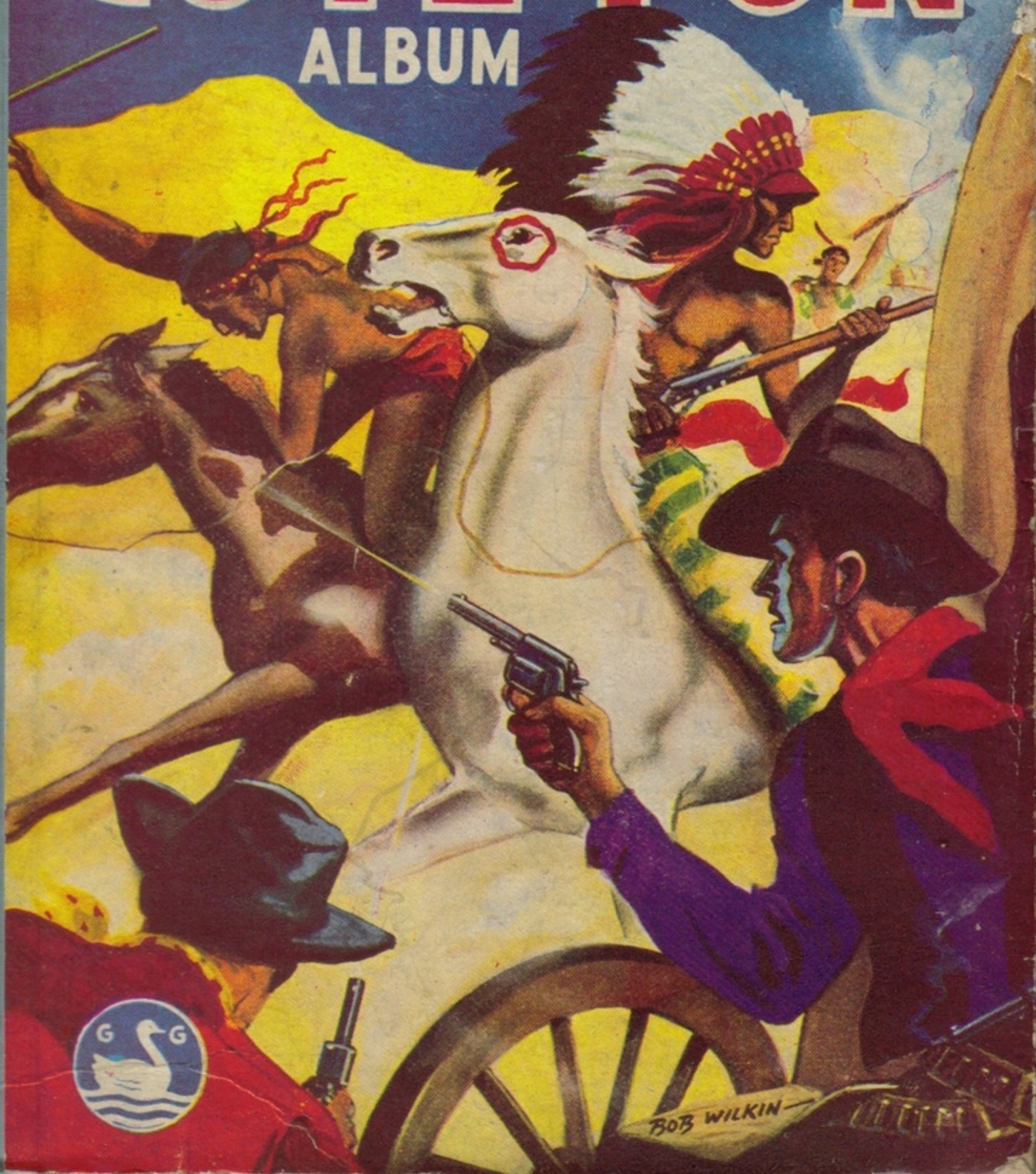


# CUTE FUN

ALBUM



BOB WILKIN



# CUTE FUN ALBUM

1953

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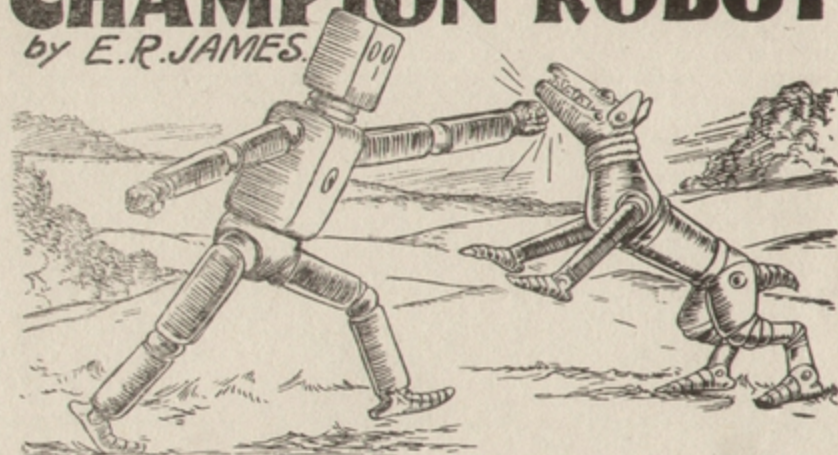
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# CHAMPION ROBOT

by E.R.JAMES.



The metal fist struck the head of the mechanical dog.

"CREAKYFOOT!" his father had exclaimed. "Surely you don't think that worn out old robot will win the title? What chance will you have against Oswald Whipp's gleaming new man, Chromo? Why, everyone will laugh at you . . ."

And all those spectators outside the starting pens had laughed, thought Andrew grimly as he oiled Creakyfoot's wrist. He stood back. Old fashioned, square-jointed, scratched and dented: the mechanical man's eight-foot-tall body was all of these he had to admit.

Yet Creakyfoot had been his slave for so many happy years . . . They knew each other so well . . . They were more than boy and robot—they were a team. "We'll show them!" he said to himself.

At that moment the Starter's voice boomed out. "All competitors will stand by with their robots for the signal to begin the race. This is the last of four heats. As with the others, the first and second robot and boy to finish the course will qualify for the final race to-morrow. Any damage

to the competing robots will be paid for out of the pool of entrance fees. Now—good luck to you all. Boys and robots, make it a good race! In thirty seconds the rear wall of each starting pen will be set on fire—and that is your signal to GO."

The crowds around the race course gave a cheer. Inside his starting pen, Andrew patted Creakyfoot's huge metal arm. "We can do it!" He stepped behind the robot, opened the door in its wide, square back, and climbed into the soft, cushioned space inside. Creakyfoot fitted him like a suit of clothes. As the door closed behind him automatically, he looked out through the robot's big glass eyes.

Suddenly the starting pen lit redly as the back wall cracked into flame.

"Now!" said Andrew. The metal man became alive as Andrew's legs began to walk. The metal legs strode forward, driven by the robot's own great power, but following each small or large movement made by the boy inside.

The mighty metal arms lifted as Andrew

lifted his arms inside them. The blows of the steel fists had all the power of the robot behind them, but it was Andrew's brain that directed their aim. They worked together. The nails fastening the boards of the starting pen wall gave way.

Sunlight glared in through the robot's eyes, dazzling Andrew. At once shades clicked into place, shutting out the brilliance.

As robot and boy ran across the field towards the first obstacle, old Creakyfoot lived up to his name. No amount of oil or new rivets seemed able to stop the squeaking of his worn ankle joints.

Andrew's heart, however, leaped for joy. The grand old robot, its strength directed by his movements inside, had broken out of the starting pens before any other. They led the field!

Through the rear-view eye of the robot, Andrew saw the other competitors breaking out and racing after them. One, a silvery, streamlined robot, was rapidly drawing away from the others. It was Chromo, the brand new robot, with Oswald, son of Mr. Whipp the millionaire, inside.

With huge, effortless strides, Chromo overtook Creakyfoot. Before the high stone wall in front was reached they raced level for a moment—and then the smooth-moving, gleaming robot showed its back to Andrew and Creakyfoot.

Andrew bit his lip, and concentrated on the wall. Under his guidance, Creakyfoot's metal hands found finger holes, and the metal toes dug into the mortar between the stones. Up they went gaining upon and then overtaking Chromo, working together in faultless combination.

Over the top they scrambled. Down they jumped into the mud beyond. On towards the next obstacle they waded through the mud. All happened in seconds. Boy and machine seemed one, each a part of the other.

They led the field by a yard, two yards, three yards, four—Now Andrew saw Chromo jump from the wall and chase after them.

Again the distance between the racing robots narrowed, for the rounded legs of Chromo pushed more easily through the mud, and the age of Creakyfoot slowed him as before.

Neck and neck, they entered the second obstacle of a belt of three foot reeds and wiry bushes. Thrusting through the reeds, dodging the bushes or striding over them, now one was ahead, now the other. What Creakyfoot lacked in speed was made up—more than made up—by Andrew's clever guidance.

When they splashed out into shallow water, Creakyfoot was once more in front. The water deepened, swirled up around the metal bodies, and the robots began to swim.

Chromo and Oswald inside it again had the advantage here. The rounded body of the new robot slipped through the water with the speed of a fish. Creakyfoot's squareness hampered him. Suddenly water spurted into Andrew's face as a crack opened in the old robot's skin. Blinded, he left Creakyfoot to swim on as best it might. "Come on!" he cried. "Come on, Creakyfoot!" And he could feel the tremendous efforts being made by the mighty limbs.

Suddenly they touched bottom. Creakyfoot struggled erect. They were on the other bank.

Andrew looked anxiously around. Chromo was well in front, and there was another robot too, who strode yards ahead of them.

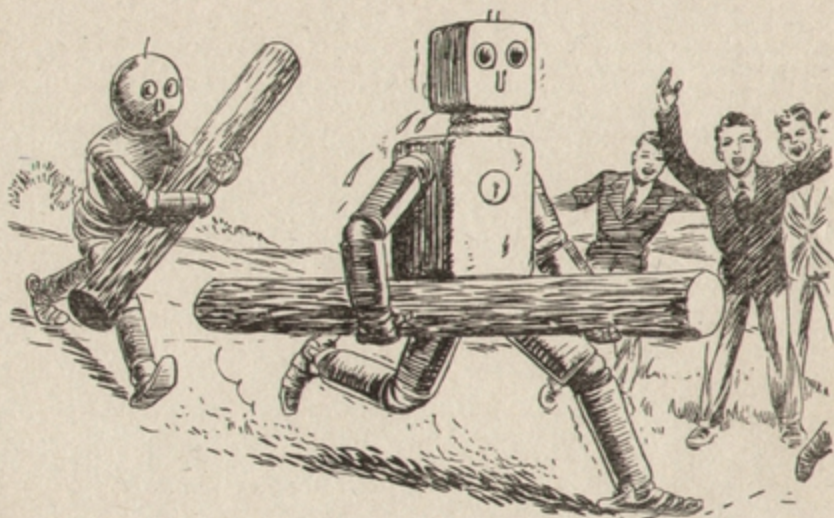
Then he saw the mechanical dogs coming at them, and for a minute he forgot the fact that they were running third. As the dog leapt at them, he lifted Creakyfoot's arm and smashed it down. The metal fist struck the metal head of the mechanical dog, and the curious thing was brushed aside, shattered.

Up the slope they strode. The robot in second place was having trouble with the mechanical dog that attacked it. Creakyfoot passed by and hurried on to where a robot—with no boy inside to guide it—stood waiting for them. Chromo, having disposed of its attacking dog, now battled against its own opposing robot.

Andrew tensed as the empty robot rushed at them, metal arms swinging. He made Creakyfoot dodge aside at the last moment, and one square, mighty arm swung around and hit the empty robot on the back of its head, sending it sprawling.

Creakyfoot led! Andrew saw that Chromo had battered its opponent to its knees, and was

## CHAMPION ROBOT



*Creaking in every joint, he crossed the line.*

stepping clear. Now the race between old and new was on again.

Straight up the slope they rushed. Creakyfoot's worn ankles were screeching and stiff. Chromo gained on them with every stride.

Chromo passed them and drew ahead. Another robot caught up and showed them its heels. And still another drew level as they reached the steep rock climb.

Andrew grimly guided Creakyfoot's climb. They were a team again. His brain, and the robot's strength. Quickly they gained second place. Mighty steel arms reaching up to grip ledges and protruding rocks, powerful legs following and thrusting up, they chased after Chromo.

Nevertheless Chromo topped the climb before them by a second or two. Andrew and Creakyfoot lifted erect to see Chromo beginning to run towards one of the little wooden shacks erected a hundred yards ahead.

After it, they raced. Into the shack bearing their own competition number they went. Andrew saw the log of wood on the floor and made Creakyfoot pick it up. Moving a little more stiffly than ever under the weight, Creakyfoot, ankle joints grating, carried it out and ran on to pass over the finishing line a full six yards behind Chromo and Oswald.

"CHROMO, GUIDED BY OSWALD WHIPP, is first by six yards. Creakyfoot, guided by Andrew Knight, is second. These two have qualified for the final race to-morrow. The winner of this race will be proclaimed Champion Robot."

They were all back at the starting point as the bald headed Chief Judge announced his decision.

Smiling, he turned to Andrew. "I must admit," he said, "that I was one of those who laughed when you brought Creakyfoot on to the field. Yet when you are inside its body,

it seems a different robot altogether. You guided it amazingly well. How is it that you work together so well?"

Andrew looked up at the great square body of Creakyfoot beside him.

"I've had him for five and a half years," he said. "We're friends—old friends. Then again we have our own training course. Look!" He pointed down the mountain valley in one end of which the race was being held.

In the distance, the house where he and his father lived stood upon a little hill. Beyond that was a natural obstacle course not unlike the one chosen for the race. The only difference that mattered was that it was on a far bigger scale. The lake, for instance, was twice the size, and there was an island in the middle of it.

"Well," said the Judge, "you and your robot certainly work together extremely well."

Soon after that the race meeting began to break up. Oswald Whipp, wearing perfectly clean, sky-blue overalls, grinned mockingly at Andrew.

"So your old tin can sprung a leak and made you all wet. What an old crock. I wouldn't think that you'd have the cheek to enter it to-morrow. You can't possibly win."

Andrew said nothing. Newness wasn't everything in a robot. Creakyfoot and he would do their best, win or lose. As it happened, he could have changed Creakyfoot for a robot as shiny and new as Chromo, if he had wanted.

Another boy, a thin, shifty-eyed young fellow called Snitchy, sidled up to Andrew.

"Little snob, that Oswald," he said viciously. "I hate him. Why didn't you trip up his robot in the reeds? No one would have seen."

Andrew shook his head. That wasn't the way to win.

Snitchy grimaced. "You don't deserve to win," he snapped.

Andrew, who had been watching Oswald walking off with Chromo towards the gleaming little aeroplane beside the race course, turned slowly to explain that he wanted to win without any dirty play; but Snitchy was scuttling off amongst the departing crowds.

As Andrew began to walk home, with Creakyfoot trudging beside him, the hum of Oswald's aeroplane made him look up. The sun flashed on the graceful little aircraft as it twisted and rolled, and looped the loop, and dived and zoomed. Oswald, triumphant because of his easy win, was showing off.

About a mile further along the road Andrew stopped. The mountain valley had rough moorland sides, and the two ends were wild and unkept, but the valley bottom was fertile and cultivated. Over a high wall, he saw rosy apples upon the trees of an orchard.

The race and his walk had made him hungry. He could almost taste the juicy fruit.

"Creakyfoot," he said. "Bend down and put out your hands."

The robot bent stiffly at the waist. Andrew stepped on to the big metal palms. "Lift me up."

Creakyfoot straightened, and Andrew went up as though on a lift. He caught hold of the top wall, and glanced back at the big glass eyes watching him.

"It's all right, Creakyfoot," he said. Boys' robots were supposed to be adjusted to keep their young masters out of mischief; but Creakyfoot was so old and used to Andrew's ways, that it would overlook small crimes like this. "Good old Creakyfoot," he went on. "I only want a couple of apples. Not much harm in that, is there?"

The robot's stare did not alter, but Andrew, satisfied, stood up on the wall and helped himself. He sank his teeth through the rosy skin and the sweet juice refreshed him.

"Hey!" The voice came from amongst the trees. "Hey, you on the wall. Stop that, or I'll have you arrested!"

Andrew gasped. He stuck the apple in his mouth and jumped down on to Creakyfoot's huge hands. "Run!" he ordered.

Creakyfoot hugged Andrew to his metal chest, turned stiffly and ran away from the wall, his ankle joints squeaking protest.

Off the road, he went. Over a low wall he stepped easily. Through the branches of a small

wood he ran with leaves rustling and twigs slapping against him.

"That's far enough," gasped Andrew presently.

Creakyfoot stopped in the little clearing which they had reached. Andrew slid to the ground. He listened but there was no sound of pursuit. He glanced mischievously up at the robot's staring eyes and munched his apple.

"Andrew," whispered a voice.

Andrew looked round quite startled.

Snitchy sidled out from behind a bush.

"You being followed?" he asked nervously.

"No. Why?"

Snitchy's thin finger beckoned. Andrew, with Creakyfoot clumping after him, followed the other boy into the bushes.

"Who's that?" A thin man, with a hard unshaven face, dragged himself up on his elbow and glared around as the little party approached.

"He's a friend of mine," whined Snitchy. "You can't stay here for ever, Dad. Maybe his robot will carry you to the island."

Snitchy's father glared with narrowed eyes at Andrew. Suddenly he pointed down at his foot.

"I've sprained my ankle, see?" he snapped. "Could you get your robot to carry me? I've been camping on the island in the lake."

"Hadn't you best see a doctor first?" asked Andrew.

"No!" gasped Snitchy. "We—"

"Shut up!" snarled his father. His hand reached up and Snitchy reeled backwards from the blow.

"Now, kid," said the man, turning his pinched face to Andrew. "Will you do it? I'll pay you—"

"I don't want any money," said Andrew.

"Well then," wheedled Snitchy's father. "I won't force it on you. But you can't leave me lying here helpless, can you?"

Andrew hesitated. He didn't like Snitchy's father very well and there seemed something queer about the whole incident. Nevertheless something had to be done and finally he ordered Creakyfoot to do as the man wanted.

They went along the side of the valley to the edge of the lake. Beside the lapping water they stopped at Snitchy's father's request.

Suddenly a robot burst wildly out of a clump of trees. It charged at them. Creakyfoot turned to protect Andrew if need be. The robot stopped, its metal arms raised threateningly.

Snitchy's father calmed it. It was his robot, he explained. A bit queer in the head it was, but his good friend nevertheless. Andrew, knowing how he felt about Creakyfoot, could understand such an attachment. Robots were like dogs used to be. You made companions of them and loved them.

Creakyfoot carried Andrew and Snitchy across to the island while the other robot swam with its master. Amongst the dry bracken of the island they sat down for a few moments.

"Now, Andrew," said Snitchy's father, "I want you to promise that you'll say nothing of having seen me. You see, there are men who want to destroy my robot—and I couldn't bear to lose him when I'm like this. Who would look after me while my ankle gets well?"

Andrew saw the reason of this. It explained everything. Other people didn't understand about robots that weren't theirs. Why, his own father wanted him to get rid of Creakyfoot. He made the promise.

"Look!" said Snitchy suddenly. He pointed towards the boathouse on the other side of the island.

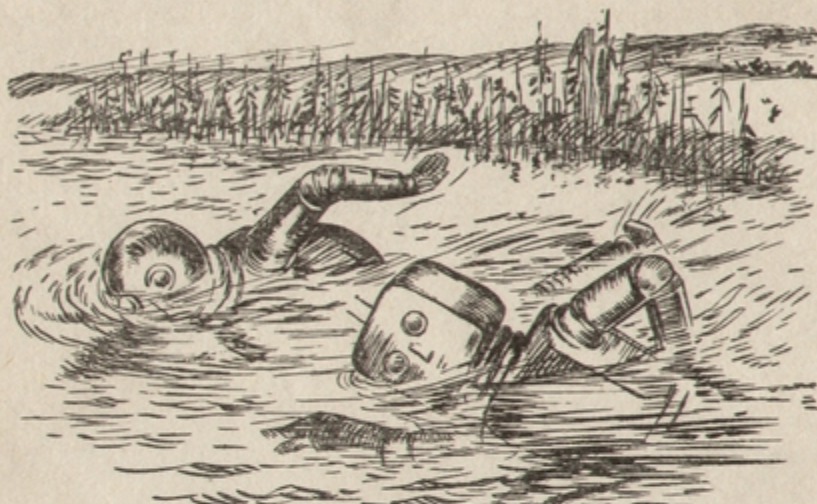
A big, horned head was raised to look at them. Andrew gasped. It must be Mr. Whipp's prize bull, who had been missing for several days, and who must have swum over to the island.

Snitchy's father cuffed his son. "Keep your mouth shut, can't you?" He turned to Andrew. "Remember, I don't want anyone nosing around here. You promised, mind!"

\* \* \*

"WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?" Andrew's father frowned as he stood up on the entrance of his son and Creakyfoot.

Andrew halted, but said nothing. His father frowned more darkly.



The rounded body of Chromo, slipped through the water like a fish!

"Never mind then. How did the race go? Did you make yourself a laughing stock?"

"I was second," said Andrew defiantly. "Creakyfoot was wonderful."

His father leaned forward.

"Second?" In his surprise, the frown disappeared. "Do you mean you have actually qualified for the final race to-morrow?"

"Yes."

Mr. Knight whistled. "Amazing. Andrew, you are a wonder. Er—" He nodded his head towards the gleaming new robot, not unlike Chromo, that stood in the corner of the room. "Think how much better you could have done if you had used a new robot. It must have been your guidance and not Creakyfoot's worn out metal body that made you race so well. How about it now—will you take the new robot as I want you to?"

"No, Father."

"Oh, but look how bright and smart it is. Look at those smooth round limbs. Think how much faster it will run with its new motors."

"I don't care. Creakyfoot is my robot."

Mr. Knight sighed.

"Creakyfoot is due to be scrapped. He's worn out. Don't you see, son? It's my business to sell robots and I know all about them. Say you'll change over?"

"No."

"I don't want to make you," threatened Mr. Knight. "To be honest, I only let Creakyfoot be entered for the race because he hadn't a chance, and I thought you'd be more reasonable after it had lost. Don't you see that it only won because you guided it so well?"

Andrew said nothing.

While Mr. Knight stared at him grimly, there was a sound of an aeroplane engine. A few

moments later Oswald Whipp knocked on the door and came in.

"Have you heard of the burglary?" he asked.

"No," said Mr. Knight. "What's happened?"

"Someone broke into my father's safe while we were all at the race course, and a thousand pounds' worth of jewels are missing."

Mr. Knight whistled.

Andrew leant forward.

"Any idea who the thief was?"

Oswald grinned smugly.

"Maybe. Snitchy's father hates my father because my father put him in jail. He broke out yesterday, and he could have done it for spite."

Andrew nearly choked. He gulped.

At that moment Mr. Whipp's burly figure stepped into the doorway. He glared around and his stare fixed on Andrew, who shifted his feet guiltily.

"Stealing my apples!" roared Mr. Whipp.

Andrew hung his head and waited for the storm to break over him. Mr. Whipp was a just man, but he was very cruel to anyone who offended him.

Unexpectedly, Mr. Whipp smiled. "Never mind the apples," he said. "I was just thinking that you might have seen a thin, shifty little man, and a wild robot when you were running away from me."

Andrew bit his lip. He had made a promise.

"Did you?" roared Mr. Whipp.

Andrew swallowed hard, but still said nothing. How could he?

Mr. Knight sighed deeply.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Whipp," he apologised. "I don't know what's come into Andrew. He's getting to be as stubborn as a mule."

Andrew glanced at his father's furious face. What would happen to him? What a mess things were in.

"Now, Andrew," said his father. "If you know anything about this thief, you must tell us. Did you see him?"

That was the one question that Andrew could

not answer. No threat or persuasion made him do so.

Finally Mr. Whipp turned angrily to Andrew's father.

"Mr. Knight. Obviously your son knows more than he will say. That makes him an accomplice to the crime. I might say that I was thinking of buying fifty robots from you to work on my farm and in my factories. Nevertheless, unless you can get your son to speak, I'll not do so. I'll buy them through the agent who sold me Oswald's new robot."

When the millionaire had gone, Mr. Knight again threatened Andrew, who still would not speak. In the end the one thing that Andrew really feared happened.

"There's only one thing to do," sighed Mr. Knight. "Until you come to your senses, you'll have no robot at all—so that you'll not be able to race to-morrow. I'll lock up Creakyfoot in the garage, and make the new robot so that you can't make it work."

THE FOLLOWING DAY—the day of the big race—Andrew sat on the wall of the garden. How he wished that he was one of those taking their robots to the race course. Maybe Creakyfoot would not have won, but it would have been wonderful just to be there.

His father had even forbidden him to go and watch—not that he would have done now. He could imagine all the spectators looking at him and whispering that he had seen the burglars and wouldn't tell.

A boy and robot in a passing car looked straight at him. He began to smile and lift his hand, but the other boy looked away. Yes, they all thought he was as much a criminal as Snitchy's father.

From where he sat he could see the race course becoming crowded with people. The starting pens looked like match boxes, and gleaming robots walked beside their masters.

Up from the centre of the valley rose Oswald's shiny little aeroplane. The sunlight flashed on its wings as Oswald showed off with daring stunts, diving, zooming and looping the loop.

Oswald was in no hurry to land at the race course. Obviously he wanted everyone to watch him flying around and then to clap in admiration as he swept down to land and step out with his shining Chromo.

The little aeroplane, swaying wildly, shot up high over the race course, circled around and dived down towards the other end of the valley. It streaked over Andrew's head, and started to rise over the lake. Suddenly, its nose jerked up.

The little aeroplane stood on its tail, fell over backwards and went fluttering down.

Andrew sprang down to the ground in his alarm. Surely Oswald would crash into the water. No, the plane lifted again. As it lifted, however, it twisted also, and went sliding sideways through the air straight towards the island.

Crash! Even though it smashed down on the island a mile and a half away, Andrew heard the noise. Flame leaped up from the wreckage. Andrew, staring fearfully, saw a small figure come running away and the huge bulk of the robot Chromo stand for a moment, black against the red fire, and then pitch forward on its face.

Andrew sighed with relief. Oswald must have been in the robot. Perhaps it had gone wrong in some way and had lost control of the plane. Oswald would have been safe inside its steel skin, and the robot had won clear of the burning wreckage before it completely broke down.

Oswald was all right. Or was he? The fire, Andrew saw, was spreading into the dry bracken. The breeze was blowing the flames across the island, like an advancing army. The lake was deep on that far side of the island—deep enough to drown Oswald who could not swim!

Andrew heard the distant alarm being given on the race course at the other end of the valley. He watched them for a moment or two. Already robots were rushing around the side of the valley to the rescue; but they had so far to go. It did not seem possible that they would reach the island in time to save Oswald from being burnt by that steadily advancing line of fire.

Andrew looked about him desperately. He was alone in the house. The new robot was not

in working condition. Creakyfoot was shut up in the garage. What could he do to help? There was no boat, and without a robot he would not be able to reach the island any sooner than the others, even though he was so much closer.

Something had to be done. The situation was desperate. He ran around to the back of the house.

"Creakyfoot!" he shouted. "Creakyfoot! Break out, Creakyfoot, break out of that garage. I need you."

He heard the old robot moving in response to his summons. The boards of the garage shuddered as steel fists beat at them. A metal arm splintered through the wood. The gap widened, and Creakyfoot smashed its square old body through and marched forward to stand before its master.

Andrew stared up at the faithful eight-foot giant for a moment.

"Good old Creakyfoot!" he said. Then he dodged around the robot, opened the door in its back and climbed in.

Even as the door closed behind him, he started Creakyfoot walking and then running down the garden path. One great stride cleared the gate, and they were running over the field towards the lake.

Working together as smoothly as ever, they clambered over the wall at the other side of the field and waded through the swampy ground beyond to where thick reeds and wiry bushes bordered the lake.

Creakyfoot's huge metal feet squelched in the ooze. The reeds slapped and rustled against the metal thighs. Andrew guided each step around the worst of the natural obstacle, but even so the mud sucked and their progress was difficult.

At last the water of the lake splashed around the metal feet, lapped rapidly up as Creakyfoot advanced at increasing speed, and then cascaded up over the glass eyes as the robot, directed by Andrew, plunged forward and began to swim with a mighty crawl stroke.

Ripples went hissing away in a widening "V" from the hurrying square body. Creakyfoot seemed to understand the desperate need for

haste. Each mighty stroke of the metal arms seemed greater than the one before; each powerful thrust of the mighty legs increased their speed.

Suddenly, as before, the leaky seam of the skin opened up, and water spurted into Andrew's anxious face.

Blinded, he left his faithful slave to its own devices. Creakyfoot swam as never before. The churning water splashed and foamed around it. Faster, and faster still, became the robot's mighty movements. Huge hands dragged through the water, huge legs thrashed the ripples to foam behind them.

At last the metal legs reached down to touch the hard earth and Creakyfoot rose dripping from the water like a monster of the deep. Andrew shook his head inside Creakyfoot's metal head, clearing the water from his eyes.

As the robot waded up on to the island, he looked out through the wet glass eyes at the leaping flames and rising black smoke, and heard the frightening crackling and cries of fear from the other side of the advancing flames.

Over the smoking, scorched ground they raced. Through the wall of flame they passed unconcerned. One moment the flames licked up before the robot's eyes, and smoke left smuts on the glass, and then they were through.

A great, horned head lifted before them. The bull! Its eyes maddened by the flames it rushed hither and thither while the big shape of a robot lumbered crazily after it.

Suddenly the heavy beast saw Creakyfoot advancing. It stopped, snorted mightily, put down its head and charged. The ground trembled with thudding hooves. Andrew swallowed and concentrated on this new menace. Fire behind, and the maddened beast in front, and the mad robot running not far behind, its big arms clanking as they beat the air!

Andrew made Creakyfoot bend. Without slowing, he punched forward with both the robot's steel fists. There was no time for dodging. Straight against the bull's skull, between the long horns, Andrew guided those terrible blows.

The shock of the colliding monsters: bull and robot, left Andrew shaken. Creakyfoot stopped as though he had run into a wall. Andrew felt one mighty arm go limp about his own, and heard the clang of it falling, broken, to the robot's side. Poor old Creakyfoot!

The bull, however, its skull smashed and its neck twisted, was struck to one side.

Andrew glimpsed the monster bulk of the mad robot swelling before them. He made Creakyfoot dodge at the last moment. Unfortunately, the other robot's swinging arms seized upon the broken arm of Creakyfoot.

The two robots seemed to swing each other. Andrew became giddy. Through his blurred vision, he smashed out at the other robot's head. He felt Creakyfoot's fist crash home. Together the metal giants staggered. Again Andrew beat at the mad robot. And again! And again! Creakyfoot reeled free, and regained its balance.

Andrew stared around, while Creakyfoot swayed a little, from the mangling of the combat. The fire had reached the little boathouse, and already flames were licking up the wooden walls and smoke was pouring from the windows.

Down by the water, frantic figures struggled to open the boathouse doors so that all might escape in the launch inside.

Andrew made Creakyfoot stride towards the commotion. As the old robot emerged out of the drifting smoke into the view of the desperate humans, they yelled and began to run.

Snitchy looked over his shoulder. "It's Creakyfoot; not the mad robot!" he yelled.

At that they stopped. Andrew had not time for them though. Creakyfoot's sound right arm crashed against the wooden doors of the boathouse. The wood splintered. Again the fist smashed home. And again! The wooden door tilted sideways as the hinges gave way. Up the slope of the launching way, Creakyfoot strode, with the others running after him.

They climbed aboard. Andrew ripped the securing ropes free, and the launch slid down the guides to splash into the water and drift out, away from the smoke.

Behind them, the boathouse suddenly lit up as the flames reached the inside. The bracken and dry shrubs at the water edge were blazing up.

Andrew looked around at the trio he and Creakyfoot had rescued.

Oswald was gaping in admiration for the old robot. "Andrew, you and Creakyfoot were just in time."

Snitchy gulped.

"How did you do it? Weren't you at the race course? Except for you, Oswald and his showing off would have been the death of us all."

Snitchy's father scowled.

"My robot was more concerned with the bull than with my safety. Whatever you did to it, I'm glad. I wish I'd have rid myself of it weeks ago. It brought that bull over to the island as a plaything, and it wouldn't take it back."

He winced as he moved his sprained ankle, and he hit out viciously at his son.

Snitchy dodged and shrank back against the side of the boat.

"Get the motor started, you young fool" his father snarled at him. "We're drifting towards the shore on which all the people from the race course are gathering."

"Yes, Father!"

"No!" said Andrew, grimly. He raised Creakyfoot's sound right arm and shook it at Snitchy's father. "My promise to you has brought me enough trouble. We're going to land by those people, and you're going to be handed over to the police. What have you done with those jewels belonging to Mr. Whipp?"

Snitchy's father put his hand to his pocket. He cowered back, whining: "No! Don't hit me. Have mercy! I didn't mean to get you into trouble with anyone. I'll give back the jewels. Have mercy on me..."

A POLICEMAN from the race course placed him under arrest when the boat landed. Mr. Whipp grabbed hold of Oswald as though he had never expected to see his son alive again. The Judges and everyone from the race course

listened while Oswald gasped out the story of the terror on the island. All had seen the great efforts Creakyfoot and Andrew had made.

In the end, Mr. Whipp turned suddenly to Andrew's father.

"I want you to supply me with robots after all. In fact I'll double my order. Sell me one hundred robots. If they're like Creakyfoot, it will be a grand investment."

The Judges, who had been talking together, suddenly came forward and the Chief Judge held up his hand for silence.

"We have talked over the amazing rescue run made by Creakyfoot and his young master, Andrew Knight. It seems to us that there is only one thing to do. Creakyfoot is now in no condition to enter the final race, but as the rescue run he made is so similar to the race course, it seems to us that there is only one decision we can make. We therefore proclaim Creakyfoot to be Champion Robot!"

Cheers broke out at these words. When they died away, the Chief Judge continued:

"Naturally, as you and Creakyfoot are assumed to have won the race, the competition rules will apply. All the damage it has suffered will be repaired. No, more than that. Under the circumstances, we will start a collection to have it completely overhauled and refitted with new parts wherever necessary. He must be made as good as new. For he is Champion Robot."

Andrew, overwhelmed with joy, looked up at the giant body of old Creakyfoot.

"Grand old robot!" he whispered, and he glanced at his father.

Mr. Knight nodded.

"I see now what you mean, son," he smiled. "You can keep Creakyfoot as long as you want to. He may look a worn out old crock, but with you inside him, he's a champion."

Andrew looked up at Creakyfoot again. Old fashioned, square-jointed, scratched and dented, and now with a broken arm; yes, Creakyfoot was not imposing to look at now; but no one was laughing at the Champion Robot.

THE END

## John Wesley Hardin

HARDIN, OF GOOD FAMILY AND EDUCATION, KILLED A NEGRO WHEN HE WAS A SCHOOL BOY. THREE TROOPERS WERE SENT TO BRING HIM IN.



THERE HE IS! HEY KID... OH-HH.



AS THE LAUGHING TROOPERS RODE INTO A NARROW DEFILE, A SLIGHT FIGURE JUMPED FROM SOME BUSHES AND SHOT THEM DEAD.



HARDIN'S TRICK OF "ROLLING A GUN"

DROP THAT GUN



HELD UP BY WILD BILL NICKOK, THEN SHERIFF OF ABILENE, HE FOOLED HIM, BY OFFERING HIS GUNS, HANDLES FIRST, BUT BY KEEPING HIS FINGERS IN THE TRIGGER GUARDS HE COULD FLICK THEM INTO HIS HANDS AGAIN.

ONCE A POSSE GOT SO CLOSE, THAT HE HAD TO ESCAPE WITHOUT HIS TROUSERS



(DISMOUNT!) PRONTO

WELL NEVER LIVE THIS DOWN

BUT HE ENDED UP AS USUAL IN

BOOT HILL

ON FINDING A COW CAMP HE BORROWED A WINCHESTER AND SOME TROUSERS, AND AMBUSHING THE POSSE, FORCED THEM TO TAKE OFF THEIR TROUSERS.

WELL NEVER LIVE THIS DOWN BUT HE ENDED UP AS USUAL IN BOOT HILL