

COMET

PRICE
3^D
EVERY
MONDAY

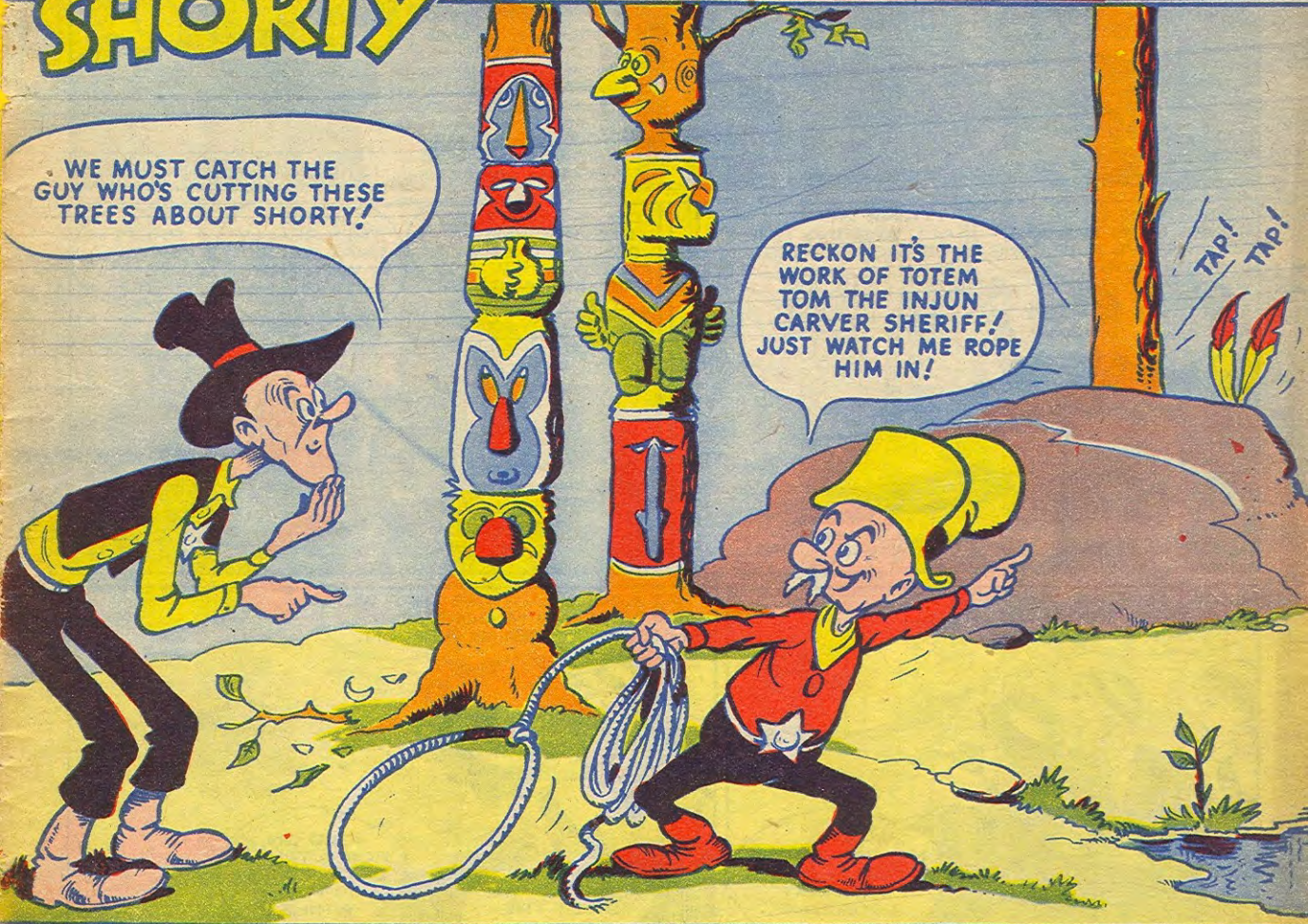
No. 222. October 18, 1952

SHORTY

WE MUST CATCH THE
GUY WHO'S CUTTING THESE
TREES ABOUT SHORTY!

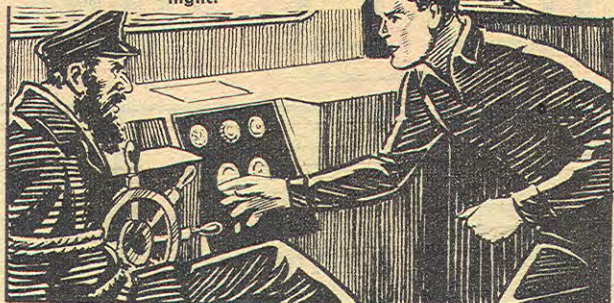
RECKON IT'S THE
WORK OF TOTEM
TOM THE INJUN
CARVER SHERIFF!
JUST WATCH ME ROPE
HIM IN!

TAP!
TAP!



Ron Mason and his sister, Jane, are in trouble. They discover that their father is working with a gang of smugglers led by a man called Hugo. To help their father they hide some watches. Through no fault of theirs the police get on the trail of the smugglers. Ron and Jane go to Hugo's launch to warn him and he keeps them prisoners. Their father is furious with Hugo and attacks him at night.

THE NEW BOY'S SECRET!

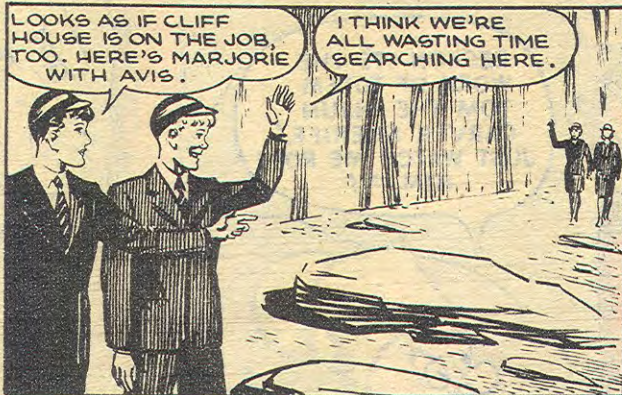


THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU FOR A TIME, MY FRIEND!

THE NEXT DAY THERE WAS GREAT ACTIVITY AT GREYFRIARS AS THE SEARCH WENT ON FOR RON AND JANE MASON.



YOU, SMITH AND BULL, TRY THE MOOR. WHARTON AND CHERRY, YOU COVER THE BEACH. YOU OTHERS SEARCH THE WOODS. LET ME KNOW AT ONCE IF YOU FIND ANYTHING.



LOOKS AS IF CLIFF HOUSE IS ON THE JOB, TOO. HERE'S MARJORIE WITH AVIS.

I THINK WE'RE ALL WASTING TIME SEARCHING HERE.



I DON'T THINK THEY WERE DROWNED. I BELIEVE THEY WERE PICKED UP BY THE SMUGGLERS' CRUISER.

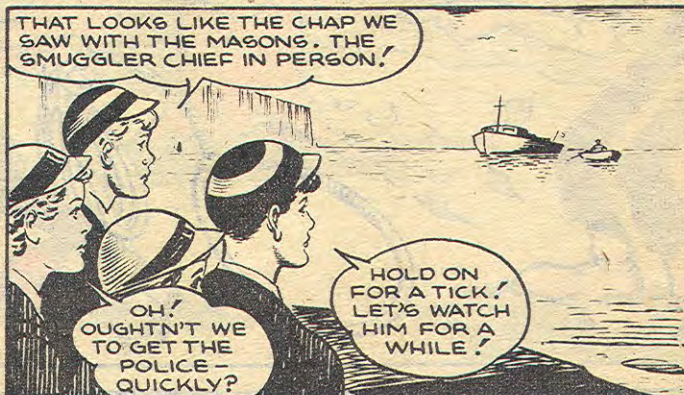
WERE THEY REALLY THAT DEEP IN WITH THE SMUGGLERS?

PRETTY OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?



LOOK! I'M SURE THAT'S THE SMUGGLERS' SHIP!

WHAT A NERVE - COMING HERE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT LIKE THAT!



THAT LOOKS LIKE THE CHAP WE SAW WITH THE MASONS. THE SMUGGLER CHIEF IN PERSON!

OH! OUGHTN'T WE TO GET THE POLICE - QUICKLY?

HOLD ON FOR A TICK! LET'S WATCH HIM FOR A WHILE!



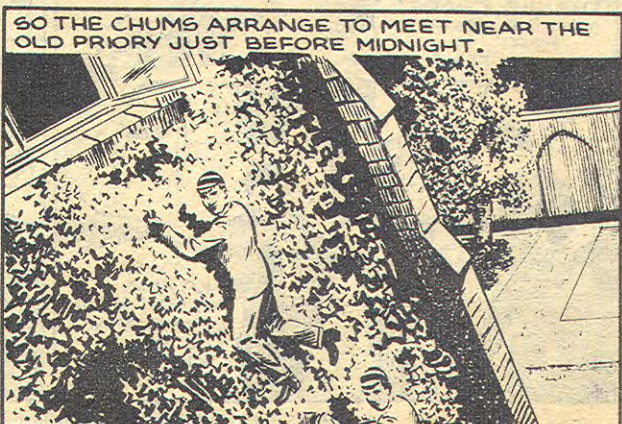
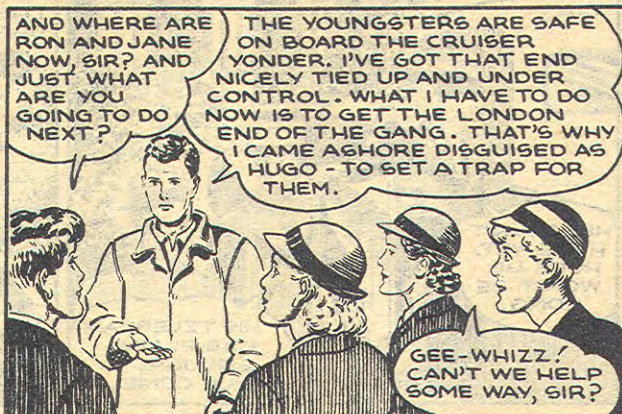
IT CERTAINLY IS THE BIG SHOT, HARRY. NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

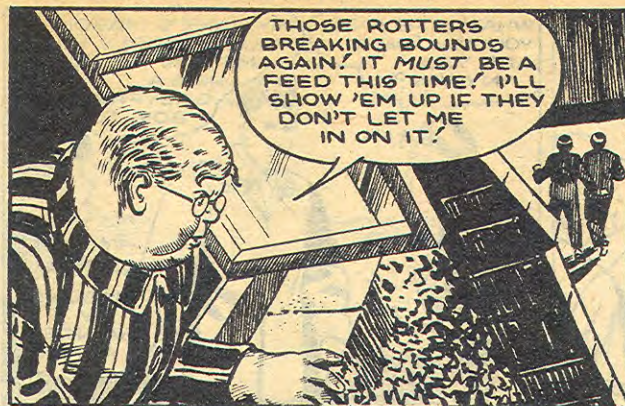
LAY LOW - AND JUMP ON HIM IF WE GET THE CHANCE!



SO THE FOUR WAIT IN AMBUSH AND AS HUGO PASSES CLOSE BY THEY POUNCE - - -

NOW!





Don't miss the first fun-filled pages of "Alonzo, the Clown." It starts next week!

THE WHEEZES OF WILLIE WIZZARD

WILLIE'S PATENT FLY-CATCHER

MR. HALFSUN, the assistant headmaster of Gandybar Academy, was drawing a diagram on the blackboard. He was talking about something as dry as dust when a sound like a snore smote his ears.

Mr. Halfsun swung around from the blackboard to glare at the class. All the boys seemed to be attentive. No one was dozing. With a suspicious grunt the assistant head turned back to the easel. The snoring began again.

Red in the face, Mr. Halfsun once more glared at the boys.

"Which of you made that noise?" he thundered.

"Zzzz" went the sound. It seemed to be coming from the direction of Jimmy Bash, who was sitting near the window. Mr. Halfsun glared at Bash, who tried to look innocent.

"Bash!" called Mr. Halfsun fiercely. "Come here!"

Jimmy got to his feet, but before he could walk forward Willie Wizzard, who sat at the next desk, had put up his hand.

"Please, sir," he said, in an unhappy voice. "It was me. I mean it was I. At least, sir, it wasn't I. That is—I mean, sir..."

"Well, what do you mean, boy?" snapped Mr. Halfsun.

"It wasn't me myself, sir," the schoolboy inventor began. "It was something in my desk, sir."

Mr. Halfsun strode across the room towards Willie's desk. "Let me have it!" he demanded.

"Well, sir, I think it might be better if..." Willie started to say earnestly.

"Let me have it!" repeated the assistant headmaster, and without waiting for Willie he lifted the flap of the desk himself.

Mr. Halfsun sprang back with a cry of alarm as a contraption leaped out of the desk with a roaring "Zzzz" sound. He flung up his arms to protect his head as the thing bounded upwards. It was now making a clapping noise as well. It zoomed and dived around the classroom, bumping into the ceiling and crashing into the walls.

From behind the desk underneath which he was crouched for safety, Mr. Halfsun shrieked: "Stop it, Wizzard! Take a hundred lines, boy!" And he added "Ooooh!" as the flying machine swooped towards him again.

All the boys were by now leaping up onto their desk tops trying gleefully to grab the flying object. They were hooraying and laughing and throwing things around when suddenly the door swung open. Dr.

Gandybar, the headmaster, stood in the doorway.

"What is this?" roared Dr. Gandybar. "Quiet!"

"There was an immediate hush, and everyone stood stock still. The glowering Dr. Gandybar was about to march into the room when he heard the "Zzzz." He looked upwards in amazement a moment before the flying machine zoomed in his direction. He watched openmouthed for a second before he turned tail and ran, with the Wizzard contraption sailing swiftly after him through the open doorway!

"Oh, my!" groaned Mr. Halfsun, struggling out from his hiding place. "Oh, my! Wizzard—go after it! Stop it, boy, whatever it is! Oh, the head will give me a wiggling for letting this happen!"

Willie Wizzard obediently hared for the door and disappeared from view. Some sort of calm returned to the classroom. Everyone wondered, of course, what was happening to the schoolboy inventor, but as there were only ten minutes to go before lessons ended for the day the boys knew that they would soon have a chance to look for Willie and hear his story.

As soon as the class was told to dismiss, about half of the boys rushed up to Willie's room to see if he was there. With disappointed groans because they could not do the same, the other boys made their way to the school hall. They were players in the school orchestra who had to attend a rehearsal for the annual concert which was due to take place soon.

The schoolboy inventor was in his room—trying to nurse those stinging parts of his anatomy which had been caned!

"Old Gandybar gave me six of the best!" he reported. "But I managed to get hold of the Wizzard Patent Fly-Catcher before it got away, and it's unharmed," he added happily.

He went on to explain that



Willie's Fly-Catcher pounced on the man and began boxing him about the ears as if it were clapping at a football match!

the device which had sprung out of his desk was indeed a fly-catcher. He held up the now quiet machine for inspection.

In the middle, it looked something like a rolling-pin. From the front end stretched two metal arms. At the end of each arm was a flat wooden pad. There was a spindle sticking up from the top of the rolling-pin part, and on the spindle was a propeller blade.

"It works like a helicopter," said Willie. "This propeller whirls round and the whole device flies across the room..."

"We gathered that, old bean," interrupted Jimmy Bash with a chuckle.

Willie grinned, and continued: "It flies across the room and, as it does so, these pads on the arms slap together—just as if they were two hands clapping. Any flies or wasps that get in the way are well and truly swatted. If you'd like to shut the door, chaps, I'll show it in action again. And if anyone's got any tame flies, let 'em loose!"

Jimmy closed the door and asked: "Does it work on petrol, or what?"

"Well, er, I'll tell you later," said Willie mysteriously, and turned a knob at the end of the rolling-pin section to set the

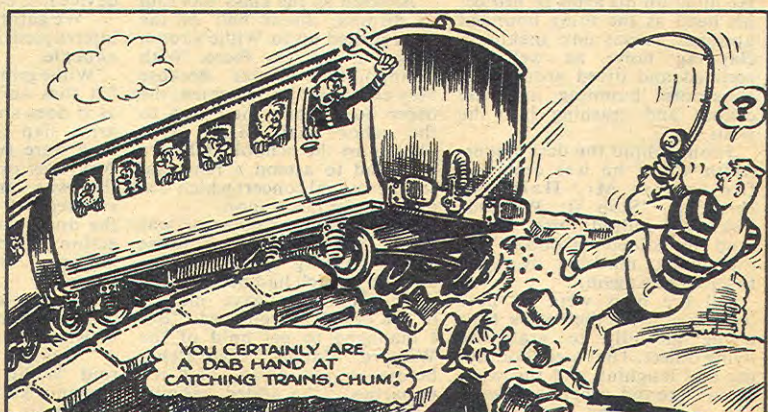
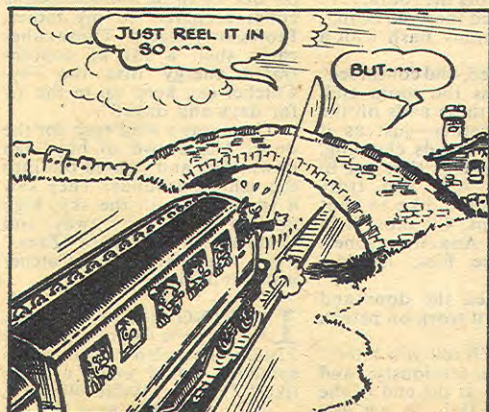
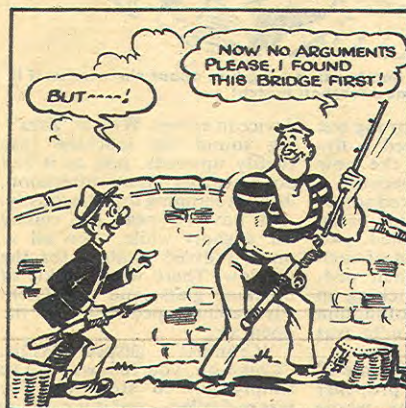
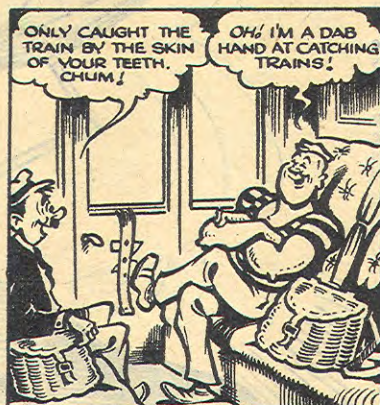
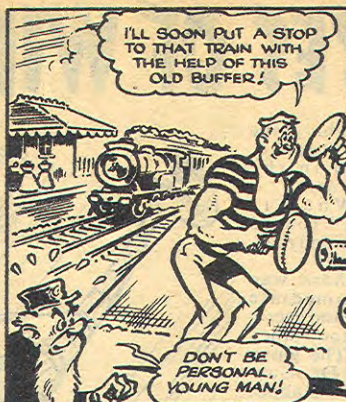
device in action. With a "Zzzz"-ing sound the machine rose swiftly upwards, just as it had done earlier that afternoon, its pads slapping together busily.

It hovered near the ceiling for a short while, then all at once it dived straight for the window. There was a tinkle of breaking glass, and the Patent Fly-Catcher sped out into the open air!

"Crumbs!" gasped Willie. "Come on, you fellows! We've simply got to stop it! I've just re-fuelled—and it is running on one of those solid sunshine cubes prepared by my father, Professor Wizzard! Those cubes carry such a lot of concentrated energy that the Fly-Catcher can keep up in the air for days and days!"

There was a mad rush for the door. The crowd of boys ran downstairs and poured out into the school grounds. They saw a small speck in the sky, high up and a long way away, and heard a distant sound of "Zzzz." Then the Patent Fly-Catcher was lost to view!

DURING the next week everyone forgot about the Fly-Catcher. Now and again someone would make a noise like "Zzzz" at Willie Wizzard, (Continued on page 18)



BOB HARLEY - SPECIAL AGENT

The "Prowler" was like a huge tank, specially made to move about on the bed of the oceans. It was as big as a battleship, and Malcolm Franklin, who invented it, had been using it to get gold from all the wrecked treasure ships that lay deep beneath the waves. The "Prowler" could reach them, however deep they lay, and was big enough to be able to haul smaller wrecks into its huge salvage hold, so that they could be explored in comfort.

Young Bob Harley, who was a Special Agent from "X" branch of Scotland Yard, was given the secret service job of helping Franklin to protect his huge craft from foreign spies.

Deep under the sea they met The Shark, a mystery man, whose face nobody had ever seen, for it was hidden under a steel mask. He was the commander of a pirate submarine from the South American country of Incaragua. In a daring raid on Franklin's secret headquarters, The Shark had stolen the working model of the "Prowler" which held all of Franklin's secrets.

After almost capturing the Shark in a battle under the sea, Franklin and Bob lost the masked pirate chief when he got away from the "Prowler" in one of the escape-boxes—boxes designed to get the crew to the surface in case of disaster.

Malcolm Franklin and Bob went up after The Shark in one of the "Prowler's" bathyplanes. These were like swift fighter aircraft, which could "fly" in the water as an aeroplane flies in the air. But up at the surface they were fired on by planes from an Incaraguan aircraft carrier. Badly damaged, the bathyplane plunged towards the sea bed—out of control!

THE bathyplane plunged downward like a stone.

With its engine out of action, it was like an aeroplane in the same plight.

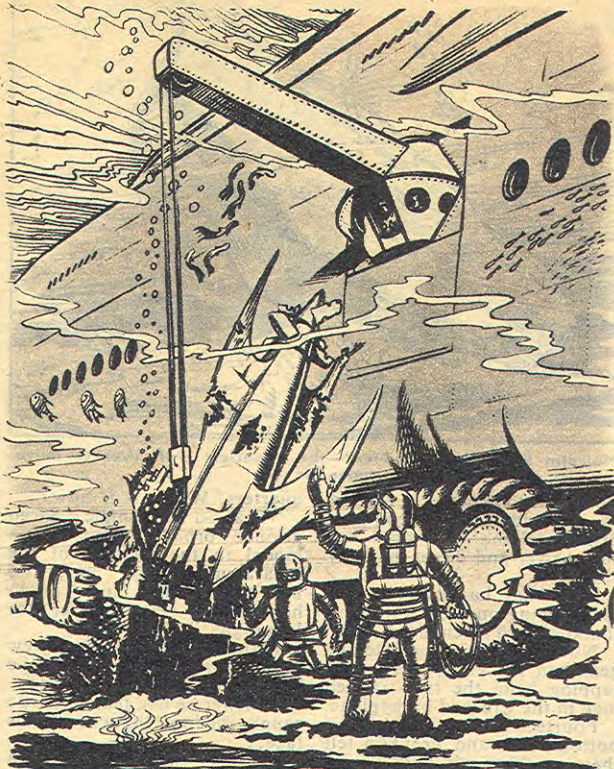
"All we can do is look for a smooth patch on the sea-bed to put her down!" said Malcolm Franklin. Bob looked sideways at the inventor. His lean face was tense.

The sea around them darkened from green to black, as they plunged deeper. Franklin leaned forward, and switched on the headlights. Narrow beams of yellow light stabbed forward into the depths.

"I'll try the radio," said Bob. "The lights are working—perhaps we can send out an S.O.S."

"No use, Bob," said Franklin. "The high tension is worked by a generator—and that's out of action with the engine. I daren't switch on the engine again with one blade of the propeller shot away. We'd be shaken to bits in no time!"

The lights worked off batter-



Fourteen hours after Bob and Franklin crashed in the damaged bathyplane, their friends in the "Prowler" found them. But were the two safe inside that crumpled wreck?

ies, Bob knew. He couldn't help wondering how long it would be before those batteries ran out, and they were left in darkness.

Franklin pulled back on the controls, and the nose of the Bathyplane came up a bit. Like a "plane without an engine, it would "glide"—but only as long as it had sufficient speed.

And all the time they were going down—down.

Franklin brought the bathyplane round in a wide sweep. The twin beams of the headlights swept across the sea-scape ahead. Fishes galore flashed past their view—and then something else appeared.

A towering wall of black, shining crags—a mountain range standing up sheer from the sea-bottom.

"Look out!" Bob yelled the warning, though he knew that Franklin would have seen the danger as soon as he had. Franklin tugged on the rudder control, and their turn grew faster. The lights swept over peaks and cliffs that seemed endless.

Black, jagged rock loomed nearer—nearer.

Franklin pushed forward on the controls, and the nose dropped into a sheer dive again. He slammed on full rudder as

he did so, and the bathyplane twisted as it dropped, so that now it faced away from the towering wall of peaks.

Down they plunged, and then, directly below them was another crag—a sort of foothill to the main range of mile-high submerged mountains.

Back came the controls, and the nose came up again.

They shot past the jagged tooth of rock with only feet to spare.

"Phew!" gasped Bob, "That wasn't funny!"

"It still isn't!" said Franklin, as the downward glide continued. "Remember when we were down below in the 'Prowler'? Could you see anything like that range of mountains then?"

Bob frowned, then shook his head.

"The lights of the 'Prowler' reach about a couple of miles—so that's the least we must be away from any possible help. The 'Prowler's' going to have a lot of sea-bed to search to find us, even assuming we get down in one piece!"

He had hardly got the words out, when the floor of the ocean shot suddenly into view. Bob searched frantically this way and that, for a landing place. They had only a few seconds

at most before they must touch down.

Lumpy, unfriendly coral, and sloping black shale seemed to be everywhere.

Then Franklin gave a cry, and swung the machine over in a fast turn to the right. Bob saw then where he was headed.

It was a strip of sand—twenty yards wide, perhaps—between outcroppings of rock.

Bob had barely time to see that it was there, before they hit it. The drag of the wet sand and mud slowed them rapidly. Franklin fought the controls tensely, and tried to keep on an even keel.

But it was of no use.

The bathyplane wasn't designed for this sort of landing.

The nose dug in, and the tail came up.

The lights went out, and in inky blackness, they were left, stood up on end, with the front ten feet of the machine buried, like a huge dagger, in the clinging mud.

"Are you all right, Bob?"

"Yes, thanks." Bob caught hold of a bulkhead beside him, and tugged upon it. "These safety straps are nearly hanging me—but if we hadn't had them, we'd have both bashed our brains out when we hit just now. I'm going to try to get right way up!"

In the bathyplane, the two men had to lie flat down, facing forward, so that now they were hanging head down in their harness.

"You do that, Bob—I'll hang on till you've managed it. There isn't room for both of us to lash around," said Franklin. "When you do get clear, try the switch by the entrance hatch. The cockpit lights just might work still. A little light will make things seem a lot better."

Bob managed to turn himself over, and loosen the straps of his harness.

The cockpit light did work, and, a minute later, Malcolm Franklin was free of his harness, too.

Together they crouched in the upright narrowness of the fuselage.

"What now, chief?"

"We'll be all right, once the 'Prowler' locates us," said the inventor thoughtfully. "The problem is, how to help them find us without radio. And there's only one answer to that."

Bob eyed the inventor curiously as he searched around in a small locker and produced a spanner. With it, he struck a ringing blow on the side of the fuselage. Then another—and another.

"They'll have listening gear switched on—and sounds carry a long way through water. We'll have to keep this up until

(Continued on next page)

they find us. We'll take it in turns."

So he went on, beating out ringing blows in steady succession.

"They'll find us, for sure!" said Bob. "Rattigan and the others on the 'Prowler' have got their heads screwed on the right way!"

Franklin grinned and nodded.

He didn't tell Bob what was in his own mind. That range of submarine mountains might be between them and the "Prowler." If it was, they hadn't much chance of being picked up.

All they could do was to wait—and hope.

THE powerful flood-lights of the "Prowler," in action once again, turned the darkness of the sea into an eerie green "daylight." The search for Franklin and Bob, overdue in their bathysphere, had begun.

From the armour-glass observation "blister" of the control room, Rattigan peered out and forward.

Suddenly he tensed, and pointed forward.

"Mountains!" he said. "That would account for it!"

The navigation officer peered ahead.

"How do you make that out?"

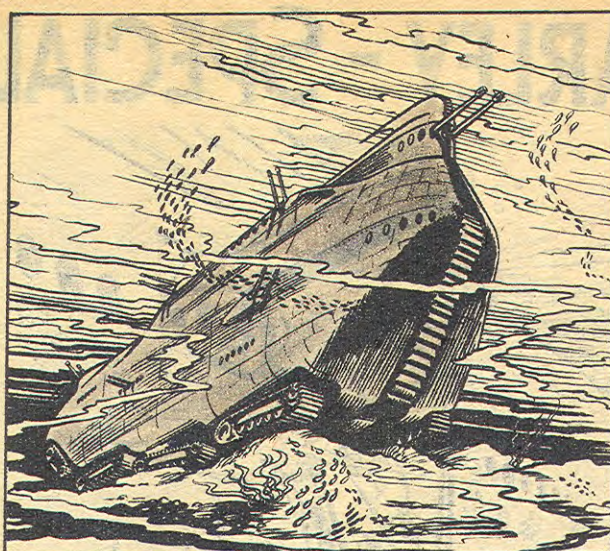
"Well, more or less by chance, when they left the 'Prowler' I chose to follow them by radar as they climbed for the surface. Thanks to that, we know that their bathysphere nose-dived for the bottom pretty sharply. They must have ran into trouble of some sort up there. Then I followed 'em down, until suddenly the radar echo which I was bouncing off 'em was suddenly cut off, and all I got back on my radar screen was a signal that meant that I was up against a blank wall. Well—there's the blank wall—that mountain range. They're on the other side of that."

"I get you." The navigator took a deep breath. "Over we go then! This is where we find out how good the 'Prowler' is at hill climbing. I'll find a way over, if there is one. And if there isn't, we'll blast one through with the forward guns. Tell the lads on the listening gear to keep at it. If Mr. Franklin and Bob are still alive, they'll be tapping out a signal—and the minute we pick up that, the rest will be easy!"

For the next ten hours the ten tractor-like feet of the "Prowler" churned over slowly in bottom gear, as they crawled up the mountain-side.

Where the way became too steep for the huge craft to advance without danger of falling over backward, men in diving armour went out, and hitched steel hawsers around huge spurs of rock. Then the big winches and hoists of the salvage gear were used to tug the "Prowler" upwards like a man hauling himself up a hillside with the aid of a rope.

At last they reached the summit, and almost the same



Malcolm Franklin's "Prowler"—the mightiest craft ever to move under the sea.

thing had to be done in reverse, for it would have been complete disaster if the "Prowler" had rolled over and down the steep slopes.

Now they had every reason for carrying on—for Rattigan's thinking had been dead right.

Now the men at the listening gear had picked up the steady tapping from the two trapped men in the wrecked bathysphere.

Fourteen hours after they hit bottom, Bob and Franklin felt their machine stir and lift, as powerful hoists from the "Prowler" tugged them out of the sand.

After that, it wasn't long before they were safe among their friends again.

NEXT day, after a long sleep, Malcolm Franklin sent for his prisoners. The Shark had got clean away, but his crew were safely under lock and key in the "Prowler's" holds.

Franklin eyed them coldly. They were a tough-looking bunch of villains, and Franklin was taking no chances with them. Men of his own crew were posted behind them, with guns at the ready.

"I'll make a bargain with you," he said quietly. "Tell me what I want to know, and I'll set you ashore on the mainland of Incaragua. If you don't tell me what I want to know, I'll turn you over to the Royal Navy, and charge you with piracy on the High Seas. Take your choice."

A big dark man, with curly black hair stepped forward, an oily grin upon his face. This was Sargo, who had been chosen as spokesman by them, for he spoke English.

"We tell-a-you. The Shark, he leave-a-us, he run. So we tell-a-you. What'a you want to know?"

"What became of the model of the 'Prowler'—the model you stole from my secret head-

quarters. Where is it now?"

"That's-a very simple." Sargo grinned broadly. "We give-a model to the flagship of the Incaraguan Navy. Now it-a been taken home. Now-a dock-hands build new 'Prowler' for Incaragua!"

Malcolm Franklin's face grew tense. That was the answer he had more than half expected—the answer he had feared. Sargo caught the look that crossed his face.

"Lots-a men work verra hard. Soon, Incaragua hava-a 'Prowler'."

"All right!" said Franklin quietly. "You've told me what I want to know. I'll keep my part of the bargain." He signalled to his own men. "Take them back to the hold."

He sat silently, thinking, for a little while. Then he looked up at Bob and Rattigan, who were standing with other officers of the "Prowler" across the room from him.

"If they build a 'Prowler,' it means war!" he said grimly. "There isn't a ship made that couldn't be sunk by undersea gunfire from a 'Prowler.' In their hands the 'Prowler' would become a deadly weapon. We've got to stop them building their machine, come what may."

"What do you propose, sir?" asked Rattigan.

Malcolm Franklin pulled a map towards him.

"Dockyards—" he said, pointing with a finger. "Dockyards in Incaragua can mean only one place—here—in Porto Visto. That's where they have built up their Navy."

He tapped the map for a moment.

"We're going to Porto Visto, gentlemen, and if there's a 'Prowler' being built there, we're going to blow it to smithereens."

"It'll be well guarded—how do you mean to get at it?"

"Take the 'Prowler' straight

up the sea-floor, and on to dry land. She'll operate like a giant tank. Nothing short of an atom bomb will stop her!"

There was silence for a moment, as the men listening thought of all that this plan could mean.

Then Bob Harley spoke.

"It strikes me," said Bob, "that you got what you wanted out of that fellow Sargo rather easily."

Franklin looked at him sharply.

"You may be right. Well?"

"Just suppose he was saying what he had been told to say, by the Shark. Suppose that the Shark's got a nice warm welcome waiting for you. He'd easily guess that you'd attack the dockyards, once you knew that a second 'Prowler' was being built."

"You're talking sense, young Bob. Go on."

Bob flushed with pleasure at Franklin's words.

"It may be a trap—so let's find out what the Shark's got waiting for us in Porto Visto. Keep the 'Prowler' out of sight until we know for certain what we're running into."

"You mean to send someone ashore, to spy out the lie of the land. Who?"

"Rattigan and I," said Bob firmly. "It's our job. We're the 'X' branch men here. We're trained Special Agents."

NINE days later the "Prowler" came to rest a mile outside the estuary of the Porto Visto river.

In eighty feet of water it was barely submerged.

Malcolm Franklin studied the shore-line ahead of them through the periscope.

"There's nothing out of the ordinary to be seen from here," he said at last. "Just buildings, and the cranes and gear of the dockyards. If the Shark has got any surprises ready for us, then they're well hidden."

He turned away from the periscope. "Surprises or no surprises, we'll go ahead with your plan, Bob. We'll go as close inshore as we dare, a mile or two to the south of the port." He crossed to a small control panel, and picked up a 'phone that connected with other parts of the "Prowler." Pressing down the correct switch, he spoke into the mouthpiece to the crewman who answered from the deck below.

"Are the Frog-suits ready for Mr. Harley and Mr. Rattigan?"

"Yes, sir, we've just checked them for leaks, and the breathing flasks are filled with enough air to last for four hours under water. Heaters and walkie-talkie radio also correct."

"Good. Have the suits ready for use in about . . ." Franklin glanced at his wrist watch. "Three hours. Mr. Harley and Mr. Rattigan will need them soon after sunset."

Franklin put down the 'phone
(Continued on next page)

YOUR FAVOURITE DOGS.

No. 11. THE
LABRADOR RETRIEVER

Although this dog is named a "Labrador" there is no dog of his type which actually comes from that country. It is believed that he originally came from Newfoundland, but now he is thought of as a real British dog.

The Labrador is used mostly as a gun dog and is a splendid worker, a wonderful swimmer and very intelligent. Because of this he is very easy to train and very quick to learn obedience.

His thick warm coat is a good protection against the weather and he has an "Otter" tail which acts as a rudder in the water. Labradors are all black in colour or any shade from cream to red.

This dog makes a wonderful friend and is used by the police. They are often trained as guide dogs for the blind.



BOB HARLEY— SPECIAL AGENT

(Continued from page 8)

and turned to the two "X" branch men.

"All set," he said.

"Good. With any luck, we'll be back before daylight," answered Bob.

Rattigan nodded.

"Being night-time, we should get away with it without being spotted. In any case, I've fixed us up with a couple of disguises, so that we don't look too British when we get ashore. They're in a waterproof parcel—we'll have to put them on after we land."

"That seems to cover everything," nodded Franklin. He turned to the navigator. "Half-speed astern, Mr. Wesley—back off to twelve fathoms, and set course for two miles. I'll take over then."

"Right you are, sir."

THREE hours later, Bob and Rattigan, looking like men from Mars in their black rubber frog-suits, climbed through the inner door into the divers' lock of the "Prowler." This was just a small room on the outside of the hull, with one door leading inward, and one leading outward to the sea.

When the inner door was securely shut, Rattigan eased open the water-valves, and the sea came flooding in. When the little room was full, they opened the outer door, and stepped on to the sea-bed. Bob closed the door carefully after them, for the lock would now be pumped clear of water, so that it was ready for use as soon as another diver wished to go out.

At eighty-odd feet below the

surface, the water was a deep green, and they could see not more than a yard or so ahead. The two lamps fixed to their chests winked on as they pressed the switches, and gave them enough light for their walk towards dry land.

Bob glanced at the compass on his wrist to make sure of direction, and pointed wordlessly. Rattigan nodded, and they set out at a steady plod towards shallower water.

An hour later they were safely ashore.

They hid their frog-suits among some rocks at the foot of a low cliff, and, keeping out of the bright moonlight so that their movements might not be seen, they quickly put on their disguises.

As they strode out towards Porto Visto, they looked just like a couple of young local fishermen, or labourers. Coloured scarves wound around their heads hid their fair hair.

They did not speak to one another as they walked, for their plans were all settled, and since neither of them spoke Incaraguan, they had agreed not to speak English. They had no way of knowing who might overhear them—quite by chance—in the darkness.

The road climbed over the brow of a hill, and as they topped the rise, they found themselves looking down upon the town of Porto Visto.

They stopped for a moment, and looked down. Then Bob let out a low whistle.

"What's up?" Rattigan whispered.

Bob looked swiftly around before answering. But there was no cover nearby that could hide a chance eavesdropper.

"Down there—those build-

ings on the shore line!" he said softly. "Look at them!"

Rattigan peered.

"I see what you mean," he said at last. "They're just false fronts—like the buildings they put up specially for films. But what's behind them?"

From where they stood, they could look into the backs of these hollow shells that had looked so real when Malcolm Franklin had scanned them that afternoon. Each one contained a large, shapeless mass.

"It's hard to see anything from here," replied Bob. "But my guess is that those lumpy things are guns—guns covered by camouflage nets!"

"I think you're right!" whispered Rattigan. "There'd be a warm welcome for anyone who attacked them from the sea! But where is their 'Prowler'—supposing that they are building one?"

"There are the dockyards, over there," Bob pointed. "I dare say they've got camouflage nets over their handywork there, too. They wouldn't want anyone to spot them from the air. Let's take a closer look."

They walked down the hill towards the Porto Visto. Soon they were threading their way through narrow streets towards the Dockyards.

The streets were empty. There was not a single person about. Everything was quiet.

Too quiet.

It was by no means late.

Why should there be nobody stirring?

"I don't like it!" whispered Bob. "I feel as though we're walking into a trap!"

"That's just what we are doing!" Rattigan breathed back. "This is most likely a curfew! If the Shark has fixed it so that

everyone must be indoors by sun-down—that would account for the streets being empty!"

"He's one guess ahead of us, all the time," gritted Bob. "He guessed we might come ashore to spy out the land! I'll bet the city's being patrolled by his men with orders to arrest..."

That was as far as Bob got.

From the corner of a nearby street, came the throb of a car engine.

A small truck, loaded with soldiers, shot into view.

Bob and Rattigan leaped backwards into the shadow of a doorway—but to no avail. The bright headlights picked them out.

"Cho drobne hasta!" roared a voice.

Armed men leaped from the car, and the two "X" branch men found themselves surrounded by menacing guns.

An officer strode towards them.

"Cho drobne hasta!" he snapped again.

Rattigan and Bob looked at each other hopelessly. They didn't understand the language, but they had no doubt about what was happening.

They were under arrest!

Guns were prodded into their ribs and they found themselves pushed roughly into the truck.

Through the empty streets they sped, away from the docks and towards the centre of the city. They stopped before a big concrete building and were hustled inside.

They found themselves in a brightly lit office.

"Welcome to Incaragua, my friends!" said a voice.

It was the Shark!

Next week—In the dungeons of
Port Visto!

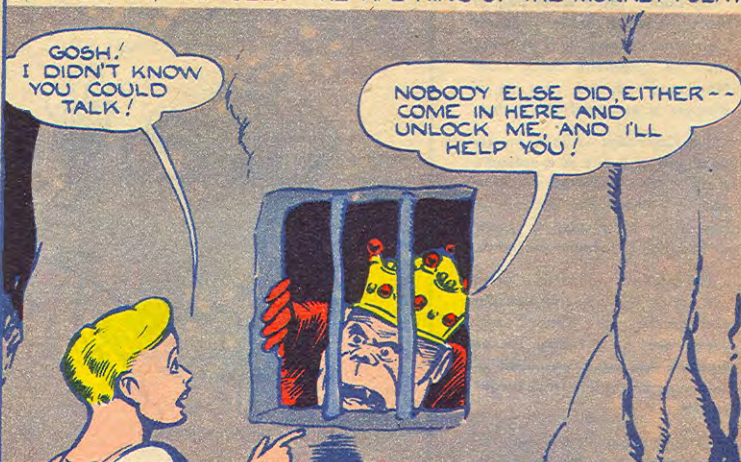
Professor Jolly, Peter and Ann, are seeking the lost crown jewels for Queen Alva, ruler of Atlanta in the Milky Way. Captured by Monkey Folk, they escape just as the Hawk, son of the pirate who stole the jewels, arrives. Peter gives the alarm, but as he goes to rejoin his friends...

THE SKY EXPLORERS



PSST!
I'M A FRIEND!
I CAN HELP YOU!

PETER LOOKS THROUGH THE LITTLE BARRED WINDOW JUST BEHIND HIM, AND SEES THE APE-KING OF THE MONKEY-FOLK!



GOSH!
I DIDN'T KNOW
YOU COULD
TALK!

NOBODY ELSE DID, EITHER --
COME IN HERE AND
UNLOCK ME, AND I'LL
HELP YOU!

SO PETER SLIPS QUICKLY INTO THE CAVE...



UNCHAIN ME --
THERE'S THE KEY,
OVER THERE!

YOU'RE NO APE --
YOU DON'T SOUND
LIKE ONE! WHO
ARE YOU?

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE CAVE, THE HAWK AND HIS PIRATES HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY THE MONKEY-FOLK.



RETREAT!

TOO LATE!
WE'RE SURROUNDED!

UP IN THE TREE-TOPS, THE PROFESSOR AND ANN ARE WATCHING THE SCENE.



GOOD --
THE MONKEY-FOLK HAVE
GRABBED THE PIRATES.
JUST AS WE'D HOPED
THEY'D DO. AS SOON AS
THEY CLEAR OFF, WE'LL
JOIN PETER IN THE CAVE
OVER THERE!

UNCLE -- WAIT --
THE HAWK IS SAYING
SOMETHING!

THE HAWK IS A PRISONER -- BUT HE IS DETERMINED TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR THE EARTH-FOLK!



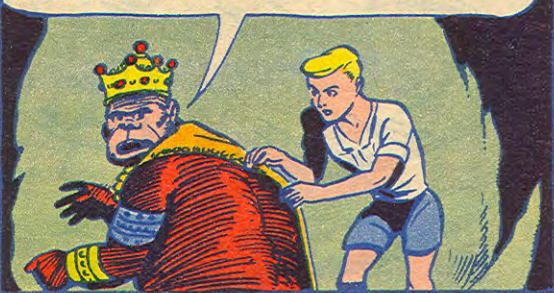
WHILE YOU'RE FIGHTING US, YOUR REAL
ENEMIES, THE PEOPLE FROM THE EARTH,
WILL STEAL YOUR TREASURE!
ONE OF THEM RANG THE ALARM BELL --
HE CAME FROM THE TREE-TOPS
OVER THERE!

A MOMENT LATER THE TREES WHERE ANN AND HER UNCLE ARE HIDING ARE SURROUNDED BY MONKEY-FOLK. IT CANNOT BE LONG BEFORE THEY ARE FOUND!



MEANWHILE INSIDE THE CAVE, PETER IS IN FOR SOME SURPRISES. . .

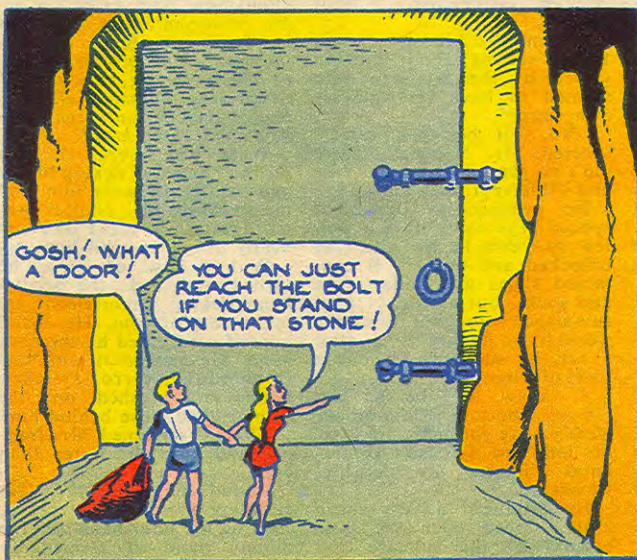
I'M NOT AN APE AT ALL - - BUT THE MONKEY-FOLK DON'T KNOW THAT. THIS IS ONLY A DISGUISE I WORE, TO TRY AND ESCAPE FROM THEM, BUT THEY FOUND ME, AND THOUGHT I WAS A HUGE APE, AND MADE ME THEIR KING, ACCORDING TO THEIR CUSTOMS, THEIR KING IS ALWAYS THE BIGGEST APE THEY CAN FIND. NOW - IF YOU LOOK YOU'LL FIND SOME FASTENERS IN THE FUR ON MY BACK. . .



PETER QUICKLY FINDS THE FASTENINGS, AND THEN. . .

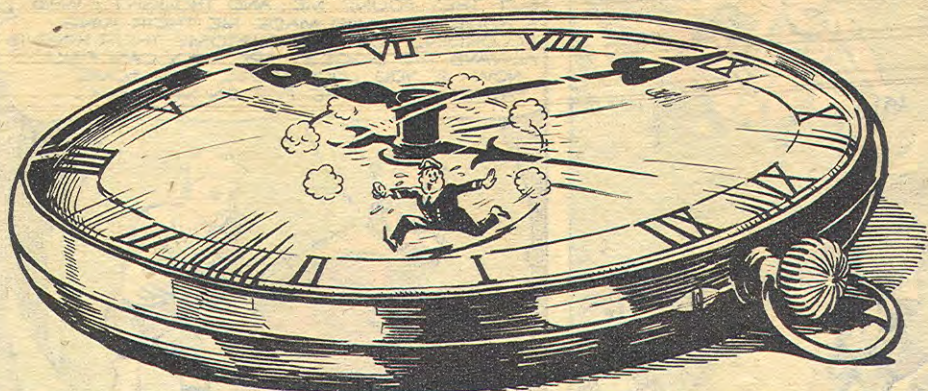


THEY GATHER THE CROWN JEWELS OF ATLANTA TOGETHER IN THE APE-SKIN, AND. . .



(Continued on back page)

MICK THE MOON BOY



Round and round behind him the second hand followed. "Help! Gemme out of here!" screamed Mr. Napper, tearing madly along.

A CASE FOR THE CUSTOMS

THE big liner S.S. *Golden Star* had reached England from America. The gangways had been run out, and down them were trooping the passengers, amongst whom was Mick the Moon Boy and his twelve-year-old pal, Hank Luckner.

"Gee, Mick, ain't it wonderful?" cried Hank, his eyes shining with excitement. "I can't hardly believe yet that you an' me's really in England an' all set to see them wonderful ol' castles an' abbeys an' things what they've got over here. What do we do first? Get a train to London?"

"The first thing we do," said Mick smiling, "is to go through the Customs. After that we'll get on the train."

"What's the Customs?" demanded Hank.

"Those long sheds there," said Mick, nodding ahead in the direction everyone was going. "That's where our luggage is examined by Customs officers to make sure we're not trying to smuggle watches or nylons or perfume or anything like that into the country."

"Why, gosh snakes! We wouldn't do a thing like that," cried Hank.

"I know we wouldn't, but some folks do try it," said Mick. "When they're caught they either get very heavily fined or sent to prison. Sometimes both."

"Well, we're okay," said Hank happily. "We ain't trying to smuggle anything."

"I know we're not and our luggage won't take much examining," said Mick.

He glanced down at the suitcase he was carrying; then as he glanced at Hank's he said sharply:

"I say, what's that case you're carrying? I don't mean your

suitcase, I mean the other one?"

"Aw, this?" said Hank, looking at a small extra suitcase he was carrying. "It belongs to that fat man just ahead of us there. The one with the bowler hat on. He asked me to carry it for him on account of he's got two big heavy ones to carry himself. He said he'd get it back from me soon's he's found a porter."

"Oh, did he?" said Mick, staring at the fat man who was staggering along under the weight of a couple of heavy suitcases. "Where did you meet him, anyway?"

"Near the top of the gangway when I was waiting for you," said Hank. "I don't mind doing the guy a good turn. This case of mine isn't heavy."

The fat man went through the Customs in front of them. Keeping an eye on him, Mick saw him turn and watch Hank. Rather anxiously, Mick thought.

It came to their turn to have their luggage examined. They dumped their cases on the long wooden counter in front of the Customs Officers and unlocked them.

The officer attending to Hank's luggage was a tall, skinny, sour-looking man with a straggling moustache and eyes like gimlets.

"Anything to declare?" he snapped at Hank, fairly boring him with his eyes.

"Yeah, I'll declare that Britain's a real swell country an' I'm mighty happy an' proud to be here, sir!" announced Hank.

The Customs officer, whose name was Mr. Napper, glared at him.

"I don't want any of your cheek!" he cried angrily. "I know what you American kids are. Fresh guys, huh, and you think we're soft. Well, I'm not soft as you'll bloom in quick find out if I have any more of

your lip. Have you anything to declare, I say?"

"When I do declare anything you say I'm sassy," began Hank.

"I mean in *here*!" bawled Mr. Napper, slapping the suitcases with his hand. "Have you any dutiable articles? Nylons, watches, scent—"

"Aw, you mean am I tryin' to smuggle anything?" cut in Hank, the light of understanding dawning on him. "No, course I'm not. You go right ahead and look."

"I'm going to!" said Mr. Napper grimly.

He rummaged through the suitcase which Hank had unlocked for him and found nothing in the smuggling line.

"I haven't got the key of the other suitcase," explained Hank. "It doesn't belong to me. It belongs to a fat gent that I'm carrying it for."

"Ho, does it?" said Mr. Napper suspiciously. "What gent?"

"I can't see him now," said Hank, staring about him in search of the fat man who seemed to have very quickly disappeared.

"No, I'll bet you can't," sneered Mr. Napper. "There ain't no gent. This is your case and I'll have it open quick."

He produced a bunch of special keys and within a very few moments he had the case unlocked and opened. It contained shirts and collars, ties and socks, but as Mr. Napper rummaged through it for all the world like a hungry terrier after a rat, he suddenly let out a bawl of triumph.

"I knew it!" he bawled. "A false bottom. I'll soon see what you've got hidden in here, my lad, and if it isn't contraband I'll eat my perishin' whiskers!"

He produced a very sharp knife, ripped open the false bottom of the suitcase and lifted it like a lid.

"Watches!" he bellowed, his eyes fairly blazing with triumph. "Gold watches. Dozens and dozens of 'em. Oh my, you'll not half go to chokey for this, you wicked young villain, smuggling watches!"

He snatched up one of the watches and had a good stare at it. It was a fine, expensive watch, with the hour hand, the minute hand and the second hand all working off the same centre pivot, the second hand being the finest of the three.

"Come on!" he roared at Hank. "You're coming to the office to be properly searched—clothes and all—then I'm going to hand you over to the coppers!"

With the watch in his hand, he lifted a flap in the counter and made straight at Hank. The lad looked wildly about him in search of either Mick or the fat man, but neither were to be seen anywhere.

"Now lookie here, I tell you that isn't my suitcase at all!" he cried desperately to Mr. Napper, backing away. "I was jus' carryin' it for a gent like I told you. I don't know anythin' about any watches!"

"Ho, no, that's what you all say when you're caught!" bawled Mr. Napper, making a rush at him. "You can tell that yarn to the police!"

In that same instant, however, a most astonishing thing happened to Mr. Napper. For in a flash the Customs shed and all the people in it completely vanished and he found himself standing in what seemed to be a huge circular compartment with a glossy white floor and a domed glass roof. And painted at regular intervals round the floor were Roman figures.

Mr. Napper glared wildly about him. And, as he did so, the nerve-shattering truth was borne in on him. He was imprisoned in the very watch he'd been carrying, only now the watch was thousands of times bigger than it had been when he'd had it in his hand!

What was more, the big second hand was ticking loudly and swiftly towards him and the petrified Mr. Napper was quite certain it would slice him neatly in half if it hit him.

With a howl of terror, he turned and fled, the second hand ticking remorselessly on in pursuit of him. He found himself confronted by the hour hand. He cleared it with one tremendous, terror-stricken bound and rushed on, the second hand close behind him.

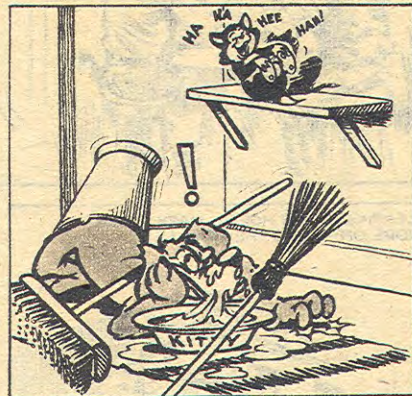
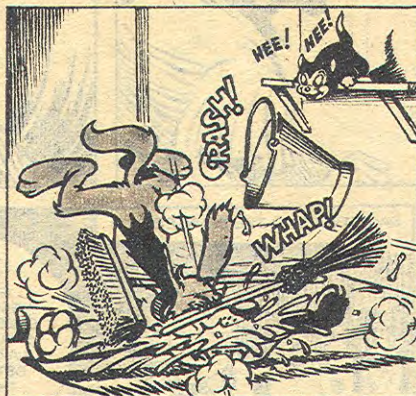
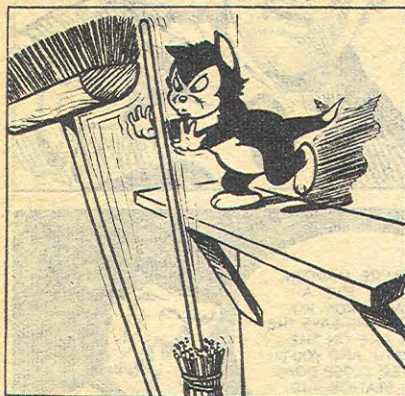
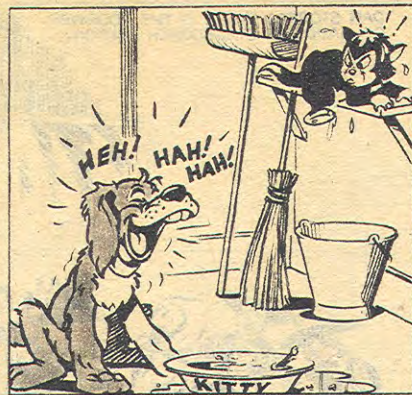
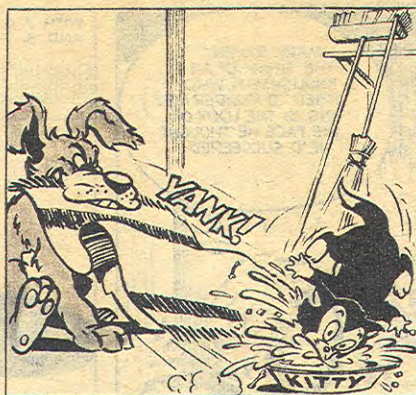
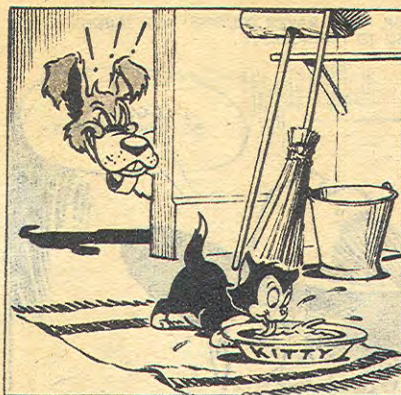
"Help!" screamed Mr. Napper and tore on faster than ever.

Round and round the great gleaming white dial he rushed, clearing the hour hand and the minute hand at tremendous

(Continued on next page)



SCAMP OUR HAPPY HOUND



MICK THE MOON BOY (Continued from page 12)

bounds, but always behind him swinging the long second hand, threatening to slice him in two if ever it caught him up.

"Help! Gemme out o' here!" screamed Mr. Napper, tearing madly along.

Then, right in a flash, another astonishing thing happened. For without the slightest warning, the frantic Mr. Napper discovered that he was no longer in the watch, but was tearing madly round and round the Customs shed, hurling people out of his path as he did so and screaming:

"Help! Help! Gemme out o' here!"

The moment he discovered that he was no longer in the watch, he stopped and stood panting and glaring about him.

"What's—what's happened?" he gasped. His glare fastened on Hank. "I was after that wicked little villain there for smuggling watches—"

"He wasn't smuggling the watches!" roared a voice, and up charged the fat man in the bowler hat. "They're my watches. I wanted to smuggle them through, but I thought it too risky, so I gave the case to that poor, innocent little lad here to carry. He looked

so innocent that I thought he might get them through and, if he didn't, then he could take the rap instead of me!"

"Ho, is that so?" shouted Mr. Napper, only too ready to vent his rage on somebody. "Then if they're your watches, you're coming along with me!"

He seized the fat man by the scruff of the neck and proceeded to drag him off to justice. Hank found Mick beside him and, knowing these strange happenings had been caused by the Moon Boy's wonderful scientific powers, he said:

"How did you work it, Mick?"

"It was dead easy," chuckled Mick. "I put the 'fluence on that Customs officer and made him think he was inside the watch. That's why he was rushing round and round like a scalded cat. Then I gave the fat guy a full dose of the 'fluence which makes folks tell the truth even if they don't want to. That's why he rushed up to the Customs officer bawling out that the watches were his. He just couldn't help doing that. He had to do it with the 'fluence on him. But, come on, let's get our cases and get on the train."

"I'll say!" agreed Hank happily.

Next week: The man who couldn't say yes!

THIS IS KIT CARSON SPEAKING



Hullo there, folks.

Over the page you'll find some more dandy pictures, telling my story of "The White Redman's Secret", and just in case you've missed what's happened up till now, I'll tell you all about it.

This is the strange tale of two brothers, who grew up without knowing each other. Their parents were killed in an Indian raid and one grew up with white folks, and was called Dan Butler. The other grew up as Deerfoot, chief of the Teton Sioux tribe.

There was a lot of mystery around these two lads. For one thing there was a sinister Englishman, named Mark Raven, who had tried to kill Dan, and knew some valuable secret about him. Then there were Tom Stack and Cinnamon Bill, who had killed Nat Butler, whom Dan knew as his father.

Dan had set out to track down those two killers, and it was then that he had nearly walked into an Indian camp. I happened along and got him out of trouble.

Then I sent him on to Madden's stage-coach station, to warn them that the Indians were taking the war-path.

And it was there that young Dan came face to face with an old enemy!

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT 'THE BEGINNING OF THIS GRAND YARN

THE SECRET OF THE WHITE REDMAN

DAN STOPPED DEAD, IN THE DOORWAY OF MADDEN'S STAGECOACH STATION...



WITH A GASP, MARK RAVEN DROPPED HIS CARDS AND BACKED TO THE DOOR...



LEAPING TO HIS HORSE, MARK RAVEN TORE OFF ALONG THE TRAIL!



DAN STRODE TO THE COUNTER...



SIOUX ON THE WARPATH! LET'S GO! WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR!



THEN THE STAGE DREW TO A HALT OUTSIDE...



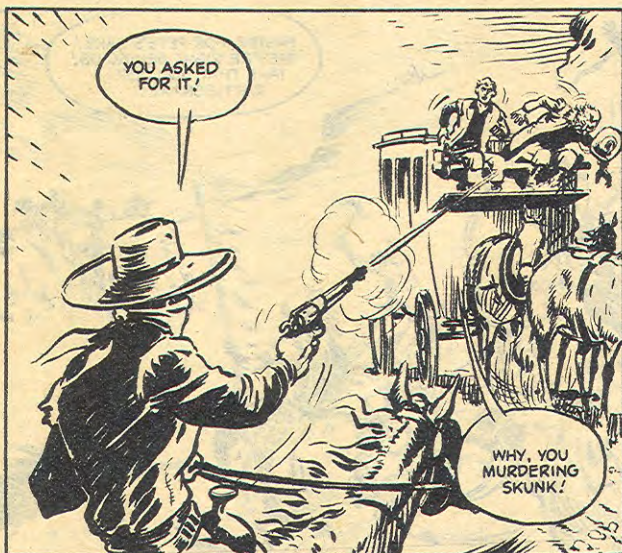
IF YOU'RE COMING, PILE ABOARD, FOLKS! HOP UP HERE, YOUNGSTER! YOU KIN RIDE WITH ME!



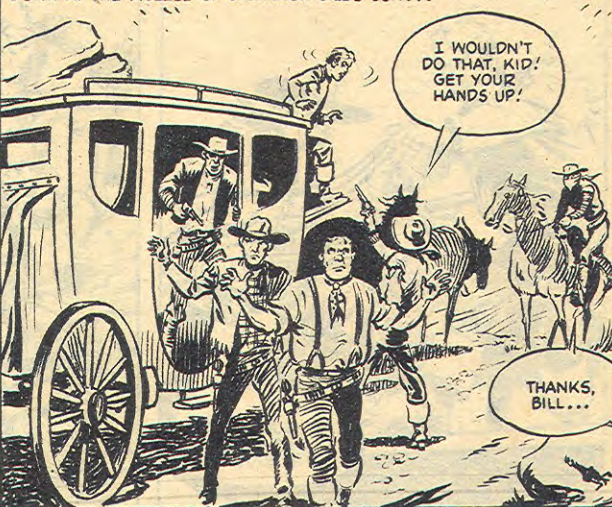
AS THE STAGE SET OFF ALONG THE TRAIL TO DEADWOOD, DAN CHATTED TO ROARING JONES, TELLING HIM OF NAT BUTLER'S MURDER BY CINNAMON BILL AND TOM STACK...



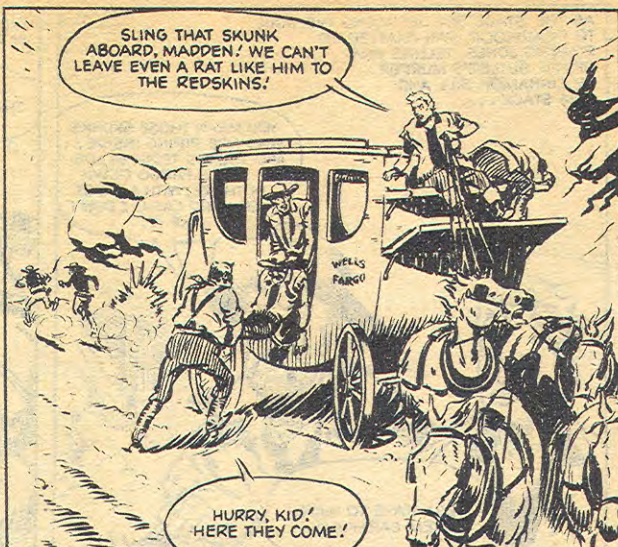
THEN A MASKED FIGURE SWUNG OUT IN FRONT OF THE STAGE...



THEN A HARSH VOICE RAPPED OUT, AND DAN GAZED DOWN AT THE MUZZLE OF CINNAMON BILL'S GUN...



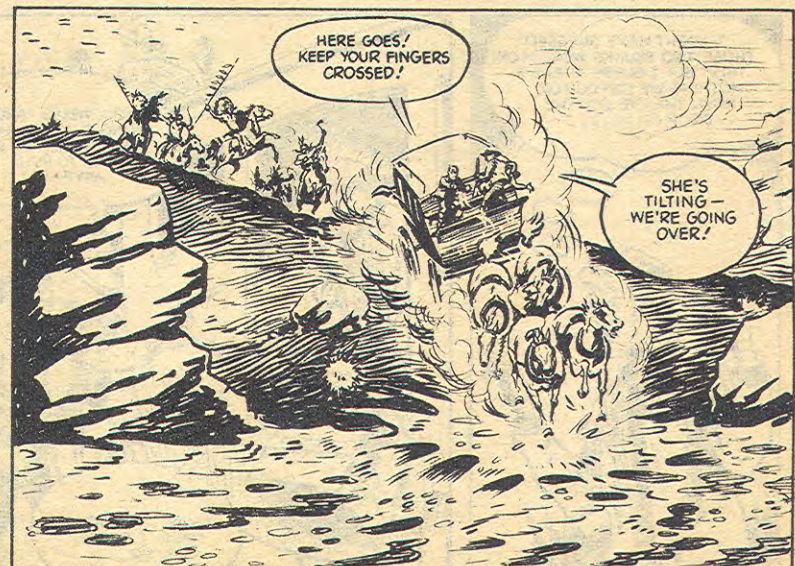
LIKE A FLASH, DAN LEAPED!



TEDDY SLADE SWUNG UP BESIDE DAN AS THE STAGE TORE AWAY...



HANG ONTO ROARING JONES, MISTER! HE'S BADLY HURT! I'M GOING TO SWING DOWN ACROSS THE RIVER! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!



What can Dan do if the coach turns over in the water? Don't miss the thrills next week!

THE RACING TORTOISE

IT was a lovely summer evening. Outside a wooden hut on Meadowsweet Farm a group of animals were sitting talking. "It's a lot of rot, that's what it is!" suddenly cried Cyril Potts, the hare.

"No, it isn't!" retorted Tommy Tuffin, the tortoise. "It's true!" "What on earth are you two chumps arguing about?" put in Freddy Fenton, the fox.

"We're talking about that stupid, silly story of the hare and the tortoise who were supposed to run a race and the tortoise won," cried Cyril furiously. "I say the whole thing's a lot of rot. How the thump could a beastly tortoise beat a hare in a race?"

"Not so much of the beastly tortoise," protested Tommy. "I say that it did win the race!"

Neither he, nor Cyril, nor Freddy the fox, nor any of the other animals had always been animals. Not so long ago they had been just ordinary school-boys—members of a party of boys who had come to Meadowsweet Farm to help Farmer Whipstraw with the harvest.

One morning all the boys had felt ill. So Dr. Dozey, the village doctor, had come out to the farm to give them a dose of medicine. But Dr. Dozey was the most absent-minded little old gentleman you could ever meet. He got the bottles mixed up, and instead of giving the boys a dose of medicine, he gave them a dose of a wonderful liquid which he had invented for changing people into birds and animals.

And birds and animals they had to remain until Dr. Dozey could find a liquid which would change them all back into their proper selves again.

"Ever since I was changed into a hare by that beastly liquid of silly old Dozey's," cried Cyril, "I've felt very deeply about that fatheaded story of the hare and the tortoise. I tell you the thing's impossible. The tortoise simply couldn't have won the race."

"That's what I say," agreed Billy Bunn, a boy who had been changed into a rabbit.

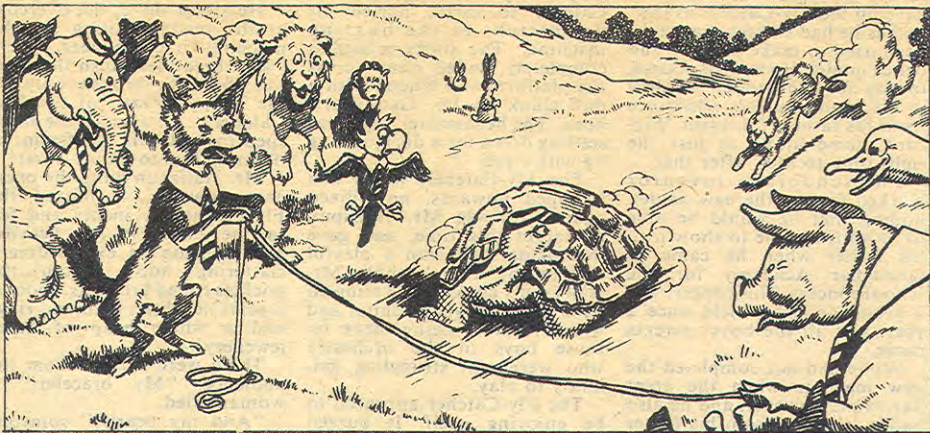
"Me, too!" cried Sammy Small, a boy who had been turned into a squirrel. "I'm sorry, Tommy, but I don't see how a tortoise could possibly beat a hare in a race—in a proper race that is."

"Well, I think it could!" calmly remarked Freddy Fenton, the fox, giving Tommy a sly dig with his paw. "I reckon a tortoise could beat a hare in a proper race."

"What?" cried all his hearers, staring at him in the utmost astonishment.

They were all staring in astonishment, that is, except Tommy. Having been given the sly dig with Freddy's paw, Tommy was blinking curiously at Freddy, for he knew him to be a very sly fellow indeed, and he reckoned he must be planning another of his cunning wheezes.

DR GRUNTER'S ZOO SCHOOL



When Cyril, the hare, saw Tommy, the tortoise, about a foot from the tape he couldn't believe his eyes!

"Yes," went on Freddy, giving Tommy another sly dig with his paw. "I reckon that Tommy here, for instance, could beat Cyril any day in a race."

"What?" yelled Cyril, giving a great bound into the air, so great was his wrath.

"You heard," said Freddy calmly. "I said, I reckon Tommy could beat you any time. Couldn't you Tommy?"

"Well, I dunno," said Tommy cautiously, wondering just what the sly Freddy was getting at.

"Of course you couldn't beat me!" hooted Cyril furiously. "Why, I could give you ninety yards start out of a hundred and beat you!"

"Well, the thing to do is to prove it," said Freddy. "What I suggest is that you and Tommy run a race. But Tommy won't want any start at all, will you, Tommy?"

"Well, I dunno," said Tommy again, more puzzled than ever. "All right, then!" yelled Cyril, bounding to his feet. "Let's start now!"

"Oh, no, you won't," said Freddy. "This has got to be a proper race, with the course all properly marked out and a starter and judges and a race committee to settle any argument, and all that sort of thing. We'll pick the race committee now, mark out the course in the morning, and the race can be run tomorrow afternoon!"

Of course, nobody thought that Tommy had any chance at all, least of all Cyril, who went round saying to everybody in the most cocky sort of manner, "I'll show him. He'll never see me for dust. I'll have finished before he's crawled a yard!"

It didn't take Freddy long to pick his race committee. The members consisted of himself, Algy Brown, the monkey, Percy Peeke, the Parrot and Horace Hake, the donkey. The next morning they marked out a course of about a mile.

George Harris, the gorilla, was the starter. He'd got a little

starting pistol, and, amidst intense excitement, Cyril and Tommy lined up for the start of the race.

"Are you ready?" cried George, pointing his pistol into the air. "Get set!"—Bang!

Away went Cyril with a terrific bound, fairly flying along. The race committee had placed animals at intervals along the course to act as markers.

The first of the markers that Cyril came to was Cuthbert Coot, the laughing hyena.

"Go on—go on!" yelled Cuthbert. "Ha, ha, ha! The tortoise is ahead of you. Go on—go on!"

Cyril, the hare, halted dead in his tracks, absolutely frozen with amazement.

"What do you mean—he's ahead of me?" he yelled, his eyes fairly bulging. "How the thump can he be ahead of me?"

"He is—he is!" cried Cuthbert. "Ha, ha, ha! Go on—go on. Don't waste precious time."

Cyril didn't. He shot away with a terrific bound, fairly flashing over the ground. The next marker he came to was Claude Corker, the crocodile.

"Hurry up—hurry up!" yelled Claude. "He's still leading. You'll have to shift if you're going to beat him!"

Cyril fairly flew along. The next marker he came to was Gussy Green, the goat.

"What the thump do you think you're playing at?" yelled Gussy. "Tommy passed here minutes ago. I should think he is just about at the finishing tape by now!"

Nearly bursting with wrath and amazement, Cyril flashed along faster than he had ever moved in his life before. The finishing tape came into view. All around it was a great crowd of excited, cheering birds and animals. But Cyril wasn't looking at them. He was glaring with bulging eyes at Tommy, the tortoise, who was less than a foot from the finishing tape

and crawling steadily towards it. "Come on, Tommy!" yelled the birds and animals.

"Buck up, Cyril!" "Tommy wins!"

"No, Cyril's catching him—Cyril'll do it!"

Next instant, with one terrific bound, Cyril flashed past the finishing tape neck and neck with Tommy.

"Hurrah!" yelled all the animals, capering excitedly about. "What a race. Hurrah!" Then the judges gave their verdict.

"A dead heat!" they said. "Cyril and Tommy passed the finishing tape together!"

"But—but how the thump did he do it?" gasped Cyril, glaring at Tommy as though he couldn't believe his eyes.

At these words a great roar of laughter went up from all the birds and animals. They laughed and they laughed, rolling about until they were weak with mirth.

"Look here, what's the giddy joke?" yelled Cyril furiously.

"I'll tell you," gasped Freddy Fenton, the fox, still shaking with laughter. "It wasn't a race at all, Cyril, old chap. We've just been having a bit of fun. When you bounded away from the starting tape we picked Tommy up and ran here with him and put him down just in front of the finishing tape."

"So you've been pulling my leg, have you?" yelled Cyril, more furiously than ever.

"Never mind, Cyril, it was only a bit of fun," said Freddy, patting him on the shoulder.

"And now we're all going to have a grand, slap-up tea and you and Tommy are going to be guests of honour."

Well, when he heard that, Cyril began to see the joke. And he became really happy again when Tommy said to him in front of everybody:

"You know, you could beat me, Cyril, in a proper race. You really could!"

Watch for more fun at the Zoo School next week, chums.

and laugh. At first the schoolboy inventor did not feel like laughing, but after a time he began to see the joke. He cheerfully gave up the Fly-Catcher as lost, and as he had enough materials, he started to make another and better model. He had, of course, to pay for the broken window in his room, but his allowance from his father, Professor Wizzard, came along at just the right time to look after that.

The schoolboy inventor worked fast on the new model, hoping that he would be able to finish it in time to show it to his father when he came to Gandybar Academy for the school concert. This concert was a grand occasion, held once a year, and all the boys' parents came.

Willie had not completed the new machine when the great day came, however, and he also had a telegram from his father saying that urgent business would keep him away. Willie was doubly disappointed, of course, but he soon cheered up when Jimmy Bash's mother and father arrived, bringing some chocolates and insisting on treating him and Jimmy to a grand tea.

The school hall was packed with well-dressed men and women and freshly-washed boys when the concert began in the early evening. Dr. Gandybar went on to the platform first to make a short speech of welcome. Then the music started.

At first the orchestra sounded very fine indeed, with every instrument in tune. After a few bars, however, a peculiar buzzing undertone began to make itself heard. It sounded as if one of the brass instruments had sprung a leak. The noise grew louder and louder.

Willie, sitting contentedly with Jimmy and Mr. and Mrs. Bash, suddenly sat bolt upright, listening. His face went pale. He turned to gaze skywards out of the window behind him. He recognised that buzzing sound!

Sailing towards the school from across the quadrangle was the long-lost Patent Fly-Catcher, its propeller blade twirling swiftly and its pads clapping busily!

Nearer and nearer came the machine, and louder and louder grew the buzzing. Other boys and their parents were looking round now, wondering where the noise was coming from. Then there was a loud crash, and the Fly-Catcher barged through a window. It started to zoom and swoop inside the hall!

The Fly-Catcher made for the middle of the hall and paused near the ceiling. Parents were gazing up at it with horrified eyes, no doubt thinking it was some kind of overgrown daddy long-legs.

The Fly-Catcher swooped! It dived straight towards a boy with a flute in the orchestra. With a playful clap, its pads smacked at the flute and whisked it from the boy's startled

fingers. The flute sailed through the air and hit the big drum with a crash. The drummer, trying desperately to bring the Fly-Catcher to earth, hurled his drumsticks at the buzzing machine. The sticks missed it completely, sailed clear across the platform and landed with a dull clunk on Dr. Gandybar's head. The headmaster, who was settling down for a doze, sprang up with a yell.

The Fly-Catcher, which had swooped upwards, now dived again. It made Mr. Halfspun its target this time, and gave that astonished man a playful slap on the Adam's apple. Mr. Halfspun's choking cry mingled with Dr. Gandybar's shout and with the noise being made by those boys in the orchestra who were still struggling gallantly to play.

The Fly-Catcher appeared to be enjoying itself. It buzzed downwards once more, into the

emergency. I shall throw it into the air and try to get it over this horrible machine and bring it down."

He stood there, the overcoat at the ready, waiting for the machine to come near. There was a breathless hush throughout the hall, broken only by the happy "Zzzz" of the Fly-Catcher. All at once the thing sped towards Mr. Halfspun, as if daring him to do his worst!

Mr. Halfspun flung the overcoat upwards. It missed the Fly-Catcher by inches and fell to the floor. It fell heavily, and it made an extraordinary clattering noise. From the pockets rolled bracelets, spoons, a pearl necklace, diamond rings and a whole heap of other jewellery!

There were shrieks from the audience. "My bracelet!" a woman cried.

"And my pearls!" someone else screamed.

All right—I'll tell! There's more loot outside the school! I'll show you where! Wow! Stop it! Mercy!"

Several parents were recovering from their surprise and they ran angrily towards the creak. They reached him as the Fly-Catcher gave one last hearty clap and fell to the floor motionless.

The creak, who, it was afterwards found was no relation of any Gandybar Academy boy, but who had smuggled his way in, was led away. As he went he begged to be allowed to keep his hands free so that he could rub his sore ears. No one would trust him, though, and his ears had to stay unrubbed!

In the hall the stolen goods were returned to their owners while the orchestra was tuning up again. Soon the concert was re-started and everybody sat back to enjoy the rest of the evening.

Willie was not there, however. Nor was Dr. Gandybar. The headmaster faced the schoolboy inventor sternly across the table in his study. On the table were two objects—the now quiet Fly-Catcher and a cane.

Slowly Dr. Gandybar stretched out his hand.

He picked up the Fly-Catcher, and not the cane.

"Tell me, Wizzard," he said earnestly. "Can you take a couple of days off from lessons to make another one of these? I should like to show one to my nephew who is going to Africa soon. I want to see if he thinks a hundred or two of these would be helpful in killing mosquitoes there."

Willie, surprised and suddenly hopeful, assured the head that he could take a couple of days off from lessons. "I shall start immediately, sir," he said quickly as he backed gingerly towards the door, keeping one wary eye on the cane. "Immediately, sir," he repeated. "At once, sir! Right away!"

He did not breathe easily, however, until he was running along the passage outside to the safety of his room!

Next week: Willie invents solid air that you can walk on!

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

KNOCKOUT FUN BOOK

PRICE 7/6

MAKES A SMASHING PRESENT! WHY NOT ASK FOR ONE?

audience this time. It knocked a wig off one dignified father's head. Its pads next sandwiched a grandad's beard and gave that a hefty tug.

The audience was near to panic, but Dr. Gandybar was bravely rushing to the platform. He tried to calm everyone.

"Ladies and gentlemen, do not be alarmed," he began. "This machine is quite harmless, I assure you." He hurriedly ducked behind a cello as the Fly-Catcher zoomed towards him. "If you will keep in your seats," he continued as the thing whirled away again, "we shall try to—er—capture it."

He eyed the Fly-Catcher nervously as it swept towards a bespectacled youth and flipped the lad on the back. "Er—can anyone use a lasso?" he pleaded. "Is there a cowboy in the house?"

Willie Wizzard had slumped into his seat as far as he could, hoping that he could not be seen. At any moment, he feared he would be called upon to step out in front of all these people and try to bring his invention under control!

But Mr. Halfspun was having a flash of inspiration. "I will get my overcoat, sir," he called to Dr. Gandybar, jumping to his feet. "Then perhaps we can throw it over this—this contraption—and bring it to earth." And he ran quickly out of the hall towards the cloakroom.

One or two people were nervously getting to their feet, preparing to hurry away, as Mr. Halfspun returned. He was carrying a coat over his arm.

"It is not my overcoat," he panted to the audience at large. "But I hope the gentleman who does own it will forgive my borrowing it for this—er—

"Good gracious! My gold watch!" gasped Dr. Gandybar.

Everyone's startled eyes were fixed on the coat. Nobody noticed that a ferret-faced little man who had been sitting near the door was tiptoeing away.

The man had nearly reached the doorway and was about to slip through when the Fly-Catcher decided to go into action again. It circled the room slowly and then shot like a bullet from a gun towards the ferret-faced one. As it reached its victim its pads were flapping so fast that they were just a blur! It began boxing the man about the ears as if it were applauding a winning goal at a football match!

"Wow!" shouted the man, sinking to his knees and vainly trying to brush the Fly-Catcher aside. "Wow! Help! Mercy! I done it! That coat belongs to me! I stole them things! Call it off! It's knocking my ears off!

ENGINE-SPOTTERS CLUB

LOOK, Spotters! Here's a really great offer this week. Instead of our usual selection of numbers we're calling a whole thousand of you with a special "bonus" offer. Think of that. One thousand Spotters become eligible for super presents—just like that! Now read on carefully and find out what to do, as there may be a present for you!

All those whose albums are marked with numbers between 76,100 and 76,600 inclusive, and between 148,000 and 148,500 inclusive, may send up for one of our presents.

If yours is included in either of these two sets of numbers, you simply have to choose which present you would like from one of these: A Cowboy Belt and Holster, Box Game, Charm Bracelet, Wrist Compass, Jack-knife, Autograph Album, Ball-point Pen, or a Water Pistol. Then write your choice in the space on the album marked "For Official Use", and at the same time make sure your name and address are filled in on the membership page. Next, on a piece of paper or postcard, write the name of the story or character you like best in COMET, and, in a few words, say why. Pop both album and piece of paper in an envelope and send it to:

COMET E.S. CLUB, 3, Pilgrim Street, London, E.C.4. (Comp.), to arrive by Tuesday October 28th. Don't forget to put a 2d. stamp on the envelope before posting! Presents are despatched about one week after the closing date, and albums are returned at the same time.

Look out for more numbers in next week's COMET! (N.B.—No further applications for new Club Albums can be accepted.)

THE ADVENTURES OF

CLAUDE AND CUTHBERT THE TWO NEW BOYS

O GOODY - IT'S LUNCH
TIME, CLAUDE!

YES, THE BEST
PART OF THE DAY!
HURRY UP!

AH - THERE YOU ARE THEN, LADS -

COO, LOOK, CUTHBERT! DOCTOR
TWIZZLE IS WAITING ON US IN
PERSON!

HOW NICE
OF HIM,
CLAUDE -

NOW THEN - THIS IS GOING TO BE A LESSON ON
TABLE MANNERS - HOW TO EAT CORRECTLY!
O-ER - I DO THE EATING, BOYS - YOU WATCH!

OW! WHAT
A SWIZZLE,
DOCTOR
TWIZZLE!

WHAT,
NO
DINNER?

NOTICE HOW NEATLY I
ADJUST MY NAPKIN,
LADS!

LOOK, CUTHBERT,
PUFF!

COO - WHERE DID YOU
GET THAT SAUSAGE
BALLOON, CLAUDE?

MY! WHAT A BEAUTY! DIDN'T NOTICE HIM BEFORE!
I'LL START WITH HIM! NOW WATCH CLOSELY AS
I HOLD THE FORK POISED FOR A PLUNGE, BOYS -

STAND BY FOR BLASTING,
CUTHBERT!

TEE
HEE!

EESH!

QUICK, CUTHBERT - GRAB
A SAUSAGE!

POP

DON'T MIND
IF I DO,
CLAUDE!

HMM - THAT'S ODD! I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHY
SAUSAGES ARE OFTEN CALLED BANGERS!
WELL, TO RESUME -

I THINK I'LL RAISE THE WIND!
HEE-HEE!

WHIRR

CLICK

WHA - ?

WATCH THIS, CUTHBERT - I'M QUITE
A DAB AT DARTS!

MUFFLED WUFFLING!

TUCK IN, CUTHBERT!

I'M WITH
YOU,
CLAUDE!

!

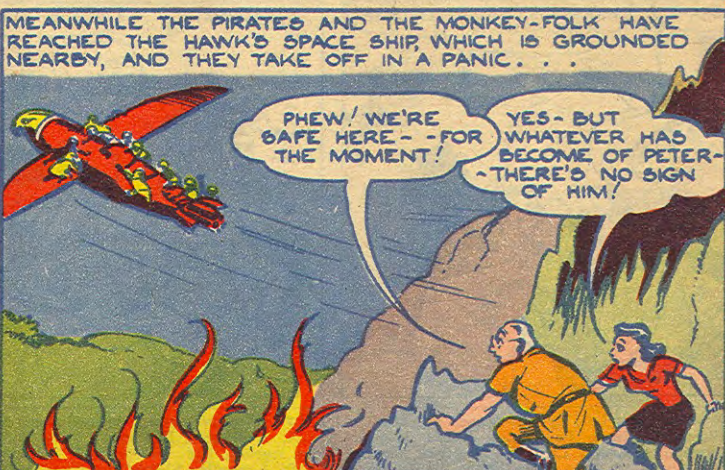
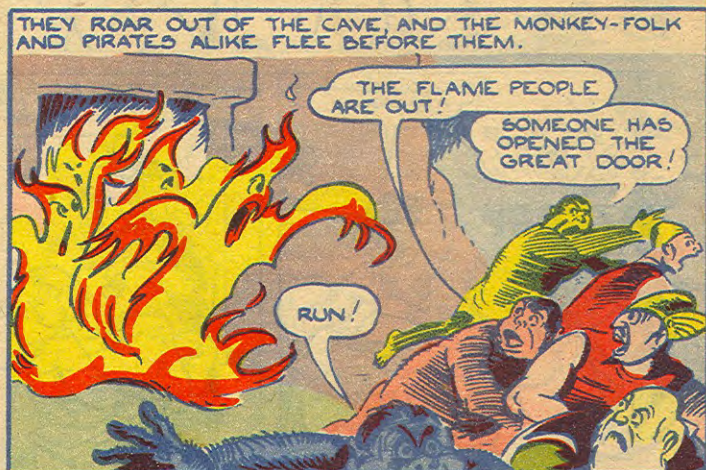
I THINK THE LESSON
IS OVER, CUTHBERT!

COMET

PRICE
3^D
EVERY
MONDAY

THE SKY EXPLORERS

(Continued from page 11)



But are they safe? What will the Flame People do now? You'll know next week!