SUN

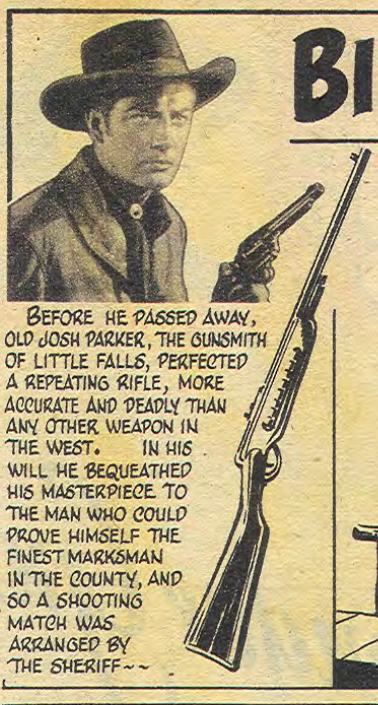
EVERY MONDAY
No. 216
March 28, 1953
3D

BILLY THE KID

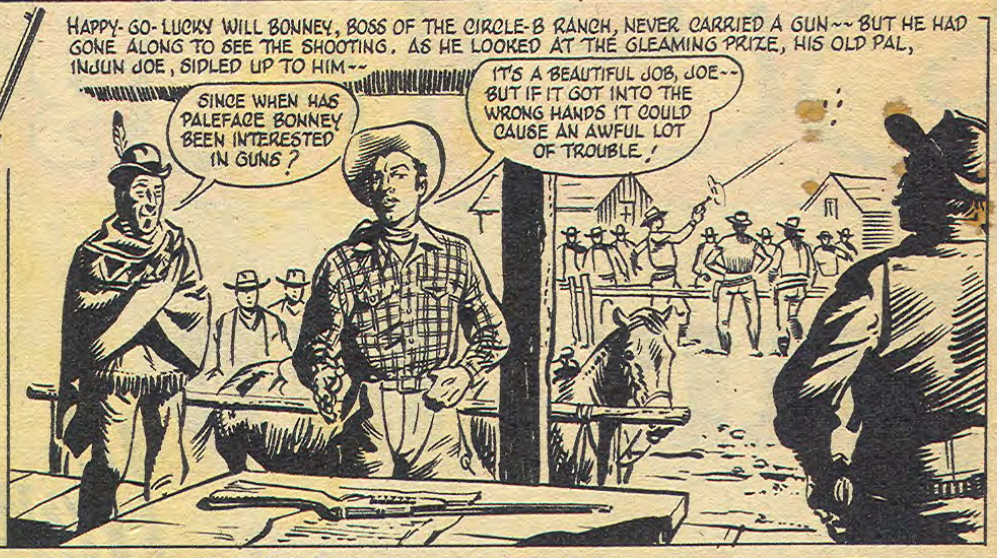
BILLY the KID and the Wonder Gun

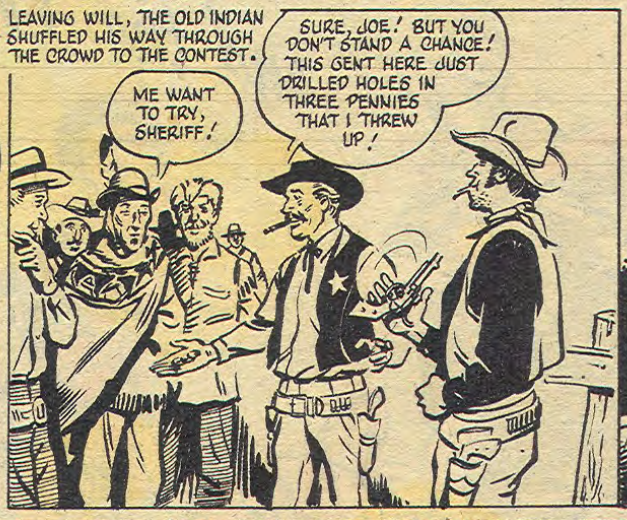
ANOTHER SMASHING COMPLETE PICTURE STORY ADVENTURE INSIDE

BILLY THE KID - LONE AVENGER



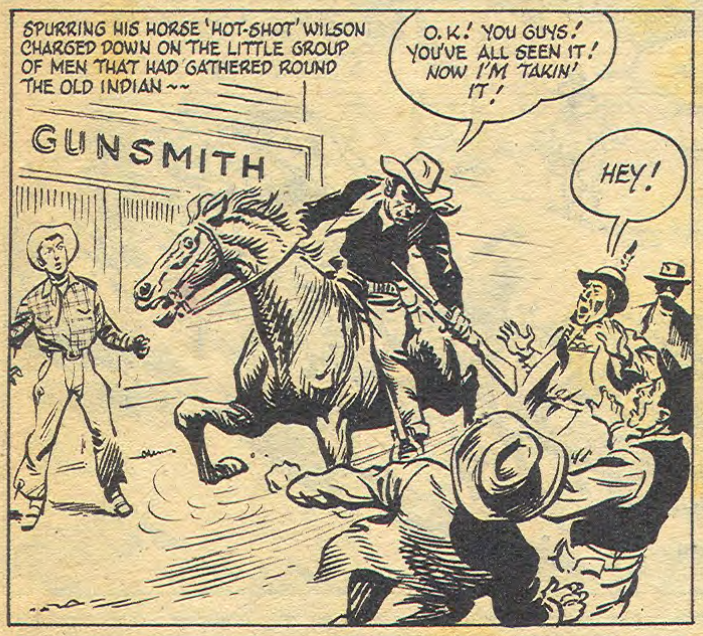
BEFORE HE PASSED AWAY, OLD JOSH PARKER, THE GUNSMITH OF LITTLE FALLS, PERFECTED A REPEATING RIFLE, MORE ACCURATE AND DEADLY THAN ANY OTHER WEAPON IN THE WEST. IN HIS WILL HE BEQUEATHED HIS MASTERPIECE TO THE MAN WHO COULD PROVE HIMSELF THE FINEST MARKSMAN IN THE COUNTY, AND SO A SHOOTING MATCH WAS ARRANGED BY THE SHERIFF~~





HARD AS THEY TRIED, NONE OF THE OTHER MARKSMEN COULD BEAT INJUN JOE'S SKILL WITH A GUN, AND THE OLD INDIAN COLLECTED THE PRIZE~~
THE GUN'S YOURS, INJUN JOE! THAT WAS A MIGHTY FINE PIECE OF SHOOTIN'!
NICE SHOOTING, JOE!

EVERYBODY WAS PLEASED THAT OLD INJUN JOE HAD WON THE PRIZE--EXCEPT ONE MAN, 'HOT-SHOT' WILSON, AN OUTLAW WHO WAS UNKNOWN IN THE COUNTY~~
I CAME INTO LITTLE FALLS TO GET THAT RIFLE, AND WHEN I LEAVE I'M TAKIN' IT WITH ME!


SPURRING HIS HORSE 'HOT-SHOT' WILSON CHARGED DOWN ON THE LITTLE GROUP OF MEN THAT HAD GATHERED ROUND THE OLD INDIAN~~
O.K.! YOU GUYS! YOU'VE ALL SEEN IT! NOW I'M TAKIN' IT!
GUNSMITH
HEY!

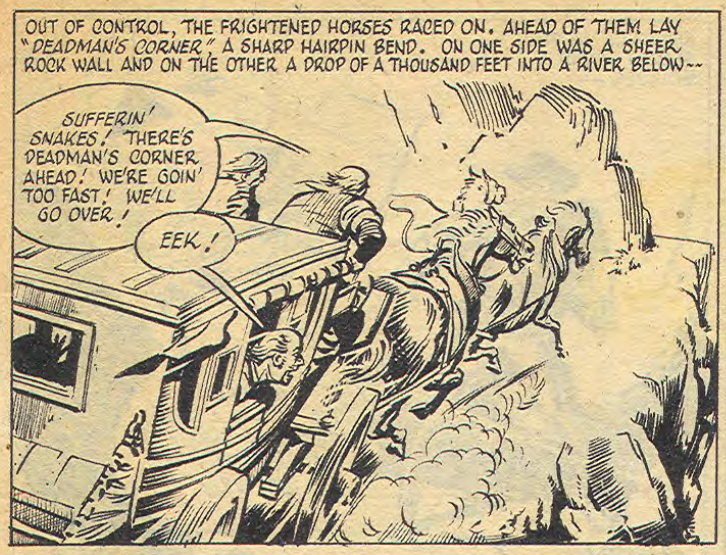
WILL BONNEY, WHO HAD BEEN STANDING ON THE EDGE OF THE GROUP, SAW WHAT HAPPENED AND TOOK A FLYING LEAP AT THE FLEEING OUTLAW.
YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS, MISTER!

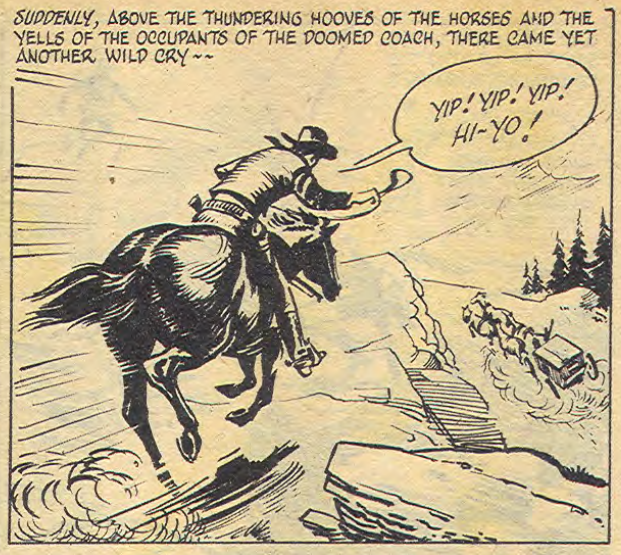
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A HICK LIKE YOU TO STOP 'HOT-SHOT' WILSON!
OUCH!

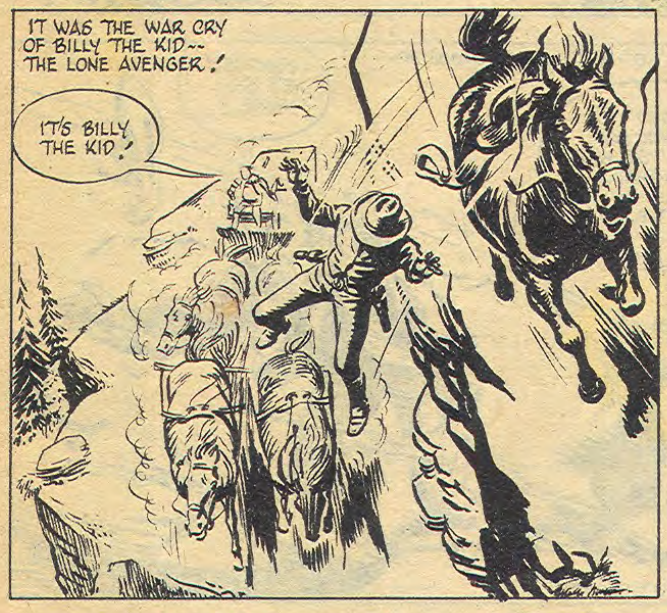
QUICK, MEN! GET TO YOUR HOSSES! WE'LL GET AFTER THAT VARMINT!
ME LOOK AFTER WILL BONNEY!

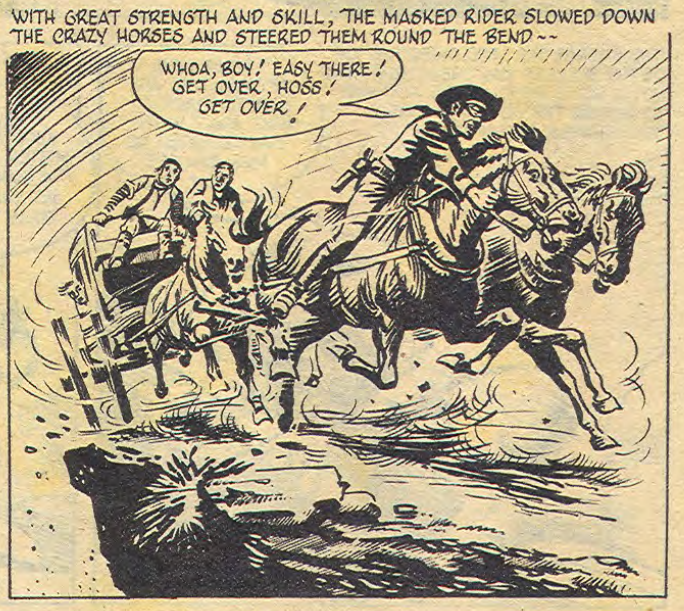
WHEN WILL BONNEY REGAINED HIS SENSES, THE SHERIFF AND HIS POSSE HAD LEFT LITTLE FALLS AFTER THE OUTLAW~~
DON'T WORRY! SHERIFF GO AFTER HIM! SHERIFF COME BACK WITH THIEF, SOON! YOU GO HOME AND REST!
IF EVER I GET MY HANDS ON THAT GUY!

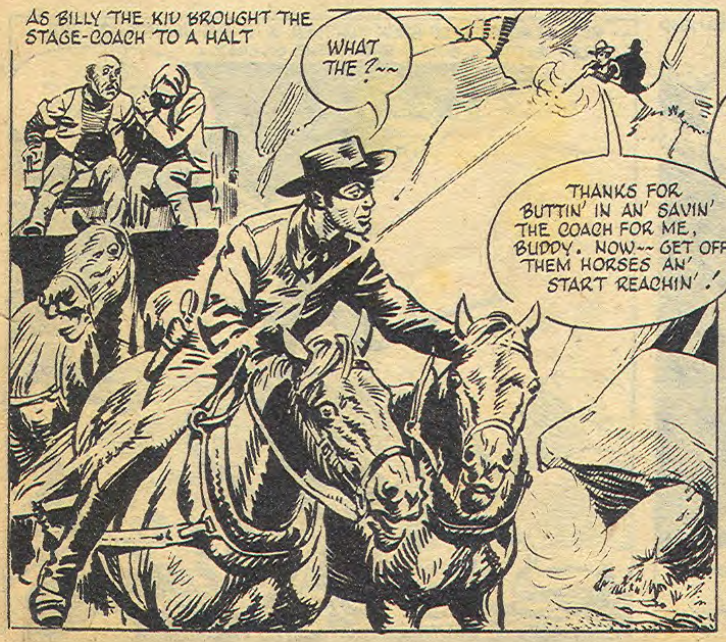
BUT AS WILL BONNEY PREPARED TO MOUNT HIS HORSE HE KNEW HE WOULD NOT BE RIDING HOME.
SORRY, INJUN JOE! HE GOT AWAY!
SHUCKS! IT'S THE SHERIFF AND HIS POSSE! AND THEY LOOK AS THOUGH THEY GOT THE WORST OF THEIR SCRAP WITH 'HOTSHOT' WILSON. THIS IS WHERE BILLY THE KID TAKES OVER!
WILL BONNEY RODE FAST TO THUNDERBIRD PEAK, WHERE IN A SECRET VALLEY LIVED A GREAT BLACK STALLION, AND ON A ROCKY LEDGE HUNG A BLACK OUTFIT AND A PAIR OF SIX-GUNS.
UNKNOWN TO ANYONE THE HAPPY-GO-LUCKY RANCHER WHO NEVER CARRIED A GUN WAS ALSO BILLY THE KID, THE LONE AVENGER OF THE WEST~~ THE OWNER OF THE STALLION AND THE GUNS.
WATCHED BY THE GREAT HORSE WILL BONNEY QUICKLY DONNED THE CLOTHES AND BUCKLED ON THE SIX-GUNS OF BILLY-THE-KID~~
THIS IS WHERE WE RIDE AGAIN, SATAN!
AS HE LEAPED THE GORGE THAT SURROUNDED THE VALLEY, THE WAR-CRY OF BILLY-THE-KID RANG THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS~~
YIP! YIP! YIP! HI~YO!
MEANWHILE, A FEW MILES AWAY, 'HOTSHOT' WILSON DECIDED HE WOULD HOLD UP THE LITTLE FALLS STAGE-COACH BEFORE RIDING BACK TO HIS OLD HAUNTS~~
HERE COMES A CHANCE TO TRY OUT THE GUN!
SHUCKS! A HOLD-UP! GIT GOIN', HOSSES!
STOP~~ OR NEXT TIME I'LL AIM LOWER!
O.K, YOU GUYS! YOU ASKED FOR IT!
HELP, SAM! I'VE BEEN HIT IN THE SHOULDER!
THE DRIVER REALISED THAT IF HE DROVE ON, THE AMBUSHER WOULD PROBABLY KILL BOTH HIM AND HIS WOUNDED GUARD. SO HE FOUGHT DESPERATELY TO STOP THE RACING HORSES ~~ BUT ANOTHER SHOT MADE HIS EFFORTS IMPOSSIBLE.
SHUCKS! THE REINS ARE SHOT THROUGH! WE CAN'T STOP 'EM!


OUT OF CONTROL, THE FRIGHTENED HORSES RACED ON. AHEAD OF THEM LAY "DEADMAN'S CORNER," A SHARP HAIRPIN BEND. ON ONE SIDE WAS A SHEER ROCK WALL AND ON THE OTHER A DROP OF A THOUSAND FEET INTO A RIVER BELOW--
SUFFERIN' SNAKES! THERE'S DEADMAN'S CORNER AHEAD! WE'RE GOIN' TOO FAST! WE'LL GO OVER!
EEK!

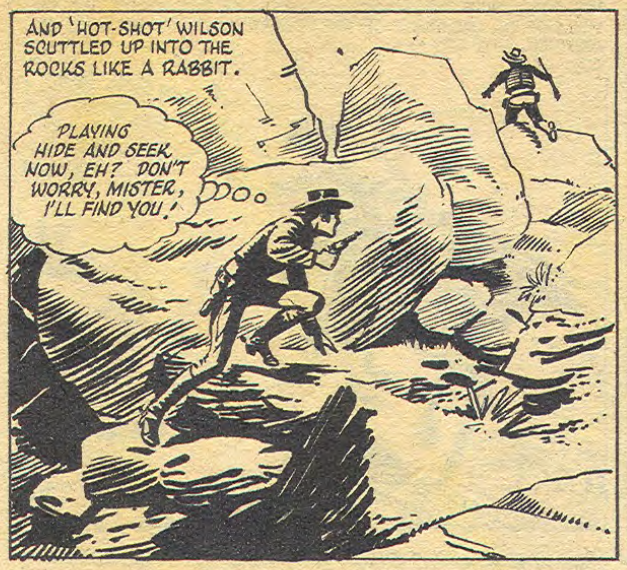

SUDDENLY, ABOVE THE THUNDERING HOOVES OF THE HORSES AND THE YELLS OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE DOOMED COACH, THERE CAME YET ANOTHER WILD CRY--
YIP! YIP! YIP! HI-YO!

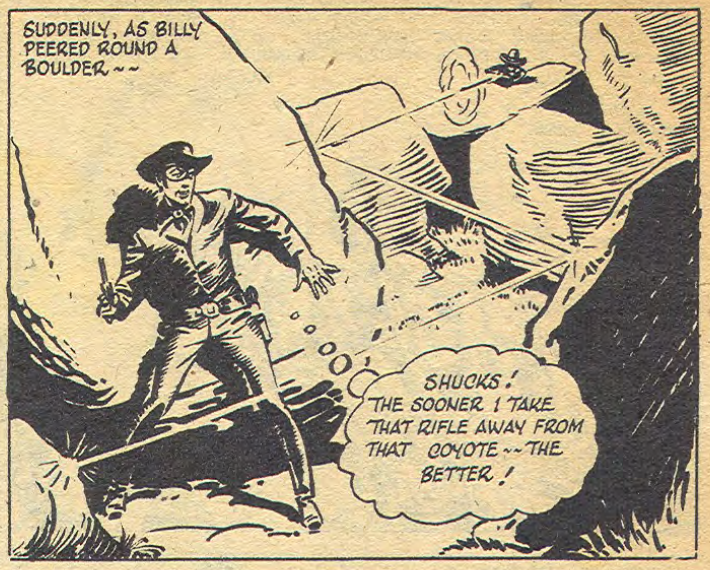

IT WAS THE WAR CRY OF BILLY THE KID-- THE LONE AVENGER!
IT'S BILLY THE KID!


WITH GREAT STRENGTH AND SKILL, THE MASKED RIDER SLOWED DOWN THE CRAZY HORSES AND STEERED THEM ROUND THE BEND--
WHOA, BOY! EASY THERE! GET OVER, HOSS! GET OVER!


AS BILLY THE KID BROUGHT THE STAGE-COACH TO A HALT
WHAT THE?--
THANKS FOR BUTTIN' IN AN' SAVIN' THE COACH FOR ME, BUDDY. NOW-- GET OFF THEM HORSES AN' START REACHIN'!

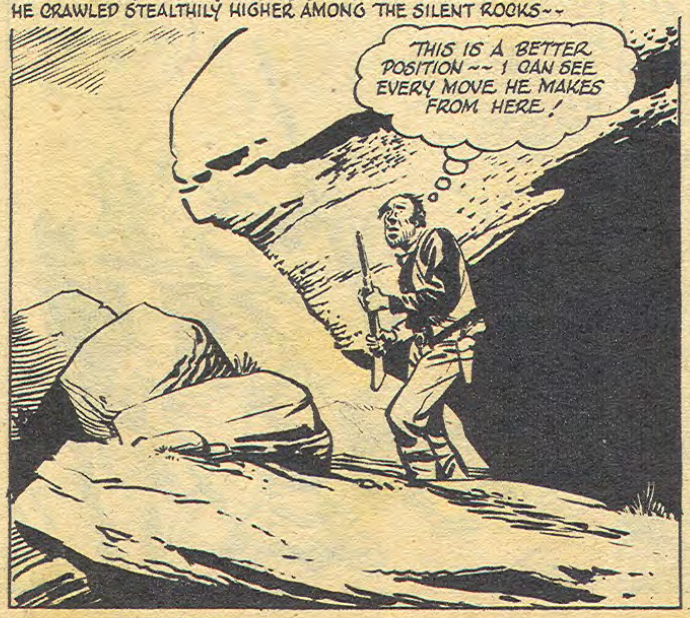
BUT BILLY DID NOT GET DOWN--
IF IT'S GUN-PLAY YOU WANT, MISTER-- I'M THE GUY TO JOIN YOU IN A LITTLE GAME! COME ON DOWN-- BEFORE YOU GET HURT!
YEAH? COME AND GET ME! YOU DON'T SCARE ME!


AND 'HOT-SHOT' WILSON SCUTTLED UP INTO THE ROCKS LIKE A RABBIT.
PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK NOW, EH? DON'T WORRY, MISTER, I'LL FIND YOU!


SUDDENLY, AS BILLY PEERED ROUND A BOULDER ~~
SHUCKS! THE SOONER I TAKE THAT RIFLE AWAY FROM THAT COYOTE ~~ THE BETTER!

THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED THE ZIP OF THE BULLETS WAS UNEARTHLY~~ AND NOT A MOVE DID BILLY THE KID MAKE TO RETURN THE OUTLAW'S FIRE. TEN MINUTES PASSED BY~~
I MUST HAVE HIT HIM! HE AIN'T SHOOTIN' BACK! HAW! HAW! WITH THIS REPEATER NO MAN CAN GET ME!

BUT AS 'HOT-SHOT' WILSON STOOD UP~~
I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID, MISTER! BUT HERE'S ONE MAN THAT'LL GET YOU~~ BILLY THE KID!
SHUCKS! HE'S STILL ALIVE!

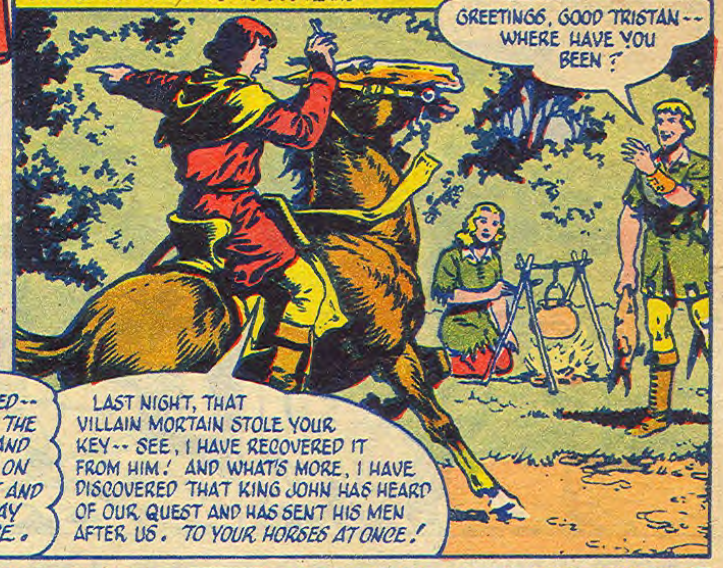

THE ACCURACY OF BILLY THE KID'S SHOOTING UNNERVED THE OUTLAW AND HE CRAWLED STEALTHILY HIGHER AMONG THE SILENT ROCKS~~
THIS IS A BETTER POSITION ~~ I CAN SEE EVERY MOVE HE MAKES FROM HERE!

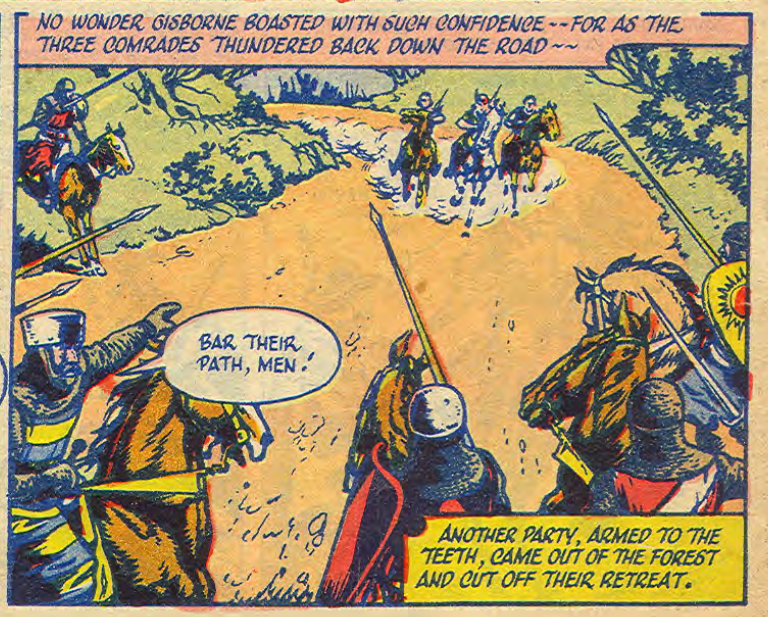
~~ BUT AS HE STEPPED BACK FURTHER INTO THE SHADOW OF THE ROCKS, ANOTHER SOUND BROKE THE SILENCE.
GOSH! RATTLERS! A WHOLE NEST OF 'EM!

Ride with Billy the Kid and his wonder horse Black Satan next week. . . .

ROBIN HOOD'S QUEST

ROBIN HOOD AND MARIAN ARE TRAVELLING TO THE WILD SCOTTISH ISLAND OF IONA IN SEARCH OF THE TREASURE OF ABBOT GODFREY. THEIR COMPANION, THE RASCALLY TRISTAN DE BORS, HAS STOLEN FROM ROBIN THE KEY TO A SECRET ROOM IN KIRKDALE ABBEY, WHERE HE BELIEVES THE TREASURE IS HIDDEN. BUT A SHOCK AWAITS HIM FOR THE ROOM IS EMPTY.

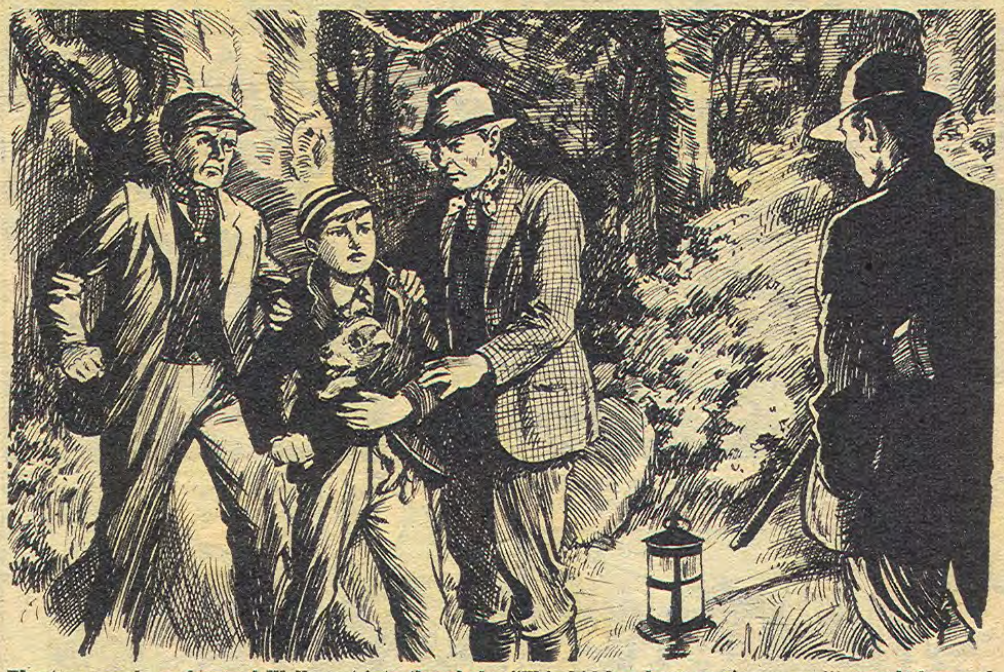




Next week—ROBIN HOOD REVELS IN YORK!

A FINE STORY OF THE BOYS OF ST. JIM'S BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

TOM MERRY'S SCHOOLDAYS.



The two poachers dragged Wally out into the glade. "This kid has been spying on us!" growled one of the men.

Tom Merry and Co. are interested in the case of Lynn, a young gamekeeper. Lynn has been sacked by his employer after having been accused of poaching by Barberry, the head keeper.

Young Wally D'Arcy and Skimpole, the nosey parker of St. Jim's, have broken bounds, and Tom Merry and Co. and Blake and Co. are out looking for them in the woods. They find Skimpole, and lead the terrified junior to believe that they are poachers and are angry because he is spying on them. . . .

THIS WEEK:
IN THE HANDS OF THE POACHERS!

SKIMPOLE swallowed hard. "I—I—I'll tell you the truth!" he stammered. "I certainly came into the wood to investigate a matter in connection with the poachers, but I had no intention of getting you arrested. I wished to set the mind of Mary the housemaid at rest by proving to her that Lynn was guilty——"

A chuckle interrupted Skimpole. But the deep terrifying voice immediately followed:

"It will be safer to kill him and bury him in the wood, mates!"

"No! No!" cried Skimpole.

"Have you anything to say before we bury you?"

"Ye-e-es!" gasped Skimpole. "I will leave the wood at once if you wish, and agree not to make any more investigations!"

"Can we trust you?"

"Yes!"

"It would be safer to bury your trusty dagger in his ribs!" said Blake in a deep, deep voice. "Finish him with your trusty dagger!"

"I—I—I—please don't be hasty! I really—really—— Please— Oh!"

"Let him swear to keep the secret, then!" said Manners in disguised tones. "Let him take the fearful oath and live!"

"Wretched spy, will you take the fearful oath and live?"

"Yes! I will take anything you like!"

"Hold the dagger to his throat while he swears!" growled Tom Merry.

"I—I can swear quite comfortably without the dagger," murmured Skimpole. "I would much rather not have the dagger to my throat, if you don't mind."

"Silence!"

Jack Blake opened his propelling pencil and jammed the point of the lead against Skimpole's neck. The nosey parker gave a shudder at the contact.

"P-p-please take it away!" he murmured. "P-p-please——"

"Hold the trusty dagger there while he takes the oath!" growled Tom Merry.

"Ay, ay, captain."

"Now, Spy, repeat this oath after me. 'By all you hold sacred, by the Form-room at St. Jim's, the clock-tower and the gym, that you will keep this meeting secret!'"

There was again a chuckle, but it was lost upon the terrified Skimpole. He repeated the curious oath, trembling in every limb.

"You will immediately leave the wood and go straight back to school and get to bed without saying a word to a soul."

Skimpole swore to do this.

"Shall we let him live now that he has sworn, comrades?"

"Better make sure by driving your trusty dagger to his heart!"

"No!" protested Skimpole.

"Silence, knave! You may go! Go, without once looking back—go, and if you linger by the way, look out for our trusty daggers, that's all!"

Skimpole was allowed to rise. His attackers disappeared in the wood. The nosey parker of St. Jim's blinked round him in dismay, then he plunged away through the wood. The track was only a few paces distant, and he was soon running along it for his life. His footsteps died away in the distance, and the amateur poachers leaned against the trees and gasped with merriment.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "Skimmy grows funnier every day. I don't think we should have got rid of young Wally so easily."

"Well, we've got rid of Skimmy, anyway," said Blake. "He'll go straight home now, and he won't look for poachers again——"

Jack Blake broke off abruptly as a sound came from the distance—a low, strange cry—the cry of someone in pain. It echoed among the trees for a moment, and then died away, and was followed by silence. The juniors looked at one another in the gloom.

"Whoever is that?" breathed Blake.

A STRANGE MEETING

WALLY ran on through the wood at top speed after escaping from Lynn. He did not mean to leave the wood without Pongo, and he was haunted by the fear that the shots he had heard had been fired at his beloved mongrel.

He ran on for some distance, and at last stopped to listen. There was no sound of pursuit. Lynn had missed him in the darkness of the wood.

"I'm out of that!" murmured D'Arcy minor. "Now I wonder where old Pongo is? Pongo! Pongo!"

He called the name softly. He did not want to give himself away to Lynn, or to the man who had fired the shots, whether he was Barberry, the keeper, or a poacher. He gave a start as he caught the sound of a low whine in the wood.

"Pongo! Pongo!" whispered Wally breathlessly.

He heard the low whine again. It was a dog's whine—the whine of an animal in pain. Wally thought again of the two gun-shots, and his heart beat fiercely. He groped through the wood in the direction of the sound.

"Pongo! Good doggie! Is it you, Pongo?"

The dog whined. Wally groped forward and his hand touched a warm body. The body was wet! Was it dew? What was it so wet and warm that met the fingers of the junior? The hot tears started to Wally's eyes—his heart beat quickly. He did not need a light to show him what it was. He knew that it was blood!

"Pongo!" he whispered, and the tears dropped hotly from his eyes upon the snuggling muzzle of the dog. "Pongo!"

The dog snuggled into his arms with a low whine. He knew his master. Wally hugged him in his arms, pressing the warm throbbing body to his chest.

"Pongo—poor old Pongo! Oh, the brutes! The brutes!"

The dog had been shot. Pongo had been shot at before by angry keepers, but he had always escaped with nothing worse than a graze. His luck had failed him this time. Whether he was badly hurt, the boy had no means of telling. But he had been hit, and his ragged coat was wet with blood.

Wally choked back his tears. He picked up the shivering mongrel in his arms and hugged it under his jacket. Holding the dog close in his arms, he made his way through the thickets.

But in the run from the

young keeper he had completely lost his bearings. He had found the dog, but he had lost himself.

"Heavens!" murmured Wally in dismay. "Which way do I go?"

He had not the faintest idea in which direction St. Jim's lay, or the village, or the road. Black thickets and huge trees surrounded him on all sides. He was lost!

It was useless to remain where he was. His only course was to keep on, trusting to luck to find a beaten track. He moved on slowly, stumbling over tangled twigs, tearing his clothes on thorns, stumbling in masses of fallen leaves.

The thickets suddenly seemed to grow thinner and there was a glimpse of moonlight. He gave a gasp of relief. Was it a path? He stopped and looked about him. He was on the edge of a hollow glade. The shadows of huge trees were thick round the glade. At one point was a glimmer of a light!

There was someone in the glade. Wally was relieved at the thought of human beings near at hand. But only for a moment. He thought of the keeper who had shot Pongo—he thought of the poachers. And he drew quickly back into the shadow.

The light was very close to the ground. It moved slightly, and Wally could see that it was a lantern. Two or three dim forms moved in the shadows. The moonlight fell upon a man of powerful frame in gaiters, with a gun in the hollow of his arm. Two others were kneeling in the grass.

Wally watched them curiously. The man with the gun looked like a keeper, but the men kneeling in the grass could never have been mistaken for anything but poachers. They were a pair of powerful ruffians, with caps drawn down low over their brows and cudgels sticking from the pockets of their coats. What they were doing Wally could not at first make out.

But he knew that he was in danger. He knew that he was watching poachers at work, and that one of those cudgels might descend upon his head if he were discovered there. He clasped a hand over Pongo's muzzle to keep him quiet. The dog understood. No sound came from Pongo save his quick breathing.

The boy did not stir. It might be dangerous to move in case he was heard.

"How many rabbits?" asked the man with the gun in a low harsh voice.

"Thirty brace."

"Good!"

The men rose to their feet. They held a sack between them, and Wally knew then that they had been filling it with dead rabbits.

But the third man puzzled him. What was a man dressed as a keeper doing there? Was he acting with the poachers? It flashed into Wally's mind that that was the explanation.

There was a sudden rustle in the wood, and another figure stepped into the moonlight in the glade. There was a sharp exclamation from the keeper.

"Lynn! You here?"

Wally recognised Lynn. The two poachers dropped the sack, and each grasped his cudgel, and they drew closer together. The man in the keeper's dress seemed too taken aback to move He stood staring at the young man, blankly.

"Yes, Mr. Barberry, I am here!" said Lynn, quietly.

"You fool!"

"Stand back!" Lynn's voice rang out sharply as the two poachers moved towards him. He raised his right hand, and showed a stout walking-stick in the moonlight. "Stand back!"

The ruffians hesitated. Barberry was staring helplessly at Lynn.

"You fool!" he muttered, again. "You fool!"

"Not fool enough for your purposes, Mr. Barberry!" said the young man, his voice ringing with scorn. "You lied to Sir Neville about me, but he will soon know the truth now. He knew that someone was helping the poachers, and you made him believe that it was I. He will know better tomorrow!"

"Fool!" said Barberry, again.

"I suspected that it was you," resumed Lynn. "Why otherwise should you have lied about me? I suspected it; and ever since I left Sir Neville's employment I have been on the watch. I knew I should catch you sooner or later if you were guilty—and you are guilty. It is you who are the fool. You could not play this game for ever. You are discovered now."

"Fool, I say! You can never prove——"

"The proof lies in that sack, and in the other which has been taken away."

Barberry started.

"You know nothing——"

"I have been on the watch since nightfall. Five of you have been at work. Two of your gang have gone with a sack full of rabbits an hour ago. I know their names and where they live. Before morning their houses will be searched by the police, and I think proof enough will be discovered. And you know they will turn upon you to get favour from the magistrates. Your game is up."

Barberry gritted his teeth, savagely.

"And—and you are fool enough to tell me so?"

"I want to give you a chance—more than you would have given me. Confess to Sir Neville, and clear my name—and go. Otherwise—prison."

Barberry bowed his head, as if to think it over. It was a trick. The next moment he swung the gun suddenly round, and the butt end crashed upon the head of the young keeper. Lynn gave a low cry and dropped heavily into the grass.

CAPTURED!

WALLY did not move. He could hardly breathe from terror. The young man lay in the thick grass where he had fallen. The blow had been a heavy one.

Barberry stood silent, breathing heavily. His two companions stared at the fallen man in terrified silence.

"It was your work," muttered one; "I had no hand in that."

"Nor I."

"Hang you!" muttered Barberry, savagely. "Hang your cowardice! If he had gone, all would have been ruined."

He threw the gun into the grass, and stooped beside the fallen man. Lynn was unconscious. The blow had stunned him. Barberry rose to his feet again. He had acted upon the savage impulse of the moment. The fear of exposure and the hatred he felt for the man who menaced him had driven him to the act. Now he was scared.

"Get the sack away," he muttered, at last.

"And—and that?" muttered one of the poachers. "You—you dare not——"

He did not finish. Barberry laughed shortly.

"Don't be a fool! Do you think I am likely to risk my neck?"

"But what are you going to do? When he comes to himself——"

"I don't know—I must think."

There was a short silence. The men lifted up the sack again, but they seemed reluctant to go. One of them handled his cudgel, and looked at the still form of the young keeper. When he came to himself their liberty depended on him, and it would be so easy to silence him now.

"No!" said Barberry, breaking the silence at last. "No, not that! He can be silenced without—without that. Listen to me! Put some of the rabbits in his pockets, and leave the snare there. Let him be found. I will take care that one of the underkeepers is sent in this direction, and he will find him. He will be arrested as a poacher before he is able to speak. It will be taken for granted that he was poaching, and was knocked down in a row with one of the gang. Do you see?"

One of the ruffians chuckled.

"I see! It will work, but——"

"I shall be there to make sure it works," said Barberry, with a savage grin, all his lost nerve seeming to return to him as he planned the way out of his danger. "Take that sack away, and shove it into Lynn's cottage."

"Lynn's cottage?"

"Yes. Leave about a couple of rabbits in it; that will be sufficient. I will see that the sack is found there. Then when he recovers and tells his story, I fancy he will find it hard to make people believe him."

"Good!"

"Get away, then—quick! There's no time to waste."

Wally crouched quite still, half frozen with horror and fear. The depth of Barberry's cunning amazed and horrified the boy. But he soon had something else to think about. The two poachers, carrying the sack between them, moved from the glade and strode directly towards the spot where Wally was crouching in the shadow of the tree.

The boy had no time to escape. The ruffians were upon him in a few seconds, and there was a startled exclamation as one of them stumbled over the crouching boy.

Pongo gave a low, fierce growl.

The sack dropped with a dull thud into the grass. The grasp of the poachers was upon Wally the next moment, and he was dragged out into the glade. He tried to remain cool; he tried to keep his wits about him; but everything seemed to swim before his gaze.

"Who—who is that?" broke in Barberry.

"Some kid; he has been watching!"

Barberry pressed his hand to his brow. He realised what it meant to him. His deed had not only been seen, but his plot had been overheard. His look was almost murderous as it was fixed on Wally.

"He's from the school," he muttered. "That—that dog is the brute I shot at an hour ago. I thought I had killed it."

Wally's terror was passing. His wits began to clear, and he hugged the dog tighter in his arms, not resisting the grasp of the poachers. That would have been useless.

"All is up," muttered Barberry, brokenly, "unless—unless——"

He looked fixedly at the poachers. They did not meet his glance. They were desperate men, they had done desperate things, but——

"No," muttered one—"no!"

"He will talk!"

"Make him promise——"

Barberry laughed savagely.

"A lot of use that would be. Do you think a promise would bind a boy's chattering tongue? If he goes back to the school the whole place will hear about this tomorrow."

He grasped Wally fiercely by the shoulder.

"What are you doing here?"

"I came to look for my dog."

"Your dog? I wish I had shot you, instead! But it is not too late."

He picked up his gun from the grass. What terrible thought was in his mind Wally could guess only too well. He began to struggle.

"Help! Help!"

The boy's cry rang piercingly through the wood. One of the poachers clapped a rough hand savagely over his mouth.

"Quiet, you puppy!"

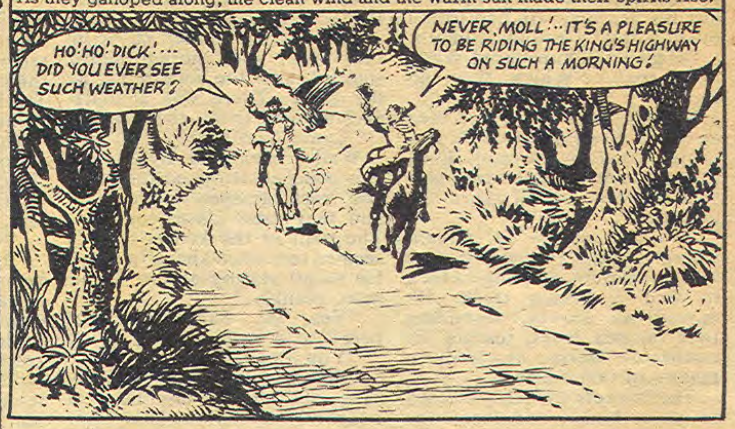
Wally D'Arcy has really landed himself in trouble this time. . . . What will happen to the game young Third Former now? Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment.

DICK TURPIN

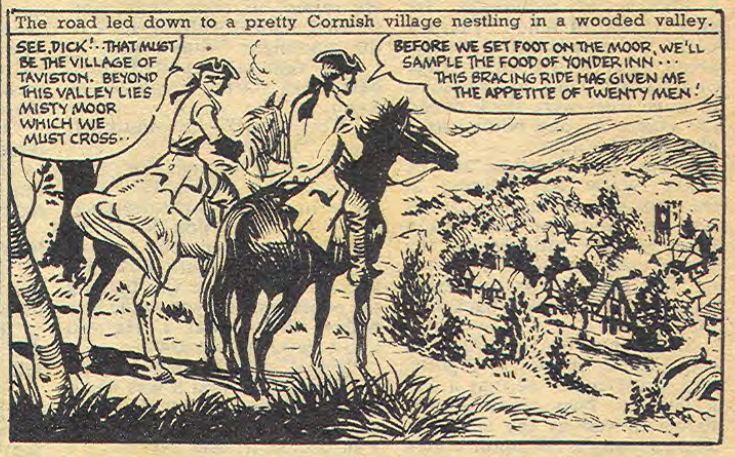
and the Mystery of Misty Moor

This is the story of a strange and thrilling adventure which befell Dick Turpin and Moll Moonlight in the wilds of the Cornish moorland. Our story begins one glorious summer's morning when the two comrades were riding westwards to visit an old friend in Cornwall.

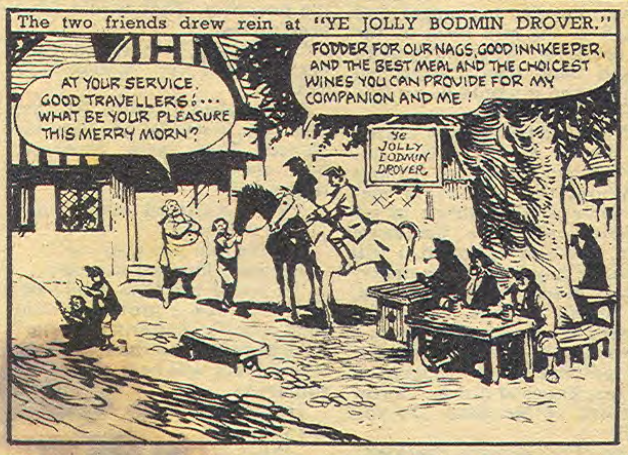
As they galloped along, the clean wind and the warm sun made their spirits rise.



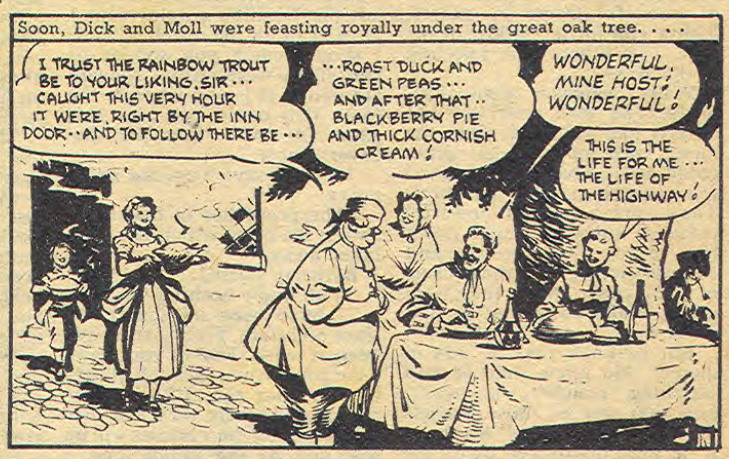
The road led down to a pretty Cornish village nestling in a wooded valley.



The two friends drew rein at "YE JOLLY BODMIN DROVER."



Soon, Dick and Moll were feasting royally under the great oak tree. . . .



When the glorious meal was over, they swung themselves into the saddle once more.

Dick Turpin was not to be put off by the threat of a mere storm.

But the innkeeper was right. A couple of hours later Dick felt heavy spots of rain on his scarlet riding coat. . . .

You mustn't miss a single smashing instalment of this swashbuckling new yarn!—Order your next week's copy of SUN *now*.

A STIRRING COMPLETE STORY OF THE FIGHTING WEST BY BARRY FORD

WILD BILL HICKOK

AND THE RED MAN'S REVENGE

THE CHEYENNE CHIEF

THE prison gates of Fort Jasper swung open and a tall fierce-looking Indian stepped out into freedom.

The five years he had spent behind prison walls had left their mark on his face. For he, who had always known the freedom of wide open spaces, had suffered much by being cooped up in a tiny cell. But his head was held proudly high as he walked out through the gates, for he was Night Hawk, Chief of the mighty Cheyennes.

As Night Hawk glided swiftly away from the fort prison on silent moccasined feet he raised a clenched fist skyward and swore vengeance on the man responsible for his long imprisonment — Marshal Wild Bill Hickok, the peerless pistoleer, known to all Indians as Man-who-shoots-fast.

"Nigh Hawk swears to track down and kill Man-who-shoots-fast. He will not rest until his enemy is dead. Death to Man-who-shoots fast! *Death to all palefaces!*"

And the Indian, his cruel face set in a deep and terrible anger, made his way across the plain towards a dense forest.

Five years previously, Night Hawk had wilfully defied a Government order and had led his Cheyenne braves out on the warpath against their hated, traditional enemies, the Crows. If there was one thing the Cheyenne chieftain despised even more than the palefaces, it was the Crow Indians!

After a vicious raid on the Crows by the marauding Cheyennes, the United States Government had sent Wild Bill Hickok to break up the tribal war and to arrest Night Hawk. This the marshal had done in his usual efficient manner, and the arrogant Cheyenne was sent to prison for five long years for daring to break the white man's law.

A month after Night Hawk, had been released from prison, Wild Bill Hickok was asked by the sheriff of Silver Creek to track down the murderer of a miner, his wife and small son.

"It was a dastardly crime, Marshal," said the sheriff. "Jenkins and his wife and boy were all brutally shot. Their cabin, which is some miles out of town, was ransacked, and his gold was stolen. Here are the bullets which were taken from their bodies. Don't know if they will be of any help to you."

Wild Bill examined them carefully.

"Hmm—they're from a Springfield rifle, latest type of repeater," he murmured. "Reckon I'll ride out and take a look at Jenkins's shack, sheriff. Might be able to pick up some tracks. I'll get the murderer all right, rest assured on that."

WILD BILL HICKOK

When Wild Bill visited the scene of the ruthless crime, his keen eyes spotted various footprints leading to and from the miner's isolated cabin. They were moccasin footprints.

"Toes turned in," muttered Hickok as he bent closer to the ground to study the prints. "So, this is the dirty work of a lone Indian. Wonder how he got hold of that new Springfield repeater?"

Wild Bill mounted Gypsy, his sorrel mare, and followed the tracks of the Indian. All that day he followed the trail. Many times he had to climb down from his saddle and peer closely at the ground to locate the tracks. But blades of grass bent over by the weight of a foot, a recently overturned stone on the trail, and a faint imprint of a moccasin in the damp soil by a river's edge, were all tell-tale signs that he was still on the track of the Indian, and was fast catching him up.

But what the marshal did not know was that the wily Indian had discovered that he was being followed, and had cunningly back-tracked his steps and was following Wild Bill! He guessed that Hickok was after him for the murder of the miner and his family, and he was determined to kill the marshal at the first opportunity.

The Indian's tracks finally led to a swiftly flowing river, but as dusk was falling the marshal decided to make camp for the night and pick up the trail the following morning.

He found a small sheltered gully not far from the river's edge and, after giving his mare food and drink, he tethered her to a tree and bunked down for the night. Not wanting the Indian to know that he was being followed, Hickok could not risk lighting a fire and giving away his position. So after munching some hard biscuits, he rolled up in a blanket, and using his saddle as a pillow, soon fell asleep.

ATTACK BY NIGHT!

SEVERAL hours later, a tall dark shadow moved stealthily into a patch of bright moonlight. Warpaint gleamed on a copper-coloured body and a large white eagle feather showed up clearly against the raven black hair of the wearer.

The lithe Indian slithered slowly forward towards the peacefully sleeping marshal. He raised his arms and rested a repeating rifle against his painted cheek, sighting it on the still form of the sleeper. Wild Bill's long golden hair flowed over his saddle and shone in the moonlight, making a perfect target.

The Indian's finger curled round the trigger as the rifle-barrel pointed straight at Hickok's head. Another fraction of a second and the famous fighting frontier marshal would be blown into eternity!

The Indian held his breath and squeezed the trigger.

But at that instant a second lithe figure leapt out from the shadows and landed on the Indian's back. The rifle exploded with a sharp crack as the Indian's arm jerked upwards, and the bullet embedded itself in a tree trunk beyond the marshal.

Wild Bill was awakened instantly by the loud report, and in one swift movement he was on his feet, his silver and ivory-butted Colts gripped firmly in his hands.

To his amazement, he saw two Indians fighting furiously only a few yards away. He noticed with a start that one of them was armed with a rifle, and as the moonlight flashed on the barrel he saw that it was a new Springfield repeater.

"The redskin killer!" he exclaimed, just as the Indian swung his repeating rifle and knocked his attacker to the ground.

Jumping on the fallen redskin's chest with both feet, the first Indian swung his rifle by the barrel and was about to club his assailant to death with the butt. But in that same instant the marshal's right-hand Colt roared out and the rifle spun from the Indian's grip.

Even as his gun spurted flame, Wild Bill flung himself forward and, throwing his arms round the Indian's body, downed him in a tackle that any footballer would have been proud of. Then driving his iron fist hard against the side of the redskin's head, he knocked him unconscious with a single blow.

Springing up, Wild Bill stepped over to the other Indian who was struggling to sit up. He was shaking his dazed head as though trying to clear it. As the moonlight shone on his fierce countenance, a puzzled frown creased the marshal's forehead, for the red man's face was vaguely familiar. His eyes dropped to the beaded armlet round the man's right arm, and as he made out the tribal emblems, he suddenly realised who the red man was.

"Why, it is Night Hawk!" he exclaimed in Cheyenne.

"Man-who-shoots-fast," grunted Night Hawk, and got to his feet. He looked down at the unconscious Indian and gave him a disdainful kick with his moccasined foot. "If Man-who-shoots-fast is wise he will tie up Black Hand before he wakes. Black Hand is a bad Indian."

"And just what are you doing here?" queried the marshal sternly.

"Night Hawk was on the track of Man-who-shoots-fast. You were on the track of Black Hand. Black Hand discovered you were following him. He back-tracked his steps and followed you. Night Hawk then followed Man-who-shoots-fast and Black Hand! Black Hand tried to kill you with his rifle while you slept. Night Hawk jumped on his back just as he was about to shoot."

"Well, I'll be hog-tied," chuckled the marshal. "What a complicated game of follow-my-leader this turned out to be!" Turning to Night Hawk, he said in Cheyenne, "I thank you for saving my life, Night Hawk. You will be rewarded for your bravery."

The Cheyenne's face was completely expressionless as he spoke again in his deep guttural voice.

"Man-who-shoots-fast is a good white man after all. Night Hawk swore to kill you. But just now you saved the life of Night Hawk. Now I honour you as my brother. Will Man-who-shoots-fast take the hand of Night Hawk in friendship?"

"Yes, indeed," returned the marshal, clasping the extended hand of the Indian. "And thank you again. But you owed me no debt, Night Hawk. I sent you to prison for five years for breaking the white man's law. Why did you save my life?" he added in a puzzled tone.

A flicker of amusement briefly touched the corners of Night Hawk's stern lips as Wild Bill knelt down to tie up the killer redskin.

"Black Hand is a Crow," he replied simply.

Another fine story of Wild Bill, the peerless pistoleer, next week

Barry Ford's WESTERN SCRAPBOOK

Howdy pals—*this is* BARRY FORD *speaking*—hope you're still reading and enjoying my yarns of Wild Bill Hickok. This week I've got something extra for you—some interesting facts about the real old Wild West, and a couple of grand photographs of those two great Wild West Film Stars, Charlton Heston and Alan Ladd

WESTERN STARS FOR YOU TO KEEP

CHARLTON HESTON
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THE JOKER'S FUN PAGE

This week's prize-winning jokes from readers! The First Prize is 7s. 6d., the remainder receive 5s. How about a joke from you? Send it to The Joker, 5 Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4. The Editor's decision is final.

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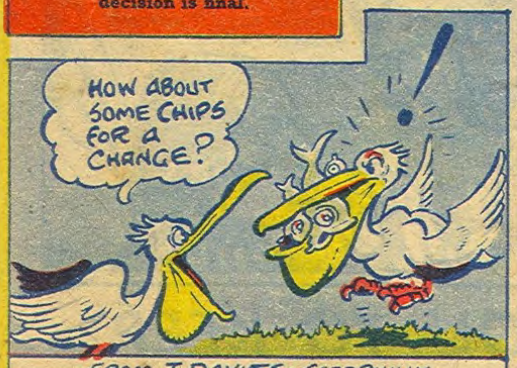
FROM JOHN COWAN - PRUDHOE ON TYNE

FROM T. PECKETT — HULL



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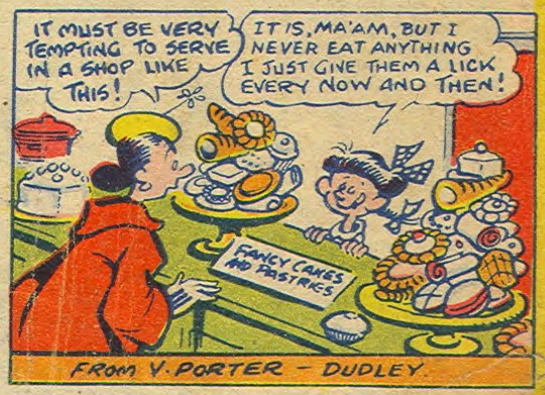

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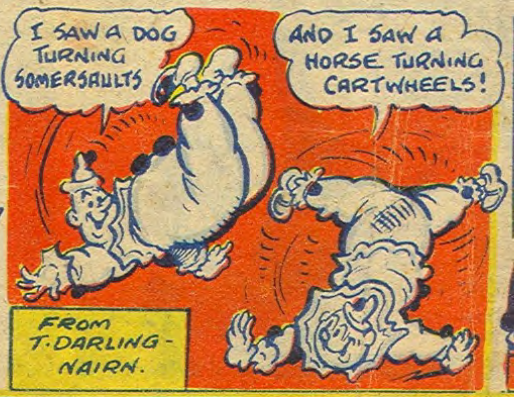

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FROM P. CORBETT - BELFAST.

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