW IF HE WAS THE FOUL VILLAIN WHO SLEW MY FATHER!"



THERE WAS AN ARMOURY AT THE SIDE OF THE GREAT HALL AND THE SAILORS SWIFTLY ARMED THEMSELVES WITH SWORDS AND PISTOLS. THEN RICHARD LED THEM AT A RUSH FOR THE UPPER FLOOR...



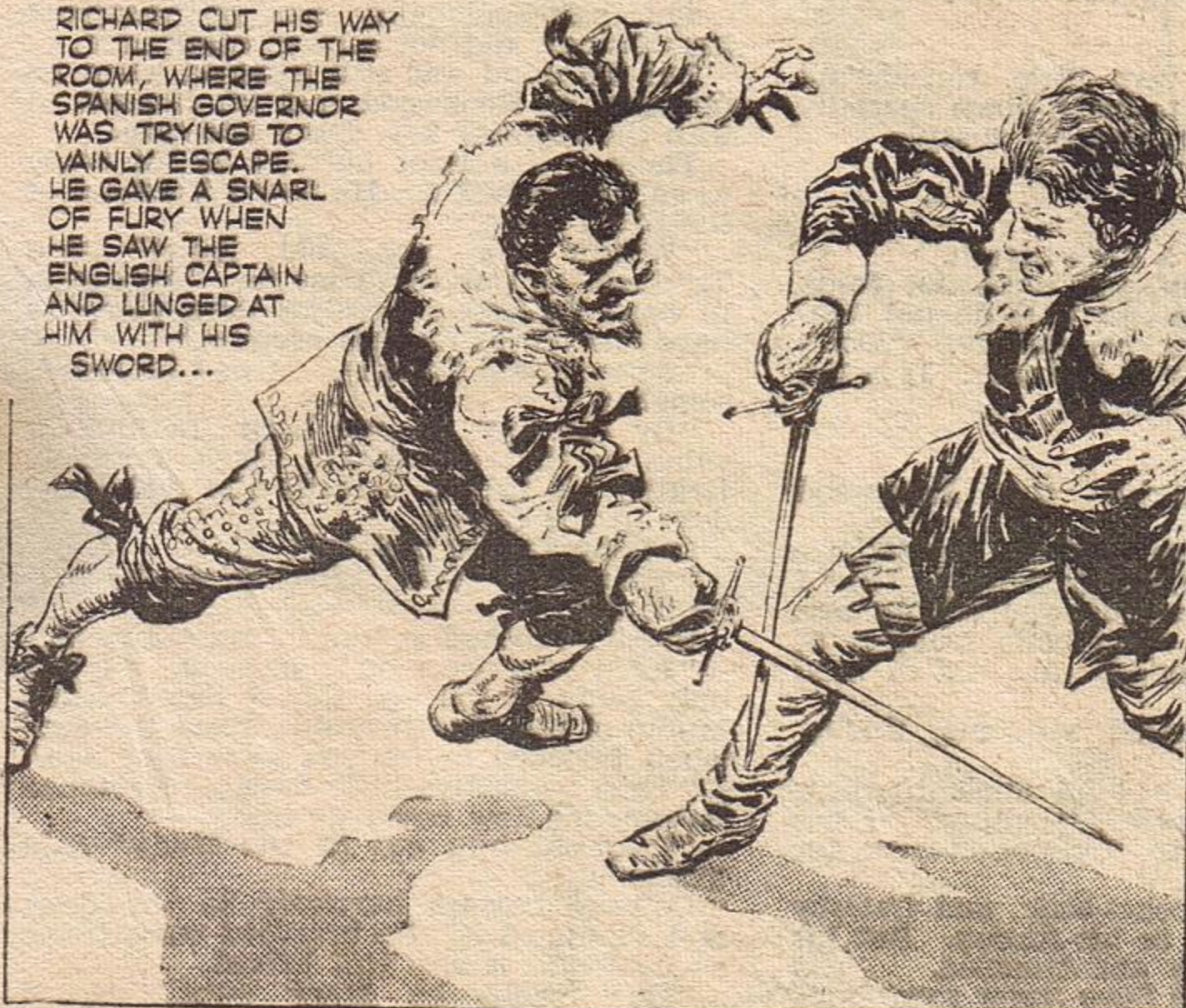
"THE PRISONERS! THEY'VE ESCAPED!" SHRILLED A STARTLED SPANISH OFFICER. "CALL OUT THE GUARD! CALL OUT THE GUARD!" BUT A GROUP OF RICHARD'S MEN HAD ALREADY SILENCED THE GUARD BELOW AND THE SPANIARDS ON THE UPPER LANDING WERE SWEEPED ASIDE.



THE SPANISH GOVERNOR OF EL SANTARO HAD BEEN CELEBRATING WITH HIS OFFICERS WHEN RICHARD AND HIS MEN SURGED IN. A WILD BATTLE THEN TOOK PLACE IN THAT LAVISHLY APPOINTED DINING ROOM... A BATTLE IN WHICH NO QUARTER WAS ASKED... AND NONE GIVEN!



RICHARD CUT HIS WAY TO THE END OF THE ROOM, WHERE THE SPANISH GOVERNOR WAS TRYING TO VAINLY ESCAPE. HE GAVE A SNARL OF FURY WHEN HE SAW THE ENGLISH CAPTAIN AND LUNGED AT HIM WITH HIS SWORD...



THREE SWEEPING CUTS FROM HIS GLITTERING SWORD HAD DON DIEGO AT RICHARD FAIRFAX'S MERCY. WITH THE NEEDLE-SHARP SWORD POINT AT HIS QUIVERING THROAT, THE GOVERNOR BACKED AGAINST THE WALL, HIS EYES BULGING IN TERROR. "NOW, YOU DOG," GRITTED THE BLACK PIRATE. "THE TRUTH... ARE YOU THE BRUTE WHO KILLED MY FATHER AND SANK HIS SHIP, CRIMSON CROSS THE FIRST? SPEAK, CURSE YOU!"

Richard Fairfax has the advantage, but will his enemy speak? Read on in **KNOCKOUT!**

THE FIGHTING FOUR

By Owen Conquest

George Bulkeley, the popular captain of Rookwood, had left the school under a cloud of disgrace. His father had been arrested on a charge of stealing valuable bonds worth twenty thousand pounds from the safe of the firm—a firm whose partner was James Catesby, uncle of a Rookwood Sixth Former.

Jimmy Silver and his chums had been unwilling witnesses of a meeting between Catesby and his uncle shortly before disgrace had fallen upon Bulkeley. And they had seen James Catesby hand a package of "very important papers" to his nephew, asking him to lock them up in a safe place at Rookwood.

Tubby Muffin suspected Catesby of having food locked up in the desk in his study, and was caught by another Sixth Former in the act of trying to open it, while Catesby was out keeping a secret appointment. (Now read on.)

DARK DOUBTS.

"WELL, Stephen?"

Mr. James Catesby halted on the quiet country road and removed the cigar from his mouth, regarding his nephew with a somewhat curious look.

There was a troubled expression on the face of Catesby, the Rookwood Sixth Former.

"You wrote to say you wished to see me, Stephen," continued the City gentleman. "I have not had time to come down before. I have been rather busy, owing to the unfortunate happenings at the firm."

"I understand that, Uncle," said the Sixth Former uneasily. "But why couldn't you come to Rookwood to see me as you used to do? Why did you say you'd meet me out here?"

"There are reasons, Stephen, why I do not wish to visit you at Rookwood at present."

"Is it anything to do with the bundle of papers you gave me to mind for you the other week, Uncle?" Catesby asked.

Mr. Catesby looked very sharply at his nephew.

"Hush!" he muttered, glancing about him swiftly.

"There's nobody to hear us here," said Catesby.

Uncle and nephew had stopped in the dusky lane, a little distance out of Coombe.

"You cannot be too careful, my boy. A great deal depends upon it."

"You have never told me what that bundle contains, Uncle."

"Important legal papers," said Mr. Catesby.

"Yes. But—but—"

"My dear nephew, do not trouble your mind about them," said Mr. Catesby. "Is there anything else you wish to ask me?"

Stephen Catesby was silent, but it was evident he was troubled.

The elder man's sharp eyes narrowed as he watched his nephew's face in the dusk.

"I hear Bulkeley has left Rookwood!" he said suddenly.

"Yes. His father—"

"Mr. Bulkeley is on bail," interjected Mr. Catesby, "but under close supervision, I believe."

"I understand that you believe in his innocence, Uncle?"

"I try to do so, at all events, Stephen. I feel bound to defend my partner, until he is actually condemned by the law."

"I've only heard imperfectly what happened, Uncle," said Catesby, after an awkward pause. "As I heard it, a number of bonds were missing."

"About twenty thousand pounds' worth, Stephen. A large sum."

"Why should Mr. Bulkeley be suspected of taking them?"

"Really, there seems little room for doubt," replied his uncle. "Mr. Bulkeley had the key to the safe."

"But you are the junior partner, Uncle; you had a key, too?"

"Quite so. But it happens I was on business in Scotland at the time, and when I left I placed my key in Mr. Bulkeley's charge for safety," explained Mr. Catesby. "It was during my absence in Scotland that the premises were entered, and the safe opened with a key and the bonds taken. The night watchman was attacked from behind, and knocked senseless; and a heavy walking-stick was found lying near the safe the next morning. It was Mr. Bulkeley's stick! Apparently he had laid it down when opening the safe, and had forgotten to take it up afterwards. However, I trust he may be able to clear himself."

"And the bonds have not been found?"

"No. He protests his innocence, of course. I sincerely hope he will be able to prove it."

There was a slight inflection of mockery in Mr. Catesby's tone, which made his nephew look at him quickly.



There was a suspicion lurking in the back of his mind which filled him with fear!



Catesby's lips opened again, but closed. There was something weighing on his mind, but it was something to which he did not care to give utterance.

His uncle regarded him closely through the smoke-wreaths of the cigar.

"Have you nothing else to say to me, Stephen?"

"N-no."

"You have said very little, considering that you asked me to come down specially to see you," said Mr. Catesby sharply.

"I—I—"

"Well?"

"Nothing."

Mr. Catesby drew a deep breath.

"My dear Stephen, you must not think too much about matters that do not concern you," he went on quietly. "Don't worry over the affair in any way. It is not your business, you know."

"I don't; only—"

"Only what?"

"Nothing," muttered the Rookwood prefect.

"Really, you are rather mysterious, Stephen," said Mr. Catesby sharply. "But I will not ask you to explain yourself further. Perhaps you have some little troubles of your own on your mind. Are you in need of money?"

"That's an old need with me, Uncle," Catesby confessed.

"Well, you have a kind uncle to draw upon," said Mr. Catesby, laughing. "I put a five-pound note in my pocket-book for you, Stephen."

He opened the pocket-book, and Catesby took the crisp fiver in his fingers. But his face was still heavy and troubled.

"By the way, you have never mentioned those papers to anyone?" asked Mr. Catesby carelessly.

"You told me not to, Uncle."

"Where do you keep them?"

"In the old mahogany desk in my study."

"And the key?"

"I wear it on my watch chain."

"Good! You cannot be too careful. If those papers were lost, I might get the worst of a law suit on a future occasion."

"Oh!" said Catesby, his face clearing a little. "They are really legal papers, then—something to do with a law suit?"

"Precisely."

"I should think they would be safer in a bank than in the desk in my study at Rookwood, Uncle."

"I am the best judge of that, Stephen. In a few weeks I hope to be able to relieve you of the charge. Until then, keep the matter secret."

"I will, Uncle."

James Catesby looked at his watch.

"Now I will say goodbye. I have to take the next up train. Do not mention that I have visited you."

"Very well, Uncle."

They parted. The City gentleman hurrying back into the village.

Stephen Catesby made his way in the direction of Rookwood with a clouded brow. There was a thought—a suspicion—lurking in the back of his mind that filled him with

uneasiness, almost with fear.

He strove to dismiss it, but it would linger.

What were the papers that his uncle had handed him within twenty-four hours of the theft of the bonds in London?

Was it possible—

The bare possibility was so terrifying that Catesby did not care to think of it.

But his mind was still troubled when he returned to Rookwood and let himself in with the prefect's key at the side gate.

There was a light burning in his study when he reached it. He found Tresham of the Sixth there.

"Waitin' for you, old man!" said Tresham, as Catesby came in. "You seem to have forgotten that we were going to have the gloves on this evening."

"Sorry!" said Catesby. "I had forgotten, somehow."

"By the way, do you keep anything of value in that old desk?" asked Tresham, jerking his thumb towards the mahogany desk in the corner.

Catesby started violently.

"That—that desk! What do you mean?" he panted.

Tresham looked at him in astonishment.

"Keep your wool on!" he said. "I was only going to tell you that I found young Muffin of the Fourth nosing about the desk when I looked in for you some time ago."

"That inquisitive little beast!" exclaimed Catesby. "How could he know—"

"I kicked him out of the study," said Tresham.

Catesby crossed hurriedly to the desk, and examined it. He breathed more freely as he found it was still locked.

"How could he know what?" asked Tresham.

"Oh, nothing! I mean, what could he

have been nosing about that desk for?" said Catesby, with forced carelessness. "There's nothing of value in it."

"I thought I'd mention it in case there was," said Tresham with a smile. "Now, if you're ready, we'll go down to the gym."

Stephen Catesby left the study with his friend, his brow darker than ever.

The prying Tubby Muffin haunted him. What did Muffin know? What could he know? What could he suspect?

THE ST. JIM'S MATCH.

JIMMY SILVER and Co. started for Big Side immediately after dinner on the following day.

They were looking very serious. Though the First Eleven match was not in their eyes, so important as their own matches, they still admitted that it was a matter of importance.

And they had no desire to see Rookwood First licked by Kildare and his merry men from St. Jim's. But that was what they fully expected to see.

How could a team composed almost entirely of Moderns beat any lot that could play footer at all?

The view taken by the Moderns was quite different.

Tommy Dodd and Co., the heroes of the Modern Fourth, opined that Rookwood was in for a successful season, now that the Modern side was really getting a chance in the games.

"Hello, Doddy!" said Jimmy Silver, as he arrived on the footer ground and found the Modern there. "Nice prospect for today—what!"

"First rate!" agreed Tommy Dodd.

"Faith, and we're going to see some footer entoirely!" said Tommy Doyle sturdily. "Real footer, I mean!"

"I don't think!" snapped Lovell.

"No need to tell us that, old scout," retorted Tommy Dodd quickly. "We know you don't think. You can't, in fact!"

"Look here, you cheeky Modern misfit!"

"Order!" said Kit Erroll, with a laugh. "Leave Tommy his opinion. He'll change it fast enough when the play begins."

"Here come St. Jim's!" said Mornington. "They look a rippin' lot!"

There was a cheer for the St. Jim's footballers.

They were a team that required the best men in Rookwood to be put into the field against them, and even the Moderns could hardly maintain that Knowles' eleven represented the best in Rookwood.

Knowles seemed to have no doubts, however. He was smiling and confident.

A victory over St. Jim's would certainly have been a great triumph for Cecil Knowles, and a proof of his contention that the Moderns had never been given a fair show under George Bulkeley's rule.

But it was a very great question whether he could win such a victory with his present team.

Knowles won the toss and elected to play against the slight wind which was blowing, obviously with the thought in mind that it would be better to have that advantage in the second half.

From the first whistle, the St. Jim's team attacked, their forwards moving with smooth precision and passing with a degree of accuracy which left Knowles and his team-mates standing.

There was a breathless hush over the

crowd; then a sudden tremendous yell as Kildare sped between the Rookwood backs and slammed the ball into the net far out of the leaping goalie's reach.

"Goal! One up to St. Jim's in the first minute!" groaned Lovell, turning to scowl at Tommy Dodd and Co. "What price our Modern skipper now!"

"Just a fluke, that's all," retorted Tommy Dodd, with a careless shrug. "Wait till old Knowles' men get really stuck into it!"

The Rookwood team were undaunted by this initial setback, and Knowles showed he was quite justified in including himself in the team.

He worked hard, and Jimmy Silver felt his hopes rise as he watched him. Angry as he was with Knowles, Jimmy could have tolerated his triumph if only he could have bagged a victory for Rookwood.

For the next thirty minutes Knowles attacked with real vigour and skill, well backed up by Frampton, Neville and Jones major, who had not resigned his place in

Tommy. "You're only jealous because the Moderns have got a square deal at last!"

"Square deal, my foot!" retorted Jimmy Silver hotly. "There's only four players in the team, and two of those are Classics—Neville and Jones major!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Lovell.

There was a threat of open war breaking out between the Fourth Formers, but the whistle went at that moment, and for the time being, a truce was called.

Unfortunately for Rookwood, the chill wind which had been blowing against them throughout the first half had faded to a mere light breeze, so they gained no advantage by the turn round.

Again the St. Jim's men swept into the attack. They forced a corner in the first five minutes, and when the ball sailed in from the flag, Kildare's head was there to meet it and send it spinning up into a corner of the goal.

"Four down!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "What a carve-up!"

The faces of the Rookwood crowd grew longer and longer. Even some of those who had voted for Knowles were beginning to have grave misgivings.

As for Knowles himself, his expression betrayed the anger burning inside him. In consequence of the setbacks, he now tended to hang on to the ball too long every time it came his way.

Neville and Jones major were "frozen out," and the Classics in the crowd lost all patience.

"Pass to Neville!" "Let Neville have a go!"

"Pass to Jones! He's on your side, Knowles—or didn't you know?"

Cecil Knowles flushed with rage, but he could not resist the appeal in which many of the Moderns were now joining.

The very next time Knowles gained possession of the ball he slammed it towards Neville. As a pass it was a pretty poor effort; too hard and too high. But Neville made the most of it.

With a mighty bound he managed to get his chest to the flying ball, and before the opposing St. Jim's centre-half could trap it, the eager Classical got his own boot to it and was away, racing off with it at his toes.

casting swift glances to right and left as he went.

He looked in vain for support. Knowles' "wonder boys" were not fast enough to respond to Neville's courageous effort. He was on his own.

"Go on, Neville! Show 'em how it's done!"

"Up, up, up, Rookwood! You've got 'em beat, Neville! On your own, boy! Shoot!"

The Classics' shouts thundered across the ground. Jimmy Silver and Co. were fairly hopping with excitement as they watched Neville slip smartly round the left back, and race on towards the St. Jim's goal.

Three more opponents were now belting after him, two of them rapidly closing the gap separating them from the lone attacker. But before they reached him, Neville's right boot connected with the ball in a tremendous kick.

The fading crimson sunlight of a winter's afternoon glistened on the flying leather, momentarily transforming it into

(Continued on next page.)



Knowles' face was white with rage as he threw up the window. "Clear off!" he shouted. "By gad, I'll—I'll—I'll . . ." He choked with wrath.

Knowles' team after all. There was no doubting Knowles' ability, and there were moments when the Fighting Four found themselves yelling encouragement.

But four men don't make a team. The other players in the Rookwood side had been chosen in the main because they were Moderns—not for their footer prowess. And as the match proceeded it became more and more obvious that it was a weak side.

They lacked the cohesion of their opponents, and by half-time St. Jim's were three goals up.

"What a pack of wet fish!" snorted Lovell, with feeling, as they waited for the game to be resumed.

"Catesby plays as if he's got two left feet!" remarked Raby scornfully.

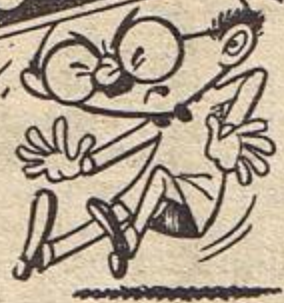
"What about Hoke, too?" scoffed Newcome. "The way he's been wandering about you can't tell whether he's left-half or goalie!"

Tommy Dodd and Co. were standing within ear-shot, and the acid comments made their ears burn.

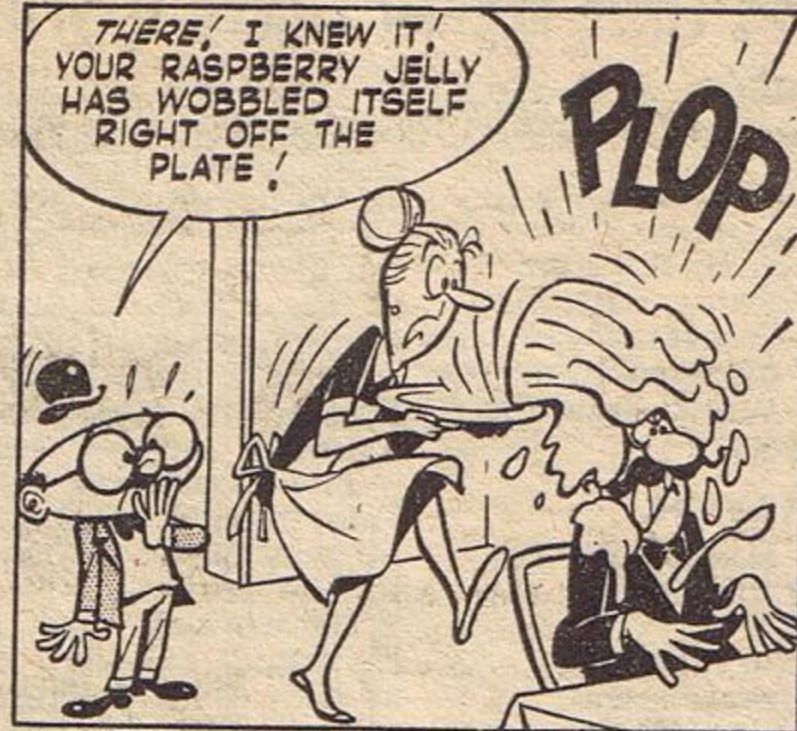
"Dry up, you Classical mugs!" hooted

PROFESSOR

KNOCKOUT

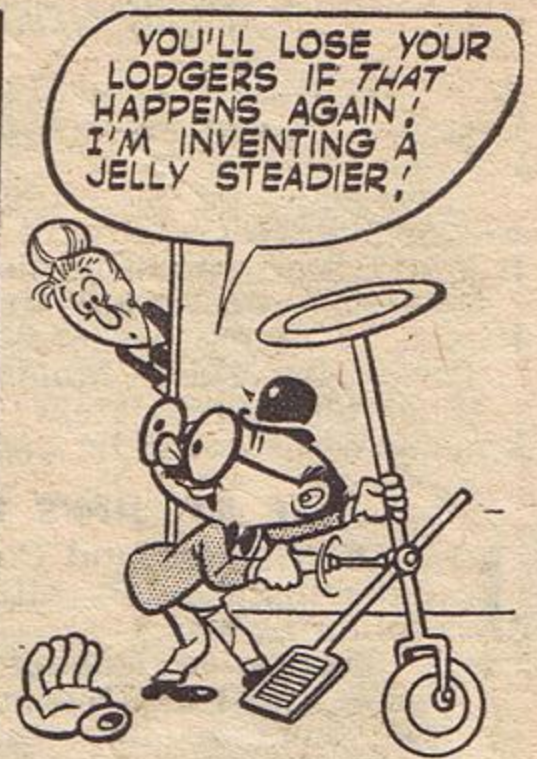


STEADY, MRS. MUDD! JELLIES ARE SUCH EXCITABLE WOBBLY THINGS!



THERE! I KNEW IT! YOUR RASPBERRY JELLY HAS WOBBLED ITSELF RIGHT OFF THE PLATE!

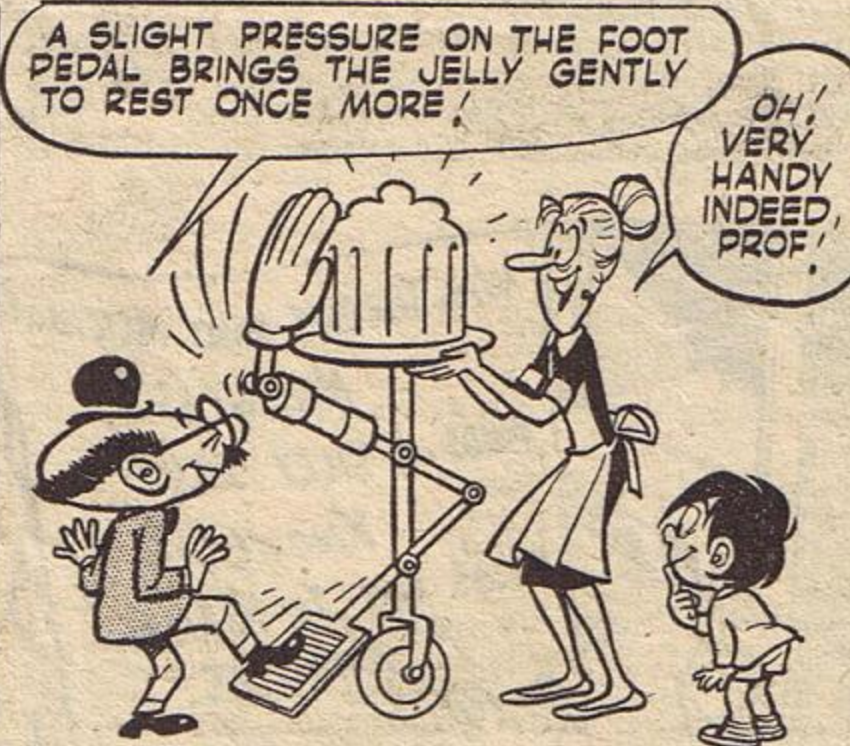
PLOP



YOU'LL LOSE YOUR LODGERS IF THAT HAPPENS AGAIN! I'M INVENTING A JELLY STEADIER!



ALL READY FOR A TRIAL RUN! OBSERVE, THE JELLY IS ALREADY STARTING TO WOBBLE DANGEROUSLY! BUT HAVE NO FEAR!



A SLIGHT PRESSURE ON THE FOOT PEDAL BRINGS THE JELLY GENTLY TO REST ONCE MORE!

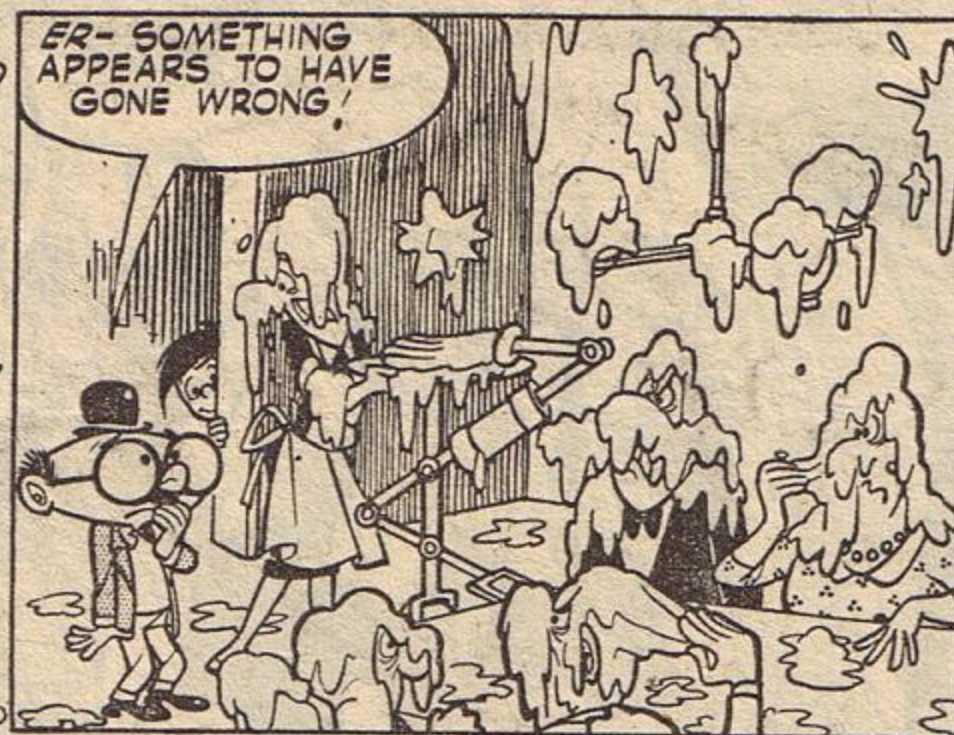
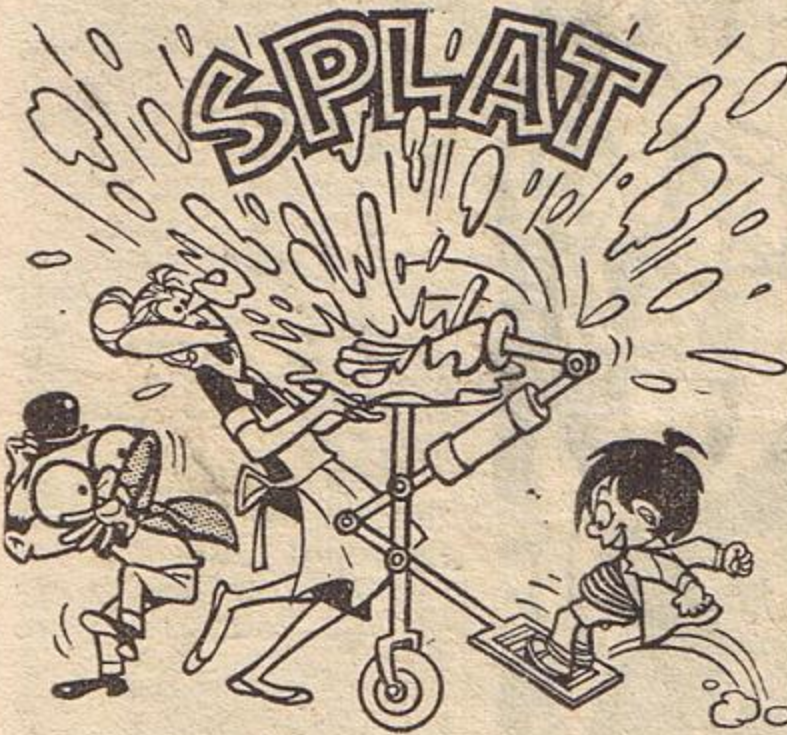
OH! VERY HANDY INDEED, PROF!



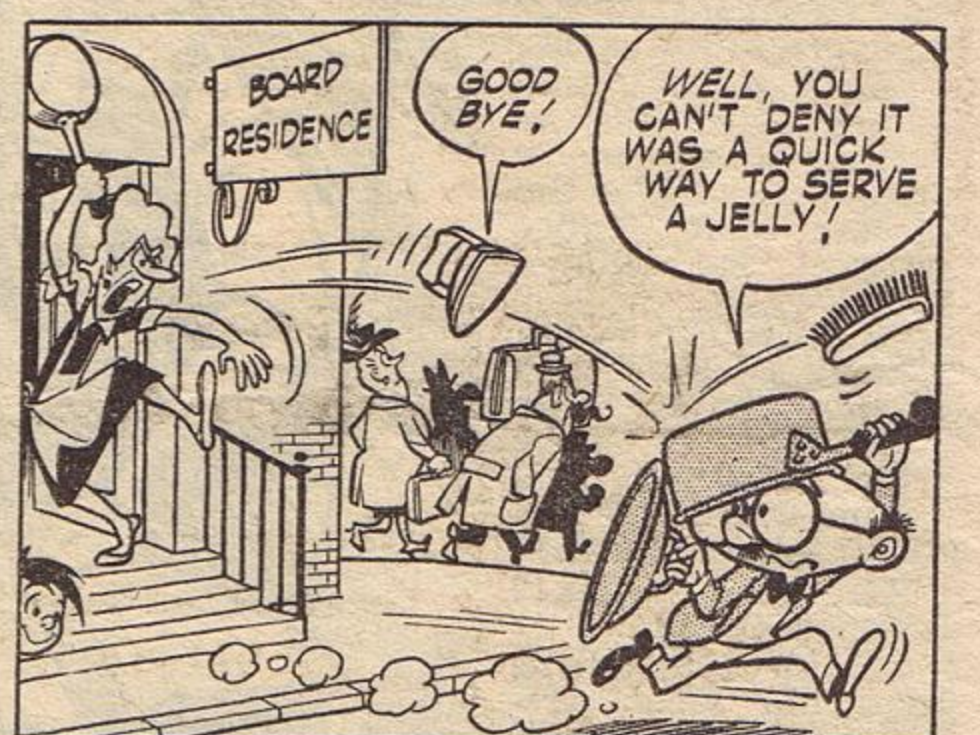
AH, THE JELLY HAS THE SHAKES AGAIN—NOW APPLY THE FOOT PEDAL—GENTLY!

SHAKE

DO HURRY WITH THE SWEET, MRS. MUDD!



ER—SOMETHING APPEARS TO HAVE GONE WRONG!



GOOD BYE!

WELL, YOU CAN'T DENY IT WAS A QUICK WAY TO SERVE A JELLY!

THE FIGHTING FOUR

(Continued from previous page.)

a fireball as it sped straight and true to its target.

The St. Jim's goalie made a desperate, flying leap. The fingers of his outflung right hand clawed frantically at the speeding ball, but to no avail.

Neville's shot was home!

And the shout which greeted his magnificent goal rang again and again across the playing-fields of Rookwood.

"Good old Neville!"

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

"Rookwood's got a player after all!"

Cecil Knowles' ears burned. Neville—his rival—was getting the applause. And he himself had earned nothing but ridicule, and criticism!

Before the final whistle blew, Kildare's men had put the ball into the Rookwood goal again, making the score five—one, and there was nothing Knowles and his men could do about it.

PLAIN ENGLISH!

BANG! Thump! Crash!

Knowles started.

He was alone in his study, in a gloomy mood. The sudden din from the dusky quadrangle startled him out of a very unpleasant reverie.

He stepped to the window and looked out. Then his glance became fixed, with surprise and rage.

Foremost among the crowd outside were the Fighting Four, of the Fourth.

They were supported by Oswald Flynn, Rawson, Mornington, Erroll—in fact, nearly all the Classical Fourth.

Smythie of the Shell was with them, with

several more Shell fellows, and a mob of Third Form fags.

And among them, too, a good many Modern juniors could be seen. It was not wholly a Classical demonstration.

The Fighting Four bore a banner aloft. It was made of a sheet stretched between two poles, and on the sheet words were daubed in paint in huge capitals.

Several fellows carried electric torches, directing their beams of light on the banner so that everybody could read it.

WHO THROWS AWAY MATCHES?

KNOWLES!

WHO'S A SILLY ASS?

KNOWLES!

WHO'S GOT TO RESIGN?

KNOWLES!

RESIGN! RESIGN! RESIGN!

Knowles ground his teeth as he read it, and his fists clenched.

This demonstration was one of the first results of his policy.

The seniors had not taken action yet, though doubtless they would do so!

But the juniors were not so slow to express their feelings.

Thump, thump, thump! Bang! Bang!!

Conroy was beating a tin can with a cricket stump, and Oswald was thumping a pair of saucepan-lids together in the style of cymbals.

The demonstrators intended to let all Rookwood know what was on. They did not mean to leave Knowles or anyone else in the dark as to their opinions!

Knowles' face was white with rage as he threw up the window.

"Resign! Resign! Resign!" roared the crowd.

"Clear off!" shouted Knowles. "By gad, I'll—I'll—I'll——" He choked with wrath.

Then he grabbed a cane from the table and rushed downstairs.

A yell greeted him as he tore out of the house, cane in hand.

"Yah!"

"Resign!"

Knowles lashed out with the cane in a blind fury.

"Yaroo!"

"Owch!"

"Collar him!"

Then followed an unprecedented scene.

The captain of Rookwood was seized. His cane was jerked from his grasp, and he was unceremoniously bumped on the ground.

He lay there gasping for breath, while the demonstrators marched away at last, confident that they had made their meaning quite clear!

"Ow, ow! Oooof!" gasped Knowles, as he sat up dazedly.

Catesby came and gave him a hand up.

"I—I—I'll smash them!" gasped Knowles, as he scrambled to his feet. "I'll—I'll——"

Ow! Groogh! Laying hands on the captain of the school, by gad! Ow! I'll—I'll——"

"Better come in," said Catesby.

Knowles gave him a savage look, but on second thoughts he decided that the advice was good. And he went in.

So far the exercise of authority had not brought much satisfaction to the new captain of Rookwood.

In the end study, on the Classical Side, the Fighting Four chuckled loud and long.

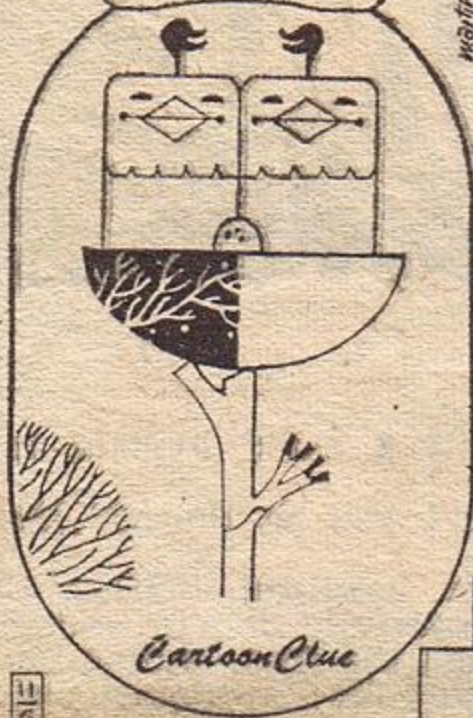
(Be sure to read the next instalment of this rollicking Rookwood story . . . another KNOCKOUT attraction!)

KNOCKOUT'S QUIZ ROUNDABOUT

Jumble

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

THIS WILL MAKE ANY NEST A HAPPY FAMILY HOME!



Cartoon Clue

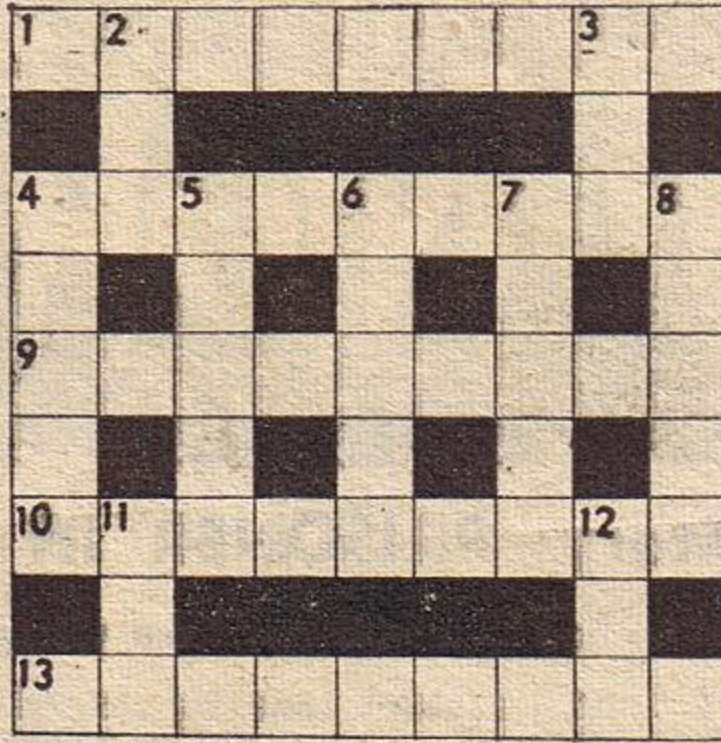
LICYOP	COURSE OF ACTION
TURNER	COME BACK
BENMUR	HOW MANY
DISTER	LONG STEP
DUPHLE	HELD UP
ANTIVIM	FOUND IN FOOD

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

Unscramble the six sets of letters, making a word of each jumble. Clues to the words are printed alongside each jumble. Print each word . . . one letter to a square . . . beneath each jumble. The letters you have printed in the CIRCLED squares will then spell the Surprise Answer if you write each CIRCLED letter in numerical order . . . that is to say, you write the letter in CIRCLE No. 1 first, and CIRCLED letter No. 2 next, and so on until you have the correct words of 5 and 4 letters in the Surprise Answer Space at the bottom.

(For solution see page 18.)

Roundabout's CROSSWORD



Clues Across.

1. Fighter 'planes.
4. Openings.
9. Windy aeroplane!
10. Carrier for wounded man.
13. Famous bomber.

Down.

2. Young dog.

Clues Across.

3. First woman.
4. Burnt trees!
5. Mistake.
6. "Oliver —" by Dickens.
7. Freshwater fish.
8. Weapon with a point.
11. Not coffee!
12. See with it!

(For solution see page 18.)

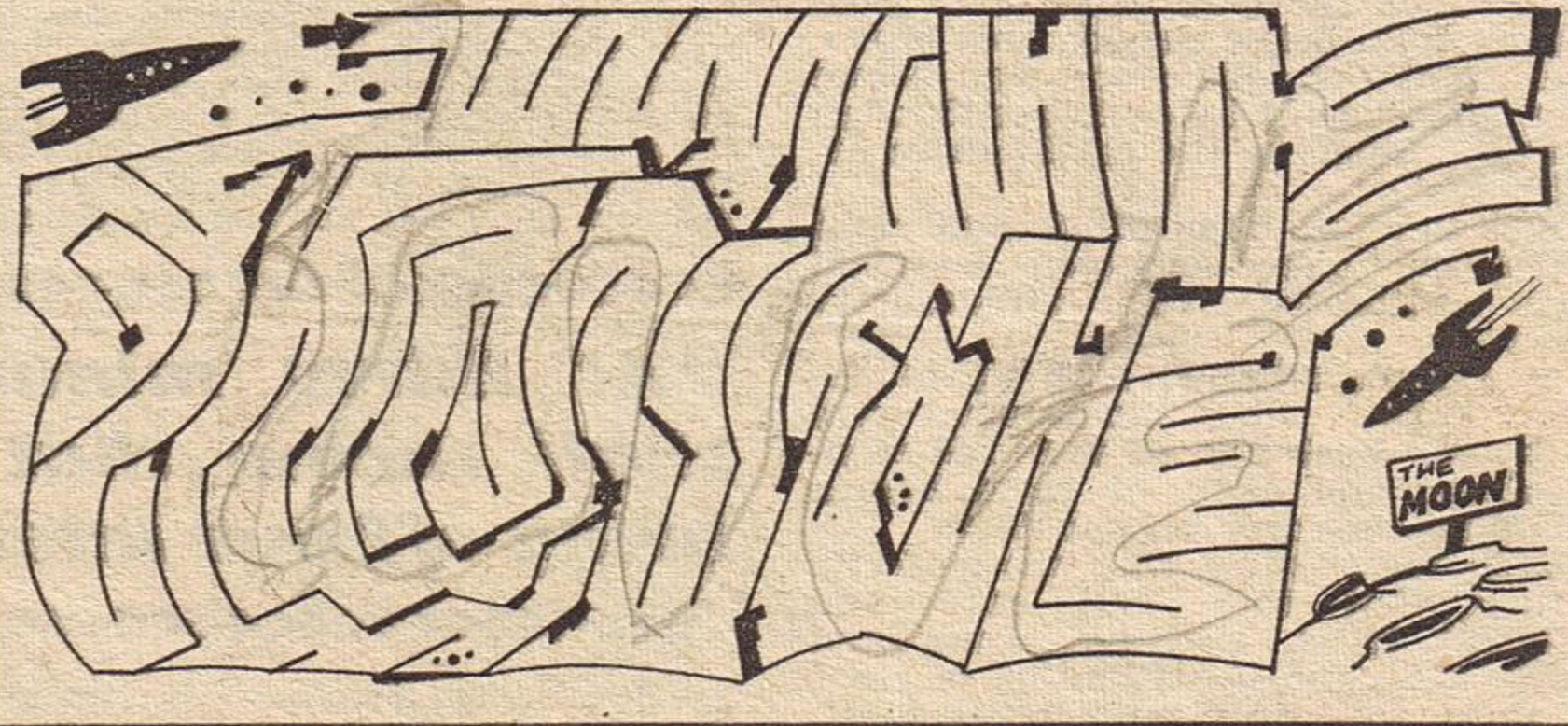
Spot the Change

These two pictures look alike. But they're not! There are eight points of difference. Can you find them?
(For answers see page 18.)



Roundabout's Space Maze

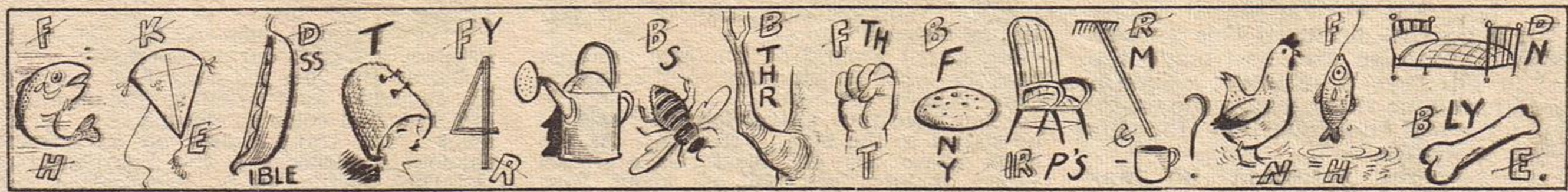
Find the shortest way to the Moon!



Daffy Disguises

Who is he? The picture-letter below will tell you.

(For solution see page 18.)



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SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE ANCIENT CASTLE LURKED A MYSTERY . . . DARK AND SINISTER!
READ OF A YOUNG MAN WHO TOOK HIS LIFE IN HAND IN ORDER TO RIGHT A WRONG!

WHEN MIDNIGHT CHIMES

This Week's Story: PRISONER IN THE TOWER!

THE FETTERED EARL!

ONLY the dim, yellow light of a lantern illuminated the silent dungeon. It was set high up in the tower of St. Leys Castle, and its lone occupant was the descendant of a line of earls who had owned this castle in which he was now held a prisoner.

There were heavy fetters at his wrists and ankles, and between these ran lengths of rusted chain of such weight that it was difficult for him to get about in his place of confinement.

He was grey-haired and his expression was kindly.

He sat at the table, staring straight before him, the gaze of his eyes looking out from below shaggy, grey brows, peering at the solid stone wall before him, almost as if he could see through it to the rooms of the castle above his prison.

Had the earl been gifted with sight which could pierce solid stone, he would have witnessed an extraordinary spectacle.

In a room situated high up in the tower above him nine men were gathered. Each and all wore full evening-dress, and eight of them had a cloak hanging over his shoulders.

Each one of these nine was perfectly attired, but they had hard and criminal faces, lowering brows and shifty eyes, and the attention of eight of them was riveted upon the ninth man.

This man was Vernon Morell, leader of the gang that occupied this ancient castle. It was he who had made the Earl of St. Leys a prisoner. Vernon Morell had done this because the castle was an ideal headquarters for his lawless activities.

From where he stood he was silhouetted against a mass of mechanism which covered the wall behind him. Almost all of the apparatus was electrical, and there were festoons of wire and heavy cables, while a great switch stood out from all else, and towards this he pointed as he now addressed the men gathered about him.

"That switch holds the secret of success or failure for our work tonight!" he said.

His voice was thin and ringing, and it held a dominant note as it reached the ears of the men before him.

"At thirty minutes after midnight I shall throw that switch, when the electrical current will be cut off from every building within ten miles," he said. "I have tapped the overhead cables which supply this district with current, and at an hour after midnight we shall bring off our latest and greatest coup!"

Some of the crooks seated at the table glanced at one another, then their gaze

went to one man who rose from where he sat.

"I think it's about time we cleared out of here, Morell," he said. "The police are getting too hot, and I've got a feeling that we're tackling something just a little too big tonight."

"Nonsense!" The arch-crook glared at him. "I know what I'm doing, and I've just given every one of you his orders. If you obey my instructions to the letter nothing can go wrong!"

"You're clever, Morell," the other answered. "I admit that, but there'll be close upon two hundred guests at the ball which the Duchess of Radford is giving. And they—"

"And they'll be helpless when they're confronted by you," Vernon Morell answered. "All you have to do, when the lights go out, is to appear in the ballroom and hold up the guests. You'll line them up, and make them go past you, handing over their jewellery and rings, their wallets, and everything else of value that they have. With four of you in the ballroom to do this, and the rest placed as

be very grateful if I could explain my trouble to you."

"Of course; won't you sit down?" Dick Fletcher asked.

He watched the beautiful Marion St. Leys seat herself gracefully, then he resumed his own place behind the desk, finding himself hardly able to take his glance away from her beautiful features. He could see that she was troubled. She slowly removed her gloves, looking thoughtfully before her until, at last, she raised the gaze of her wide eyes to his own.

"It's about my uncle, the earl," she said. "He lives almost alone up at the castle, and I haven't seen him for quite a long while."

Dick Fletcher frowned as he listened to the girl's words, wondering exactly what she was going to tell him.

"I thought he might be ill," she continued. "And one evening I telephoned to the castle. My call was not answered. I telephoned again and again, and still I received no reply. Then I sent three or four telegrams, begging him to let me know if he was all right! Mr. Fletcher, I am



"At thirty minutes after midnight I shall throw that switch . . . we shall bring off our latest and greatest coup!"



I've directed, ten minutes will see the whole thing over, and you'll come back here with a very substantial fortune in gold and jewels! Tonight's coup shall be our last in this district!"

He glared around at the men, and he saw the relief which came in the expressions of many of them.

"You have your instructions," he said as he signed to the men. "Now go! As the clock above the old Black Gate strikes twelve tonight, you will go about your business!"

AT THE BLACK GATE!

SUNLIGHT struggled through the grimy office window, lighting the figure of a young man who sat at a desk. Across the window was gilt lettering:

FLETCHER, HARPER & FLETCHER
And below this showed a single word:
Solicitors.

The young man at the desk was Dick Fletcher, and before him were spread a number of legal-looking documents, which he was regarding with some distaste, when there came a knock on the door and a clerk entered.

"A young lady to see you, sir," he said. "Name of Miss Marion St. Leys. None of the partners are in, so will you see her, Mr. Fletcher?"

Dick Fletcher nodded, and rose from his desk as a girl entered while the clerk held open the door. Just for a moment the handsome young lawyer stood astonished by the girl's loveliness.

"I'm the niece of the Earl of St. Leys," she told him. "I know that your firm attend to all my uncle's business, and that is why I came to you. I understand that none of the partners is in, but I should

worried—terribly worried about him!"

Once again the girl paused, twisting her gloves in her hands, while deep concern showed on her face.

"Then I'll go at once and find out what's happening," Dick cut in decisively.

During the long journey which followed, his thoughts went often to the beautiful girl who had come so unexpectedly to his office. The train rushed on as evening shadows deepened into the night, until at last Dick alighted at St. Leys station, and it was close upon midnight when, after a long walk, he sighted the shape of the castle itself.

He could see the moon shining upon its turrets and battlements, then he saw the old stone wall and the big arched gateway.

He heard a clock sound the first stroke of twelve, and as it rang out he saw the gate beneath the arch drawn slowly open.

He saw the massive front door drawn wide as the clock solemnly tolled on, and from out of the castle came—eight men!

All of them were clad in full evening-dress. They came down the steps to where a large, gleaming saloon car stood waiting in the shadows, and a moment later the doors had slammed shut and the car sped away into the night!

For some moments Dick stood staring into the darkness after the eight men had gone, and now he remembered what he had heard of a mysterious crook gang which was operating around St. Leys Castle.

They were known as the Midnight Men, and were said to wear evening clothes.

Presently Dick was standing by the castle entrance, gazing up the broad flight of shallow steps which led to the massive door above. He mounted them, not expecting that the door would give when he

THE CASTLE GATE SWUNG OPEN AND OUT CAME EIGHT MEN! WHERE WERE THE MIDNIGHT MEN GOING?

turned the great iron handle, but, to his surprise, the door opened.

He stepped quietly into the big building, closing the door behind him, and standing quietly there, while his eyes became accustomed to the gloom of the hall in which he now found himself.

The floor of the hall was paved with slabs of stone, and from a corridor at one side there came a faint gleam of light.

Slowly Dick paced towards this, peering down the broad corridor when he reached it. He saw that the light came through a half-opened door at one side, and he crept towards this, finally peering in.

He saw the tall, gaunt figure of Vernon Morell standing before the apparatus at one end of the big room. The man drew out his watch, then glanced at the dial.

"I've nearly half an hour!" Dick heard him murmur. "There is just time to interview my prisoner!"

Instantly Dick slipped aside, sheltering in the shadowy niche formed by a corner

Quietly Dick followed him. He reached the second door, ascending the steps and following Morell until he reached a heavy door which was reinforced by heavy lengths of iron. Morell was drawing bolts back from the door when Dick saw him again, and the crook pushed the door open, stepping through to the dungeon beyond.

Swiftly Dick moved to the door, and peered cautiously within. He saw the tall figure of Vernon Morell confronting the fettered form of the earl, who sat still at the table on which stood the lantern.

"I've come to tell you that it will not be long before you are released," Vernon Morell said.

"And the moment I find my freedom I shall put the police on to you, you scoundrel!" the Earl of St. Leys said defiantly, while his eyes flashed as he spoke.

"I'm afraid that by the time you tell the police all you know, I shall be very far away from here," Morell replied. "My business has been extremely profitable, but

watch—"my eight Midnight Men, as the police call them, will be taking up their positions."

He paused. The chained earl was staring up at him, fascinated by the revelation of this arch-crook's plot.

"At precisely thirty minutes after midnight I shall throw a switch in a room upstairs," Morell went on. "That switch will extinguish every light in this neighbourhood, including those in the duchess' house! Certain of my men will knock out the four detectives who are supposed to be guarding the guests, and the remainder will collect tribute from the lords and ladies who are assembled there."

Once again he chuckled to himself, jeering at the earl.

"You scoundrel!" the Earl of St. Leys panted, and he dragged himself off the bench, raising his fettered hands as, with a supreme effort, he hurled himself at the man.

But Vernon Morell moved quickly aside



The revolver roared! Dick threw up his hands with a gasping cry, and pitched helplessly over the battlement!

and the earl fell, tripped by the heavy chains that he wore, just as Dick Fletcher stepped through the open door of the dungeon!

THE SHINING SWITCH!

VERNON MORELL saw Dick the moment that he entered, and amazement showed on the crook's face.

But only for a moment did he stare, then one hand flashed to a pocket, seeking the revolver which he carried, but at his very first movement Dick leaped towards him, grappling with the man and striving to bring him down.

Fiercely the two fought, with the crook striving to draw his revolver, and with Dick doing his utmost to prevent him.

Morell forced Dick back, and the bench went over with a crash. The two struggled against the table until that, too, overturned, for the lantern to clatter to the ground, so that its light went out.

In the darkness Dick called upon all his strength in an effort to bring the crook to the ground, only to feel himself whirled off his feet and slammed against the dungeon wall.

His head struck the stonework, so that he slumped, half stunned, to the floor.

He struggled to his feet, and heard Morell running out of the dungeon. He heard the sound of the door slamming, and through the crash of it came a cry in the voice of the earl, then Dick was on his feet, reeling towards the door.

"He didn't close it," he heard the earl's voice sound out of the darkness. "I was trying to get out, and I managed to wedge

(Continued on next page.)

where the corridor turned. Hardly breathing, he remained there as the door was opened and lights flooded out. He saw that Morell now carried an electric torch in one hand, and the unsuspecting leader of the Midnight Men switched on this torch and passed Dick as he paced on around the turn in the corridor.

Dick saw him open the door at the end, while the beam of the torch shone upon steps which led steeply upwards and which the crook ascended.

The moment that he had disappeared the young lawyer followed him. The steps led up to one of the towers, and he had a glimpse of the man silhouetted against the beam of his own torch, as he opened a door and went up more steps.

I am bringing off my final coup tonight—at the Duchess of Radford's ball."

The earl's eyes widened, while he stared at the man, and the crook's grin became even more mocking.

"The duchess sent an invitation to you to attend her ball, and I believe you go every year," he said to the earl. "But, of course, it would have been inconvenient for me to allow you to attend this year. However, my representatives will be there in your stead."

"What are you going to do?" the earl gasped.

"I intend to relieve the duchess and all her guests of such valuables as they happen to be carrying," Morell replied. "At this particular moment"—he glanced at his

one of my chains against the door, so that it wouldn't shut."

Dick hardly heard what he was saying. He stumbled against the door and started to drag it open, then staggered out into the corridor beyond and reeled along it to the end where the stone steps continued upwards.

Dazed as he was, Dick realised these steps must lead to the upper room—the one he had heard Morell mention to the Earl of St. Leys when he was taunting him in the tower dungeon a few minutes before.

There was a small landing at the top of the steps, and a door which now stood partly open admitted a shaft of light out into the chill, stone-walled stairway.

Making no sound, Dick crept stealthily across to the door, then peered inside.

His startled gaze travelled swiftly over the elaborate electrical installations, the dials and the switches. Morell stood close to a large switch which dominated the control-panel, his gleaming eyes again consulting his watch as he waited impatiently for the appointed time of action—thirty minutes past midnight!

Then, even as Dick was moving with silent, panther-like tread across the room, the crook whirled abruptly, clawing the gun from his jacket pocket as he did so!

"No, you don't, you interfering cub!" he snarled. "I saw your reflection in one of the dials! You shall regret your persistence! This time there'll be no second chance!"

Dick had instinctively retreated before the menacing figure, until now he felt his back pressing against something hard. He imagined it to be the wall, and as he watched Morell's forefinger tightening on the revolver's trigger he felt sure his last moment had come.

But luck was with Dick Fletcher that night. It was not the wall which had halted his retreat, but another door—a small wooden door which gave access to the battlements of the ancient castle. And all of a sudden it gave under Dick's pressure!

He staggered backwards, almost falling in the instant that Morell fired.

A splinter of wood flew from the open door as the bullet viciously lashed across it and ricocheted off it with an ominous whining sound, close past Dick's head!

Staggering out into the chill moonlit night, Dick bounded towards the battlement close by, flinging a backward glance towards the lighted doorway as he reached it.

Escape from the armed crook was uppermost in Dick's mind at that moment, for he knew he stood no chance against Morell now that he had lost the opportunity of getting to close quarters with him.

A swift glance over the castellated wall revealed tangled ivy growing on part of the ancient stonework below. Dick had climbed through one of the gaps in the battlement when a snarl of triumph rang out behind him.

"That's right—jump!" cried Morell, raising the revolver and taking deliberate aim. "And I'll help you on your way with this bullet!"

As he finished speaking the weapon roared. Dick threw up his hands with a gasping cry, and next instant his figure pitched headlong over the battlement—hurtling down close past the iron-barred window of the dungeon in which the Earl of St. Leys had been held a helpless prisoner for so long!

Morell turned back into the tower-room, satisfied that he had eliminated the young man who had ventured to invade the secret hide-out of the Midnight Men.

But Morell would have been shaken had he now looked over the castle battlements. For Dick Fletcher had not crashed to his doom.

Clutching the ivy on the wall with his outflung hands, he had survived the initial savage wrench on his arms, and he was now hauling himself across the wall-face by means of the ivy.

A broad window was his objective. Upon reaching it he breathed a sigh of relief when he discovered the casement opened under his hand, and in another moment he had slipped back inside St. Leys Castle!

Panting from his exertions, he paused, but only for a brief instant. Sight of a clock on the mantelpiece spurred him into swift action once again, for the hands indicated one minute to half-past twelve!

Dick fairly raced up the stone staircase which led to the tower-room where Vernon Morell now stood, his hand resting on the handle of the main switch.

This time, Dick made no mistake. He entered the room with a mighty bound which carried him from the doorway to within reach of the crook. Too late, Morell turned from the big control-panel, only to receive a punch on the jaw which sent him crashing to the floor.

And it was at that moment that the castle clock chimed—one solitary stroke, marking the half-hour past midnight!

The crook remained where he had fallen, stunned.

Staggering, breathless, Dick straightened up above the man, to hear a knocking upon the other door. He snatched up the man's revolver from his pocket, moving to the door and turning the key in the lock. He pulled the door open, and upon the threshold he saw the chained, grey-haired figure of the Earl of St. Leys.

"Come in, my lord!" Dick panted. "I've knocked that man out, and he had no chance to throw the switch. If I can telephone the police and warn them, they may yet prevent his gang from doing anything. They'll be waiting for the lights to go out, only they won't go out!"

There was a telephone at one side of the room, and Dick ran towards it. He spoke swiftly to the telephone operator, asking to be connected with the police. Soon he

found himself talking to an inspector, to whom he swiftly related what had occurred.

A search of Morell's pockets by Dick enabled him to gain possession of the key of the padlocks.

Then swiftly he secured the stunned Morell with the chains he had removed from the earl. Barely was this done when the telephone bell rang, and Dick answered it. It was the inspector of the police talking.

"Well, thanks to you, sir," the inspector said, "we've got every one of those eight Midnight Men. We were able to take them by surprise, and we had handcuffs on them before they could show fight."

"Good!" exclaimed Dick. "And if you can come up here, inspector we can turn the leader of the gang over to you!"

"I'll be there within a quarter of an hour," the inspector answered.

The police officer was as good as his word. In less than fifteen minutes the Earl of St. Leys was admitting him and four constables to the castle, conducting them to the room where their prisoner was now conscious, struggling with vicious impotence to free himself of his iron manacles.

"I think we'll take him to the police-station as he is," the inspector suggested. "And now, my lord, with your permission, we should like to search the castle, because I've an idea that we shall find here some of the things which this man has stolen."

The police inspector did not have to search for very long. In another room, farther along the corridor, he discovered the whole of the booty which the Midnight Men had stolen during their operations in the district. Evidently Vernon Morell had kept it against the day when he would divide the proceeds with his confederates.

"You're like most crooks," the inspector told him, as he was led out to the waiting car with his chains rattling. "you always go too far, and now you're starting on a journey which will only end when it sees you behind the bars of a prison cell. And I think I can promise that you'll remain there for a very long time!"

Within the castle the Earl of St. Leys was shaking hands with Dick Fletcher, trying to express his thanks for the way in which he had released him and had brought this gang of criminals to book.

"I'm afraid most of your thanks are due to your niece, Miss Marion St. Leys," he said.

"Then, if you'll accept the hospitality of my castle tonight," the earl said, "I'll accompany you to London in the morning, and I'll thank her personally."

It was when the Midnight Men were brought up for trial that Dick met Marion St. Leys again. The criminals received very heavy and well-deserved sentences, and Dick turned to the girl as they left the court.

"Well, I'm not sorry that they're being punished," he said. "The whole business has been so unpleasant that I want you to forget it all," he went on. "There was only one really pleasant thing about it."

"What was that?" Marion asked him.

"Meeting you!" replied Dick. And, something in her smile told him that many more happy meetings would follow.

(Another grand story appears in this exciting series next week. Buy **KNOCKOUT**—and be thrilled!)

SOLUTIONS TO KNOCKOUT'S QUIZ ROUNDABOUT.

CROSSWORD :

Across : 1. Spitfires. 4. Apertures. 9. Hurricane. 10. Stretcher. 13. Lancaster.

Down : 2. Pup. 3. Eve. 4. Ashes. 5. Error. 6. Twist. 7. Roach. 8. Spear. 11. Tea. 12. Eye.

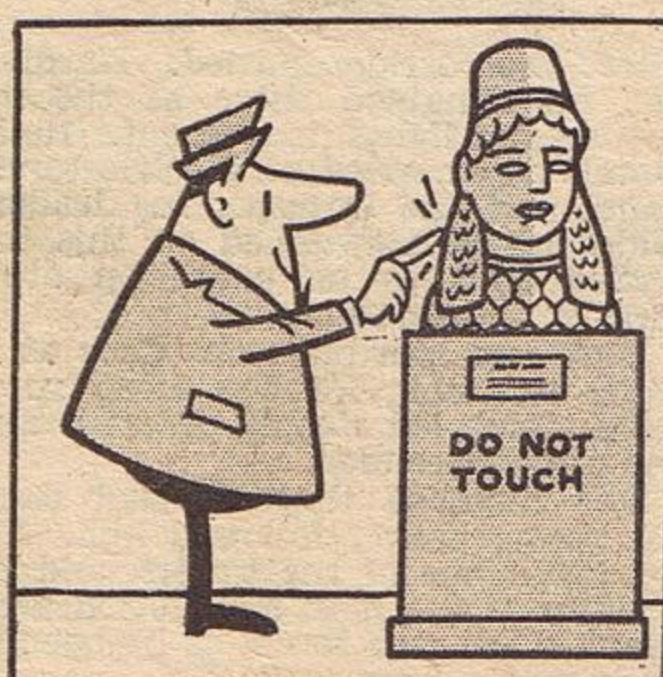
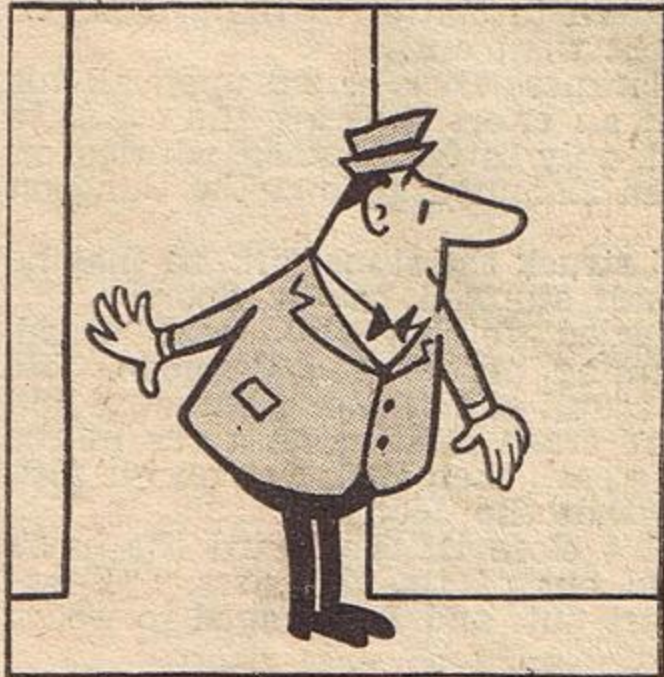
JUMBLE : A THIRD BIRD.

DAFFY DISGUISES : BEN LYON.

SPOT THE CHANGE :

Spots on turbans.
Points on girl's sandals.
Pendant round genie's neck.
Magic lamp.
Side of building.
Tower of building.
Back of girl's skirt.
Genie's smoke-tail.

IZZY DIZZY. He can't resist doing what he's told not to do!



BLARNEY

BLUFFER

HE'S BRITAIN'S BIGGEST BRAGGER!

He has a slim chance of convincing us with this one!

I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT STUFF WILL MAKE ME SLIMMER! - WHY DO YOU CALL IT OCTOPUS MIXTURE ANYWAY?

AH! LET ME TELL YOU THE WHOLE SAD STORY, LITTLE LADY!

10/-

OCTO MIXTURE

GET SLIM WITH OCTOPUS REDUCING MIXTURE

"FIFTY FATHOMS DEEP OFF THE COAST OF SUNNY SPAIN I GOT FRIENDLY WITH A YOUNG OCTOPUS WHO HAD A LIKING FOR FRESH FRIED SAUSAGES."

"IN EASY STAGES I GRADUALLY TEMPTED HIM BACK TO ENGLAND WITH THE SAUSAGE BAIT."

"AND FINALLY, WITH AN OUT-SIZE SOSS ON A STRING I HAD HIM FOLLOWING ME UP THE HIGH STREET LIKE A PET POODLE DOG."

BLARNEY VILLA

"WELL, I SOON FOUND THAT LITTLE OCKY WAS MOST HANDY TO HAVE AROUND THE HOUSE, HE COULD DO UMPTEN JOBS AT ONCE WITH HIS FOUR PAIRS OF ARMS."

"OCKY HAD A CUTE EAR FOR MUSIC, TOO! I GAVE HIM MUSIC LESSONS."

DOH
RAY
LAH
TE
ME
FAH
SOH

"AND HIS ONE-MAN BAND ACT AT THE ALBERT HALL WAS A SENSATION."

PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME

HONEY TRAIL

SEATS 25/-

"BOXING TOO! OCKY'S SIX GLOVE ATTACK SOON MADE HIM HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP OF THE WORLD."

THUMP
WOP
BOFF

BIG FIGHT
£50,000 A SIDE

"AT FOOTBALL HE WAS UNBEATABLE! NO TEAM COULD TOUCH HIM WITH HIS EIGHT-LEG DRIBBLE! HE WON THE ENGLISH CUP SIX TIMES IN ONE SEASON."

"OCKY WAS MAKING ME RICH UNTIL ONE NIGHT, HE SAW SOME DEEP SEA DIVING ON THE TELLY! THAT GOT HIM FEELING HOME-SICK AND LONGING FOR THE SALTY SEA AGAIN."

IT'S MY LITTLE BROTHER, OSWALD!

"I COULD SEE HE WAS ITCHING TO ESCAPE SO I LOCKED HIM IN THE BATHROOM FOR SAFETY."

WANNA GO HOME!

WE CAN'T ESCAPE NOW!

"THEN OCKY SAW MY SECRET SLIM-QUICK MIXTURE! HE GULPED THE LOT IN ONE GO!"

"I RUSHED IN JUST IN TIME TO SEE HIM VANISH DOWN THE PLUGHOLE!"

SO LONG, CHUM!

PLOP!
GLUB!

"AND THAT'S HOW I LOST MY AMAZING OCTOPUS - ALL THROUGH MY SECRET SUPER-SPEED SLIMMING MIXTURE!"

CHEERIO, CHUM!

WASTE WATER PIPE

"MY! MY! MUST BE WONDERFUL STUFF! BRING ME ANOTHER DOZEN BOTTLES!"

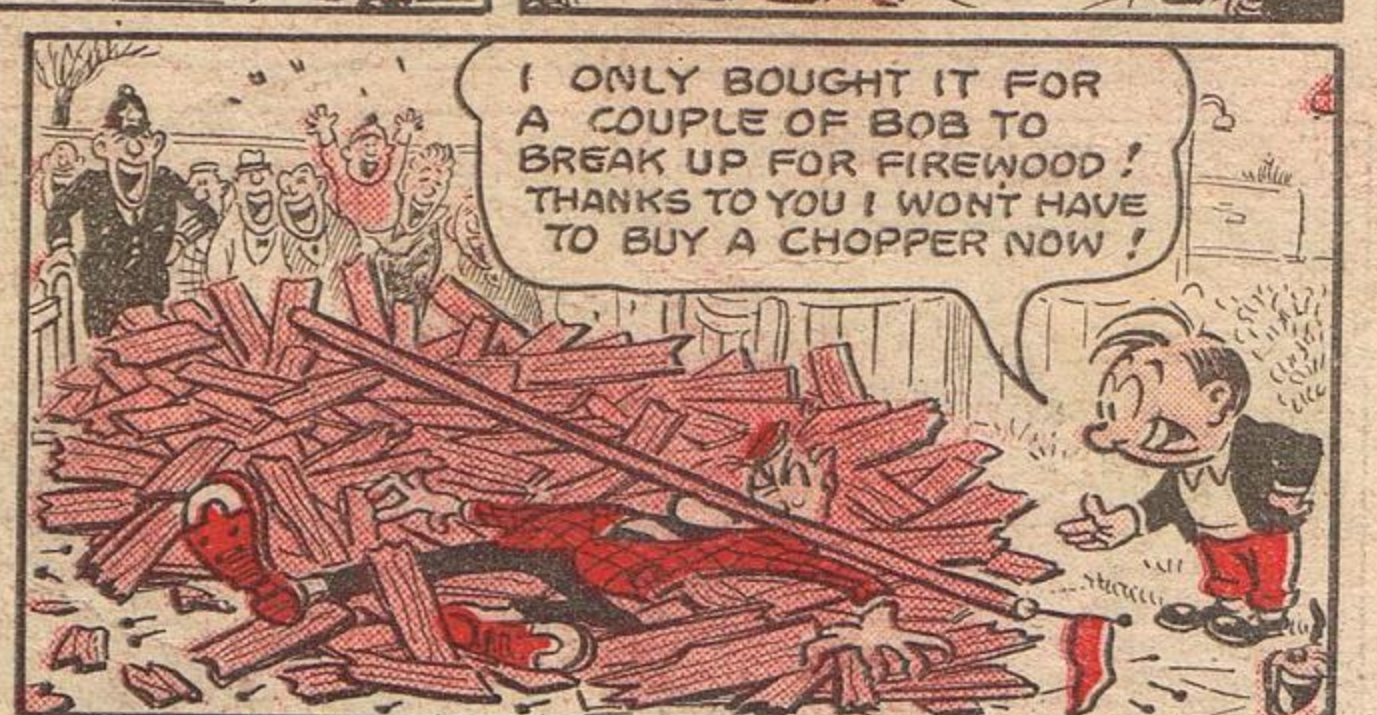
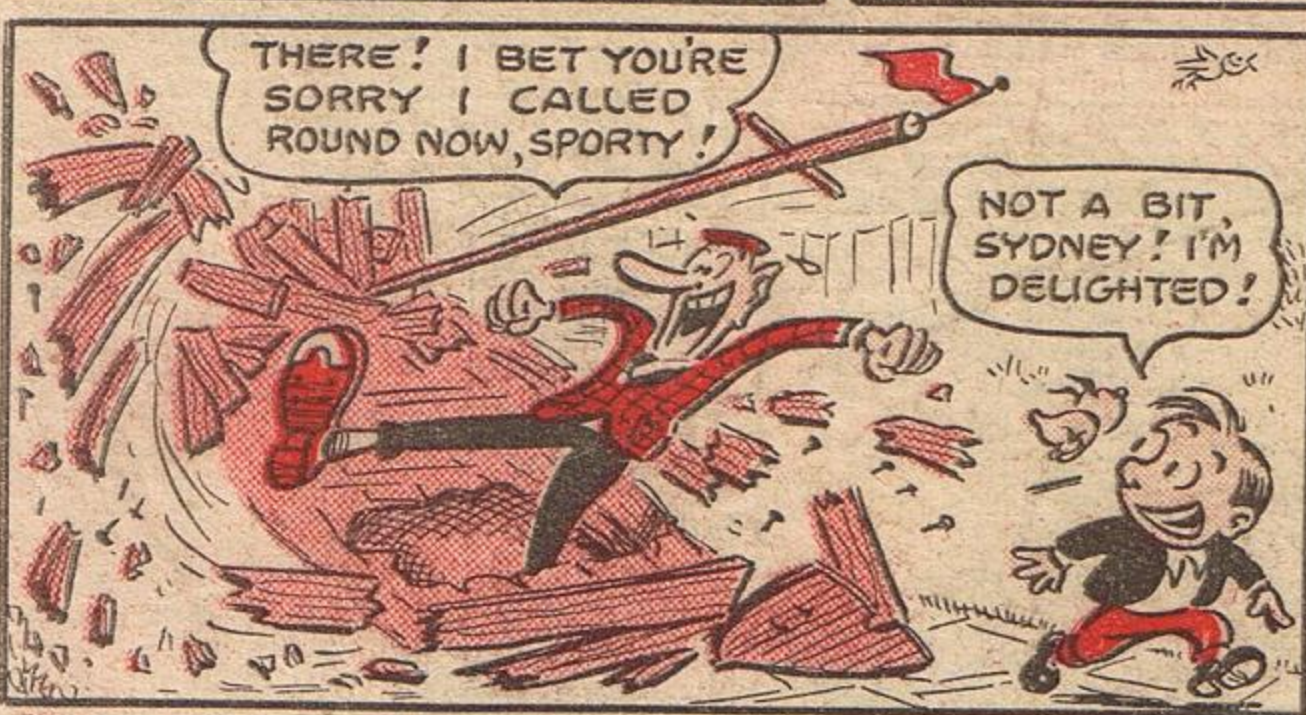
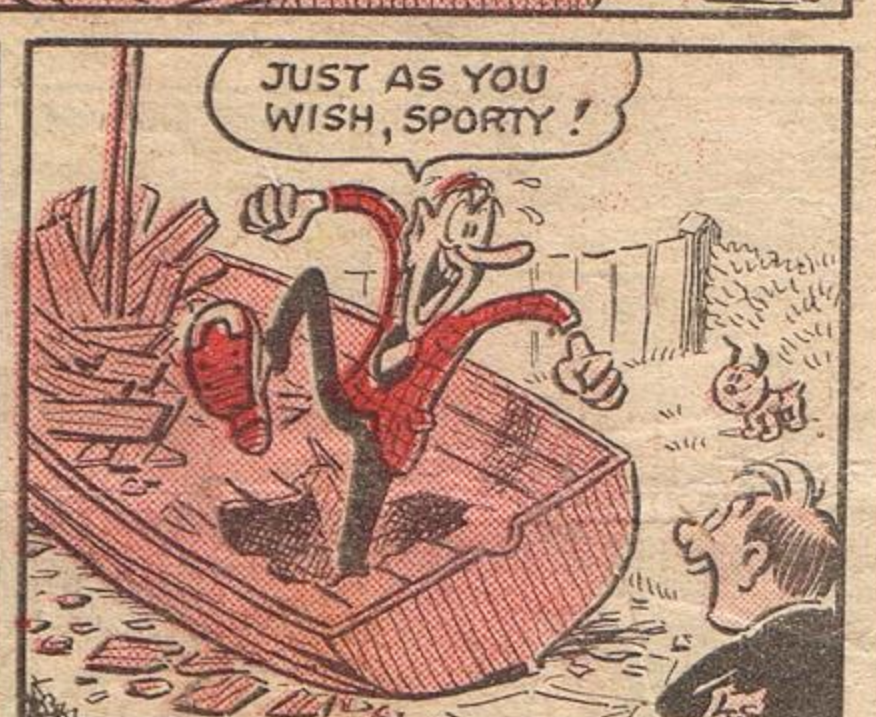
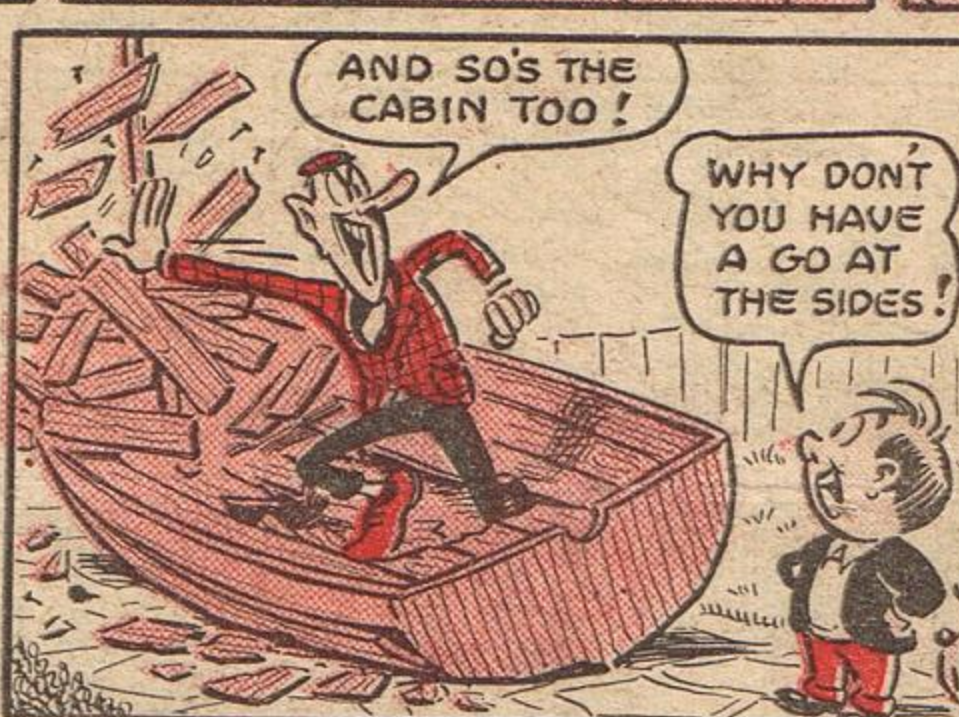
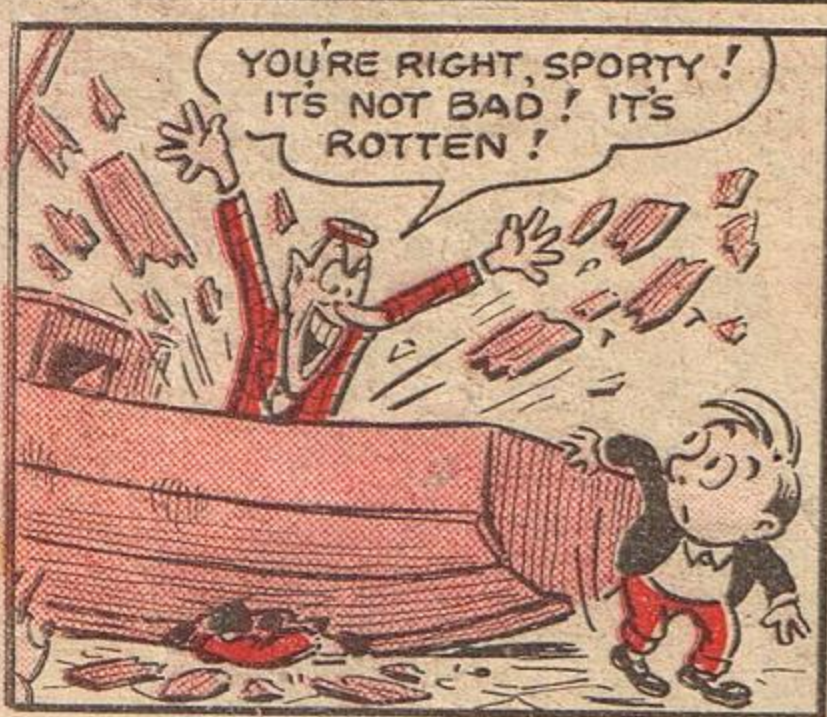
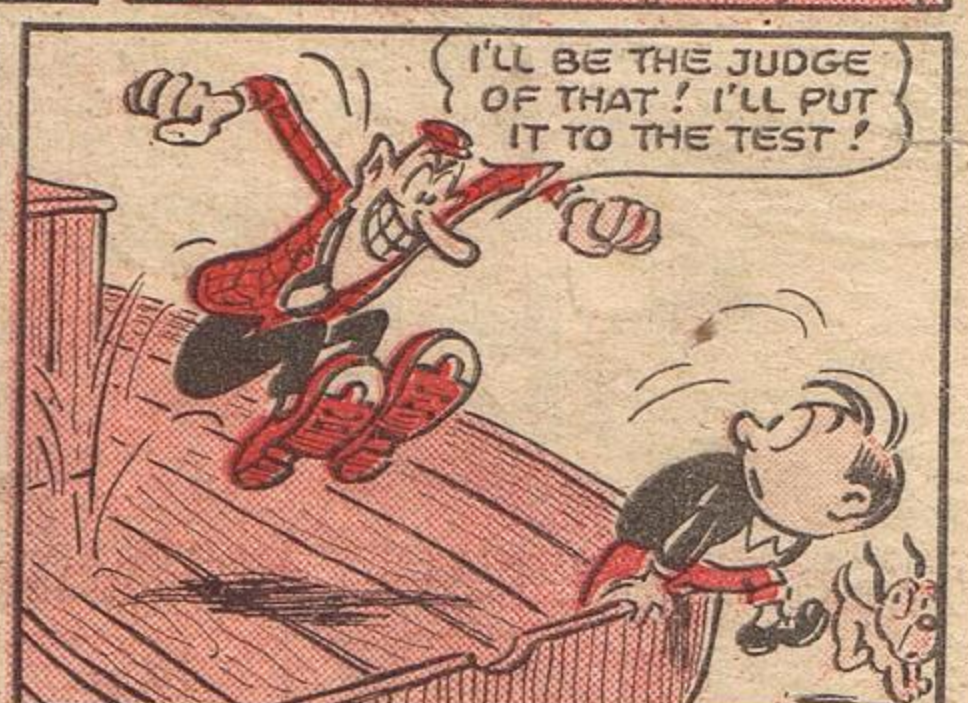
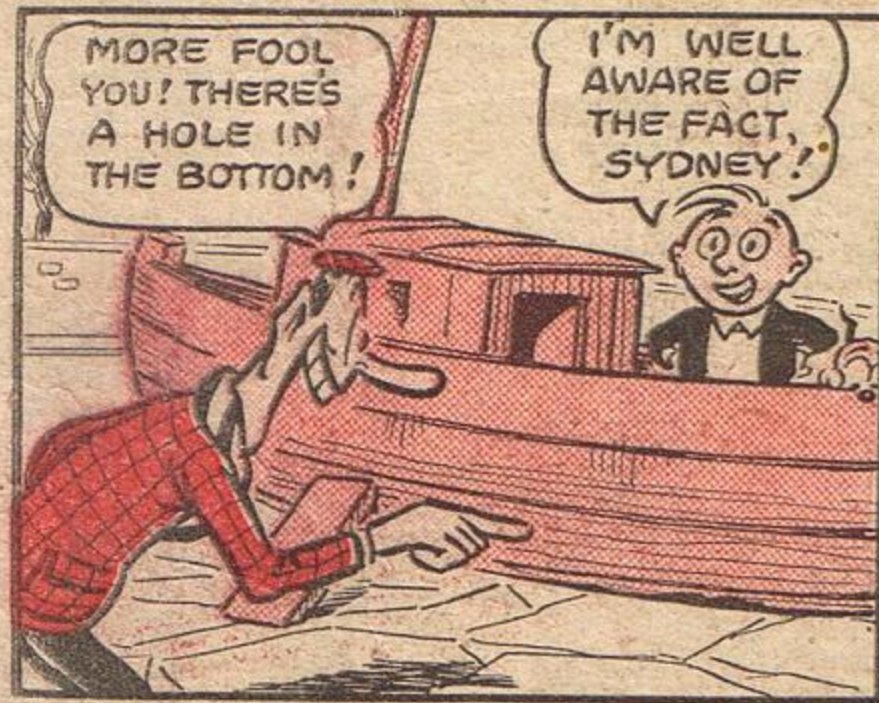
THANKS MUG - I MEAN MADAM!

GET SLIM WITH OCTOPUS SLIMMING MIXTURE

Whatever you do, you'll never feel blue, with bluffing old Blarney—the boy for you!

SPORTY

by
Reg Wootton



TICHER

