

SAIL TO ADVENTURE WITH THE BLACK PIRATE!



Knockout

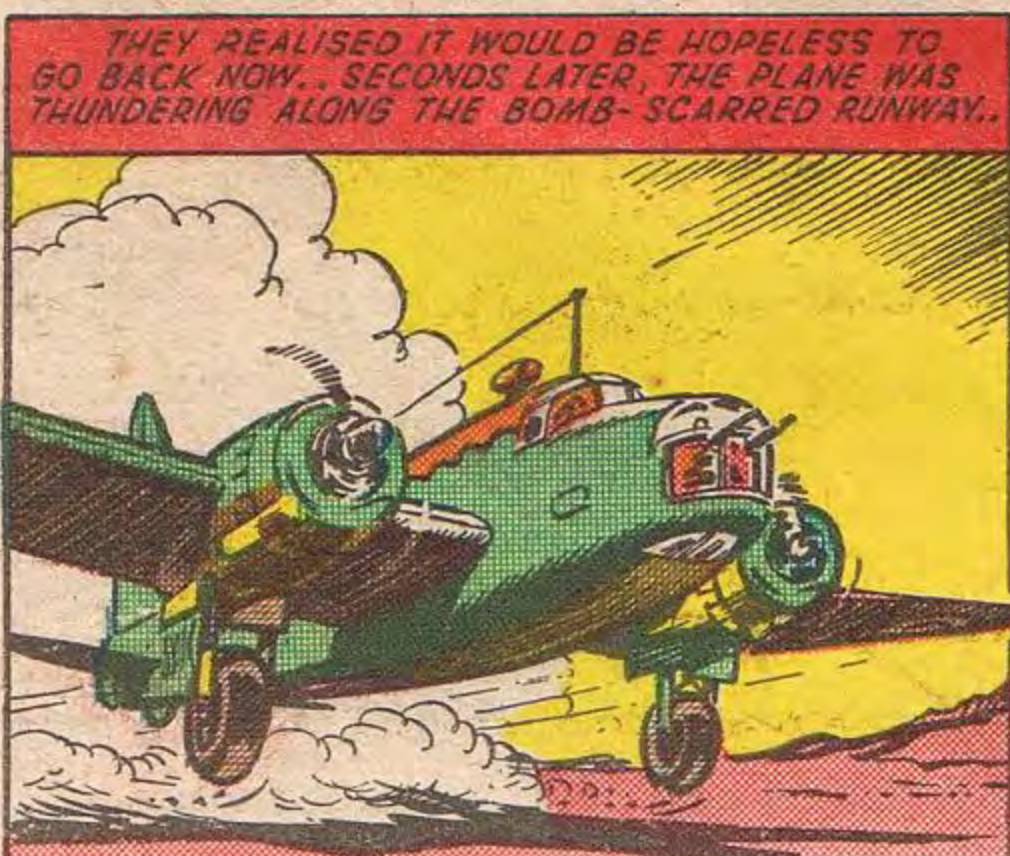
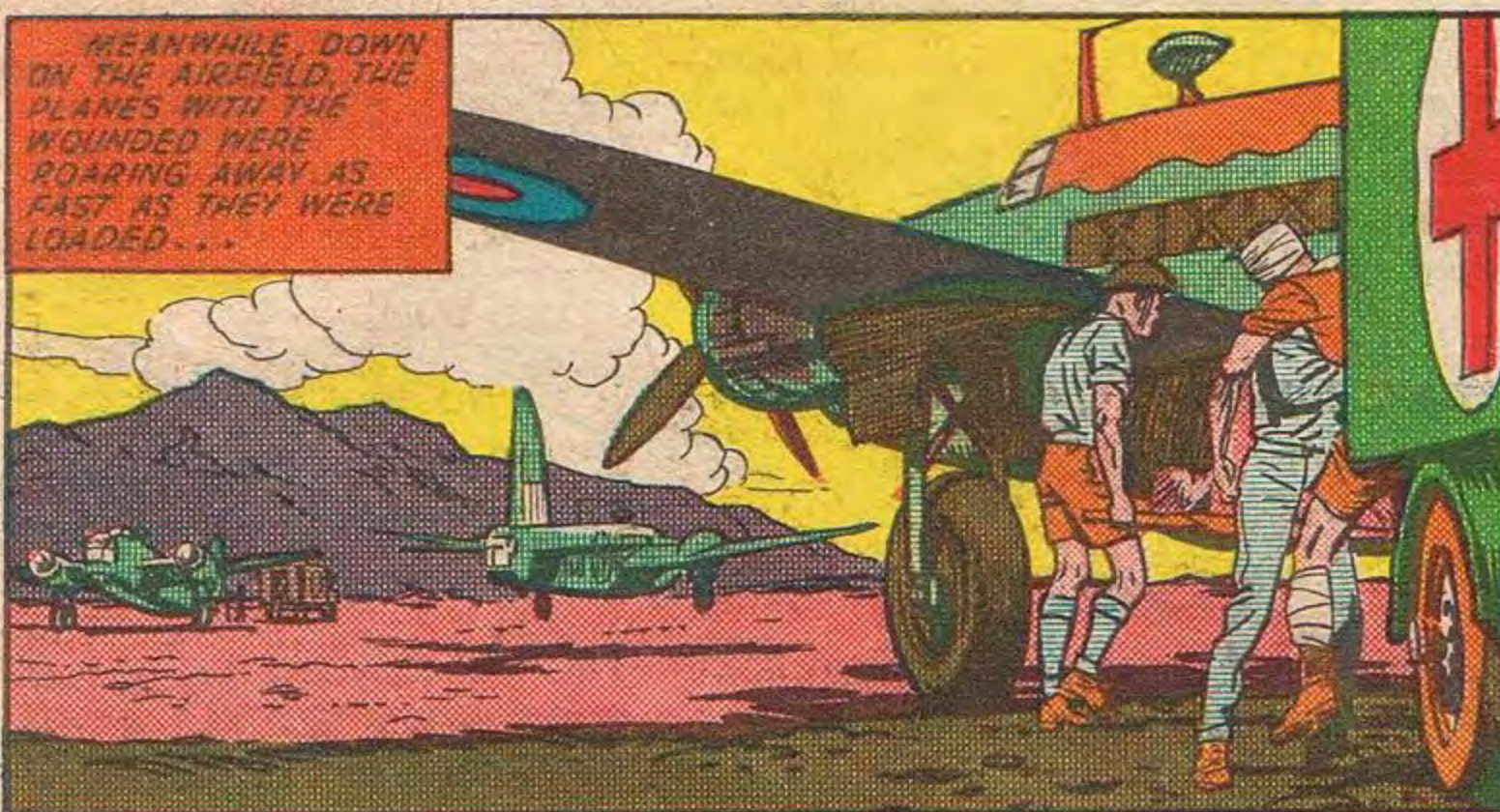
3rd DECEMBER, 1960.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

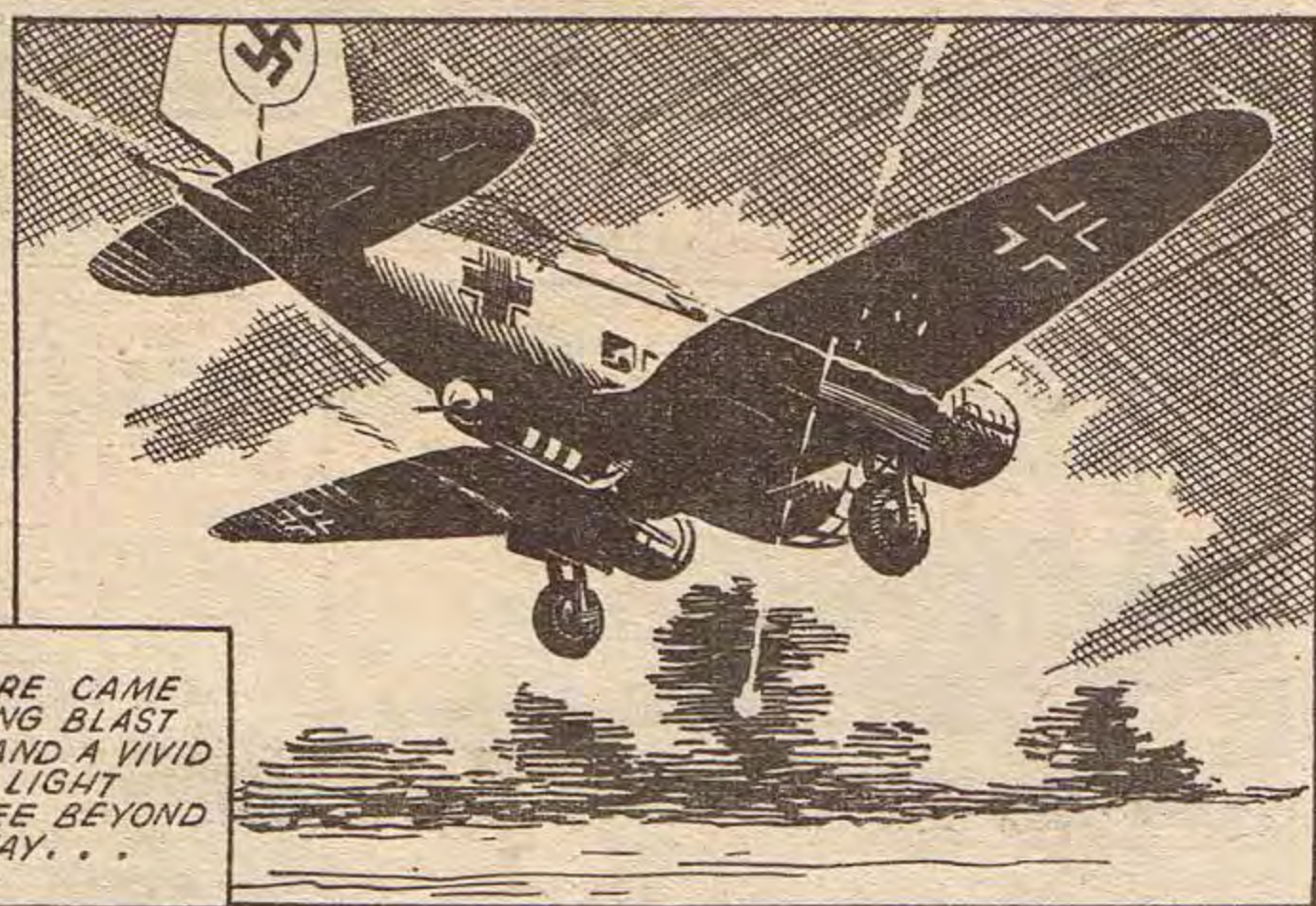
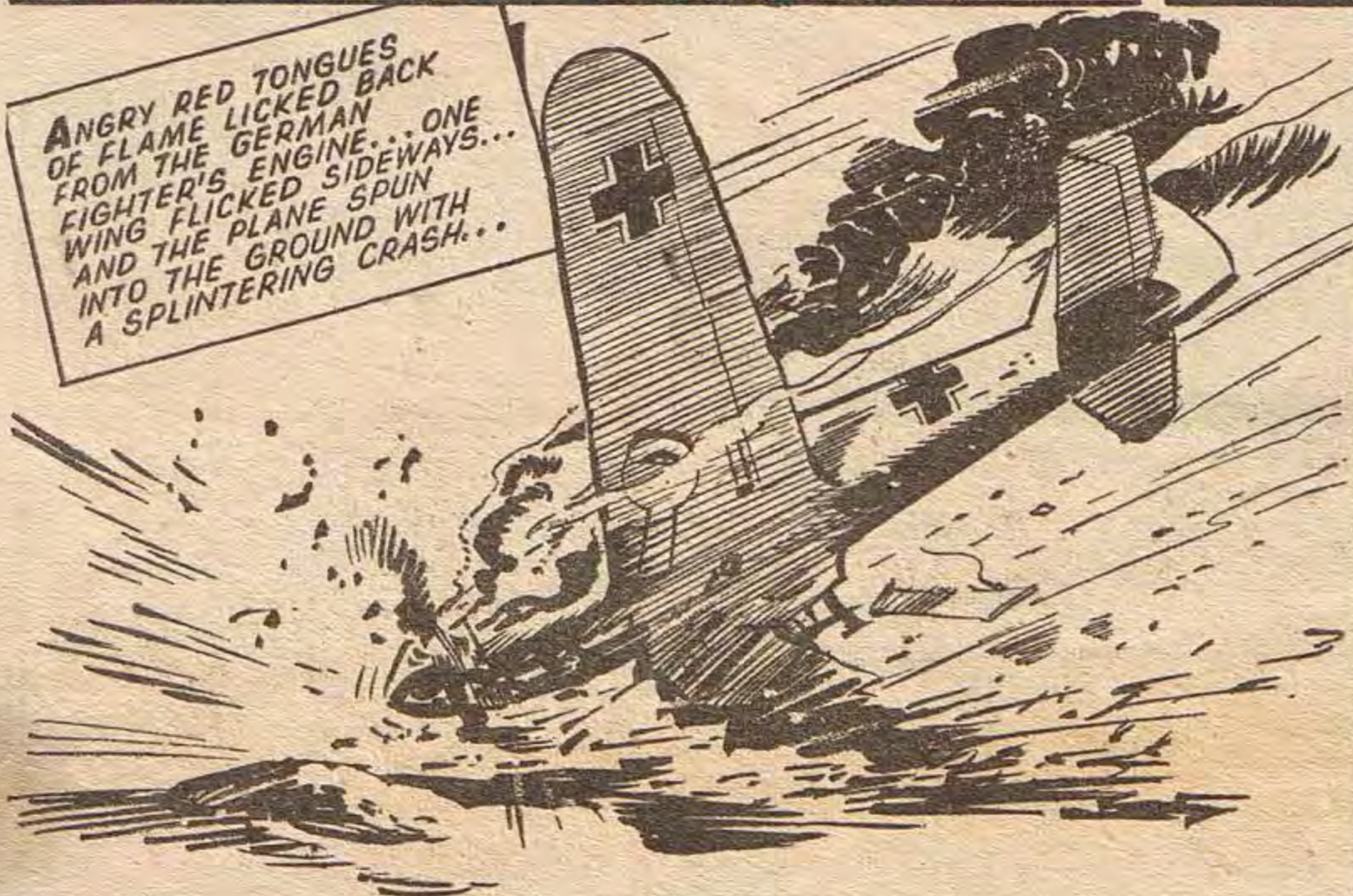
4½

Battler Britton FIGHTING ACE

Wing Commander Battler Britton, the famous fighting ace, was trying to hold a battered and bombed airfield in Crete against a heavy German attack, so that Allied wounded could be flown off. Battler ordered his men to withdraw to the last plane . . . and fearlessly remained to fight on . . . alone!



(Continued on next page.)

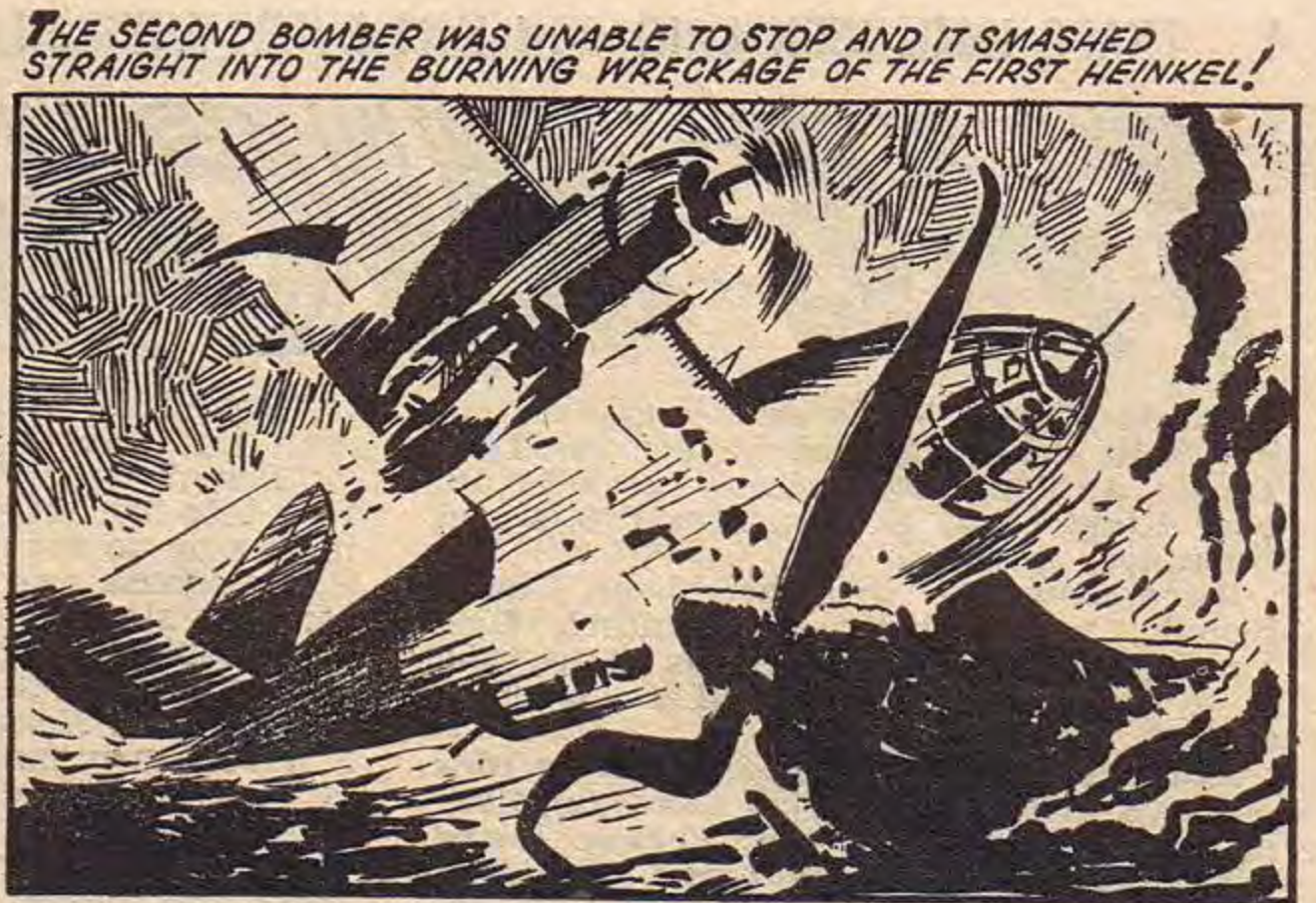




BULLETS TORE INTO THE HEINKEL BOMBER AS IT TOUCHED DOWN... THE PLANE SLEWED DOWN... AND BLEW UP SIDWAYS... AND BLEW UP WITH A SHATTERING EXPLOSION!

THAT'S ONE LOAD OF BOMBS THEY WON'T DROP ON OUR LADS!

IT WAS BATTLER WITH HIS BREN, COOLLY AND CALMLY PICKING OFF THE ENEMY PLANE AS IT LANDED!



THE SECOND BOMBER WAS UNABLE TO STOP AND IT SMASHED STRAIGHT INTO THE BURNING WRECKAGE OF THE FIRST HEINKEL!



GERMANS RAN FROM ALL SIDES TOWARDS THE WRECKED PLANES, STILL UNABLE TO GRASP WHAT HAD HAPPENED. BUT BATTLER WAS WAITING FOR THEM...

NO POINT IN WASTING THE LAST MAGAZINE OF BULLETS... HELP YOURSELF TO THAT LOT, SAUSAGE-EATERS!



AS THE BREN SPAT OUT ITS LAST BULLET AND COUGHED UP A HALT, BATTLER LEAPED DOWN FROM THE TREE AND RACED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT!

THAT'S MUCKED UP THE AIRFIELD FOR THEM.. IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME TO CLEAR AWAY THE MESS. MEANWHILE I'M OFF TO THE COAST!



THE GERMAN NAVAL SENTRY SHIVERED IN THE EARLY DAWN AS HE PACED ALONG THE JETTY BESIDE THE POWERFUL MOTOR LAUNCH...

ACH! WHY DID WE HAVE TO STOP AT THIS FORSAKEN HOLE? I'LL WAGER THE HERR LIEUTENANT WAS THINKING ONLY OF A COMFORTABLE NIGHT'S SLEEP IN THAT HOTEL ON THE CLIFFTOP!



THE SAILOR WAS STILL MUTTERING TO HIMSELF WHEN A FIGURE SUDDENLY ROCKETED DOWN FROM THE CLIFF... AND SMASHED INTO THE GERMAN WITH BONE-CRUNCHING FORCE...

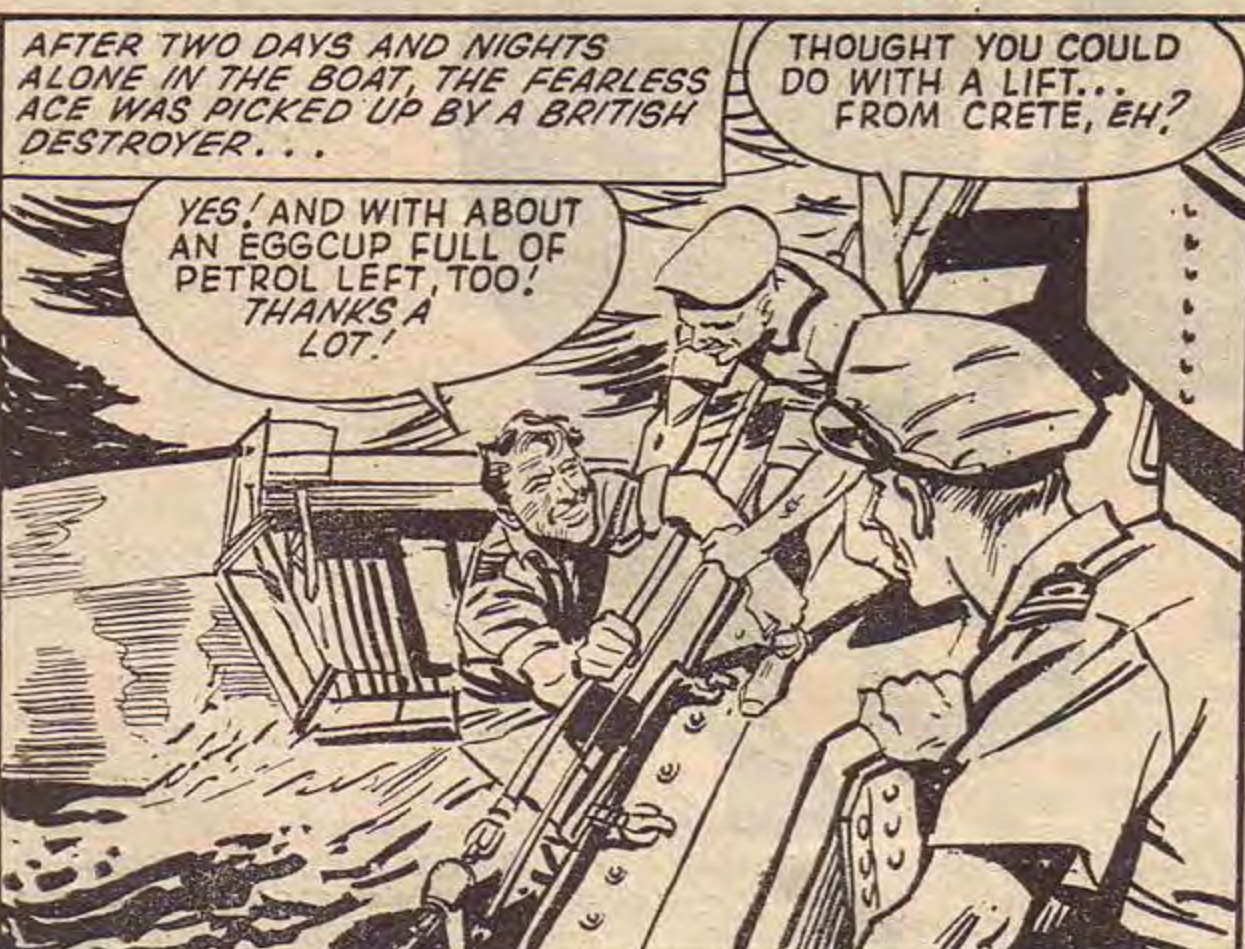
MORNING SQUAREHEAD! SORRY I DROPPED IN WITHOUT AN INTRODUCTION.. THE NAME'S BRITTON!

YAAAH!



TWO MINUTES LATER THE MOTOR LAUNCH WAS SLIDING SMOOTHLY AWAY OUT TO SEA... WITH BATTLER AT THE HELM...

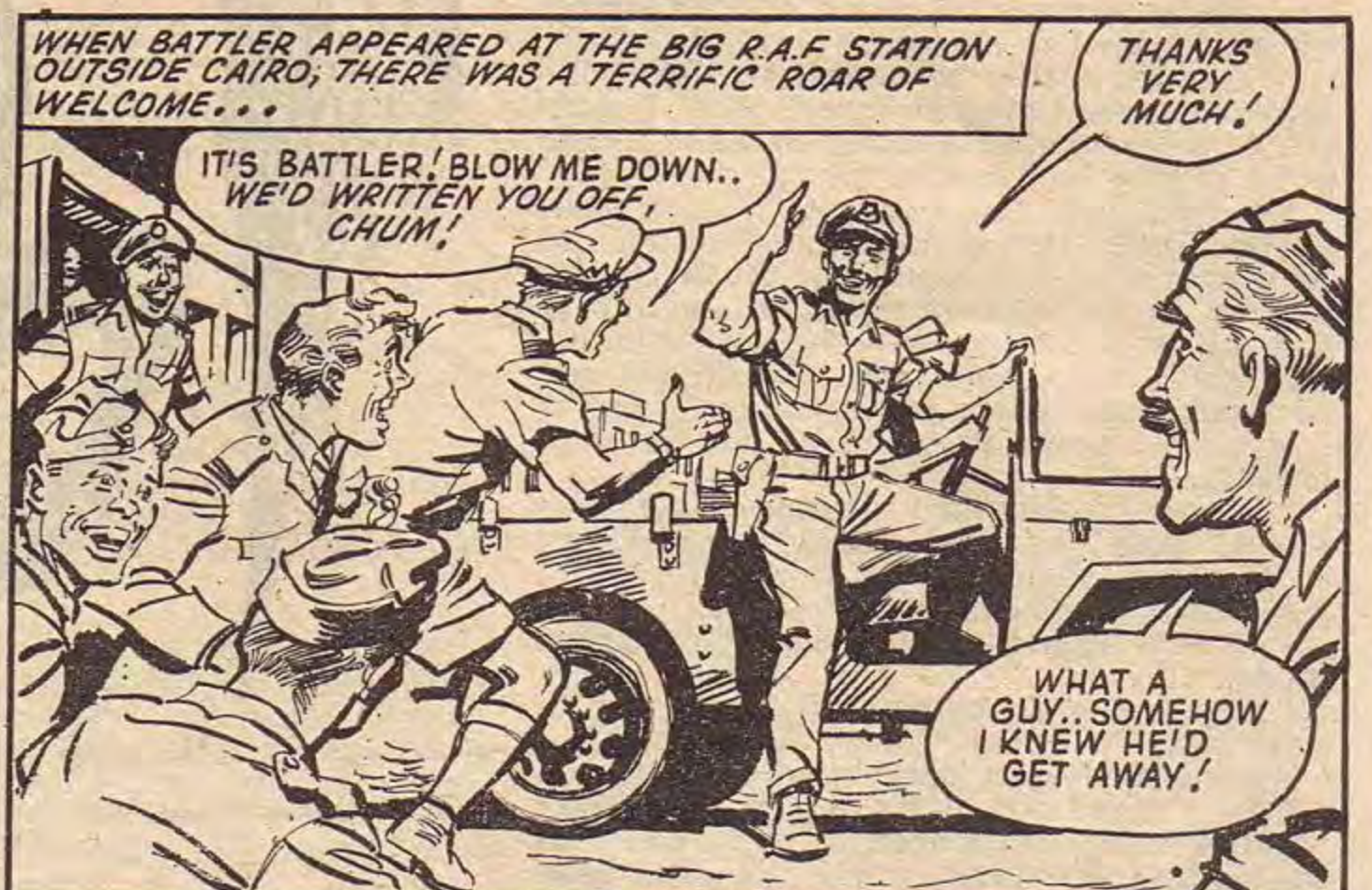
SO-LONG, CRETE! IT'S BEEN FUN WHILE IT LASTED.. BUT I'LL BE BACK SOME DAY. AND THEN THE JERRIES WILL WONDER WHAT'S HIT 'EM!



AFTER TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS ALONE IN THE BOAT, THE FEARLESS ACE WAS PICKED UP BY A BRITISH DESTROYER...

THOUGHT YOU COULD DO WITH A LIFT.. FROM CRETE, EH?

YES! AND WITH ABOUT AN EGGCUP FULL OF PETROL LEFT, TOO! THANKS A LOT!



WHEN BATTLER APPEARED AT THE BIG R.A.F. STATION OUTSIDE CAIRO, THERE WAS A TERRIFIC ROAR OF WELCOME...

THANKS VERY MUCH!

IT'S BATTLER! BLOW ME DOWN.. WE'D WRITTEN YOU OFF, CHUM!

WHAT A GUY.. SOMEHOW I KNEW HE'D GET AWAY!

Another thrilling war story starring Battler Britton starts in next week's **KNOCKOUT!**

THE NIGHTRIDERS

An old moated house on a lonely part of the Kent coast afforded shelter for Dick Turpin and his nightriders—Pat O'Flynn, Tom King, Flick, Beetles, Jem Peters and Lestrangle.

Discovering that their neighbour, Doctor Brindle, was actually a scoundrel, Dick Turpin thwarted his villainous plans, and in so doing made for himself a dangerous enemy.

Realising that he could not frighten Dick and his friends away by haunting their nights with ghostly noises, Brindle joined forces with Horace Grassgreen, the chief of the Bow Street Runners, who was searching for Dick Turpin.

Brindle told Grassgreen he suspected "Mr. Palmer," present owner of the moated house, was Dick Turpin, and he led the constables into it by an underground tunnel.

But a mysterious explosion brought an end to their mission, and Grassgreen recovered consciousness at a spot some miles from the moated house! (Now read on.)

A SHOCK FOR GRASSGREEN

HORACE GRASSGREEN had made himself comfortable in the best inn in Ashleythorpe, and, having recovered from the shock to his nerves, he was as boastful as ever.

"The fellows who played me such a trick had better look out for themselves when I meet them face to face!" he said, as he sat at breakfast.

He had an audience of one, the landlord, a simple-minded fellow, who firmly believed that next to the King, the chief of the Bow Street Runners was the most important personage in the land.

"It is a wonder to me that they had the audacity to do it," he replied in awed tones. "It's enough to make a man turn pale to think of it."

"So let them tremble!" Grassgreen said, rapping the handle of his knife on the table. "Let them shake and shiver in their shoes! Let them— This bacon is very fine; let me have two more rashers as soon as they can be cooked."

"Certainly, worthy sir," the landlord replied. "It is quite an honour to hear a gentleman like you praise the bacon. I cured it myself."

Now, Grassgreen the lordly, in spite of his having come down a peg, had made up his mind to enjoy himself. As he moved his chair a little nearer to the fire his mind travelled to Bow Street, and he laughed softly, and stirred up the logs so that they sent huge tongues of flame and a myriad of sparks up the chimney.

"I'd much rather be here than there," he said. "It is time, however, that I concocted some kind of a letter, or I shall have some prying fool coming down."

He had not the remotest notion that Justice Drake had gone to London, nor did he dream of the possibility of Moses Spouts putting in an appearance at Ashleythorpe. But he was coming—yes, he was coming, and was very close now, for Grassgreen had put some extra hours in bed, and it was almost noontide when he sat down to breakfast.

"There's a carriage coming down the street," said the landlord, as he came in with the rashers on a dish and a hot plate covering them.

"A carriage!" repeated Grassgreen interestedly.

"Yes, and it looks as if it was going to stop here."

"Some nobleman, perchance," said Grassgreen. "Landlord, don't let him go away without being introduced to me. Tell him that Mr. Grassgreen, chief of the Bow Street—the celebrated Bow Street constables is here, and that he would deem it an honour to speak to his lordship."

"But if he happens to be a common man just like myself?"

"Then," said Grassgreen, sticking his fork into the largest rasher, "there will be no reason to say anything at all!"

Grassgreen was on the alert, and as the carriage stopped he went to the window, and rubbing off some mist from the glass, peered through it.

"Oh, only Drake," he sneered. "Pooh! I have nearly had enough of that fellow. If he comes here with the notion of disturbing me at my meals, why, confound his impudence— But—but who is this? By Mars and Jupiter! Can it be? Yes—no! It is! It's Moses Spouts!"

Of course, Moses Spouts it was.

Grassgreen had no eyes for the other men that half-tumbled out of the carriage, and stood in the snow, stretching their legs and banging their hands on their shoulders.

But he heard Justice Drake say: "Where is that man Grassgreen? Take me to him at once," and his face grew positively crimson.

The door opened, and in walked the magistrate and Moses Spouts.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Grassgreen, bracing himself up for the encounter.

"Ask him," replied Spouts, pointing to Justice Drake, who, without losing a moment, proceeded to explain.

Not a word could Grassgreen get in edgeways. Fifty times, boiling over with rage, he tried to interrupt, but the magistrate silenced him each time with a commanding movement of the hand.

"So," said Drake, in conclusion, "you see

how matters stand, and as you are not likely to be much use here, the best thing you can do is to get back to Bow Street as fast as you can."

"This to me!" Grassgreen cried, turning all sorts of colours. "This to me, a man holding a high office!"

"Don't put it on my shoulders," said Moses Spouts, "so you needn't glare at me as if you'd like to eat me. Justice Drake is responsible for his own words."

"I am," said the magistrate. "Why in the name of wonder, did you, who cannot identify Dick Turpin, come down here, wasting time and public money? I'll send an account of these proceedings to the government, and, mind you, I shall not mince my words while I am about it."

"Your—your worship need not lose your temper," stammered Grassgreen. "I did what I thought would be best, for I was following Turpin up. Anyone would think that I had come down to this beastly hole for a holiday. Spouts, whom have you left in charge?"

"Mister Chalkchop," answered Moses Spouts.

"Who the deuce is Mr. Chalkchop?" gasped Grassgreen.

"The man at the head of affairs of Bloomsbury and Marylebone."

"Oh, yes, I have heard of him," said Grassgreen, with both hands clutching the top of his disturbed head. "Well, what is your scheme?"

"I haven't formed one, and I can't until I have seen the covies at the two houses Justice Drake talks about," Spouts replied. "At all events, if Turpin is here, he is as



Bullets sang close past Dick Turpin's head! He drew his pistols as he swung round in the saddle!

good as jailed. Deal have sent some men who know every inch of the country to look out for a gentleman on a black mare. As for the others," snapping his fingers, "I don't care a fig about 'em at present!"

"What, not for your old friend Jem Peters I have heard you speak of so often?"

"No, not even for him," Spouts replied. "With Turpin out of the way, the rest of the gang will go off with a bang like a paper-bag."

Grassgreen plucked up courage.

"I take my orders from no one in the county of Kent," he said, trying to stare Justice Drake out of countenance. "Moses Spouts, instead of going back, I will stay and help you."

"That is your own lookout," Drake replied; "but as the despised county of Kent will no doubt be called upon to defray the expenses of this little entertainment, I warn you not to apply to the magistrates for a single penny, for the answer you'd receive would not be at all pleasing to a man with sensitive feelings."

"Nevertheless, I stay, and there is an end of it!" said Grassgreen.

THE ICE-TRAP!

WHILE matters of such importance as above were being discussed at the inn, there passed through the village a tall, young maidservant, with a thick shawl over her shoulders and a wicker basket on her arm.

"It is the girl from the moated house," said Justice Drake, observing her through the window.

"The 'girl' . . . actually Dick Turpin's young friend, Flick . . . gave the inn a casual glance, and passed on to the general shop. There he made sundry purchases, and, with his basket well filled, returned, scarcely looking to right or left.

As he entered the moated house so Dick Turpin left it, riding Black Bess straight for the Deal Road, and, once upon it, they were soon out of sight.

Once Turpin turned to wave his hand. A handkerchief fluttered in response from a window, and then the highwayman was alone with his bonny black mare.

It was a typical winter's day. Light, in the true sense of the word, there was none. Never for a moment did the sun pierce the leaden vastness overhead, and the very sky seemed to be frozen.

Over and over again Black Bess, snuffing the keen air into her nostrils, tried to break into a gallop; but Turpin, remembering the treacherous state of the road, held her well in check, while he pretended to humour her.

"No, no, lass!" he said. "If you went down, there would be an end to both of us. Ice cuts worse than a knife. So steady—steady!"

But Black Bess seemed to have been warned of something, and, indeed, it is said of animals that they feel misfortune intuitively.

Thus it is that dogs howl and cattle low mournfully at the approach of sickness or danger.

And surely Black Bess had never been so restless. She threw her head from side to side, champed angrily at the bit, and was in such a disobedient mood that Turpin was inclined to give her a touch of the spur, just to remind her who was head of affairs.

Dark and lowering as was the sky, there were but a few flakes of snow in the air, dancing up and down as if they were too light to reach the earth, but another fall was coming.

The wind bellowing across the dreary downs, moaning through the valleys, and shrieking through the bare trees until they shook as if in fright, told that a terrific storm was at hand.

Dick knew it, too. An outdoor life at all times and in all sorts of weather had taught him to read the signs in the sky accurately.

"It will be on us in an hour," he said, glancing seawards. "I hope before it bursts the lads will be under cover."

He thought of them first, as he always did, and his unselfishness and devotion to his followers had endeared them to him in a manner that nothing but death could alter.

He had ridden some miles, when, loosening the reins for a moment, he leaned forward.

It was done in an unguarded moment, and nearly cost him an ugly fall, for Black Bess, taking it as a signal to gallop, bounded forward.

But Dick was too practised a horseman not to be ready for an emergency, and in a moment he was back again in the saddle, safe and sound.

"My fault, lass," he said cheerily. "Your master was nearly caught napping."

Above the wind there had risen a sound that Dick Turpin knew only too well to be the screech of a constable's whistle.

Where it came from he could not tell, but it put Dick on the alert, and he made up his mind to leave the road, where he could easily be seen.

Still, there was just the chance that his ears had deceived him.

Not a soul, not a living thing was in sight, save an old raven perched on a withered branch, thrust from a tree like a witch's staff.

The bird of ill omen croaked as Turpin rode under it, and hovered over him as he passed through an open gate into the fields.

enemy, and it was quite possible there were constables hidden among the trees in front of him.

Turpin drew his pistols in readiness, and, uttering a warning word to Black Bess to modify her pace, swung round in the saddle.

Ping! sang a bullet past his ear, and yet another whizzed so close to Black Bess that the mare threw up her head and swerved as if the messenger of death had pierced her side.

"My luck is against me," Dick thought. "I am being made a target of, but can see nothing to shoot at."

Crash! Bang!

Again and yet again came the spurts of flame and the ringing reports.

Then silence, which was presently broken by a shrill whistle.

"That is the signal to surround me," said Turpin. "Now, Bess, we must risk everything for a gallop. May the goddess of fortune be with us! So, forward, lass, and straight ahead!"

Never did steed answer more gamely to a call.



Jagged pieces of ice and a volume of water flew as Turpin and his brave mare went through! "We've got him now!" cried the constables.

Dick took his bearings. He knew that he must travel some miles out of his way, but anything was better than to fall into an ambush.

There was no repetition of the whistle, and Turpin, more at his ease, sent Black Bess along at such a pace that the blood was soon dancing in his veins again.

Out of the field he dipped into a wood, and beyond it lay what looked like a gentleman's park, with a background of dark trees.

The house was not visible, and Dick Turpin was wondering if it lay beyond the thicket, when from out of the trees to the left came three spurts of flame, accompanied by the explosions of as many pistols.

In a flash Turpin realised his deadly peril. Traps had been laid for him everywhere, and he was on the very threshold of one of them.

What was he to do? It was a question that meant life or death.

He had no notion of the strength of the

Black Bess had been fretting for her head, and, once she felt the reins relax, she bounded forward like a greyhound from the leash.

Straight as an arrow to where reeds and rushes, in spite of being broken and withered by the frost, still grew high.

Dick Turpin was too busily engaged with keeping his eyes open for the enemy to notice that the reeds denoted soft and yielding ground, if not of water.

Suddenly, to his alarm, Black Bess slipped and nearly fell.

"Great Heaven!" Dick cried. "The mare is on the ice!"

Black Bess, in attempting to get a holding with her feet, floundered badly.

Then came an explosion louder than the report of a musket.

Jagged pieces of ice and a volume of water flew upwards as Turpin and his brave mare went through.

Nature had laid a trap for Dick Turpin.

(Continued on next page.)

He had ridden the mare on a frozen lake, and he was caught and held firmer than chains or prison-walls could hold him.

As luck would have it, the water only came up to his waist, but the ice formed an impenetrable barrier against escape.

Black Bess snorted with fury, and then gave vent to a cry of anguish that was almost human.

"It's no use, lass," Dick said, patting her neck. "We must make the best of it. My pistols are wet, and I have nothing to rely on but my sword. Ah, here they come!"

Three burly constables, leaving the shelter of the trees, came lumbering along through the reeds and rushes, and reached the ice.

One bore a rope twisted round his arm, and forming a noose at the end, got nearer and nearer to Dick.

The second, crawling along on hands and knees, presented a pistol at Dick; while the third, raising a horn to his lips, awoke the echoes with a loud blast.

"We've got him now!" said the man with the rope. "I'll have this round his neck in a minute, then it will be all over with him!"

With blazing eyes, and fighting for her liberty, Black Bess' rage was terrible to see. She snapped her jaws, snorted defiance, and such was her fury that Dick thought she had gone mad.

"Steady, now," said the man with the rope. "Here goes to net a fish worth ten thousand guineas. Keep the horn going, Jodkins. Sound the signal for them covies to keep on the lookout in the wood, but I don't suppose that we shall require their help. Here goes! Belby, if I miss him and he tries to scramble on the ice, put a couple of ounces of lead in his head!"

He flung the heavy noose of rope. It struck Black Bess on the head, and she, rearing and plunging violently rolled sideways on the ice, and sent Dick Turpin sprawling.

Belby blazed away with his pistols, and missed, too, wherast the hornblower, seeing that Turpin was scrambling to his feet, took to his heels.

The mare's iron-shod feet were all against her.

She floundered and struggled as if wounded beyond all hope. But she was up at last, and Dick, so exhausted that he could hardly stand, got his left foot in the stirrup, and was swinging his right leg over the saddle, when the mare, believing that he had gained his seat, started, and sent him sprawling on his back.

Dick retained his sword in his half-frozen hand, but the vision of death was in his eyes.

Rolling over, he saw that the mare had reached the opposite side of the lake, and missing him, was turning back again.

But the faithful creature fell again, and lay groaning with despair on her side.

Turpin, however, had himself to look to, and seeing that Belby had reloaded his pistols and the man with the rope was coming on again, he leaped to his feet, determined now to die with his face to the foe.

"Down with him, Belby! Down with him!"

Belby fired again. Instinctively Turpin dropped on his knees, and was on his feet almost before the bullet had passed over his head.

It was the last time that Belby ever drew trigger. Turpin rushed at him. A deadly thrust with the flashing blade, and then he made for the man with the rope.

"Duty, good sir. I was only doing my duty," the man pleaded.

"And I am doing mine in removing an enemy from my path!" Dick cried. "Up on your feet, and die like a man!"

The man pushed himself backwards with his hands, his eyes, round and hollow with fright, glaring at Turpin.

He was looking into the face of death, but it was not at Turpin's hands that he was destined to meet his fate.

His knees reached the hole in the ice through which Dick Turpin and Black Bess had fallen, and he went over. The weight of his body swung him backwards.

"Save me!" he cried, as he clutched convulsively at the air. "Save me!"

Turpin would have found it hard work to lend a hand even to his dearest friend.

All round the hole the ice was cracked, and deep fissures appeared as the constable

strove to gain a footing. The mud threw him off his feet, and sent him sliding beneath the ice . . . and he appeared no more!

Turpin turned away quickly and, half-sliding, half-running, reached the mare.

"Up, lass, up!" he shouted, seizing the bridle rein. "There is hope yet, but we'll never see Dover again today. Up, I say, up! Do you not hear? The other bloodhounds are coming in full cry!"

Black Bess reached her knees, and, with a supreme effort, regained her feet, and staggered to the shore.

"Back to the house!" Dick cried. "It is our only chance. Steady, girl! Let there be no mistake this time. Now, now, do your best!"

The old fire seemed to have gone out of Black Bess, and she scrambled rather than galloped over the ground.

"On, on!" Turpin cried, looking over his shoulder. "The rabble comes!"

The report of a pistol pulled Black Bess together. Chilled to the bone with the icy water, dazed by the heavy falls she had sustained, it had seemed that she would sink beneath her master's weight.

But now she shook off the spell of agony and fright, and swept across the land leading to the road.

Obedient to the touch of the rein, she made for the moated house at a headlong gallop.

No thoughts of ruts and hidden ice were in Turpin's mind now. He must reach the house, change his clothes, and warm his blood, or perish with cold.

"Brave mare, keep on!" he cried. "Best friend and companion rob yonder wolves of their prey!"

The mare flung up her head and neighed.

Warmth and strength had returned to her. Once more the blood tingled and coursed through her veins. Her sides throbbed like pulses beneath her master's legs, and she seemed to fly over the snow-covered ground.

Dick Turpin took another look over his shoulder.

The pursuers were no longer in sight. Black Bess had outstripped them.

(Don't miss the continuation of this thrilling story in next week's KNOCKOUT.)

famous

INTERNATIONAL TEAMS 29

TURKEY

COLOURS - WHITE SHIRTS WITH RED STRIPE AND THE CRESCENT AND WHITE STAR.

WHITE SHORTS, BLACK STOCKINGS WITH RED TOPS.

FOOTBALL IS PLAYED IN TURKEY ALMOST THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

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XL25

VENGEANCE TRAIL

Peaceful Matt Marriott sought revenge when a herd of cattle driven by Andy Carper destroyed his farm, killing his parents and the father of his pal, Powder Horn. The day Matt bought a pair of guns in Dodge City, he was seen by Carper and his foreman, Clem Frost, and shooting started before Powder could get Matt's new guns out of the box. (Now read on.)



TARNATION! WHY DID THAT FOOL STOREMAN HAVE TO TIE THIS BOX SO TIGHTLY?



NO SIGN OF THE COMPLIMENTS BEIN' RETURNED, ANDY!

WELL, I AIN'T TAKIN' CHANCES SAY—LOOK AT THIS—THAT FELLOW MARRIOTT'S COMING OUT OF THE STORES!



WATCH YOUR STEP, MISTER. WE SHAN'T MISS NEXT TIME.

I'M UNARMED, CARPER. IF YOU WANT TO COMMIT ANOTHER MURDER—GO RIGHT AHEAD.



TAKE THIS AS A CLEAR WARNING. THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU SEE ME WITHOUT A GUN!



WHEN WE NEXT MEET—YOU ARE GOING TO PAY FOR THE THREE LIVES YOU TOOK!



LOOKS LIKE YOU BOYS HAVE GOT YOURSELVES A SHOOTING DATE.

SURE—AND IT'LL BE LIKE TAKIN' CANDY FROM A KID!

WHEN THEY REACHED THE FARM...



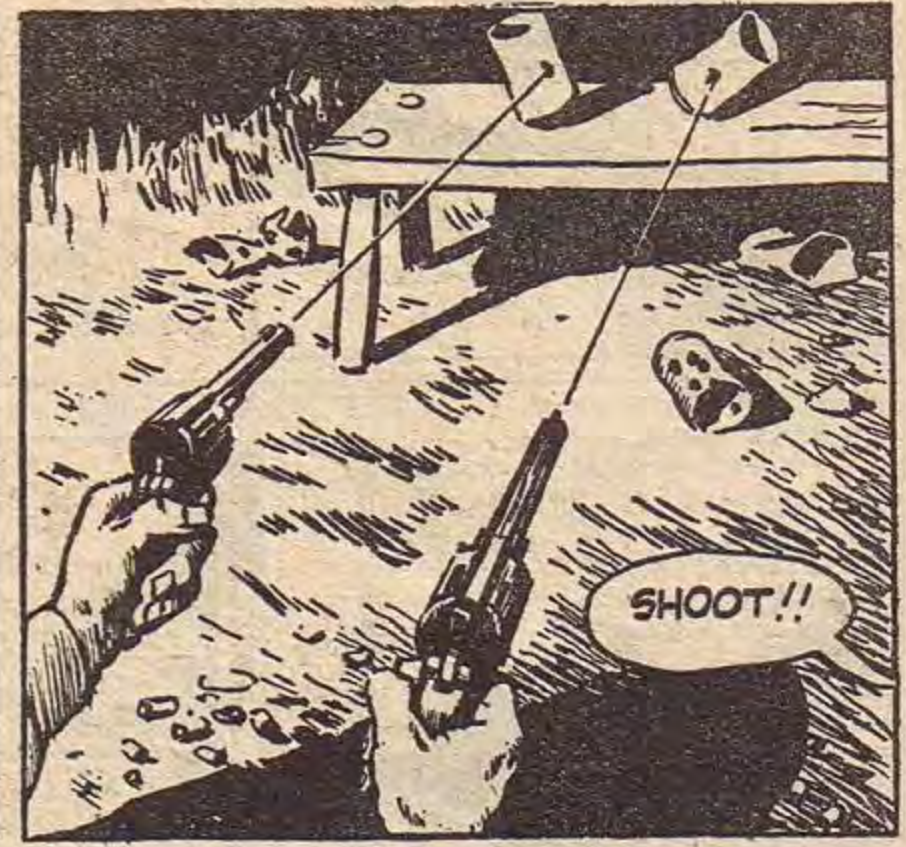
THIS PLACE IS NOT FOR ME NOW! WE'LL STAY ONLY AS LONG AS IT TAKES TO LEARN TO USE THESE.

SURE, MATT—BUT LEARN YOUR LESSONS GOOD—YOU DON'T MAKE MISTAKES TWICE IN THE GUN GAME.

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED MATT MARRIOTT SHOWED HIMSELF TO BE AN APT PUPIL...



DRAW!



SHOOT!!

POWDER GAVE MATT THE EXPERIENCE OF FACING FAST DRAWING...



MORE TRAINING AND MORE TRAINING, UNTIL...



BLAZES, YOU BEAT ME—YOU BEAT ME!

YOU'VE MADE IT, MATT. YOU'RE SLICKER THAN GREASED LIGHTNIN' WITH THEM GUNS.



TOMORROW WE'RE GOING INTO DODGE TO FACE CARPER!

At last, Matt Marriott is ready to challenge his enemy! See what happens next week!

BILLY BUNTER



**THE HEAVYWEIGHT
CHUMP OF HIS SCHOOL**

BAH! THOSE LUCKY SIXTH FORM BEASTS HAVE GOT THE DAY OFF! WONDER WHAT'S UP WITH OLD MR. PROUT?

MR. PROUT WILL BE UNABLE TO TAKE THE SIXTH FORM TODAY. ALL SIXTH FORM BOYS WILL BE EXCUSED LESSONS.

POOR MR. PROUT CANNOT TAKE THE SIXTH FORM LESSONS TODAY, DR. LOCKE! HE IS A NERVOUS WRECK!

HM! PROUT HAS BEEN READING TOO MANY OF THOSE RUBBISHY HORROR BOOKS AND LISTENING TO THOSE RADIO GHOST STORIES.

IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN THESE FOOLISH HORROR BOOKS TO WRECK MY IRON NERVES, SIR!

I SHOULD THINK SO TOO, QUELCH!

NO LESSONS FOR YOU SIXTH-FORM BOYS TODAY! YOU WILL BE SORRY TO HEAR YOUR POOR MASTER IS UNFIT FOR DUTY!

OH, YES! WE'RE EVER SO SORRY! YIPPEE!

NO DOUBT YOU WISH I WAS UNFIT FOR DUTY TOO, EH, BUNTER? GET TO YOUR FORM ROOM AT ONCE, BOY!

4TH FORM

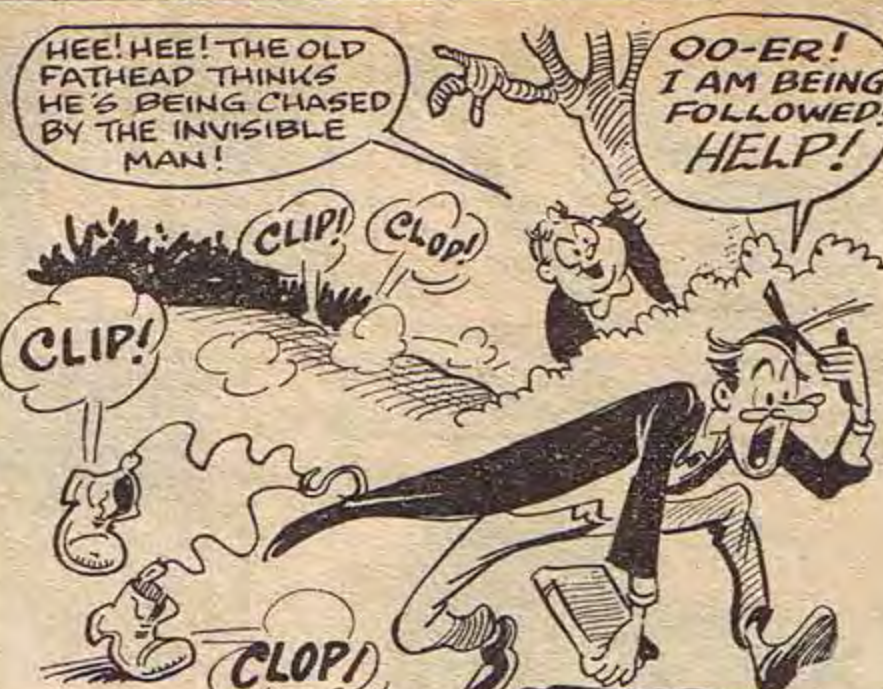
GR! IF ONLY I COULD SCARE QUELCH ENOUGH TO KEEP THE BEAST OFF DUTY!

THAT EVENING THE ARTFUL BUNTER STARTED HIS TERROR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UNSUSPECTING QUELCH.

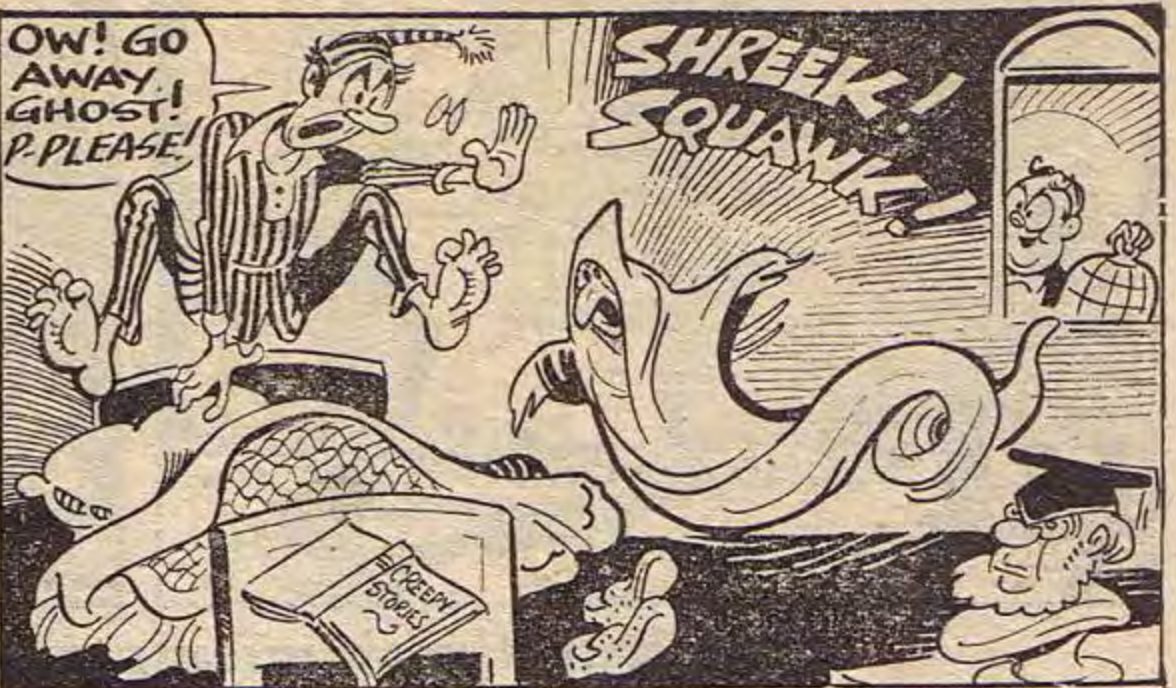
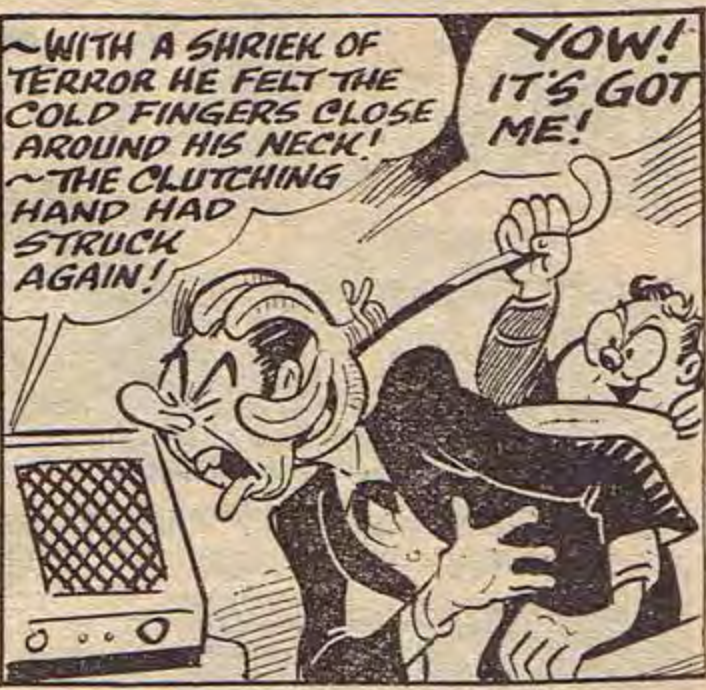
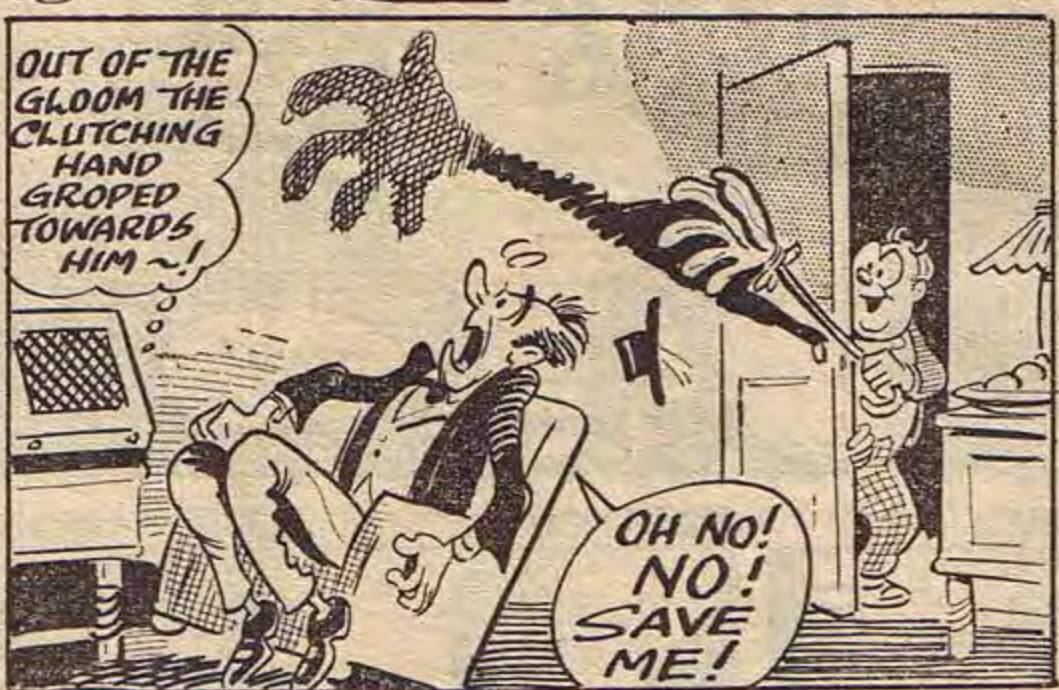
SUDDENLY THE VICTIM HEARD STRANGE FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND HIM!

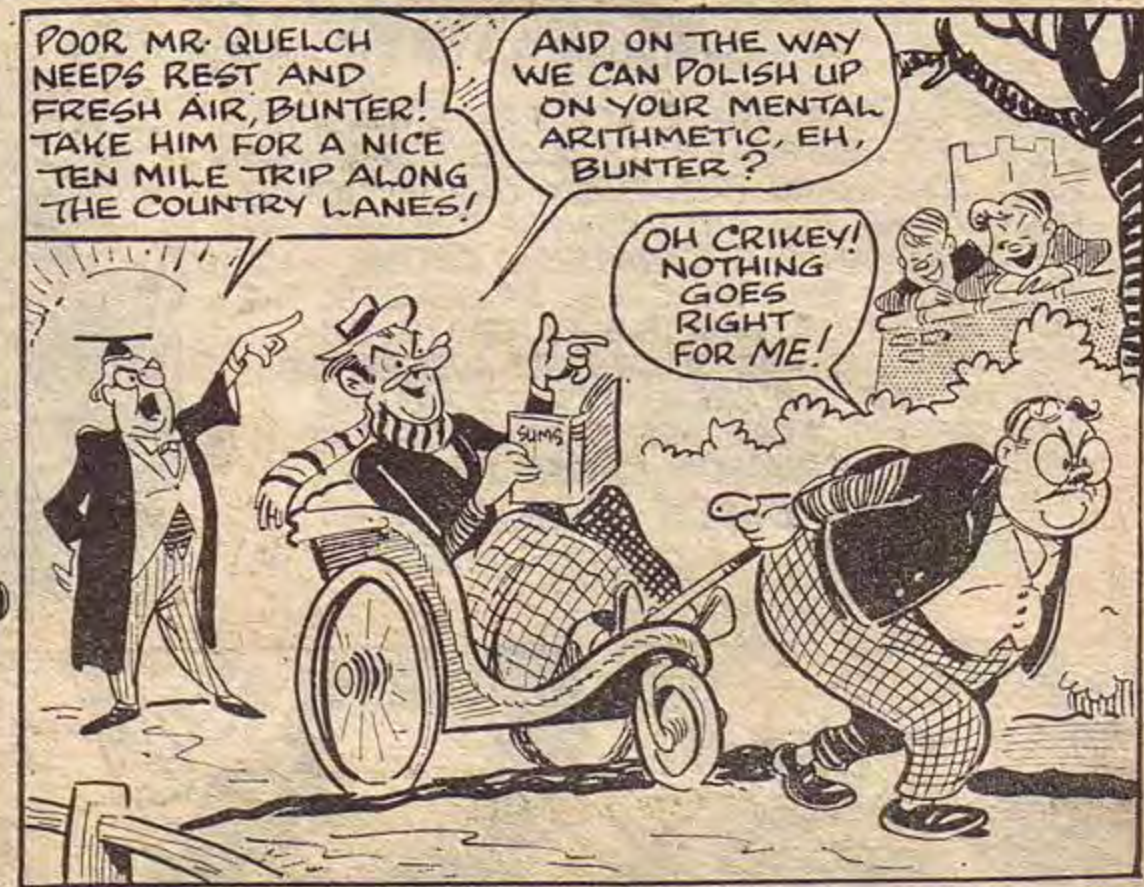
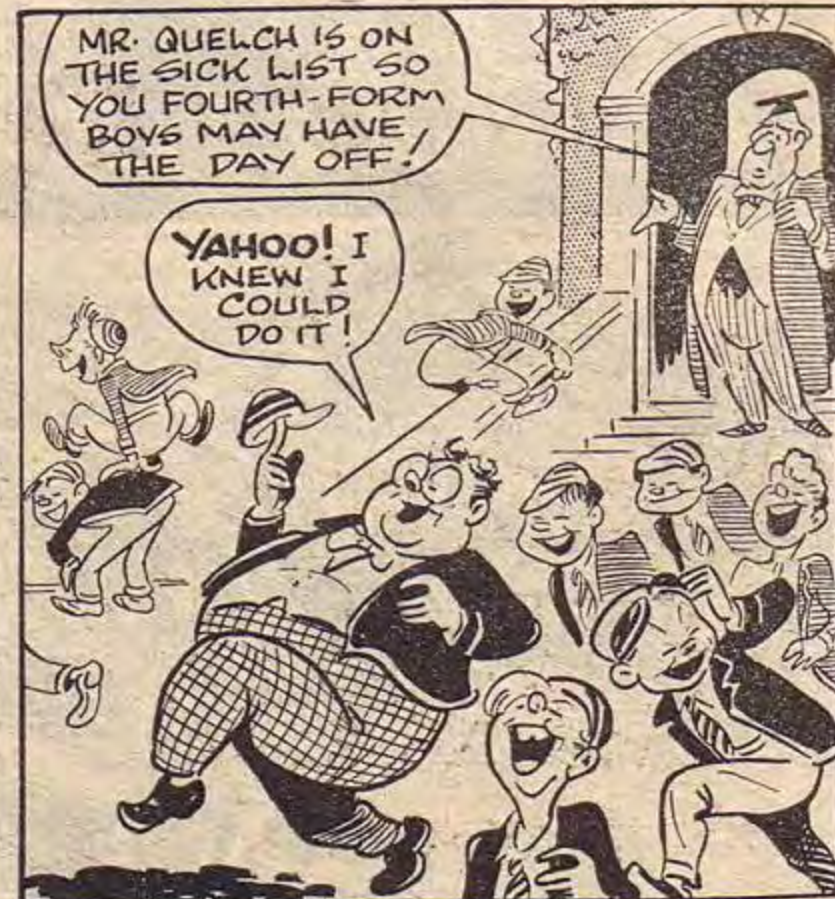
HEE! HEE! I'LL HOOK A PAIR OF THE GARDENERS' CLOTHOPPERS ON HIS GOWN!

SPOOKY LANE.



OO-ER! I AM BEING FOLLOWED! HELP!





Which only "ghost" to prove it doesn't pay to be too big a little horror!

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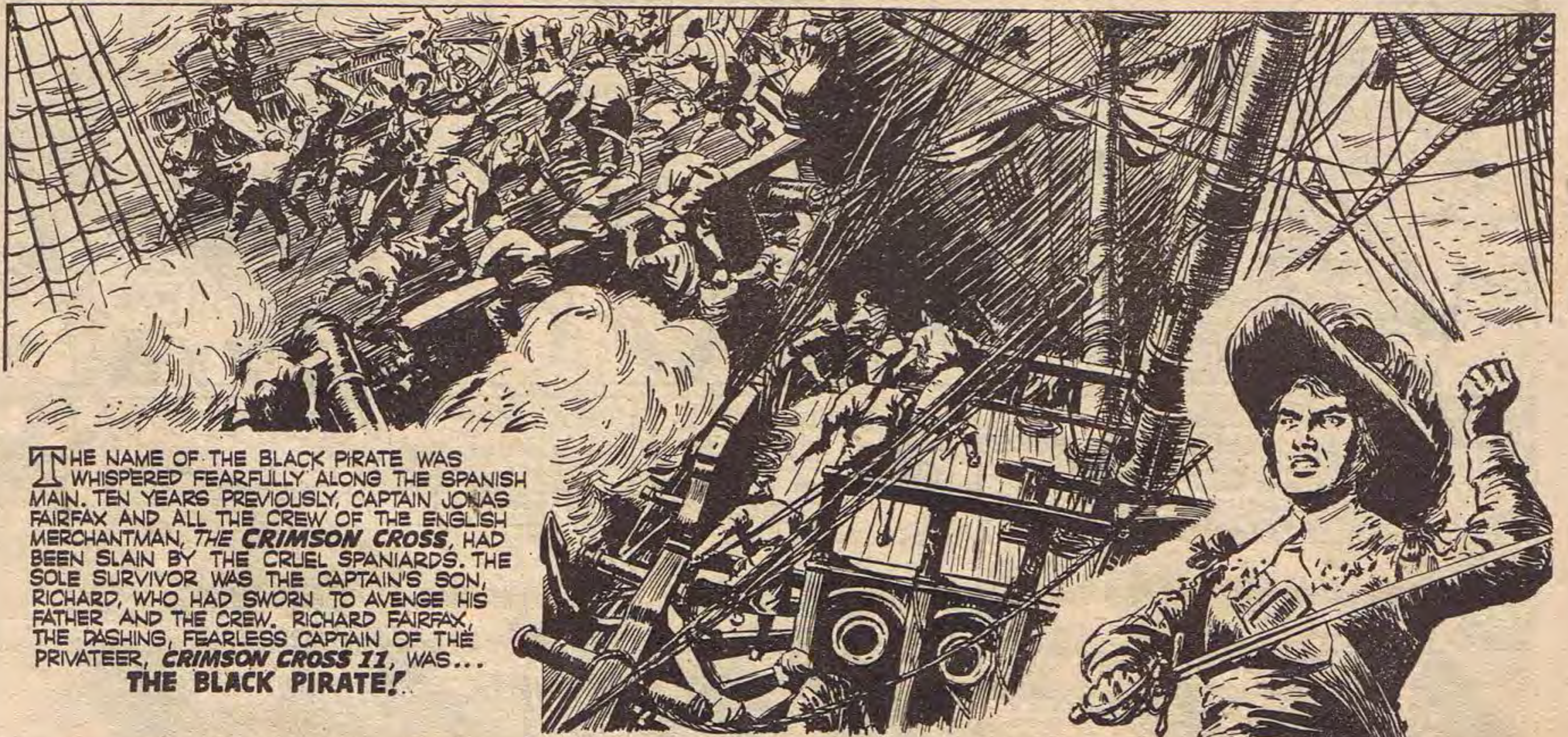
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BUNTER'S
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THE BEST**

TUCK-BOXES ARE WON—JUST FOR FUN! SEND IN YOUR BEST JOKE TODAY!

THE BLACK PIRATE



THE NAME OF THE BLACK PIRATE WAS WHISPERED FEARFULLY ALONG THE SPANISH MAIN. TEN YEARS PREVIOUSLY, CAPTAIN JONAS FAIRFAX AND ALL THE CREW OF THE ENGLISH MERCHANTMAN, **THE CRIMSON CROSS**, HAD BEEN SLAIN BY THE CRUEL SPANIARDS. THE SOLE SURVIVOR WAS THE CAPTAIN'S SON, RICHARD, WHO HAD SWORN TO AVENGE HIS FATHER AND THE CREW. RICHARD FAIRFAX, THE DASHING, FEARLESS CAPTAIN OF THE PRIVATEER, **CRIMSON CROSS II**, WAS...
THE BLACK PIRATE!



IN VAIN DID THE SPANISH CAPTAIN, WHOSE SHIP WAS NOW A SINKING HULK, PROTEST TO RICHARD FAIRFAX THAT SPAIN AND ENGLAND WERE NOW AT PEACE.

"SPAIN AND ENGLAND MAY BE AT PEACE... BUT SPAIN AND I ARE AT WAR!" CRIED RICHARD. "TEN YEARS AGO I VOWED ON MY FATHER'S SWORD THAT I WOULD FIND THE FIENDS WHO SLEW HIM AND HIS CREW. AND, BY HEAVEN, I'LL FIND THOSE SPANISH DOGS IF I HAVE TO SINK EVERY SHIP OF SPAIN WHICH CROSSES MY PATH!"

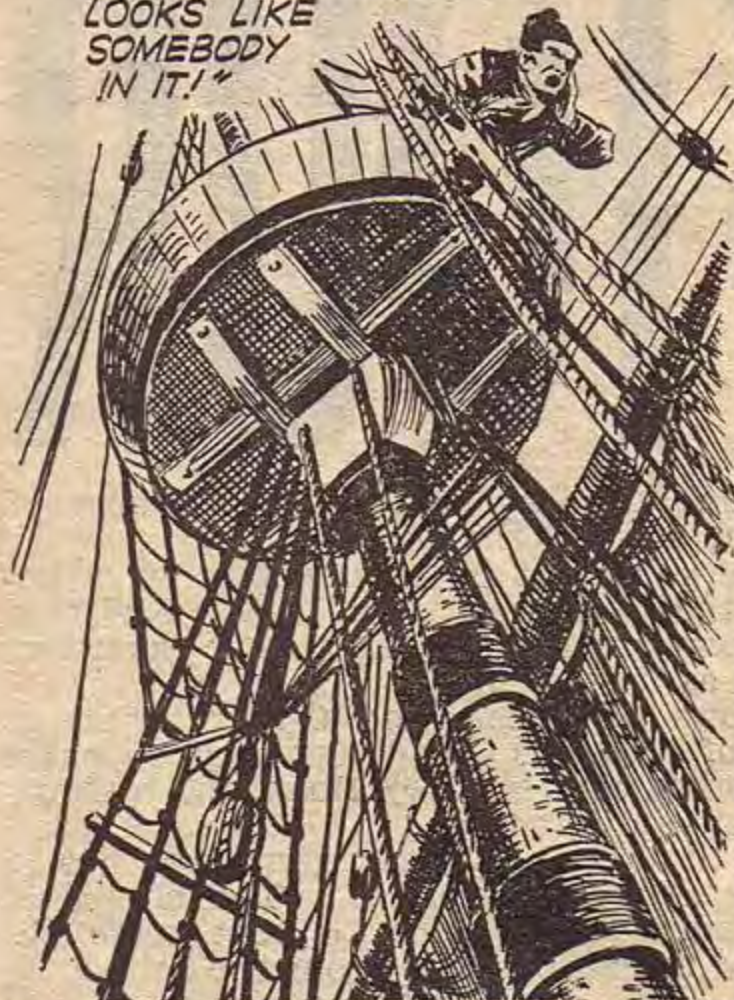


WHEN THE **CRIMSON CROSS** REACHED HISPANIOLA, THE ISLAND HEADQUARTERS OF ALL THE BUCCANEERS OF THE SPANISH MAIN, RICHARD HEARD OF A NEW PORT THE SPANISH HAD BUILT TO SHIP GOLD TO SPAIN.



A SPANISH FLEET WAS ASSEMBLING AT THE NEW PORT OF EL SANTARO... THE **CRIMSON CROSS** SET SAIL ON THE NEXT TIDE!

TWO DAYS OUT, THERE
CAME A LOUD CRY FROM THE
LOOK-OUT. "CANOE AHEAD
ON THE PORT BOW, CAP'N.
LOOKS LIKE
SOMEBODY
IN IT!"



THERE, DRIFTING
HELPLESSLY IN A
WATER-LOGGED
CANOE, WAS AN
EXHAUSTED
INDIAN BOY.

THE **CRIMSON CROSS**
SWEEP ALONGSIDE
AND THE BOY TRIED
DESPERATELY
TO SCRAMBLE
ABOARD...



...BUT A
WAVE
SMASHED
THE CANOE
AGAINST THE
SHIP'S SIDE...
AND THE INDIAN
WAS HURLED
INTO THE
SHARK-INFESTED
SEA!

EVEN AS THE SINISTER
SHAPES SLID TOWARDS
THE STRUGGLING BOY,
A FIGURE SLICED
DOWN FROM
THE DECK
ABOVE IN
A DEATH
DEFYING
DIVE!

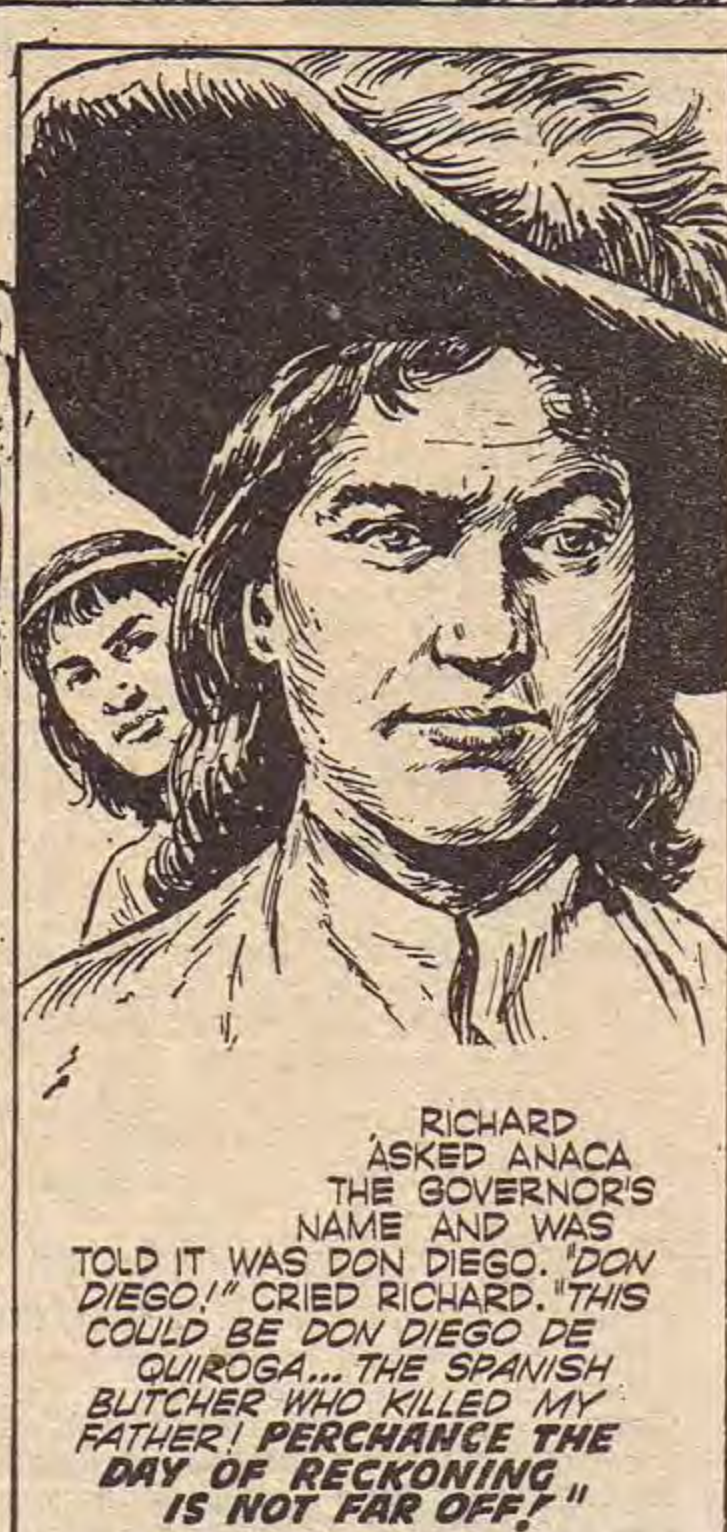


RICHARD'S STRONG
ARM SCOOPED
THE TERRIFIED
INDIAN LAD
FROM THE
SNAPPING
JAWS OF
DEATH...

...AND WILLING HANDS HAULED THEM UP TO SAFETY.



AS SOON
AS HE HAD
RECOVERED, THE
INDIAN STAMMERED
OUT HIS THANKS.
"I AM ANACA AND
HAVE ESCAPED
FROM THE
SPANIARDS WHO
HAVE KILLED
MANY OF MY
PEOPLE, AT EL SANTARO.
THE SPANISH
GOVERNOR ACCUSED
US FALSELY OF
HIDING GOLD."



RICHARD
ASKED ANACA
THE GOVERNOR'S
NAME AND WAS
TOLD IT WAS DON DIEGO. "DON
DIEGO!" CRIED RICHARD. "THIS
COULD BE DON DIEGO DE
QUIROGA... THE SPANISH
BUTCHER WHO KILLED MY
FATHER! PERCHANCE THE
DAY OF RECKONING
IS NOT FAR OFF!"

Thrills galore in next week's instalment of this grand story. Buy **KNOCKOUT** regularly!

THE FIGHTING FOUR

By Owen Conquest

When Jimmy Silver was a new boy at Rookwood School he soon learned of the keen rivalry which existed between the Classics and the Moderns.

Being a member of the Classical side himself, he won popularity when he scored over Tommy Dodd and Co. of the Modern side.

Later, his courage and good sportsmanship earned him the admiration and friendship of many, including Lovell, Raby, and Newcome, his study mates.

The latter trio had formerly been known as the Fistical Three, but with the addition of Jimmy Silver they were recognised as the Fighting Four!

And in time, Jimmy became Captain of the Fourth Form. (Now read on.)

FAG WANTED

"O H, rotten!" Jimmy Silver glanced round as he heard that irritated exclamation.

Catesby of the Sixth Form was standing in the old gateway of Rookwood, with a letter in his hand and a decidedly ill-tempered expression on his face.

He did not observe the junior, his eyes were fixed upon the letter in his hand, the contents of which apparently did not please him.

Jimmy Silver was waiting for his chums, Lovell, Raby and Newcome; the Fighting Four being bound upon a little excursion that afternoon.

"Rotten!" repeated Catesby. "Why the dickens can't he come here? And why does he want to spring it on me at the last minute like this?"

And the Sixth-Former gave a dissatisfied grunt.

"Ahem!" coughed Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy thought it best to let the Modern senior know that he was there.

Catesby looked round quickly as he heard the cough.

"Silver!" he rapped out.

"Hello!" said Jimmy.

"I want you to cut down to Coombe for me."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Sorry, Catesby! I'm going out for the afternoon with some chaps."

"You're going down to Coombe for me!" roared Catesby.

Jimmy's face set obstinately.

Modern seniors, prefects or not, had no right to fag juniors of the Classical side, and Jimmy Silver was a stickler for his rights.

Besides, he was booked for that afternoon, and he did not feel inclined to throw over his own arrangements to please the bully of the Sixth.

"I want you to take a note," continued Catesby. "I've got to get off now, somewhere. I'll write the note here, and you can scam with it."

"Better call some Modern fag!" suggested Jimmy.

"No time."

Catesby took out his pocket-book, and scribbled on a page, and tore it out. Then he put it in an envelope and sealed the flap.

The junior watched him coolly. Jimmy had no intention whatever of fagging that afternoon for the Modern senior.

"There you are," said Catesby, holding out the sealed note. "Take that down to Coombe, Silver. You'll find a man waiting by the stile—"

"I don't think I shall find him, Catesby."

"Eh! Why not?"

"Because I'm not going!"

Catesby gritted his teeth, and made a stride towards the Classical junior.

At the same time Lovell, Raby and Newcome came up and joined Jimmy in the gateway.

The Modern prefect paused.

"One of you kids can take this note, if you like," he said.

"Can't be done," said Lovell. "We're going out."

The Fighting Four walked out of the gates. They had not time to waste on Moderns—senior or junior.

Catesby made an angry rush after them. He grabbed Jimmy Silver by the collar, and swung him round.

"You cheeky little worm! Stop when I tell you!" he shouted.

"Leggo, you bully!" howled Jimmy.

"Take this note—"

"Blow your note! I won't take it!"

Catesby shook him violently.

"Let go, or I'll biff you, Catesby!" shouted Jimmy Silver, clenching his hands hard.

Shake!

Biff!

Jimmy Silver hit out, and Catesby received his clenched fist on the chest.

He gasped, and released his hold, staggering back. Jimmy, with his hands up, faced him fearlessly, his chums rushing to his side at once.

Catesby sprang forward again. But before he could hurl himself on Jimmy Silver, Bulkeley of the Sixth came striding up.

The captain of Rookwood pushed Catesby back.

"Now, what's the row?" demanded Bulkeley.

"That young cad struck me," snarled Catesby. "You must have seen him!"

"I saw you shaking him, too," said Bulkeley quietly. "What's the matter?"

"Catesby wants us to fag for him, and we're not going to!" shouted Lovell wrathfully.

"Is that the trouble, Catesby?" asked Bulkeley, frowning.

"Suppose it is?" snarled Catesby.

"Well, you are in the wrong, then, and you've no right to bully Silver," said the Rookwood captain sharply. "You've no right whatever to fag the Classical side, and you know it. If you want Silver to do anything for you, you must ask him."

"I'll wring his neck!" howled Catesby.

"You won't!" said Bulkeley. He made a sign to the juniors. "Cut off!"

"You bet!" answered Jimmy gratefully.

The Fighting Four walked cheerfully out of the gates.

Catesby scowled as he watched them go.

"I'll remember this, Bulkeley!" he muttered.

He turned from the gateway and strode into the quadrangle. Leggett of the Modern Fourth was lounging lazily in the stone archway of Little Quad, and Catesby called to him.

Catesby handed him the note with his instructions, and Leggett nodded and walked off with it. Then the prefect looked at his watch again, and uttered an angry exclamation. He had lost a good deal of time in the argument with Jimmy Silver and Co.

"Confound it!" he muttered. "Uncle James will be mad if I keep him waiting! Why the thunder couldn't he come here? Oh, rotten! Hang it!"

And in that amiable mood Catesby of the Sixth strode away from Rookwood, cutting across the fields at a great rate.

CORNERED!

JIMMY SILVER and Co. were proceeding at a trot, feeling it would be wise to keep at a respectful distance from Catesby that afternoon.

They did not want any fresh trouble with

Stephen Catesby after the Rookwood captain was off the scene.

Also, going out of bounds was an enterprise that was best kept dark. Not that there was any harm in their little excursion, as far as that went.

Fellows like Peele and Gower would go out of bounds to visit questionable characters, such as Joey Hook, the billiards sharper, at Coombe.

But that kind of shady game was not in Jimmy Silver's line at all. The chums of the Fourth were going to visit some old ruins a couple of miles from the school.

The reeling walls and tottering fragments of roof were decidedly dangerous to explore, for which reason Doctor Chisholm, the headmaster of Rookwood, had declared: "Woodend Lodge is out of bounds!"

It was a wise decision of the Head; but the juniors, curious to see the old place, did not quite agree with him.

"Here we are!" said Jimmy Silver at last.

The juniors had followed a footpath through the wood, and they came out on the ruins, glimmering in the afternoon sunshine.

"May as well go inside," said Raby.

The juniors entered through the great doorway. Inside, the sunlight fell on the broken masonry. It was difficult to tell where the separate rooms had existed, so complete was the ruin.

Suddenly Jimmy Silver let out a cry of alarm.

"Gosh! That Modern bully has tracked us down, after all!"

Jimmy was glancing through a ruined window. From the footpath, in the distance, Catesby of the Sixth had come in sight, striding straight towards the ruins.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Lovell, in dismay. "This means a report to the Head!"

"How on earth did he guess we were coming here?" grunted Raby.

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"Keep out of sight," he muttered. "He may not know we're here. He may only be coming to see the place, same as we did."

"Well, that's so," agreed Lovell, relieved.

The Fourth-Formers kept carefully in cover, peering out cautiously at the prefect as he came on.

They realised now that their excursion was rather a more serious matter than they had thought. They had come there carelessly enough, but it now dawned on them that, if the matter was reported to the Head, they would be in real trouble.

They watched Stephen Catesby anxiously. He was looking about him, and they wondered whether he was searching for them.

But he hardly glanced at the ruins.

Jimmy Silver remembered now that he had heard Catesby muttering over his letter—something about somebody he was to meet, and who he thought might as well have come to Rookwood.

Was this the place of the appointment?

Catesby stopped at last, a dozen yards from the ruins. He stood there looking about him.

"He's waiting for somebody," Lovell whispered, with a perplexed look. "He's not after us, Jimmy."

Jimmy shook his head.

"Some appointment with his precious sporting pals," grunted Raby. "It's pretty well known that Catesby knows Hook and his gang at Coombe."

"Can't be that! Why should they come as far as this to meet Catesby?"

"Oh, I give up!"

"Well, he's not after us, that's one comfort," murmured Newcome. "So long as we lie low, we'll be O.K."

"Hello! There comes the other johnny!" muttered Lovell.

From a different path through the wood a man appeared in sight—a tall, middle-aged man, dressed in a well-cut overcoat and smart grey felt hat.

Catesby waved his hand, and moved off to meet him.

"Gosh!" murmured Lovell, in blank amazement. "That's Catesby's uncle. I've seen him at Rookwood, when he's been visiting the twerp. What on earth are they meeting here for?"

"May have come down for Catesby to show him over these blessed ruins," suggested Newcome.

"Oh, rot! He wouldn't take the trouble."

"Blest if I see what else it can be," said Lovell. "I think we'd better get out of sight, in case they come in."

"Mind how you move! That wall may come down!"

"Careful!"

"They're coming this way! Quiet—they'll hear you!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

In a very unenviable frame of mind, the chums of the Fourth stood quite still. Voices came clearly to their ears from outside.

Catesby and his uncle had stopped nearby, and only a few yards separated them from the Four—with a tottering wall and a heap of broken stone in between!

A BAFFLING MYSTERY

CATESBY'S voice sounded irritable as it came to the ears of the four juniors. The Rookwood prefect was not in a good humour.

"Couldn't you have come to the school, Uncle James? I really don't see the necessity for coming here at all—miles out of the way!"

A cold, quiet, smooth voice replied—a voice that the juniors instinctively did not like.

"There was a reason for it, Steve."

"I'm blest if I can see it!"

"I did not wish anyone to be aware that I had visited you, Stephen."

Jimmy Silver and Co. looked at one another uncomfortably as they heard that.

"But why—ever—" began the Rookwood prefect, in astonishment.

"There is a reason," cut in the voice of his uncle. "You told me in your letter of these ruins, so I thought it was a good spot to meet, as you mentioned that it was placed out of bounds for the school."

"Yes, that's right enough, if you don't want any Rookwood fellow to see you," answered Catesby, in wonder. "But I don't see why not. You've visited me at Rookwood before."

"The matter is different now," answered James Catesby quietly. "But take a glance into the building, Stephen; someone may be there."

"Oh, the place is quite deserted," answered Catesby carelessly. "I've been here some time, and I've seen no one."

"Very good! Step into the doorway," said Mr. Catesby.

"It's very rough in there."

"Never mind that."

They crunched over the fallen stone, so that the remaining portions of the doorway hid them from the view of anyone who might pass.

Catesby was growing more and more surprised and impatient. But he had to keep his feelings within bounds. He did not care to quarrel with his relative. Mr. Catesby was a wealthy gentleman, director of half a dozen companies, and was good for generous "tips."

"I dare say you are surprised, Stephen," said the elder man.

"Well, yes, Uncle."

"Never mind that. You are to keep secret the fact that you have met me today. Mention it to no one—in fact, forget it yourself."

"You gave me a hint in your letter," said Catesby. "I've not spoken to anyone about it. Why didn't you write in the usual way?"

"I thought it safer to send a lad from the village with the note," answered Mr. Catesby. "The post is sometimes unreliable, in these days, and one cannot be too careful."

"You speak as if it were some awful secret, Uncle," said Catesby, in growing astonishment.

"It is not an awful secret, Stephen; but it is a secret. A great deal depends upon it—how, I need not explain to you. You

have, I believe, a study to yourself at Rookwood?"

"Yes. All the seniors have."

"Quite so. You have some receptacle in your study that is perfectly safe, and never opened by anyone but yourself?"

"Yes; there's a locker, where I keep—some things."

Catesby had nearly said "cigarettes," but he stopped in time.

"Only one key?"

"Yes."

"Good! I wish you to take charge of some papers for me, Stephen, and place them in a safe place, and keep that place locked very carefully."

"Oh!" said the Rookwood prefect, in astonishment.

"They are rather valuable papers, Stephen, connected with some business I have in hand, and I do not care to keep them in London. Will you take charge of the papers?"



Jimmy Silver hit out, and Catesby received his clenched fist on his chest. He gasped and released his hold as he staggered back.

"I'll do it with pleasure, Uncle."

"Very well then, here they are."

The financier handed his nephew a thick, sealed, heavy envelope.

"By gad, it weighs a bit!" said Catesby.

"Only papers?"

"Yes, legal papers. Put it out of sight."

Catesby slid the envelope into the inside pocket of his coat.

"It's safe there, Uncle."

"Very good! Mind, no eyes but your own are to see it, and get it locked up as quickly as possible. How are you off for money, Stephen?" asked Mr. Catesby, changing the subject abruptly.

"Hard up, as usual," said Catesby, with a smile.

"No reason why you should be pushed for money, my boy, I suppose two fivers would be very useful to you?"

"By gad, I should say so!"

"Well, I have brought them for you."

"I say, you're awfully good, Uncle!" said Catesby in amazed delight.

He had expected two or three pounds, at the most.

"Not at all, my boy. By the way, how do you get on with George Bulkeley? He is in your Form I believe?"

"Yes; he's head of the Sixth and captain of Rookwood," said Catesby. "I don't pull with him very well."

"Really, you should try to do so, as his father is my partner," said Mr. Catesby, a little severely.

"Ye-es, but—"

"You don't like him?"

"Well, no. You see, he's a Classical, and we Moderns are rather up against the Classical side. My pal, Knowles, is generally against Bulkeley, and I back him up. We don't consider we get a fair show in games, for one thing. Some of us think that Knowles ought to be captain of Rookwood."

"If Bulkeley left—"

"Oh, Knowles would get in as skipper then!" said Catesby. "I wish he would. It would be ever so much better for me and my set."

"Such a thing may happen," said Mr. Catesby.

"Eh! Why should Bulkeley leave?" exclaimed Catesby. "Is his father thinking of taking him away?"

"Possibly he may have to do so," answered Mr. Catesby dryly. "Of course, not a word about this, Stephen. I know I can rely on your discretion."

"Yes, rather," said Catesby.

"I will get back to the station now. Don't leave here till I have been gone ten minutes; it will be better. Goodbye."

Catesby of the Sixth stood staring after his uncle blankly.

"Well, my hat!" he gasped aloud. "This beats it—beats it hollow! What's all the dashed mystery about?"

He was puzzled, but he was feeling very contented when he sauntered away at last from the ruins, with the mysterious package safely concealed inside his coat.

(Be sure to buy next week's **KNOCKOUT**, and learn more about the strange mystery surrounding George Bulkeley.)

KNOCKOUT'S QUIZ ROUNDABOUT

Jumble

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

WHAT THE LITTLE MOUSE WHO WASN'T FEELING WELL HAD!

HA HA



Cartoon Clue

7
10

Print the SURPRISE ANSWER here

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 4 and 6 letters in the Surprise Answer space at the bottom.

(For solution see page 18.)

SKINVE SHARP BLADES

4 8

MUBLJE THIS GAME

2

TWUNAL A TREE

1 7

INTQUA DAINILY ODD

6 9

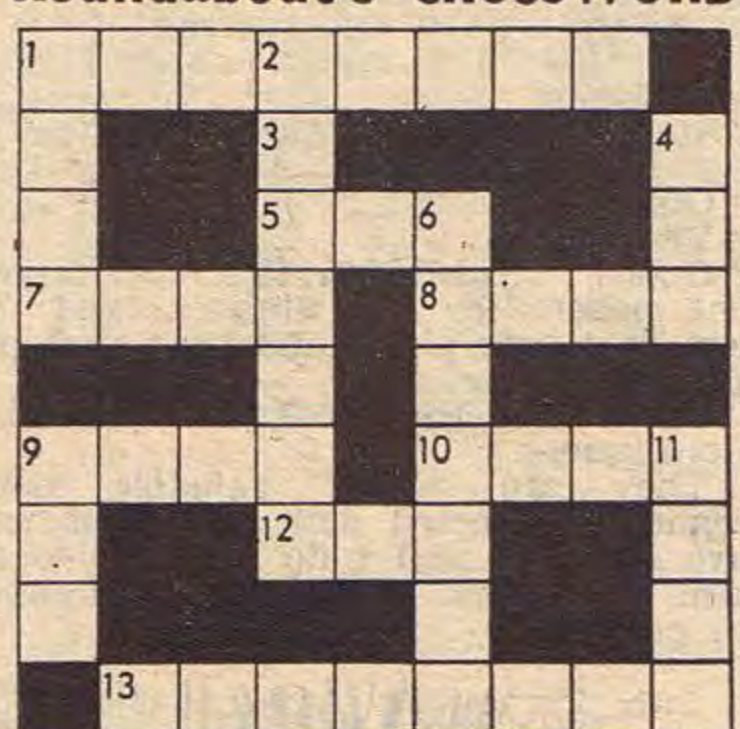
FAUNSE NOT SAFE

5 3

DOKGIMN KING'S STATE

10

Roundabout's CROSSWORD



Clues Across :

1. Assumed.
5. Finish.
7. Used in printing.
8. Competent.
9. Colt.
10. Body of musicians.
12. Snake-like fish.
13. Birds.

Down :

1. Measure.
2. Spire.
4. First woman.
6. Paddles.
9. For steering.
11. Debts.

(For solution see page 18.)

Spot the Change

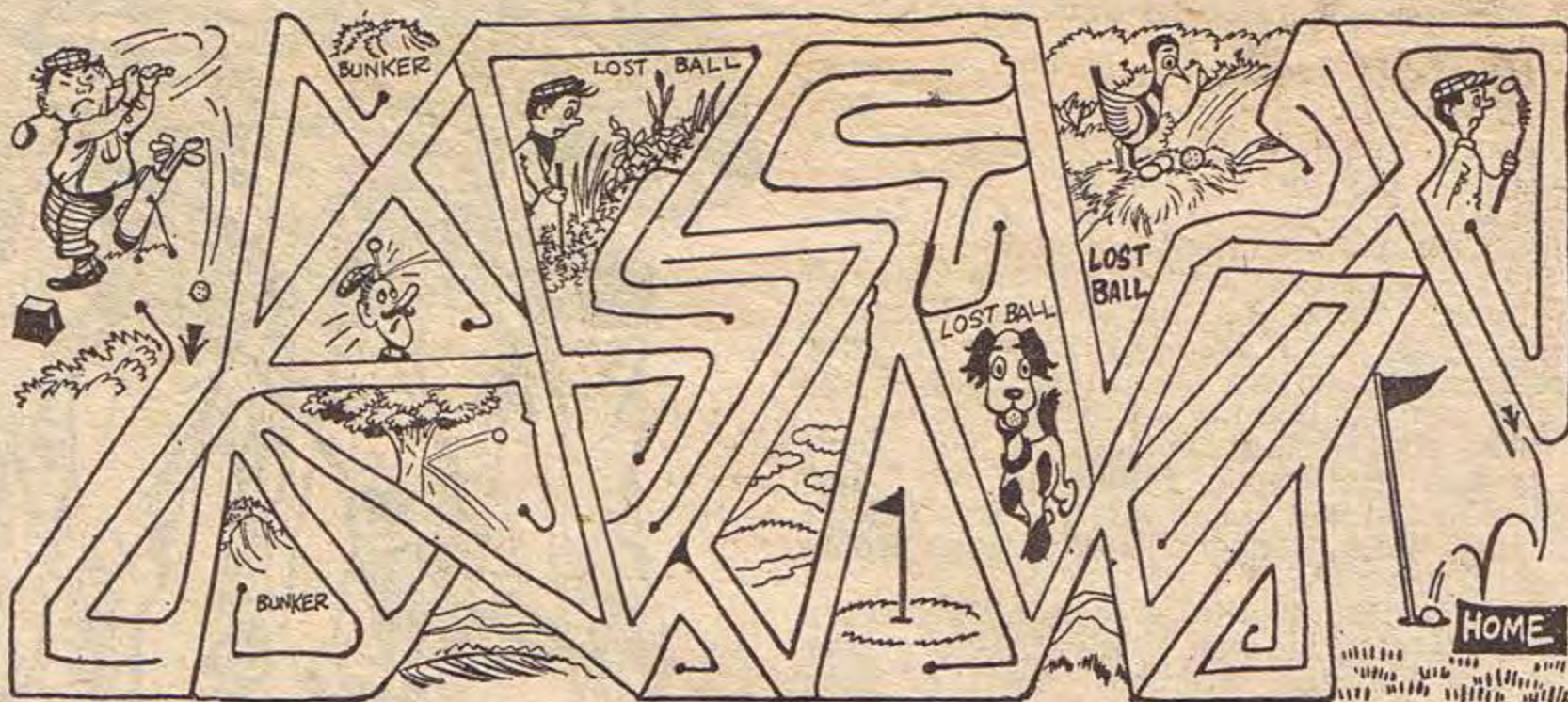
These two pictures look alike. But they're not! There are eight points of difference. Can you find them?

(For answers see page 18.)



The Golfer's Roundabout

Can you find the quickest way to the hole?



Daffy Disguises

Who is he?
This picture-letter will tell you.

(For solution see page 18.)



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BLARNEY BLUFFER

HE'S BRITAIN'S BIGGEST BRAGGER!

Trust him to bowl 'em over when he has a fling!



“AH! THAT REMINDS ME OF WHEN I WAS MAROONED ON TREASURE ISLAND, MYSELF - I’LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT, LAD!”



“WELL, I’D MINED A MILLION DIAMONDS OR MORE ON THE ISLAND SO I BURIED THEM IN A BIG HOLE FOR SAFE KEEPING.”



“I PLANTED A BABY COCONUT PALM RIGHT ON THE SPOT TO MARK IT AND SWAM THE 6,666 MILES BACK TO CIVILIZATION!”



“YEARS LATER - BEING A BIT HARD UP, I DECIDED TO GO BACK AND COLLECT THAT HOARD OF SPARKLERS FROM TREASURE ISLAND!”



“LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT LONG JOHN SILVER THE PIRATE WAS TRAILING ME BEHIND A BANK OF FOG!”

TREASURE ISLAND, AHoy!



“ONCE ASHORE THE PIRATES TRUSSED ME UP LIKE A SPRING CHICKEN AND STARTED TO DIG FOR THE DIAMONDS - BUT THEY WEREN’T THERE!”



“THE PIRATES PUSHED OFF AND IN TWO TICKS I’D GOT TO THE ROOT OF THE MISSING DIAMONDS MYSTERY!”



“YOU SEE, THAT PALM I’D PLANTED OVER THE SPOT HAD GROWN MIGHTY BIG NOW! ITS HOLLOW ROOTS HAD SUCKED THE SPARKLERS RIGHT UP THE TREE TRUNK AND MY DIAMONDS HAD COME TO REST INSIDE THE COCONUTS!”

CLINK! RATTLE!



“BUT MY LUCK WAS OUT, WHILE I WAS ASLEEP, A TRIBE OF COCONUT MERCHANTS CRUISED UP AND COLLECTED THE LOT!”

SOME MORE NUTS HERE, HASSIM!



“WHEN I WOKE UP, MY DIAMOND-FILLED, DOUBLE-TUFTED COCONUTS WERE ON THEIR WAY TO BE SOLD IN THE COCONUT MARKET!”



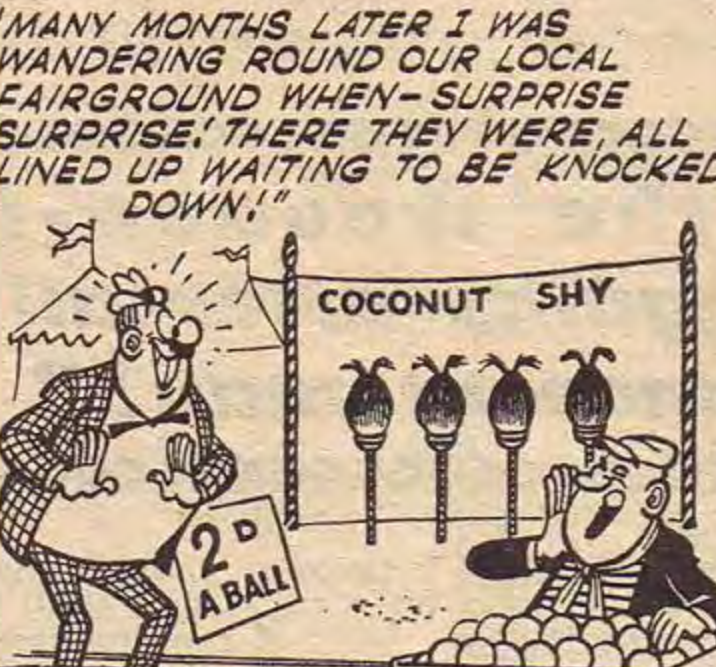
“SAD AND WEARY, I CAME HOME NEVER EXPECTING TO SEE THOSE FOUR DOUBLE-TUFTED COCONUTS AGAIN!”



“MANY MONTHS LATER I WAS WANDERING ROUND OUR LOCAL FAIRGROUND WHEN - SURPRISE SURPRISE! THERE THEY WERE, ALL LINED UP WAITING TO BE KNOCKED DOWN!”

COCONUT SHY

20 A BALL



“BUT I WAS DOWN TO MY LAST TUPPENCE! HOW TO KNOCK DOWN ALL FOUR COCONUTS WITH ONE BALL WAS A TRICKY PROBLEM.”

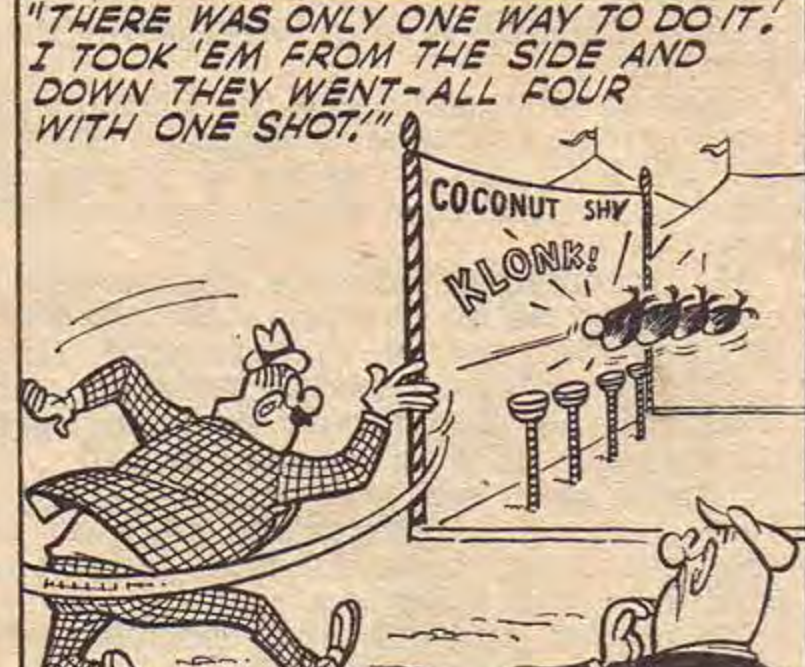
THROW IT HOW YOU LIKE, MATE! SO LONG AS YOU STAND TEN YARDS AWAY!



“THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO DO IT! I TOOK ‘EM FROM THE SIDE AND DOWN THEY WENT - ALL FOUR WITH ONE SHOT!”

COCONUT SHY

KLONK!



“I DIDN’T STAY TO ARGUE WITH THE BLOKE IN CHARGE, BUT TROOPED OFF HOME AT TOP SPEED!”



“A FEW CLONKS WITH MY LANDLADY’S COAL-HAMMER REVEALED MY LONG-LOST SPARKLERS INSIDE THE COCONUTS!”



“AND NOW BLARNEY BOY WAS SIMPLY ROLLING IN MONEY! THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD!”



LAST WEEK’S RENT? BUT I’M STONY BROKE!

COO! THE FAT FIBBER TOLD ME HE WAS A MILLIONAIRE!

RENT 15/-



Well, that was pretty rich, wasn't it, chums? Meet Blarney here again next week!

ALL THE SECRETS OF THE RED FOX INN ARE REVEALED IN THIS FINAL STORY! GO WITH SEAMAN JOE ON A THRILLING JOURNEY BENEATH THE CARVED CHAIR! READ AND BE ENTHRALLED BY THE UNMASKING OF JASPER TODD!

SINISTER INN

POLICE!

THE single lamp which lit the bar-room of the Red Fox Inn was alight where it hung from a blackened beam above the big carved chair.

It cast a circle of yellow light upon the floor, leaving the rest of the place in shadow.

Seaman Joe was standing behind the bar, cleaning glasses, and nervously glancing about the grim and sombre room. For once he was alone. Jasper Todd, the man who had enslaved him, was out.

A sound outside made Seaman Joe start, and as the door swung open a gleam of alarm leapt to his eyes at sight of the visitors.

One was Sergeant Friend, a local police officer, and he was accompanied by a constable.

"Where's Todd?" asked Sergeant Friend.

"He—he's gone to town, sergeant!" Seaman Joe replied. "He won't be back until late."

"Oh, gone to town, has he?" Sergeant Friend repeated. "Well, it's you I wanted, anyway."

Seaman Joe waited with mounting fears. "Do you remember me calling here just after you arrived some months ago?" the sergeant asked slowly. "I came looking for a seaman—a man with a wooden leg!"

Seaman Joe tried to answer, but no words would come from his lips. He had to grip the edge of the bar so that the sergeant should not see how his hands trembled. Wild thoughts flashed through his mind.

Had Jasper Todd met the sergeant on the road and told him everything? Had mine host of this lonely hostelry betrayed him?

"We wanted him over an affray which occurred near the docks in London—a knifing matter, it was," Sergeant Friend went on.

Seaman Joe continued to gape at him, too terrified to move or speak. His mind flashed back to a fog-bound night, to a glittering knife, to a struggling and falling man!

He remembered how his own wooden leg had echoed as he had run down alleys and through the narrow surrounding streets, racing from the scene, hearing police-whistles and the shouts of men ringing through the mist as he was pursued.

"Radio messages were sent out about the man that night," the police sergeant said. "He got away from London, but he was trailed in this direction."

He paused, and his tones seemed to grow very measured and slow.

"I suppose you don't know anything about him, do you?" Sergeant Friend asked. "You don't know anything about this fugitive seaman with a wooden leg?"

"No, nothing at all!" Seaman Joe panted. "He—he never came here, sergeant. He—he's probably left the country by now!"

"Yes, I dare say he got a ship and cleared off," the sergeant replied. "But I feel sorry for him if he has. I don't like to think of that poor fellow with this weight on his mind. It's been a queer affair altogether—not only the way this wooden-legged seaman vanished, but the crime itself."

He glanced at his companion, and the constable nodded agreement.

"Very peculiar, sergeant," he commented. "Especially the confession."

"Yes, it's because of the confession that we want the wooden-legged seaman," Sergeant Friend told Joe. "You see, there

were three mixed up in this fight in the alley up in London. The wooden-legged man really hadn't got anything to do with it, and I don't quite know how he got dragged into the affair. But the other two had knives, and they used them. Apparently, in the fight, a knife was dropped and the seaman picked it up, and struck out to defend himself.

"The other man fell, and the seaman thought that he stabbed him; but he hadn't. The man who died had been stabbed in the back—by the third man! We picked the guilty man up for another job, and he confessed to this stabbing affair."

Sergeant Friend moved away from the bar, and the constable followed him towards the door.

"You see, the wooden-legged seaman isn't guilty," the police officer added, turning his head. "Of course, it doesn't interest you; but if you do see that wooden-legged man, just let him know that I'd like to talk to him and tell him he's no longer wanted by the police!"

Seaman Joe remained gripping the bar, watching the two with startled eyes as they left the inn.

"I'm not guilty!" he muttered. "I needn't be afraid of Jasper Todd any more!"

THE SAILOR SPEAKS

A MIDNIGHT moon tinted the sagging roof of the Red Fox Inn and lit the lurching figure of Jasper Todd as he approached the hostelry.

The light from the window flashed in his eyes as he reached for the latch, then he slammed the door open, shambling in, flinging off his coat and hat and glaring about the bar-room. He saw Seaman Joe

He laughed, watching the amazed expression which dawned upon the fallow features before him. Todd's eyes half closed, only to open wide at Joe's next words.

"So I'm no longer your slave—but you're mine!" he said. "I'm going to put an end to all this, Jasper Todd! I'm going to find out what happens to those who sit in the chair! And then I'm going to tell the police!"

He stepped still nearer, and his triumph was such that he missed the look which came upon Todd's face.

"I see, you are master now—ha, ha, ha!" Todd chuckled. "It's very clever of you, my nautical friend, to turn the tables on me like this—very clever indeed!"

He stood leering at the man, chuckling softly—while his right hand slid to the hip-pocket of his trousers, gripping the butt of a revolver which lay there.

"But, Seaman Joe, you're not quite clever enough!" Todd answered. "You have forgotten that I have—this!"

With the words he jerked the revolver from his pocket, ramming the muzzle at the sailor's chest, and the tattooed man stepped back involuntarily, gasping out at the weapon's menace.

"So you have not quite turned the tables on me—and you are not yet master," Todd told him. "But you shall learn the secret of the chair, my nautical friend. You shall learn all the secrets of my inn—only, you'll never tell the police!"

He laughed softly, holding Seaman Joe covered steadily, then, raising his free hand and pointing to the chair which stood beneath the glowing lamp.

"Sit down, my friend!" Todd breathed. "Ha, ha, ha! Sit at ease in my chair, and

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**"You see, the wooden-legged seaman isn't guilty after all! He is an innocent man!"**  
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sitting in a chair by the fire, and Todd snarled at him.

"Get me a drink! I'm tired, and it's been a long walk across the moor!" he exclaimed.

Seaman Joe glanced at him.

"Get it yourself, Jasper Todd!" he said. "And while you're about it you can get me one as well!"

"Are you crazy?" Jasper Todd asked. "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"No; but the police have been here tonight, and they have told me something," Seaman Joe replied.

"The police!" The owner of the lone inn looked at him sharply.

"Yes; and they were asking for a sailor with a wooden leg—but they didn't want to arrest him!" the tattooed man answered.

He moved nearer, and there was something in his manner which made Jasper Todd retreat before him.

"They were looking for the wooden-legged sailor," he repeated; "but they did not want to arrest him, Jasper Todd. They only wanted to tell me that I am not guilty!"

I promise that I shall withhold nothing from you. You shall learn all!"

With a movement that was swift from the frenzy of despair Seaman Joe snatched at the revolver, turning it aside in the instant that Todd pressed the trigger.

The revolver roared, tonguing red flame, while the bullet screamed clean across the inn and smashed into the wall at the far side. Seaman Joe flung one tattooed arm about the innkeeper's waist, tearing the revolver from the man's hand and dropping it to the floor and setting his foot on it.

As he did so he lifted Jasper Todd from the ground, raising him high above his head, hurling him into the carved chair!

The great chair shook and shuddered as Todd crashed into it, while the sailor stooped, snatching at the revolver and facing the gasping and now trembling man.

Jasper Todd knew that he was trapped.

"Now you're sitting where the others sat," Joe gasped, "and I've a mind to pull that lever. But I want to see where the others have gone!" he said. "I want to learn all the secrets of this place, and then to let the police know. You've hounded

me down, you've made a slave of me—but now I've got you! Light the lantern and show me the way down!"

He stood with the revolver held ready while Jasper Todd reached beneath the bar and lit a lantern which stood there.

The light glowed in his eyes, and they narrowed as he straightened up. For one moment he tensed, almost as if he thought of dashing the lantern into the sailor's face, and trying to snatch the revolver—but the tattooed man was wary and watchful.

"Don't try any tricks, Jasper Todd!" he said. "Open that trapdoor!"

Jasper Todd obeyed.

He lifted the trapdoor wide, and from the black depths below there came a gust of chill air which made the sailor shiver for a moment.

Seaman Joe motioned with the revolver and Jasper Todd gripped the lantern, stepping on to the ladder which showed at the edge of the trapdoor.

The tattooed man followed him, and the ladder creaked under their feet as slowly Jasper Todd led the way below.

THE TRICKERY OF TODD

THE sailor's eyes were watchful, and the muzzle of his loaded revolver never ceased to cover the snarling, red-bearded figure which clambered down before him.

Jasper Todd's heavy lids drooped over his reddened eyes, and his stone-white teeth showed between his thin lips as he chuckled savagely.

"Ha, ha, ha—there's nothing here, my nautical friend!" he rasped. "The police have searched the cellar—but they've never found anything!"

Seaman Joe regarded him grimly.

"You'll either show me everything or I'll march you straight across the moor to the police!"

For long moments they remained eye to eye, then the owner of the lone inn chuckled again.

"Ha, ha, ha! Very well, Seaman Joe!" he said. "I'll show you—but you may be sorry for it!"

He leered at Joe, grinning as he started to cross the cellar floor.

"You'll regret it, my nautical friend!" he muttered viciously. "But stop there—then you'll see everything."

Seaman Joe remained crouching a little, watching him while Todd stepped towards one of the great barrels which stood against the wall. He bent, gripping one of the staves, and pulling it out, revealed an iron lever set within the barrel itself.

Jasper Todd flung a sidelong glance at

Seaman Joe; then his hand darted forward, wrenching on the lever.

The sailor was standing immediately beneath the carved chair in the bar-room, overhead, and the suddenness of Todd's movement warned him of danger. He felt the floor underfoot quiver, and he leaped sideways.

In that instant, the floor where he had been standing dropped downwards, revealing a great square cavity!

Had he remained there a moment longer, he must have been dashed into the black depths of the pit which had opened up—and Todd had told him to remain there—hoping to trap him!

"You fiend!" he gasped. "Try anything like that again and I'll shoot—I swear it!"

Jasper Todd faced him, a bland smile on his thin lips.

"Ha, ha, ha, I forgot you were standing there!" he said. "I hope I didn't startle you, my nautical friend!"

Seaman Joe regarded him grimly, then glanced towards the opening. He guessed that when the black lever overhead was moved to turn the chair, the same mechanism opened this hole in the floor. But the lever hidden in the barrel unmasked only this pit, and did not shift the chair.

When a victim of the chair was plunged down he fell through this opening in the cellar floor, hurtling to whatever might lie below.

Slowly, keeping Jasper Todd covered, the sailor approached the edge of the pit. He saw another wooden ladder leading into the depths, and he motioned to Jasper Todd.

"Go on, lead the way!" he commanded.

Jasper Todd regarded him for a moment before he obeyed, and Joe kept Todd covered as he followed. The ladder shook, and they descended a full twenty rungs before the bottom of the narrow pit came into view.

SLAVES OF THE INN

FOR long moments Seaman Joe listened to a strange thudding sound, like heavy machinery, and the dulled clatter of chains.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"Go down the passage—and find out!" Jasper Todd snarled.

"That's what I am going to do. Lead the way!" Seaman Joe answered grimly.

He motioned with the revolver and Jasper Todd stepped into a brick-lined passage which, except for the glow of the lanterns, was enwrapped in pitchy darkness.

With every step, that strange thudding grew clearer. It seemed to Joe that a

number of machines were at work, and when the passage bent he saw a gleam of light.

It was a narrow slit, shining from beneath a door.

He rammed the muzzle of the revolver into the innkeeper's back, as a warning of what would follow if he attempted any treachery.

"What's behind that door?" the sailor asked.

Jasper Todd glanced over his shoulder, and words hissed from between his gritted teeth.

"You'll see," he answered. "Ha, ha, ha—you'll see!"

The lantern-light caught the door. It was heavily bolted at top and bottom, while a great key showed in a huge lock. The clanking came from behind it and, without a word, the sailor drew back the massive bolts, then gripped the key.

Seaman Joe grunted through the clattering of the machinery. The key was stiff, and he bent momentarily, peering at the lock—and that moment was enough for Jasper Todd!

He brought the lantern crashing down, thudding its metal shape at the side of the sailor's head!

Seaman Joe was half-blinded by the blaze of light, while glass broke all about him as Todd grabbed at the revolver.

The light snuffed out as the lantern fell to the floor, crushed beneath their stamping feet, while they wrestled for the revolver. Todd seemed to be gifted with unnatural strength, and the seaman was forced back against the wall, while the innkeeper's voice snarled out of the dark.

"You want to learn my secrets, do you—well, you shall learn them!" Todd gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha—you shall learn them—just as the others have done!"

Seaman Joe felt Todd's grip tighten, and his head began to swim. He realised that, in the passing of but a few seconds, he must be rendered unconscious, and desperate strength flowed into his muscles. He suddenly flung his weight sideways, forcing himself against Todd with all the weight and strength left in his body—and the innkeeper overbalanced!

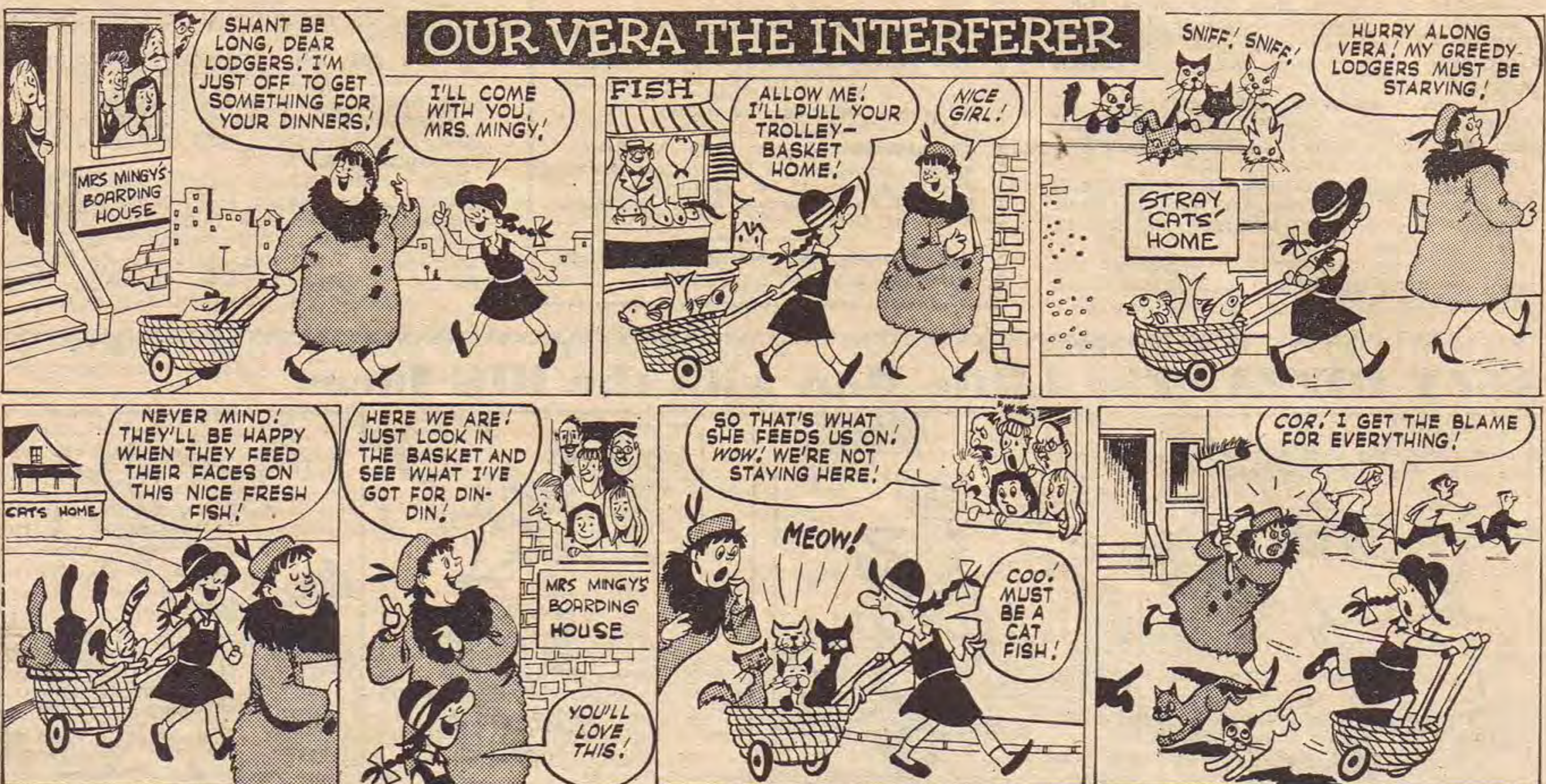
He crashed to the floor, and Seaman Joe sprawled across him, tightening his grip upon the revolver, holding it ready and gasping into the gloom.

"I'll shoot if you come for me again—I swear it!" he called.

Jasper Todd neither moved nor made any response.

Joe waited a moment, then felt in one pocket, producing a match and striking it

(Continued on next page.)



upon the chill wall beside him. The match revealed Todd sprawled on his back, his face pale and his eyes closed.

"He stunned himself—hit his head on the floor!" Seaman Joe gasped, and came slowly to his feet.

He stood panting there, and a minute passed before he turned to the locked door. The match had burned out, and he fumbled in the dark, gripping the key, forcing it round in the lock.

Slowly he drew the door open.

The roar of machinery came loudly to his ears, and, for a moment, he could see but little in the sudden blaze of light.

He remained standing astride the senseless figure of Jasper Todd, and a gasp broke from his lips as his eyes became accustomed to the glare into which he was peering.

He was gazing into a long cellar. Gaunt, thin, pallid figures were chained to its walls, while others were secured to benches. The clattering came from the long, flat looms which these figures were working, and Seaman Joe gasped again as he recognised some of the men.

One was clad in evening-clothes. Another was habited in tattered garments that were torn and dishevelled, bottle-green from age. One was dressed in the garb of a hiker, and in a corner was a giant, brutal-looking man. All of them were pale, starting-eyed, as if worn from long confinement—and all were men who had once sat in the carved chair in the bar-room above!

Each was a victim of Jasper Todd.

Each man had walked into the inn—to be lost to the world!

Each had been hurled to the depths below the chair—and now they sat chained to the rattling looms!

And, as he watched, Joe could see that they were making carpets and mats and rugs—like those which hung upon the walls of the inn, and which Jasper Todd frequently sold to big warehouses in London.

Joe remembered the big heavy boxes which he had seen brought to the inn by night, and now he could guess what they had contained—replacements for the machinery, and provisions for the luckless slaves who operated them.

The tattooed man stared at the astounding spectacle—and he became aware of a figure standing near, carrying a short-hafted whip with a long, black hide thong.

He appeared to be an Indian, and he wore a drooping suit of thin blue cloth—and he was already swinging the whip above his head for its lash to snap out. Seaman Joe tried to duck from it, but the lash coiled about his arm.

The tattooed man jerked backwards, pressing the trigger of his revolver. The roaring shot made the dark-faced man stagger, although the bullet missed him. The whip-thong fell limp, and Joe leaped back into the passage, with the Indian jumping after him.

The sailor plucked the inert figure of Jasper Todd from where he lay. He lifted the red-bearded man high, then hurled him through the doorway.

The flying figure struck the Indian, and he crashed down, while the tattooed man hurled the door shut, spinning the key in the great lock.

Panting and gasping he drove home the bolts, securing the Indian and Jasper Todd with their prisoners.

THE LOST MEN!

SEAMAN JOE returned to the deserted bar-room, stopping short and staring at the carved shape of the chair which showed under the lamp hanging from the blackened beams above.

"I've got to get the police!" he muttered.

He crossed the floor, jerking open the door and peering into the darkness. The moorland road ran like some ghostly highway through the gloom on either side, and Joe knew that he was ten miles from the nearest town—ten miles from the police!

"There's a way I can get the police here fast!" he muttered.

He went running towards the back of the inn, making for a shed. He kicked open the door and dragged out a couple of sheaves of straw.

He carried it clear of the inn, then spread the straw on the ground, running back to the shed and coming back with bits of wood which he found there. He piled them up on the straw, then shook his head.

"There's not enough to make a good blaze," he told himself.

He dashed into the building, running back and forth, bringing out benches and chairs and rickety tables. He ran to the upper floors, and threw mattresses and wooden bed-frames and furniture down from the windows.

He worked with feverish energy, piling everything up, until he had a great heap which rose high above his head.

"That'll do!" he told himself. "That'll burn as red as Jasper Todd's eyes!"

From another shed he brought out half a dozen cans of petrol, spilled their contents on to the pile, slewing the petrol all over it before he struck a match. Instantly the petrol flared up, and a great banner of flame rushed up to the sky.

The straw caught and the wood began to crackle, and the flames tinted the back of the inn, gleaming on the sagging roof, winking from the windows, and lighting the ground all around.

Joe was driven back by the heat of it, laughing as he watched the flames mount towards the night sky, until they seemed to tint the very clouds overhead.

"The police will see that—they can't help it!" he gasped.

Desperately he fed the flames, keeping the huge fire going until at last he was rewarded by sight of two lights rushing towards him along the moorland road.

SOLUTIONS TO KNOCKOUT'S QUIZ ROUNDABOUT

SPOT THE CHANGE:

Hill behind car
Nearer driver's cap
Nearer driver's scarf
Car wheels
Saloon's rear-window
Post of road-sign
Boot of nearer car
Other car's radiator-cap

CROSSWORD:

Across: 1. Presumed. 5. End. 7. Type. 8. Able. 9. Foal. 10. Band. 12. Eel. 13. Thrushes.
Down: 1. Pint. 2. Steeple. 4. Eve. 6. Dabbles. 9. Fin. 11. Dues.

DAFFY DISGUISES: NORMAN WISDOM.
JUMBLE: A WEAK SQUEAK.

A car pulled up, and burly Sergeant Friend alighted, accompanied by two constables.

"We thought the whole place was alight!" the sergeant exclaimed. "We saw the fire from the town. What's going on here?"

"I started the fire, because I wanted to fetch you!" Seaman Joe panted. "And I've got news for you, sergeant!"

He stepped towards the sergeant, his eyes gleaming.

"I'm the wooden-legged sailor you've been looking for. I'm the man you wanted for that knifing affray back in London!" the tattooed man said. "But I'm not guilty, am I? You were telling the truth when you came here earlier, weren't you?"

"We always tell the truth, sailor," Sergeant Friend replied. "We don't want you for anything. You're not guilty of any crime, so far as we can tell."

"That's all right, then!" Joe panted, and pointed to the open trap-door at the end of the bar. "Well, Jasper Todd's down there—locked up, with all his prisoners!"

"Prisoners?" the sergeant repeated.

"Yes, all the men who've been missing—he trapped them with his chair!" the sailor gasped. "Look, I'll show you!"

He jumped to the black, brass-bound lever at the end of the bar, wrenching it back with all his strength.

The watching men heard mechanism move, and saw the great carved chair swing over!

They saw the black cavity appear in the floor behind, closing again as the chair completed its circle and clashed back to its former position.

"If you'd been sitting in that you'd have been thrown down below, sergeant!" Seaman Joe gasped. "That's what's happened to all the men you've been looking for! I thought that when they went down that hole they were finished; but they weren't!"

"They fell down a great pit, and Todd's been making them work for him. They've got looms down there, and they make the mats and the rugs that he sells! And all the money they had with them, and all the jewels and all the valuables he took for himself. And it's hid in a big chest upstairs!"

His words had fairly tumbled from his lips, while the sergeant and his companions stared in blank amazement. His words confirmed many of the police officer's own suspicions, and he stepped quickly towards the tattooed man.

"Lead the way below, sailor!" he said. "If what you tell me is true, then—"

He broke off.

The sailor gestured suddenly, stepping back from the trap-door.

"Listen! He's coming back!" he gasped. All clearly heard footsteps mounting the ladder!

"He's got out, somehow!" Seaman Joe whispered. "He's got an Indian with him—he was in charge of the prisoners!"

Sergeant Friend moved behind the trap-door, crouching there with Seaman Joe and the constables.

The ladder which led to the bar-room quivered, and Jasper Todd came into view, climbing up with the Indian at his heels.

They had escaped from the cellar below, and Jasper Todd was muttering to himself as he stepped to the bar-room floor.

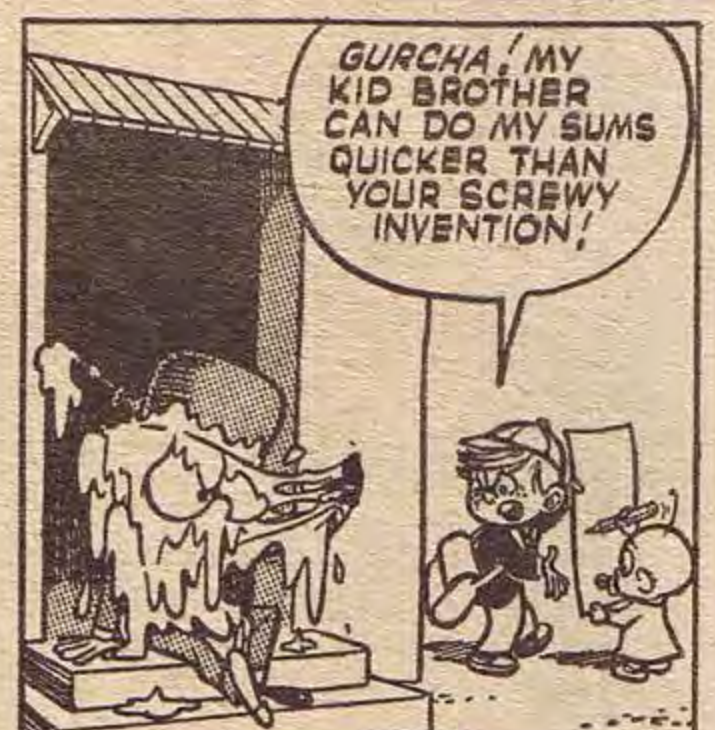
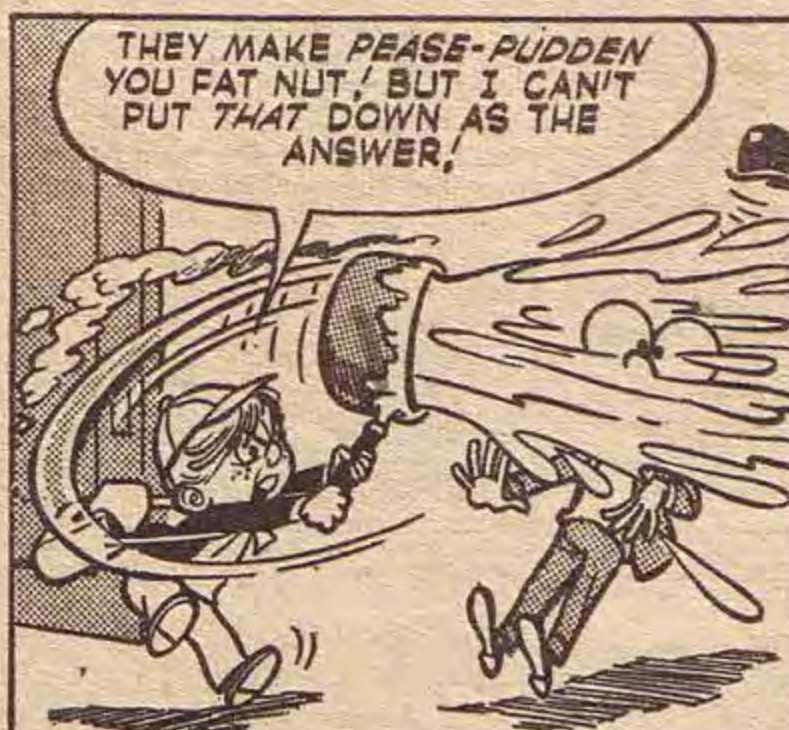
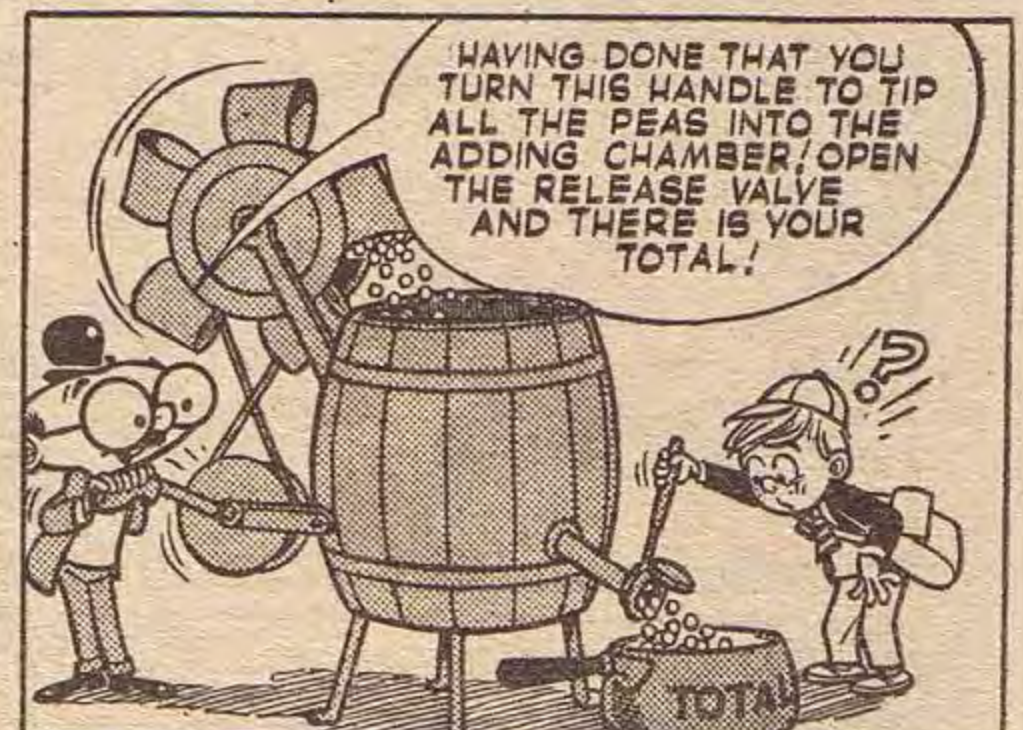
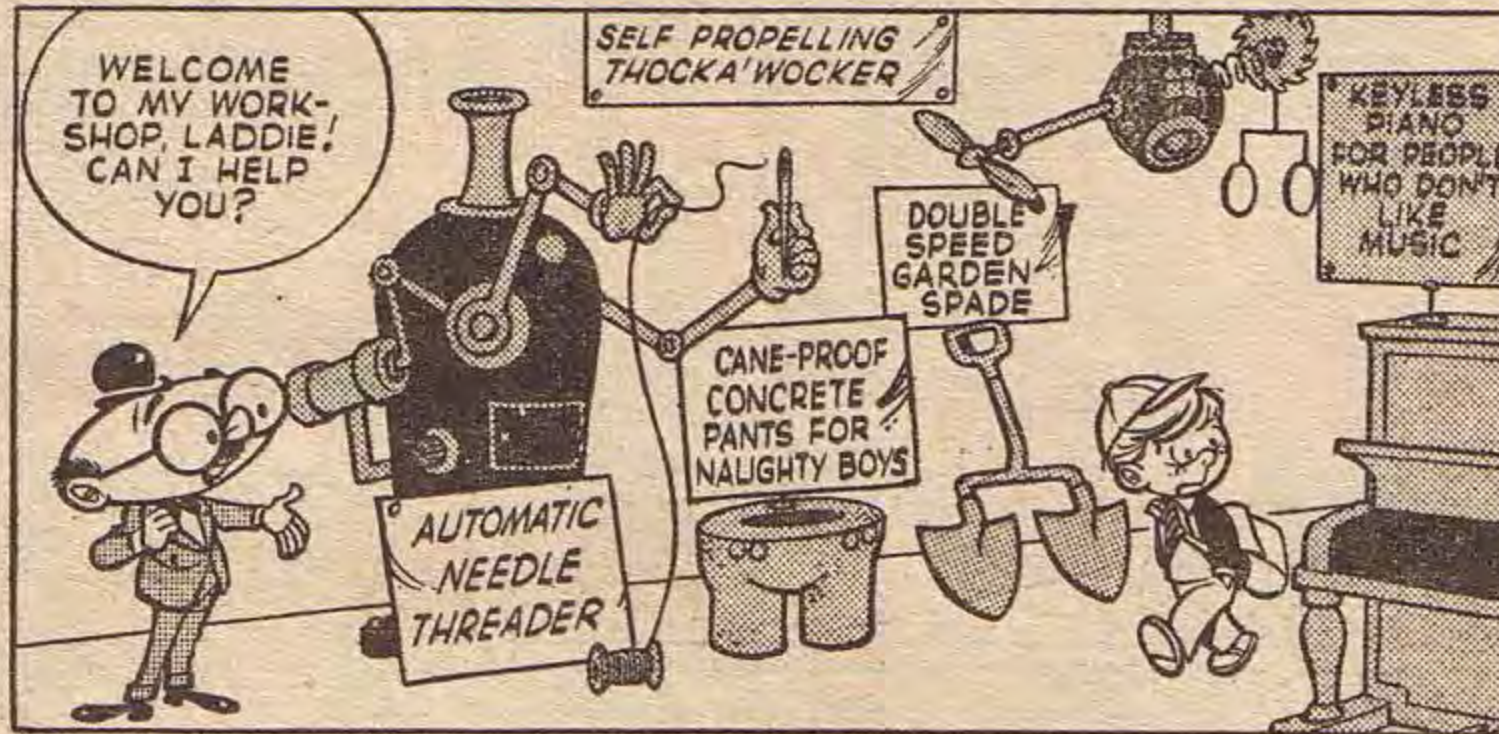
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IZZY DIZZY—The Little Man with the BIG Ideas



PROFESSOR

KNOCKOUT



Our prize professor will invent another laugh-raiser next week!

SINISTER INN

(Continued from previous page.)

oblivious of the watching figures near him.

"Let me get my hands on Seaman Joe!" he snarled. "I'll teach him to cross me!"

The silent-moving Indian came out, and it was as Jasper Todd stood glaring about him that Sergeant Friend leaped forward. The red-eyed man turned swiftly, quick as a fox—darting for the outer door.

Instantly one of the constables hurled himself across the floor, gripping Todd ere he could reach the open portal, while Sergeant Friend grabbed him, steel handcuffs glittering.

Todd fought with savage fury, while Seaman Joe used the revolver to cover the Indian as the policemen handcuffed him.

"You'll pay for this, I swear!" he rasped at Joe. "You betrayed me, curse you!"

Joe made no answer. Sergeant Friend straightened up, nodding to one of his constables.

"Watch these two, and take that revolver from the sailor!" he panted. "Use it, if you have to!"

He addressed the seaman.

"You remain here; I'll go down below and see what I can find."

Boldly the sergeant stepped on to the ladder, accompanying the other policeman. They disappeared, while Seaman Joe handed his revolver over to the blue-clad man who had been left in charge of the handcuffed prisoners.

Jasper Todd remained staring at the trapdoor, and the gaze of his red-tinged eyes seemed to be fascinated. Long minutes passed, and he neither moved nor spoke.

There came the sound of many voices, echoing in the cellar below, and the victims of the innkeeper of that lone hostelry appeared one by one.

A cry sounded as a gust of wind blew open the door behind the bar, and a great billow of smoke rushed in. Through it they saw fluttering flame, and heard the crackling of burning wood.

"The inn's ablaze!" Seaman Joe panted. "A spark from the fire outside must have caught it."

While he was yet speaking tongues of flame licked into the bar-room. The Red Fox Inn was ancient, and its wood was like tinder. The fire was spreading with amazing rapidity, as if eager to wipe out this sinister building.

All backed towards the door, the police dragging their handcuffed prisoners to the open, while the rest followed, except Joe. He suddenly darted towards the burning doorway, vanishing in the smoke.

The heat had driven those outside across the road, when Joe appeared, bearing on his shoulders a great, iron-bound chest. He almost collapsed, dropping it at the feet of Sergeant Friend, when the chest burst open, spilling banknotes and jewellery, golden coins and precious stones in all directions.

Todd cried out as he saw scattered on the road the ill-gotten treasure that he had

stored—stolen from his many victims.

But the gleaming gold was almost forgotten as all watched the flames swiftly consuming that inn which had held so many strange secrets.

A pillar of fire rose up to the clouds, topped by a mighty rolling plume of smoke that was as black as the heart of Jasper Todd.

Jasper Todd stood his trial, and that trial created a sensation which fired all England.

Jasper Todd was sentenced to penal servitude for life, while those who had been his victims were restored to relatives who had imagined them lost for ever.

The convict went back to prison, and the miser was given his gold, while such thieves as Jasper Todd had victimised received their just deserts.

Rewards had been offered for information concerning many of those who were missing. It was through Seaman Joe's work that the missing ones were restored, so he received the rewards.

The total sum was more than enough to compensate him for all that he had suffered, and he settled down to a life of quiet contentment.

Only sometimes in dreams did he remember the dramatic events and the amazing things that he had known before vengeful flames claimed the sinister inn.

(Don't miss "When Midnight Chimes" in next week's KNOCKOUT.)

SPORTY

by
Reg Wootton

SPORTY
STOPPERS BIFFEM
BANGEM
TRIPPER
CRACKEM SLIDER
RESERVE - SYDNEY

