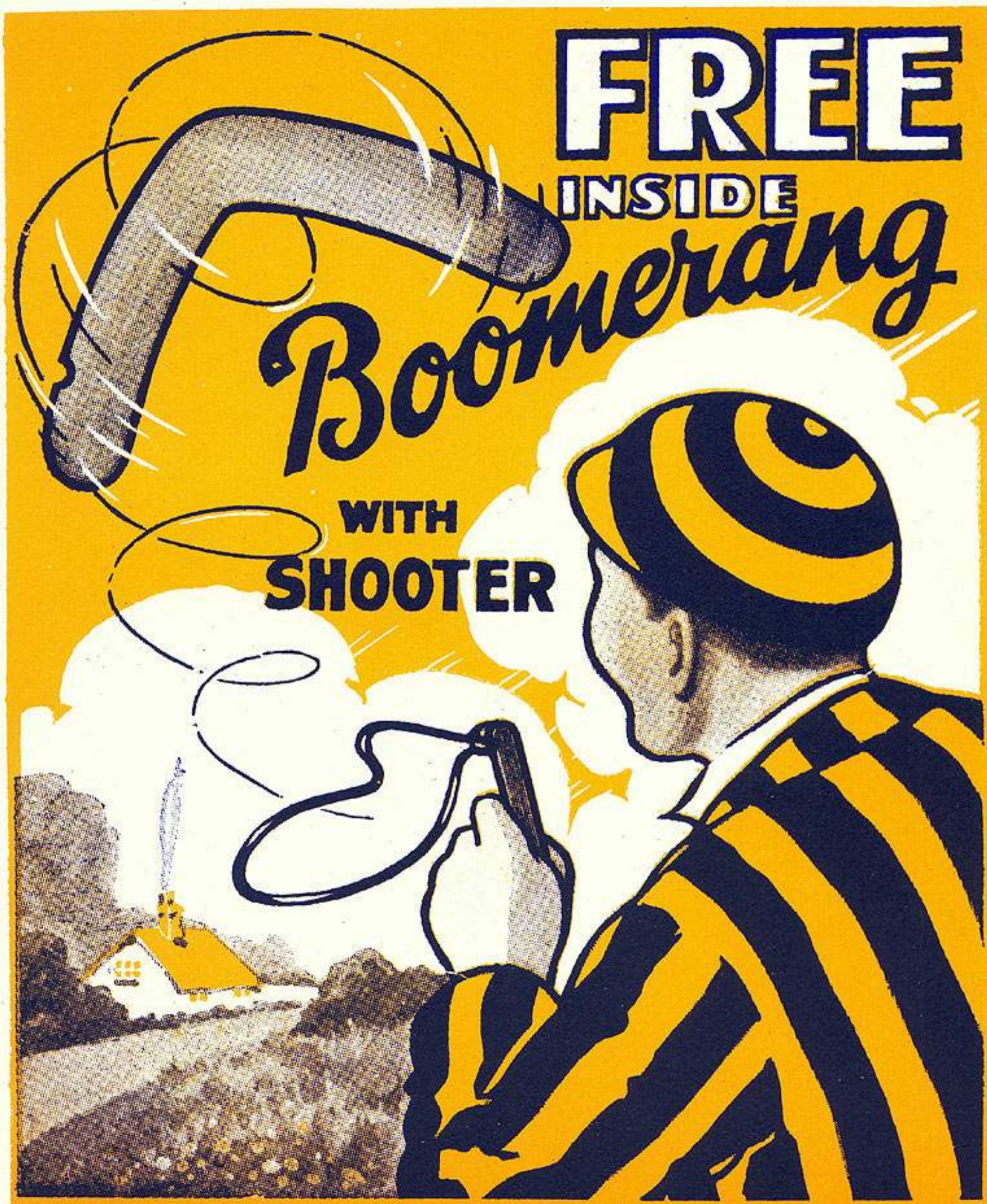


HARRY WHARTON & CO. AND BILLY BUNTER IN AFRICA!
(SPECIAL ADVENTURE STORY INSIDE.)

The **MAGNET** 2^D



FREE

INSIDE

Boomerang

**WITH
SHOOTER**



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, the Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

R. Bain, of Sydney, N.S.W., writes to tell me that he gets the MAGNET regularly every week out there. Yes, R.B., this paper of ours circulates throughout the whole of the British Empire, and also in a great many foreign countries. I'm sorry to hear that you missed your copies while you were at sea. If it wasn't too long ago, you can obtain them by writing to the Back No. Dept., Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The cost of the issues required, plus postage, should be sent with the order.

HALLO, chums! You have in your hands now the third Free Gift of the series, and I feel confident that every man Jack of you is well satisfied. Once you have got the knack of "firing" the boomerang with accuracy, there is no limit to the fun you and your pals can have.

Why not arrange some matches? Choose a target, say thirty feet away, and see who can get nearest to it—the deciding factor being that the boomerang having "rounded" the target should return to the thrower.

Do you know which is

THE LARGEST DESERT IN THE WORLD?

S. Hitchens, of Aylesbury, asks me if I can tell him. The Sahara is the largest, for its area consists of nearly three and a half million square miles. And here are some facts that perhaps you do not know about the Sahara: Nearly two million people live in it! Three-fifths of it belongs to France, the remainder being held by Italy, Spain and Egypt, and the vast tracts of salt which it contains are worked commercially. Nearly twenty thousand camel loads of salt are taken from it annually.

Contrary to popular opinion, the soil is very fertile, and if only it could be irrigated, it would produce rich crops. Below the Sahara, there is an impermeable strata of clay, with the result that water which comes down from the highlands sinks through the sand and forms vast reservoirs. It is the water from these reservoirs that breaks through the sand occasionally and forms oases. That also accounts for the fact that fish can be caught in the Sahara—for there are fish in these underground lakes, strange as it may seem!

HERE is a clever Greyfriars limerick, which earns a topping book for the lucky reader who sent it in to me. He is Valerie Dudley, 23, Loyals Avenue, East Brunswick, N.W.10, Victoria, Australia.

Bob Cherry's a Briton right through,
So's Wharton and Johnny Bull, too.
Each one is the "Co."
As all readers know,
Is loyal, as well as true-blue!

DO you know that fur-trappers in the wilds of Canada always wear gloves when setting their traps? This is not to keep their hands warm, as you might suppose, but for an entirely different reason.

TRAPPERS OF THE FAR NORTH-WEST

use gloves because all wild animals are extremely suspicious, and the slightest scent of human hands is sufficient to frighten away the quarry from the traps. Often, in addition to gloves being worn, the traps, before being set, are also smoked in a wood fire to remove all human taint from them.

The most valuable fur of all is a silver fox, because it is really a freak, being a black fox which has silver hairs sprinkled amongst the black. Like all freaks it is very rare, and its fur is the softest, thickest and most lustrous of all furs. That is why it is actually worth more than its weight in gold!

Do you know what was

THE LARGEST SALARY

ever paid to a man? The Emperor Franz Josef I, of Austria, was the lucky man who received the largest salary of all. His wages were over £880,000 per year! In other words, he was paid at the rate of over £100 per hour! During his lifetime he received nearly £55,000,000 from the State in salary alone. Just think of the number of postal orders he could have sent to Billy Bunter.

Have you ever wondered why people use the term

THE KING'S ENGLISH?

Jack Warren, of Richmond, wants to know. Well, as the King is the sovereign of our country, everything English is supposed to be under his sway—that seems to be the natural answer. But here is a curious thing: One King of England could not speak a single word of English! He was George the First, who spoke only German!

George Read, of the Chalet, Elmstone Road, Ramsgate, Kent, has sent me the following rib-tickler, for which I am awarding him one of our topping books:



Tramp: "Can you give me some work, kind lady?"

Lady: "What kind of work?"

Tramp: "Well, ma'am, I'm a sort of a dentist, and I want to advertise. I'll put a set of teeth into a good pie for nothing!"



HELP THE NEWSAGENT.

Have you ever thought how difficult it is for a newsagent to order just the right number of copies of any particular paper each week? You can make his task much easier if you place a regular order with him. You will not only help him to order correctly and avoid waste, but will make sure of getting your copy regularly each week.

WE number a large band of embryo poets amongst our readers—as the excellence of some of our limericks proves. But one of my readers, E. D., of Leeds, aspires to something more ambitious than the writing of limericks, and he asks me for advice.

HE WANTS TO BE A SONG-WRITER,

and would like to know how to get his songs set to music. He should type out his lyrics neatly and then send them to any good music publisher, with a request that they might be read and considered. A stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for a reply. He can get the addresses from any sheet music.

My reader must not be surprised if he receives a large number of rejections at first. All writers, whether of poems or of stories, have to put up with such experiences, for the market for song poems is very limited, and it often takes years of hard work to get into it. I wish him luck.

Now let us turn to next week's special bumper programme. Frank Richards' splendid yarn dealing with the further exciting holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

"JUNGLE VENGEANCE!"

and is certainly one of the best I have ever read from his pen. It seems hardly credible that an author can keep on turning in good stories week after week like Frank Richards does. But all of you will admit that he never lets us down. He compels your interest and attention from the very first sentence and keeps it up until the end of the yarn. You'll enjoy next week's holiday story, believe me, chums. Need I say more?

Quite a number of letters have reached me praising the "High, Low, and Nippy" series of adventure yarns, so you can prepare yourselves for another treat next week. The puncher pals are some lads, what! Just wait until you read next week's all-thrilling adventure.

Of course, there will be another rib-tickling issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," not to mention more winning jokes and Greyfriars limericks. My little chat will round off the programme.

Cheerio, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.

PENKNIVES, POCKET WALLETS and TOPPING BOOKS

offered for Storyettes and Snappy Greyfriars Limericks. All efforts to be sent to: c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

Don't Miss This Opportunity of Winning Something Useful!



**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Turned Down!**

BILLY BUNTER grinned. He stood in the doorway of Study No. 1, in the Greyfriars Remove, blinking into that celebrated apartment through his big spectacles. And the grin on his fat face was so expansive, that it stretched almost from ear to ear.

Bunter seemed to be bucked. Harry Wharton & Co. were in the study.

They were discussing a rather important matter; the midsummer holidays. Greyfriars was on the point of breaking-up; and from one cause or another the chums of the Remove had not yet made their arrangements for the "hols." So the matter was important; and interruptions, at the moment, were not wanted.

So when William George Bunter put his expansively grinning fat countenance into the study doorway, five voices spoke in unison:

"Buzz off, Bunter!"
"I say, you fellows—"
"Hook it!" said Bob Cherry.
"But I say—"

"The hookfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky—"
"And shut the door after you!" added Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"
Johnny Bull picked up a cushion. Bunter kept a wary eye on the

cushion. But he did not hook it. Apparently the fat junior had come to Study No. 1 with something to say.

The Famous Five thought that they could guess what it was.

There was no time during the term when Billy Bunter's society was really wanted by any man in the Remove. Least of all was it desired when the school was about to break up for the holidays.

At such a time, Bunter was liable to develop a strong attachment for his old pals, which was totally unreciprocated on their part.

**A Hiking Holiday, says Harry Wharton.
In Surrey, says Bob Cherry.
In Kent, says Johnny Bull.
In Sussex, says Nugent.
IN AFRICA, says Vernon-Smith
and AFRICA it is!**

For several days, as the term drew to a close, Billy Bunter had been going up and down the Remove like a lion seeking what he might devour. So far, he had not "fixed up" the hols.

Where he went for the vacation, Bunter did not seem to care very much, so long as he did not go home to that attractive and splendid residence, Bunter Court.

So the Famous Five thought they could guess what was coming. And they were not, so to speak, taking any.

They felt that they had had enough of Bunter during the term. Often they

felt that they had too much. Bunter in the hols, was altogether too much of a good thing.

So they waved him away. They waved him off as if he had been a fat bluebottle buzzing into the doorway.

Bunter, however, was not to be waved off. He was far more persistent than the most obstinate bluebottle.

"I say, you fellows—" he repeated. "Where will you have it?" asked Johnny Bull, taking aim with the cushion.

"Oh, really, Bull—"
"Run away and play, old fat bean," said Harry Wharton. "We're rather busy."

"Fixing up the hols, what?" grinned Bunter.

"Well, yes."
"And we don't want any help!" added Johnny Bull pointedly.

"You wouldn't get any from me!" said Bunter.
"Eh?"

"What?"
The Famous Five looked at Bunter rather more attentively. They observed the expansive and extensive grin that irradiated his podgy countenance. They noted that the fat Owl seemed uncommonly bucked.

It dawned upon them that Bunter had not, as they naturally feared, arrived in the study to inform them that he was joining up for the holidays, with the fixed intention of turning a deaf ear to any negative, howsoever emphatic.

Johnny Bull put down the cushion. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,228.

It looked as if it might not be wanted, after all.

"I say, you fellows, I thought I'd drop in and mention it," said Bunter. "I shan't be able to come with you, after all."

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, really, you beasts—"

"Fixed it up, old fat man?" asked Harry Wharton. "Good!"

"Sorry to have to turn you down, and all that," said Bunter.

"Oh, don't mench!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"We'll try to bear it!" said Johnny Bull, with a deep and withering sarcasm that was a sheer waste on Bunter.

"The bearfulness will be preposterous!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The survivefulness of our excellent selves will be truly terrific!"

"The fact is," said Bunter, unheeding, "I was trying to think how I could spare you fellows a week or two. But it can't be done."

"You mean we can't be done?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I shouldn't care to come home with you, Wharton, with that bad-mannered outsider Bull in the party. A fellow must draw a line somewhere. Well, I draw it at Bull."

Johnny Bull's hand strayed to the cushion again, but he relinquished it. After all, he was not going to see Bunter again till next term. That was enough to make any fellow good-tempered and forbearing.

"I've spent a vacation or two at your humble home, Wharton," went on Bunter.

"You have," agreed the captain of the Remove.

"You never treated me really decently. And, after all, your poor little place is hardly up to my weight, is it?" said Bunter.

"Well, your weight is rather uncommon, old fat man, I admit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The weightfulness of the esteemed podgy Bunter—"

"Beast! I didn't mean that, you silly ass! I meant—"

"Never mind what you meant. The rest of the speech can be taken as read," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Well, I hope you fellows will have as decent hols as you can get in your poverty-stricken way," said Bunter. "I'm sorry, as I said, that I can't come."

"You've got all the sorrow on your side, old fat ass!"

"But you can't expect it," said Bunter, unheeding. "When a fellow's got a pressing invitation to a millionaire's home you can't expect to get him under your humble roof, Wharton."

"Poor old Mauly!" sighed Bob Cherry.

The juniors grinned.

For days and days Billy Bunter had been stalking Lord Mauleverer of the Remove. Mauly had been seen to dodge round corners to keep out of his way. Mauly was a fellow who hated to say no. It looked as if Bunter had run him down at last, and his unhappy lordship had uttered a reluctant "yes."

But once more the chums of the Remove were in error.

"Tain't Mauly!" snapped Bunter. "I should refuse to spend the hols with Mauly after the way he's treated me. Kicking a fellow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. Apparently Lord Mauleverer, instead of saying "yes" had said "no," and made it clear with the aid of his elegant foot.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter. "I've turned

Mauly down, just as I'm turning you fellows down."

"But who's the happy victim?" asked Bob Cherry curiously. "Smithy's the only jolly old millionaire in the Remove, if it isn't Mauly. And it can't be Smithy."

The juniors chuckled at the idea. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was about the last fellow in the school to be landed with Billy Bunter for the summer holidays. The Bounder was not in the least like Mauly. He was not only the fellow to say "no," but to say it most unpleasantly. Bunter certainly had stalked the Bounder, as he had stalked half the fellows in the Remove. But of all the Remove, Smithy was the least likely to fall for it.

But it was a day of surprises.

"Well, it is Smithy!" jeered Bunter. "So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, see?"

"Great Scott!"

"You're really landed on Smithy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"That's rather a rotten way of putting it, Cherry. I've accepted Smithy's pressing invitation to spend my holidays with him," said Bunter, with dignity. "That's why I've come here, to tell you fellows not to expect to see me again till next term. Sorry and all that!"

"Poor old Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you cheeky rotters, it's rather a catch for Smithy!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "After all, his father's only a City millionaire. Of course, they like to get a fellow of really good family in their place—"

"Yes. But why should they want you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Well, good hols, old chap," said Harry Wharton, very cordially. Now that it was certain and safe that Bunter was not going to land himself on the Famous Five, they all felt very cordial. "I hope you'll have a jolly good time with Smithy."

"Well, it will be a bit different from staying with you, you know," said Bunter, in his agreeable way. "Big place, lots of cars, plenty of money—Smithy does things in style, you know. Sorry I can't ask Smithy to let you chaps come, too, but the fact is you're hardly the fellows I should care to take to a palatial establishment as my friend's—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Especially Bull," added Bunter. "I can stand him in the term, but when it's a question of taking him about on the hols as a friend, I can only say—Whoop!"

Bunter said that quite suddenly and unintentionally as the cushion flew.

It landed on Bunter's little fat nose and swept him out of the study doorway.

There was a bump in the Remove passage.

"Yaroooh!"

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Out!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came in a roar from the passage. "Beast, you come out here and I'll jolly well lick you—"

Johnny Bull jumped up.

"Coming!" he called back.

There was a sound of retreating footsteps in the passage. Some pressing engagement seemed to call Bunter elsewhere. And the chums of the Remove chuckled and resumed the discussion of the holidays—making plans which were not to include William George Bunter. But—as a novelist would say—they little knew!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Smithy's Little Joke I

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stood at the gates of Greyfriars and waved his hand after the junior who rolled away in a taxicab. Tom Redwing, from the cab, waved back.

The Bounder's chum was leaving a day before the rest of the school. Redwing was going on a deep-sea trip with his father, the sailorman of Hawkscliff, which was to fill up the whole of the vacation; and Smithy was not likely to see him again till Greyfriars gathered for the new term.

There was a thoughtful shade on the Bounder's rather hard face as he watched the taxi disappear down the road. When it was out of sight he turned back into the quad and shoved his hands deep into his pockets. The thoughtful shade was still on his brow as he walked back to the House.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Vernon-Smith looked up at Bob Cherry's cheery greeting. The Famous Five gave him cheery smiles.

"Redwing gone?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, he will be at sea to-night. What are you fellows doing these hols?" asked Smithy.

"Hiking, chiefly. And we're frightfully obliged to you, Smithy."

"To me?" repeated the Bounder.

"The obligefulness is terrific, my ridiculous Smithy."

"Vote of thanks all round!" grinned Frank Nugent.

The Bounder looked puzzled.

"I don't see—" he began.

"You see, we expected to have to put in a lot of trouble dodging Bunter," explained Bob Cherry. "A fellow hates to kick a fellow on breaking-up day."

"The kickfulness is not the proper caper, on such a happy and execrable occasion," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh!" Vernon-Smith chuckled.

"Yes, Bunter's coming with me."

"Wish you joy of him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The hopefulness is great, that the joyfulness will be preposterous, my esteemed Smithy."

The Bounder chuckled.

Harry Wharton & Co. regarded him rather curiously.

There was no doubt that Billy Bunter was glad to fasten his fat self on the Bounder for the vacation. He might, perhaps, have preferred a holiday at Mauleverer Towers; but Lord Mauleverer's boot seemed to have settled that in the negative.

Smithy was the next best thing. His father, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, was a millionaire several times over; and there was no doubt that money was rather splashed about by the millionaire at his magnificent town house, his enormous country house, and on his wonderful yacht. It was, in truth, no end of a catch for Bunter.

But where Smithy came in was the puzzle.

That Smithy could want Bunter seemed improbable. Nobody ever wanted Bunter.

But if he did not want him, why was he having him? The chums of the Remove could not picture Smithy yielding to Bunter's blandishments. They could not imagine him taking a fellow simply because the fellow wanted to come; as they themselves had done many a time and oft.

So it was a little perplexing; and they were faintly curious.

"Yes, I'm having Bunter," assented the Bounder. "The fat blighter has

been stalking me all over Greyfriars for days; I've kicked him oftener than I remember. But when it was settled that Reddy was going to sea, and I fixed up my own vac, I thought I'd give him his head. You see, I'm doing something rather special this vac."

"Yachting?" asked Bob.
 "Oh, no!"
 "Alpine stunts?" asked Nugent.
 "Rather jolly in Switzerland."
 "Not at all."
 "Painting the town red?" asked Bob, laughing.
 "Not the palest pink."
 The Bounder chuckled again.
 "I don't think Bunter will stay long," he remarked. "But he's welcome to stay as long as he likes. After this, I think very likely he will leave me out when he tries sticking fellows for the hols."
 "Oh, you're pulling Bunter's leg? Is that it?"
 "Something in the line," admitted the Bounder. "You see, as Reddy has gone, I'm rather left—"
 "Come hiking with us, old bean," said Wharton.
 "It's all fixed up now," smiled the Bounder. "I suppose you fellows know

So this vac I'm taking business study—hard and fast! I'm going the whole giddy unicorn for a solid month—hard work with a hard tutor—"
 Bob Cherry gave a yell.
 "Is that for Bunter, too?"
 "Exactly."
 "Oh crikey!"
 "I've told Bunter he can come and share in everything I do," said the Bounder. "He's quite welcome to learn book-keeping, if he likes—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bills of lading and things—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

"My dear boy," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, "you can't ask Bunter to share a holiday with you that's going to be spent in hard study." "It'll teach the fat scoundrel a lesson!" explained Smithy. Bunter heard every word and behind the screen, shook a fat fist.

theatres and night clubs, Alpine hotels and Blue Trains to Monte Carlo!
 Instead of which—
 "Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry.
 "Poor old Bunter!"
 "He may leave me out next vac," said the Bounder grimly. "A fellow gets tired of saying no. So I've said yes, for a change—in the circumstances."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up to the chuckling group in the quadrangle, and gave the Famous Five a suspicious blink through his big



that my pater is in business—big business. Some day I shall be at the head of one of the biggest things in the jolly old world. That isn't the sort of thing a Greyfriars education fixes you for. French will come in useful, of course; but I shan't have to talk Latin to business callers, or Roman history to steamer captains, or discuss English literature with managers and chief clerks, or Classical literature with copra traders at Singapore or coffee-planters in Kenya."
 "Nunno! I suppose not," said Harry.
 "But what—"
 "So I'm spending this vac in taking a course of business instruction—book-keeping, and so on."
 "Wha-a-t?"
 "It's as much to please my father as anything else; and, of course, he's jolly pleased," explained Vernon-Smith. "He would rather like me to be at a school that had a Modern Side—but, of course, it's Greyfriars for me! Still, he wants me to learn something useful, as well as the ancient stuff we cram here.

"I'm putting in the month at a quiet cottage—nobody there but the tutor man and a deaf old housekeeper," said Vernon-Smith cheerfully. "No town within six miles—no distractions of any sort—only long, lonely walks for health—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bunter will enjoy that!" roared Bob Cherry.
 "The enjoyfulness will be terrific."
 "I think perhaps he will turn me down, after a day or two. Still, he can keep it up as long as he likes!" said Smithy. "I shan't mind Bunter about the place—it will make a little comic-relief after the book-keeping by double entry and bills of lading and things—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 The Famous Five yelled.
 They had wondered why the Bounder had allowed Bunter to hook on for the holidays! They knew now!
 Bunter doubtless had a joyful vista of town houses and country houses, Rolls-Royce cars and stunning yachts,

spectacles. "I say, you fellows, you let my pal Smithy alone!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, Smithy, if these fellows are fishing for invitations for the hols, you give them the go-by," said Bunter anxiously. "We don't want them."
 "They're more than welcome, if they'd care to share the high old time I've been describing to them," answered the Bounder.
 "Thanks!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I think I'd rather hike."
 "The thankfulness is terrific; but the esteemed hikefulness is more preposterously attractive!" chortled the Nabob of Bhanipur.
 "Look here, Smithy, don't you ask those chaps—" urged Bunter. "They're not the sort you want. They wouldn't even care about night clubs—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Or a plunge at Monte Carlo—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle

at! Leave them out, Smithy; your programme for the hols wouldn't suit them at all."

"I rather think it wouldn't," agreed Vernon-Smith. "I hope it will suit you, Bunter."

"What-ho!" chuckled Bunter, with fat satisfaction. "I say, you fellows, you clear off, while I talk to my pal Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. cleared off, almost weeping with merriment, leaving Billy Bunter with his pal Smithy.

At the present moment Bunter was deeply, strongly, and affectionately attached to his pal Smithy. It was probable that there would be a change when he learned what that vacation with Smithy was really going to be like. It was probable that even Bunter Court and the society of his brother Sammy and his sister Bessie, would seem preferable to Bunter. But for the present Bunter's anticipations were bright, and the Famous Five left him to them and to the company of his pal Smithy.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants to Know!

"TODDY, old man!"

Peter Todd grinned.

Billy Bunter blinked at his study-mate darkly and suspiciously.

"Look here, Toddy, what's the joke?" he demanded.

"You are, old fat man!" answered Toddy.

"There's something on!" said Bunter warmly. "I don't know what it is, but there's something. Ever since Smithy asked me for the vac fellows have been grinning like hyenas—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toddy.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at, you silly ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Look in the glass!" suggested Toddy.

"Those beasts, Wharton and his gang, were chortling like anything," said Bunter. "Lots of other fellows, too! Temple of the Fourth stopped me in the quad to say he hoped I should enjoy the hols with Smithy! Smithy had just been speaking to him."

The wide grin on Peter Todd's face indicated that Smithy had been speaking to Peter Todd, too!

Probably the Bounder felt that his little joke on Bunter was too good to keep. Certainly a good many fellows in the Lower School at Greyfriars seemed to have had their gaiety considerably increased that day.

Bunter was getting suspicious!

"Temple was chortling like anything," he said. "So were Dabney and Fry of the Fourth. And then there was Hobson of the Shell. He asked me if I was really going with Smithy, and he was chuckling as if he thought there was something funny in it. Nothing funny in my going home with Smithy for the hols, I suppose?"

"I wonder!" murmured Peter.

"I dare say the fellows are jealous!" remarked Bunter. "Smithy hasn't asked anybody else. He wouldn't ask you, Toddy."

"I might decline if he did!" chuckled Peter.

"You jolly well wouldn't!" sniffed Bunter. "You'd jump at the chance! I've often felt sorry for you because you never get decent hols, Peter. Still, you can't expect to be asked to a millionaire's home. There's your manners, for instance! And your looks!" Bunter shook his head. "Still, you might tell me, as a pal, what this joke is."

"You're such a nice chap, you make

a fellow feel so jolly pally!" remarked Peter. "You have such a tactful, agreeable way of putting things."

Sarcasm was wasted on Bunter.

"That's because I'm a fellow of good family," he explained. "Fellows of good family are born to good manners, Toddy. But you'd hardly understand that, of course."

"Ye gods!" said Toddy.

"It looks to me," went on Bunter, "as if there's some joke on up against me! Hazel and Bolsover major and Skinner were in the passage when I came up, and they just yelled—simply yelled!"

"I wonder why!"

"Well, I don't like it," said Bunter warmly. "I come into this study and you started grinning like a chimpanzee. You're in it, too, Toddy! If you think Smithy's pulling my leg, you're jolly well mistaken. It's all fixed up, and Smithy isn't the chap to let a man down. He's a bit of an outsider in some things; but he wouldn't do that. Think he would?"

"He wouldn't!" said Toddy.

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. Perhaps a doubt had crossed the fat mind of the Owl of the Remove. "It would be pretty rotten to be left stranded, if Smithy was only pulling my leg, and never meant to take me home. But even a rank outsider like Smithy couldn't play a dirty trick like that."

"I believe Smithy's rather keen on taking you, old fat man!" said Peter.

"Well, he would be, you know!" said Bunter. "These jumped-up millionaires are always glad to get the aristocracy in their new-rich establishments!"

"Oh crikey! Did you put it like that to Smithy?" gasped Peter.

Bunter grinned.

"Well, no! Still, there it is! It's rather an honour for these Smiths to get a fellow of good family at their place. That's where Smithy comes in—see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared Bunter.

"A fat chump!" answered Peter.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 7, leaving Peter Todd chortling. He was feeling a little uneasy in his fat mind.

Certainly it was impossible for Herbert Vernon-Smith to let him down at the last minute, after asking him for the holidays. No Greyfriars man could possibly be such an outsider as that.

Yet nearly all the Remove seemed to regard Bunter's arrangements with Smithy as a screaming joke. Why?

Bunter could not guess why; but he was worried.

As he rolled along the Remove passage he caught sight of the Bounder, in conversation with Snoop, Micky Desmond, and Penfold. All of them were laughing.

The Bounder, as he saw Bunter coming, went into his study. The other three fellows looked at the fat junior, and chuckled.

"I hear you're going home with Smithy, Bunter!" called out Snoop.

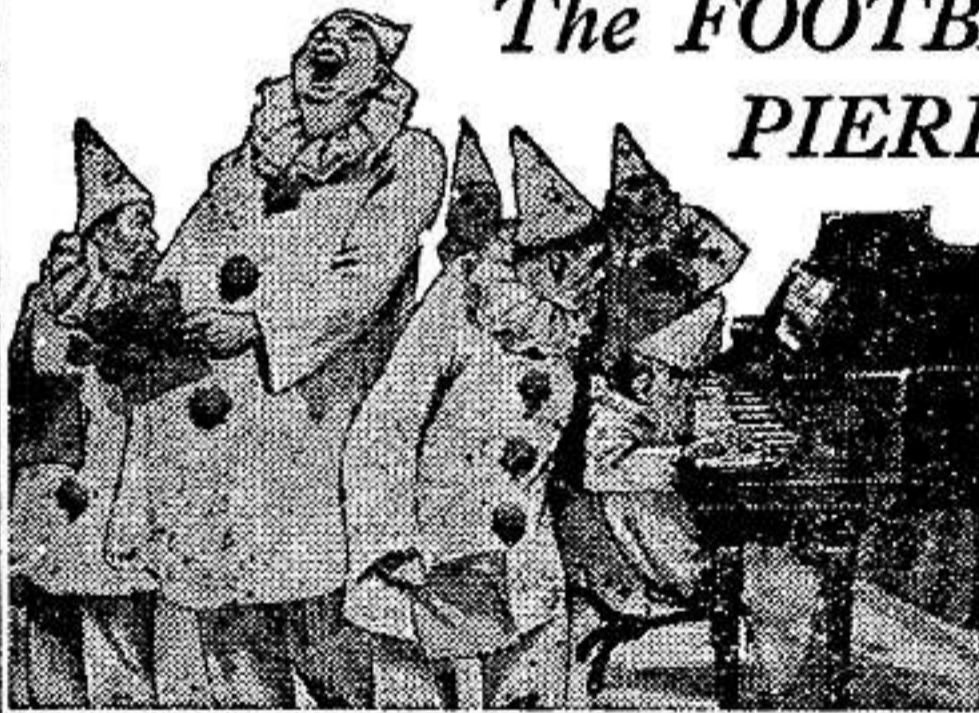
"Hope you'll have good hols!" chuckled Micky Desmond.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gave them a disdainful blink through his big spectacles, and, like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, rolled on.

He was puzzled and annoyed. His fat brow was wrinkling in thought as he went down the Remove staircase. What was there to produce all this hilarity in the fact that he was going with Smithy for the holidays? Fellows might feel jealous about the gorgeous time he was going to have with the wealthy Bounder; but that did not wholly

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account for it. Bunter realised that there was something else, and he wondered what it was.

At the foot of the stairs he came on Ogilvy and Russell of the Remove. They called to him simultaneously.

"I hear you're going home with Smithy?"

"Have a good time, old fat man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant reply; and he rolled on.

The chuckles of Ogilvy and Russell followed him.

Five or six Remove men glanced at him as he rolled out into the quad, and grinned. Almost every man in the Remove seemed to be in the joke by this time, whatever the mysterious joke was.

Bunter ambled along by Masters' windows in a thoughtful and disturbed frame of mind. There was some jest attached to Smithy's invitation for the holidays; he could see that. Smithy had a rather sardonic turn of mind; and Bunter, as a matter of fact, was quite astonished when he had succeeded in screwing an invitation out of the Bounder. What sort of a jest was that beast Smithy playing on him? He couldn't let him down after asking him—that was impossible. Yet what else could it be?

Bunter wanted to know—very much indeed he wanted to know. If there was anything amiss with that invitation, he wanted to know before the school broke up and the other fellows got away. Until the fellows actually escaped, there was still time to stick somebody if he decided not to go with the Bounder. As a last resource, he could go hiking with the Famous Five. He could manage that somehow. But he wanted to know!

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked round irritably at the sound of his master's voice.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was standing at the open window of his study. Bunter for a moment was tempted to have a sudden attack of deafness and scud. He had no doubt that Quelch was going to ask him for some lines that ought to have been handed in before tea-time, and that had not been handed in—and never would be handed in if Bunter could help it.

But the gimlet eye was upon him, and Bunter did not venture to scud. He rolled reluctantly up to the study window.

"Yes, sir! I've done them!" he stammered.

"What?"

"Only Toddy spilt some ink on them, sir, and I—I shall have to do them over again, sir."

"I was not about to speak of your lines, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I desire you to take a message to Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master. "You will tell him that his father has telephoned to me, stating that he is coming to Greyfriars to see him this evening."

"Oh!" repeated Bunter.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith will arrive at seven o'clock," said Mr. Quelch. "You will tell Vernon-Smith so, Bunter."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch stepped back from the window, and Bunter rolled round to the door of the House and rolled in. The fat Owl was extremely reluctant to negotiate the staircase again; but when Mr. Quelch commanded, there was no choice in the matter. Billy Bunter grunted his way up the stairs to the Remove passage and blinked in at Study No. 4.

Vernon-Smith was alone there. He glanced round and grinned at the sight of Bunter's fat face.

"Oh, you!" he said. "Don't say you've come to tell me that you've changed your mind, Bunter, and aren't coming home with me!"

"No fear," said Bunter promptly—"I mean, I find I can spare you a few weeks, Smithy! It's all right."

"Good!" said the Bounder gravely.

"Message from Quelch!" explained Bunter. "He says your pater's phoned that he's coming to see you to-day, getting here at seven."

The Bounder stared.

"My hat! What the dickens—" he ejaculated.

Evidently the Bounder was surprised.

"I dare say he's got something to tell

"Shut the door after you, old bean! I'm rather busy!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith shut the door, the fat Owl stepping back into the passage just in time to save his nose.

Bunter breathed hard and deep. This sort of thing was not civil—not the sort of thing a fellow would expect from a fellow who was taking him home for the holidays.

Bunter rolled away, thinking! Something was on—that was clear! That unspeakable beast Vernon-Smith was pulling his leg somehow! Everybody in the Remove knew what was on—excepting Bunter. And Bunter was going to know!

When Bunter wanted information, he had his own ways of getting it. Billy Bunter's intellect was not perhaps a first-class apparatus. Still, it worked. Bunter thought it out.

Old Smith—in that disrespectful manner did Bunter think of his pal Smithy's father—old Smith was coming to see young Smith only a day or two before breaking-up, running in at an unusual time without previous announcement. That looked as if his visit had something to do with the holidays. By being present at the interview between old Smith and young Smith, Bunter felt that he could learn how the matter really stood, and what sort of a holiday it was that young Smith had asked him to.

The Bounder assuredly was not likely to allow Bunter to be present at his interview with his father if he knew it. But that was all right—he was not going to know it!

Towards seven o'clock the Bounder walked down to the door of the House to meet his father when he came.

At the same time Billy Bunter stepped into Study No. 4 in the Remove.

As Redwing was now away, that study was empty. The coast was clear for William George Bunter.

Smithy was certain to bring his father up to the study to talk. Neither of them was going to know that Bunter was there.

The fat Owl grinned as he blinked round the study. The wealthy Bounder's study was furnished rather more expensively than most Remove studies. One of the articles of furniture was a handsome Japanese screen which stood across a corner of the room.

Nothing could have suited Bunter better.

He glided behind the screen, thoughtfully taking with him one of the Bounder's cushions. With equal thoughtfulness, he had brought a packet of toffee that belonged to Peter Todd.

Sitting on the cushion in the corner, completely hidden by the screen, Billy Bunter absorbed toffee and waited.

And he grinned a cheery fat grin when there were footsteps in the passage, stopping at the door of Study No. 4; and he heard the door open, and the voices of Vernon-Smith and his father in the study.

Bunter wanted to know—and now he was going to know!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Change in the Programme!

MR. VERNON-SMITH sat down rather heavily in the armchair and gave a grunt. The Bounder closed the study door, and then sat on the corner of the table facing his father. He was wondering what this sudden visit meant, and

SHE GOT THERE FIRST!



A very haughty lady, walking in the park, saw a labourer apparently approaching the same seat as she had chosen to sit upon. She decided to hurry and get there before him.

"Hi, lady!" called out the labourer. "Don't—don't—"

The lady ignored him, however, and sat down.

"All right, lady," said the man, "sit there; but I'll be hanged if I'll paint that seat again to-day!"

George F. Price, of 13, Blurton Road, Lower Clapton, E.5, sent in this joke and already a splendid Pocket Knife is on the way to him.

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you about the hols," suggested Bunter. "Trip to Monte, or something."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"It's all cut and dried about the hols," he answered. "I only hope you'll enjoy them, Bunter."

"I say, Smithy, a lot of the fellows seem to think it's rather a joke, my coming home with you for the hols," said Bunter, blinking at him.

"I wonder why!" said the Bounder blandly.

"Well, I keep on wondering why," said Bunter. "I can't make it out, Smithy." He blinked suspiciously at the Bounder. "Why, you're grinning yourself!"

"Sheer joy!" said the Bounder. "A fellow who's going to have your company for the vac, Bunter, naturally feels a bit bucked."

"Well, of course, you don't often get a chap like me to go home with you, old fellow!" said Bunter fatuously.

"That's exactly it!" agreed the Bounder.

"All the same, it's rather queer how the fellows seem to be killing themselves chortling over it!" said Bunter. "I say—"

whether it had anything to do with the arrangements for the vacation. Mr. Vernon-Smith looked at his watch.

"My stay must be very brief, Herbert," he said. "I am dining with a business friend at Lantham, and I have not too much time."

"No good offerin' you a spread in the study, then?" grinned Smithy.

The millionaire laughed.

"Thank you, no! As I was passing within a few miles of the school, I thought I would call in and see you instead of writing. It's about the vacation."

"I guessed it would be about that," remarked Smithy.

Behind the screen in the corner sat a fat junior who had also guessed it! And that fat junior grinned silently.

"Any change in the programme, father?" asked Smithy.

"Well, yes, that's it."

"You've thought of some new subject to put into the business course?" grinned Smithy. "Do you want me to learn shorthand and typing?"

"The fact is, Herbert, I was very glad—very pleased indeed—when you consented to take a business course of instruction during the vacation," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Taking such a course will be of great benefit to you in the future. At the same time, it is a sacrifice of your holiday—"

"That's all right," said Smithy.

"You will miss your friends—"

"I've asked one chap to stay with me, dad."

Mr. Vernon-Smith started.

"My dear boy! How can you ask a friend to stay with you, for a vacation that is to be spent in a quiet secluded place in hard study?"

Behind the screen, a fat face changed in expression.

Billy Bunter was beginning to understand.

"It's Bunter I've asked," explained the Bounder with a grin. "He has been trying to stick every man in the Remove for the hols, me among the rest. I've let him stick me—for a joke on the fat bounder. I want to see his face when he finds out what the vac is really going to be like! You don't mind if I take the fat idiot along?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith laughed.

"What an absurd joke," he said. "Bunter would soon get tired of a holiday spent in studying book-keeping and commercial matters."

A fat fist was shaken behind the screen.

Bunter knew now!

This was the ghastly holiday Smithy was going to have—and which Bunter was to share!

This was the joke that was making all the Remove chortle!

Billy Bunter was strongly tempted to arise in his wrath, hurl aside the screen, and confront the Bounder, and pour on Smithy's devoted head the torrent of his scorn and indignation.

But he remained where he was. If he showed up, there was no doubt that Smithy would kick him out of the study—hard!

Billy Bunter had often been kicked, but he had never grown to like it. He contented himself with shaking a fat fist silently behind the screen, and like Brer Fox lay low and said "nuffin."

"You see, it's a lesson to the fat scoundrel," explained Smithy. "He never gives a man a minute's peace at the end of the term. He's positively dangerous at close quarters the last few

days before we break up. So I thought I'd pull his fat leg."

"Well, well, never mind Bunter." Mr. Vernon-Smith looked at his watch again. "If you desire to adhere to the programme for the vacation, Herbert, you are entirely your own master in the matter."

Smithy looked a little puzzled.

"I'm game," he answered. "I can't say I'm frightfully keen on it, but I'm game, father."

"But the fact is, Herbert, business calls me abroad, and it has occurred to me that you might care to accompany me on the trip. You have never seen Africa—"

"Africa!" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Probably, in your geography lessons here, you have heard of Kenya—British East Africa," said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I have rather extensive interests in that new country, Herbert, and some of these interests call for my personal attention. If, therefore, you would care for a trip to Kenya in the holidays, instead of the programme we mapped out—"

The Bounder's eyes danced.

"If!" he chuckled.

"You like the idea?"

"What-ho! Could I bring any of the fellows?"

"Certainly, if you like, I will give you carte blanche in that direction. Only let me know the number, for booking the berths, and so on."

"Redwing's gone to sea for the hols, with his father," said Smithy. "But a few other fellows—"

"Certainly, certainly. I am sorry I could not let you know earlier, Herbert, but, as you know, my decisions often have to be taken suddenly. I have an opportunity of securing a great coffee-planting tract in Kenya, but it is too big a thing to leave to agents. The master's eye you know." Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled. "At the present time, I can secure this at a bargain price—probably you know there is a world-slump going on just now, and coffee has suffered like every other product. There are mountains of unsold coffee weighing down the market and the whole industry's in a perilous state."

"I've seen something of it in the papers," said the Bounder. Smithy, schoolboy as he was, took a keen interest in matters that were far outside the purview of other Greyfriars men. He was probably the only Greyfriars man who fully realised that he lived in the big world, as well as in the little world of the school. "But, look here, dad, according to all reports, the coffee-planting game is in a tottery state. Is it a time for putting money into it?"

"Exactly the time," answered Mr. Vernon-Smith calmly. "Exactly the time for a man with keen judgment, who can afford to let his money lie for a few years. The world-slump is on the turn, Herbert, next year will tell a very different tale."

"I know you know the game, father," said the Bounder.

"I fancy so," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a complacent smile. "I fancy so, Herbert! While half the business men in the kingdom are bemoaning the slump, I am getting ready for the return of prosperity which is at hand. But never mind business matters—while I am doing my business, you and your friends will enjoy all sorts of trips, and see all sorts of sights. I am told that the climate of Kenya is very pleasant and healthy—it is a coming country, Herbert. So you like the idea?"

"What-ho!"

"Such a holiday will have educational value, of course," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You will probably acquire as much useful knowledge, of a different sort, as by taking the business course we had originally planned."

"I shan't miss that, father," said the Bounder, with a grin. "Kenya for me, every time."

"Then it is settled."

The millionaire rose.

"I shall have to leave you now, Herbert! Come down to the car with me."

The Bounder left the study with his father.

When their footsteps died away down the Remove passage, a fat figure emerged from behind the screen in the corner.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

An expansive grin irradiated his fat countenance.

"Beast! Taking a fellow in!" murmured Bunter. "Beast! I knew there was something on, the awful rotter! But—he, he, he!"

Bunter blinked out of the study doorway. The coast was clear, and the Owl of the Remove rolled away.

Smithy, by way of a sardonic joke, had asked Bunter for the vacation, which, as originally planned, Bunter certainly would not have enjoyed. Bunter undoubtedly would have thrown it up at a very early date. But the change in the programme made all the difference! Instead of the dull grind which Smithy had sardonically invited Bunter to share, there was to be a trip to East Africa—all expenses paid! No wonder the Owl of the Remove chuckled as he thought of it. Smithy had jested not wisely but too well, and it looked as if the sardonic Bounder had overreached himself!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Some Hike!

HARRY WHARTON glanced up as Vernon-Smith stopped at the doorway of Study No. 1, and gave the Bounder a smile and a nod. The rest of the Co. looked a welcome. There had recently been a little trouble between the Bounder and the captain of the Remove, but it had blown over, and of late Smithy seemed to have been trying to blot out the memory of his offences. Wharton was more than willing to meet him half-way, and at present they were on better terms than they had ever been before. So the Bounder was "persona grata" in Study No. 1, and he received friendly looks from all the Famous Five as he strolled in.

"Busy?" asked Smithy.

"The busifulness it not terrific, my esteemed and absurd Smithy," answered Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Only drawing up a route," said Harry. "I told you we're going hiking in the vac. We're mapping it out. Take a pew, old bean."

"Hiking's a good idea," said the Bounder. "I suppose you're not specially particular where you hike?"

"Not at all." Harry Wharton laughed. "If you've changed your programme for the vac, Smithy, and prefer hiking to bills of lading, come along with us, and help us map out the route."

"Glad to have you, old bean," said Bob Cherry.

"The gladfulness will be preposterous."

"The fact is, the programme's changed," said the Bounder; "and if you'll let me suggest a route for hiking, I—"

"Pleased!" said Frank Nugent.

"One route's as good as another, really, so long as you hike," said Johnny Bull. "What's your idea of a route, Smithy?"

"Well, on my route we should have to begin on a train and a steamer," said the Bounder. "That all right?"

"To get to the selected spot, you mean?" asked Harry. "Yes, that's all right, of course. What's the big idea?"

"Train to Southampton to begin with," said Smithy.

"Hampshire's all right for hiking," agreed Bob.

"Steamer from Southampton to Mombasa!"

The Famous Five jumped.

"Mombasa!"

"Yes."

"Where on earth's Mombasa?" ejaculated Nugent.

"British East Africa."

"Is that a joke?" asked Wharton, puzzled.

"Not at all. Train from Mombasa to Nairobi—"

"Nairobi!" yelled Bob.

"That's in Kenya!" remarked Nugent. "Capital or something."

"Got it in one!" assented Smithy.

"Nairobi is, I believe, a jolly good centre for hiking. You get trips on the big African lakes; you can walk up Mount Kenya; you can hike in the forest and the jungle; give the cannibals a look-in—of course, you'll have to be careful to keep outside them."

The Famous Five stared blankly at Smithy.

"You're not serious?" asked Harry.

"Quite."

"Of course, we'd like to hike abroad, if it comes to that. But, my dear chap, we can't work in trips to Equatorial Africa."

"A bit nearer home, Smithy!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Say, Surrey or Sussex."

"Yorkshire's all right," said Johnny Bull. "You can't beat Yorkshire. What about Yorkshire?"

"I'll shove the cards on the table," said the Bounder, laughing. "My father's got a business trip on, to Kenya; and he's offered to take me and any friends I like to ask. I'm asking you fellows."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Famous Five, together.

"Catch on?"

"The catchfulness is terrific."

"Of course, you'll have to ask your people," said Smithy. "But the party will be in my father's charge, so that will be all right. Of course, the pater's standing the whole thing—you fellows will be my guests. I'll be jolly glad to have you, if you'll come. I'm asking you lot first; I hope you'll come."



"It's you fellows I'm rather anxious about," said Billy Bunter. "You're no sailors, you know. Grin and bear it, you know. And I say—groooogh!" The steamer pitched again, and Bunter's face turned deathly pale.

"Well, it rather takes a fellow's breath away," said Wharton. "But I don't think we shall have to ponder it a lot. I'd be jolly glad of a trip to Africa in the vac."

"Same here!" said Bob.

"The samefulness is terrific."

"Hiking in Kenya!" said Johnny Bull. "Sounds good!"

"Jolly good!" said Nugent heartily.

The Bounder smiled genially. It was evident that he was glad to have the Cheery Co. as his companions on that gorgeous trip.

"It's a go, then?" he asked.

"It's a go!" answered five voices in unison.

"Good egg!"

The Bounder, with a cheery nod, turned to the door.

"What about Bunter?" asked Bob.

"Oh gad!" Vernon-Smith gave a start; he had forgotten Bunter. "Oh, holy smoke! Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "You're landed now, Smithy! You shouldn't have pulled his leg!"

The Bounder's face was a study. Its expression made the Famous Five chuckle.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter blinked into the doorway. "My pal Smithy here? I say, Smithy, old chap, I—"

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath as he looked at the fat Owl. He was, as Bob had said, landed now. As matters had turned out, it was his own leg he pulled instead of the fat leg of William George Bunter.

He walked out of the study without a word.

Bunter blinked after him, and then turned his big spectacles on the grinning faces of the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows! What's up with Smithy? Has he told you—"

Bunter broke off.

"Has he told us what?"

"Oh, nothing! I don't know anything about it yet, you know," said the fatuous Owl.

"About what?"

"Nothing, old fellow!"

Billy Bunter rolled away.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"That fat chump knows already," said Bob. "He won't let Smithy off! We're landed with Bunter for the trip."

"Rotten!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, perhaps a cannibal will gobble him—"

"Ha, ha ha!"

"Anyhow, we're for Kenya!" said Bob. "Fancy hiking on the jolly old Equator! Some hike!"

"What-ho!"

There was no doubt that the chums of the Remove were looking forward to that trip. Hiking on the Equator was, as Bob declared, and his comrades heartily agreed, "some" hike!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bound for Africa!

BILLY BUNTER wore a cheery smile.

He wore, of course, other things; but the smile was the most noticeable.

Bunter was bucked.

If Bunter had been given his choice of various ways and means of passing the vacation, probably he would have chosen that trip to Kenya.

The chums of the Remove, like Lord THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,228.

Bunter begin to do real justice to the "grub." But by that time the fat Owl had got his sea-legs, and he was able to pack away the foodstuffs without dire results accruing.

The other fellows were quite keen on strange scenes and strange cities, but Billy Bunter, when he was not eating, was generally resting comfortably in a deckchair. Bunter remembered the long trip through the Mediterranean chiefly as a series of enjoyable meals and delightful naps. But when the steamer put in at Port Said, Bunter sat up and took notice, as it were.

"I say, you fellows, we ought to run ashore here," he said. "I've heard that this is a frightfully lively place. What about it, Smithy?"

"Nothing about it," answered the Bounder.

"Of course, it would hardly suit these fellows," said Bunter, with a pitying blink at the Famous Five. "Let's leave them here, and you and I get off and paint the town red, Smithy. You're rather goey at Greyfriars, you know. Fellows keep on wondering how it is you don't get sacked—"

"You silly Owl!"
"Oh, really, Smithy! And I'm a bit of a dog myself—"

"Do you mean a bit of a hog?"

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "And if that's the way you talk to a guest, Smithy, I can jolly well tell you that I'll change into a home-ward-bound steamer here, and chuck the trip!"

"You don't mean it?" ejaculated the Bounder.

"I jolly well do!" said Bunter firmly.

"You'll chuck up the trip if I call you a hog?"

"I jolly well will!"

"Good!" said the Bounder. "Hog!"

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Hog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, if you speak to my pater he will fix it up for you to take the steamer home, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked at Herbert Vernon-Smith through his big spectacles with a devastating blink.

"I'll call my pater—"

"You needn't trouble, old chap!" said Bunter hastily. "I wouldn't let you down at this stage of the trip. It's not my style to let a fellow down in the holidays."

"I was afraid it wasn't!"

"Beast! I mean I'm sticking to you, old chap! I can't say I like your manners, Smithy, but I'm seeing you through. You'll need me to protect you when we get to Africa. If we meet a lion face to face—"

"The lion would only see your back."

"Beast! If we fall in with a tribe of cannibals you'll be jolly glad to have me with you—"

"What-ho! You'd last them a month, unless they were a very numerous tribe," agreed the Bounder. "Still, if you're keen on that steamer home—"

"Not at all, old chap!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away, to cut short the discussion.

Bunter did not paint the town red at Port Said. That city with the salubrious reputation was left behind unpainted by Bunter, and the steamer churned on through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea.

In the Red Sea it was hot.

That was quite a common state of affairs, and the fellows had expected to find it warm. But to judge by Bunter's remarks, he seemed to take the view that the heat in the Red Sea was a malevolent trick that Nature was playing on him personally.

"It's hot!" he said accusingly, as Mount Sinai disappeared astern. "I say, you fellows, it's hot! Beastly hot!"

"Warmish!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"The warmfulness of the esteemed sun is grateful and comforting," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

The Nabob of Bhanipur was basking in the blaze of sun-heat. It reminded

and the barren flats of Somaliland stretched far and wide before their eyes.

Billy Bunter blinked disparagingly at the Dark Continent.

"If that's Kenya, I don't think much of it!" he remarked.

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled.

"That isn't Kenya; that is Somaliland, Bunter," he said. "We are still a good many hundred miles from British East."

"Somaliland, is it?" grunted Bunter. "Well, it looks jolly dusty, and it wasn't worth bagging."

"That is Italian Somaliland," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "British Somaliland borders the Gulf of Aden. This part was bagged, as you call it, by Italy."

"Chance for you to mug up some geography, Bunter," suggested Bob Cherry. "You'll be able to surprise Quelch next term."

Grunt from Bunter. He was not desirous of surprising Mr. Quelch by learning anything.

"We shall be crossing the line soon," remarked the Bounder.

"Eh? What line?" asked Billy Bunter. He blinked round through his big spectacles as if in expectation of seeing the line to which Smithy alluded.

"Not a clothes-line!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Smithy means the jolly old Equator."

"Bunter doesn't know what the Equator is," grunted Johnny Bull. "Don't expect too much of him."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The Equator, my young friends," said Bob, "is an imaginary line running round the middle of the globe. It runs right round the jolly old world in the widest place, where it is more extensive

than Bunter's waistcoat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Kenya's right on the line," went on Bob. "Mombasa, where we stop, is south of the line, in the giddy southern hemisphere. That's official; I've looked it out on the chart. When we get to Mombasa we shall be jolly nearly seven thousand miles from home. Like to learn something about Mombasa, Bunter?"

"No."

"I'll tell you, all the same—the steward told me," said Bob. "Mombasa is the chief port for Kenya, and there's a railway up to Nairobi. It has a native name—it's called something or other—"

"Sure you've got that right?" asked Harry.

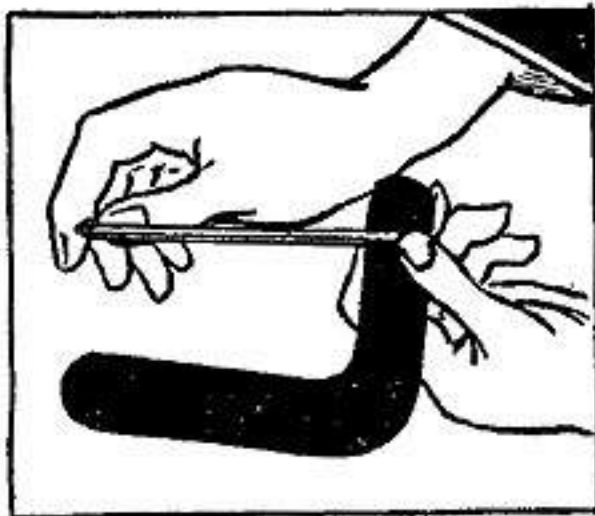
"Well, it's called something or other, or what do you call it—"

"Kisiwa Mvita," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a smile.

"I knew it was something or other," agreed Bob. "And I believe it means something, too."

How to Catapult the MAGNET Boomerang.

Quite a lengthy flight may be obtained with the novel boomerang Presented Free with this week's MAGNET, and with only ordinary skill and a little practice you will soon become an adept in making the boomerang spin away and return to your hand smoothly. The secret, of course, is to hold the boomerang and shooter in the correct position. First loop the rubber band of the catapult in the notch provided in the boomerang, and hold it in position with your thumb and forefinger as shown in the picture above. Incline the long end of the boomerang slightly towards the hand holding the catapult, then stretch the rubber gently and let go. The boomerang will then spin away, curve round, and come sailing gracefully back to you. With a little practice you can gauge the strength of the elastic shooter to suit any distance, and once you have acquired this knack you and your pals can arrange a match, the winner being the one whose boomerang is not only nearest a certain target—a cap on the ground will do—but whose boomerang makes the most perfect return flight. Get the idea, boys? Good!



him of the torrid sunshine of his native land. But even the nabob admitted that it was warm.

"It's putrid hot!" groaned Bunter. He fanned a perspiring, fat face. "I say, you fellows, I don't know how a fellow's going to stand this!"

"Sit down!" suggested Johnny Bull. "Don't be a funny idiot! I'm melting!"

"I fancy this will reduce Bunter's weight," remarked Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I think he will weigh more than a ton by the time we're through the Red Sea!"

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton & Co. could not help noticing that it was hot. But had they not noticed it Bunter certainly would have brought it to their attention. From the Suez Canal to Aden, William George Bunter indulged in one long, continuous grouse.

But the narrow seas were left behind at last, and the steamer churned on round Cape Guardafui and ran on down the East Coast of Africa.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked with keen interest at the shore. The steamer passed within easy view of the shore,

"Isle of War," said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"That's it," said Bob. "Mombasa is situated on an island, which is I forget how many mile long, by I can't remember how many miles wide—"

"The exactfulness of this esteemed information is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we shall see when we get there," said Bob. "It used to belong to the Portuguese. It's very hot."

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob. "He lost a ton of fat in the Red Sea; he will lose another ton at Mombasa. There won't be more than a couple of tons left of Bunter to put on the railway to Nairobi."

"Beast!"

The steamer churned on down the East African coast and duly crossed the line, and arrived at long last at Mombasa—otherwise, Kisiwa Mvita, the Isle of War. And the chums of Greyfriars were glad enough to get ashore.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

"Simba!"

HARRY WHARTON & CO. would rather have liked to explore Mombasa, and make a trip to Pemba and Zanzibar, but Mr. Vernon-Smith was a business gentleman with no time to cut to waste.

After a couple of days at Mombasa the Greyfriars party boarded the train for Nairobi, and the sea was left behind them. But the juniors found plenty to interest them as the train climbed higher and higher on the journey inland.

Tropical vegetation met their eyes on all sides in wild luxuriance—coconut-palms, mangoes, bananas, and other trees of which they hardly knew the names—and as the train had an average speed of about twenty-five miles an hour they had plenty of time to see the scenery. It was hot, but it grew cooler as they reached the uplands; and, though it certainly was very dusty, only one member of the party grumbled at the dust. That one member certainly put in enough grouching for the whole party.

"This is a jolly interesting spot!" Bob Cherry remarked when the train grunted into Tsavo.

"What about it?" grunted Bunter.

"This is where the construction of the line was held up once upon a time by jolly old lions."

"Ow!"

Billy Bunter blinked uneasily out of the train.

At Greyfriars, and during the sea voyage, William George Bunter had spoken cheerfully—indeed, contemptuously—of lions. He had announced his intention of taking home a lion-skin to adorn Study No. 7 in the Remove. Now that he was in the land of lions, however, Bunter regarded those fearsome beasts with much less contempt, and considerably more uneasiness.

"I—I say, you fellows, are there any lions in Kenya now?" he asked.

"Lots and lots!" answered Bob.

"The lotfulness is terrific!"

"There's a station on this line called Simba," said Bob. "Simba is the native name for lion, my beloved 'earers.'"

"I—I say, do—do they ever get on the train?" asked Bunter.

Bob Cherry winked at his chums.

"I wonder!" he remarked. "Anyhow, if

a lion gets on the train, old bean, you'll hear him roar. Listen for a jolly old lion's roar, you men."

With grave faces the juniors bent their heads to listen. Billy Bunter listened with all his ears, the perspiration on his fat brow. The thought of a huge lion, with tawny mane, leaping on the train and making a meal of one of the passengers, was extremely uncomfortable to Bunter; especially as any lion who knew his way about would be pretty certain to select Bunter!

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

There was a loud snorting sound!

"Is—is that a lion?" gasped Nugent. "Help!"

Snorrrrrrrrrt!

"Ow! Keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, you get in front of me! I say, I'm getting off this train!

I say, I'm going home! I say, I'm not going to be eaten alive by lions to please you beasts! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" yelled Bunter. "Fire! Police! Help! Keep him off!"

The dreadful sound was repeated, and Bunter made a wild plunge to get off the train.

The Co. grasped him and dragged him back.

"You silly ass——" gasped Wharton.

"Leggo! Help! Yooooop!"

"It isn't a lion, you silly chump!" yelled Bob Cherry. "It's the engine."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The train was moving on out of Tsavo. Billy Bunter plumped back into his seat. He realised that that dreadful snorting sound proceeded from the engine, not from the deep throat of Simba.

"You—you beasts!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I knew it wasn't a lion, of course! I—I'll bet I made you fellows think I was frightened! He, he, he!"

"You jolly well did!" chuckled Bob.

"Lions don't really get on the trains, old fat man," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Besides, if there's a lion about, the natives will all start yelling 'Simba,' which is their name for a lion!" said Bob, with another wink at his chums.

"Don't be alarmed till you hear them calling out 'Simba,' old fat bean."

"I'm not likely to be alarmed!" said Bunter. "You fellows may be! I think that's very likely! I'm not that sort, I hope."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Nothing to be afraid of if a lion did turn up," said Bunter. With the train in motion again Bunter's terrors had vanished and he was as bold as Simba himself. "You quell wild beasts with your eye, you know. They can't face the human eye."

"Then you ought to be all right with four to fix on him," remarked Bob.

"Beast! If a lion got on this train I should simply quell him with my eye," said Bunter. "Of course, it needs pluck. That's where I come in strong. You fellows needn't be afraid of lions so long as I'm with you."

And Billy Bunter, easy in his fat mind now, leaned back and went to sleep; and the deep and resonant snore that proceeded from him might almost have made some of the other passengers suppose that there was, after all, a lion on the train.

It was some hours later that Bunter awoke, as the train stopped once more. He blinked out at the station,

"I say, is this where we get grub?" he asked.

"Not yet," said Bob. "We grub at Kiu——"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "Think I don't know we're seven thousand miles from Kew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not Kew, fathead—Kiu!" chuckled Bob.

"Well, what's this place?" grunted Bunter. He was not much interested in a station where there was no refreshment department.

"Simba! Simba!" came a calling voice.

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Wha-a-t's that? What's that nigger shouting?" he gasped.

"Simba!" shouted the native porter.

"Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly idiots!" roared Bunter. "Simba means lion! I say, you fellows, there's a lion! Help! I'm going home."

"Hold on!" gasped Harry Wharton.

But this time the juniors were too late to stop the fat Owl! He made a flying leap from the train.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, who was travelling in the next car, had alighted to stretch his legs a little, and he stared blankly at the terrified Owl.

"Here, Bunter——" he exclaimed.

"Yaroooh!"

"What's the matter with the boy? You'll lose the train! We stop here only a few minutes!"

"Help!"

"Goodness gracious, what is the matter? Bunter!"

"I'm going back!" howled Bunter. "Help! Get a gun or something! Shoot him! Somebody shoot him!"

"Shoot whom?" stuttered the amazed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Is the boy mad?"

"The lion!" yelled Bunter.

"Great gad! There is no lion—what do you mean?"

"Simba!" called out another native porter.

Bunter dodged round the portly form of Mr. Vernon-Smith. If there was a lion looking for a meal at that wayside station, Bunter preferred the plump millionaire to get the first bite.

"Keep him off!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep whom off?" howled Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Are you out of your senses? What are you afraid of?"

"Can't you hear that nigger?" shrieked Bunter. "He says there's a lion——"

"What? What? The man was calling the name of the station!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Eh?"

"This station is called Simba——"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

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

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at them and then stared at Bunter, and then his perplexed and angry face broke into a smile.

"You foolish boy!" he exclaimed. "The name of the station is Simba; there is no lion anywhere near the place! Get in, and don't be a frightened young ass."

Billy Bunter crawled back into the train.

The juniors chuckled loud and long as the train rolled out of Simba. Billy Bunter glared at them with a glare that nearly cracked his spectacles. But he smiled again when the train stopped at Kiu. There were refreshments at Kiu.

**THE NINTH CHAPTER.
A Walk Round Nairobi!**

NAIROBI lay shimmering under the tropical sun. The capital of "British East" looked a pleasant place to the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows.

True it looked very large for its population, having obviously been planned on very hopeful lines. And the galvanised iron buildings of the early days had not yet all given place to more permanent structures. But Harry Wharton & Co. liked the look of Nairobi.

All sorts of races were to be seen there; the white European, the dusky Hindu, the sleek Parsee; the muscular Kikuyu, the tall, proud Masai; even the black bushman from the far interior, as well as Somalis, Arabs, and Jews.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had taken up his quarters at the Planters' Hotel, where rooms had been booked long in advance for the party. In their first walk down Sixth Avenue the chums of the Remove had a view of the varied life of Nairobi, and as the day was fine and clear they had a glimpse of the snowy summit of

Mount Kenya in the far distance—the gigantic mountain towering over eighteen thousand feet, on the summit of which dwells N'gai, according to the belief of the natives.

"Jolly place!" said Bob Cherry. "The jolliffulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"It's still hot," said Bunter. "Not hot like the beastly Red Sea, or the putrid Gulf of Aden; but hot."

"The hotfulness is a boonful blessing, my esteemed Bunter," remarked Inky.

"I suppose you'd like it, being a nigger," assented Bunter. "All the other niggers here don't seem to mind."

"My esteemed and execrable Bunter—"

"N'gai can't find it very warm, I fancy," observed Bob Cherry, staring up towards the distant gleam of white in the clouds that was the summit of Mount Kenya.

And the juniors grinned. If N'gai dwelt on that snowy summit, he certainly could not have suffered from the tropical heat.

The juniors walked out of the town in the direction of the suburb of Parklands. There was no doubt that it was warm in Nairobi; but the air was clear, and the climate undoubtedly good. They turned from the road into a path that led under shady trees, and after following it for about a mile, reached a spot where a little rivulet, trickling down from the uplands, crossed the path.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bunter stopped. "Come on, fathead!" said Vernon-Smith impatiently. "The water's not six inches deep."

"I'm not going to get my feet wet, Smithy."



The "arm-chair" ceased to exist as Vernon-Smith suddenly let go of Bob Cherry's hands. Splash! "Yaroooh!" There was a fiendish yell as Bunter sat in the stream.

"Jump it, then, ass! It's only six feet."

"Beast!"

"You can jump six feet, Bunter," said Harry.

"I can jump farther than any other fellow here, and chance it!" answered the Owl of the Remove. "But it's too hot for jumping."

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—"

"I say, you fellows, you can join hands and carry me across, if you like," suggested Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't think the six of us could manage it, old fat bean," said Bob. "Our limit is a ton."

"Beast!"

Bunter sat down at the foot of a shady tree near the little stream. Bunter was tired. A mile and a half was quite enough to tire him. He had more to carry than the other fellows.

Vernon-Smith glared at him.

"Are you coming on, you fat chump?" he demanded.

"No!" snapped Bunter.

"Then we'll leave you to it."

"I say, you fellows, if you think you're going to leave me here to be eaten by lions and cannibals—" yelled Bunter.

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"If a lion ate you, a cannibal couldn't."

"Look here—"

"And if a cannibal ate you, there would be nothing left for the lion."

"Beast!"

"Let's rest a bit," said Harry Wharton. "Then if Bunter can't get on, we'll turn him over and roll him along like a barrel."

"Good egg!"

The Bunder grunted, but he gave in. Not for the first time Smithy repented

him of that little joke at Greyfriars which had landed him with William George Bunter for the vacation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a jolly old native!" remarked Bob Cherry.

The juniors looked with interest at a tall, powerful man who was approaching the stream from the other side.

He was a dark-skinned Kikuyu, and the fact that he was dressed in monkey skins showed that he came from the interior. The white cotton "kanzu" was the usual dress of the natives in Nairobi.

He was a man of splendid physique, with a dark face and flashing, black eyes. He came swinging on towards the stream, and as he came near it he stooped and picked a stone out of the earth, carrying it in his hand as he approached the stream.

"I say, you fellows, if that nigger is going to chuck stones—" began Billy Bunter, blinking uneasily at the big Kikuyu.

"Fathead!"

"Well, he looks a jolly savage brute—"

"Shut up, you ass! He will hear you in a minute. Lots of the natives speak English, fathead!" said Harry.

"I don't like that nigger's looks—"

"Shut up!"

"Look here, you beast, I can call a nigger a nigger if I jolly well like! I'll jolly well kick him if I like!" said Bunter independently.

"You fat idiot—"

"Beast—"

"What's the man up to?" said Bob curiously.

The tall Kikuyu had reached the water, evidently intending to wade across. Before stepping in he cast the

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(Continued from page 13.)

stone from his hand down on the bank, where the juniors now observed that there was already a little pile of stones.

Then the native came splashing across the shallow stream to the path by the side of which the Greyfriars fellows sat under the tree.

"What on earth did the silly nigger do that for?" asked Bunter. "Is it a game?"

The tall Kikuyu's dark, flashing eyes turned on the juniors under the tree. From the expression on his face, they could see that he understood English, and probably he did not feel flattered at hearing himself described as a silly nigger.

"Will you shut up, Bunter?" hissed Johnny Bull.

"No, I jolly well won't!" answered the fat Owl. "The nigger doesn't understand, you ass! And I don't care if he did."

"O Small Fat One," said the Kikuyu, speaking in English, but in the idiom of his own tongue. "My ears hear you, and if these words were spoken in the forests of Masalindi, you should feel the cutting edge of my spear."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He was glad to see that the Kikuyu had no spear about him at the moment. No doubt he left that implement at home when he paid a visit to the city of the white masters of the country.

"Jolly lucky for you that you're not in the forests of Masalindi, wherever they may be, Bunter!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows, keep him off—"

"Please do not be offended, O Kikuyu!" said Harry Wharton politely. "The Small Fat One is a fool, and does not know what he says."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, you fat duffer! It would serve you right if the man kicked you!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"Why, you beast—"

"Awfully sorry, old bean!" said Bob Cherry affably. "The Small Fat One is merely a prize idiot."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The frown faded from the face of the tall Kikuyu.

"My ears hear you, O handsome and noble stranger," he said, inclining his head. "And your words are pleasant to the ears of Kikolobo."

And with that, the tall Kikuyu passed on his way, much to the relief of Billy Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wet!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. watched Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, out of sight. They had already seen plenty of the Kikuyu in Nairobi. The servants at the hotel were mostly of that race, and there were

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plenty in the streets. But the man from Masalindi was new to them. Kikolobo, the warrior from the wild interior, was very different from the civilised Kikuyu who were houseboys and hotel servants and porters. He looked every inch a fighting-man, and it was easy to imagine him with a rhinoceros-hide shield on his arm, and a flashing spear in his sinowy hand. It did not occur to any of the juniors just then, however, that they were destined to see Kikolobo again, and in his fighting outfit. The future held unforeseen adventures for the chums of the Greyfriars Remove.

"I say, you fellows, I'm glad that beast has gone," said Bunter. "I dare say he's a cannibal. I'd a jolly good mind to kick him for his cheek! Niggers ought to be kicked, you know."

"The kickfulness of the esteemed and idiotic Bunter is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Beast!"

"Well, are we going on, or are we sitting here to listen to Bunter's bright and improvin' conversation?" asked the Bouncer sarcastically.

"Let's get on," said Harry.

"I say, you fellows, if you like to join hands and carry me across the water, I'll go on. I'm not going to get my feet wet."

"Our feet don't matter?" asked the Bouncer.

"Yes, old chap!" assented Bunter. "That's all right! Don't be selfish, you know!"

"Well, I'll lend a hand," said Vernon-Smith. "If Bunter wants to be carried across, let's carry him!"

"Rot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"My dear chap, isn't Bunter the only fellow who matters? Bear a hand, one of you!"

Bob Cherry grinned. He guessed that if the Bouncer helped to carry William George Bunter across the rivulet, Bunter would not reach the other side in a dry state.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Here you are, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter detached himself from the earth with a grunt. Bob Cherry and the Bouncer joined hands, making a seat for him. The fat junior sat in the "arm-chair" and clutched the two Removites round the neck.

"Careful!" he grunted. "Mind you don't drop me!"

"The dropfulness would be a terrific disaster!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry as Bunter's considerable avoirdupois was heaved up. "Buck up, Smithy—I can't stand the strain long!"

"Heave ahead, my hearty!" grinned the Bouncer.

Almost staggering under the weight of the Owl of the Remove, the two juniors bore him down into the stream.

Stepping into the shallow water they had to get their feet wet, but that, as Bunter had remarked, did not matter. They were not Bunter's feet.

The rest of the fellows looked on from the bank, grinning. They had a strong suspicion that something was going to happen to Billy Bunter before he reached the farther side of the stream.

That suspicion was well founded.

The stream was shallow—hardly more than a foot deep in the middle. In the middle, the Bouncer came to a stop.

His hands suddenly let go Bob Cherry's. The "arm-chair" ceased to exist all of a sudden.

Splash!

Mahomet's coffin, according to the

legend, remains suspended mid-way between the earth and the heavens. It was rather unfortunate for Billy Bunter that he was not built on the same lines as Mahomet's coffin. The moment he was left without visible means of support, Bunter obeyed the well-known law of gravitation and started downwards.

There was a splash and a yell as he sat in the stream.

"Yayoooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yoooooop! Ow! Whooop!" roared Bunter. "You've dropped me! Ow! I'm wet! Beasts! Wow!"

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

Bunter sat in the water which flowed round him. It washed round his extensive equator as he sat and roared.

Bob Cherry and the Bouncer stepped out of the stream. Their feet were wet, but they felt that it was worth while getting their feet wet in the circumstances. More of Bunter than his feet was wet.

"Ow! Beasts! Help!" roared Bunter. "Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look out for crocodiles, Bunter!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter fairly bounded up. He was aware that there were crocodiles in the rivers of Kenya; though it was really unlikely that there would be any in that little rivulet flowing through fields of Indian corn. But the mere mention of crocodiles was enough for Bunter.

He scrambled frantically out of the water.

"Ow! Keep them off!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter staggered up the bank and fell gasping on his hands and knees. The Bouncer stooped over him and pinched a fat calf. There was a fearful yell from Bunter. In his fat imagination he felt the jaws of a crocodile.

"Ow! He's got me!" yelled Bunter. "Help! Draggimoff! Rescue! I say, you fellows! Help!"

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

"Beasts! He's bitten my leg off!" yelled Bunter. "Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove staggered to his feet. Rather to his surprise, he discovered that he had still two legs. He blinked wildly round for the crocodile. But there was no crocodile to be seen.

"I say, you fellows, he—he—he bit me!" gasped Bunter. "I felt his fearful jaws—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a fearful wound in my leg—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you—you beasts," gasped Bunter. "It wasn't a croc at all—it was some beast pinched me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you awful beasts, I'm all wet—"

"You'll soon get dry in the sun," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Come on. Do you want to be carried across again, or will you jump?"

"Carry you if you like, old bean," said Bob.

"Pleased!" chuckled the Bouncer.

But Bunter decided to jump it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Fleeing Man!

I SAY, you fellows—"

"Rats!"

"I'm tired!"

"Bosh!"

"I can see a rickshaw coming—"

"More rats!"
 "Look here, you beasts, I'm going to have a lift back!" roared Bunter.
 The juniors had sauntered on another mile or so; or rather, the Co. and the Bounder had sauntered, and Billy Bunter plugged on behind, grunting and puffing and blowing.
 Harry Wharton & Co. were enjoying their ramble round the environs of Nairobi. Naturally they wanted to see as much as they could, as Mr. Vernon-Smith was resuming his journey the next day, and they were to accompany him to the plantation he had to inspect.
 Billy Bunter, however, was not much interested. Nothing would have induced him to remain behind at the hotel, but after a couple of miles or so, Bunter's idea was to head for home, and a rest and a feed, which was not the idea of the other fellows at all.

From the rugged path under the trees, the juniors had emerged into a well-laid road, one of the many that radiated from Nairobi. Two or three motor-cars whizzed by them, followed by longing blinks from Bunter. Then, when a rickshaw came in sight, Bunter halted.

The juniors had observed that the "jinriksha" was a common mode of transport in Nairobi, as in the cities of the East they had once visited. They had not expected to see one so far out of the town, however, and it would have passed them unheeded but for Bunter. But Bunter was not likely to let anything pass unheeded that promised a rest for his fat little legs.

"Oh, let him have a lift, and be blowed to him," grunted Johnny Bull. "He can go back and leave us to it!"
 "I say, you fellows, I think you'd better come back too—"

"Fathead!"
 "I say, call that rickshaw man before he gets away!"

It was an empty rickshaw that was returning to the town, apparently after taking a passenger out to some distant residence. A coolie in a dingy kanzu ran lightly between the shafts of the little two-wheeled carriage. He came willingly to a halt as the juniors beckoned to him; probably glad to pick up a passenger on his return journey.

"You like rickshaw, sar?" he said, grinning cheerfully. "Take you Nairobi, two rupee. Yes!"

"It's worth two hundred to get shut of Bunter!" remarked the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy! If that's the way you talk to a guest—"

"Roll in, Bunter," said Bob. "And go easy—if you plump your weight down, the bottom will fall out of the rickshaw!"

"Beast!"

"You go to Planters' Hotel at Nairobi," said Harry Wharton to the rickshaw coolie, handing him three rupees.

"Yes, sar! Savvy!"

"Wedge in, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, you'd better come—"

"Do you think there's room for the whole family in one rickshaw?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Well, you fellows can walk; you seem to be fond of walking," grinned Bunter. "The man can go slow, and you can walk!"

"We're not going back till sundown."

"Oh, really, you beast—"

"Roll in, Fatty!" said the Bounder. "You can feed when you get to the hotel. It all goes down on my pater's bill. You can burst yourself all over Nairobi, if you like."

Bunter snorted.
 Really, there was not much danger—if any—in rolling back to the town in the light-running rickshaw by himself. But Billy Bunter suspected that a lion might jump out of the maize fields. And he was not quite sure that the rickshaw coolie was not a cannibal. Still,

One of this week's
**DANDY LEATHER POCKET
 WALLETS**
 has been awarded to B. Slade, of
 11, Stanley Street, Pontnewydd,
 Newport, Mon. whose Greyfriars
 limerick is illustrated herewith.



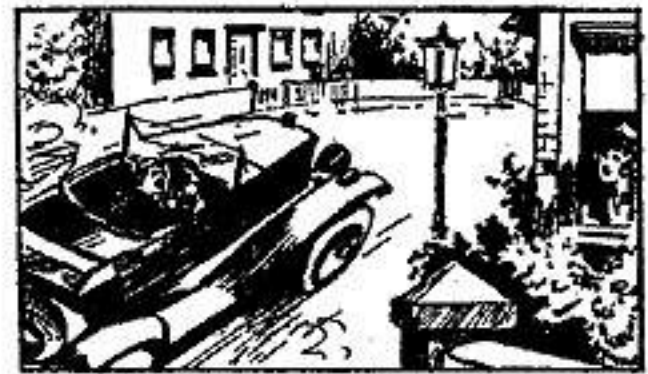
A certain young fellow named Coker



Owned a nuisance which he called a motor.



When he went into town,



All the blinds were pulled down,



For the dust which he raised was a choker!

Send in your Greyfriars limericks, chums, and WIN one of these
USEFUL PRIZES!

on reflection, he decided that those remote dangers were preferable to exertion, and the prospect of another feed at the Planters' tempted him.

He proceeded to wedge his fat person into the rickshaw.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited to see him off; not displeased at the prospect of continuing their ramble without the fascinating society of W. G. Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly. "That merchant must be looking for sunstroke."

There was a patter of running feet on the road.

From the direction of Nairobi a man came in sight, running hard in the brilliant sunshine.

The Greyfriars fellows looked at him curiously.

The greatest heat of the day was over; but it was still hot, and the sunshine fell on the road in a blinding torrent of light. Energetic as they were, the chums of the Remove would not have cared for a foot race in that tropical blaze.

Why the man was tearing along at such a rate was rather a mystery, unless he was some wrong-doer, and the askaris were after him.

But they could see no sign of a pursuer.

The man had a dark, swarthy, sun-burnt face, but his thick moustache was of a light flaxen hue, and his eyes a light blue, which looked odd enough in so dark a face.

He was evidently a European, but he looked as if there was a generous dash of native blood in him.

He breathed in gasps as he ran, and the perspiration was streaming down his swarthy face. Twice the juniors saw him glance over his shoulder as if in fear of pursuit.

He was so preoccupied with what might be behind him, in fact, that he gave no attention to the road in front. And he was hardly a dozen yards from the Greyfriars group by the rickshaw when he perceived them.

He came to a sudden halt.

There was fear and savage rage in his swarthy face as if he looked for enemies; but a second glance perhaps reassured him as he discerned that the group ahead were boys. Perhaps he had, for the moment, feared to see askaris—the native military police.

His halt was only momentary; he came running on, and stopped by the rickshaw, breathing in great gulps.

"Rickshaw, boy! Here!" he panted. "Ach, ach!"

Then he discerned the staring, fat face and glimmering spectacles of Billy Bunter in the rickshaw, and made a gesture to him to get out.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton warmly. "This rickshaw is engaged."

"English fat gentleman in rickshaw, sar," said the coolie.

The swarthy man gave a snarl.

He reached into the rickshaw, and grasped Bunter by a fat arm.

"Ach!" he panted. "Get out! Quick! I want that rickshaw! Get out, you fool!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Look here—"

"Stand back!"

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Keep him off! He's not going to have my rickshaw! Draggimoff!"

The swarthy man with the light blue eyes did not heed the juniors. He dragged savagely at Bunter's arm, to hook him out of the rickshaw. The

coolie stared at him in astonishment mixed with fear. But the juniors had no fear of the man, and they were not likely to submit to such high-handed proceedings.

Three or four pairs of hands were laid on him, and he was jerked bodily back, and compelled to let go Bunter.

He swung round on the juniors, his eyes blazing.

"Fools! Stand back!" he snapped.

"You cheeky sweep!" roared Bob Cherry indignantly. "Who the dickens are you? And what the thump do you think you're up to?"

"Ach, stand back! Dummkopf, stand back!"

The European portion of the swarthy man was apparently Teutonic. Probably he belonged to German East Africa—German no longer since the War.

"Dummkopf yourself, old bean!" said Bob. "I believe that means blockhead, or fathead, or something. You must be a fathead to think you can bag a fellow's rickshaw like this."

"Ach! Will you stand aside?" roared the swarthy man furiously.

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "What the thump do you mean? You can't have that rickshaw."

"Look out!" yelled Johnny Bull.

There were startled exclamations from the juniors, and a howl of alarm from the rickshaw coolie, as the man whipped a revolver from his hip. The barrel glinted in the sunlight as he threw it up, his finger on the trigger, his light eyes blazing.

"Now stand back!" he snarled. "You—you fat fool! Get out of that rickshaw! Quick, or——"

With a howl of terror Billy Bunter rolled out of the rickshaw, headlong into the road.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Handling a Ruffian!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stared blankly at the desperate man.

That he was some law-breaker, in instant fear of pursuit, they had no doubt now. Only that could account for his lawless attempt to seize the rickshaw under the muzzle of a revolver.

That he was utterly desperate, there was no question. The fear and fury in his light, blazing eyes, told that only too plainly.

The juniors backed from the glinting revolver. They were, of course, unarmed. There was not even a stick in the party, save the light Malacca cane the Bounder carried.

Vernon-Smith's grasp closed hard on that cane; but he backed with the rest. There was murder in the glaring eyes over the revolver.

"Look here——" gasped Nugent.

"Enough! Back! Silence, you!"

The man snarled out the words, and then turned to the staring coolie. The rickshaw was his now, and he evidently did not expect the schoolboys to attempt to argue with a revolver.

There was deep wrath and indignation in their faces. But it was not only their resentment of the ruffian's high-handed proceedings that they were thinking of. They had no doubt that the man was a law-breaker on the run, and by letting him have the rickshaw they would be helping him to escape justice. A lift in the rickshaw might very likely mean all the difference between escape and capture. It was obvious that the man with the light eyes hoped so.

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"Turn round, and go—go—go fast!"

He snapped out the words to the scared coolie.

"Yes, sar," gasped the brown man.

The fugitive scrambled into the rickshaw. The revolver was still in his hand, but he contemptuously disregarded the juniors, evidently in the belief that he had frightened them off with his weapon.

In that belief he was mistaken.

As he turned and scrambled into the vehicle the Bounder made a sudden spring, and crashed the cane on the back of his head.

The cane was not a heavy one, but there was all the Bounder's strength in the blow, and the man reeled under it. He fell forward, half in the rickshaw, dazed for the moment. In one more moment there was no doubt that he would have been up again, and the revolver would have been spitting death at the schoolboys.

But they did not give him a moment.

Even as he collapsed under the Bounder's fierce blow, the juniors rushed on him, and collared him. He was dragged down into the road, and Harry Wharton got a grip on the dusky right wrist.

Crack!

The revolver barked; but the bullet flew away over the trees by the roadside.

The next moment the weapon was torn from his hand, and tossed far away out of reach.

"Now, you scoundrel!" panted Wharton.

"Collar him!"

"Jump on him!"

The man struggled and fought like a wild cat. He was a bulky fellow, and probably a match for two or three of the schoolboys. But the six of them were too many for him.

But the struggle was fierce. The man tore and clawed and scratched like a wild animal in his fury.

Had the revolver been still in his hand, he would plainly have used it ruthlessly. Fortunately, it was far out of his reach.

For three or four minutes there was a wild and whirling struggle; but the ruffian was secured, and he lay at last, panting and gasping, in the grasp of the breathless juniors.

"Got him!" panted Bob.

"The gofulness is terrific."

"Ach! Let me go! Let me go!" gurgled the man with the light eyes.

"Mein Gott! Your lives shall pay for this!"

"Hold the brute!" said the Bounder between his teeth. Vernon-Smith's cheek was bleeding from a clawing hand. "He's going to have a lesson. Hold him—face down!"

"Good egg!" grinned Bob. "Give him six!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The ruffian resisted again; but he was helpless now. In the grasp of the Famous Five he was turned over in the dusty road and held.

The Bounder swung up the malacca.

Swish!

There was a yell of fury.

But the rage of the desperate rascal did not worry the Greyfriars fellows. Their view was that the lawless ruffian wanted a lesson, and that he was going to get one.

Whether he was a law-breaker, in flight from justice, they did not know, but they thought it extremely probable. In any case, he was a desperate and murderous ruffian, and they did not see letting him get away unpunished.

Swish, swish, swish!

The Bounder put all his beef into the

swishes. No Greyfriars prefect had ever wielded the ashplant with such force. The man with the light eyes yelled and writhed under the thrashing.

Swish, swish!

"That's six!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Let him have a few more!" said the Bounder. "He's got to learn that he can't handle fellows like a wild beast. Some of us would have been killed if he'd got going with that revolver."

Swish, swish!

"That will do, old chap!" said Wharton. "He's had a lesson now——"

Swish!

The last swipe came down with such force that the cane broke on the back of the yelling ruffian.

"That tears it!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

The Bounder panted.

"He ought to have a few more; but perhaps he will remember that licking for a bit! Let the brute rip!"

The struggling man was released.

He sprang away from the juniors, with the activity of a wild animal, bulky as he was. Then he turned on them, half-crouching, his hands clenched, his eyes blazing fury. It seemed as if he would spring on them like a leopard.

"Come on, you rotter!" said Johnny Bull. "If you want some more you can have it!"

"The morefulness will be terrific, my esteemed scoundrel!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But you had better go while the go-fulness is good."

"Ach! Himmel! Ach!" stuttered the breathless, panting man. "Ach! I will have your lives for this! Your lives—all of you!"

"I think we'd better collar that brute and walk him into Nairobi," said Johnny Bull. "I fancy the police would like to see him."

The light-eyed man leaped away.

He did not wait for the juniors to act on Johnny's suggestion. He turned and ran up the road, and disappeared into a path that led off the road through a plantation of bananas.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"What a giddy wild beast!" said Nugent breathlessly. "Cheek—to think that he could handle Greyfriars men as——"

"Well, he's gone," said Wharton. "Where's Bunter? My hat! Where has that fat idiot got to?"

Bunter had disappeared during the combat.

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! All safe now, Bunter! You can show up, you giddy hero!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A fat figure crawled from a bush by the roadside. Billy Bunter blinked round uneasily through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows! Is—is—is he gone?"

"The gonefulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Fancy the beast thinking he could bag my rickshaw! Sure he's gone?"

"Yes, ass! All safe now!"

"You fellows ought to have bagged him and run him in!" said Bunter.

"Why didn't you bag him?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"If you think I was afraid of him, Bob Cherry——"

"Oh, my hat! Weren't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I—I was looking for—for a stick! I was going to—to stun him and—and—and run him in, you know——"

"Not a bad idea!" said Bob. "Let's go after him, and Bunter can stun him and we'll run him in——"



"Stand back!" snarled the swarthy man, brandishing a revolver in threatening manner at the juniors. "Now—you fat fool—get out of that rickshaw quick—or—" With a howl of terror, Billy Bunter obeyed.

"Let's!" agreed Nugent.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I think we may as well let him rip! We—we'd better not get mixed up with bad characters like that. I say—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes a car! Look out!"

A car came racing from the direction of Nairobi. A white man was at the wheel, and three askaris were packed in the car. The juniors wondered whether it was in pursuit of the man they had handled.

The car jammed to a halt.

"Have you seen a man pass here—a man running—?" called out the white man at the steering-wheel.

"Yes," answered Harry Wharton. "A dark man with light eyes—"

"That's Krantz! Which way did he go?"

"Up the road and into that banana plantation—"

"Good!"

The car swept on. It turned from the road into a track that ran through the plantation, and vanished from the sight of the juniors.

"My hat! So the merchant's name is Krantz—and the police want him, after all," said Bob. "They were native bobbies in that car. I jolly well hope they'll get him!"

"I say, you fellows, if you'd collared the man, as I told you you ought to have done—"

"Shut up, ass! Get into your rickshaw and bunk!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Krantz may come back this way, and—"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter scrambled headlong into

the rickshaw, and yelled to the coolie to get going.

The coolie started, and the light vehicle ran off swiftly in the direction of Nairobi. Billy Bunter disappeared from sight.

Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their ramble, considerably excited and breathless after that startling encounter. They kept their eyes open for Krantz and his pursuers; but they saw nothing of the hunted man or of the police-officer and the askaris. And as the sun sank towards the distant wilderness of the Congo they turned their steps, at last, back to Nairobi.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Dangerous Enemy!

MR. VERNON-SMITH looked very grave when he was told of the adventure of the afternoon. Evidently the name of Krantz was not unknown to the millionaire; indeed, the juniors soon discovered that it was a general topic in the hotel, and doubtless in many other places in Nairobi. There was a shade of anxiety on Mr. Vernon-Smith's plump face as he listened.

"I wish you had not thrashed the man, Herbert!" he said.

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"Why, father? He was an absolute ruffian—a murderous villain! He drew a revolver, and would have used it, too. And we're all jolly well clawed—he scratched like a wild beast!"

"I have no doubt that he deserved it—in fact, he deserves hanging!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I did not mean that the punishment was undeserved,

Herbert; after his violence and insolence. But the man is a desperate character and a dangerous enemy."

"I'm not afraid of him, dad!" said Smithy, with a grin.

"Neither is the fearfulness of our esteemed selves terrific, honoured sahib," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The millionaire smiled. But his brow was worried.

Evidently he regarded the light-eyed man as a man to be feared, though the reckless Bounder was quite incapable of fear.

"But who is the sportsman, sir?" asked Bob Cherry. "Is he some terrific son-of-a-gun with a juicy reputation?"

"He is certainly well known," said the millionaire. "The whole town has been talking of nothing else this afternoon. He had a narrow escape from the askaris, and he wounded two of them with his revolver in escaping."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Some sort of a jolly old bandit?" asked Nugent.

"He is well known to be concerned with a gang of Arabs in the slave trade in the interior, and is wanted for kidnapping negroes, from what I have heard," explained Mr. Vernon-Smith. "A Kikuyu chief, I am told, named Kikolobo, is in Nairobi at the present time, bringing a complaint to Government House of this very rascal for stealing men belonging to his tribe."

"Kikolobo! That's the man in the monkey skins we met!" exclaimed Bob. "He looked like a chap to put paid to that greasy rotter Krantz if he got a chance at him."

"Krantz is a very dangerous man,"

said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "His full name, I believe, is Ludwig Krantz. He is half-German and half-Arab, though he calls himself a white man. He was a planter in German East Africa before the War, and though a very young man at that time, he was punished by the then German Government for cruelty to the natives.

"It must have been a pretty bad case, for the Germans were not very particular in such matters. He was engaged in bush fighting in the operations here during the War—on the German side, of course—and was notorious for ruthless and savage cruelty. Since the War he seems to have leagued himself with a gang of Arab slave-traders in the interior, possibly relations of his on one side. His impudence in coming to Nairobi is astonishing; but probably he did not think that he would be recognised."

"And he was?" asked Harry.

"Yes. He was seen by several persons, I understand—persons whom he and his associates had attacked and robbed while on a safari in Uganda. He would have been arrested, but he shot two of the askaris and fled. I certainly never dreamed that you boys would encounter him."

"Well, I'm rather glad we gave him something to remember his visit to Nairobi by!" said the Bounder.

"I jolly well wish that we'd kept hold of him!" said Johnny Bull. "If we'd only known—"

"I am only too glad that you escaped injury at his hands," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "His vindictive nature is well known. But no doubt he has fled into the interior now; certainly he will not dare to remain within a hundred miles of Nairobi now that he is known and hunted for. I hope we shall never hear of him again."

But the millionaire was evidently troubled in mind. And later, when they heard the talk of other guests in the hotel on the subject, the juniors were not surprised at Mr. Vernon-Smith's uneasiness.

Ludwig Krantz, the half-Arab German, seemed to possess a "juicy" reputation, as Bob Cherry described it, and, from all accounts, he was a desperado of the first water.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were not feeling alarmed. That the light-eyed man would, if he ever had a chance, take a signal revenge for the handling they had given him, they had no doubt, from what they had seen of him themselves. But it seemed unlikely that they would ever encounter him again, and if they did, they were cheerfully confident of giving a good account of themselves.

The next day Mr. Vernon-Smith and the Greyfriars fellows left Nairobi. Apart from his desire to get to business, Mr. Vernon-Smith seemed relieved to get away, and the juniors suspected that he had some lingering fear that Krantz might reappear in Nairobi itself for revenge on the millionaire's son.

That idea seemed utterly fantastic to the juniors, only to be accounted for by Mr. Vernon-Smith's anxious affection for his only son. But they were to learn later that the millionaire knew the half-blood outcast better than they did.

Certainly the juniors dismissed him from mind as the railway climbed the woody highlands from Nairobi.

There was still bright sunshine, but the air was cooler and more invigorating as they reached the uplands.

Native kraals could be seen from the train, sights of considerable interest to

the Greyfriars juniors, especially as they passed through the Kikuyu country; they had not forgotten Kikolobo.

But the next day they quitted the railway; the plantation they were to visit lay at a considerable distance from the line.

The juniors had rather wondered how they would travel when they left the "iron horse" behind—whether by horseback, by foot, or by trek wagon.

But they found that Mr. Vernon-Smith had made all arrangements in advance, money being no object with that fortunate gentleman.

A large and roomy car waited for them, with another car for the baggage. The well-laid roads of Nairobi were far behind them, but the track that wound away through a forest of cedars was quite good going. Billy Bunter packed himself into the car, with a gasp of relief. He had feared that there was going to be some exertion, and his fears were relieved.

But as mile after mile ran under the whizzing wheels of the motor-car Bunter blinked rather uneasily at the great forests that stretched on either side, gigantic trees whose vast branches shut off the glare of the sun.

"I say, you fellows, are there any lions here?" asked Bunter.

"Lots!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, I—I ought to have brought a gun!" said Bunter.

"Safety first!" answered Bob. "You'd be too jolly dangerous with a gun, Bunter! I'd rather chance the lions!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, you know what a jolly good shot I am! You've seen me shoot on the range at Greyfriars."

"I never saw you hit anything."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, you've seen me shoot—"

"We've seen you shoot the cat on the steamer from Southampton!" agreed Johnny Bull. "But that's different from shooting lions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lions aren't likely to attack a motor-car, even if there are any in this locality," said Harry Wharton. "Cheer up, old fat man!"

"I hope you don't think I'm afraid of lions," said Bunter, with dignity. "I was really thinking of taking a skin home. I told Toddy I'd bring back a lion-skin for the study."

"Better leave it on the lion!" grinned Nugent. "It's safer there, really. The lion might object."

"And you'd give him indigestion!" remarked Bob.

Billy Bunter cast another uneasy blink at the tall, massive trunks that lined the road. The car seemed to be plunging into the very depths of the African wilderness.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter suddenly.

He jumped, and his little round eyes almost bulged through his big, round glasses.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry stared round. "What is it now—a jolly old lion, fathead?"

"That man!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh—what man?" Bob stared from the window. "Can't see any man."

"That man Krantz—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I—I saw him!" gasped Bunter. "He was staring at us from behind a tree as we passed! Oh lor'!"

"What rot!" said Harry Wharton. "That rotter is a hundred miles away or more."

"I tell you I saw him!" hooted Bunter. "Think I don't know him—with light blue eyes in a black face! It was him!"

"My dear chap, it wasn't him—it was

he, if it was anybody!" said Bob. "If Quelch heard you say it was him—"

"Blow Quelch! I—I say, you fellows, it ain't safe here with that villain knocking about!"

"Rubbish!" Bob Cherry put out his head and stared back along the track. "Only fancy, old fat bean!"

"I saw him—"

"Nonsense, Bunter!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. He spoke very testily. It was evidently a very disagreeable idea to the millionaire that Ludwig Krantz might be anywhere in the vicinity. "Nonsense! You are frightened at nothing, as usual!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Nonsense!" snapped the millionaire.

Billy Bunter relapsed into sulky silence. Mr. Vernon-Smith dismissed the matter gruffly. But Harry Wharton & Co. wondered a little whether it was only the fat Owl's terrified imagination, or whether they were destined to see something more of the half-blood ruffian in the wilds of the interior of Kenya.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alarming!

"JOLLY place!" said Bob Cherry. Had Robert Cherry of the Remove found himself at the North Pole, or on the summit of Gaurisankar, or in the Cannibal Islands, he would probably have remarked that it was a jolly place.

"Beastly!" remarked Bunter. And that was Bunter's way. In any surroundings William George Bunter would have found something at which to grouse.

The Milsom bungalow, in the back country of Kenya, was jolly or beastly, according to the way a fellow looked at it.

It was a large wooden building, with ample accommodation, surrounded by gardens, with the plantations stretching miles in all directions. The air of the uplands was fresh and invigorating; so much so that it was difficult for the Greyfriars fellows to believe that they were actually on the Equator. Mr. Milsom, the planter, was plump and hospitable, and made the numerous party welcome.

The juniors had rooms that opened on a big veranda, from which they had a view of forest-clad hills to the west—the Masalindi hills, as they learned. Beyond those hills lay Uganda and Central Africa—the wilds of the Congo. It was quite thrilling to the juniors to feel that they were near that mighty river. True, it was a good many hundreds of miles away. But they were in a land of great distances, and a hundred miles in Africa did not seem anything like a hundred miles in England.

It was jolly from Bob's point of view, and his friends agreed. Billy Bunter pointed out the beastliness of the place.

It was lonely, Bunter declared. Undoubtedly it was. The Masalindi district was one of the least settled in a country that still had vast, unsettled tracts. Mr. Milsom's nearest neighbour was a day's ride away. There were lions about, Bunter declared. And certainly there were lions. In fact, the first night at the plantation a lion's roar was heard pealing from the dusky distance. There were flies, Bunter averred—lots of flies. But, considering that it was an equatorial country, the flies were few, and at home there were plenty of flies in August.

There were crowds of savage niggers, according to Bunter, but the good-humoured coolies who worked on the

plantation did not seem very savage to the other fellows. Bunter was prepared to see a savage cannibal in every black man he spotted. Even the black household servants made Bunter a little uneasy. There was absolutely nothing going on at the place, Bunter pointed out—walking, riding, seeing strange sights and strange people being nothing in Bunter's eyes.

At Nairobi there were shops, theatres, races, restaurants, teashops. At Nairobi Bunter could have enjoyed his holiday. He could have dropped into a cafe and fed, and then rolled to a restaurant and fed again, and then rolled into another cafe for another feed. That would have been something like! He could have rolled off to the races in a car and backed his fancy, and in the Bounder's company Bunter had quite expected something of that sort. But the Bounder was rather circumspect in the respectable company he now found himself in, and there was no backing of his fancy for Bunter. Now they were immense distances from the races, anyhow.

Altogether, according to Bunter, it was beastly. Still, when the Bounder offered to send him back to Nairobi, to take the train for Mombasa and the steamer for home, Bunter only snorted. Beastly as it was, it seemed that it was better than Bunter Court, and the fat Owl was sticking to his old pals.

"Jolly place!" said Bob for the tenth time, if not the twentieth, when the juniors strolled round the plantation in the bright, sunny morning and watched the coolies at work in the fields.

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh declared that the jolliffulness was terrific.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was likely to be very busy for the next few days, and the schoolboys did not expect to see much of him. The millionaire was there for business, not for pleasure. But the juniors had no doubt that they would be able to look after themselves and find plenty to do. And the Bounder was planning a "safari."

The idea of a safari, or hunting trip, appealed to all the juniors, except, perhaps, Bunter. Bob Cherry pointed out that it would give Bunter a chance of bagging the lion's skin he wanted to take back to Greyfriars. But the fat Owl seemed to lack enthusiasm. Now that he was in the land of the lions, Billy Bunter seemed rather to have decided to leave that lion's skin on its wearer.

Mr. Vernon-Smith looked rather grave when his son proposed a safari. But Mr. Milsom, the planter, nodded a cheery approval. Shooting lions, of course, was not to be thought of; but there was no reason why the schoolboys should not make a few days' trip under competent guidance and care. Horses for the juniors to ride, Swahili porters to carry their baggage could easily be provided, and there was no danger so long as they did not look for it. Mr. Vernon-Smith gave his consent, as was usually the case when his son wanted anything, and all arrangements were made by the planter.

"We'd better go armed to the teeth," remarked Bunter. "I suppose this Milsom man can lend us rifles and revolvers and things?"

"He jolly well won't lend you any," said Johnny Bull, with emphasis. "I'm jolly well not going to have you blowing off the back of my head!"

"You silly ass! Suppose we meet a lion?" snorted Bunter. "We shall need arms then!"

"You won't," answered Johnny. "You'd use your legs! No need of arms!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Beast!"

"We're going to take rifles," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "That is, the fellows who can use them. You're too lazy even to carry a rifle, Bunter!"

"I should have a gun-bearer, of course!" said Bunter, with dignity. "You always have a native gun-bearer on a safari."

"Well, so long as you let the native carry the gun all the time, and never touch it!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yah! I say, you fellows, are we going in a car?"

"No, ass!"

"Well, what about rickshaws?" asked Bunter.

"I don't suppose there's a rickshaw within a hundred miles."

"If you think I'm going to walk——" roared Bunter.

"We're going to tie you on a horse," explained the captain of the Remove. "That is, if a horse can be found to carry your weight."

"Well, I'd like to ride," agreed Bunter. "You fellows know what a horseman I am. You should see the girls looking at me when I've been riding the donkeys at Margate! Couldn't take their eyes off me!"

"I suppose they were wondering why you were treating your relations like that!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Or perhaps they were wondering which was which!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, with a good, mettlesome steed, and a rifle and a gun-bearer and plenty of grub, I shall like it all right," said Bunter. "We'll go!"

"Thanks!" said the Bounder, with deep sarcasm. "Bunter will like it all right, you men, so we'll go. Otherwise, of course, we wouldn't!"

"Exactly!" agreed Bunter. "But mind about the grub, Smithy! Of course, you can rely on me to shoot plenty of game. But we don't want to run short of grub, all the same. That's important!"

"Jolly important—if the only alternative is to eat the game you shoot!" assented Smithy.

"As for danger," continued Bunter, having made up his fat mind by this time that there was no danger, "rely on me! I've really come out here with you fellows to protect you. I shall do it. If we meet a tiger——"

"Oh, my hat! There aren't any tigers in Africa, fathead!"

"Rot!" said Bunter. "There was a Dutchman at the hotel in Nairobi who was saying that he had shot tigers."

"African Dutchmen call leopards tigers, fathead! He meant leopards."

"Rubbish!" said Bunter. "The fact is I'm going to take a tiger-skin home. If we meet a tiger, leave him to me!"

At which the juniors chortled. No doubt the Owl of the Remove was able to deal with all the tigers they were likely to meet in Kenya.

"But there's one thing I'm not satisfied about," added Bunter. "Milsom says he's putting the safari in charge of a native hunter. How do you fellows know it's not a cannibal?"

"Oh, we shall see about that all right!" said Bob.

"How?" demanded Bunter.

"Well, if he's a cannibal he will eat us when we camp. Then we shall know for certain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he will eat you first, as you're the fattest, old bean. If he does, we shall sack him."

"You silly idiot!" roared Bunter.

Leaving the juniors in the shady veranda discussing the coming safari, Billy Bunter rolled down the steps into the garden. The native hunter who was to take charge of the safari was to come

up to the house that day and interview the planter and Mr. Vernon-Smith, and Bunter wanted to see him first. He was not at all sure that he was not to be handed over to the tender mercies of a cannibal.

Harry Wharton & Co. were still discussing with great keenness their plans for the trip, when there was a yell from the garden.

Patter, patter, patter!

Billy Bunter came bolting up the steps of the veranda.

"Help!" he roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Help! Rescue! Keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

"Who? What——"

"He's after me!" howled Bunter.

"Help!" The fat junior stumbled on the veranda, sprawled, and roared.

"Help! That cannibal—he's after me! He's got a spear! Help!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors jumped up and stared down at the garden path.

A tall figure appeared there, striding with great dignity towards the house. He was a powerfully-built Kikuyu, dressed in monkey skins, and with a spear in his left hand. The juniors knew him at once.

"Kikolobo!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

It was the tall Kikuyu they had met near Nairobi.

"Help! Keep him off! Rescue!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, shoot him! Collar him! He's after me! I'm not going to be eaten up alive to please you beasts! Jump on him!"

"You silly ass!" roared the Bounder.

"Shut up!"

"Help!"

"It's the hunter that's going to take us on safari, you howling chump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All serene, Bunter, you're not going to be eaten this time!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I'll tell Kikolobo specially that you're not to be taken internally."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help! Rescue! Keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove remembered the Kikuyu's words; and he had no doubt that the cutting edge of the spear was ready for him.

The tall Kikuyu halted, and saluted the schoolboys. He stared at Bunter, and a faint grin came over his visage.

"O Small Fat One!" he said. "This Kikuyu is your friend and servant."

"Keep him off!"

"Glad to see you again, Kikolobo!" said Harry.

"O Bwana, my eyes see you!" said the Kikuyu; and he passed on to the house.

Bunter sat up, quaking.

"Is—is—is he gone?" he gasped.

"You fat chump!" hissed Johnny Bull. "That's our guide! What sort of a howling funk do you think he will take you for?"

"He's a cannibal——"

"Fathead!"

"He's got a spear——"

"He doesn't carry that spear for pig-sticking—nothing for you to worry about."

"Beast!"

It was not till Bunter saw Kikolobo in talk with Mr. Vernon-Smith and the planter that he was reassured. It dawned on his fat brain, at last, that the Kikuyu was not a cannibal; and that he was in the way of turning an honest penny by acting as guide for safaris in the interior. In Bunter's own inimitable way, he passed at a bound

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from the depths of funk to the opposite extremity of fat self-confidence.

"If you fellows think I was funky of that nigger, you're jolly well mistaken," said the Owl of the Remove, blinking at the juniors. "I know how to handle niggers, I can tell you. I shall kick him to begin with."

"What?" yelled Wharton. "Kicking niggers is good for them," explained Bunter. "That's my idea—the more you kick a nigger the better it is for him. Shows him his place, you know. I'll begin by kicking that Kikuyu, see, and then he will know that I'm not to be trifled with."

The juniors gazed at Bunter. "You benighted bandersnatch!" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones. "If you begin by kicking Kikolobo—"

"Leave it to me, old chap! I know how to handle niggers."

"If you do, you howling chump, he's pretty certain to run that big spear right through you!"

"Eh!" "Not that it would matter!" remarked the Bounder.

"Beast!" But on second thoughts—proverbially the best—Bunter did not begin by kicking the Kikuyu. Which certainly was just as well for Bunter.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

On Safari!

BLACK walls of forest surrounded the camp. The watch-fires twinkled and gleamed against the blackness of the night. Overhead, giant trees interlaced their branches, and hardly a glimmer of the stars came through. The Swahili porters slept. Kikolobo, magnificent in striped monkey-skins, stood like a statue, leaning on his spear. Harry Wharton & Co. sat outside their tent, talking in low tones. From the interior of the tent came a sound that resembled the rumble of distant thunder. Billy Bunter was already asleep; and the forests of the Kenya highlands echoed to the deep snore that had been wont to echo in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. were on safari now, and they were enjoying it to the full. Hiking in Kenya was, as Bob Cherry had declared, "some" hike! Even Billy Bunter was enjoying it. Sitting on a horse did not require a lot of exertion—the weather was fine and the grub was plentiful. Bunter had realised by this time that Kikolobo was not a cannibal, leading the Greyfriars fellows to some secluded spot where he might devour them at leisure. He had ceased to regard the Swahili porters with uneasiness. He had even ceased to fancy every crack of a falling branch the roar of a hungry lion. He did not grouse more than half the time, which was rather a record for Bunter.

The juniors enjoyed every minute of it. As much as anything, they enjoyed Kikolobo and his flowing English, spoken in the picturesque idiom of his own tongue. And the tall Kikuyu, finding the schoolboys friendly and civil, had grown friendly and civil, and seemed to like the company he found himself in; and he told them many hunting stories round the camp-fires and tales of 'British East' before the white man came. To Bunter he never spoke if he could help it, though with the natural courtesy of his race he concealed his opinion of the fat Owl. But the juniors could guess what he thought of a fellow

who regarded the natives with a mingling of contempt and terror.

"Jolly, isn't it?" said Bob. "Yes, rather!" agreed Wharton. "Smithy, old bean, this trip was the brightest idea you ever had."

Herbert Vernon-Smith smiled. "The brightness of the idiotic idea was preposterous!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "We shall have many ridiculous things to tell the fellows when we return to esteemed Greyfriars."

"I wonder—" murmured Bob. His eyes were on the tall, motionless figure of the Kikuyu, at a little distance. It seemed to him that Kikolobo was listening.

"What, old chap?" asked Harry. "If there's a lion around!" said Bob. "There's lions around here, you know, though we mustn't tell Bunter."

"We can handle Simba, if he turns up!" said Nugent. "We've got our rifles, and we know how to handle them. And Kikolobo has killed three lions with that jolly old spear of his."

The juniors looked curiously at the Kikuyu. His head was bent a little, and he seemed to listen intently. They noticed, too, that the horses were stirring, and that some of the native porters had lifted their heads. From the gloom came a whispering of native voices, and they caught the word "simba."

The juniors felt a thrill. They were not looking for trouble with Simba; but if he came along to the camp in search of a meal, that was a different matter. Quietly they picked up their rifles, feeling rather glad, at that moment, of the assiduous practice they had put in on the range at Greyfriars.

Kikolobo stepped towards them. His keen black eyes scanned their faces in the dim glimmer of the watch-fires round the camp. Possibly he was looking for a sign of fear. If so, he did not discern any.

"Lions?" asked Harry Wharton. "Simba comes, Bwana!" answered the Kikuyu.

"Looking for his supper?" asked Bob cheerily.

The Kikuyu grinned. "There is no fear in the heart of the Bwana?" he said.

"Not so's you'd notice it," said Bob. "The fearfulness of our esteemed selves is not terrific, O esteemed Kikuyu!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Kikolobo grinned again. English as spoken by the Nabob of Bhanipur had as entertaining effect on him as his own on the Greyfriars juniors.

"We're ready for his jolly old Highness!" said Johnny Bull. "But aren't the watch-fires supposed to keep lions off?"

"It is true, O Bwana," said the Kikuyu gravely. "Yet perhaps Simba may be very hungry; and if it be so we shall see with our eyes the terrible-one-of-the-forest."

"Better wake up Bunter," murmured Bob. "Here's his chance for his jolly old lion's skin."

The juniors chuckled. "Let the Small Fat One sleep, O Bwana!" said the Kikuyu hastily. "Also, my lords are under my care, and therefore, let them go into the tent, that Simba may not see them with his eyes."

"Yes, I can sort of see us skulking in a tent and leaving the other fellows to handle the lion!" grinned Bob. "Wash it out, old man!"

"I don't think!" said Johnny Bull. "The don't-thinkfulness is—"

"Preposterous!" chuckled Nugent.

The Kikuyu looked doubtful. He had already, in the few days the safari had lasted, observed that the Famous Co. were of rather a different calibre from William George Bunter. But he was evidently doubtful about the schoolboys if they came to close quarters with a lion.

The Bounder grinned cheerfully as he examined his rifle. All the juniors were on their feet now, rifle in hand.

"This is luck!" remarked Vernon-Smith. "We've promised the pater not to look for trouble. But if Simba comes along looking for it it's up to us to give him all he wants."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "If my lords desire to see Simba with their eyes—" said the Kikuyu dubiously.

"You've got it," said the Bounder. "We're going to see him with our jolly old eyes and hear him with our jolly old ears!"

"It is for the Bwana to command," said Kikolobo. "Let the rifles be ready to speak."

"What-ho!" said Bob. The Kikuyu stepped away, his long spear in his right hand, a short stabbing-spear in his left. Half a dozen glimmering watch-fires burned in the night, but between them were spaces by which the lion might creep. On one of these openings the Kikuyu's eyes were fixed. Evidently it was from that direction that he expected Simba, though to the eyes and ears of the Greyfriars juniors there was no sound and no movement. But the senses of the Kikuyu hunter were as keen as those of Simba himself.

The carriers were all awake and on their feet now, and some of them, armed with rifles, were watching the spot on which the Kikuyu's eyes were fixed. Harry Wharton & Co. waited tensely.

They were not conscious of fear, but they felt a thrill of deep excitement. In the silence there came no sound but the crackle from the fires and the deep snore of Billy Bunter from the tent. Bunter, certainly, would not have snored so placidly had he dreamed that there was a hungry lion lurking round the camp. Bunter was probably dreaming of his last meal, or of his next one. At all events, he slept and snored peacefully, which was a relief to the other fellows. They did not want the fat Owl squealing with alarm at that thrilling moment.

"Is—is—is that something?" whispered Bob Cherry.

It seemed to him that he caught a dark glitter from the gloom surrounding the watch-fires.

"What-ho!" breathed Wharton. His grasp was steady on his rifle. "I can see his eyes shining in the firelight—"

"Thrillin', ain't it?" yawned the Bounder.

Smithy was cool as ice. "The thrillfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It remindfully recalls the esteemed tiger-hunt of my ridiculous native land."

"Oh, my hat! Hark!" gasped Bob. Suddenly, like thunder in the silence, there came a terrible roar—a roar so loud, and so near, that it sent the blood thrilling to the hearts of the juniors.

There was a cry from the native carriers.

"Simba!" "Oh, my hat! Here he comes!" "Look out!"

The lion was leaping.



Steady as a rock, and spear in hand, Kikolobo faced the roaring lion. "I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter, peering from the tent, "what are you firing those guns for? I thought it was thunder!"

the tawny throat, driven deep by the muscular arm of the Kikuyu.

But the weight of the leap carried the lion on, and the next instant Kikolobo was sprawling on the ground, the lion over him. The brute had received the death wound, but he was hard to kill. Growling horribly, he fixed his red, blazing eyes on the fallen Kikuyu, and in another moment he would have been tearing Kikolobo limb from limb.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed forward, but it was the Bounder, who was nearest, who reached the lion first.

With utter recklessness, the Bounder rushed at him, and drove the barrel of his rifle in at the wide-open jaws that were about to rend the Kikuyu.

The terrible tooth snapped hard on the rifle. The weapon was torn from the Bounder's hands, and the lion turned on him. A fearful claw lashed at Vernon-Smith, and he barely dodged it. In another second it would have lashed again, and the Bounder would have paid for his temerity with his life. But Kikolobo was on his knees, spear in hand, and he drove the spear into Simba's side, with such force that the broad blade, crimsoned, emerged on the other side of the sinuous body.

A choking gurgle came from the lion, and he collapsed on the earth, panting out his life.

Harry Wharton grasped the Bounder and dragged him back.

"Oh, Smithy!" he panted. Smithy's face was white. He had been within a fraction of a second of a fearful death, and he knew it; but he was quite cool.

"Touch an' go, old bean!" he said. There was a rush of the natives, and a dozen spears and rifles put an end to Simba. The Swahili porters dragged the carcass away.

Kikolobo wiped his spear. "Well, we're well out of that!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "My THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,228.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Slaying of Simba I

LIKE a great cat, huge, sinuous, tawny, with bristling mane, the lion leaped. The forest was still echoing to the thunder of his roar as he came through the air, landing within the circle of the watch-fires. He landed, huge as he was, with elastic lightness, and another deep roar pealed from his cavernous throat. A squealing of frightened horses, a yelling of the scared carriers, and the crack, crack, crack of rapid rifles!

Harry Wharton & Co., cool and steady, were firing.

Kikolobo, steady as a rock, undaunted, stood, spear in hand, facing Simba. The lion's leap had landed him within a dozen feet of the tall Kikuyu. In a moment more the fierce beast would have been on him, but the crashing of the rifles arrested the second leap. Bullets, well aimed, tore into the tawny flanks of the king of beasts, and for a moment he stood roaring and clawing up the earth with huge claws, his roar filling the air with thunderous sound. From the tent behind the juniors came a startled squeak:

"I say, you fellows!" They did not heed Bunter. Bunter was not easy to wake, but the roar of Simba had awakened him.

Crack! Crack! Crack! "I say, you fellows, what's that row?" came peevishly from the tent. "I say, is that thunder? If there's going to be a storm—"

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles emerged from the opening of the tent.

Billy Bunter blinked round, annoyed at having been woke up.

"Look here, you fellows, you needn't kick up that row at this time of night! What are you banging off those guns for, you silly asses? I say, was that thunder?"

"Get back into the tent, idiot!" said the Bounder, over his shoulder.

"Shan't! I say—"

Bunter broke off suddenly. He saw the lion!

His jaw dropped, and his little round eyes almost bolted out through his big, round spectacles.

He gave one horrified gasp, and plunged back into the tent.

Bunter evidently was not looking for a chance to bag a lion's skin, after all, to take back to Study No. 7 at Greyfriars.

Crack, crack, crack!

Some of the armed natives were firing, as well as the juniors. The lion, bleeding from a dozen wounds, seemed disconcerted by his warm reception. Instead of attacking, he stood pawing the ground and roaring with fury. It was a terrible and fascinating sight.

Then suddenly he leaped.

The tall figure of the Kikuyu in the striped monkey-skins seemed the chief object of his rage. He leaped right at the Kikuyu, and Kikolobo met him with thrusting spear. The long, wide, keen-edged blade of the spear went deep into

only hat! Handling lions is an acquired taste, you fellows."

"He nearly had our jolly old guide, philosopher, and friend," said Harry Wharton. "Smithy just stopped him."

"The stopfulness was a stitch in time," remarked Hurree Singh.

Kikolobo, having wiped his spear, laid it down, and came towards the juniors. There was a grave expression on his dark face.

His eyes were on the Bounder.

The juniors had wondered whether, in that terrible moment, the Kikuyu had noticed the Bounder's action, which certainly had saved his life. Evidently it had not escaped the eye of Kikolobo.

He bent down before Herbert Vernon-Smith, and touched the earth with his forehead at the feet of the Bounder.

"Hallo! What's the game?" asked Vernon-Smith, staring.

"O Bwana," said the Kikuyu, "you who have more courage than the greatest warrior of the Masai, and more swiftness than T'ui, the leopard, when he leaps upon the antelope—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You, whose arm is strong as the cedar on the hills of Masalindi, whose eyes are as keen as the eyes of N'gai, who dwells on the Great Mountain, and sees all things—"

"Phew!"

"You, O Bwana, have saved the life of this unworthy Kikuyu, and Kikolobo is your servant!"

And the Kikuyu, standing up, spat at the Bounder's feet, once, twice, and thrice. And the juniors, who had fortunately learned already that this was a sign of the highest esteem and respect, were careful not to smile.

"Time we turned in," said Harry Wharton; and the juniors turned to the tent. There was a howl as they entered.

"Yaroooooh! Keep off! Help!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! I want to go home! Keep him off! Help! Keep that lion off!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass, it's us, not the lion!" roared Bob Cherry. "They're skinning

the lion, and if you jolly well don't shut up, I'll jolly well skin you!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, I—I thought it was that beastly lion coming into the tent! I—I—I mean, I—I was just coming out to shoot the lion! I was looking for a rifle—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! If you fellows think I'm afraid of a lion—"

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter!"

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton & Co. turned in; but it was some time before Billy Bunter's snore was heard again. But it was heard at last; after which, it rumbled on merrily till morning.

THE END.

(For the continuation of this thrilling schoolboy adventure series get next week's MAGNET and read: "JUNGLE VENGEANCE!" Harry Wharton & Co. are booked for the biggest thrill of their lives, and so are you!)

GREYFRIARS HERALD.

(Continued from pages 14 and 15).

FISHY AT HOME

Interview with a Celebrity

(By our Special Interviewer)

(NOTE.—Owing to the fact that I could not find any guy willing to undertake the task of interviewing me for the GREYFRIARS HERALD, I had to do the job myself.—F. T. F.)

I moseyed into Study 14, and found me writing at a desk, with a look of deep thought on my handsome map.

"What is that you are doing, Brother Fish?" I asked.

"I'm mapping out a prospectus, sonny," I replied solemnly. "I calculate I'm forming a new company in the Remove."

"What—another one?" I said.

"Sure," I answered modestly. "Business first and last is my motto."

"And what is it this time, Mr. Fish?"

"Well, sir, I guess it's the most extraordinary stunt ever heard of. This company is just about going to revolutionise classes and prep. Any galoot who takes shares in this company won't have to worry no more about lessons."

"Amazing!" I said. "What is the name of the company?"

"FISH & BUNTER, LTD., Lesson Producers," I answered gaily.

"Are you having that fat clam Bunter in your company, Mr. Fish?"

"You bet! We go shares in the work, and take fifty-fifty of the profits."

"But what on earth is the idea?"

"It's simple, you big sap! I'm going to learn lessons for Remove men at the rate of a guinea a term. They needn't bother to do any prep. I'll do it all—learn it all thoroughly, you bet—and satisfy Quelch for them the following morning."

"Impossible! Quelch always makes a man stand up and construe, or give answers to his questions. If a man hasn't properly learned his Virgil Quelch will bowl him out."

"Not at all," I laughed. "That's Bunter's part of the work."

"Bunter's part?"

"Sure! He sits next to me in class. Suppose Cherry gets up to answer questions, for instance. Quelch asks the

question, I jot down the answer quick on a scribbling-pad, Bunter reads it, throws his voice so that it comes from Cherry, and answers the question. All Cherry has to do is to move his lips. Bunter and I do the work."

"You mean that you are going to use Bunter's ventriloquism to answer fellows' questions?"

"Exactly!"

"For a guinea a term?"

"One pound, one shilling per term sir."

"You were born to make your fortune," I said, "and you'll most certainly do it."

"You bet!" I answered laughingly.

FOUND!

A LARGE BOX OF CIGARETTES, partly used. If the junior to whom it belongs will apply to me in my study he will doubtless hear something very greatly to his advantage.

H. S. QUELCH.

(Form master.)

SPARRING PARTNERS WANTED.

Must belong to either 2nd or 3rd Forms. Bring own gloves and ambulance.

PERCY BOLSOVER (Major).

Remove.

GREAT NEW FREE INSURANCE SCHEME.

"The Greyfriars Herald," the most go-ahead and up-to-date paper in the country, has just started a great new free insurance scheme. THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO GREYFRIARS FELLOWS ONLY. Generous benefits paid in case of accident. Simply fill up the form below. The insurance is quite free to all fellows who pay £30 per year.

LIST OF BENEFITS.

In the event of sudden death from:

Falling out of a balloon, collision with a Chinese junk, being trodden on by a camel, eating acid drops, or travelling on the French railways. The "HERALD" will pay you—£1.

In the event of injury from:

Sticking pins in a tiger, swallowing a football, being struck by thunder,

waterlogged diving-suit, or checking Bolsover major,

The "HERALD" will pay you—3s. 6d. In the event of:

Losing two eyes, two arms, two legs, two noses, two ears, two fingers, two thumbs, two toes, and two teeth in a submarine wreck,

The "HERALD" will pay you—1s.

Consider how often these accidents happen. Fellows are being trodden on by camels and struck by thunder every day of the week. Prevention is better than cure. Fill up the form right away.

FILL UP THIS FORM.

Christian name.....
Surname.....
Nickname.....
Age last birthday.....
Age next birthday.....
Name of pet dog.....
Name of dentist.....
Have you had many accidents?.....
How many of them were fatal?.....
Have you got any cigarette cards?.....
Can you play ludo?.....
Do you like parsnips?.....
Size in gloves.....
Size in boots.....
Number of watch (or of pawn-ticket).....
Christian name again.....
Why did the chicken cross the road?
.....
Have you ever been in gaol?.....
(Thanks. We thought as much.)
(Signed).....

MAGNET Editor's Note.—This feature was received at the "Herald" office unsigned, but there is not the slightest doubt that it emanates from the business-like brain of Fisher T. Fish.

(Next week Horace James Coker fills the editorial chair, so look out for something big in shocks).

LEAVE IT TO AUNTY!



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fun Afoot!

"HIGH" Jinks, "Doc" Low, and "Nippy" Nolan were taking their ease in the bunkhouse on the Leanin' L Ranch. Colonel Lou Luttrell, the owner, was away, and for the time being work was a bit slack.

The trio were more than thankful, for the temperature was up in the nineties and the range was hot and dusty.

Nippy was seated at the table, laboriously trying to write a letter, his tongue lolling out at one corner of his mouth, his head on one side, and the fingers of his right fist smothered in ink. From the expression of his face he was probably writing a letter of condolence, for it was tragic in the extreme, and the ink on the paper was mixed with beads of sweat which dropped from his brow.

High was lolling back on a tilted chair, with his "number ten's" comfortably cocked on the table. He was drawing strange sounds from an accordion he had recently acquired by mail order, with the book of instructions propped up on his bony knees. It was entitled: "How to Play the Accordion in Six Hours," but as his long-suffering teammates had been putting up with the doleful strains for close on sixty, perhaps the "tutor" was not quite so "teachy" as it was advertised to be.

Doc Low, horn-rimmed glasses perched upon his Roman nose, was stretched upon a pile of blankets, his head comfortably supported by a saddle, studying a letter and a photograph alternately and apparently deriving much amusement therefrom, as his somewhat pudgy tummy shook with inward spasms every now and again.

"Blarn it; 'nother blinkin' blot!" cried Nippy, carefully swabbing up the drop with the loose end of his neckerchief, which was already spotted in places not intended by the designer. "Ow yer expects me to write important letters, with one o' yer stiff's strummin' on a broken-winded 'armonium an' th' other makin' noises like water runnin' awye dahn a plug 'ole, I dunno. 'Ere, Doc, yer s'posed to 'ave 'ad some eddication. 'Ow many 't's' in 'materimony'?"

"Just dee-pends how much she's got," put in High, with a dismal wheeze on the bass end of his instrument of

Fed-up cook willing to swop his rich aunt for a pet rattlesnake!

torture. "I was courtin' a widdier onct, an' th' number o' teas I had to pay for before I discovered it was a 'matter-o'-mony' wi' her—"

A bolster deftly thrown by his Cockney pal hit him full in the accordion, and with a loud groan from the instrument High fell over the back of the chair.

"Serve you right for buttin' in and givin' misleadin' information!" said Low. "'T's' in matrimony, my little feller? On'y one—'t'other is silent, as in 'wardrobe.'"

"Haw, haw, haw! List to th' professor!" jeered High, as he picked himself up. "Why, yer big fat mutt, thar ain't no 't' in 'wardrobe' a-tall!"

"No, dearie. That's why it's silent!" smirked Low.

The door burst open and in rushed the cook, known to all and sundry as

"Stinky," though what his real name was history did not relate. He was afflicted with a nervous stammer; some rude cospunchers averred through eating his own pies, which closely resembled corrugated iron.

"B-b-boys," he stuttered, "f-f-fone message from th' b-b-boss! He says for you to g-go to M-m-merrivale an' w-wait thore f-for him. He m-may c-c-come in t-t-to-morrer or he m-m-may be—"

"For e-e-ever!" sang High. "Look hyar, Stinky, if yer stands thar spittin' down my ear much longer thar's goin' to be a death in yer fambly an' yer goin' to be 'it'! Beat it, my porridge-faced hash-sp'iler! Put an' egg in yer sock an' beat it!"

The cook hastily backed towards the door, stood for a moment, caught Low's eye, then, with a resigned air, cast his eyes up to the ceiling, shrugged his shoulders, and, with a deep sigh, departed.

Low gave another glance at the photograph, and again gave himself up to silent chuckles.

"Wot th'— 'Ere, wot's goin' on 'tween you an' ol' Stinky?" demanded Nippy. "Wot's th' joke yer've been keepin' all to yer bloomin' self! Contrary to th' rules, eh, High?"

"Yeah," intoned the long 'un. "One for All—"

"And 'All for One'!" chimed in Nippy, with a grin. "Don't forgit to remember that th' slogan o' th' 'Three Must-Git-Theirs' applies ekally to jokes as well as beer! 'There Must Be—'"

"'No Secret Between Us Three'!" finished High, quoting another slogan of the merry trio of roughnecks. "Spill et, Low!"

"I—I wuz goin' to tell yer, but I kind o' thought et wuz betrayin' Stinky's confedence. But 'tween us—waal, boys, et's thisyer way. Stinky has got an ant!"

"Careless feller!" quoth Nippy. "Never mind, it might 'ave been a flea—"

"An A-U-N-T, yer iggerant Britisher—a she-male ree-lative, not an insect!" informed Low. "She is known to Stinky an' his fambly as 'Aunt Steppy,' her name being Stephanotis. From th' looks of her, if he called her 'Anti-Septic' he wouldn't be far out. Take

a liker at thisyer foto she has sent her never-knew."

"Cripes! Wot a dial!" spluttered Nippy, whilst High peered over his shoulder at a picture of a forbidding-looking dame with corkscrew ringlets, clad in black silk and a lace cap, displaying numerous diamond rings on her podgy hands and a three-strand necklace hung from her neck, which all glittered even in the coloured photograph.

"Th' dame sure carries some gew-gaws on her pusson!" said High. "Reckon Stinky's sittin' pretty, havin' an aunt like thet, if she leaves him all her dough—"

"She sent a hunderd dollars wi' thisyer foto an' thisyer letter!" declared Low impressively. "Stinky's goin' inter Merrivale to bust it, right pronto—an' he has axed me to go wi' him. Yuh goes as well, o' course. Now listen to th' letter."

It appeared that Aunt Steppy was a lady of rigid views on the Prohibition question, and was undertaking a crusade through some of the States under the banner of a well-known temperance advocate known as Deacon Skinner.

Low had discovered that the cook could not read, and he had taken advantage of that fact to edit the letter a trifle and put in some bits of his own. With a perfectly grave face he had read a "P.S."—which accounted for poor Stinky's weebegone appearance—and he now retailed it to his grinning chums:

"P.S.—Now, my dear Montgomery—"

"Coo! It carn't be true!" chortled Nippy. "Montgom— Pore ol' Stinky!"

"Shurrup!"

"Montgomery, I have some good news for you. I have heard that in the Wild West there are many who have not yet seen the light and still indulge in abhorrent alcohol. I have therefore persuaded dear Deacon Skinner to extend our tour to the West, and we hope to visit Merrivale very shortly and there further the good work and at the same time make the acquaintance of my dear nephew and your colleagues, the cow-gentlemen of the Luttrell Ranch.

"P.S.S.—Shun the wine-cup."

"Cow-gentlemen! Oh, hellup!" spluttered High, rolling on the blankets with joy. "S-s-shun th' wine-cup! An' old Stinky likes his likker reg'lar an' frequent—"

"And has a hundred dollars with which to go on a bender in Merrivale with!" chuckled Low. "Now, lissen in, boyees, an' git this right—we're goin' to have a li'l joke wi' Stinky, an' mebbe some fun wi' t'other cow-gentlemen!"

Stinky's Aunt Arrives I

MERRIVALE was certainly living up to its name. The Fourth of July being at hand, the little cow-town was full to the brim. In celebration of Independence Day there was to be a rodeo, and, in addition, there were sundry side-shows, including a circus, amongst the performers of which Nippy had found several old friends, with what effect will be seen anon.

Low was standing at the top of the steps leading to the "stoop" of the hotel-cum-saloon named the First and Last, being the only hostelry in the place, save some boarding-houses, which, being very "dry," did not

appeal to the convivial souls who gathered in Merrivale for a joyous time.

Beside Low, and clinging with great affection to his arm, was Stinky, the cook. He had made good use of his Aunt Steppy's hundred dollars, and was what is commonly known as "well alight."

He was puffing at a cigar, which went out every half-minute, and was surveying the bustling scene with a benevolent smile.

Being mail-day, the crowd was out in the street awaiting the arrival of the stage coach from Collin's Pass, which was the railhead. For a wonder it was late. Jokin' Jock, the stage-driver, prided himself on the fact that he brought her in ninety-nine times out of a hundred "daid on time."

"Mebbe thar's another letter from yer Auntie Steppy, an' it's thet heavy wi' dough it's stopped th' coach!" grinned Low, as he steadied the swaying cook. "Or, mebbe—gee-whiz, I never thought o' thet!—mebbe she's on it her own self!"

"Oh—oh, don't!" groaned the cook, as if in mortal pain. "I wish—hic—I ain't got an' aunt. I'd shwop 'er for a—hic—rattler ef anybuddy wants 'er. But I'm gittin' firsty ag'in—I must go an' 'ave nuzzer snifter."

He pushed his way through the crowd into the saloon just as a cheer announced that the coach was in sight tearing down the trail from Fountain Gulch. Another yell went up as a keen-sighted puncher announced that Jokin' Jock was not driving, but that the ribbons were held by—

"Perish me pink, it's a foe-male! Two hours late an' drove by a hen-bird! Boyees, th' stage has been stuck up ag'in!"

"Black Mistral an' One-Eye been at it ag'in, I'm bettin'!" shouted another. "Whar's th' sheriff an' what's he doin' of?"

If the driver was a woman, and a peculiar-looking one at that, it was evident that she was no novice, for the stage tore up to the saloon at a mad gallop, and the six horses were pulled up on their haunches, with hoofs slithering in the dust, in a manner that would not have disgraced Jokin' Jock himself.

That worthy was seated behind the driver, with his usually ruddy face pallid and drawn, but wearing a wide grin as he waved his left arm to the crowd, his right "wing" being in a sling.

He winked at the boys, and gave a knowing jerk of his head at the lady driver.

"Some dame, I'll tell th' cock-eyed world!" he bawled. "Gents, this yer is Miss Stephanotis Sidebottom, an' lemme tell yer thet she's all wool an' a yard wide! Th' blarmed stage was stuck-up in Baker's Gully by thet tarnation crook Black Mistral an' his side-kick One-Eye. Seein' thar was a she-male aboard, I was for pullin' up pronto. But would she have et? Would she blazes! Kicks my fut off'n th' brake and leans over an' socks Black Mistral on th' dial. Then when One-Eye plugs me t'roo th' wing, she grabs th' reins an' holds me on to th' seat wi' her other arm, whilst th' gent inside let's drive a six-gun. Shootin'? I'll say so! In two wags o' a duck's tail One-Eye's gat was sent a-kitin' an' he was howlin' blue murder an' nussin' a broken arm—"

"Brayvo, ol' gal!" yelled the crowd.

"Seein' thet thar wuz fifteen thousand dollars sittin' in th' boot for the Miners' Bank, ye may well cheer 'er!" yelled Jock. "Whar's Peter Paulus, th' blamed manager, to take charge of it? Likewise, whar's Miko Miller to git a posse up to trail them two road-agents?"

Doc Low stepped forward and, sweeping off his hat with a low bow, offered his hand to assist the lady from her seat.

"Will you allow me, Miss Side—" he began.

"Miss Siddy-bot-ome, if you please, young man," she snapped, "is the way to pronounce my name, and I'll thank you to make no mistake. Montgomery—Montgomery—Siddy-bot-ome, where air you? Oh, why is my Monty not here to welcome 'is lovin' Auntie Steppy?"

"Thar ain't no one o' that monniker hyar. Who's she axin' for?" whispered one of the men. "Montgom—"

Stinky, the cook, attracted by the excitement, swayed out of the swing half doors and stood blinking at the apparition. She gave one shriek, and, with a leap like a deer's, cleared the heads of the crowd and landed in his arms.

"Tis he!" she yelped. "It is my Montgomery himself! Oh, joy—oh, rapsher! Monty, kiss yer Auntie Steppy!"

"Hic!" was all that miserable cook could say as he blinked at the lady in rustling black silk, with a bonnet cocked over one eye, boasting a young rose garden and a couple of ostrich-plumes as adornment.

"Montgomery, you are not well—you are not your dee-ar self!" she shrilled, holding him off and gazing into his bleary eyes. "You have a cold, my preshus! You have been sleepin' without your bedsocks, or have left off your flannel binder. Oh-h-h, good cow-gentlemen, excuse me feelin's, but it is me own brother's chceild thet I be'old once more. Him I useter slap in 'is bath—"

There was a peculiar sound, half a groan, half a yelp, from within the stage coach, and she released the wretched cook and hastened to the vehicle.

"Deacon—Deacon Skinner!" she yawped. "Oh, I have forgotten the shepherd! Come forth—come forth and greet Montgomery! Oh, what a blessed day this is!"

"Sufferin' crows, it's a walkin' lamp-post!" gasped a hoss-wrangler, as, first, a very tall hat appeared; and then a long, lank figure, clad in tight black clothes, with a little white choker at the neck, was extracted from the interior of the coach. Black cotton gloves, far too long for the fingers, concealed fists like hams, and the sleeves of the seedy frock-coat were half-way up the lengthy arms.

"Say, Jock, be thet th' guy as did th' shootin'?" queried a dandy young top-hand, in sheepskin chaps and wide white Stetson. "Can thet stuff! I'm bettin' he couldn't hit a haystack at five yards!"

He had spoken in an ordinary voice, but the long man seemed to have abnormal hearing. He looked at the youngster over the top of his thick glasses with red-rimmed eyes, and then, with a movement so swift that the eye could hardly follow it, snatched the dandy rangeman's two six-shooters from where they swung low at his thighs, and, without seeming to take any aim, fired at a tin can lying in the road. As it leapt into the air he hit it again and again, until he had driven it fifty

yards down the street with the twelve bullets.

"Ree-tract, mocker!" he boomed, in a deep bass voice, that seemed to come from his big elastic side boots. "Ere I saw th' light I c'ud shoot a sawed-off pup like yew out'n his boots an' never bat an eyelid. Ho, men of wrath, bee-hold th' shepherd who has come to call you to th' fold o' temperance! Sister Stepanotis, let us raise th' strain. 'Pure sparklin' wa-a-ter, wa-a-ter from th' crystal rill; gimmo a cup from th' coolin' stream, for it will not make me ill!"

"Geo whiz, ef he raised that crimson sneezer on any crystal rill—lead me to et!" murmured the town toper, gazing enviously at Deacon Skinner's raspberry tinted beak.

"Montgomery! Where is that boy? Take my trunk up to the best room in the 'otel, an' be extry keerful of it, for there's a plum cake in it like you useter be so fond of, a knitted red wool comforter for yer pore neck, two flannel vestes for your weak chest, an' a night-gownd I worked my own self—"

Two cattlemen were unceremoniously slung out of their bed-rooms to accommodate the heroine of the day and her teetotal companion. A hefty meal, that would have made a couple of navvies jib, was served in the proprietor's private room, and done full justice to. It was served by Doc Low, who insisted on acting as waiter for the occasion.

"Yuh darned shootin' fool, yuh'll give th' game away as sure as eggs if yer go showin' off like thet!" he growled to the prohibitionist, as he plumped a jug of water and a glass beside him. "Auntie, what are yer goin' to drink—water or milk?"

"Neether, yer fat-bellied 'ippo-potamus!" snapped Miss Sidebottom. "Gimmo somethin' wi' a kick to it, or I'll go right out in th' bazaar an' give th' gime awye. Milk? Wot d'yer tink I am—a hinfant in harms?"

With a sigh of resignation Doc produced a largo flask from his hip-pocket, and in two minutes the produce of the "crystal rill" was being qualified with "abhorrent alcohol." Auntie raised her glass in a toast.

"One for All—"

"All for One!"

And the "Three Must-Get-Theirs" solemnly pledged each other.

"Fellers," said Nippy, "w'en ol' Low 'ere suggested this little jape, we never thought we was goin' to strike some-think 'ot—but there's some as is goin' to get a li'l surprise in this town afore long. We'n I 'it that Black Mistral on 'is smeller, the black come orf 'is fice on to my lemon kids, an' 'o let hout a word that I've never 'eard but one man use—"

"One-Eye pipped Jokin' Jock with a snapshot from his left hip thet neat an' party as I've never seen but one feller ekal, an' thet feller has two eyes; but he never uses both guns," drawled High, taking a swig from the crystal rill. "Mebbe, if we jinces th' merry throug outside yarnder, we may pick up some more p'inters. I wuz mighty keerful to shoot said One-Eye on'y thru' th' fleshy part o' his arm arter I'd blowed his gat away. I've a notion he c'ud show up wi'out havin' it in a sling. Let's mosey an' see how th' winebibbers air gettin' along."

And after the "Three Must-Get-Theirs" had each taken another "pull" from the large flask, they went down into the saloon of the hotel.



"'Tis my Montgomery himself!" yelled the excited dame. "Monty! Come and kiss yer Auntie Steppy!" The cook almost collapsed in astonishment as the lady in rustling black silk rushed upon him.

In the Night!

THE fun in the First and Last waxed fast and furious as the night wore on—for all but one, that is. Poor Stinky was having a thin time, for the eagle eye of Auntie Steppy was on him if he showed any signs of winebibbing, and her shrill voice could be heard above the tumult if he edged near the bar. She found a hundred things for the wretched cook to do, and compelled him to introduce her to sundry and diverse grinning "cow-gentlemen," whom poor Stinky knew would never allow him to forget that his real name was Montgomery "Siddy-bot-ome," so long as he was on the Leanin' L Ranch.

Besides the cowpunchers, auntie showed a desire to know the prominent citizens, chief amongst whom were Mr. Peter Paulus, manager and cashier of the Miners' Bank, and the sheriff of Merrivale, Mike Miller.

"Say, if yer don't look out, Stinky, yer goin' to lose yer auntie an' gain an uncle, I'm thinkin'," said Doc Low, with a jerk of his head towards the table where the lady was seated with the sheriff on her left, and the bank manager on her right.

The latter's gold-rimmed glasses glistened as if the lady's glittering diamond ornaments dazzled him, and no

wonder, for auntie had certainly "got 'em all on."

She was wearing half a dozen rings on either hand, a brooch as big as a small saucer on the breast of her black silk gown, which looked like a headlamp in the lights of the saloon, and what a fence-rider described as a "ta-ra-ra" in her hair. For a dame who extolled the simple life and the joys thereof, she certainly was behaving in a somewhat skittish manner with the two prominent citizens, who seemed to be attracted either by her person or the dazzle of her ornaments.

Deacon Skinner sat on the other side of Paulus, and got little of that gentleman's attention, but that did not seem to trouble the teetotal fanatic very much. He had a large tumbler of what he described as "barley water" beside him, which was often refilled from a stone jug which he kept a very wary eye upon.

Two or three times he suddenly moved a large, ham-like hand swiftly upwards in dangerous proximity to the spectacled manager's right eye; but so engrossed was Paulus in auntie's description of her home "back East," and the history of the various ornaments that she was wearing that he paid no attention. The deacon caught auntie's eye at last, and gave an imperceptible

nod. She was laughing at something the bank manager had said, and, with a girlish giggle, she cried: "You are a one!" and smote him with no fairy-like fist upon the upper part of his right arm.

"Ah-h-h!" he almost screamed, and his face went deathly pale.

With a mighty effort he controlled himself, and, smiling in a sickly manner, explained that his horse had kicked him on the biceps that afternoon.

"Now, if that ain't real curious!" smiled the lady. "Not three minutes ago Mister Miller here was tellin' me how he bruised his nose. His naughty horse threw up his head and nearly broke his poor nose-posey. D'yew know, I was wicked enough to think that someone had given him a blow—but no one would dare do that to the sheriff, would they? Tee-hee-hee!"

For some reason her coy remarks seemed to put a damper on the conversation, and a few minutes later the bank manager left with a muttered excuse, giving an almost imperceptible wink to the sheriff. It passed unnoticed to all but two pairs of keen eyes watching for something of the kind. Before Paulus had left by the front door Doc Low had quietly slid out of a window at the back.

He snaked his way along behind the wooden buildings, keeping level with the bank man as he walked rapidly down Main Street. When Paulus let himself into the bank premises with his latchkey, Low was crouched at the rear of the bank watching the approach with intent eye, until he saw the burly form of the sheriff emerge from the shadows, and slide into the bank by the back door.

Half an hour later Low slid unobtrusively back into the saloon, and stood against the bar scratching his left ear with his right hand in meditative fashion.

Shortly after, auntie yawned politely, bade good-night to the Deacon, called Stinky to her, and made his life miserable by publicly embracing him, and insisting upon his taking the woollen nightgown she had worked for him with her own fair hands, together with a pair of pink bed-socks.

But once in her room, with the door safely locked behind her, Miss Sidebottom's movements would have puzzled the cheery bunch below in the saloon.

She discarded the ringleted wig with a sigh of relief, lugged off the "prop" jewellery borrowed from pals of the circus, and threw it carelessly on the dressing-table. Then, with the aid of a bolster and sundry oddments taken from her trunk, she proceeded to rig up a very fair imitation of her fairy form under the bedclothes.

Next door to her Deacon Skinner did



A small boy was sent to buy some powder for his sister.

"I want some powder for my sister, please," he said timidly.

"The sort that goes off with a bang?" asked the chemist jocularly.

"No," answered the youngster, "the sort that goes on with a puff!"

H. A. Fullett, 74, Salisbury St., Hull, E. Yorks, wins a handsome leather pocket-wallet for the above joke. Send in your joke to-day, chum. If it catches the judge's eye you'll bag a handsome prize!

very similar things. And, somewhere about three o'clock, which at that time of year was the "darkest hour before dawn" in Colorado, both rooms were uncannily quiet.

But the silence was broken by the faintest sound from outside, and two shadowy forms slid stealthily over the pitched roof of the kitchen premises, immediately under auntie's and the Deacon's rooms.

Silently the well-prepared, greased windows slid up; silently the figures

stole into the rooms towards the bed; as one man they raised gleaming knives, and brought the points thudding down into well-constructed dummies.

Then there was silence no longer, but pandemonium that roused every sleeper in the "hotel." In auntie's room there was a mighty grunting and scuffling. The figure, with blackened face and hands, had left the dagger stuck in the bed, as a slight form leapt out of the wardrobe, and gave him a punch like a kick from a mule. And he had only recovered from it in time to meet a young cyclone which seemed to hit him all ways at once.

He was a strong and burly man, weighing twice auntie's six stone; but in less than three minutes he was sleeping peacefully from the effects of a pretty a right hook as was ever given in a ring.

Next door the other shadowy figure bent over the bed in the same attitude, still clutching the knife, as when the deep, bass voice of Deacon Skinner had bade him "Stick 'em up, an' look mighty slippy!" whilst the muzzle of a six-gun bored into his floating rib.

Lights were brought, and Black Mistral and his side-kick, One-Eye, were herded into the saloon downstairs. A little soap and water revealed Black Mistral as Mike Miller, the sheriff; whilst without the patch over one eye, and the ferocious moustache and chin-piece, it was easy enough to recognise Peter Paulus, the highly respectable manager of the bank.

"Oh, you nasty, naughty boys!" minced Nippy, as he shook his finger at the pair. "Deceivin' a pore maiden lady in that way. You flirted with me—you know you did—and I've got 'arf a mind to give you anuvver slosh across th' jib for squeezein' me 'and! 'Owever, seein' as yer'll soon 'ave yer gullets squeezed some early mornin' afore brokfuss, I'll let yer off! Doc, wot abaht it? I've got a thirst I wouldn't sell for 'arf a nicker. Wotcher got?"

"You can take your choice, sir—pure, sparklin' wa-a-ater from th' crystal rill, or milk from th' moo-moo, or—half a mo', thar's Stinky waitin' to kiss his auntie—that oughter take yer thirst away."

(There are more thrills—and laughs—in "HIGH JINK'S REST CURE," the next story in this smashing Wild West series. Mind you read it, chums!)

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August 29th, 1931.

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Hero's another example of the true business instinct, you jays. Fisher T. Fish, Esq., has rented an old six-seater car from Lazarus, of Courtfield—the engine's a bit uncertain, but it sure is a comfort-able little auto.

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Having had a few words recently on the subject of a dud sixpence which Fishy worked off on Bolsover...

Round 1.—Immediately the gong went, Fishy sailed out of his corner, jumped on Bolsover's neck and bit him sharply on the left ear.

Round 2.—Fishy jumped out of his chair and threw it at Bolsover. The chair landed on the bully's bean, and before Bolsover could extricate himself...

Round 3.—Bolsover rushed at Fishy, who tripped him up. The big Removite hit the floor with a crash, and Fishy jumped on the small of his back...

pened to be in the house, and hearing the big sep ranking a noise, came down and buffed in. This merchant went to kick the burglar, but, instead of that, he hooded the dynamite and blew the whole boiling of 'em to Hellix.