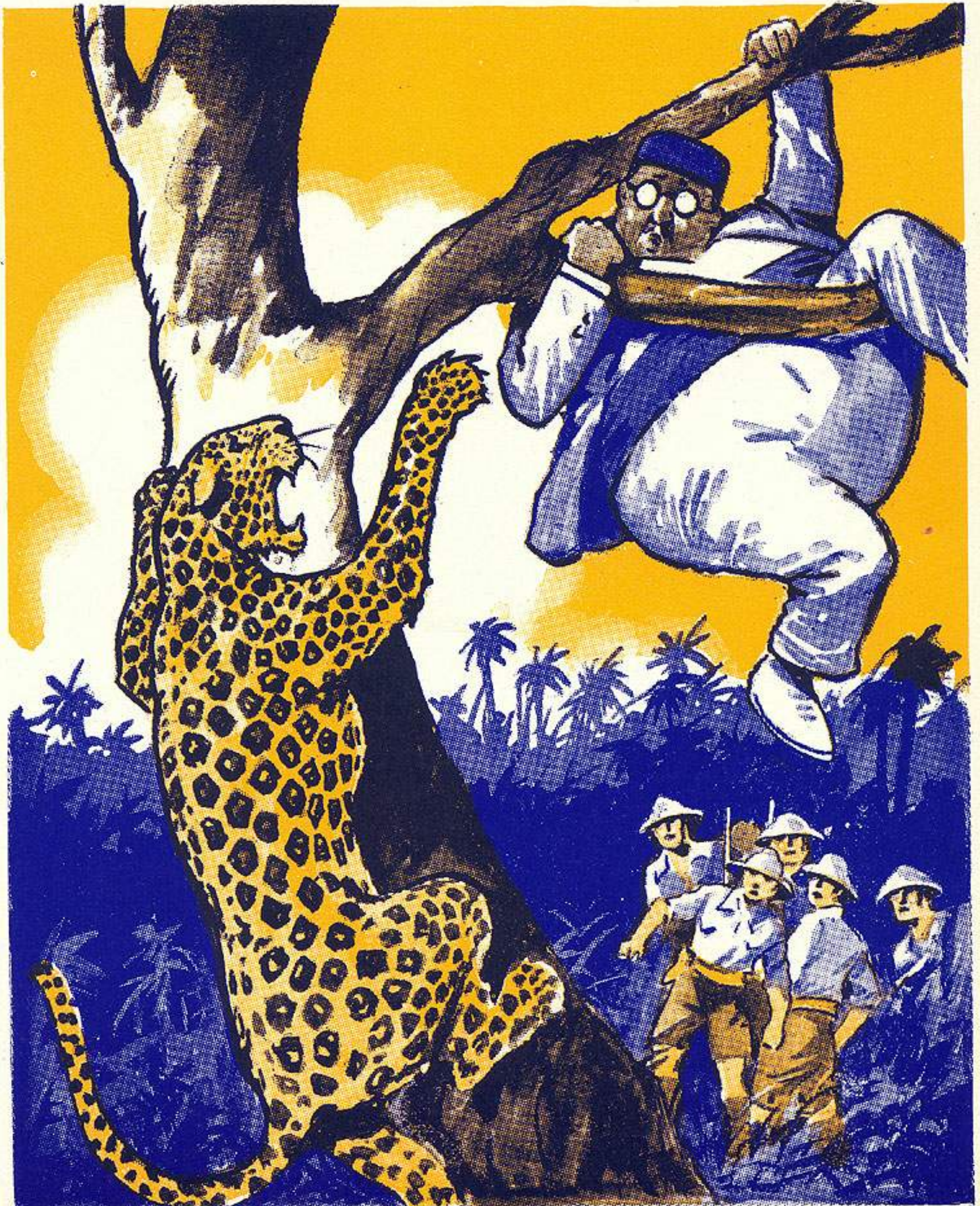


BILLY BUNTER IN AFRICA!

Read all about his thrilling experiences ——— inside.

The **MAGNET** 2^D





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.

BY way of a change we'll kick-off this week with a Greyfriars limerick, which has earned for Miss Pauline Michaelson, of 29, Park Parade, Harlesden, N.W.10, one of this week's ripping leather pocket-wallets. Here it is:

Said Bunter to Todd, with a grin:
"I think I am getting quite thin.
I want a good feed;
Yes, that's what I need—
But where can I feed without 'tin'?"

I feel sure you'd like one of these wallets, chum, so why not set to work and win one?

OF course, you all remember the recent sinking of a British submarine in Chinese waters, and there may be many of you who are puzzled to know how men manage to escape from a trapped submarine. Len Walker, of Kenton, asks me to tell him something about it. So here goes!

The Davis life-saving apparatus, which was the means by which six men saved their lives when the Poseidon was

TRAPPED TWENTY FATHOMS DEEP,

looks something like an inflated waistcoat. A flexible tube stretches from this to the mouth, and is tightly fastened in position. Through this tube the life-giving air is supplied. Clips are fastened over the nostrils to prevent the water rushing into them, and the eyes are protected by goggles.

When there is no further hope of a submarine being raised, the men don these life-saving suits and stand under the conning tower lid. Weights hold them down until the lid is shot open, and then the weights are removed, and the men shoot upwards to the surface. Then the inflated waistcoat acts as a life-belt and supports the wearer in the water, where he can then remove the clips from his nostrils and breathe fresh air once more.

SHALLOW WATER DIVING-OUTFITS.

Wouldn't you like to have a walk on the bottom of the sea for half an hour or so? Well, you can, if you possess one of these outfits. They consist of stout waterproof suits with a headpiece that is not so heavy as that of an ordinary diving-suit. There is no air-pipe, because a certain amount of air is trapped in the suit, and the shallow-water diver breathes this air over and over again.

Of course, air is poisonous once it has been breathed, so the diver has a tube attached to his mouth, and a small apparatus strapped around his chest. He exhales the poisonous air down the tube, and it passes into a chamber where certain chemicals take the poison out of the air and make it fresh again. Then it passes into the suit once more, and is breathed in by the diver. After a

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time the air becomes too bad to breathe in, and the chemical runs out. But, by that time, the diver has returned to the surface, after his submarine wanderings.

How would you like to

LIVE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?

A certain rich American likes the bottom of the sea so much, that he has constructed himself a home under the water. It consists of a kind of diving-bell with strong plate-glass windows and a long tube which reaches from the surface above. The owner can move it round to whichever part of the world he prefers, and he and his family very often spend days at a time, living on the bottom of the ocean, in such places as Bermuda and the West Indies, where there are vast submarine "gardens" composed of beautiful weeds, anemones and the like. He has written a book about the bottom of the sea, and I can tell you, it made me feel quite envious when I read it!

HERE'S a query that I must admit "stumps" me:

DOES BROADCASTING AFFECT THE WEATHER?

Someone has told a Staffordshire chum of mine that the reason we have had so much rain this year is because of the immense amount of broadcasting that has been going on. Well, that remains to be seen. No one knows for certain. It is possible, of course, that the electricity used in broadcasting may affect the rain clouds, but I don't see how anyone is going to prove it. Perhaps, if all the broadcasting stations in the world ceased their activities for a few weeks—or months—we might be able to discover something.

But even then, some unexpected vagary of the weather might still bring rain pouring down upon our helpless heads! Incidentally, this chum also wants to know

THE WETTEST PLACE IN THE WORLD.

Is England the wettest country? he asks. Not by a long chalk! The greatest rainfall in a day that has been experienced in this country, was at Bruton, in Somerset, in 1917. In twenty-four hours, nine and a half inches of rain fell—which is equivalent to 965 tons of water per acre.

That's pretty wet, but just imagine what happens in Assam, where the station of Cherra Poonjee is generally considered to be the wettest place in the world. They have an average rainfall of nearly twenty-three inches a day, and on one occasion nearly forty-one inches of rain fell in twenty-four hours!

Any of you interested in

HOME CINEMATOGRAPHY?

Ben Turnbull, of Swanage, is; and he asks me what it costs to buy a good home-

cinema. You can get them from fifty-five shillings, upwards, and it is not advisable to pay less than that for a projector, if you want satisfactory results. Most home-cinemas nowadays are termed "sub-standard" machines, which means that they use film that is not as wide as that used in ordinary cinemas. Naturally, the narrower the film is, the cheaper it is—and the purchasing and hiring of films is the most expensive thing about running a home-cinema.

Cinema fans can take their own films nowadays, and film cameras cost anything from six pounds, upwards. It costs four shillings and sevenpence to develop a film that is equal to 100 feet of professional film. If my chum decides to run his own home-cinema, there is one little tip that he had better bear in mind. Be sure to get non-inflammable film! The ordinary celluloid film is far too dangerous an article to leave lying about the house!

WELL, after all these facts you certainly can't accuse my little chat of being *dry*, this week! However, here is an excellent sample of dry humour which has been sent in by L. Nightingale, of 35, Welbeck Street, Nottingham. He gets a splendid prize of a pocket-knife for it:

Father: "Well, Tommy, how are you getting on at school?"



Tommy: "Oh, fine, dad! I play centre-forward in the football team."

Father: "I mean, at your lessons."

Tommy: "Oh, I'm right-back, there!"



SPECIAL NOTICE.

Your newsagent has a difficult task in ordering the correct number of MAGNETS every week for his customers. You can alleviate his task by placing a regular order with him, so helping him to order correctly and avoid waste, and at the same time making certain of obtaining your own copy every week.

IT'S time I was winding up, this chat by telling you something about what I have in store for you next week. I'm not going to spoil the Greyfriars story by telling you too much about it. It's entitled:

"THE MAN-TRACKER OF UGANDA!"

By Frank Richards,

and tells of the further thrilling holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., in Africa. I won't let you know what's going to happen, but I will tell you this much—you'll feel like reading every word of it at one sitting—and then you'll be sorry it wasn't twice as long!

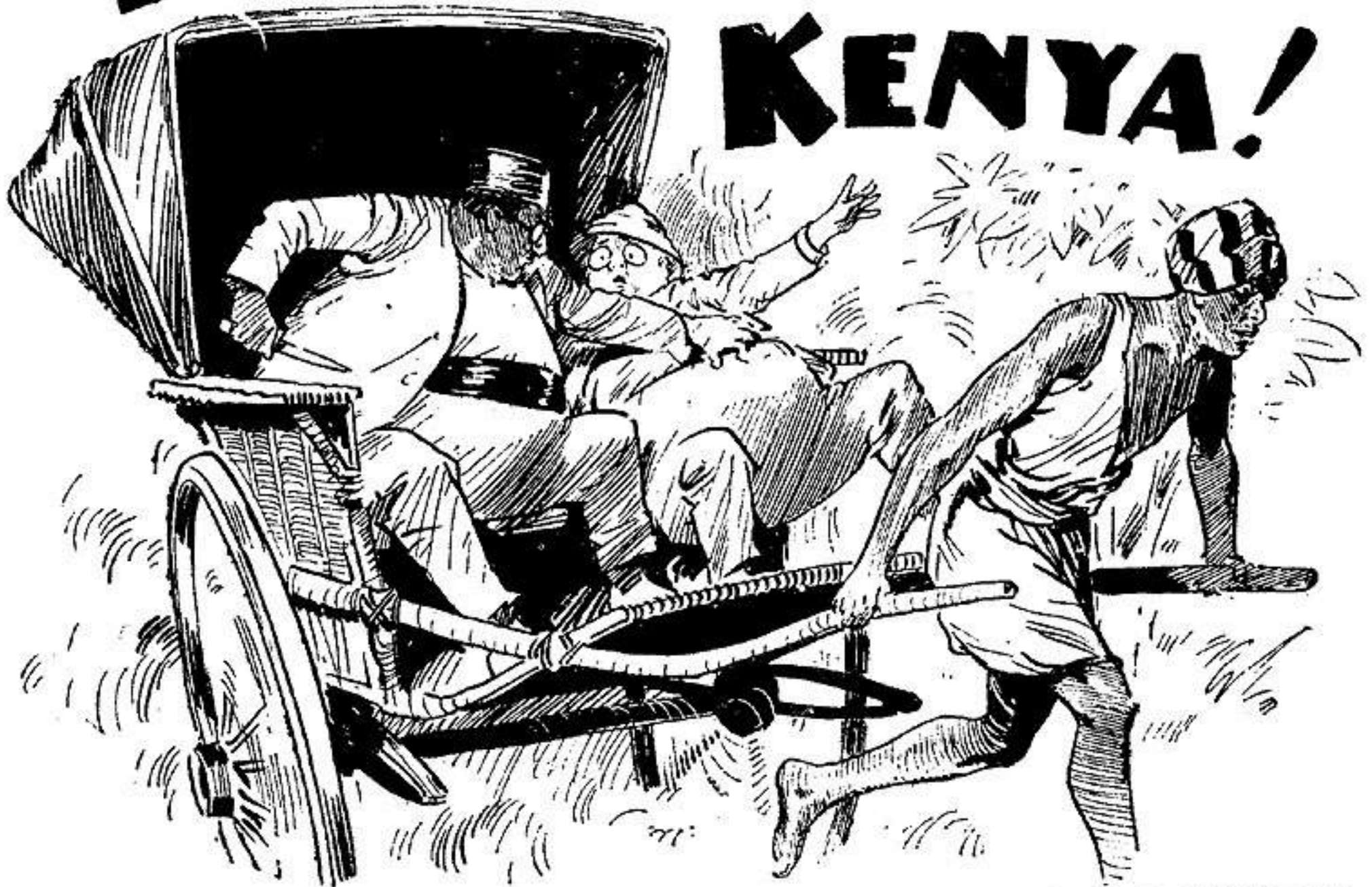
How do you like High, Low, and Nippy, our cheery cowpuncher chums, who are appearing in our series of Western yarns? They're good scouts, aren't they? And they turn up trumps again, in next week's yarn.

You'll enjoy this, I can promise you! You'll get plenty of chuckles in the special issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," and there are prizes to be had for jokes and limericks. Of course, I shall be in my little corner, as usual, waiting to have a chat with you!

YOUR EDITOR.

THRILLS, FUN AND ADVENTURE—ALL IN THIS MAGNIFICENT COMPLETE YARN!

KIDNAPPED IN KENYA!



Featuring Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, on Holiday. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

An Alarm on the Road!

THE rifle-shot rang suddenly, sharply, in the stillness of the tropical afternoon. The cheery buzz of conversation in the big motor-car ceased, and Harry Wharton & Co. stared from the windows. The road, or rather track, wound down the hillside, baking in the bright sunshine of Kenya.

Here and there shady trees dotted the roadside, and some distance ahead of the car, a tall cedar threw a long black shadow across the sunny road.

It was from the direction of the tall cedar that the sudden rifle-shot came.

It was hot!

Billy Bunter, who had lunched, not wisely, but too well, was fast asleep in his corner snoring. Mr. Vernon-Smith had dozed off, but he started into wakefulness at the sound of the shot. Bunter snored on. A rifle-shot was not likely to awaken Billy Bunter; even a cannon-shot might have failed. Rip Van Winkle had nothing on Bunter when he was snoring.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder were wide awake, however, drowsy as the African afternoon was. They looked from the windows of the car, scanning the road winding down the hillside ahead.

Patter, patter, patter!

It was a rapid beat of hoofs on the road.

From under the shadow of the tall cedar, two donkeys came in sight, racing up the road.

The Eurasian chauffeur slowed down. The track was not wide, and the runaway donkeys were galloping directly towards the car.

"What—what was that, Herbert?" asked Mr. Vernon-Smith, rubbing his eyes.

"A shot!" answered the Bounder. "Sounds like somebody in trouble!"

A screaming voice came from the direction of the cedar.

Penniless Bunter is mighty flattered to be mistaken for the son of a millionaire—until a desperate kidnapper carts him off into the heart of the African jungle!

No one could be seen, but it was evident that someone was there, and that he was in trouble.

"Good gad!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"There's a cart under the tree," said Harry Wharton, staring from the window. "Those donkeys must belong to it—and they've bolted. Better stop, sir—"

"Hark!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. Above the screaming of the human voice there sounded a loud, yelling roar.

"Good gad!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Is—is—is that a lion?"

The plump millionaire looked rather alarmed.

He was on his way back to Nairobi, from the timber country high up in the hills. But Nairobi was still a hundred miles away, and in the back-country of Kenya there were plenty of lions. Mr. Vernon-Smith was in Kenya on business, and he had many irons in the fire, but big-game shooting was not one of them. A lion was not likely to attack a rushing motor-car, but Mr. Vernon-Smith disliked the idea of stopping and giving Simba a chance.

"It's not a lion, dad!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Eh! It is some wild beast!" said the millionaire rather testily. "How do you know, Herbert?"

The Bounder grinned.

"My dear old pater, we've been on safari while you've been rooting after big business," he answered. "We know all about lions!"

"The knowfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib!" said Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Not a lion!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "Simba has a jolly old roar louder than that—as loud as Bunter snoring—"

"A leopard, I think," said Harry Wharton.

"Leopard, ten to one!" said Frank Nugent.

"Well, leopards are fearfully dangerous animals," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "We had better accelerate—"

"But there's somebody in danger, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,231.

father!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Can't you hear the man yelling?"

As the car glided on, the screaming voice from the tall cedar came louder and clearer.

"Somebody's potted at the leopard and missed, and taken to the tree!" said Johnny Bull. "Not much good climbing a tree away from a leopard! The brute will be after him!"

"Lucky we've got our rifles in the car!" said the Bounder.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith gave a grunt.

The Famous Five and the Bounder grasped their rifles. Billy Bunter snored happily on.

"Tell the chauffeur to halt at the cedar, dad!" said Smithy.

The millionaire hesitated for a moment.

Mr. Vernon-Smith could handle men and handle millions; but he could not handle a rifle to any great extent. And, undoubtedly, he disliked leopards at close quarters.

But the voice yelling for help from the cedar could not be disregarded. That really was impossible, little as Mr. Vernon-Smith liked the idea of allowing the schoolboys to enter into a tussle with a fierce wild beast.

But, after all, Harry Wharton & Co. had had some experience since they had come out to Kenya with the millionaire for the summer vacation from Greyfriars School. They had been on "safari"; they had fought the lion and the gorilla; they were good shots, and they had plenty of nerve and pluck.

The Eurasian chauffeur was looking round for his master's instructions. The car had almost reached the cedar now. The two donkeys had raced by, one on either side of the car.

Under the tall cedar a cart could be seen. Evidently it had been a camp by the lonely road that the leopard had attacked. The donkeys had been grazing, and they had promptly fled; the man, whoever he was, had fired one futile shot, and then clambered into the tree. Doubtless he had seen the car approaching, for he was screaming frantically for help, and there was probably no other human being within twenty miles.

Mr. Vernon-Smith signed to the chauffeur to halt.

"Take care!" he exclaimed. "Take great care! Herbert, I positively forbid you to run into danger!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith grinned.

He was not likely to keep back while the other fellows were tackling the leopard. Neither would his father, perhaps, have desired him to do so; but, undoubtedly, he was extremely anxious about his son.

"All serene, dad," said the Bounder. "After what we had on safari, a leopard is very small beer to us—isn't he, you men?"

"The smallfulness of the honourable beer is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Hark!" exclaimed Nugent.

A hoarse growl from the unseen leopard was heard. From the man, also unseen, came a stream of words in a shrill, screaming voice. Evidently he knew that the car was at hand, though the thick branches of the cedar hid him from sight.

"Honourable misters, help!" came the scream. "Pleece no more proceeding while fearful leopard approximates to my endangered person!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob.

The man was speaking English, but it was a variety of English that rather

reminded the juniors of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Come on!" exclaimed the Bounder.

He hurled open the door and leaped out, rifle in hand. The Famous Five jumped after him.

Bunter's eyes opened. The car had stopped with a jerk on the rough track, and the fat junior was nearly pitched off his seat.

He blinked round, through his big spectacles, in annoyance.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Good gad!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith in great uneasiness, as he stared after his son and the chums of the Remove.

"I say, have we stopped? I say, wharrer we stopping for?" demanded Billy Bunter irritably. "Waking a fellow up!"

"It's a leopard!" grunted the millionaire.

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"A leopard!"

"Yaroooh! Shut the door! Drive on! Help! Tell that idiot of a chauffeur to drive on! Stamp on the gas! Help! Shut that door!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith did not heed.

His portly form blocked the doorway as he stared after the juniors. Behind him Billy Bunter squealed unheeded.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Fight with a Leopard!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. approached the tall cedar with caution. Its great branches extended for a considerable distance, casting deep shadow; and they could see nothing so far of the leopard, or of the man he was attacking, though the growling of the savage beast reached their ear, and, still more plainly, the howling for help from the terrified man.

Nothing was to be seen under the tree save the two-wheeled donkey-cart, resting on its shafts, and a few articles scattered about, among them a rifle, which the owner had apparently dropped after firing a hasty shot. The man was in the branches, and the leopard apparently clambering into the tree after him, and as he was now disarmed that could only mean a terrible death unless rescue came.

"Help!" came the shrieking yell. "Honourable misters, I beg you exercise considerable and extensive haste."

Even at that thrilling moment the juniors could hardly help grinning at a call for help couched in such amazing English. From the English and the tone of the voice they guessed that the man in the tree was a Hindoo—one of the educated Hindoos, or Baboos, of whom there were large numbers in Kenya, many of them occupying minor official positions.

The juniors lost no time, cautious as they were. They approached the circle of deep gloom cast by the cedar, with their rifles ready for instant use.

Cool and steady as they were, the Greyfriars fellows could have wished that Kikolobo, the brave Kikuyu hunter, had been still with them. They would have been glad of the aid of his fighting-spear.

But Kikolobo was gone back to his people, and he was to rejoin the party later, at Naivasha, on their way to Uganda. The Remove fellows of Greyfriars had only themselves to depend upon.

"Help, estimable sirs!" came the yell of the unseen Baboo. "Pleece to shoot with quickness and prompt dispatch,

for the fearful leopard approximates with dangerous nearness."

"There he is!" breathed the Bounder.

Out of the blaze of bright sunshine the juniors blinked for a moment in the shadow of the cedar branches.

Half-hidden by foliage, a fat man was clinging and clambering on a high branch.

In figure he rather resembled Billy Bunter. He was short, and he was round. His face, a dark olive, was blanched with fear, and a pair of large, horn-rimmed spectacles gave him a queer look of a frightened owl.

Lower down the tree a spotted, cat-like figure crept, clawing its active way up the cedar.

A low, horrible growling came from the leopard as it crept and crawled, its burning eyes fixed on the man above.

Evidently the Baboo, with an activity strangely at variance with his fatness, had leaped into the tree to escape the spring of the leopard—his only chance, but a desperate one, for the leopard was much more at home in high branches than the most active man could be.

The bulging eyes of the Baboo, shining with terror through the horn-rimmed glasses, were turned beseechingly on the juniors as they appeared below.

"Shoot!" he howled. "Oh, honourable misters, shoot with sudden and prompt swiftness!"

The "honourable misters" lost no time.

At the sound of their coming the leopard turned his head, staring down at them with burning eyes and a hideous growl. They had reached the spot none too soon to save the Baboo from his claws.

Crack! rang the Bounder's rifle. Smithy was the first to fire, and his bullet tore through the sleek, spotted skin and was answered by a fearful yell from the leopard.

In an instant the fierce beast came slithering down the tree.

The Famous Five fired together as it came; but so swift were its movements that only one bullet of the five reached a billet.

Elastic as a cat, the leopard dropped to the ground, and from the man in the cedar came a spluttering gasp of relief.

He was left unassailed. The fury of the wounded beast was turned on the Greyfriars juniors.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The juniors stood steady and fired fast. At such close range the hot lead tore through and through the fierce brute.

It was well for the juniors that they did not lose their nerve. Had they failed to hit, the leopard would have been upon them, with rending, tearing claws.

But the hot lead tore through the spotted, sinuous body as he rose to spring, and the leopard fell back, yelling and clawing wildly.

"Go it!" panted Bob Cherry.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The yelling of the wounded leopard was blood-curdling to hear. As it rolled on the ground, under the rapid fire, the juniors hoped that it was mortally hurt. Blood was streaming from half a dozen gashes in the sleek, spotted skin.

But the wounded brute scrambled up and came leaping towards the group of riflemen. They jumped back swiftly, but a claw tore the rifle from Frank Nugent's hand, and in another moment Frank would have been down under the lashing claw.

Harry Wharton leaped forward.

The barrel of his rifle was thrust

fairly into the open jaws of the leopard with such terrific force that it drove the savage cat back.

Crash! came the Bounder's rifle-butt on the twisting head, smashing down on the burning, glaring eyes.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The rifle-muzzles almost touched the spotted skin as Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh pulled trigger.

With a hoarse yell the leopard rolled over again.

In mad fury the claws tore up the earth, scattering stones and dust, and the schoolboys, keeping back from reach of those fearful claws, poured in shot after shot till the sinuous carcase lay still.

The last horrible growl died away. Then, the leopard, lay lifeless, riddled with lead.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry wiped the perspiration from his brow. "My hat! That was warm while it lasted!"

"The warmfulness was terrific!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"A splendid brute!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith eyeing the lifeless leopard coolly. "I wish Kicky was here to skin him for us. Any of you men know how to skin a leopard?"

Harry Wharton looked up at the fat man clinging to a high branch in the cedar, and waved his hand.

"All safe now!" he called out. "You can come down."

The fat Baboo, gasping, clambered down the cedar. He seemed to have some difficulty in getting down. He had clambered up with the terror of the leopard behind him. But even so, the juniors wondered how he had done it as they watched the fat man gasping and clambering clumsily. But he got down at last, landing in a sprawling, spluttering heap at the foot of the tree.

Harry Wharton kindly gave him a hand up.

The Baboo leaned on the trunk of the cedar panting for breath. His supply of wind was not extensive at the best of times, and the desperate climb in the cedar had exhausted it, such as it was. He panted and gasped and puffed and blew, with the perspiration rolling in streams down his dusky olive face. And his bulging eyes, through the big glasses, turned apprehensively on the stretched form of the leopard.

"All serene," said Bob, with a grin. "He's a goner!"

"Is he truthfully dead, honourable mister?" gasped the Baboo.

"Quite!" grinned Bob. "Safe as houses."

"I offer all you estimable gentlemen humble, sincere thanks, from heart," said the Baboo breathlessly. "But for your momentary help I should certainly



In another moment the juniors would have been under the lashing claws of the leopard. But Harry Wharton leaped forward and thrust his rifle-barrel into the open jaws of the brute!

have hopped a twig and been back number."

The juniors smiled. They were very glad that they had arrived on the spot in time to rescue the fat Hindoo gentleman; and they found him rather entertaining.

Hurree Singh, however, was eyeing the man rather keenly.

As he belonged to the same country as the Nabob of Bhanipur, the other fellows rather expected Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to give him the glad hand, so to speak.

But the nabob, after a keen scrutiny of the fat man's perspiring face, turned and walked back towards the car. Apparently he was not very favourably impressed by the fat Baboo from India's coral strand.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mr. Chunder Run Makes a Mistake!

THE Bengalee gentleman panted and gasped, and mopped his streaming, fat brow with a crimson silk handkerchief. But while he pumped in breath, and mopped his brow, his black eyes, which looked almost like slits in his fat face, behind the horn-rimmed glasses, watched the juniors, and shot quick, searching glances towards the big car, in the doorway of which Mr. Vernon-Smith stood. And those black eyes were very keen, and had a sly and watchful gleam in their dusky depths. No doubt the man was interested in the party that had come to his rescue, and perhaps surprised to see them on that lonely road

in the hills of Kenya, where motor-cars were few and far between.

"It was fortunate circumstance, and stroke of luck that you estimable misters travel these solitary places," he said. "Otherwise I should, as you would say, have kicked a fatal bucket. Yes!"

"Well, you're all right now," said Bob Cherry. "I'm afraid you'll have some trouble getting hold of your donkeys again. They seem to have cleared."

The Baboo made a gesture. "That is small matter, and of light consideration," he answered. "Death in terrible shape has approximated to my imperilled person, and I am still with a heart in a mouth. I give you thanks for noble rescue, from lowest portion of grateful heart."

"That's all right," said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"I must also render grateful acknowledgment to honourable father of brave and noble youths," said the Baboo, with a gesture towards the stout millionaire in the car. "Sirs, my name is Chunder Run, a humble Bengalee merchant. May I inquire humble honourable name of esteemed mister in splendid car?"

"Mr. Vernon-Smith?" said Harry.

"This name I have heard in much speech at Nairobi," said Mr. Chunder Run. "It is name of gentleman of tremendous wealth, who travels with a son and many friends. Yes?"

"That's it!" said the Bounder, with a grin. There was no doubt that Mr. Vernon-Smith and his tremendous wealth had been much talked of in Nairobi.

"To that esteemed gentleman I must

“speak my humble thanks,” said the Baboo.

“Not necessary,” said the Bounder. “The fact is, we’ve got to get on—”

“I ask to excuse, but I must utter grateful thanks from bottom of heart,” said Mr. Chunder Run.

And leaving the shade of the cedar, the fat Bengalee trotted across to the car. The juniors exchanged smiling glances.

“Inky doesn’t seem to think much of that sportsman,” murmured Bob Cherry. “But they seem to have learned much the same sort of English in India. I suppose they’re a different caste or something; old Inky doesn’t seem to want to have anything to say to him.”

Mr. Chunder Run arrived at the car, and took off his hat and made a low bow to the millionaire.

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith stared at him.

The Baboo was fairly oozing with effusive gratitude and respect; but he did not impress the keen business man very favourably. The cunning lines in the fat, brown face, the sly gleam in the slits of eyes, were not lost on Mr. Vernon-Smith.

“Honourable sir, I beg to tender grateful thanks and humble acknowledgment of favour received,” said Mr. Chunder Run. “Also permit me to express superabundant delight at making acquaintance of gentleman of tremendous importance.”

Grunt, from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The millionaire had no intention whatever of making the acquaintance of a sly Bengalee trader, or of allowing the effusive Mr. Chunder Run to make his acquaintance.

But Mr. Chunder Run was not easily abashed.

His slits of eyes geamed past the millionaire at the fat figure of Billy Bunter in the car.

It seemed that he was interested in Bunter.

“From considerable speech in Nairobi I have learned that you travel in Kenya with esteemed son,” continued the Baboo.

“Yes!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith briefly. “Now, you boys, get into the car—we’ve no more time to waste.”

“This so delightful country is honoured by visit of so tremendous a gentleman as Mr. Vernon-Smith!” went on the Baboo. “May I express hope, sir, that your noble son is revelling in complete enjoyment of trip in Kenya?”

His eyes rested on Bunter as he spoke.

Possibly from the fact that Bunter had remained in the car with Mr. Vernon-Smith, Chunder Run seemed to draw the impression that he was the son of the millionaire.

If Mr. Vernon-Smith noticed the error, he did not take the trouble to correct it. His only desire was to get rid of the talkative Baboo and get on his interrupted way.

“Oh, quite!” he said. “Good-day to you, sir! Hurry up, you boys—we’ve got a long way before us.”

Chunder Run unwillingly stepped back to make room for the juniors to enter the car.

They packed themselves in again; the Baboo standing back and watching them with his sly slits of eyes.

His attention was almost concentrated on Bunter, however. He scanned the fat face of the Owl of the Remove, as if memorising the features.

Mr. Vernon-Smith signed to the chauffeur and the car was set in motion again.

Chunder Run raised his hat in salute, and the juniors saluted him politely in return.

He stood staring after the great car as it rolled away down the hilly road, with the baggage-car trailing behind.

Bob Cherry, glancing back from the window a minute or two later, saw him still standing there, gazing after the car.

A turn of the road hid him from sight, and Bob drew his head in.

“I hope that Johnny will be able to catch his donkeys again!” he remarked. “He’ll be rather stranded if he doesn’t.”

“Might have lent him Bunter!” remarked Johnny Bull.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, really, Bull—”

“I fancy he was thinking the same,” chuckled Bob. He had an eye on Bunter! He was watching him like a cat.

“I noticed that,” said Harry Wharton, with a nod. “I fancy he took Bunter for Smithy.”

“Oh, really, Wharton!” exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. “I hope you’re not trying to make out that I look anything like Smithy.”

“What?” roared the Bounder.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Well, I don’t see what Wharton wants to insult a chap for!” said Bunter warmly.

“Why, you—you—you fat toad—” gasped the Bounder.

“Oh, really, Smithy—”

“You fat ass,” said Harry Wharton, laughing, “the man’s never seen either of you before. I mean, I fancy he thought you were Mr. Vernon-Smith’s son, from the way he spoke and looked. Of course, he may have been thinking you’d come in useful for his cart as he’s lost his other donkeys—”

“Beast!”

Mr. Vernon-Smith gave a grunt. Now that he thought of it, he realised that the Baboo had had the impression that it was his son in the car with him. And he was not feeling flattered.

“I noticed the man looking at me,” said Bunter. “I fancy he was wondering what a fellow of my style was doing, travelling with a lot like you.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“Packed eight in a car,” said Bunter. “It’s a bit like a Bank Holiday crowd, isn’t it? I dare say the man was surprised to see me here.”

“Or he might have been wondering how you got out of the Zoo!” remarked Johnny Bull thoughtfully.

“That’s it!” agreed Bob Cherry.

“Beast!”

“You could have talked to him in your own nut-cracker language, Inky,” remarked Bob Cherry. “Didn’t you like his looks?”

“The likeliness was not terrific, my esteemed fatheaded Bob. And a nabob does not talk with a low-caste Bengalee,” said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

“My mistake!” grinned Bob. “I keep on forgetting that you’re a jolly old prince in your own country, Inky.”

“What rot!” said Bunter. “I should think you’d be glad to have a jaw sometimes with another nigger, Inky.”

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh made no reply to that polite observation. In the presence of Mr. Vernon-Smith, the chums of the Remove had to refrain from kicking Bunter, however earnestly he asked for it.

Billy Bunter soon settled down to sleep again, and his snore awoke the echoes and mingled more or less musically with the buzz of the engine, as the car ran on swiftly towards distant Nairobi. Harry Wharton & Co. speedily

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forgot Mr. Chunder Run, never expecting to see that fat and oily gentleman again. They were far from guessing the startling circumstances in which they were to be reminded of his oily existence.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Nairobi!

NAIROBI'S all right!" That was Bunter's verdict. Looking from a window of the Planters' Hotel, on Government Road, Nairobi, Billy Bunter was pleased to give the capital of "British East" his commendation.

After which, no doubt, Nairobi ought to have felt exceedingly satisfied with itself!

Harry Wharton & Co., as a matter of fact, were not enjoying the view from the hotel window so much as Billy Bunter was.

They liked Nairobi, and admitted that it was a fine city, and was obviously going to be a finer one. But certainly they preferred to be on safari with the faithful Kikolobo, or rambling over coffee plantations or timber concessions.

Looking out on Government Road, Nairobi, it was a little difficult to realise that they were in the same country where lions growled in the forest, and leopards crept in the bush, and crocodiles watched for a chance of nipping the horses' legs as they forded rivers.

Government Road, Nairobi, was highly civilised—frightfully civilised, in fact! Motor-cars whizzed and whirred, and the dust and smell of petrol reminded the young travellers of home, sweet home.

"Nairobi," repeated Bunter, "is all right. You can get a car here. You can take a rickshaw when you're tired of walking. You can get a feed in a decent restaurant. You can shop at shops."

"You can get a car, and feed in a restaurant, and shop at shops, without travelling seven thousand miles to do it!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Perhaps you prefer a tent, with flies, and a lion growling outside!" said Bunter sarcastically. "Give me restaurants and motor-cars! Why, a fellow can go to the theatre here."

Bunter blinked triumphantly at the juniors as he made that statement.

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed. Undoubtedly there was a theatre in Nairobi, and no doubt it was a safer place than a tent with a lion growling outside; but really the chums of the Remove had not travelled seven thousand miles by sea and land to go to the theatre. They could have gone to a theatre at home, and saved the seven thousand miles!

"Give me Nairobi, and you can keep the jolly old jungle!" said Bunter. "Of course, a fellow rather likes danger as an experience. I rather revel in it myself, as you've noticed."

"The noticefulness was not terrific."

"No cannibal niggers or slave-traders here," said Bunter. "And, after all, I can't be always looking after you fellows and saving your bacon."

"Oh crumbs!"

"My idea," said Bunter, "is to stay here. This is a decent hotel, and the grub is good. Well, if Mr. Vernon-Smith has business in Uganda, let him get off to Uganda and get on with it, leaving us here, you know."

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "It's a chance of a lifetime to see Uganda, while we're in East Africa."

"What utter rot!" said Bunter. "Who wants to see Uganda? I dare say it's much the same as Kenya—a lot of blinking niggers, and a lot of Government officials walking about fancying they're the salt of the earth. Look here, we'll wait here till Mr. Vernon-Smith gets back from Uganda, see?"

"I fancy not!" said the Bounder.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, Smithy can go on with his pater," he said. "After all, we don't want Smithy! His manners are horrid, and he's always getting into one of his beastly tempers. I expect my pals to stay here with me."

"Jolly good idea!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "You stay here with your pals while we go on to Uganda, Bunter."

A PENKNIFE FOR A JOKE!
For the following rousing rib-tickler P. W. Sellick, of 7, Barkly Street, Uitenhage, Cape Province, South Africa, has been awarded one of this week's useful penknives.



Wag (to pork butcher): "I want a yard of pork, please!"
Butcher (turning to assistant): "Certainly, my lad! Bill, serve this lad with three pig's feet!"

I didn't know you had any pals in Kenya; but—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Why haven't you introduced us to your pals, Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull. "Are they in Nairobi?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Not a bad idea," said Harry Wharton, entering into the game, as it were. "Let's leave Bunter here with his pals, whoever they are."

"Good egg!" said Nugent. "And as we start to-morrow for Uganda, you'd better phone up your pals, Bunter."

"The goodness of the esteemed egg is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh heartily.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five. It was just like these beasts to pretend to be unaware that they had the honour and distinction of being Bunter's pals.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, what about a ride, you men?" asked the Bounder, ruthlessly interrupting the Owl of the Remove.

"You're interrupting me, Smithy!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"I know that! What about a ride?" asked Smithy. "It's a lovely day for a trot, and we haven't seen half the sights of Nairobi yet. And we get on the train to-morrow."

"Good!" said Wharton. "Nothing I'd like better!"

"I've got some shopping to do," said Bunter. "I'm afraid I shan't be able to go riding this morning."

Apparently Bunter expected that announcement to cause dismay; instead of which, there was a general brightening of faces.

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"The shopfulness is the proper caper, while we perform the esteemed horsemanship!" agreed Hurree Singh.

"If you fellows prefer riding to coming shopping with me—" said Bunter warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows—"

"I'll go and fix up about the horses," said Smithy, and he walked away, apparently uninterested in Bunter's further conversation.

Bunter blinked after him contemptuously.

"Nice manners—what?" he asked, with a curl of his fat lip. "I'm blessed if I quite know how to stand these Smiths! Not my class, you know."

"Fathead!"

"Well, look here," said Bunter. "If we're going on to Uganda to-morrow, I've got some shopping to do to-day. That means money."

"Go hon!"

"I believe I mentioned to you fellows that I was expecting a postal order—"

"Oh crikey!"

"But the way we've been wandering about, my remittances seem to have missed me somehow," said Bunter.

"That's a way they have," agreed Bob Cherry. "They always seemed to miss you at Greyfriars, somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, if you fellows are going to lend me ten pounds or so—"

"If!" murmured Bob.

"After all, what's money between friends?" said Bunter. "I hope you fellows are not going to be mean and sordid!"

"We are!" grinned Nugent. "Horrid mean and horrid sordid!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You men know that sportsman?"

He made a gesture towards a fat, olive-skinned gentleman who was passing in the street outside the hotel.

"Chunder Run!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

The Baboo was rolling along Government Road with a fat smile on his fat face. He was dressed in white ducks, with a bright purple cummerbund, which glowed from afar in the bright sunshine. Likewise, his big, horn-rimmed glasses flashed back the rays of the sun.

The juniors smiled. The fat Bengalee was rather a figure of fun in their eyes, and certainly his purple cummerbund was striking and remarkable.

He caught sight of the smiling faces at the window, stopped, and made a low bow, raising his hat in salute.

The juniors politely acknowledged the salute, and the fat Baboo rolled on and disappeared among the crowds of pedestrians.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You fellows ready?" It was the Bounder's voice.

"Ready—ay, ready!" called back Bob Cherry cheerily.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ta-ta, Bunter! Have a good time, old fat bean."

"I say, about that tenner!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, you fellows, don't walk

away while a fellow's talking to you! Beasts!"

Harry Wharton & Co. did walk away, heedless of the fact that Bunter was talking. Really, there was no help for it, if they were to walk away at all, as the fat junior was not likely to leave off talking.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter, rather to the surprise of a number of other guests in the Planters Hotel.

Leaving the Owl of the Remove to his own devices, the Famous Five left the hotel with the Bounder. The horses were ready—little matters like these were arranged at a word from Mr. Vernon-Smith. The six juniors mounted, and trotted cheerily away down Government Road towards the suburb of Parklands, and once outside the town they let out the horses, enjoying a gallop in the keen air. Probably they did not enjoy the ride less, because William George Bunter was too busy that morning to join them.

Billy Bunter was left to do his shopping, though how he was going to do it after being disappointed about every single remittance he had expected since his arrival in Kenya Colony was a problem that it was up to the Owl of the Remove to solve.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter and the Baboo!

"**R**ICKSHAW!" called out Bunter. "Here, sar! Jinricsha, sar!"

There were plenty of rickshaws and rickshaw boys outside the Planters Hotel. Billy Bunter, when he rolled out, had only to take his choice.

Most of the shops in Nairobi were on Government Road, and within an easy walk. But Bunter was not likely to walk when he could go on wheels.

He rolled into the rickshaw, and rolled away.

A brawny coolie, in a dingy cotton kanzu, took the shafts of the light, two-wheeled vehicle, and ran lightly—though not perhaps so lightly as usual. He had a rather unusual weight in the rickshaw.

Not a hundred yards away was the stores on which Bunter designed to bestow his valuable patronage.

The rickshaw came to a halt, and Bunter rolled out. He almost rolled into a portly Baboo in a purple cummerbund.

Chunder Run stepped back, raising his white topee.

Bunter gave him a careless blink.

He had no use for Mr. Chunder Run, and he had a lofty, contemptuous scorn for "niggers," anyhow.

The fact that Mr. Chunder Run seemed to desire to improve the acquaintance, begun by chance in the hills when the leopard had treed the portly Baboo, was a quite sufficient reason for Bunter to snub him.

If Mr. Chunder Run wanted to get acquainted with the millionaire's party Bunter was just the fellow to put him in his place.

Bunter had no use for pushing bounders!

But it was rather difficult to ignore Mr. Chunder Run. He bowed over his topee with an effusive smile.

"Top of a morning, estimable mister!" he ejaculated. "It is pleasure and uplifting of heart to behold esteemed sir once more. You find delight in varied scene and teeming crowd in Nairobi, after solitude of eternal hills. Yes?"

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Grunt from Bunter

The rickshaw boy was holding out a black hand.

He expected his fare to be placed in that black hand. Bunter, however, had no desire to place anything in it.

He ran his hands through his pockets. "Dear me!" said Bunter. "I've left my money at the hotel!"

The rickshaw boy eyed him. He was a Kuke, as they call the Kikuyus for short in Nairobi. Probably he had never been bilked by a white man before. Billy Bunter really was not the fellow to uphold the prestige of the white man among the coloured races.

"It's all right," said Bunter. "Go back to the hotel and ask for Mr. Vernon-Smith! He will pay you."

The name and fame of the millionaire were known all over Nairobi. Every rickshaw boy in the district knew him by sight already; and the name was enough.

"Yes, sar," said the Kuke, and he trundled the rickshaw back to the Planters Hotel, quite satisfied.

Bunter had no doubt that Mr. Vernon-Smith would pay the rickshaw boy. His opinion was that it was up to Mr. Vernon-Smith.

As a guest of the party, Bunter expected his expenses to be paid. On that score the Bounder's guests certainly had nothing to complain of—money was nothing to Mr. Vernon-Smith, and he would have been offended had not all the bills been left to him without question. But Billy Bunter was assuredly the only member of the party who would have dreamed of "sticking" the millionaire for a rickshaw fare.

Still, the Kuke had to be paid; and Bunter was not going to pay him, so that was all there was about it.

Bunter rolled across into the stores.

After him rolled Mr. Chunder Run.

It did not occur to Bunter that Mr. Chunder Run, having ascertained that Mr. Vernon-Smith's party were located at the Planters, had waited and watched outside the hotel.

And certainly it would never have occurred to him that the Baboo had seen Harry Wharton & Co. depart with the Bounder, with complete indifference, and waited on till Bunter emerged.

Bunter had an idea that he looked like a wealthy fellow, and that he might have been taken by any really keen observer for a travelling nobleman. Still, he did not suspect what a very deep interest the Baboo was taking in him, still less would he have dreamed that it was founded on the little mistake the Baboo had made on the hill road.

Mr. Chunder Run had supposed, at that time, that the schoolboy who remained in the car with Mr. Vernon-Smith, when the others alighted to tackle the leopard, was Mr. Vernon-Smith's son.

Mr. Chunder Run supposed so; but he wanted to make sure, for certain very important reasons of his own.

He was sure now, his certainty being based on what Bunter had said to the rickshaw boy.

He was keeping Bunter under observation, to make assurance doubly sure, as it were.

In the peculiar plans that Mr. Chunder Run had formed in his sly Bengalee mind, for the benefit of the millionaire's son, he really could not be too sure of his ground.

Bunter took no notice of the fat Baboo. If the darkie thought he was going to hook on to a white man, he was jolly well mistaken, in Bunter's opinion.

It never even occurred to his fat mind that Chunder Run might have

any other motive, other than a "pushing bounder's" desire to ingratiate himself with his betters.

Bunter rolled into the stores.

It was quite an extensive stores, with many departments—the biggest thing going in Nairobi.

All sorts of desirable things were to be had there, the only difficulty being that they had to be paid for.

As Bunter was possessed of only a few rupees this might have seemed an insuperable difficulty.

But it was far from insuperable to Billy Bunter. He had his own ways of overcoming such difficulties.

He proceeded to make purchases on a rather generous scale.

A shooting outfit, a set of guns, a silver-fitted dressing-case, a Panama hat, mosquito-boots of the finest quality, were only a few of the items.

Anyone who might have doubted that Bunter was a millionaire's son could scarcely have continued to doubt, after following him round the stores and listening to the magnificent orders he gave.

In the course of half an hour Bunter's orders amounted to considerably over a hundred pounds.

It was not necessary to pay for anything. Instructions to deliver the goods at the Planters Hotel, and present the bills to Mr. Vernon-Smith, were quite sufficient.

The millionaire's name was a name to conjure with.

Once or twice Mr. Chunder Run approached Bunter and endeavoured to enter into conversation, offering unasked advice about the goods Bunter was so recklessly ordering.

He was severely snubbed every time, and at length he kept his distance, only watching Bunter from afar through his big, horn-rimmed glasses.

But a dozen times, at least, he caught the name of Mr. Vernon-Smith as Bunter gave his lordly instructions.

That Bunter had absolutely no right or authority to give such orders, but was hoping to "get away with it" by sheer cheek, was naturally not likely to occur to Mr. Chunder Run.

He already supposed that Bunter was the millionaire's son; and Bunter's extensive round of shopping was proof positive to him.

Mr. Chunder Run was keen, and sly, and observant; but the keenest and slyest observer might have supposed, in the circumstances, that the fellow who was ordering expensive things right and left, in Mr. Vernon-Smith's name, was the millionaire's son.

Bunter finished his round of shopping at last. He was rather inclined to continue; but he realised that there was, after all, a limit. It was up to Mr. Vernon-Smith to stand his expenses on this trip; that indeed had been arranged. But expenses such as this were not, perhaps, exactly what the millionaire expected. Bunter realised that. He felt that he had better stop soon after the hundred-pound mark was passed.

After all, if he got away with this, he could go shopping again. He was not absolutely certain yet that he would get away with it!

It was possible that Mr. Vernon-Smith, millionaire as he was, would cut up rusty, and act in a mean, stingy manner, and refuse to pay for the goods. In that case, they would have to be sent back to the stores. Certainly Bunter could not pay for them with three rupees. Bunter, so far as he

could see, did not stand to lose anything, except the time spent in shopping. And he hoped for the best.

Mr. Chunder Run had spent half an hour watching Bunter, with sly slits of eyes behind his enormous horn-rimmed glasses. Then he had walked ponderously out, to wait for the fat junior to emerge.

Outside the stores, Mr. Chunder Run signalled to a rickshaw coolie who was trundling slowly along.

The rickshaw stopped, and the Baboo approached the black man at the handles. Evidently they were acquaintances.

The rickshaw boy was not a Kuke,

the side of the rickshaw, with his spectacles glittering in the sun.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Look here, what do you want?" he snapped. Bunter was fed up with this pushing bouncer who could not keep his distance. It did not occur to Billy Bunter that Mr. Chunder Run, in this respect, was anything like his worthy self. William George Bunter had never regarded himself as a pushing bouncer, though lots of fellows at Greyfriars could have pointed it out to him.

He gave the effusive Chunder Run a severe blink.

"Honourable sir——"

Not the remotest suspicion crossed his fat mind that the Baboo had any motive but to "hook on" to him as a member of the millionaire's party. But the more Mr. Chunder Run desired to hook on, the more Bunter was determined to snub him.

"Look here, you chuck it!" he said. "I'm not giving you a lift in my rickshaw. I'm rather particular whom I'm seen with, see?"

"Honoured mister——"

"Find another rickshaw," snapped Bunter. "I'm not giving a nigger a lift. Go and eat coke!"



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called a well-known voice as the horsemen reined in. Bunter jumped up in the rickshaw. He knew that voice. "I say, you fellows!" he cried. "Help—murder—rescue!"

like many in Nairobi. He was an Indian coolie, from Mr. Chunder Run's own country. They spoke together in a language that would have been incomprehensible to most of the inhabitants of Nairobi. Mr. Chunder Run addressed him by the name of Jam Das. Jam Das nodded and grinned as he listened to Mr. Chunder Run's instructions, and the Baboo left him waiting.

Ten minutes later Billy Bunter rolled out of the stores.

He blinked round for a jinrichsha.

"Rickshaw, sar! Good fine rickshaw!" called out Jam Das, and the fat Owl, without a suspicion in his fat mind, stepped into the rickshaw.

"Planters Hotel!" he said, as he sat down.

"Yes, sar."

"Estimable and respected mister." It was Mr. Chunder Run again, bowing by

"Oh, cheeso it!" said Bunter. "Let the rickshaw boy get on. Look here, don't you bother me, see?"

"Expressed wish of estimable mister, is word of command to yours sincerely," said Mr. Chunder Run, with another bow. "I would only point out with due respect that rickshaw here present is engaged by me, and the presence of yourself is superfluous honour."

"Oh, rot!" grunted Bunter. "I jolly well engaged this rickshaw, and I'm jolly well keeping it, see? You get another."

"Other rickshaws are considerable distances from present spot," explained Chunder Run. "But arrangement to complete satisfaction is perpetrated without difficulty; if you will consent to give lift in rickshaw to humble self for limited distance."

Snort, from Bunter.

Chunder Run's slits of eyes glittered behind the glasses.

All coloured persons were "niggers" in Bunter's estimation; indeed, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, a prince of India, was only a nigger to the lordly Bunter.

But a Bengalee Baboo does not even regard himself as a "coloured" person, let alone a "nigger."

To be classed with the Kikuyu, the Baganda, and the Somali and the Dinka was a deadly insult, from Chunder Run's point of view.

His fat and oily politeness almost failed him. It would have failed him completely, but for the fact that he had a purpose to serve by keeping it up.

"Angry words from honourable mister desolate my worthy self," he said. "But rickshaw being engaged by

me, pertains to me by right of property and prior attachment."

"Look here, there's another rickshaw coming along," said Bunter, "take that one, and be blowed to you!"

"You refuse requested lift to humble suppliant, honourable mister?"

"Yes," snapped Bunter. "Go and eat coke!"

He settled back in the rickshaw.

What happened next surprised Bunter.

He expected to see the Baboo roll away, and the black boy to trundle him off to the Planters Hotel. Instead of which, the fat Baboo, with a sudden activity which was surprising in a man of his weight and rotundity, stepped swiftly into Bunter's rickshaw, and before the fat junior knew what was happening he was seated beside Bunter and Jam Das was trundling rapidly off.

In utter amazement and wrath the Owl of the Remove turned his spectacles on Chunder Run with a devastating blink.

"You cheeky rotter!" he bawled.

"Oh, honourable mister!" said Chunder Run deprecatingly. "This humble person begs your generous toleration and thousand pardons."

"Get out, you cheeky nigger!" howled Bunter. "By gum, if you don't get out, I'll jelly well chuck you out on your neck!"

As a matter of fact, there was not much room for the two in the rickshaw. There was plenty of room for two ordinary passengers; but neither Bunter nor the Baboo was ordinary in girth. Undoubtedly it was rather a squeeze.

Jam Das, heedless of the controversy going on in the vehicle, ran with great swiftness along Government Road, in spite of the unusual weight he had to deal with. And Bunter, with his angry attention fixed on Chunder Run, did not even observe that the rickshaw coolie shot round the first corner, leaving the busiest street in Nairobi behind.

Bunter half rose.

His very spectacles gleamed wrath at the "nigger."

"Get out!" he bawled. "Here, you rickshaw boy, you stop! I'm chucking this cheeky nigger out! Hold on!"

Instead of stopping at the word of command, Jam Das ran on, as if for a wager.

A fat olive hand was laid on Bunter's arm; and he was jerked back into his seat.

"The preservation of silence is sine qua non, and consummation devoutly to be wished," said the Baboo, in a tone of voice, and with a glitter in his eyes strangely at variance with his absurd English. "Pleece to resume sitting position and remain immovable."

"You cheeky—Ow—"

Bunter broke off with a gasp.

From the ample folds of the Baboo's cummerbund the gleaming point of a dagger emerged, and the sharp point pricked Bunter's fat ribs.

"Wow!" gasped Bunter.

"One more word, or attempt to leave rickshaw, and sudden death will supervene with disastrous swiftness," snarled the Baboo.

Bunter gazed at him with distended eyes behind his spectacles.

The Baboo, to look at him, and listen to him, was a figure of fun. But the glitter in his slits of eyes was deadly ferocious, ruthless as the glare of a leopard.

One thrust of the keen dagger, and the fat junior of Greyfriars would have been transfixed.

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A shudder of terror ran through him as it dawned on his fat brain that this man was not merely a cheeky nigger, but a desperate rascal, as savage and ruthless as the tiger of his native country.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

The Baboo cast a swift glance round. They were already out of Government Road, and bowling swiftly along a less frequented street.

There were plenty of people about, but they gave no attention to the hurrying rickshaw. The Baboo's dagger was hidden by his cummerbund; only Bunter knew that it was there, though Bunter was awfully and painfully conscious of it.

To the eyes of any who had noticed them, they were a fat European school-boy and a podgy Hindoo, taking a ride together in a rickshaw—merely that and nothing more.

"Preservation of golden silence will save estimable life of English mister!" said the Baboo. "But one cry—one word—attracts approximation of sudden demise!"

"Oh crikey!"

The absurd English was belied by the murderous gleam in the slits of eyes, and the sharp pricking of the dagger-point. Billy Bunter, in a state of hopeless funk and bewilderment, fairly collapsed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped!

NAIROBI, planned as a very extensive city, was not yet grown to full stature, so to speak. It did not take long for the swift-footed rickshaw "boy" to whirl his passengers out of the frequented part of the town. There was still a good road under the wheels of the rickshaw, which, no doubt, would be lined with buildings some day; but buildings rapidly grew fewer and fewer, and at last disappeared altogether.

Billy Bunter, squatting in the rickshaw with wildly thumping heart, hardly noticed that he was being taken out of the town.

He was too confused and bewildered to notice anything clearly.

He was in desperate hands; he knew that now. The fat, smiling Baboo, in enormous horn-rimmed glasses and ridiculous purple cummerbund, might be comic to the view, but no dacoit of the Indian ghauts was more savage and ruthless. Bunter realised that, and he quaked.

But he was still more astonished than frightened, deadly as was his terror at the prick of the hidden dagger.

What the man wanted with him was an utter mystery.

Robbery could hardly be his intention; Bunter could hardly imagine that he was being taken to some lonely place to be robbed. But if that was not the Baboo's object, the terrified Owl could not begin to guess what his object might be.

That he had some purpose, and was carrying it out with deadly determination, was plain enough. But his purpose was a hidden mystery to the hapless Owl of the Remove.

Once outside the town, the Baboo ceased to hold the dagger-point to the fat junior's ribs. The weapon disappeared under the ample cummerbund.

But it was ready if it was needed, as Bunter knew, and he was not dreaming of resistance.

For several miles the Baboo spoke no word, though if Bunter stirred, the slits of eyes in the fat face turned on

him with a glare in them that made the fat junior tremble.

The hapless Owl tried to think it out. The villain wanted him for something—and it was not robbery. If he had wanted to go through Bunter's pockets, there was no need to take him all this distance. They were already far from observation.

That the black rickshaw boy was in league with the Baboo was clear. Without a word of direction from either of his passengers he was going swiftly on his way, as to a destination already fixed.

Bunter understood that, and he understood that the Baboo had been watching him in the Nairobi Stores, and that his confederate had been waiting outside with the rickshaw in readiness. But he cudgelled his fat brains in vain to guess what they were up to.

The Baboo spoke at last. Now that he was safe out of Nairobi with the kidnapped Owl, he seemed relieved, and the fatuous, good-humoured smile returned to his podgy face.

"Honourable mister need not be alarmed, or subject to fearful terrors," said Chunder Run. "No injurious damage is contemplated to person of young and estimable sir!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He was glad to hear that, at all events.

"Life of young mister is safe as Bank of England!" said Chunder Run. "Only utterance of superfluous cries will cause deadly dagger to approximate!"

"I—I say, wharrer you up to?" gasped Bunter. "Look here, what do you mean? Where are you taking me?"

"The proceeding is to humble dwelling of worthy self. It is desirable residence considerable distances from Nairobi!"

"But what—what—why—"

"Explanation does not occur to bright intelligence of young mister?" asked Chunder Run.

"N-no! If—if it's a lark—" stammered Bunter.

Chunder Run grinned.

"Being busy man, with many irons in several fires, I do not possess superfluous time for larkishness," he said. "I have eye on main chance, and extensive profit!"

"I—I've only got three rupees—"

"Young mister is son of tremendous and wealthy gentleman!" said Chunder Run.

Bunter opened his eyes wide behind his spectacles.

According to Bunter, his father was undoubtedly a gentleman of enormous wealth, and Bunter Court was a place where fivers and tenners were as thick as blackberries in less-favoured spots.

But he had never succeeded in convincing Greyfriars fellows that this was so; and it was simply amazing that this man, a perfect stranger to him, should believe what nobody else dreamed of believing for a moment.

"I—I say, you—you don't know anything about my father?" stammered Bunter.

"Considerable knowledge has been accumulated by watchful perspicacity," answered Chunder Run. "Esteemed father of young mister is tremendous and wealthy gentleman of untold resources. Such resources he will expend on recovery of kidnapped son!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He understood now.

This grinning Bengalee, who looked like a figure out of a comic opera, and acted like a desperate bandit, had seized him to hold for ransom.

His object was explained, but it was

more mysterious than ever why he had seized on Bunter.

He might rather have been expected to attempt to kidnap Herbert Vernon-Smith, if he gave his attention to the millionaire's party at all.

Not for a moment did it occur to Bunter that the Baboo was under the impression that he was Herbert Vernon-Smith!

His proceedings in the Nairobi Stores that morning might have given anyone that impression, but it did not occur to Bunter.

"Sum which is considerable desideratum to me, is small and negligible to tremendous wealthy gentleman!" said the Baboo. "Ten thousand pounds is not huge figure to estimable millionaire!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He tried to picture the face of Mr. William Samuel Bunter, at Bunter Villa, Surrey, if he received a demand for ten thousand pounds. A demand for a twentieth part of the sum from the Inspector of Taxes was wont to throw Mr. Bunter into a frame of mind that made him distinctly disagreeable about the house.

"I—I say, my father ain't a millionaire!" gasped Bunter. It was the first time that Billy Bunter had told the truth on that subject, but even Bunter could tell the truth at times. It was not a habit of his, but he could do it, and he did it now.

Chunder Run grinned.

"False statement is useless in view of ascertained facts," he said. "The paying over of sum of ten thousand pounds will reintegrate young mister in desired society of tremendous father. Otherwise, pleece to contemplate sudden disappearance, and unheard-of fate!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

Jam Das was still running swiftly on, his black limbs apparently tireless. The rickshaw was more than ten miles from Nairobi now, and the roads had been left behind.

Bunter, blinking dismally out of the rickshaw, saw that they were following a track through a wooded country, with the shady branches of trees casting shadows across the way.

There was no building in sight, and only here and there a native to be seen, in cotton kanzu, glimmering in the sunshine.

On the road there had been passing motor-cars, but here there was no traffic of any sort. The track was no more than a bridlepath, and it was narrow, even for a rickshaw.

Evidently they were heading for some solitary place at a considerable distance from Nairobi; where Bunter was, apparently to be kept in security, while the cunning Baboo negotiated for his ransom.

How he was going to get into touch with Mr. Bunter in far-off England Bunter could not guess. He little imagined that it was with Mr. Vernon-Smith, at the Planters Hotel, in Nairobi, that Mr. Chunder Run intended to get into touch.

Beyond the wood, at a considerable distance ahead of the rolling rickshaw, was a more open road, bright in the sunlight. Bunter hoped that there might be more traffic on it; though traffic was not of much use to him, as he dared not call for help.

On and on ran the rickshaw, carrying the hapless Owl farther and farther; and dimmer and dimmer grew the fat countenance of William George Bunter.

Mr. Chunder Run's olive, fat face, on the other hand, was beaming.

He had taken a rather desperate



This week the GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER reveals the hero worshipped by Lord Mauleverer. His hero is about as energetic as himself.

No. 2—LORD MAULEVERER.

*Listen to the story told
By a limp and lazy lord;
His hero's neither brave nor bold—
Such things make Mauly bored.
Famous men give him the pip;
His hero is a fine old Rip
Van Winkle, who let ages slip,
And snored, and snored, and
SNORED!*

*"Begad! I like him very much,"
Said the limp and lazy lord;
"I always call him My Old Dutch"—
A joke at which he roared—
"I've often thought old Rip was deep
To sneak away from folk and creep
Into the hole, where sunk in sleep,
He snored, and snored, and
SNORED!*

*"Some people think old Rip was dense,"
Said the limp and lazy lord,
"But fellows who have common sense
Will all admit he scored;
For while the ordinary ginks
Enjoyed their beastly rough high
jinks*

GREYFRIARS HEROES



*Old Rip had forty-eight Van Winks,
And snored, and snored, and
SNORED!*

*"I always envy Rip Van Wink,"
Said the limp and lazy lord;
"I'd like to do the same, I think,
And yet I can't afford
To copy Rip upon the sly.
To think," said Mauly, with a sigh,
"He let whole centuries go by,
And snored, and snored, and
SNORED!*

*"If only I could do the same,"
Said the limp and lazy lord,
"I'd let all titles, birth, and fame
And things go by the board;
But I have got to grin and bear
This life with all its woe and care,
With which he sank back in his chair
And snored, and snored, and
SNORED!*

chance in kidnapping Bunter in the busy, thronged Government Road, at Nairobi, but he had succeeded. Probably his sly eyes had read Bunter's character fairly accurately, and he had felt assured that the prick of the dagger would be enough to keep him quiet.

Now he had him safe!

In the happy belief that the millionaire's son was in his grasp, Chunder Run was already counting on touching ten thousand pounds of Mr. Vernon-Smith's money.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

It was the staccato beat of horses' hoofs on the hard earth.

The rickshaw had almost reached the corner, where the track through the wood joined another road, when the clatter of hoofs came loudly, from riders as yet hidden from sight by the trees.

But in a moment more they came in sight.

A bunch of horsemen came trotting round the corner, almost riding into the rickshaw before they saw it; and there was a clattering and jingling and trampling as they reined in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look out!" called a well-known voice.

Bunter jumped.

He knew that voice!

Without stopping to think he yelled:

"I say, you fellows! Help! Rescue! I say, you fellows! Murder—help—rescue! Yaroooooh!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fortunate Meeting!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. almost fell off their horses in their astonishment.

The chums of the Remove had been trotting cheerfully along a bright sunny road, and the sight of the track turning off under shady trees attracted them. The lightly running rickshaw and the bare feet of the coolie made little sound, and they were unaware that there was a vehicle on the narrow path till they swept round the corner.

Then, as they reined in, in a hurry, came that startling yell from the rickshaw.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The rickshaw had halted. Jam Das had no choice about that, with six horsemen crowding and trampling in the narrow path in front of him.

Chunder Run looked out of the vehicle.

His slits of eyes gleamed with rage through his horn-rimmed glasses at the sight of the Greyfriars juniors.

It was a frightfully unfortunate encounter for the Baboo.

In laying his cunning plans he certainly had not counted upon the chapter of chances to this extent.

Under his cummerbund his dusky hand closed almost convulsively on the haft of his dagger.

But he relinquished the weapon. The juniors were unarmed, but they had their riding-whips, and, anyhow, armed or not, the Baboo could scarcely have hoped to deal with six fellows in a bunch.

For a moment a spasm of rage shook the fat Bengalee. The ferocity of a tiger gleamed from his narrow eyes.

But Mr. Chunder Run was not thinking of a desperate and deadly affray with a crowd of sahibs. Nature had given him a good allowance of the ferocity of the tiger of his native land, but had not provided him with that animal's courage.

Bunter, the moment he had yelled, remembered the dagger hidden under the purple cummerbund, and squealed again in sheer terror.

As he squealed he plunged headlong out of the rickshaw.

His whole fat carcass quivered with the fear of a thrusting dagger, or a clutching hand from the fat Bengalee.

The juniors, reining in the startled horses, stared blankly at Bunter, and at the olive, spectacled face of Chunder Run.

But the latter did not remain long in their sight. With a bound, displaying once more the unusual activity that dwelt in his fat limbs, the Baboo was out of the rickshaw, and he leaped away among the trees by the path almost in a twinkling.

Among the trees the purple cummerbund glimmered for a few moments as he ran, then it vanished.

Jam Das stood holding the handles of the rickshaw for a moment, as if undecided. But as the Baboo fled, the rickshaw coolie evidently made up his mind that it was a good example to follow. Abandoning the rickshaw, he darted away among the trees and disappeared.

"Help! Keep 'em off! Help!" Bunter was roaring.

The fat junior, sprawling on the ground in a state of frantic funk, was not even aware that the kidnappers had fled.

In horrible expectation of a thrust from the dagger, he sprawled and roared and yelled.

"I say, you fellows! Keep 'em off! Help!"

"What on earth——" gasped Nugent.

Harry Wharton was the first to dismount. He threw his reins over a branch, and ran to Bunter.

"Bunter, you ass——" he exclaimed.

"Yarooooh! Keep 'em off!"

"They're gone, fathead," said Harry.

"What on earth has happened? What's the matter with you, you fat chump? What's up with that Baboo? What has he bolted for?"

Bunter sat up.

He blinked round through his big spectacles, and gasped with relief to see that the Hindoos were gone.

"Ow! Oh dear! Help a chap up, you beast! Ow!"

Wharton grasped him and jerked him to his feet. Bunter stood gasping and spluttering.

The other fellows had dismounted now. They gathered round Bunter in a crowd, amazed and wondering.

"What the thump has the fat duffer been up to?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"What's the row, Bunter?"

"Oh dear! Ow, I've been kidnapped!" groaned Bunter.

There was a yell of astonishment.

"Kidnapped?"

"Ow! Yes! That beastly nigger—oh

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dear! He had a knife—he stabbed me——"

"Oh crikey!"

"The stabfulness could not have been terrific, my esteemed idiotic Bunter. You seem to be preposterously alive!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I mean he was going to stab me! Oh dear! Thank goodness you fellows met us!" groaned Bunter. "Don't leave me! I dare say they haven't gone far! I say, you fellows, I've had a fearfully narrow escape."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him. That Bunter had been kidnapped in Kenya seemed, to them, wildly impossible. But the flight of the Baboo and the rickshaw boy bore out his statement. Obviously the two natives of India had fled in fear of being collared.

"Kidnapped!" repeated Johnny Bull. "What the thump should anybody want to kidnap you for?"

"Wanted him for a beauty show, perhaps!" suggested the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows, don't go! I'm in fearful danger!"

"They must have been up to something," said Wharton in perplexity. "They've bolted and left the rickshaw. But what——"

"I've been kidnapped!" yelled Bunter.

"Rot!" said the Bounder.

"Beast!"

"The rotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"Yah!"

"Well, tell us what's happened, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry soothingly.

That something unusual had happened was clear, from Bunter's terror, and the flight of the Hindoos.

But the chums of Greyfriars wanted convincing that William George Bunter had been kidnapped. So far as they were aware, Billy Bunter was neither useful nor ornamental, and that anybody could possibly want him seemed incredible.

The Owl of the Remove spluttered out his story. The juniors listened with growing astonishment.

"Well, that tears it!" said Bob.

"That man Chunder must be as mad as a hatter!"

"Must be, if he wants Bunter," said the Bounder.

"Blessed if I make it out!" said Harry. "He seems to have bagged Bunter. But why——"

"He was going to hold me to ransom!" gasped Bunter. "He said that he was going to stick my father for ten thousand pounds! I suppose he's found out somehow that my people are enormously wealthy——"

Evidently Bunter was recovering.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! He may have heard of Bunter Court, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you beasts——"

"I suppose there's some truth in it," said Vernon-Smith, staring at the fat Owl. "I shouldn't believe a word of it, only they've cleared off and left the rickshaw. They bagged Bunter, goodness knows why. I suppose they couldn't have wanted to melt him down for tallow! I don't know how much they'd get for a couple of tons of tallow——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" roared Bunter. "But if you'd sat beside that ferocious nigger, with a dagger sticking in your ribs——"

"Well, you're all right now, old fat

bean," said Harry. "They're gone; we'll take care of you, old fat man!"

Sniff from Bunter!

The fat Owl was not long in recovering his courage when he was no longer in danger.

"I can take care of myself, I fancy!" he said.

"Oh! In that case, we'll get on with our ride."

"Hold on! I say, you fellows, don't you leave me!" yelled Bunter, in alarm.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose we'd better stick to the fat fool!" grunted Vernon-Smith. "Those darkies were after him, though goodness knows why."

"They were going to hold me to ransom——"

"Rot!"

"They've found out that my father is a millionaire——"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Smithy, you beast, if you think your pater is the only millionaire in the world——"

"Fathead!"

"Well, they've bagged him, whatever they wanted him for," said Harry. "We must see the fat duffer safe back to Nairobi. We shall have to walk the horses, I suppose."

"One of you fellows can pull the rickshaw," said Bunter.

"What?"

"I can't walk miles. It's miles and miles! You can take it in turns to handle the rickshaw, with me in it," explained Bunter.

"I can sort of see us doing it!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're going to be selfish——"

"We are," grinned Bob—"frightfully! Any of you fellows keen on a job as rickshaw coolie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody seemed keen on taking on the rickshaw coolie's job. Once more Bunter was up against the selfishness which long experience had led him to expect from these beasts!

"Well, I can't walk," said Bunter. "I'll ride one of those gees, and one of you fellows can walk."

"I suppose we can give him a lift," said Harry. "We shall have to take it in turns to walk. That fat duffer can't walk."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm a better walker than any other fellow here, and chance it."

"Then you can walk back to Nairobi."

"If you're going to be a selfish beast——"

"Oh, dry up, fathead!"

The morning's ride had to be given up. The Bounder grunted discontentedly; but the Famous Five took it good-humouredly. Obviously, Bunter had to be looked after, inexplicable as it was that Mr. Chunder Run desired to make off with him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Boot for Bunter!

MR. SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH stared when he was told what had occurred. It was plain that the millionaire did not believe that Bunter had been kidnapped to be held to ransom. He paid very little attention to Bunter's statements, having already learned that Bunter's statements were, as a rule, about as reliable as those of Ananias or Baron Munchausen or George Washington. Still, it was clear that Bunter actually had been carried off in the rickshaw; and the millionaire agreed to

report the matter to the Nairobi police, and it was left at that.

Much to Bunter's indignation, he did not seem to regard the affair as one of the very first importance. Mr. Vernon-Smith had a great deal of "big business" on hand in Nairobi, and he might possibly have regarded his own affairs as more important than Bunter's.

Indeed, he seemed rather annoyed at the trouble Bunter was causing; though in this especial case the Owl of the Remove was not wholly to blame. But Billy Bunter had given a good deal of trouble already, in one way or another. Mr. Vernon-Smith had already been bothered that morning by a rickshaw boy who demanded a fare on Bunter's account. He had also been astonished and irritated by the delivery at the hotel of a huge quantity of goods, and the presentation of a bill for one hundred and five pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence!

With a snappish message that some foolish mistake had been made, he had sent both the goods and the bill back to the Nairobi Stores, after which he received an indignant telephone call from an indignant manager, who stated that the goods had been ordered in his name.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, in biting tones, advised the manager to be a little more careful how he allowed himself to be made a fool of by practical jokers and rang off.

Incidents like these did not improve Mr. Vernon-Smith's temper.

However, he recovered his good-humour at lunch, and talked cheerily with the juniors on the subject of the journey to Uganda, which was to begin in the morning.

Bunter, who had naturally expected his perilous adventure to be the sole topic, suppressed his indignation with difficulty. But he drew comfort from the lunch, which was good and ample; and while the other fellows chatted Bunter devoted his attention to packing away the provender.

After lunch Mr. Vernon-Smith had a call to make at Government House. The juniors were left on their own for the afternoon; but the millionaire gave Bunter a word before he went out.

"Stay in the hotel, as you do not seem to be safe out of doors," he said, and departed without waiting for a reply.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly after the car as it rolled away with the millionaire, more than suspecting that Mr. Vernon-Smith forgot his existence as soon as his back was turned.

"Nice way to treat a guest, ain't it, you fellows?" he asked.

"Don't you like it?" grunted the Bounder.

"No; I jolly well don't!"

"There's a missionary in this hotel who's going back to England," said Smithy. "The pater could arrange with him to take you home, if you like."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"You'd be safe from kidnappers at Bunter Court!" said the Bounder sarcastically. "Nobody in England knows your pater is a millionaire, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And there's a frightful lot of lions in Uganda!" said Bob Cherry.

"And leopards!" said Nugent.

"I'm not so funky of lions and leopards as some fellows," said Bunter calmly. "Still, I think it would be better for us to stay in Nairobi, and wait for old—I mean, for Mr. Vernon-Smith to come back. I dare say those kidnappers have found out that we're going to Uganda, and they may be watching for me on the way. They won't dare to come back to Nairobi,

with the police looking for them. So I should be safe here. In the circumstances, I expect you fellows to give up that trip to Uganda."

"Go hon!" murmured Bob.

"I suppose I've got to expect your usual selfishness, after all I've done for you?" said Bunter bitterly.

"Well, what about getting out, you men?" asked Smithy. "If you're not frightfully keen on Bunter's conversation—"

"The keenfulness is not terrific."

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're not going out and leaving me here alone?" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Old Smith—Yaroooh! If you kick me again, Smithy, you beast—"

"Let's get out," said Bob. "Lots of things we haven't seen in Nairobi yet."

They departed, leaving Bunter snorting with indignation. However, the Owl found comfort in a nap, and slept soundly for a couple of hours while the other fellows were exploring Nairobi, after which he rolled into the hotel tea-room and packed away several teas, one after another. As Mr. Vernon-Smith was footing the bills, there was no need for Bunter to stint himself. And he didn't! His gastronomic performances were limited only by his circumference. And even his ample circumference was put to rather a strain.

When he rolled out of the tea-room he was feeling his exertions a little, and his movements resembled those of a very old and very tired snail.

The beasts had not yet returned. But Bunter had a rather important matter



The foot of the manager landed on Bunter's stern, and with a roar the Owl of the Remove flew out of the Nairobi Stores into the roadway. "Oh! Ow! Yarooooogh!" roared the fat junior.

"Old—I mean, Mr. Vernon-Smith says I'm to stay indoors, you beasts! I suppose you're not leaving me here?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Harry. "You can go to sleep and feed—"

"Beast! I expect my pals to stay in if I stay in," said Bunter. "I suppose you like my society?"

"Great pip!"

"I'm going to have a nap. Well, one of you fellows can sit beside me and watch over my safety, see?"

"My hat!"

"And fan me to keep the flies off," added Bunter.

"Now, don't all you fellows speak at once," said Bob Cherry. "I can see you're all frightfully eager to sit beside Bunter and hear him snore and keep off the flies that come after the lunch he's left on the outside of his chivvy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come on!" grunted the Bounder, and he started.

"I say, you fellows, if you leave me alone I shall go out!" said Bunter warningly. "That may mean that you will lose me!"

Even that awful prospect did not seem to entice the juniors to remain indoors.

to occupy his mind. The goods he had ordered that morning at the Nairobi Stores had not come to hand.

For excellent reasons he had ordered them in Mr. Vernon-Smith's name. They would therefore be delivered to Mr. Vernon-Smith. Bunter did not intend to mention the matter till they arrived. He suspected that Mr. Vernon-Smith might be quite capable of ringing up the stores and cancelling the order before delivery.

Once they were delivered, with Bunter on the spot to claim them, Mr. Vernon-Smith would be faced with a "fait accompli"—an accomplished fact which Bunter hoped would settle the matter.

Indeed, if they arrived during the millionaire's absence from the hotel, Bunter was prepared to unpack them and take possession, leaving only the bill to be presented to Smithy's pater.

That would make it at least difficult for Mr. Vernon-Smith, howsoever stingily inclined, to send them back.

Upon the whole, Bunter considered that it would be rather better in every way if the goods came while Mr.

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KIDNAPPED IN KENYA!



(Continued from page 13.)

Vernon-Smith was absent, and he was quite anxious to see them come.

He was blissfully unaware that the delivery had taken place that morning while he was enjoying the trip in the rickshaw with Mr. Chunder Run, and that the manager of the Nairobi Stores was yearning just then for a sight of the practical joker who had, as he supposed, given an extensive order in the millionaire's name and made a fool of him.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had made no reference to the matter, never dreaming that it was a member of the party who had played the supposed practical joke, and as he had not referred to anything being delivered from the Nairobi Stores, Bunter naturally concluded that the goods were not yet delivered.

Having packed away all the teas that his circumference would hold, Bunter decided to give the Nairobi Stores a look-in and hurry up that delivery. In every way it was better to get the goods into his hands before Mr. Vernon-Smith came back from Government House.

He blinked round him warily as he rolled out of the hotel.

But he realised that, after what had happened in the morning, Mr. Chunder Run was not likely to be seen again in the streets of Nairobi.

But he did not take a rickshaw. Bunter was fed-up on rickshaws. Any of the grinning Kukes outside the hotel might have been in league with Chunder Run, for all Bunter knew.

Still, as it was only a hundred yards to the Nairobi Stores, even Billy Bunter was able to negotiate the walk without undue fatigue.

He arrived at the stores, and rolled in. Instantly he drew the attention of a neat young man who had served him on his previous visit.

That neat young man was quite surprised to see him roll in. But he was pleased, too. He had never expected to see the practical joker again—at least, within the swing doors of the Nairobi Stores.

He came rather quickly towards Bunter.

"Oh, here you are!" he said.

Bunter blinked at him.

He was not an observant fellow, but he could not help noticing that the neat young man was no longer displaying the polished courtesy with which he had received Bunter's magnificent orders that morning.

"Eh? Yes," said Bunter. "What about those things I ordered? I've been waiting!"

The neat young man stared. This fat, flabby-looking ass, blinking through his spectacles, did not look as if he had a tremendous nerve. But evidently he had! With perfect coolness he was revisiting the scene of his extraordinary exploit of the morning!

"One moment, sir!" gasped the neat young man. "I will call the manager."

"No need," said Bunter. "I just want to know—"

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"The manager wishes to see you, sir, if you will kindly take a seat for a moment."

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, and he sat down. "Tell him not to keep me waiting."

"I am sure he will not keep you waiting, sir," said the neat young man. "He is most anxious to see you, sir!"

The manager did not keep Bunter waiting! The fat Owl had reposed his podgy limbs for less than a minute when the manager arrived.

He was a tall, thin gentleman, with a hard eye. That eye glinted as it was fixed on Bunter.

"Yes, this is the fellow," he said, with a nod. "I remember him quite well. This is the rascal!"

Bunter jumped.

"I say—"

"This is the scoundrel!" said the manager, with another nod.

"Eh?"

There was no doubt that the manager of the Nairobi Stores was glad to see Bunter. He almost looked as if he could eat him!

Bunter started to his feet. He realised that something was wrong. The manager's words and looks were hardly those of a manager dealing with a customer who gave orders for a hundred pounds' worth of goods.

"Open the door, Thomson!" said the manager.

"Certainly, sir!" said the neat young man, with an anticipatory grin.

"I say! Oh, my hat! Leggo!" roared Bunter in amazement and wrath, as the manager grasped him by the collar.

Customers glanced round in surprise. Billy Bunter was more than surprised—he was astounded.

He was jerked along to the door, which the neat young man was holding wide open. He was landed in the middle of the doorway, facing the road.

Some intuition warned Bunter what was coming. He jumped. His jump was swift. But swifter still was the foot of the manager.

Crash!

"Yooooooooop!"

Billy Bunter flew out of the Nairobi Stores.

He nose-dived into Government Road, and roared.

"Oh! Ow! Yaroooooogh!"

The door closed.

Bunter sat up dizzily in the midst of a grinning crowd of Kukes.

"Ow! Oh crumbs! Wow!" gasped Bunter.

And, still in a dizzy state, the Owl of Greyfriars picked himself up and limped back to the Planters Hotel, a sadder, if not a wiser Bunter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Begs For It!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. boarded the train, the following day, in cheery spirits.

They liked Nairobi, and could have spent many days more, with pleasure, in the capital of Kenya. But there was plenty to be seen along the Uganda Railway, which was to carry them on their journey as far as Victoria Nyanza. And they were extremely keen to see the Great Lakes. Billy Bunter cared nothing for lakes, great or small, and he was rather doubtful about the grub in Uganda; and undoubtedly preferred Nairobi. But he had given up trying to induce the other fellows to remain in the town, watching him feed at teashops, for the remainder of the holidays. That, according to Bunter,

would have been something like a holiday, but the other fellows did not seem to see it, somehow.

Bunter rolled into the station with the rest, in good time for the train. He had little to carry, as he was—as usual—travelling light. Had his extensive purchases at the Nairobi Stores come off, Bunter would have been travelling heavy, and would have needed at least one Kuke porter to himself. But, after all his trouble, Bunter had bagged nothing at the Nairobi Stores but one hefty drive from the manager's boot.

There was, however, a considerable amount of baggage in the party, and among other things, there was a very handsome lunch-basket, specially ordered by Smithy for the train, and supplied by the hotel. On a slip of paper, attached to it, was the name: "H. Vernon-Smith."

Bunter's eyes lingered on it as the juniors, in a cheery group, chatted while they waited for the train.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, at some distance, was improving the shining hour by a last rapid business talk with some business acquaintance, Mr. Vernon-Smith being a gentleman who never wasted a minute, his minutes being as valuable as the hours, if not years, of lesser mortals.

Bunter blinked morosely at six cheerful juniors.

These fellows knew perfectly well that he preferred Nairobi to Uganda, and teashops to jungles, and cafes to crocodiles. Yet they were starting on the journey in great spirits, just as if Bunter's preferences did not matter.

They were actually discussing Kikofoo, the Kikuyu, who was to rejoin the party when they stopped at Naivasha, which was about sixty miles from Nairobi, up the railway.

The Kikuyu hunter was to accompany the party into Uganda, where the juniors hoped that they would be able to go on safari again, with Kicky as guide.

Bunter did not want to go on safari, and he did not want to see Kicky again. The Kikuyu had never treated Bunter with the respect that was due from a nigger to a pukka sahib like Bunter.

Heedless of what Bunter wanted, Harry Wharton & Co. were looking forward to seeing Kicky, and were very glad to be meeting him at Naivasha, on the way to Uganda.

But, irritated as Bunter was by this selfishness and disregard of his important person, he was rather glad that the juniors had neither eyes nor attention upon him just then.

Unregarded by the cheery, chatting group, the Owl of the Remove picked up the lunch-basket and moved farther along the platform.

Smithy had had that basket specially packed for a lunch all round. There was, therefore, enough for Bunter, if he succeeded in getting away with it.

The train came puffing up from the coast at last, and stopped in Nairobi station. Bunter, whose usual speed was about 1 m.p.h., moved with unwonted celerity. He was the first fellow in the train—at the farthest distance he could get from Harry Wharton & Co.—and Smithy's lunch-basket went with him.

He put out a grinning face and looked along the train at the other fellows. They were looking round for him.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry ran up. "What are you up to, fat-head? We're all travelling together."

"I don't care for your company,

thanks," said Bunter calmly. "I want a bit of a rest sometimes from a mob of noisy schoolboys."

"What?" gasped Bob.

"And I can't stand Smithy's manners, you know; and his pater's rather the limit, too. Tell them so, from me,"

"You fat idiot—"

"Come on, Bob!" shouted Wharton, from the distance.

"Look here, Bunter, you fat chump, we'd better stick together—"

"Rats!"

"Well, if you get lost, you benighted bandersnatch, you'll stay lost!" hooted Bob.

"Go and eat coke!"

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep. It really was kind of him to look for Bunter and gather him in, for certainly he did not want Bunter's company. But Bunter, evidently, did not mean to be gathered in. For some reason unknown to Bob he wanted to travel alone that morning.

The reason—in the form of a well-packed lunch-basket—was on the seat beside Bunter, as a matter of fact, but it was not visible to Bob Cherry.

"Cut off!" said Bunter, blinking at him from the train. "If you want my company, Bob Cherry, you'd better mend your manners a little. They can do with it."

"Who wants your company, you fat walrus?" hooted Bob. "Stay where you are, and be blown!"

"Yah!"

Bob Cherry ran along the train to rejoin his friends. They were already packing themselves in.

"Where's Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Farther back. He wants to travel alone."

"The silly owl!"

"Let him, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed the Bounder. "I suppose you men are not pining for Bunter's chin-wag?"

"The pincfulness is not terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, let the fat idiot rip!" said Wharton. "He can't come to any harm on the train. He knows we don't get out till Naivasha."

And Bunter was given his head. Truth to tell, the chums of the Remove were distinctly relieved by Bunter's unaccustomed desire for solitude. There was no doubt that, of the fat Owl's fascinating society, a little went a long way.

Mr. Vernon-Smith travelled in another carriage, with some business men of Nairobi, who were going up to Naivasha. They were talking sheep—the juniors had learned that sheep-farming was the growing industry in the Naivasha region. The Famous Five and the Bounder had a carriage to themselves, and undoubtedly it was more comfortable without Bunter.

"Where's that dashed lunch-basket?" asked Vernon-Smith. "They don't seem to have put it on. Any of you fellows see it?"

Nobody could see it.

"Here, you Kuke!" called out Smithy. "Lunch-basket! There's a lunch-basket to put on!"

But the Kuke porter seemed to know nothing of it. The Bounder, with an

angry grunt, jumped down to look for it. But it was not to be seen, and the engine gave a shriek.

"Buck up, Smithy!" called out Bob.

And the Bounder had to jump back into the train. It looked as if someone among the jostling crowds in the station had picked up that lunch-basket by mistake—or perhaps not by mistake! Anyhow, there was no time for further search, and the Bounder had to go on without it.

But looking from the train interested the juniors, and they did not worry unduly about the loss of the lunch-basket. There was plenty to be seen of great interest going up from Nairobi.

They had glimpses of Mount Kenya in the distance, the great mountain, on the summit of which, according to Kikolobo, the great god N'gai dwelt, his eye seeing all that happened in "British East" from that elevated coign of vantage.

Native villages could be seen from the train, and at Kikuyu—a place named after the natives of the country—the juniors looked over wide, cultivated fields of maize and millet, beans and wattle.

Farther on, the railway ran through great forests, where the juniors saw timber mills, where wood was cut for railway fuel.

Then the line dipped into the Rift Valley, where the view was really magnificent, and craters of extinct volcanoes could be seen.

But the magnificent scenery of the celebrated Rift Valley, though it held

(Continued on next page.)

A few more miles to go

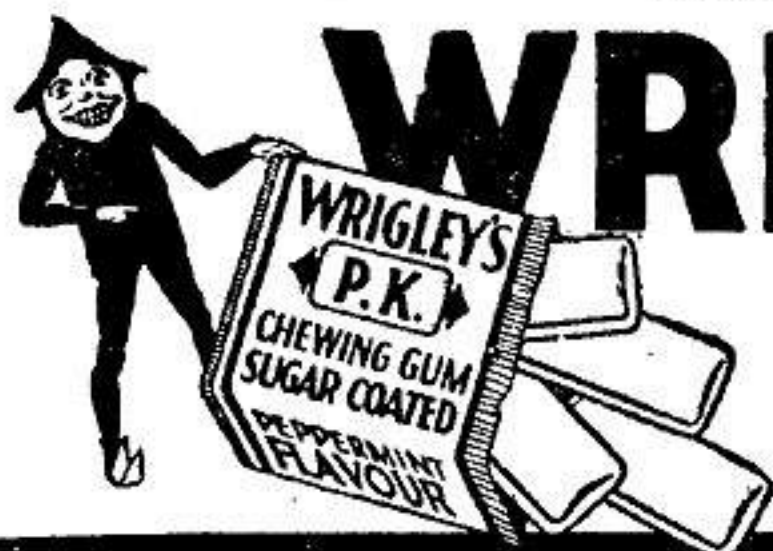


A FEW more weary miles to go before there is a halt for tea. Now is the time for Wrigley's. The delightful flavour of Wrigley's Chewing Gum will buck you up—will refresh the mouth and take away the parched feeling.

And Wrigley's "after every meal" will aid digestion and cleanse the teeth.

In two flavours—P.K., a pure peppermint flavour; and Spearmint, a pure mint leaf flavour. Only 1d. a packet, but the finest quality money can buy.

The flavour lasts—British made



WRIGLEY'S

1^d PER PACKET



the attention of the chums of the Remove, was absolutely wasted on a fat junior farther along the train.

Billy Bunter's eyes, and spectacles, were fixed on the contents of Smithy's lunch-basket.

Those contents had been gradually diminishing, growing smaller by degrees, and beautifully less.

Bunter grinned over that prolonged and extensive feed, and wondered whether the fellows up the train were getting hungry. If they were it served them right, and Bunter had no sympathy to waste on them.

But even Billy Bunter had to leave off eating at last, and as the train rocked on, he unwillingly relinquished the lunch-basket while eatables yet remained in it, and leaned back to rest after his exertions.

It was quite a happy morning for Bunter—one of the best he had had in Kenya.

He leaned back, and his little round eyes closed behind his big round spectacles, his extensive mouth opened, and he snored.

There were two other passengers in the carriage, who had glanced every now and then at Bunter, with interest, perhaps wondering where he was packing away the foodstuffs.

When the train slowed down in Kijabe, half-way down the great Rift, they changed their carriage, perhaps finding Billy Bunter's gargantuan snore too much of a good thing at close quarters.

But Bunter was not long left alone.

The train made a prolonged stop at Kijabe, and a couple of minutes after the passengers had left an olive-skinned face looked into the carriage.

It was that of a slightly built, bony featured Hindoo, who looked like one of the Baboo clerks employed on the railway and in the commercial houses of Kenya.

He looked at Bunter, and then his eyes fixed on the label on the lunch-basket, which bore the inscription: "H. Vernon-Smith."

He started—and then grinned and stepped into the carriage.

Bunter, had he been awake, might have guessed that the skinny little man was interested in a fat youth whose name was supposed—by Mr. Chunder Run—to be Herbert Vernon-Smith.

But Bunter was deep in slumber, and if he was dreaming he was not dreaming that one of Mr. Chunder Run's numerous relatives had boarded the train at Kijabe to spy on the millionaire's party, Mr. Chunder Run having the best of reasons for keeping personally out of sight.

Bunter snored on.

The skinny Hindoo looked out of the train and made a sign to a black man who was squatting in the shadow of a stack of packing-cases.

Then he sat down and waited.

His black eyes glimmered at the snoring Owl. Not till the train was about to start did the Hindoo stir.

He gave a rapid glance along the train. There was no sign of Mr. Vernon-Smith and the other schoolboys alighting. Obviously, they were going on to Naivasha.

There was a shriek from the engine. The skinny Hindoo bent over Bunter, and hooked him out of his seat.

"Grooogh!"

Bunter woke up quite suddenly.

What was happening to him, unless it was an earthquake Bunter did not know.

He flew from the carriage, and

bumped on the platform. The train was already in motion.

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter sprawled and roared.

He sat up, dazed and dizzy. He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked round him in utter amazement.

The train was going on. Bunter, sitting breathless and dizzy on the platform, blinked after it.

He had hardly glimpsed the Hindoo who had pitched him out, and who had gone on in the train.

His fat wits were in a state of utter confusion.

He sat and blinked after the train as it disappeared. The train rushed on towards Naivasha, twenty miles distant; and Billy Bunter sat and gasped, and gasped, and gasped, in a state of hopeless bewilderment—left behind!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Chunder Run in Luck!

BILLY BUNTER staggered to his feet.

He blinked round him.

Several Kuko porters were staring at him. They seemed amused. No doubt their impression was that the white passenger had clumsily fallen in getting out of the train.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "Here, I say, is this Naivasha?"

"No, sar! This Kijabe!" answered one of the Kukus.

"I've been pitched out of the train," gasped Bunter. "Some nigger got hold of me and chucked me out."

The Kuke grinned.

"The train's gone on!" gasped Bunter.

The Kuke still grinned.

"My friends have gone on—I'm left behind!"

The Kuke continued to grin.

"What am I going to do?" gasped Bunter.

The native porter's grin grew a little wider, but that was all. Apparently he did not know what Bunter was going to do. All he had to contribute was an expansive grin.

"You silly fool of a nigger!" grunted Bunter.

He rolled away to a seat and sat down.

His fat brain was still in a state of bewilderment.

Had Bunter foreseen such an extraordinary occurrence, Herbert Vernon-Smith's lunch-basket, or a dozen lunch-baskets, would not have tempted him to travel alone. But how could a fellow have foreseen that a perfect stranger would collar him and pitch him neck-and-crop off the train?

It really was one of those things which no fellow could have foreseen.

Even now it had happened Bunter could not understand it.

Unless the nigger on the train was mad, or a practical joker of a distinctly unpleasant variety, there seemed no explanation of his amazing action.

It did not occur to Bunter's fat brain that Chunder Run's spy had been watching at Kijabe, and, unexpectedly finding the fat junior on his own, separated from the rest of the party, had seized the golden opportunity to separate him still farther.

Bunter had asked for it—in fact, begged for it—as he often did. But he was far from guessing what it meant. He did not even surmise any connection between the nigger on the train and the Baboo who had attempted to kidnap him at Nairobi.

He was completely at a loss.

But there he was, stranded at Kijabe, and the Greyfriars party, utterly ignorant of the fact that he was no longer on the train, were speeding on to distant Naivasha without him.

There was nothing for it, apparently, but to wait for the next train—and he was aware that trains were not frequent.

In a state of wrath and bewilderment Billy Bunter sat and rubbed the places where he had collected aches and pains on establishing contact with the platform.

The Kuko porters lost their interest in Bunter; but the black man, squatting by the packing-cases, who had received the signal from the nigger on the train, was watching him curiously.

He rose at last and came towards Bunter.

The fat Owl blinked at him sourly.

The man looked like a coolie. He was dressed in white cotton with a red stripe, and wore a scarlet fez on his fuzzy black hair. He saluted the fat junior with great respect.

"You lose a train, sar?" he asked.

"Yes," grunted Bunter.

"You like drive in fine carriage, sar?"

"No," grunted Bunter.

"Fine quick carriage, sar—drive you anywhere, cheap price! Drive you Nairobi, drive you Naivasha—"

Bunter sat up and took notice.

"Naivasha!" he repeated.

"You go Naivasha, sar? Drive you all same train, sar! Fine quick carriage, sar! You like?"

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Look here, how long should I have to wait for the next train to Naivasha?"

"Two, three hour, sar!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Fine carriage very quick, sar, all same time train to Naivasha! Cheap price, sah! Everybody in Kijabe tell you me one good driver, sar."

Bunter rose from the seat.

This was too good a chance to be lost.

It was likely enough, for all Bunter knew, that a driver cutting across country, might reach Naivasha, as soon as the train, following the line—especially as trains in Kenya were decidedly slow.

The sooner he rejoined the Greyfriars party the better Bunter would be pleased. He had no fancy for wandering about Kenya on his own, especially after his experience with Mr. Chunder Run the day before.

"All right!" he said.

"Yes, sar! You come this way, sar, you see a carriage!" said the coolie.

Bunter followed him from the station.

His spirits were rising a little. This really was rather a stroke of luck.

He did not even inquire the price of a drive to Naivasha. Whatever the price was, it would not have to be paid until the end of the drive, and then it would be left to Mr. Vernon-Smith. Bunter could afford, in the circumstances, to be careless in money matters.

He blinked round him in the bright sunshine for the carriage.

Kijabe Hill, rising at a little distance, did not interest him, neither did the surrounding forest.

"Where's the carriage?" he asked.

"This way, sar! You follow."

Bunter grunted, and followed.

At a considerable distance from the station a covered cart stood by the roadside. The canvas cover being closed, Bunter could not see whether the cart had an occupant, and was happily unaware that two sly slits of eyes, behind a pair of enormous horn-rimmed

glasses, watched him through a rent in the canvas as he rolled up.

Two donkeys were harnessed to the cart. The whole outfit was vaguely familiar to Bunter's eyes. Still, there were plenty of donkey-carts in Kenya, and he did not identify this one as the cart that had stood under the tall cedar on the hill road, when Mr. Chunder Run had been rescued from the leopard.

He blinked at the donkey-cart, and blinked angrily at the coolie. There was a dawning grin on the black face.

"This isn't the carriage, I suppose?" demanded Bunter warmly.

"Yes, sar! Fine carriage, sar. Drive you too quick, sar."

"You silly chump!" snapped Bunter. "Think I'm going to drive miles in a donkey-cart?"

"Fine quick cart, sar; cheap price. Very too comfortable," said the coolie. "You look in a cart, sar, you see."

The coolie drew aside the canvas at the back of the cart invitingly. Bunter snorted.

That a donkey-cart could reach Naivasha in the same time as the train he had lost seemed highly improbable. Still, if he had to wait two or three hours for the next train, there was no doubt that the donkey-cart could make the journey much sooner than that. After all, he could lie down in the cart and go to sleep, and that would be better than hanging about a wind-swept station for two or three hours.

The coolie watched him covertly. He was prepared to collar Bunter, and pitch him, neck-and-crop, into the covered cart, if necessary. But it was not necessary.

"Oh, all right," granted Bunter.

With a helping hand from the coolie he stepped into the cart.

The canvas dropped behind him, shutting off the bright sunshine.

Bunter blinked in the dim dusk of the interior, and started at the sight of a glimmering pair of enormous glasses. The next moment a squeak of terror escaped him as a podgy hand grasped him, and sat him down in the cart, and a bare blade gleamed in the dusk.

"You will not perpetrate unnecessary and superfluous noises," said the familiar voice of Chunder Run. "In such cases, this dagger will penetrate with disastrous fatality."

"Oooogh!" gurgled Bunter.

"Plecco to sit down in reposeful silence," said Chunder Run. "This time there will not be chance meeting with superfluous persons executing horsemanship. No, the utterance of vocal cries will be signal for approximation of fatal dagger."

"Ooooh!"

Bunter collapsed on the rugs in the bottom of the cart. There was a sound of a stick cracking on the backs of the donkeys, and the cart was set in motion. It rolled rapidly away, to an accompaniment of continual cracking of the stick in the hand of the coolie who was driving.

Hidden from all eyes by the canvas cover of the cart, Bunter blinked in terror at the fat, grinning face only a

foot from him, and the podgy hand that held the dagger.

He was in the hands of Chunder Run again, and this time, as the wily Baboo remarked, no accidental meeting was likely to save him.

He sat and quaked.

Chunder Run grinned.

Unexpected, almost un hoped for, success had come his way. Certainly he would not have succeeded so easily had his victim been the Bounder, as Chunder Run supposed him to be. The fatuousness of the Owl of the Remove had played into his dusky hands.

"Once more we travel in happy

sight of the juniors looking from the train, showed that he was pleased to see the party again—especially "Bwana-wangu," as he called the Bounder.

Kicky was in his fighting garb of monkey-skins; but he had left his rhinoceros-hide shield and spears behind when he came down to the station to wait for the train. He bent his tall head in salute over the crowd as the juniors waved to him.

"Jolly glad to see old Kicky again," said Bob.

"The gladfulness is terrific."

The Bounder's face wore a cheery



Stealthily, unregarded by the cheery, chatting juniors, Bunter picked up the lunch-basket and moved silently away!

juxtaposition," said Mr. Chunder Run pleasantly. "We proceed in company to desirable residence, where you will inhabit with felicity until honourable parent coughs up, as you say, considerable sums. Yes!"

And Bunter, quaking with terror, was borne away as fast as the coolie's slick could drive the donkeys to that desirable residence.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Where is Bunter?

"KICKY, by Jove!" "Good old Kicky!" The train stopped at Naivasha.

There were a good many people on the platform, but conspicuous among them, towering head and shoulders over most, was a tall figure clad in striped monkey skins.

It was Kikolobo, the Kikuyu. The Greyfriars party had arranged to pick up the Kikuyu on their way to Uganda, wither he was to accompany them. During their days at Nairobi, Kicky had been back among his own people. But the cheery grin that relaxed his grave face, at the

smile. Hard, and somewhat cynical as he was, the Bounder had been touched by the loyal devotion of the Kikuyu, and he had a strong liking for Kicky. All the juniors were glad to see the famous hunter of Masalindi again; the Bounder most of all.

Mr. Vernon-Smith met the juniors as they alighted from the train. He was rather hurried; two business friends who had travelled with him were waiting for him.

"You boys, all right—what—what?" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Leave the baggage to the hotel porter. I've spoken to him. Don't lose that young ass, Bunter. Where is he? Follow me to the Naivasha Hotel."

"There's Kicky over yonder, father," said the Bounder. "I'll cut across and speak to him."

"Yes—yes. Then come on to the hotel."

Mr. Vernon-Smith rejoined his friends. They walked to the hotel. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not notice, and the juniors did not dream of noticing, a little, skinny Hindu who alighted from the train, and hovered near with his eyes on the millionaire. There were a dozen Hindus or more about the station, and the man who had

pitched Bunter out of the train at Kijabe was only one among many.

The skinny man followed the millionaire from the station. He had no eyes for the juniors. They had no interest for him.

He followed the millionaire until he entered the hotel, after which he hung about the building for some time, entering into talk with some of the native attendants. Having ascertained easily enough that Mr. Vernon-Smith had booked to stay at Naivasha over night, Mr. Lal Jang was apparently satisfied, for he cleared off immediately afterwards. Anyone who had been interested in the movements of the skinny, little man might have noticed that Lal Jang hired a mule, and jogged away by a path through the grassy pasture land that extended for a great distance towards the forest. But no one, least of all the Greyfriars fellows, took any interest in the movements of Lal Jang.

The juniors, no doubt, would have been interested in the skinny gentleman had they known that he had pitched Bunter out of the train twenty miles back on the line. But as yet they knew nothing of Billy Bunter's misadventures.

At the moment they were interested in Kikolobo.

Leaving their baggage to the native hotel porters, they made their way through the crowd on the platform to the tall Kikuyu.

He advanced to meet them.

"Jolly glad to see you again, Kicky!" said the Bounder, with a genial cordiality that he did not often display.

"O Bwana-wangu, the heart of this Kikuyu is light as the wing of a butterfly, beholding once more your noble and beautiful countenance," said Kikolobo.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob. "Kicky is a jolly old poet!"

"The poeticality of the esteemed Kikuyu is terrific," remarked Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh.

The juniors remained talking with the Kikuyu for several minutes before they remembered Bunter.

Then Wharton glanced up and down the platform for him.

"Where's that fat duffer?" he asked. "I suppose he's got out of the train."

"Gone to sleep more likely!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Better hook him out before the train goes!" grinned Bob. "The fat ass had better not go on to Uganda on his own."

"You fellows bag him," said Vernon-Smith; and, leaving the Famous Five to collect Bunter, he walked out of the station with the Kikuyu.

There was no sign of Bunter on the platform, but the train had not yet restarted. Bob cut across to the carriage where he had seen Bunter ensconce himself at Nairobi.

Two or three passengers had got in, but Bunter was not there. But on the seat was a lunch-basket, with a label attached, bearing the name of "H. Vernon-Smith."

Bob stared at it. He knew now what had become of the missing lunch-basket, and why Bunter had desired to travel alone.

"The fat villain!" ejaculated Bob.

He picked up the lunch-basket, which weighed considerably less than it had weighed at Nairobi, and rejoined his friends.

"Isn't Bunter there?" asked Harry.

"No. Smithy's lunch-basket was, though!" grinned Bob. "That fat villain must have bagged it; that's why

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he wanted to travel alone. But he seems to have left it there and got out."

"But he hasn't got out," said Wharton, puzzled. "We should have seen him if he'd got out. He's wide enough to be seen."

"Oh, my hat! Has the howling ass got out at the wrong station?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Let's look along the train," said Harry.

The juniors ran along the train, looking into every window. But all they ascertained was that Billy Bunter was not on the train.

A few minutes later the train steamed out, leaving the Famous Five in a perplexed group on the platform.

"The howling ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The frightful chump! He's got out at the wrong station," said Harry. "Goodness knows why! Queer that he should leave the lunch-basket behind. That's not like Bunter."

"The queerfulness is preposterous."

"Better go on to the hotel, and let Mr. Vernon-Smith know," said Harry.

"I suppose he will have to telegraph along the line. Still, if the fat idiot got out too soon, I suppose even Bunter will

NORTHANTS CHUM WINS

LEATHER POCKET WALLET

for the following snappy Greyfriars limerick! George G. Clapham, 134, Knox Road, Wellingborough, Northants, has been sent a handsome leather pocket wallet.

Said Temple to Dabney and Fry:
"To fight Harry Wharton I'll try."

But strange to relate,
To lose was his fate;
Yet he won a gorgeous black eye!

You would like a handy leather pocket wallet, chum. Send along your limerick to-day, and if it's a winner you'll get a wallet!

have sense enough to come on by the next train."

The juniors left the station. At the hotel they found Mr. Vernon-Smith and reported Bunter's absence.

The millionaire gave a snort. "Why did you let the young ass out of your sight?" he grunted.

"Well, you see—"

Wharton hesitated. He did not want to tell Mr. Vernon-Smith about the lunch-basket.

"He must have got out at Lamoru or Kijabe," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "The boy seems to me fool enough for anything. But I suppose he has sense enough to come on by the next train—what—what?"

"I—I suppose so."

"I say—" began Frank Nugent; and he paused.

"Well?" rapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I—I suppose he can't have landed in trouble—that Baboo fellow who bagged him at Nairobi!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Rubbish!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Well, it's rather queer—"

"Nonsense!"

The juniors had to let the matter drop. Mr. Vernon-Smith was evidently fed-up with the trouble of the fat Owl, which was not really surprising. And, really, it was more probable that Bunter had mistaken his station, than that he

had fallen into the hands of the Baboo in broad daylight on a crowded train.

"We stay the night here," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "The young ass will come on later. Leave it at that."

And it was left at that.

Short as the stay was to be at Naivasha, Mr. Vernon-Smith had several business affairs to attend to there. He had secured an option on a big sheep farm in that vicinity, and that was a matter which required his attention, to the complete exclusion of Bunter and all his works.

Harry Wharton & Co. lunched with the millionaire at the Naivasha Hotel, after which Mr. Vernon-Smith was busy, and the Famous Five went out with the Bounder. They called for Kikolobo, who had his quarters in a native hut on the shore of Lake Naivasha, and enjoyed a trip on the lake with the Kikuyu. Huge hippopotami floated like great logs on the surface of the lake, and once Kikolobo pointed out a herd of zebras on the bank. The absence of Billy Bunter did not weigh unduly on their spirits; indeed, it is much to be feared that they had almost forgotten his existence.

But when they walked back to the hotel for a late tea, they remembered him.

"I suppose we shall find Bunter at the hotel," remarked Bob. "He must have come on by this time. He can't be lost."

"No such luck!" grunted the Bounder.

But even Smithy looked serious, when they reached the hotel, and found that Bunter had not arrived.

Another train had come in; in fact, more than one train, and Bunter, it was evident, had not come on by the railway.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was absent from the hotel, and the juniors had their tea in rather a worried mood. The conviction was growing in their minds that the Owl of the Remove had landed in some sort of trouble.

"If that blinking Baboo's got hold of him again—" said Bob Cherry.

"How could he?" grunted Smithy.

"Blessed if I know! But it looks—"

"Well, if he's got the fat chump, he can keep him!" growled the Bounder.

"He's welcome to him, so far as I'm concerned."

To which the other fellows made no reply. There was no doubt that Bunter was an irritating ass; but they could not help feeling anxious about him.

"Look here, let's go down to Kicky's hut," said Smithy. "He's going to take us along and show us where the old elephant tracks are. There used to be a lot of elephants round here."

"Better wait here till your pater comes in, I think," said Harry. "Bunter's got into some trouble—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, you cut off and see Kicky, and we'll stay," said Harry.

"Rot!" growled the Bounder again.

And he waited with the rest till Mr. Vernon-Smith came in.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Ransom!

MR. VERNON-SMITH came in, with a letter in his hand. It had been presented to him by a black coolie as he reached the hotel, and he had not yet opened it. He gave the juniors a nod.

"Had a good time, Herbert?" he asked.

"Ripping!" answered Smithy. "We've been on the lake with Kicky. But that fat ass, Bunter—"

"Hasn't he come in?"

"No."

Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted.

"I suppose I shall have to make inquiries for the young ass," he said. "Wait till I've looked at this."

He opened the letter, doubtless supposing it to be a note from one of his business friends.

An extraordinary change came over his face as he looked at it.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated.

The juniors waited in silence. Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a face of blank astonishment, read the letter through a second time. Then he stared at the juniors.

"Good gad!" he repeated. "What does this mean? Is the man mad? Do you know anything of this, Herbert?"

"That depends on what it is, dad," answered the Bounder.

"Look at it!"

The millionaire flung the letter on the table. He signed to the juniors to read it, and they all read it together, with an amazement as great as the millionaire's.

It was undoubtedly a remarkable and rather surprising epistle. It ran:

"Venerable and Honoured Mister. —Humble greetings and respectabilities from your obedient servant, Chunder Run.

"Son of tremendous wealthy gentleman having tumbled into hands of yours sincerely, remains immured in commodious residence in parts unknown.

"Comprehending with feeling heart the illimitable grief of such sad parting, yours sincerely will undertake to restore missing filial descendant, on remuneration of trifling sum in hardened cash.

"To regain personal view of beloved son, payment of ten thousand English pounds is indispensable desideratum.

"Non-payment of such sum will lead to utter and complete disappearance of estimable Herbert Vernon-Smith, whose sad remains will find hidden interment, after approximation of fatal dagger.

"This would be great grief to feeling heart of yours sincerely, and unquestionably painful to your respectable self. Therefore, let the envisaged sum of hardened cash be forthcoming with a prompt dispatch.

"Banknotes emanating from respected Bank of England are preferably required, and in prompt subsequence, missing son will be restored to weeping parent.

"Affirmative answer may be indicated by light displayed prominently in window at witching hour of midnight, after which arrangements will be perpetrated for handing over of desiderated sum.

"Not seeing such described light as affirmative signal, fatal dagger will immediately approximate to unhappy son.

*"Believe me, venerable sir,
"Your obsequious humble,
"CHUNDER RUN."*

Harry Wharton & Co. perused that wonderful example of Baboo English in utter amazement. The most amazed of all was Herbert Vernon-Smith. The amazing diction of the "educated Hindoo" made the juniors smile, though they realised that it was not a smiling matter. Under the ridiculous language there was evident a deadly and ruthless purpose.

"My only hat!" said Harry Wharton at last.

Snort from Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. "Well, what does that mean, Herbert?" he demanded.

"Ask me another, dad!" said the Bounder, shrugging his shoulders. "That fat Baboo must be off his chump, I should say."

"He says that he holds you a prisoner, and that I am to pay ten thousand pounds for your release!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Is the man some wandering lunatic?"

"Looks like it!"

"My esteemed sir—" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The ridiculous Baboo has got the wrong pig by his esteemed ear."

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!" Wharton understood suddenly. "Bunter! He's got hold of Bunter!"

"Great pip!"

"Bunter!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith testily. "Is the man idiot enough to believe that Bunter is my son?"

"My hat!" said Smithy. "That's it! That's why the fathead bagged him at Nairobi! He thinks that fat idiot is little me."

"That's it," said Wharton, with conviction. "I remember now that day up in the hills when we got him away from the leopard, I thought he was taking Bunter for Mr. Vernon-Smith's son. And the fat chump may have done something, or said something, to make him believe so—"

"He had my lunch-basket in the train, with my name on it," said the Bounder. "But—"

"Good gad!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. He stepped quickly to the window and looked out. But, as he expected, the coolie who had handed him the letter had vanished.

"So that's where Bunter is," said Bob Cherry. "Chunder Run has bagged him again, and he thinks he's Smithy, and he's asking ten thousand pounds for him. Phew!"

"The scoundrel!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Ten thousand fiddlesticks! I shall not pay the villain one penny!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith's jaw shut like a vice.

The juniors looked at him, and looked at one another.

Had the Bounder fallen into Chunder Run's hands, as the Baboo believed, doubtless Mr. Vernon-Smith might have taken a different view, though certainly it would have gone severely against the grain to part with a large sum of money to a lawless scoundrel. Nevertheless, to save his son from danger Mr. Vernon-Smith undoubtedly would have parted with ten or twenty times as much. Indeed, his whole fortune would have weighed very little in the millionaire's mind in comparison with the life of his son.

But owing to the Baboo's egregious mistake it was not Herbert Vernon-

Smith, but Billy Bunter who was in the grip of the kidnapper.

That made all the difference.

Rich as he was, Mr. Vernon-Smith could hardly be expected to part with ten thousand pounds on account of a fellow who had fairly asked for what had happened to him.

It was natural, too, that he should not take the Baboo's threatening letter with such seriousness as would have been the case had it really referred to his son.

"The rascal!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "The impudent scoundrel! Not a penny—not a farthing! Good gad! I'm to show a light in my window to tell him that I agree to pay ten thousand pounds blackmail! Good gad! If he watches for that light he will watch a very long time! Huh!"

The millionaire gave an emphatic snort.

"It seems that he has got hold of Bunter in mistake for my son! Thank goodness, Herbert, that he made such a mistake!"

"He wouldn't have got hold of me so easily," said the Bounder, with a curl of the lip. "The man's as big a fool as he is a rogue; only a fat idiot like Bunter could have landed in this!"

"True, quite true!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I have no doubt the rascal will soon be brought to book. There is a police-officer at Naivasha, fortunately, with some askaris. I will see him at once and take this letter to him. I have no doubt he will soon lay this scoundrel Chunder Run by the heels."

With another snort, Mr. Vernon-Smith crumpled the letter into his pocket and stalked away.

The juniors looked at one another. Smithy whistled softly.

"Good heavens!" muttered Wharton. His face was pale. "Smithy, old man, that fool of a Baboo believes he's got hold of you. He means every word he says in that letter, silly as it sounds."

"I know!"

(Continued on next page.)

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"And—and Bunter?" muttered Bob. "I know the fat fool has asked for this. He must have done something fat-headed to make the Baboo feel so sure that he's Smithy. But—but if the brute doesn't see that light in your father's window at midnight, Smithy—"

"I know!"

"What on earth's going to be done?" breathed Nugent.

The Bounder set his lips a little.

"My father's not the man to be threatened by a babbling Baboo," he said. "He won't pay a stiver; he means that. He can't be expected to. He will leave the matter in the hands of the police."

"But—but, Bunter—" muttered Johnny Bull.

"I'd dare say he'd pay if it was me," said Smithy, with a faint grin. "But it isn't, you see. The proper thing in a case like this is to leave it to the police."

"Yes, but—"

"The Baboo will have to come round to watch Mr. Vernon-Smith's window at midnight," said Harry slowly. "But it will be pitch dark, and he won't come near—no chance of spotting him."

"None!" muttered Bob.

"Not for us!" said the Bounder, with a nod.

"Or the police-officer, either, whoever he is. Even if he felt inclined to hang about all night watching you can bet that Chunder Run will have his eyes open for him."

"You can bet on that!" agreed the Bounder.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

There was horror in the faces of the Greyfriars fellows. All Bunter's irritating folly was forgotten now. He was in the hands of a man who, if his demands were not met, would take his life as unscrupulously as a mosquito's. Absurd as was the language in which Chunder Run's letter was couched its ruthless meaning was perfectly clear to the juniors, if not to Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

"If—if we had the faintest idea where he was—" muttered Bob.

"We haven't!"

Wharton fixed his eyes on the Bounder.

"You're thinking of something, Smithy. What is it?"

"Kicky!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"That scoundrel of a Baboo will hang about to-night to see if the light is shown in my father's window. We shouldn't have an earthly of spotting him—and he will be on the watch for a white officer or askaris. But Kicky—"

"Kikolobo?" breathed Wharton.

"He's never seen Kicky—knows nothing of him. And Kicky can see in the dark like a cat and almost follow the track of a bird in the air. I'm going down to Kicky's hut—"

"Oh!" muttered Wharton. "You can describe the Baboo to him—he's easy enough to recognise—"

"That's it! It's possible that Chunder Run may send some confederate to see whether the light's shown in the window. But anybody who is seen watching the hotel at midnight won't get away from Kicky, whether it's the Baboo or not. Anyhow, there's nothing else to be done."

"Nothing!" said Harry, with a deep breath.

Herbert Vernon-Smith left the hotel. He went alone to the Kikuyu's hut by the lake, the other fellows remaining in the hotel. It was some time before the Bounder returned, and they gave him anxious looks.

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"It's fixed with Kicky," said Smithy. "He's not frightfully keen on the small fat one; but he would do anything for me! I fancy we can rely on Kicky pulling it off. Anyhow, that's all there is to it! We've got to wait—and hope!"

But it was with heavy and anxious hearts that the Greyfriars fellows waited, and the long minutes seemed to pass on leaden wings.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Unseen One!

MR. CHUNDER RUN gritted his teeth hard.

Standing in the deep shadow of a tree, at a considerable distance from the hotel, the fat Baboo was watching.

It was midnight.

From the railway station a light twinkled. The hotel was plunged in blackness.

Darkness lay like a thick velvet cloak on Naivasha, on the wide lake, on the hills beyond the shadowed pasture-land, peopled with woolly backs.

Through his big horn-rimmed glasses the Baboo watched.

His spy, Lal Jang had told him all he needed to know. He knew which were the windows of the rooms occupied by the Greyfriars party. He waited to see the light in Mr. Vernon-Smith's window.

But no light came.

Midnight passed; and still the darkness was unbroken.

He gritted his teeth hard.

It was scarcely possible for Chunder Run to believe that the millionaire intended to pass his threat unregarded. Long ago he must have missed his son. Long ago he had received the Baboo's letter. That he had gone to see the police-officer of the district the Baboo knew; Lal Jang had spied and reported. But that the police-officer or his askaris could render any help the Baboo knew was impossible. The kidnapped schoolboy was safely hidden away; weeks of searching might fail to unearth him. And time for a search was not granted. Only till midnight—

Chunder Run was wary. His slits of eyes were watchful through his big glasses. Had he spotted a white officer, or even a native askari, he would have vanished like a ghost at cock-crow. But he spotted nothing that could alarm him.

Long after midnight he still watched and wondered, with a growing cold fury!

The light did not show. His demand and his threats were treated with contemptuous indifference.

Not for a moment did it cross the Baboo's mind that he had captured the wrong man. The explanation was not likely to occur to him. He believed that he had the millionaire's son in his power; and he was amazed at the apparent indifference of the father.

He had fully expected to see the signal light. Wary negotiations through third parties would have followed, every point guarded by the cunning Baboo for his own safety. He was quite prepared for the millionaire to affect agreement and attempt to trick him afterwards. But he was not prepared for this utter disregard; and it enraged him with a savage, bitter rage.

The Baboo was risking long years of imprisonment. He had no hope of remaining in Kenya after this; only flight from British jurisdiction could save him from punishment. He could

afford to abandon his business and connections in Kenya if he went with ten thousand pounds in his pockets. But if he had to flee without his expected prize—

In that case the tiger in the jungle would be no more savage and pitiless than the fat Baboo. His prisoner would remain in an unmarked grave in the forest when he fled. If he had to swallow his disappointment, at least he would revenge it.

Blacker grew his fat brow, darker and more bitter his thoughts as he watched in vain for the signal light to gleam in the dark window.

He stirred at last.

It was an hour after midnight; he had waited, hoping against hope; but it was evidently useless to wait longer.

There was so signal. He was disregarded and defied. Either the millionaire did not believe his threats were in earnest, or he was trusting to the police-officer to seize him in time.

If that was the case, it was a frail reed that the white sahib was leaning upon. The Baboo intended to be far away before the askaris had a chance of tracking him down.

His lips were drawn back in a snarl like a wild animal's; his eyes gleamed with savage ferocity behind his big glasses as he moved away from the spot at last.

He had failed!

He had counted upon the ransom of the millionaire's son as an absolute certainty—as indeed he might have done had it been Herbert Vernon-Smith who was in his hands. But he had failed; and all that remained for him to do was to keep clear of the askaris, who certainly would soon be hunting for him—a disastrous end to his cunning scheme.

His hand closed on the dagger under his cummerbund. That weapon was to be used before he fled from the askaris. The millionaire who had contemptuously disregarded him would never see his son in life again. He would learn that the threat he had disregarded had been terribly in earnest.

The fat Baboo, his dusky face almost green with rage and disappointment, glided away through the darkness and shadows.

If a shadow among the shadows stirred he was unaware of it. He was wary—on his guard; watchful for white officers and askaris. But he did not dream that a Kikuyu hunter, the slayer of lions and leopards, the keenest tracker in all the land of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, was watching him.

Kikolobo, who could tread so softly that his step would not alarm the listening leopard in the jungle, was not likely to give the alarm to Mr. Chunder Run. He who could track the coiling python in the elephant grass, was not likely to lose the track of the Baboo.

For a mile from Naivasha Station the Baboo was watchful; but after that he padded on, without a glance round him in the gloom. No sound reached him of a pursuer.

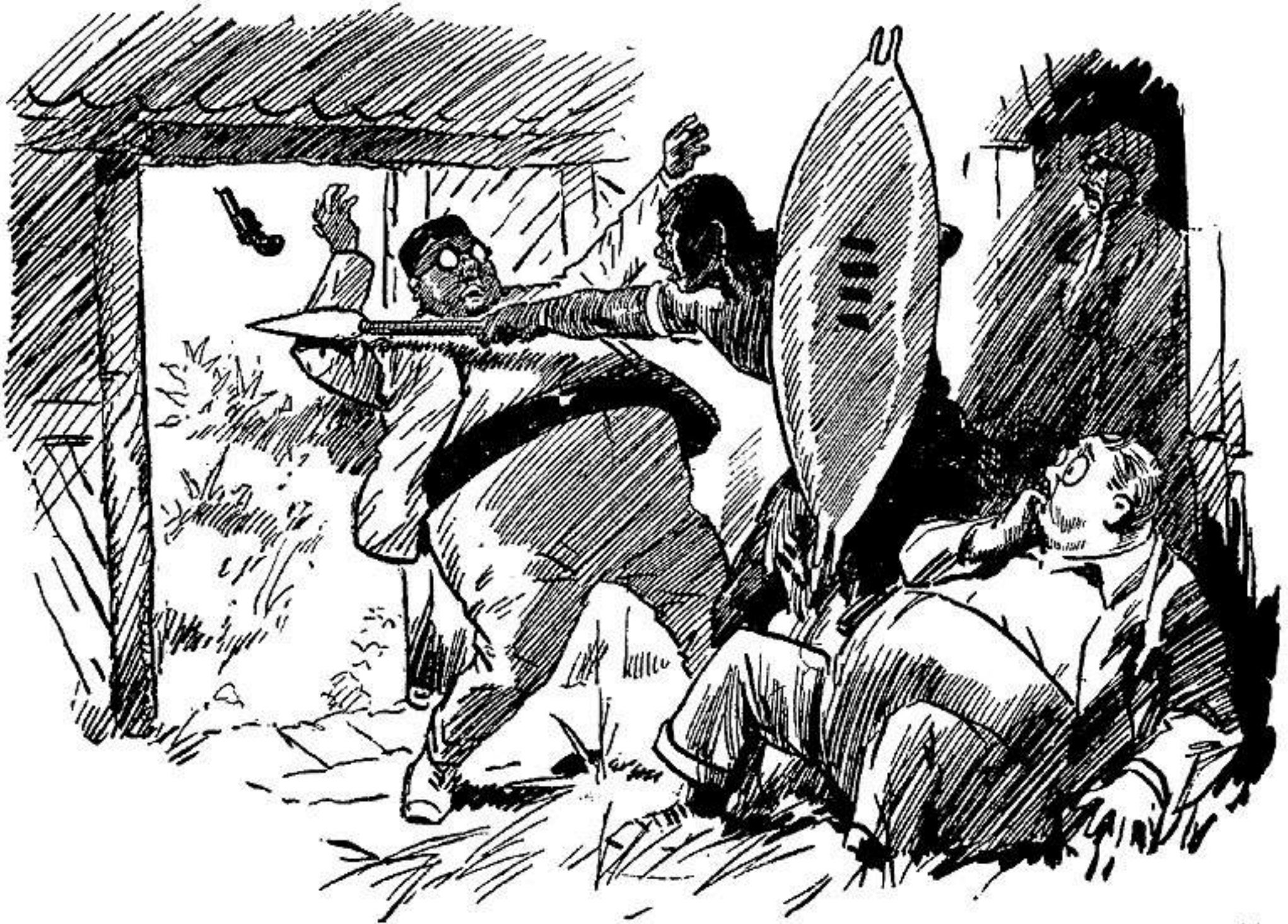
He tramped on in the darkness.

Another mile, and another! Then the Baboo turned from a lonely track into a dense wood.

A quarter of a mile he trod among the trees, where there was no path. Then he stopped at a wooden hut almost hidden by bushes and brambles. From a small window, screened by a blanket, came a glimmer of light.

A grim, savage smile crossed his dark face for a moment as a sound reached him from the hut.

It was a snore!



Swift as the Baboo was, Kikolobo was swifter. The Kikuyu's spear whizzed through the air, and there was a shriek from Chunder Run, and his pistol dropped from his hand!

Chunder Run tapped lightly on the flimsy door of the hut. It was immediately opened from within.

He stepped in and Lal Jang closed the door.

The hut was small and wholly unfurnished. On a heap of grass in a corner lay the fat junior whom Chunder Run believed to be Herbert Vernon-Smith. He was fast asleep.

Lal Jang had risen from a bundle of grass as the Baboo knocked. He rubbed sleepy eyes as he blinked inquiringly at the fat man in the dim light of a small kerosene lamp.

"All is well?" he asked in his own tongue. But he knew from the Baboo's black and bitter look that all was not well.

The Baboo shook his head, showing his teeth in a snarl. From under his cummerbund the curved Indian dagger glimmered out into the light.

He made a gesture towards the sleeping junior; and Lal Jang, without a word, crossed to Bunter and shook him by the shoulder.

Outside the hut, a shadow among the shadows moved lightly; and a tall and massive figure in monkey-skins, with three fighting spears, stopped silently at the door.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kikolobo Takes a Hand!

BILLY BUNTER opened his eyes. He sat up in the heap of grass and jammed his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at the two Hindoos. Bunter had not been enjoying life

since he had driven away in the donkey-cart from Kijabe.

Where he had been taken, he had not the faintest idea; only he knew that after many jolting miles he had been jerked out of the donkey-cart and led through a wood to this lonely hut. The donkey-cart had been driven away by the coolie; Bunter had been led into the hut, and since then, either the skinny Lal Jang or else Chunder Run himself had been with him all the time; he had had no chance of attempting escape.

It was a late hour before Bunter laid down to sleep. Sleep generally came easily enough to the Owl of Greyfriars, but in his terror of the slit-eyed Baboo he found it difficult to woo slumber. But he had slept at last, and snored, and for quite a long time Lal Jang had sat and listened to his nasal solo, while he awaited the return of Chunder Run.

Bunter opened his mouth to speak, as he awoke at the shake and sat up, but the words died on his fat lips as he saw the Baboo.

A shudder ran through his fat limbs. Chunder Run, in his enormous horn-rimmed glasses and his cummerbund, was still a figure of fun to the view. But the slits of eyes from behind the glasses gleamed murder; and the Baboo, with the bare dagger in his hand, was testing the keen edge with a dusky finger. The cold, suppressed fury in his fat face was blood curdling.

"You will get up, honourable young mister," said Chunder Run in a soft voice that was like the purr of the tiger of his native land. "Pleeece to assume perpendicular."

There was something horrible, unnerving, in the contrast between the ridiculous English and the tigerish voice in which the words were spoken.

Bunter shuddered. He dragged himself to his feet.

"I—I say——" he gasped.

"Honourable parent of tremendous wealth desires to grudge payment of sun in hardened cash," said the Baboo. "Life of son goes out like flicker of extinguished candle in subsequent consequence——"

"Ow!" gasped, Bunter. "I—I say——"

"Utterance of words is superfluous and obnoxious," said the Baboo. "Sudden demise is item on programme of immediate subsequence——"

Crash.

Chunder Run started violently, and Lal Jang leaped almost clear of the floor as the flimsy door of the hut crashed in under the heave of a mighty shoulder.

A terrifying figure leaped into the hut.

The two Hindoos stared in almost dazed terror at the tall Kikuyu in striped monkey-skins, rhinoceros-shield on arm, spears in his hands.

Bunter gave him one blink and yelled:

"Help! Kikolobo—I say, help! Save me! Oh, save me! Help!"

Chunder Run and Lal Jang backed to the wall; the skinny little Hindoo gurgling with fear, the fat Baboo grasping his dagger with convulsive rage.

Kikolobo gave Bunter a glance.

"O, Small Fat One," he said gravely,

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"I, Kikolobo, the mightiest hunter of the Kikuyu, am here to save you."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"For it is the order of the Bwana—Bwana-wangu!" said the Kikuyu, "and I, Kikolobo am proud to serve him."

Bunter made a bound and placed himself behind the massive figure in monkey-skins.

How the Kikuyu had come there, was a mystery to Bunter, as to the Hindoos, but never had Bunter been so glad to see anybody as he was to see the tall hunter whom he had always loftily regarded as a "nigger."

The fat junior gasped with relief when the massive figure stood between him and the snarling Baboo.

Chunder Run gripped the dagger, his eyes burning. Lal Jang, trembling from head to foot, crept along the wall towards the open door, his eyes fearfully on the fierce-looking Kikuyu.

"Black and obnoxious Kikuyu," snarled Chunder Run, "transport yourself with immediate prompt dispatch from interiors of this building."

"O, Fat Black One!" said the Kikuyu. "I am here to save the Small Fat One, that being the order of the Bwana, whose command to me is as powerful as the voice of N'gai, who dwells on the summit of the Great Mountain. But, also, the Bwana has commanded me to shed no blood if no weapon is raised against me, and for that reason I bid you go in peace."

"Let not your feet linger, O, Fat Black One," he said, "and all will be well with you. For it is the wish of Bwana-wangu that my spear shall drink no blood."

The Baboo, mad with rage, stood eyeing him like a tiger. Then slowly he turned to the door.

The dark eyes of the Kikuyu watched him.

In the doorway the treacherous Baboo turned with sudden swiftness, and there was a flash of gleaming steel in the light, as he hurled the dagger full at the face of the native hunter.

Swift as he was, the Kikuyu was as swift. His spear swept up and dashed the whizzing weapon aside.

The Baboo's dusky hand was in his cummerbund; it darted out with an automatic in its grip.

A second more and the Kikuyu would have rolled on the floor with a bullet in his brain.

But that second was enough for the Kikuyu hunter.

Swifter than the Baboo, swift as the wretch was, the Kikuyu's spear darted, and Chunder Run reeled over with a shriek, the pistol dropping from his hand.

The broad blade of the spear was driven deep through his shoulder.

The Baboo collapsed on the floor in a pool of blood.

Back jerked the spear, dripping red, and the Baboo shrieked in fear of the death-thrust. But the Kikuyu checked the thrust.

"O Fat Black One," he said calmly, "but for the command of Bwana-wangu you should die under this spear, which has slain braver men. Give thanks for your life to Bwana-wangu, the son of Bwana-m'kubwa!"

A groan from the disabled Baboo was the only answer.

Lal Jang, with a sudden leap, vanished through the doorway. He was heard crashing through the thickets in flight, and the Kikuyu smiled grimly.

The Kikuyu dropped a hand on Bunter's shoulder.

"Let your feet follow me, O Small Fat One!" he said.

"Ow! Yes, rather! Let's get out of this!" gasped Bunter through his chattering teeth. "Oh dear! Ow!"

The Kikuyu led him from the hut.

Lal Jang had vanished in the night. Chunder Run was left lying where he had fallen, and his groans followed the Kikuyu and the rescued junior as they plunged into the darkness of the wood.

Billy Bunter stumbled along by the side of the tall hunter. He could see nothing, but the hand of the Kikuyu guided him without a pause.

They emerged from the wood at last into an open track. There the Kikuyu stopped and regarded the stumbling, gasping Owl gravely.

"O Small Fat One," he said, "your feet are slow and soon tired, and it is yet a great distance to Naivasha. I, Kikolobo, will bear you on my back, and we shall see Naivasha with our eyes, O Small Fat One, when Siku, the Day, opens the eyes of Bwana-wangu."

And the powerful Kikuyu lifted Bunter in his brawny arms, slung him over a broad shoulder, and bore him away through the night in the direction of Naivasha.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Off to Uganda!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were up before the first gleam of dawn.

Early as the dawn was, it found the Famous Five outside the hotel at Naivasha, with the Bounder watching anxiously.

They had scarcely closed their eyes during the night, which had seemed endless.

They felt a shuddering certainty that the Baboo would carry out his threat. The life of the missing junior depended on Kikolobo. Mr. Vernon-Smith, satisfied to leave the matter in official hands, and by no means convinced that so absurd a letter as the Baboo's came from a desperate and ruthless man, was still sleeping, while his son and the Famous Five waited and watched outside the hotel for the Kikuyu.

The earliest gleam of the sun was coming up over Naivasha, catching the glimmering waters of the lake, when Bob Cherry uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Wharton caught his breath.

"He's coming!"

Dimly through the shadows loomed the tall figure in monkey-skins. The juniors ran towards him.

"I say, you fellows——" came a gasping squeak.

"Bunter!" panted Wharton.

"Bunter!" yelled the Bounder.

"Kicky's done the trick!"

"Oh, ripping!" gasped Nugent.

"The ripfulness is terrific."

Anxiety was over; deep relief took its

place. Never had Harry Wharton & Co. dreamed that they would be so glad to see the fat visage and glimmering spectacles of William George Bunter.

"Bunter!" said Johnny Bull. "Oh, my hat! I'm glad!"

The Kikuyu swung Bunter from his back and set him on his feet. Bunter stood and gasped.

"O Bwana-wangu," said Kikolobo, "this Kikuyu has carried out your commands, and now your eyes see the Small Fat One."

There was blood on the Kikuyu's spear-blade, and the eyes of the juniors fixed on it. The Kikuyu smiled.

"The Fat Black One lies sorely wounded," he said. "But this Kikuyu remembered the Bwana's wish and did not slay him. And if it be my lord's wish this Kikuyu will guide the askaris to seize him in the hut where he lies."

"Oh, good!" gasped the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Safe again, old bean!" said Harry Wharton, clapping Bunter on the shoulder. "Thank goodness you're all right!"

"I'm not all right!" grunted Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I've had a rotten time, and I'm hungry——"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Carried along like a sack of coke by that nigger!" said Bunter, with deep indignation. "You might have sent a car—or a rickshaw, at least."

"Oh crikey!"

"I'm aching all over——"

"Dear old Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Beast! I'm fearfully hungry! Look here, I'm jolly well going to have something to eat before I turn in! If they're all asleep in the hotel you can jolly well wake them up! See? I've had nothing to eat since I had a snack from Smithy's lunch-basket in the train. I'm famished! A black beast pitched me out of the train, and I left the lunch-basket——"

"We've got it, old fat man!" chuckled Bob. "Come in, and I'll take you straight to it. There's only enough for three or four lunches left in it, but it will last you till brekker——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm hungry!" hooted Bunter.

"And if this is what you call giving a fellow a holiday, Smithy——"

"Take him in and feed him, for goodness' sake, before I kick him!" said the Bounder.

"Beast!"

And Bunter was led in to feed.

Billy Bunter looked quite merry and bright the following afternoon when the Greyfriars party boarded the train again for Uganda.

Mr. Chunder Run was left safe in the hands of the authorities, and there was no more to be feared from him—indeed, it was likely to be many months before the Baboo recovered from his wound, to go to the prison that awaited him.

But Bunter was careful not to travel separated from his friends, all the same. He was not taking risks. And he was quite glad to get going for Uganda, after being kidnapped in Kenya.

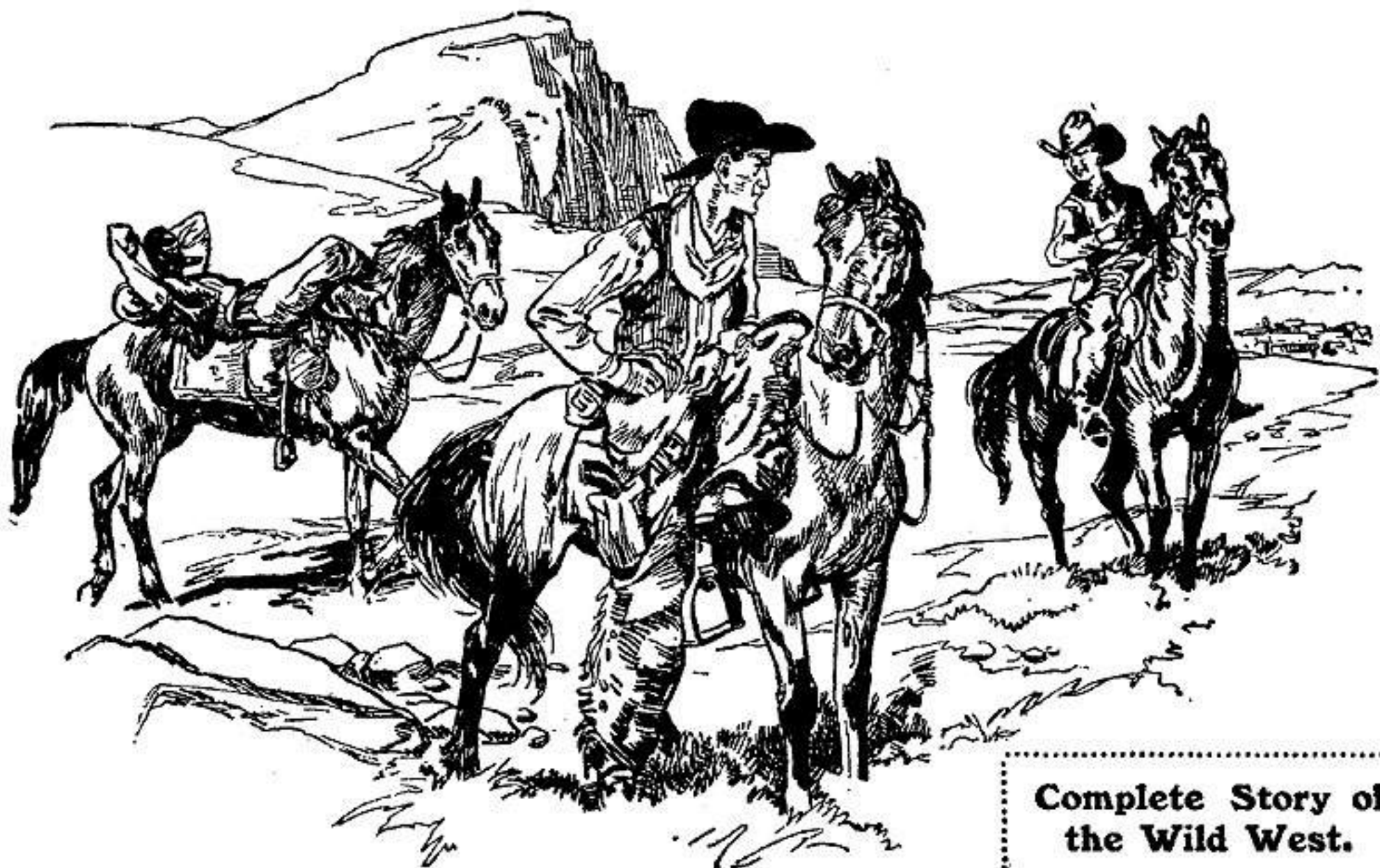
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Peace—Perhaps?

PEACE, perfect peace!" breathed "Doc" Low softly, turning his somewhat rotund form over in the purple sage and seeking a slightly softer spot on which to recline. "I have allus longed for that same, and at last I am sampling it. But for how long? Has it struck yuh lately, li'l one, that our High brother has got somethin' up his sleeve? He gits a month's leave o' absence from th' boss an' rides us three hundred miles into New Mex, an' ever since we have arrove at this yer Santa City he has been actin' kinder mysterious? Doesn't want us to be seen in th' town, asks us to camp up hyar an' himself scouts around wearin' a false beard, so's he won't be recognised? Yet he says he's never been in these parts before. Of course, in accordance wi' our slogan, 'One For All—'"

"All For One—" murmured Nippy mechanically.

"We have to comply; but he seems to have entirely forgot the rest of it—'For thar shall be—'"

"No secrets between us three," murmured Nippy, again completing the slogan of the "Three Must-Get-Their's." "Yuss, I rumbled it orl right; but, o' course, I didn't like to say anythink. I thought mebber it was somethin' to do wi' a donah—yer know wot 'Igh is where th' fair sect is concerned. Hinflamable, I thinks th' word, eh?"

"Most happy, most appropriate!" approved the professor gravely; "it describes our friend to a T. Moreover, I've heard him mutter, more or less as a sort of explanation of our present—er—pilgrimage, something about, 'He's treated her dirty, an' I'm goin' to git him!' I only hope it does not mean a

blood feud on behalf of some she-male, for, as you know, I am all for peace!"

"Yuss, I've noticed it—sometimes!" grinned Nippy sarcastically. "At other times I've seen yer sail inter trubble like a plurry wild cat. One minnit yer talk like a college professor, an' th' next like th' toughest tough."

"Dee-plorabile, but true, my dee-ar friend!" murmured Doc Low. "It is environment and association. 'When in Rome do as the Romans do!'"

"In case th' rum 'uns does yer fust!" grinned Nippy.

"But to return to our long friend. I have watched him through my binocular glasses, down there in the city of Santa, and I have noticed that he prowls about

Bull Baron's Blackbeards turn blue when our Puncher Pals beard them in their den!

in that beard of his as if seeking someone, and he haunts the little restaurant where most of the better class inhabitants get their meals. Further, I have seen a trim and comely damsel come out of there and busy herself in the little strip of vegetable garden at the back. But to-night we shall doubtless know more about it, for he has promised that we shall go into the town and see a bit of life. It seems that every Saturday the cowpunchers from the neighbouring ranches ride in for their weekly recreation—"

"Oh, for any sake, 'oldup on them long words. Yer a cowpuncher yerself, ain't yer? Talk like one!"

"Okay, li'l one, that goes wi' muh!" responded Low, in broad Western slang. "C'mon, bo', it's nigh sundown, an'

High is goin' to meet us at th' Sam Slicker speak-easy. Let's mosey pronto an' kinder give that burg th' onct over!"

Half an hour's fast riding took them down the winding trails from the high mesa where they had been camping, into the little cow-town. Already the "city" was packed with punchers from the various ranches round about, and the one topic of talk appeared to be the recent activities of a gang of rustlers and hold-up men known as Bull Baron's Blackbeards, from the fact that they were led by a wily desperado named "Bull" Baron, and that every member of his gang either grew a natural beard or wore a false one as a disguise when on their nefarious business.

"Th' blamed sheriff don't seem to git too busy," growled one ranch-owner. "Why don't he git a posse an' rout th' cuss out'n his stronghold. He knows purty well wharabouts et is, don't he?"

"H'm, mebber, but don't forgit as Sim Howett's a'ready had three posses cl'ared out on a raid an' he's been wounded hisself. 'Tain't so all-fired easy to smoke them rustlers out. They seem to have had warnin' of ev'ry raid in advance, an' ambushed him. It'll take some li'l posse to capture Bull an' his men, believe muh!"

Low was watching High as he lounged against the bar and heard these comments, and he noticed that the long puncher's eyes narrowed in the way they had when he was deeply interested or excited, and his long, lean fingers curled into claws near the butts of the six-guns which hung at his thighs.

Low's keen brain thought rapidly. Was this man who had "treated her dirty," one of Bull Baron's gang? What was High's motive in coming to Santa City? Was it even Bull Baron, rustler

and road-agent and general "bad man," who was his pal's objective.

"C'mon, let's git out'n this!" he muttered in High's ear, but the long puncher shook him off impatiently.

"I'm stickin'!" he growled in reply. "Yuh kin mosey if yuh want. Yuh'll find me right hyar when ye come back. Go on, Nippy—beat et!"

"I'm stoppin' with yer, long 'un," was the Cockney's reply, as he gave a significant wink to Low. He also had seen High's tense attitude, and meant to be in it if there was any trouble. "Th' doc's goin' to feed his fice, I reckon. Yer know 'ow delikit 'e is, an' must 'ave 'is grub reg'lar. 'E's on'y 'ad five meals so far to-day, an' is feelin' faint. Run along, granpa!"

Low had a motive in deserting the other two for a while, and made his way across to the little eating shack which displayed the sign "Ethel's Place" on a board across the front, and into which he had seen the disguised High make his way so many times.

The trim little proprietress waited on the customers herself, and just at the present time, being the slack hour, the large eating-room was empty. Low sat up at the counter and gave a large order, and whilst the girl was fetching it, watched her closely. It was easy to see from her red-rimmed eyes and saddened face that she was in trouble of some sort. Low had a heart as big as a bullock's, and his sympathies were aroused. He made one or two casual remarks in his best and most cultured tones, and the girl looked at him with interest, replying in the low, soft Texan drawl.

"Texas, aren't yuh, miss?" he asked, "What part?"

"Dad had a ranch near the Brazos, but he lost all his cattle in a drought, and it kinder finished him. Ted, my brother, tried to carry on, but he was killed in a stampede, and I had to sell out and come here. This isn't so bad, if— Oh, some things— But it isn't Texas!"

The Brazos—High's old stamping ground!

"I knew a guy one time came from that part. Feller of the name of Jinks—a long, thin guy—"

"Very quick with the gun?" she asked excitedly. "Why, he was Ted's greatest friend! Oh, if he was only here now! I'm in trouble, and I've got to have help, and there's no one I can trust in Santa!" She was near to tears.

Now there was something about Doc Low which inspired the trust and friendliness of men and women alike. Perhaps it was the shrewd, but kindly gleam in his eyes, his worldly-wise humour or his ready sympathy. Whatever it was, it impelled the girl to blurt out a story which the experienced cow-puncher had already half guessed. She showed him a ring she wore upon her finger, a thick gold rope in which sparkled a milk opal; not a valuable stone but such a one as a puncher might give his girl.

It had been given to her by a young rider named Bill Kekewich, who had worked on a neighbouring ranch. But he was somewhat wild and easily led away.

"It was because he was so anxious to make money quickly so that we could get married," the girl said simply. "I told him I would wait for years if

needed, but Bill's kinder impulsive. Now—now—he's got in with Bull Baron's Blackbeard gang. He's ashamed of himself, and thinks that as he's turned rustler I'll throw him over—but I wouldn't, whatever he's done. My Bill's a white man at heart—if I could only let him know—"

"Missy, if yuh'll trust me, I'll get word to him an' let him know your feelin's, an', with a bit o' luck, I'll get him back for yuh. I've got a hunch it kin be done. Let me have thet ring so's to show him I'm on th' square, an' if he ain't hyar eatin' humble pie in your restorng inside a week—call me a spavined ol' acid drop!"

Ten minutes later Doc Low left the little eating shack with Ethel Manning's ring in his pocket, and a full-sized scheme simmering in his brain.

He grinned to himself as he set off for Sam Slicker's saloon.

"Guess I'm one up on ol' High!" he murmured. "Thar ain't no secret 'tween us three now, High, an' I'm goin' to show you some fun, boyee. 'Treated her dirty, has he? I reckon not; we'll wipe th' dirt cl'ar away an' make th' li'l lass happy!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nippy Nips In!

POP-POP, crack-crack, pop-pop! There was a small crowd around a shooting saloon where a long, gangling cowboy was showing off with two sixes. There were murmurs of admiration as he scored bull after bull, and he smirked his satisfaction. He turned to the admiring group of his ranch mates.

"Thet ain't nuthin' to what I kin do wi' a rifle," he bragged. "Gimme a twenty-two rifle, boss!"

There was a white-chalked target at the extreme end, and, pumping out bullets as fast as he could pull trigger, he "wrote" his name: "Gus Sloman" with the successive shots.

"Whoopee! Hurrah for th' ol' XL!" yelled a friend, clapping the marksman on the back. High and Low were watching the shooting, and Nippy gave his lengthy pal a dig in the ribs.

"Garn, long 'un, show 'im some-think!" he whispered. "Yer o'ud beat 'im wiv one 'and tied be'ind yer!"

Thet was enough for the Texan, who was always ready to show his prowess to the glory of Texas. He winked at the saloon proprietor.

"Fill her up ag'in, boss, an' lemme show th' gent somethin' he's forgot. He ain't completed his sentence yet!"

His hand moved swiftly to the breast of his shirt, where glittered a peculiar-

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looking tie-pin. It was actually a tiny mirror, which he clipped on behind the back sight of the rifle without the onlookers seeing his sleight-of-hand movement.

"Dead easy to hit a target size o' a barn door when yer kin see it. How 'bout when yer can't, Slocum?"

He turned his back to the target, and, sighting the little mirror, rapidly emptied the magazine. There was a shout of amazement from the men as neatly formed letters followed Gus Sloman's, reading, "is too durned slow." Then a yell of laughter followed as it was seen that a couple of bullets had altered the "Gus" to "Gas," and the lanky cowboy's face turned crimson with wrath.

"I weren't gassin'," he cried. "Shootin's shootin', an' yuh air more'n natteral. Mebbe a black beard makes yer shoot some better. Git plenty practice, huh?"

"Wot are you talkin' abaht, yer long ladder o' wind?" inquired Nippy, looking up at the lanky cowboy. "If my friend likes to wear a beard, 'e can, I s'pose, or 'as 'e got to ask yer permission? For two pins I'd slap yer acrost th' face!"

"Yuh would?" grinned the cowboy. "Run away, li'l boy, or I'll put yer across ma knee!"

Plunk! He reeled back from a blow that felt like the kick of a mule, and then plunged in at the Cockney with head down, prepared to slaughter the little insect. In two or three seconds he was slammed all around the booth, never being able to plant one blow on the elusive little feather-weight, and finished up on his back.

Low had been glancing around the crowd, and had noticed one man with a long, tawny moustache and cunning-looking eyes, set too close together, who seemed deeply interested in the doings of the "Three Must-Get-Theirs." As they returned to the saloon, this individual followed, and, from a dark corner, still kept his eyes on them. After a while he disappeared.

Tired at last of the noise and bustle, and anxious to get High away before any rumpus started, Low led his pals up to the bed-room which they were to share for that night. As he put his hand on the doorknob, he paused, and listened intently; then, shoving High on one side, he stood at the other and swung the door back as far as it would go. There was an oil lamp burning on the table, and seated at ease in a chair was the tawny-moustached, close-eyed man he had seen watching them.

"Hallo, ain't yuh made a mistake, stranger? This yer room is booked to us, see?" cried Low.

"No offence," said the man, waving his hand airily. "I jest wanted a word wi' yuh gents in private. Strangers hyar, ain't yuh? Wa'al I'm sheriff o' this yer burg." He flipped back the lapel of his coat and displayed his badge. "Sim Howett's my name, an' I guess yer jest th' very fellers I've been lookin' for!"

"Oh yeah? Why? I guess we ain't been doing nothin' unlawful. Spill it, anyway, an' then beat it!" snapped Low.

"Now, take et easy," advised the sheriff. "This is plumb straight business an' nothin' else. I seen yuh fellers do some right smart shootin', to say nothin' o' th' bantam-weight's scrappin'. Said to meself: 'Them's jest th' guys I need!' Have yuh heerd o' Bull Baron's Blackbeards?"



Bull Baron's hand went like lightning for his gun, but there was a quick flash from High's six-gun. The rustlers' leader was beaten to the draw!

"Oh, hellup, we've heard o' nothin' else!" grinned Low. "Yuh don't think we're in it, do yuh?"

"Nope; I know yuh air not. I reckon yer straight guys, but yuh know how to handle yerselves, an' that's what's wanted. Listen, thar's a thousand dollars ree-ward offered for Bull dead or alive, an' I want him brought in, eether feet-first or head-first—don't make no difference to me. I cain't do th' trick alone, an' I don't trust no local deputies, for Bull's spies air everywhere. For th' same reason I cain't go arter him with a posse, for he allus has warnin'. Now, I'm bein' roasted from head-quarters for not gettin' this rustler, besides th' citizens guyin' me. How 'bout yuh three assumin' deputies' badges an' go-gettin' him for me? Yuh're strangers hyar, and yuh know yer way 'bout. I'll add another five hundred apiece personally if yuh bring him in. Git muh?"

"Sure, we git yuh!" chuckled High. "Sheriff, we've burnt all th' fingers we're likely to, pullin' other people's chestnuts out'n th' fire. We wasn't born yesterday! Try some one that is a mite greener than what we air!"

"Yuss; Gas Slocum an' his pals," grinned Nippy. "'E cain't 'ave th' Must-Get-Thems on a piece o' string, eh, Low?"

"Will yuh put th' offer o' th' ree-ward, with yer own five hundred apiece, in writin', sheriff?" asked Low, to his pals' dismayed astonishment.

"Right now!" was the reply, and the man drew out his notebook and hastily scribbled a few sentences, then threw three deputies' badges on the table. "Thar's yer authority, an' th' reward will be paid d'rectly yuh bring in th' rustler chief!"

Low examined the document, nodded, and flicked over a badge to High and Nippy.

"Stick 'em in yer vest, boys," he said briefly. "We ride for this Bull Baron's stronghold to-morrer!"

After a few brief directions, the sheriff left, and the other two confronted the placid Low.

"What d'yuh think yer doin'?" demanded High. "Want to git us all killed? Goin' arter rustlers in a country we don't know. What for? Dollars—blood money! What do we care whose

steers he's rustled, or how many o' these pie-faced gazebos he's stuck up? We should worry!"

"All for peace, Low is; ball for plurry peace—I don't fink!" groaned Nippy.

"Listen, High; yuh are after li'l Ethel Manning's Bill Kokewich, ain't yuh? Sure, I know! Wa'al, he's with Bull Baron's Blackbeards, an' she wants him back. Nippy—'All for one—' C'mon boyees!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Frame-up!

DUSK next day saw them across the desert that separated the fastnesses of the hills from Santa City, and, as they entered the canyons, they loosened their rifles in their scabbards, and saw that their six-guns were all ready for action.

"Jest as well to be pree-pared," said Low confidently. "At th' same time, boyees, I don't mind bettin' that we're in no sorter danger—at present. I've gotta hunch thar's more in this yer business than meets th' eye; but time alone'll prove whether I'm right. We've got to be wary an' wily, so leave all th' talkin' to me, an' no gunplay till I gives th' word, see?"

At the top of the canyon they saw a large notice-board, on which was painted in red:

"NOTIS!!

One Shot is two miles funder on. Aincher forgot somethin' yer wanter turn back for? Thar's nothin' in O.S. to see, but a plenty to git. Try somethin' and see! **BLACKBEARDS.**"

A skull and crossbones ornamented the bottom of the board. Low rode leisurely up and touched the lettering with his finger.

"Humph! Paint's still wet!" he observed. "Put up to scare th' kids,

I guess. Some tough guy this yer outlaw, mebbe not. I never saw th' hard case yet that wasn't more'n half bluff. Keep a-goin', boys, but don't shoot unless I tell yuh."

In half an hour they were through the canyons, and entered a round, shallow basin entirely surrounded by thickly wooded hills. In the centre of this basin were half a dozen shacks and a big board store. All were lighted, and the sounds of a banjo and many voices came from the shacks. In the store a gaunt, broad-chested man with a vulturo face was bending over a book, apparently deep in accounts.

The three slid off their horses and entered the store.

"Evenin'! We wantor see Bull Baron," Low said abruptly. "Whar is he?" There was no reply, but the gaunt man turned a pair of cruel eyes on the three—eyes which glowed with the fire of a ferocious tiger's. "Lost yer tongue? Waal, we see th' sign, but we didn't turn back for anythin' we'd forgot, brother. We came right along, and we aim to stay. Whar's Bull Baron?"

"Away. Won't be back till mornin'," was the response, spoken through milk-white buck teeth with snarling, thin lips. "Yuh air welcome to stay till he comes if yuh want to. Meet th' boys!"

He must have made some secret signal, for a dozen men had filed into the store from the darkness outside, and stood in a semicircle behind the three chums. They were all heavily armed, and whiskered up to the eyes. Low ran his eye over the bunch of desperadoes and grinned.

"Waal, I may have seen a tougher-lookin' bunch, but I cain't rightly remember whar. Pleased to meet yuh fellers, but it's Bull Baron I wanter talk turkey to. Yuh infant class have my permission to vamose!"

He stroked his upper lip with his left hand, on which Ethel Manning's ring gleamed, and there was a startled movement from a slim figure at the end, and a half-smothered exclamation.

BULL BARON'S BLACKBEARDS!



(Continued from previous page.)

Low's keen eyes noted which man it was. Bill Kekewich, for a dollar! At a muttered word from the storekeeper the men turned and marched out as silently as they had come. Then a half-breed woman came in carrying some dishes, and set down a smoking hot supper at a table.

"Fall to, boys! Guess yer hungry!" grinned the man. "Yuh will see Bull arter breakfast. That'll be plenty soon 'nuff for yo!"

"S'pose we don't reckon on stayin'?" demanded High, his right hand straying towards his thigh.

The cold, yellow eyes followed his movement, and the gaunt face split in an evil smile.

"Reckon yuh'll stay!" he said tersely. "Take a stroll arter supper' an yo'll see why!"

They took him at his word, and saw that at each entrance to the basin a watch fire burnt, with armed men lying beside it. Then, as they walked across the space between the buildings, out of the shadows sprang a figure who accosted Low. He recognised the slender youngster who had started at sight of the ring.

"Whar d'yuh git that ring, cuss yuh? Speak quick, or I'll cut yer liver out!"

"Easy!" growled Low. "Bill Kekewich isn't it? Th' very feller I've come to see. Listen, Bill! Ethel's crazy 'bout yuh. Doesn't care what yuh've done. She jest wants yuh back, poor fool! But, seein' that's her wish, she's goin' to git yuh, but git yuh clean!"

There was a hurried whispered conversation, then Bill Kekewich disappeared into the shadows again, and the three returned to the store. The storekeeper sullenly indicated some blankets in which they could roll themselves, and left them to their slumbers.

Low lay awake, listening. After a while he heard the rattle of a horse's hoofs, the sound of a whispered conversation, in which he recognised the voices of the gaunt man and young Kekewich, then the drumming of the hoofs died away in the distance, and he smiled to himself.

"Guess my hunch is workin'!" he thought. "Bill's got leave to ride into Santa, but he'll be back. They ain't taken our guns from us. I'll lay a dollar my hunch is clean O.K.!"

Early in the morning, so early that the first streaks of dawn still showed in the East, the three rode through the forests, with the storekeeper on one side of them and half a dozen well-armed, bearded men behind them.

After an hour they pulled up in a small declivity in which there burned a small camp fire, with blankets, a skillet, and a coffee-pot beside it.

"Yuh'll wait hyar," said the gaunt man. "Bull will be along purty soon. Be mighty keerful what yer say to him, for he's a hard man—mighty hard. He'll inspect yuh, see?"

"Good luck to him! If he's hard we're tough, so we oughter git on ra'al good," said Low easily. "Hope he won't be long, for I want'er git busy!"

The storekeeper gave a series of orders.

"Monty, yuh go tell Bull we're hyar. Jacques and Mac, git out inter th' bush an' keep watch. Rest o' yuh boys scatter back a piece, an' keep a look-out. Be wary!"

"Say, yuh on'y want a brass band an' a flag or two to be a ra'al army!" chuckled Low. "Yuh leavin' too, brother? So-long!"

They watched the men disappear, then Low lifted his Roman nose and sniffed the air.

"Smell cattle, High? Yeh, over thar in th' bush. See th' game? Th' sheriff and his posse comes along an' finds us hyar, night rustled cattle, wi' camp fire an' all complete, an' collars us for th' rustlers. Yeah, that's it, boyees. Mr. Sim Howett's in with the 'gang' an' to save his face he's gotta find some rustlers. Three strangers happens along, shows some fancy shootin', makes 'emselves ra'al conspicuous. Easy for th' sheriff! Hark! That's hoofs a-rattlin' back thar! That'll be th' sheriff's posse beatin' th' woods. This is whar we mosey. Sit down to it, boyees, an' gallop!"

He led the way straight into the bush and breasted the hill, seeming to find his way by instinct. Then suddenly a thick clump of bushes were swept aside

and the mounted figure of Bill Kekewich showed, frantically beckoning them. They rode through and followed him at a tearing gallop, whilst behind them sounded the distant crackle of scattered rifle fire.

"Sheriff fightin' some o' Bull's gang—those he don't want any longer!" chuckled Low. "Now, boys, ride like billy-ho, for we've gotta cut off Bull Baron!"

Ten minutes later they entered the semi-darkness of a thick cluster of live oak, in which they were completely concealed. After a while there came the quick drumming of horses' hoofs, ridden at speed, and into the clearing beyond rode the storekeeper and half a dozen of his men. They pulled bridle and sat listening, then turned with a start as Low and the others broke through.

"Hello, Bull! Lookin' for me?" asked Low sweetly. "Thought I didn't know who yuh were, eh? Too bad! Put 'em up, boys!"

There was a yell from the storekeeper with the yellow eyes and gaunt face, for he was none other than Bull Baron. His hand went like lightning for his gun. There was a quick flash from High's six-gun, and the leader dropped with a bullet through his neck. Desperately the other men fought, but in a few seconds they were rounded up and bound hand and foot to their horses. Then the little party jogged back to Santa by devious ways.

There have been few more astonished men than the sheriff of Santa City when he returned with a tale of a desperato fight with the outlaws, to find the chief dead and half a dozen of his gang prisoners, whilst three grinning cow-punchers demanded the reward as stated in his own handwriting. He was forced to disgorge. Then Low turned the money over to young Kekewich and Ethel.

"Young feller, yuh beat it for Texas wi' yer gal. What yuh want to learn is to keep yer temper an' be peaceful. Nuthin' was ever gained by gettin' inter scraps. Ain't that so, boys?"

High caught Nippy's eye, and solemnly winked.

"Yuss, that's it. Foller Low's example, me lad. 'E's all for peace; Low is, all for peace—I don't fink!"

THE END.

(Watch out for High, Low, and Nippy in another thrilling adventure next week. It's packed with Wild West thrills and side-splitting laughs!)

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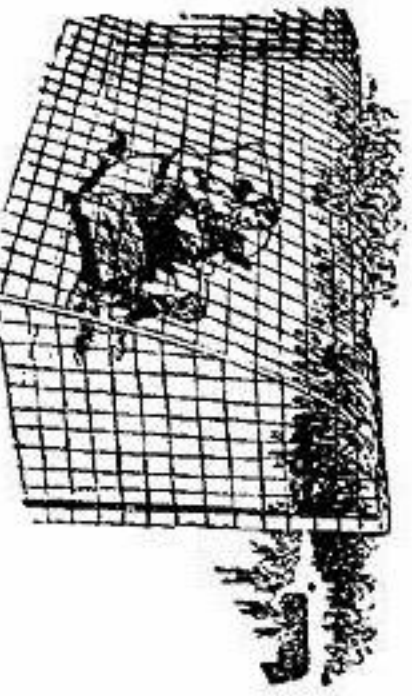
"Know anything about easy-chairs, Temple?" asked Hazeldene of Cecil Reginald Temple in the Rag the night before the first footer match between the Remove and the Fourth.

Cecil Reginald deigned to look round and nod. Usually, he ignores the Remove. As captain of the Fourth he feels that he has a position to keep up. But Hazeldene happened to be keeping goal for the Remove on the following afternoon, and could hardly be ignored altogether, in the circumstances.

"A little. Why?" he drawled in that bored tone which distinguishes Upper Fourth men from the civilised world.

Hazel smiled agreeably—which was rather surprising from a Remove man, considering that Temple had for at least half an hour been discussing the superiority of Fourth footer over the Remove brand.

"I thought you'd like to help me," he said. "I want to borrow a chair in which I can rely on being thoroughly comfortable for about an hour and a half."



"Queer idea—what?" drawled Temple, raising a bit.

"Well, I happen to know I shall have the chance of a real rest for that period of time, and I want to make sure of being really comfortable. Knowing you're a bit of an expert on most matters, I thought I'd ask your advice."

Cecil Reginald almost purred.

"Not a bad idea, certainly!" he admitted. "In the ordinary way, I wouldn't dream of making this offer to a Removee kid. But you're not a bad kind of chap, Hazeldene, so I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll lend you my own easy-chair!"

"You will?" exclaimed Hazel.

"You will?" exclaimed Hazel.

"Always glad to help an intelligent kid!" said Temple, with an approving nod.

"Well, if I can borrow it for twenty-four hours—"

"Done!" said Temple.

DINING OUT

Hints for Gourmets

With the dining-out season already here, the more exclusive and fashionable circles at Greyfriars are eagerly discussing the problem of where to go.

Naturally, one is content with nothing less than the dernier cri—the very latest resort of youth, fashion and frivolity.

And, of course, fashion changes so quickly that the place which was all the rage yesterday is empty and deserted to-day.

Uncle Clegg's bunnishop in Friar-dale was packed to the doors with the cream of society quite recently. To-day its marble halls are silent.

The hundreds of swif, immaculate Italian waiters stand about awaiting flies, for want of custom; while the huge Hungarian band plays to an empty house.

Society has flown.

Where has it gone?

Unless we are greatly mistaken, to Alf Smith's Fried Fish and Stewed Eel Emporium in Courtfield.

Here one may now listen to the light chatter of the setons of noble houses, mingling with the pleasant sound of eel-bones being thrown under the tables. A quaint and amusing resort!

Another much-frequented place these days is the One-price Ice-cream and Hot-drink Saloon in the High Street, where, for the modest sum of twopenny, one may gorge oneself on ices and hot drinks among the elite, to the romantic music of a penny-in-the-slot machine.

Need we mention the Dainty Tea Rooms? A place for wolf doughnuts and drink tea out of quaint cups, chipped and cracked all over and usually minus handles. Closing one's eyes and listening to the smashing of crockery and the popping of ginger-beer corks and sniffing the pleasing aroma of washing-up, one really feels that one is in a place designed by nature for the patronage of the nobility.

That's all for this week. Don't be surprised if we bob up again shortly with more news from the best circles!

A WONDER ON WHEELS

Trick Cycling at Greyfriars

KIPPS BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE

Mr. Kipps, of the Remove, gave a remarkable exhibition of trick cycling in the quad last night. The performance was in aid of the Distressed and Destitute Tuckshop Patrons' Fund, and attracted a large audience.

The show began with an accomplished exhibition of cycling on one wheel, during which Mr. Kipps collapsed only three times, doing no damage beyond buckling the handle-bars and smashing the brakes.

A display of vaulting whilst in motion followed, the bike merely losing its back step and



downwards, using his hands for pedalling purposes and his legs for steering. No damage resulted, with the exception of the loss of a pedal and a rather nasty puncture.

As his piece de resistance Mr. Kipps cycled in mid-air across a suspended length of wire, crashing only half a dozen times, to the accompaniment of loud applause.

Unfortunately, the performance terminated soon after that in somewhat peculiar circumstances. Mr. Colter of the Fifth was suddenly seen to be rushing towards the artist, shouting, for unknown reasons: "My bike! My bike!" On seeing him Mr. Kipps hurriedly mounted and rode off at terrific speed.

Not looking exactly where he was going, the trick cyclist drove right into Minible's toolshed with such force as to bring the entire structure crashing down in ruins.

We understand that Mr. Colker soon afterwards assaulted Mr. Kipps with great ferocity.

We condole with Mr. Kipps, and ask him to comfort himself with the reflection that he certainly did "bring down the house!"

NEGATIVE NEWS

Event Not Happened

Owing to a shortage of sensational happenings this week we are compelled to look for sensational items among the things which have not happened. We feel sure you'll find them quite as unimpeachable as our usual sensations. "snoots." Here goes! Egoism has not elanghtered a single fac at the last Wednesday! to the glories of New York!

HOW TO BE A BLADE

Mysteries of Blagging Revealed

SKINNER SHOWS THE WAY

An odour of tobacco-smoke and the sight of a pair of big feet on the table and a copy of "Sporting Snippings" spread out half-way across the room told the "Greyfriars Herald" Representative that he had arrived at the study of Mr. Harold Skinner, the celebrated bold, bad lad of the Remove.

"Would you be kind enough to show me how to be a blade?" the "G. H." Rep. asked.

Mr. Skinner nodded.

"Anything for a quiet life! The first thing you have to know is, how to put on a sneering grin."

"And how do you do that, Mr. Skinner?"

"Easy! I put mine on with gum every morning, before breakfast! Then, of course, you have to learn to curl your lips. The best way to do this is to put them in curlers overnight."

"And then?"

"Well, of course, the novice will have to know how to throw a quick, hunted look round the room. For this, I recommend practice with a boomarang; it helps to develop the circular motion, you know."

"I suppose one gets quite accomplished at it in time, Mr. Skinner?"

Mr. Skinner laughed.

"Oh, quite! I threw at least half a dozen, without any effort, just before you came in. Then, of course, there's the art of licking one's lips. Any blade worthy of the name licks his dry lips when he's in a fix."

"It must be rather difficult, sometimes!"

"Well, the licking part's easy enough," the bold, bad lad of the Remove replied. "It's getting them dry that's more of a problem."



YOUR DREAM—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Look Here for the Answer!

So many readers have written us recently asking what their dreams mean that we have decided, at enormous expense, to retain the services of Squiff, the celebrated dream expert and fortune-teller, author of "Trickshop Dreams and How to Have 'Em," and other classics. His first list of answers is printed below. His second list will possibly appear next week. More probably it will not.

"Bossy."—Three nights running. I've begun before going to bed each night are beginning to get the better of you!

"Horsery."—"I dreamed I was made captain of the First Blorvon. What does it mean?"—Bossy, "Horsery," dear! It means that in the near future you are likely to achieve distinction at hogscotch or marbles!

"Dear Squiff"—I dreamed last night that you paid me back that half-