

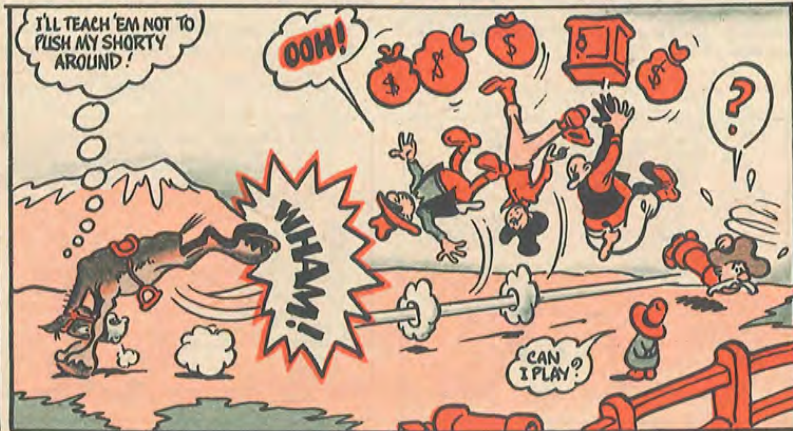
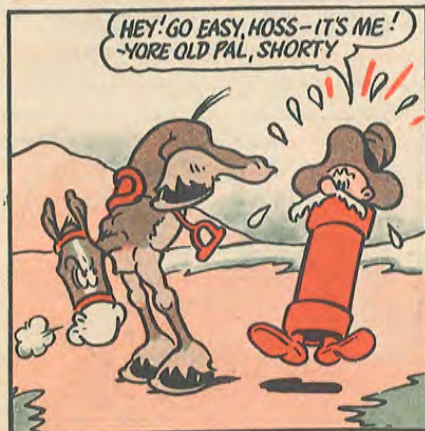
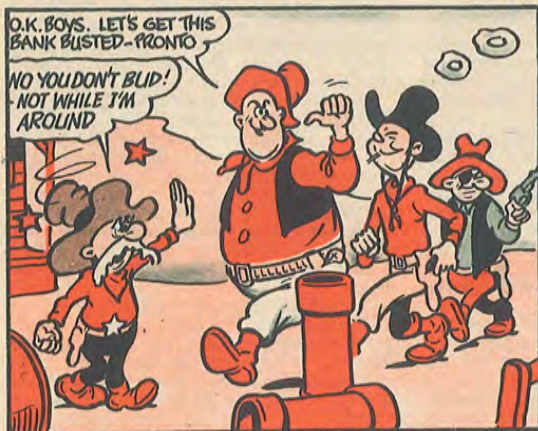
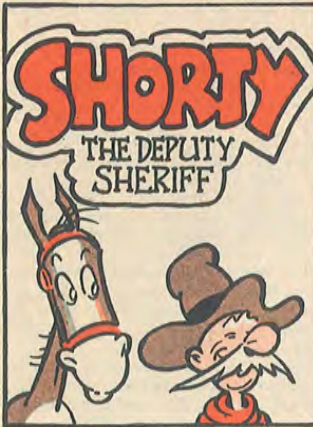
COMET

No. 89
(New Series)
Feb. 11th, 1950

THE
ALL STAR
COMIC



2ND EVERY
OTHER
MONDAY



TRIAL MATCH!

"MY hat! What is it?"
 "Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"
 Billy Bunter, of the Remove at Greyfriars, blinked through his big spectacles. He was just coming downstairs, and he stopped on the lowest step as the crowd of juniors greeted him.

Bunter, the fattest junior at Greyfriars, had sought fame in many ways since he had been at the school, and now his latest ambition was to distinguish himself on the football field. He had bothered Harry Wharton for a trial for the Form eleven but Harry Wharton had been deaf to his appeals.

There seemed to be no chance for Bunter—yet here was the fat junior in football garb, evidently ready for a game!

Bunter's shirt was striking. Its pattern consisted of alternate black and yellow stripes; added to that, Bunter more than filled the outfit, so that he looked as though he was threatening to burst through at every point.

It was no wonder that the juniors burst into a roar of laughter as they saw him.

Bunter could not see the joke. He was convinced that he was destined to become a second Stanley Matthews, if he had the chance, and that chance he was determined to get.

He blinked at the grinning juniors.
 "What's on?" demanded Bob Cherry.
 "A fancy dress ball?"

"Certainly not! I'm going to play football!" replied Bunter. "I may not be appreciated in the Remove, but the Upper Fourth know I am a star player!"

The laughter stopped, and the Removites stared at Bunter.

They were too amazed to laugh.

The idea of Bunter playing footer for the Remove was absurd; but his playing for the Upper Fourth, the next form above the Remove at Greyfriars, was fantastic!

"You see," Bunter went on victoriously, "some fellows who know something about football have observed my form."

"His dainty form," murmured Nugent.

"I mean my form at footer, of course," snapped Bunter. "Some fellows may think more highly of my play than you fellows think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"So Temple has asked me to play for the Upper Fourth, and I have consented," Bunter finished with dignity.

"You nitwit!" roared Wharton. "Temple is pulling your leg."

"This jealousy is what I might have expected," said Bunter. "So I am not going to waste time talking to a lot of jealous rotters!"

And he walked towards the door.

He was followed by practically the whole of the Lower Fourth. Bunter playing football for the Upper Fourth was something that was too good to miss!

TEMPLE and Co. of the Upper Fourth stood about on the football field waiting for Bunter to put in an appearance. They all wore a grin, in anticipation of the joke that was about to be played on the fat junior.

There came a sudden shout from one of the team.

"Here he comes!"

"My hat! Look at the outfit!" roared Fry.
 "A giddy zebra!"

"Most of the Remove seem to be coming, too," remarked Dabney. "They've caught on to it."

"He could hardly go about in those clothes without attracting attention," grinned Scott.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!" Temple snapped. "Don't let him see you grin!"

Bunter rolled up.

"I hope I haven't kept you fellows waiting," he said in a superior tone of voice.

BILLY BUNTER

THE FOOTBALL STAR



"What's on?" demanded Bob Cherry. "A fancy-dress ball?" "Certainly not! I am going to play football," replied Bunter.

"Oh, that's all right," said Temple cheerfully, bestowing a wink, which Bunter did not see, upon his comrades. "We don't mind waiting for a chap like you!"

"Right ho," said Bunter loftily. "I'm ready. These fellows have come to see me play."

"They're welcome," replied Temple. "It should be worth seeing."

The Removites chuckled.
 "Look here, what's the little game?" demanded Harry Wharton. "I suppose you're pulling Bunter's leg?"

"That's our business," said Temple haughtily. "You fellows had a smashing player in your form, and you neglected him. I suppose you don't object if we want to have him in our side?"

"You see how it is, Wharton," added Bunter. "You must admit that I've done my best to play for the Remove, but your jealousy has kept me out of the team."

Harry Wharton laughed.
 "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," snapped Bunter. "I'm ready, Temple, when you are," he added to the Upper Fourth captain.

"Then come on," said Temple.
 He linked his arm affectionately in Bunter's and walked the fat junior on to the field.

The teams formed up; the Upper Fourth fellows who were playing against Bunter, all put on exaggerated looks of alarm as they came near Bunter.

"You'll kick off, of course?" said Temple.

"Certainly!"
 Bunter blinked round the field, then kicked off.

There was immediately a wild scramble for the ball. The zebra stripes were seen tossing to and fro amid the crowd, like a boat on a stormy sea, and soon they had disappeared altogether.

Where was Bunter?

A feeble voice was heard from the midst of the players.
 "Ow! Oh, really, you fellows! Yow! Gerroff!"

The Upper Fourth players parted, and Bunter was revealed. He was stretched upon the ground, gasping for breath. Temple and Dabney, choking with suppressed laughter, rushed to help him up.

"Hold on you chaps," said Temple. "Our best player's hurt!"

"It's—it's all right," gasped Bunter. "Somebody fell on me! I wish you fellows wouldn't play so rough—it spoils my delicate touch."

"You hear that?" said Temple, severely, to the other players. "We don't want to spoil Bunter's delicate play!"

The game proceeded.
 Billy Bunter was allowed to take the ball and dribble it towards the goal. His dribbling was about as clumsy as an elephant dribbling a table-tennis ball, but he was getting the ball towards the goal, and he was quite satisfied with himself.

Billy Bunter was going to score a goal! He'd show the Removites!

He drew back his foot to wham the ball in the general direction of the net—and then it happened.

The Upper Fourth players, who had been standing back while Bunter had made his run, now descended on him in full force. Bunter's kick was never completed! Once again he was tossed higher and thither and once again he disappeared, under the throng of Upper Fourth Formers.

"Yow!" roared Bunter. "H-help! Owch! Groo-oo!"

The Removites, feeling that the joke had gone far enough, rushed upon the field and dragged the footballers away. Temple and Co. went whirling, and Bunter lay revealed.

He lay gasping like a newly-landed fish. His shirt was split up the back, his hair was a tousled mop, his spectacles were gone.

"Ow! Oh, what happened?" blinked Bunter.

"What did you expect, you young duffer?" laughed Wharton. "Get off the field, and don't play the fool."

Bunter picked up his glasses and put them on his nose.

"Ouch!" he moaned. "Upon the whole, your methods of football are too crude," said Bunter. "I decline to play for the Upper Fourth."

And Billy Bunter, gasping for breath, staggered off the football ground, leaving the juniors still shrieking.

"I'm so sorry, Bunter!"
 It was Alonzo Todd, the duffer of

Greyfriars, who made the remark.

Billy Bunter was sitting on his bed in the dormitory, removing his football togs.
 "Go and eat coke!" snapped Bunter.

"Oh, certainly, if you wish," replied Alonzo. "I only wanted to say that I was so sorry that you can't play footer, and to show you this."

"What is it?"

"This advertisement in the Courtfield News. You see," went on Alonzo, "I, too, have the feeling that, given the chance, I should shine forth as a very great footballer."

"Oh, cut the cackle," snapped Bunter.

"Well," continued Alonzo. "I have no chance of playing for Greyfriars, and you have no chance either. It has occurred to me that we might look further afield, and as soon as I saw this advertisement, I thought of what a great chance it might be."

"Read it out," commanded Bunter.

Todd read from the local paper.

"Wanted—players for the Courtfield Rovers team. Average age, fifteen.—Apply, W. Bunter, 10 Oak Lane, Courtfield."

"By jove!" exclaimed Bunter.

"It struck me that it might be a relation of yours," said Alonzo.

Bunter shook his head.

"I haven't any relations in this country at all," he said grandly. "Some of my relations are titled people—in fact, most of them are. We're a big family, of course. The original Bunter came over with William the Conqueror—that was Sir Jocelyn de Bunter—and the family has spread very much. But not to Courtfield."

"But about this advertisement," put in Alonzo. "Courtfield's only two miles away. We could get there easily, and if we joined the team—"

Bunter rubbed his fat hands.

"That's not a bad idea," he agreed. "It would serve these chaps right if we gave Greyfriars the go-by and joined the Courtfield Rovers."

"I think we ought to call on this 'W. Bunter' right away," said Alonzo.

"Right!" said Billy. "We'll buzz over on bikes today."

"But I haven't a bike," said Alonzo doubtfully.

"Neither have I," snapped Bunter. "But we can borrow a couple can't we?"

Billy Bunter fastened his collar, and he and Alonzo went downstairs together. Billy, fully convinced that he would be welcomed with open arms by the Courtfield Rovers, was already swelling with importance, and he was strutting by the time he reached the lower passage.

HARRY WHARTON was standing in the doorway, chatting with Frank Nugent and Bob Cherry. They were discussing the pros and cons of cycling over to Cliff House, and having tea somewhere with Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends. Todd nodded to the chums as he passed, but Bunter stopped to speak.

Wharton smiled as he saw him.
 "Feeling better, Bunter?" he asked.

"I'm all right," grunted the fat junior. "I was treated very shabbily. I'm not understood at Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, you're all jealous! I'm done with Greyfriars! There are people elsewhere who appreciate me, and in future I shall play all my football outside Greyfriars."

"My hat!" grinned Nugent.

Bunter blinked at him.

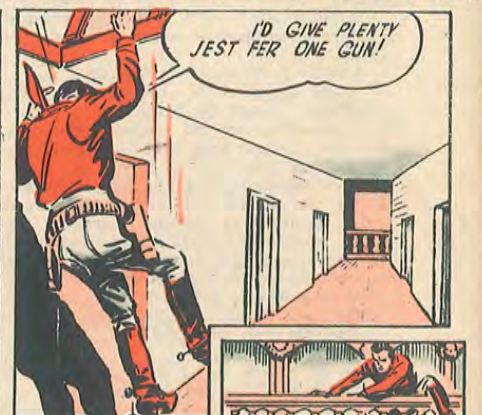
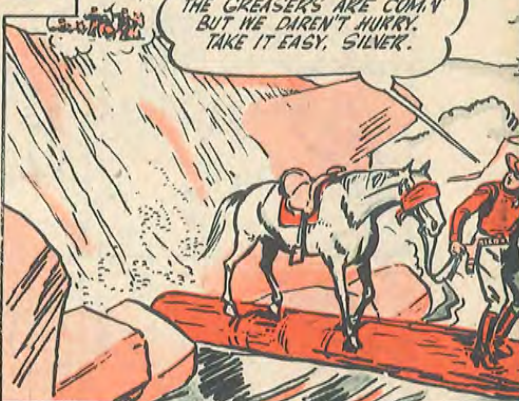
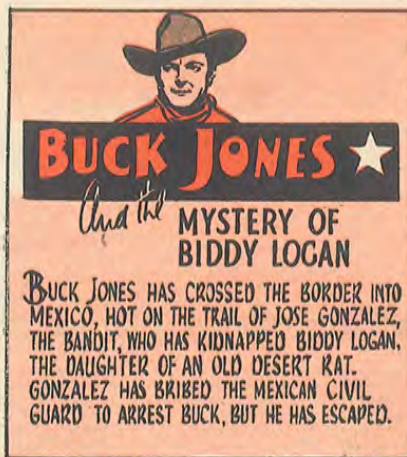
"I'm going to play for the Courtfield Rovers," continued the fat junior. "The captain of the team wants me to play, and I want to borrow your bike to pop over there!"

"Sorry, it can't be done," said Frank. "You'd squash it for one thing, and for another, I'm going to use it myself."

(Continued on opposite page)

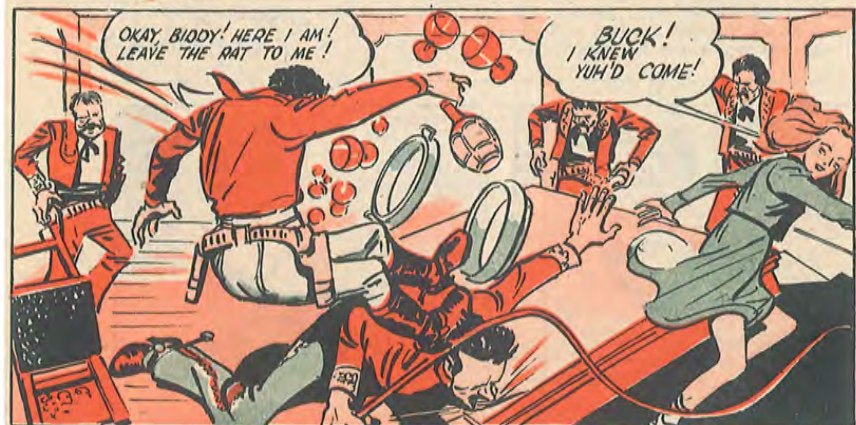
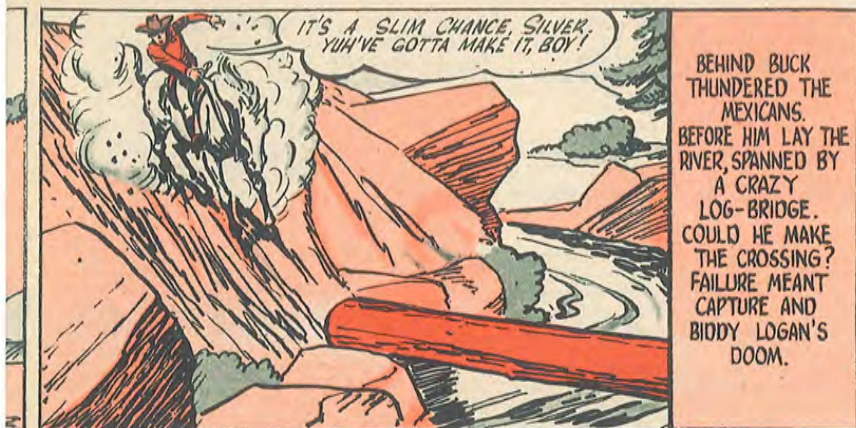
CHUCKLE CORNER





SCOOP—THE "COMET" REPORTER





SIMON - THE SIMPLE SLEUTH





THE PLAN THAT WENT WRONG

RALPH ROVER felt himself to be marooned as surely as if he were still with Jack Martin and Peterkin Gay on Coral Island.

On shore were the natives, whose ways were so horrible that he could not think of them without shuddering.

On board the ship which had taken him away from Coral Island were men worse even than the natives. Even Bill, with whom he was most friendly, had a name among his fellow seamen for his fierceness.

Feeling very much alone, Ralph began thinking again of trying to escape. The news that Avatea, the native girl whom they all liked, was in danger, spurred him on. A spark of hope came to him when he learned that a quarrel had arisen between the skipper of the pirate sandalwood trader and Romata, the chief of the island off which the ship lay.

He was ordered by the skipper to go ashore with the sandalwood cutters and take a gift of whale's teeth to Romata to pacify him. He received Ralph and Bill haughtily, but his eyes gleamed as he saw the whale's teeth, which were greatly prized among the natives.

"Go," he said, with a wave of his hand, "go and tell your captain that he may cut wood today, but not tomorrow. He must come ashore. I want to palaver with him."

Bill shook his head as he and Ralph went to rejoin the woodcutters. "There's mischief brewin' in that black rascal's head. I know him of old," he said.

That evening, Ralph, standing on the deck near the skylight of the captain's cabin, heard him talking to the mate.

"I don't like it," the mate was saying. "It seems to me we'll only have hard fighting and no pay."

"Becoming soft-hearted, eh?" said the Captain angrily. "The cargo's not all aboard. There's a good quarter of it lying in the woods. That chief knows it and won't let me take it off. Now—here's my plan."

Ralph listened in horror. The captain intended to muffle the sweeps and row the schooner to the head of the creek, from which they could command the pile of sandalwood with their brass gun. He would take a large party of men to the village, where the natives would be dancing round their cannibal supper, and hoped to drop at least forty or fifty of them with a first volley from carbines loaded heavily with buck-shot. In the panic which was bound to follow, they would take what wood they wanted and sail away.

Ralph hurried to tell Bill, who listened thoughtfully, and agreed that they must try to stop this cold-blooded murder.

"Ralph," he said presently, "I'll swim ashore after dark and fix a musket to a

tree not far from the place where we'll have to land. If I tie a long string to the trigger, and stretch it across the path, someone's bound to let it off. That ought to warn the village in time, but not too soon to stop us from gettin' safely back to the boat. I'll baulk Master Captain for once in his life!"

He carried out his plan shortly after dark, and then stood by with Ralph, waiting for the Captain's orders. As midnight approached, the cable was cut and the sweeps were got out. These large oars each required two men to work them, and the schooner made slow progress up the dark creek.

Having reached a spot that was as dark as a cavern because of overhanging trees, the Captain had a small kedge anchor attached to a thin line let softly over the stern.

"Now, lads," he whispered as he walked down the line of his waiting crew, all armed to the teeth, "don't be in a hurry, aim low—and don't waste your first shots."

The boat was pushed off strongly from the schooner's side and drifted slowly and silently towards the shore of the creek. Ralph was left with it, with orders to shove off immediately if any natives came near him.

With fast pounding heart he watched the Captain put his carbine in the hollow of his arm and glide into the bushes, followed by his men.

Ralph knew the exact spot where Bill had fixed the musket. He strained his eyes into the darkness in that direction. No sound came. He began to fear that they had taken another path, or that Bill had not fixed the string properly.

Suddenly he heard a faint click and saw one or two bright sparks among the bushes. The trigger had been pulled—but the priming had not caught!

Bill's plan had failed. A feeling of dread came over Ralph as he crouched tensely by the boat.

He jumped as a shot cracked in the stillness. It was followed by the wild yell of a thousand voices from the village.

Again the cry came, followed by shouts as of scattered parties of men bounding into the woods. Then he heard another shout, nearer at hand. It was the voice of the Captain, cursing the man who had fired the premature shot.

"Forward!" he roared, and Ralph heard a ragged cheer as the seamen charged the natives.

Shots rang out in quick succession, and then a loud volley echoed through the woods, like the rolling of thunder. Ralph shuddered as many wild shrieks arose, drowned by another cheer from the seamen. While he was listening to these confused sounds, Ralph was startled by the rustling of leaves close to him.

At first he thought it was a party of natives who had seen the schooner, but as he froze to the ground he saw in the dim light a large number of black figures bounding through the trees towards the scene of the battle.

They had outflanked the landing party,

and would soon attack them in the rear. Shortly the shouts increased tenfold. Exultant cries from the savages burst out as the noise of battle died down, and he was sure now that the seamen and their Captain had been defeated.

"What can I do now?" he thought. Capture by the savages was too horrible to think about. Flight to the mountains would be hopeless, since he would soon be discovered. To take the schooner out of the creek without help was impossible.

But the schooner was his only hope. He was about to push off when his hand trembled and his blood chilled as an appalling shriek rang through the woods. It was followed by a triumphant shout from the natives.

With these horrifying sounds still ringing in his ears he seized the boat-hook and again prepared to push the boat away from the shore. As he did so, a man sprang from the bushes.

"Stop! Ralph! Wait!" he shouted, and leaped into the boat so violently that it nearly upset.

It was Bill. He sat gasping and panting as Ralph pushed off and the boat glided towards the schooner. In a few moments they were clambering aboard. "Hurry, Ralph!" cried Bill. "Cut the anchor free quickly! I'll deal with the natives."

Bill's first stroke with his sweep nearly pulled the schooner round to the bank again. He had quite forgotten that Ralph could hardly move his unwieldy oar. Dashing to the stern, the seaman lashed the rudder in such a position that while it helped Ralph, it acted against himself, and so made the force of their strokes more equal.

Slowly the schooner began to glide down the creek while Ralph pulled and strained till he thought his lungs would burst. Many of the natives had plunged into the water and began swimming towards them, but the schooner was now making such headway with the current that only one man succeeded in reaching her.

He seized the cut line that hung from the stern and swarmed up. Bill saw him directly his head appeared above the taffrail, but the big man did not stop rowing, and did not even seem to notice the savage until he was within a yard of him.

Dropping the sweep, Bill swung a mighty blow with his clenched fist. It caught the native on the forehead and felled him to the deck. Bill lifted him, flung him overboard, and again took hold of his sweep.

But now Ralph saw that some of the natives had outrun them along the bank and were about to plunge into the water ahead of the schooner.

Bill hesitated for a moment. Then he sprang to the brass gun, drawing a pistol from his belt, held the pan of the pistol over the touch-hole and fired. The hiss of the gun's priming followed the shot. Then the thunder of the gun burst upon the savages with a deafening roar that seemed enough to split the island.

That frightening sound was enough. The natives' scared hesitation allowed the schooner to pass the point at the creek mouth. A gentle breeze bulged out the sails, and the schooner headed slowly out to sea.

Now that the danger was past, a great weariness came over Ralph. During the greater part of the day he had suffered much physical strain and nervous excite-

ment. Now he sank down on the deck, and a wave of blackness swept over him. He awoke with cool breezes on his forehead, and the blue sea tinged with yellow at the horizon as the sun rose. The sea was dead calm, and the blue of the sky unbroken by cloud.

Bill was sitting on the deck near his feet, his head resting as if in sleep on his right hand, which held the tiller.

He started and looked round as Ralph stirred.

"Well, Ralph, awake at last, my boy? You've slept long and soundly."

Ralph sprang up in anxiety as he saw that Bill's face was deathly pale and his hair clotted with blood. Blood also stained his haggard face and the front of his shirt, which was torn and muddy.

"Bill, you've been wounded!"

"Even so," said Bill, in a deep slow voice. "I've been waiting for you to wake up, to ask you to get me a drop o' brandy and a mouthful o' bread from the cabin lockers. I didn't want to disturb you, but I don't feel up to much now."

Ralph hurried to carry out his wishes, and soon Bill fell asleep. The boy watched him anxiously for a while and then busied himself lighting a fire in the galley and preparing a hot breakfast. But although Bill seemed much better after he had awakened and eaten, it was plain that his wound was serious.

It had been caused by a pistol shot in the right side of his chest, fired, Bill told Ralph, by the Captain. When his warning musket had failed to fire, Bill had managed to trip and fire his carbine as if accidentally. But the ferocious skipper had not been taken in, and now Bill was paying for his attempted act of mercy.

During the battle he had managed to escape, chased by a horde of natives, and rejoined Ralph.

"Well, Bill," said Ralph briskly, to take the seaman's mind off the pain of his wound, "we'd better think what we're going to do now. We've got a schooner all to ourselves, and here comes a breeze, so we must make up our minds which way to steer."

"It doesn't matter to me which way we go," said his companion weakly. "I'm afraid I haven't much time, anyway. Go where you will. I'm content."

Ralph gripped his hand. "We'd better steer for Coral Island then, Bill, and see what's become of my old friends, Jack and Peterkin. The island has no name, but the Captain pointed it out to me on a chart and I marked it afterwards."

He went on eagerly, saying how he would manage the sails if a squall should blow up, how he would get a nap now and then if only Bill could manage to hold the tiller for a couple of hours each day. But as he looked at Bill's haggard face and sunken eyes, he knew it would not be so easy as that.

The grim fact remained that they were only a boy of fifteen and a helpless man alone on a schooner in the limitless Pacific. How could he possibly manage if one of the violent storms of the South Seas sprang up?

Will Ralph ever reach Coral Island and see Jack and Peterkin again? Be sure not to miss the thrills in the next COMET.

MY DEAR READERS

I want to thank all of you who have written such nice letters to me. I am replying to them all, personally, as soon as ever I can.

It is grand to know how much you welcome the COMET every fortnight. Don't forget I want to know just what you like best in this issue of your favourite paper, and I will answer your letter if you enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Address your letters to The Editor, THE COMET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, LONDON, E.C.4.

Your sincere friend,

The Editor



Don Deeds

The sunken treasure-ship is located at last! Equipped with Hoo Sung's patent diving gear, Don Deeds gets aboard the wreck, but while his foot is entangled in a chain he is attacked by a shark!



WILL HOO SUNG'S PLAN SAVE MAI-MAI? MORE THRILLS IN THE NEXT COMET!

★ 'COMET' GALLERY OF STARS PRESENTS FOUR MORE FILM FAVOURITES ★



36. DAVID NIVEN
(London Films)



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WINS A MEDAL AND BAR

MARS IS BIGGER SIZE NOW!

● Get your Bigger Size Mars today
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THE ELUSIVE PIMPERNEL

IN 1792, WITH REVOLUTION RAGING IN FRANCE--HER CHIEF SPY--CHAUVELIN, CAME TO LONDON TO CATCH THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL, WHO HAD SAVED MANY PEOPLE FROM DEATH--WAVELING LORD TONY DEWHURST, A MEMBER OF THE PIMPERNEL'S BAND--CHAUVELIN'S HIRELINGS STOLE A NOTE MAKING A RENDEZVOUS AT THE LONDON HOUSE OF LORD GRENVILLE--

AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN LONDON--CHAUVELIN IS JUBILANT.

I SHALL GO TO THE BALL AT GRENVILLE HOUSE TO-NIGHT--AND THERE I SHALL COMPEL LADY BLAKENEY TO HELP ME TRAP THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL!



GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES, HEADED THE LONDON SOCIETY FLOCKING TO GRENVILLE HOUSE THAT NIGHT--



SIR PERCY AND HIS FRENCH WIFE, LADY BLAKENEY--AND WITH THEM CHAUVELIN--AWAITED THE PRINCE IN THE GREAT BALLROOM--



NOT EVEN LADY BLAKENEY KNEW THAT HER HUSBAND WAS THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL--



ANGRY AT SIR PERCY'S FLIPPANCY, CHAUVELIN INVITED LADY BLAKENEY TO DANCE--



CHAUVELIN TOOK LADY BLAKENEY ASIDE AND HIS FIRST WORDS MADE HER FORGET THE DANCE



WHEN CHAUVELIN HAD LEFT HER, LADY BLAKENEY SENT A MESSAGE TO HER HUSBAND--THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD HELP HER. HE WAS PLAYING CARDS WITH THE PRINCE--



PRESENTLY--SIR PERCY BLAKENEY DISAPPEARED FROM GRENVILLE HOUSE AND HURRIED TO A LOFT HIGH IN HIS OWN LONDON HOME--USED ONLY BY HIMSELF AND CERTAIN CARRIER PIGEONS--



Can the Scarlet Pimpernel thwart Chauvelin? Don't miss the thrills in the next Comet Based on a Powell-Pressburger production for London films, from a book by Baroness Orczy

HERE ARE SIX STAMPS FOR YOUR ENGINE-SPOTTERS' GUIDE. SIX MORE WILL BE IN NEXT WEEK'S "SUN"



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(No. 93). Tube Train London Transport



(No. 7). 4-6-0 Southern Region Remembrance Class



(No. 60). 0-8-0 London Midland Region 7F Class



(No. 29). 4-6-0 Western Region Hall Class



(No. 15). 2-6-4 Tank, Southern Region W Class