

Another Frank Richards Thriller:

"THE SLAVE-TRADER'S VENGEANCE!" inside.

Tip-Top Holiday Adventure Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co.

The **MAGNET** 2^D



**Attacked by
Slave-Traders!**

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EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending October 3rd, 1931.



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.

LET'S kick-off this week with a Greyfriars limerick for which Sidney Grocock, of 18, Albany Street, Gainsborough, Lines, will duly receive a prize of a handsome leather pocket wallet. Here it is:

You've heard of Oliver Kipps,
Who is full of fun and quips?
He juggles with plates,
With balls and with weights,
And rarely does he make slips!

Our heartiest congratulations to Sidney.

The first query which comes to me this week is sent by a Portsmouth reader, who asks for some information

CONCERNING SCOTLAND YARD.

He has been very surprised to hear that Scotland Yard has no authority over the whole of England, and wants to know why that is! Simply because "Scotland Yard," as we call it, is really the Metropolitan Police Office, and deals only with metropolitan districts, and, in addition the Thames and the dockyards at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport. It might also surprise my reader to know that Scotland Yard has no authority in the City of London, which has its own police and commissioner.

When a serious crime is perpetrated outside the metropolitan area, Scotland Yard has nothing whatever to do with it—unless it is asked by the local police to help with the case. Naturally, however, as Scotland Yard is better fitted to track down criminals, it is very rarely that it is not consulted.

Here's a curious question, which Harry Sands, of Wolverhampton, sends along to me. He asks me which is

THE BIGGEST BRITISH DOMINION?

I suspect that Harry is trying to pull my leg. Doubtless he expects me to say "Australia"—but, strange as it may seem, Australia is *not* the largest dominion! Apart from the fact that Australia is composed of several states, even its total area is not so great as that of the largest dominion. There is one which has an estimated area of over three million square miles! And yet it has no population, and no capital! Have I got you guessing? Well, you'll find it right down at the bottom of a map of the world, and its name is South Georgia! It was acquired by the British Empire by occupation in the year 1771—but I have never heard of anyone wanting to live there regularly!

The smallest British dominion is Gibraltar, which has an area of only two square miles, and the least populated is the island of Ascension, on which only 150 people live. The greatest populated dominion is the Indian Empire, where there are about 320 million inhabitants.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,233.

Have you ever wondered what is

THE TALLEST BUILDING IN ENGLAND?

Nine people out of ten would say that St. Paul's Cathedral is. However, such is not the case. The spire of Salisbury Cathedral is 404 feet high, as against the 365 feet of St. Paul's. So Jim Sparkes, of Salisbury, wins the argument which he has been having with his chum!

Here is a list of the "biggest in the world," which might interest my readers:

- Highest Mountain: Mount Everest.
- Deepest Ocean: Pacific.
- Largest Island: Greenland.
- Longest River: Amazon.
- Tallest Building: Empire State (U.S.A.)
- Longest Canal: Gota (Sweden.)
- Largest City: London.
- Longest Tunnel: Simplon (Switzerland.)
- Most-spoken language: English.

I WOULD not like to say which is the funniest story in the world, but I can certainly pass on a very amusing one to you, which has been sent in by H. Smith, of 27, Bilton Hill, Rugby.

He gets a topping prize of a pocket knife for it, and if you know a more amusing story, send it along, and you'll get a prize, also!



Teacher (giving lecture on birds): "Why is it that a stork stands on one leg?"

Sharp-witted Boy: "Well, sir, if it lifted the other leg it would fall down!"



There are more prizes waiting to be won, chums, so pile in with your efforts.

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WHO SAYS

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THERE are a number of shorter queries to reply to this week, so here goes for my

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

Where is Bedlam? (G. C., of Taunton.) "Bedlam" is the name given to the Bethlehem Royal Hospital, which stands in the Lambeth Road, London. The hospital is now being removed to Shirley, in Surrey.

The earliest inhabitants of Britain. (Walter H., of Chelsea.) There were men living in these islands as early as 2,000 B.C. They are said to have belonged to a Central Asian race.

The Press Gang. (J. W., of Newcastle.) Whenever the supply of recruits for the Navy was going down, gangs of sailors used to go ashore and round up as many strong young men as they could. Whether they liked it or not, these men were compelled to serve in the Navy. It was declared illegal as long ago as 1641, but it still carried on until fairly recent times.

Aeroplane Carriers. (J. K. of Whitstable.) Aircraft carriers are very fast vessels, and many of them can do 30 knots easily. A big one can carry about fifty aeroplanes, and costs about £5,000,000 to build and equip. The planes used are specially built, have a low landing speed, and strengthened undercarriages, to withstand the shock of landing on a steel deck.

WELL, I think that's enough to be going on with this week, otherwise I won't have space to tell you what is in store for you in our next issue.

Naturally, you're all wondering what sort of scrapes the Greyfriars chums are going to get into next week. The present series is certainly one of the best we have ever published, and in next week's yarn, which is entitled:

"WHITE SLAVES OF THE CONGO!"

you'll find that your interest is held from the first line to the very last! As you can guess, William George Bunter makes an ass of himself, as usual; but, in doing so, he causes a certain amount of excitement, in which Harry Wharton and Co. are well to the fore. But read the yarn for yourselves, chums! You'll enjoy it, I can promise you!

High, Low, and Nippy get up to more of their stunts next week, and there are chuckles enough and to spare in the "Greyfriars Herald" supplement.

Also, don't forget that I'll be waiting to have another chat with you all—and if there's a query you want answering, don't hesitate to send it along to

YOUR EDITOR,

The Slave- Trader's Vengeance!



Featuring Harry Wharton & Co, on Holiday.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Chase on Lake Albert!

TOP of a morning!"

"Eh?"

"Top of a morning! Those are fine weathers, are they not?"

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled.

It was a sunny morning on the shores of Lake Albert Nyanza, in the heart of Africa.

The chums of Greyfriars were far from home.

Greyfriars, indeed, seemed like a very distant memory to the juniors, in the sunny land of Uganda, in the midst of vast forests and trackless jungles.

The Greyfriars party had arrived at Butiaba, on Lake Albert, the previous day, and found quarters prepared for them at the bungalow of Mr. Jarram, the Eurasian planter, who was now greeting them in his own variety of their language.

They had had a long and tiring trek from Entebbe. But early in the morning the Famous Five turned out to take a view of their new surroundings.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, in whose charge the schoolboys were travelling, was still asleep under his mosquito-net.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had not yet turned out. And a deep and rumbling snore that echoed through the whole building announced that Billy Bunter was still in the land of dreams. But the Famous Five had turned out early, as merry and bright as the morning.

They met Mr. Jarram on the path as they walked down to the shining lake.

The little, fat, olive-skinned gentleman lifted his big white topee with a graceful bow, and the Greyfriars

of their native tongue. Mr. Jarram's was as interesting as any they had heard hitherto.

"You speak English well, sir!" said Bob Cherry gravely.

"You think?" asked Mr. Jarram. "Yes; I fancy I have fairly good nodding acquaintance with him. In India, my native country, I have been told I speak English with enormous verbosity. You think, don't it?"

The juniors nodded and smiled. It was rather difficult to hear the Eurasian gentleman speak English without smiling.

"You walk out of a bungalow in so fine a morning to see circumjacent sights, don't it?" added Mr. Jarram. "Myself, I go in a boat with a gun to shoot a duck on a lake. Your honourable accompaniment would be a considerable pleasure. You would like, don't it?"

With a sort of mental jump, the juniors realised that the Eurasian gentleman was asking them to go with him in the boat, duck-shooting.

"Jolly good wheeze!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather!" agreed Nugent.

One moment a care-free schoolboy enjoying a holiday in Africa, the next a captive in the hands of a bitter foe, who is determined to sell him into slavery! Such is the fate of Vernon-Smith of Greyfriars!

fellows, not to be outdone in politeness, raised their hats and bowed in return.

"Top of one fine morning!" pursued Mr. Jarram, with a beaming smile. "That is how you say in English, don't it?"

"Something like that, sir," said Harry Wharton, smiling. "Good-morning, sir!"

Since arriving in Africa, the juniors had heard many interesting varieties

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, whose English had a sort of family resemblance to Mr. Jarram's own.

"Come, then!" said the planter. "You follow in a footstep."

With his gun under his arm, the planter led the way down a path through a shady grove to the lakeside.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed him cheerfully. A trip on the shining lake, under the rising sun, before brekker, was quite in accordance with their wishes.

The Jarram bungalow lay near the shore of Lake Albert, at a little distance from Butiaba.

In a few minutes the juniors came out on the lakeside, where there was a timber landing-stage, which belonged to the bungalow.

A boat was tied on to the timber, with two pairs of oars in it. Mr. Jarram indicated it with a wave of the hand.

"You jump in a boat!" he said. "In a solitary moment I take a canoe, but in welcome company of numerous young English, a boat is more largely accommodating, don't it?"

"We'll row you, sir!" said Johnny Bull.

"This kind offer is instantaneously acceptable," said Mr. Jarram. "But I—"

He broke off and stared about the landing-stage.

"But where is a canoe?" he asked.

He picked up a loose rope that trailed from the landing-stage into the water and stared at the dripping end.

It had been cut clean, with a knife.

"A canoe is not here!" ejaculated Mr. Jarram. "Where is a canoe? A rope has been cut, and a canoe is absent. A person has cut a rope and taken a canoe! This is a stealing!"

Up to that moment the plump Eurasian gentleman had been all smiling good-humour. Now his brows knitted, his black eyes gleamed, and his olive cheeks reddened with anger.

He stared up and down the shore of the lake, and then across the shining waters, stretching far away towards the Belgian Congo.

Evidently Mr. Jarram was very angry and disturbed at the theft of his canoe.

"A person steals a canoe!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "In a night, when an eye is closed in a slumber, a person steals a canoe! If I see this person I give him one charge of duck-shot from a gun! You see some person on a lake?"

The chums of Greyfriars stared away across the wide waters, glimmering in the rising sunshine.

There were plenty of fishing villages round the shores of Lake Albert, but at that early hour none of the natives seemed to be abroad.

Only, far out on the lake, a speck was discerned on the gleaming waters, though whether it was a canoe or not could not be told by the naked eye.

Bob Cherry pointed it out to the excited Eurasian gentleman.

"That's something," he said. "But whether it's a canoe or a jolly old hippo—"

Mr. Jarram stared fixedly at the distant speck. Then he nodded.

"I think I catch a shine of a paddle!" he said. "You think, don't it?"

The juniors stared hard. It seemed to them that a glimmer came at moments from the distant speck, which was very probably caused by a paddle catching the rays of the sun.

"It's a chance, anyhow," said Harry Wharton. "Let's go after it and see,

Mr. Jarram. Whatever it is, we'll run it down, with four of us pulling."

"Jump with quickness in a boat!" exclaimed Mr. Jarram.

If the distant speck really was Mr. Jarram's missing canoe, which had been "pinched" by some pilfering native, the chums of Greyfriars were only too willing to lend a hand in recovering it. They had not seen much of Mr. Jarram, so far, but he had already shown himself an exuberantly hospitable host, and they liked the plump Eurasian gentleman. So they "jumped with quickness," as Mr. Jarram expressed it, into the boat, and Mr. Jarram jumped after them, with equal quickness, and cast off the painter.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent, took the oars, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shoved off with a boathook. Mr. Jarram sat at the lines, as the juniors pulled out on the lake, and Hurree Singh stood in the bows, watching the distant speck.

"Row, brothers, row!" chanted Bob Cherry.

"Put your beef into it, you men!" said Harry Wharton. "If that's the thief in the canoe he's got a long start. But we'll jolly well run him down, if we have to pull across to the Congo country!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

The four oarsmen put their "beef" into it, pulling as hard as they had ever pulled in a race on the Sark, at far-off Greyfriars School. The boat fairly shot across the water.

Mr. Jarram grinned with satisfaction.

"We go with an extensive quickness," he remarked. "If that is a thief in a canoe, we make one catch of that thievish person."

With long strokes, in perfect time, the four juniors pulled. The speck on the lake grew larger and clearer to the watching eyes of Mr. Jarram and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What about it, Inky?" asked Wharton, over his shoulder, after a time.

"It is a ridiculous canoe," answered Hurree Singh. "I make it out now with terrific clearfulness. There is one man in it, and he is paddling with preposterous rapidity away from our esteemed selves."

"We're gaining on him?"

"The gainfulness is great!"

"Good egg!"

Mr. Jarram half rose, staring at the distant canoe. The boat, pulled by four pairs of sturdy arms, was gaining fast, and every moment the canoe was nearer and clearer. There was a single man in it, who was paddling, with a double-bladed paddle, with desperate energy. He was heading directly across the lake towards the Congo shore.

"I see a person!" exclaimed the planter. "It is not one thievish native, as I have suppose; it is a white man in a canoe. I do not see a face, but I see white man's garments on a person!"

"A white man!" exclaimed Harry in surprise.

It was not unlikely that a native might steal a canoe; but it was very improbable indeed that any white inhabitant of Uganda would do so. The juniors wondered whether, after all, the canoe was really Mr. Jarram's missing property, or whether they were chasing some early fisherman.

"It is a thief in a canoe," said the planter, "for now I have recognition of a canoe; also, if he is not thief, why does he make an escape?"

"That settles it, if Mr. Jarram recognises the canoe!" said Bob. "We'll jolly well get it back."

"Pull!" said Harry.

The oarsmen pulled hard. Closer and closer the boat drew to the fleeing canoe. That it was fleeing was quite evident now; the single occupant was making desperate efforts to get away. The long paddle flashed incessantly in the gleam of the rising sun, coming up over the hills of Kenya.

Hurree Singh, standing steady as the boat swept on, had his dark eyes fixed on the fleeing man in the canoe. The man was kneeling to the paddle, and his back was to the pursuing boat. The nabob could see that he was dressed like a white man; in white drill and a topce; but he looked like a man who had been in hard luck. His garments were torn and tattered and muddy, and his hat was little more than a rag. There was something vaguely familiar in the sinewy figure, and recognition was dawning in Hurree Singh's eyes.

Suddenly the man in the canoe looked round.

He gave a fierce glare back at the pursuers.

Hurree Singh uttered a sharp exclamation.

He saw the man's face now; a dark, almost coppery face, from which a pair of light blue eyes gleamed; eyes whose light German blue was strangely at variance with the African duskiness of the skin. Well did the Greyfriars juniors know that dark, savage face.

"My esteemed chums!" ejaculated Hurree Singh. "The absurd rascal in the canoe is an old and disgusting acquaintance."

"Eh! Who is it, then?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It is the esteemed and execrable slave-trader, Ludwig Krantz!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Capture of Ludwig Krantz!

"KRANTZ!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared round involuntarily.

The man in the canoe was paddling again, desperately, making the light little craft fairly skim across the shining surface of the lake.

"Steady!" exclaimed Wharton. "Pull, you men! If that man's Krantz, we've got him now."

"Go it!" said Bob.

The juniors went to the oars again.

"You're sure it's Krantz, Inky?" exclaimed Nugent.

"The surefulness is terrific," answered the Nabob of Bhanipur; "I saw his esteemed and execrable face with preposterous plainfulness."

"We'll get the brute this time!" said Johnny Bull.

"Pull like thunder."

The oars fairly flashed.

Faster and faster the boat drew nearer to the fleeing canoe, four oars easily beating a single paddle, desperately as it was handled.

The juniors' faces were grim and determined now.

It was Krantz, the slave-trader, in the canoe; the bitter enemy of the Greyfriars party; the desperado who had twice seized the Bounder, though each time Smithy had escaped him. The juniors had last seen the ruffian on the forest track between Lake Victoria Nyanza and Lake Albert, fleeing from the pursuit of Captain McCann and the askaris. He had escaped Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, by plunging into the Maanja



With knife raised, Krantz leaped towards the juniors' boat. Hurree Singh struck out with the boathook, and the ruffian gave a sharp yell and lost his footing as the blow landed!

river, and until this moment, they had not known whether he had survived.

Evidently the hunted outcast had escaped and reached the shores of Lake Albert; and he had stolen Mr. Jarram's canoe to escape across the lake into the Belgian territory.

Once across the lake, in the wilderness of the Congo, the slave-trader would have been safe.

The juniors could guess that the hunted rascal, trailing wearily out of the forest, had struck the lake, and searched along the shore for a canoe to take him across.

He had found Mr. Jarram's canoe tied up to the bungalow landing-stage, and lost not a moment in getting away in it.

But for Mr. Jarram's intention of going duck shooting before breakfast, he would have escaped unseen and unpursued.

Now pursuit was close on his track.

The juniors pulled their hardest. Hurree Janset Ram Singh, standing in the bows, grasped the boathook. It was likely that some weapon would be needed when Krantz was overtaken; and it was certain that he would be overtaken now, long before he had a chance of landing on the Congo shore.

But there was a rather uneasy expression on the plump face of Mr. Jarram. The name of Krantz had startled him.

Hitherto he had supposed that his canoe had been stolen by some pilfering rascal who would be easy to deal with when overtaken. But Ludwig Krantz, the slave-trader, was known as a reckless desperado throughout Kenya, Uganda, and the Tanganyika territory. The plump

Eurasian gentleman was not looking for a fierce conflict with the most desperate ruffian in the East African territories.

"You think with a certainty that a person in a canoe is Krantz?" he asked uneasily. "But this Krantz is a dangerous man—one very dangerous person indeed."

"We'll handle him, sir!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"But he will shoot——"

"If he had firearms he would have used them already, I think," said Harry Wharton. "If he had a rifle in that canoe he would stop us fast enough, Mr. Jarram."

"Yes, that is one certainty!" agreed the planter.

"We came on him in the forest on our way to Butiaba," explained Wharton. "He was hunted by Captain McCann, the man-tracker, and the askaris; and he had lost his rifle."

"But he has a knife," said Mr. Jarram. "A rope on a canoe was cut by a knife."

"That's all right."

The Greyfriars fellows had no fear of Krantz's knife, though it was quite certain that he would endeavour to use it when he was overtaken.

It was obvious that he had no firearms, or he would have fired on the pursuing boat already.

The juniors were unarmed; but they had the oars, and Hurree Singh had the boathook, and Mr. Jarram had his duck gun. There were plenty of hands to deal with the slave-trader once he was within reach.

"The esteemed rascal has stopped!" said Hurree Singh.

The chase had swept far out on the wide waters of the lake now. The eastern shore of Lake Albert had fallen into a blur behind the boat. Miles had glided under the labouring oars. And the desperate rascal in the canoe, almost overtaken now, had given up the flight, realising that it was hopeless. He needed his strength for the struggle that was coming.

The canoe had stopped, and rocked idly on the shining water. Krantz, standing in it, stared back at the boat, and his knife was in his hand now.

A haggard and terrible figure he looked, with his tattered garments, torn and muddy, a week's beard like stubble on his chin, and his sunken eyes glittering from his dark face, that was scarred by a knife-cut.

The boat glided down to him, and he recognised the Greyfriars juniors as they approached.

"Ach! It is you!" he panted.

"Little us, old bean!" answered Bob Cherry. "Glad to see us again?"

The half-blood's eyes blazed with hatred.

The boat rocked a few feet from the canoe, and the juniors were all standing now, oars in hand.

Mr. Jarram raised his duck gun. "You Krantz, you will surrender with instantaneous quickness," he said. "Otherwise I send you a charge of duck-shot, don't it?"

The light German eyes in the dark Arab face burned at him.

Evidently the slave-trader of L'anganyika did not intend to surrender.

"We're going to get you, Krantz!" said Harry Wharton. "Drop that knife."

The slave-trader only snarled.

"Go for him!" said Bob.

Hurree Singh hooked on with the boathook, and drew the boat close alongside the canoe.

"You drop a knife!" exclaimed Mr. Jarram. "You enormous scoundrel, you drop a knife with considerable quickness, or you receive a charge of duck-shot from a gun!"

And as the desperado did not heed, the Eurasian planter fired the duck-gun point blank.

But Krantz was watchful, and he threw himself down in the canoe as the planter pulled trigger and the duck-shot whizzed over him.

The next instant he was up again and leaping into the boat.

With desperate resolution he was making the attack, instead of waiting to be attacked in the canoe.

At close quarters, with the knife in his hand, he had a chance of defeating the unarmed schoolboys, and had he been given time to use the knife, certainly more than one life would have been lost before the ruffian was secured.

But as he leaped into the boat, Hurree Singh struck with the boathook, lashing full in the dark, desperate face.

Krantz gave a sharp yell, and lost his footing, falling half in the boat, half across the gunwale of the rocking canoe.

Bob Cherry's oar crashed on him as he sprawled. Wharton's oar dashed the knife from his hand, and it sank into the waters of the lake.

"Collar him!" panted Wharton.

Five pairs of hands fastened on the ruffian.

The canoe rocked away, leaving Krantz's head and shoulders sinking in the water, his legs in the grasp of the juniors over the gunwale of the boat.

"Got him!" grinned Bob.

"Drag him in!"

There was a wild splashing beside the dancing boat. Krantz's head was under water, and his arms splashed wildly.

The Greyfriars fellows dragged on his legs and landed him in the boat, half-drowned and spluttering frantically.

"Ach! Ach! Oooooogh! Ach!" spluttered Krantz.

He still attempted to resist. But down in the bottom of the boat with the five juniors on him he had no chance.

Five cheery faces grinned down at him as he struggled and panted and spluttered and cursed.

"We've got you, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "Take it smiling! Swearing won't buy you anything, you know."

"Ach, ach! Mein Gott! Ach!" panted Krantz.

"Sit on him!"

"Give me a room!" exclaimed Mr. Jarram. "I will stun this person with a butt of a gun!"

"Oh, my hat! It's all right, sir—we've got him; no need to crack his nut!" exclaimed Bob hastily.

The slave-trader was a prisoner. His hands were forcibly dragged behind him, and his wrists bound together with strips torn from his own tattered garments. He lay in the bottom of the boat and glared at his captors like a wild beast.

"Not a bad morning's work for little us!" grinned Bob. "They've been hunting this rotter for weeks—and we've got him! This will be rather a surprise for Captain McCann when we hand him over."

"Good old Greyfriars!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

The canoe was tied on, to be towed home, and the juniors took the oars again. Mr. Jarram kept a watchful eye on the prisoner sprawling in the boat, the butt of his gun ready if Krantz gave trouble. Perspiring under the brightening blaze of the sun, but in very elated spirits, Harry Wharton & Co. pulled back to the distant shore of Lake Albert Nyanza.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Begs for It!

"I SAY, Smithy—"

"Oh, can it!" snapped the Bounder.

"Look here—"

"Dry up, you chattering ass!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Bounder with a devastating blink through his big spectacles.

That blink, however, seemed to produce no effect on the back of Herbert Vernon-Smith, which was turned to the Owl of Greyfriars.

The Bounder was standing in the veranda of the Jarram bungalow, staring through the trees towards the lake that shimmered here and there through the foliage in the bright morning sunshine.

He was frowning.

Billy Bunter sat at a table at breakfast in the veranda. Several soft-footed native servants in white kanzus, were flitting to and fro, waiting on Bunter. The fat junior was keeping them busy.

He had started breakfast at the same time as Vernon-Smith and his father; but the Bounder and his father had long finished, and Billy Bunter was still going strong. Breakfast was one of those things, in Bunter's opinion, which, if it was worth doing, was worth doing well. And Bunter was doing it well—perhaps even a little too well. The native servants watched him in wonder, and in the kitchen of the bungalow they told one another in awed tones how much the Small Fat One was packing away.

At the beginning of a meal Billy Bunter liked to give his undivided attention to the foodstuffs. But when he had packed away enough for three or four fellows, and so taken the keen edge off his appetite, he grew talkative. Hence his remarks to Smithy.

The other fellows, rather to Bunter's indignation, were not visible. They seemed to have gone out, regardless of Bunter. So, as the Bounder was the only person present, Bunter addressed his remarks to him—without receiving any encouragement to continue them.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had business in Butiaba that morning, and though he had been rather surprised by the absence of his host, Mr. Jarram, from the breakfast-table, it had not bothered him at all. He had breakfasted and gone back into the house, and was about to start for the settlement which was half a mile from the Jarram bungalow. A rickshaw was in waiting on the path below the veranda, to take the millionaire into Butiaba.

The Bounder stared towards the lake, with knitted brows. He wondered where the Famous Five were with growing irritation.

That morning he had intended to pass in a trip on the lake, and Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, had orders to have a canoe ready. Apparently the other fellows had gone out and forgotten all about it. Herbert Vernon-Smith did not like



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by DAVID GOODWIN



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the idea of being forgotten and left on his own, as if he were a person of no more consequence than Billy Bunter.

His temper was growing more and more irritable as he waited for the Famous Five to turn up.

All he could learn from the servants was that the juniors had turned out early and left the bungalow. Vernon-Smith had not expected them to call him if they turned out early; in fact, he had wanted to have his sleep out after a tiring journey the previous day. But he did not want to be left at a loose end like this.

There was a step in the veranda, and Mr. Vernon-Smith came out of the house, in a shady topee, with a bag in his hand. He glanced at Bunter, still keeping the native servants busy, and then crossed over to the steps where the Bounder was idly lounging with his hands in his pockets.

"Haven't your friends come in, Herbert?" he asked.

"No!" said the Bounder abruptly. "That's odd! Mr. Jarram seems to be still absent," said the millionaire. "They may have gone somewhere with him."

"I shouldn't wonder." "Well, I must get off; I have an appointment at ten," said Mr. Vernon-Smith; and with a nod to his son he went down the steps, entered the rickshaw, and disappeared in the direction of Butiaba.

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter at the table.

Smithy scowled round at him. "Well, what are you cackling at, you fat image?" he grunted.

"Left on your own, what?" said Bunter agreeably. "I dare say the chaps are getting brekker out somewhere and giving you the go-by. He, he! I don't wonder at it, either, with your beastly temper. I'm fed-up on it, I can jolly well tell you, and I dare say they are, too."

Vernon-Smith made no reply to that. He turned his back on Bunter again, and stared moodily towards the lake.

"Here, you nigger!" called out Bunter. "Bring me some more coffee! Savvey, coffee?"

"Yes, sar!" "Not bad grub here, Smithy," said Bunter, addressing the Bounder's back.

"This fish from the lake is good; and these duck, too. I like duck for brekker. The coffee is a treat; as good as I get at Bunter Court, or jolly nearly. Frightful bad manners of old Jarram not to turn up; but one doesn't expect much of these dashed niggers. Thank goodness the grub is good!"

The Bounder looked round. "Mr. Jarram is a Eurasian," he said. "If he hears you call him a nigger, you're liable to get lifted out of this bungalow on the end of a boot!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—" "Now shut up!"

"Here, you nigger, where's that coffee?" shouted Bunter.

"Yes, sar; me come, sar!" "Hurry up, then, blow you!"

A steaming coffee-pot was set on the table. There was no doubt that the coffee was good; grown by the Eurasian planter on his own plantation.

Billy Bunter declared that it was as good as the coffee he was accustomed to at Bunter Court, and perhaps it was even a little better! Anyhow, Bunter liked it, and he had no hesitation in asking for what he wanted.

"I say, Smithy, have another cup of coffee?" "No!"

"Ever heard of the word 'thanks'?" asked Bunter sarcastically.

"Oh, shut up!" "Shan't! 'Tain't my fault if the fellows have got fed-up on your rotten temper, and given you the go-by."

Vernon-Smith turned a lowering look on him. It really looked as if the Famous Five had gone off for the morning and forgotten all about the Bounder, and with every passing idle minute Smithy's temper was growing sorer.

He was accustomed to treating Bunter with ruthless disregard and contempt; but the mere suspicion of such treatment for himself was enough to rouse his anger and resentment.

"If they think they can treat me as if I were you—" he muttered.

"Oh, really, Smithy—" "Shut up, you fat idiot!" "Yah!"

A tall figure in striped monkey-skins

**OTHERS ARE WINNING
USEFUL PRIZES—WHY NOT
YOU?**

Philip Browne, of 23, High Street, Ealing, W.5, has caught the judge's eye with the following amusing storyette:



Bobby (who has just joined the Scouts): "Mum, I think I had better lie down."
Fond Parent: "Why, what is the matter, Bobby?"
Bobby: "I've been doing so many good turns to-day that I feel giddy!"

Don't waste any more time, chums, send in your joke right away!

came up the path, and stopped at the wooden steps of the veranda.

Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, saluted the Bounder with grave respect, and Smithy's knitted brow cleared a little at the sight of him.

Since the time when Smithy had saved the Kikuyu from the jaws of a lion, Kikolobo had been devoted to him, and his loyal devotion had touched some chord in the Bounder's heart. Except his father and his pal Redwing at Greyfriars, it was doubtful whether anyone had ever really liked the Bounder, though plenty of fellows were friendly with him. That, perhaps, caused Smithy to respond the more readily to the respectful regard of the brave Kikuyu hunter.

"O Bwana-wangu," said Kikolobo, "my eyes see you!"

"My eyes see you, Kikolobo," said the Bounder, who had half-humorously fallen into the Kikuyu's own way of speaking when addressing the hunter, "and my eyes are glad to see the bravest hunter of the Kikuyu people."

"My ears hear sweet words!" said the Kikuyu gravely. "This Kikuyu comes to tell you, Bwana, that the canoe is ready, and I Kikolobo, wait for the Bwana-wangu and the other white lords."

"I'm not ready yet, Smithy!" called out Bunter. "This coffee's jolly hot—"

"Go and eat coke, you fat ass!" "Oh, really, Smithy—"

"My friends are not ready yet, Kicky," said Vernon-Smith.

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter.

Billy Bunter had no doubt that Harry Wharton & Co. had cleared off, to give the Bounder the "go-by," as he expressed it. Bunter found that idea rather entertaining. It was time, in Bunter's opinion, that the Bounder's swank was taken down a peg or two.

The Bounder turned a dark look on the fat junior. His own suspicious belief was the same as Bunter's; but mockery from Bunter on the subject was intolerable to the proud spirit of the Bounder.

"Will you shut up, Bunter?" he said.

"No, I won't!" answered Bunter cheerfully. "If you think you're the only pebble on the beach, Smithy, you're jolly well mistaken—see? I've told you a lot of times that you can't expect fellows to stand your rotten temper and your bad manners. You needn't tell that nigger to wait; the fellows won't be coming back, and you jolly well won't see them again this morning. He, he, he!"

The Bounder set his lips, and made a stride towards the Owl of the Remove.

In his present irritable temper there was solace in kicking Bunter; and undoubtedly the fat junior was asking for it.

Bunter jumped up in alarm.

The coffee-pot was in his hand, and he spilled a stream of hot coffee over his fat knees as he jumped, and gave a squeal.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast! Keep off!" roared Bunter.

He jumped away as the angry Bounder strode at him.

"You cheeky fat rotter, I'll kick you from one end of the bung to the other!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Ow! Keep off!" roared Bunter, with another backward jump. "I'll jolly well sling the coffee at you, so there!"

And as the angry Bounder came on, unheeding, Billy Bunter swung round the coffee-pot, and a jet of steaming hot coffee sprayed over Smithy.

There was a yell from Herbert Vernon-Smith, that woke every echo of the Jarram bungalow.

The coffee was hot—almost scalding! The Bounder hopped in anguish as it streamed over him.

"Ow! Oh! Whooop!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Ow! I'll smash you! By gad, I'll burst you all over the shop! I—I'll—"

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter dropped the coffee-pot and leaped for his life. He scrambled over the low veranda rail, and dropped bodily into the shrubbery below. There was a terrific yell as he landed. Apparently he had found thorns.

He did not linger on the thorns! He scrambled up frantically and ran.

"Kikolobo!" yelled the Bounder. "My ears hear you, my lord!" said the Kikuyu.

"Go after that fat scoundrel, and thrash him within an inch of his life!" howled the Bounder.

"As my lord wills!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter, and he vanished round the building, at a speed that was really amazing, considering the weight he had to carry.

Behind him he heard the pattering steps of the Kikuyu in pursuit.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, his brow blacker than ever, went into the bungalow to change his clothes.

Billy Bunter ran for his fat life.

There was no doubt that the Kikuyu would carry out the Bounder's hasty order; indeed, there was little doubt that he would have slain the "Small Fat One" with his broad-bladed spear had "Bwana-wangu" ordered him to do so. The Bounder's commands, hasty or not, were a law to the faithful Kikuyu.

Bunter heard the Kikuyu's feet pattering in pursuit as he bolted round the bungalow.

Behind the building were a number of sheds, used for the storing of the produce of the plantation. The door of one was open, and Bunter bolted into it like a rabbit into a burrow.

He hoped to find a hiding-place in the shed, but it contained nothing but a heap of large, coarse sacks lying in a corner.

Hurriedly Bunter pushed the door shut.

A few moments later the pattering feet of the Kikuyu passed. Within the shed the fat junior listened in fear and trembling.

The footsteps passed, stopped, and Bunter heard them returning.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He plunged desperately under the heap of sacks in the corner. There were more than a dozen large sacks irregularly piled, as they had been thrown down by the careless hands of natives. Bunter disappeared from sight under the heap.

A moment later the door opened, and the Kikuyu glanced into the shed. But Bunter, with deep relief, heard the door close again. The Kikuyu had not seen him or guessed that he was there. But there was no doubt that the Kikuyu was still seeking him, and Billy Bunter sagely decided to remain where he was.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Smithy On His Own!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH came out of the bungalow, his brow darker than ever. There was no sign of the chums of the Remove; neither had Mr. Jarram returned. To the Eurasian planter the Bounder gave no thought; he was not concerned about the movements of Mr. Jarram. Of what had happened on the lake that morning he had, of course, no knowledge; and he had almost forgotten the existence of the slave-trader Krantz.

That Harry Wharton & Co. had pursued the fugitive slave-trader far across the lake, and that they were even now pulling wearily back to the shore of which they had almost lost sight, was not likely to occur to his mind.

His suspicious and sulky temper was fully roused, and he came out in a black mood, his eyes glinting under his knitted brows. He caught sight of a tall figure in monkey-skins, and called to the Kikuyu.

Kikolobo came up.

"O Bwana, my eyes have not seen the Small Fat One!" said the Kikuyu. "The unworthy one, who has angered my lord, has vanished like the antelope

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at the roar of Simba, the lion. But if it be the Bwana's will I will seek him, and beat him with many blows with a whip of rhinoceros-hide."

The Bounder granted.

"Never mind Bunter—let him rip! You've brought a canoe here, Kicky?"

"All is ready, Bwana."

"Then let's go."

"And the other lords—?"

"Blow the other lords!" growled the Bounder. "They've cleared off somewhere, and I'm not waiting any longer."

The Kikuyu gave him a rather searching look. He could see that the "Bwana" was in a black and bitter mood, of which Bunter's fatuous antics were not wholly the cause.

"As my lord wills!" he said.

And he led the way down to the lake, and the scowling Bounder followed him.

Kikolobo's canoe was tied up to the landing-stage. The Kikuyu had brought it along from the native village, where he had his quarters while the Greyfriars party were staying at the Jarram bungalow. It was a large canoe, as it had been intended for the whole party, and baskets of provisions had been placed in it, as the juniors had intended to spend the whole day on the lake, starting soon after breakfast.

The Bounder jumped into it, and the Kikuyu followed him and pushed off. He laid his spears in the bottom of the canoe and picked up the long, double-bladed paddle. The canoe shot away from the landing-stage.

Vernon-Smith sat down, his face still dark and sullen. He did not really want a day on the lake with only the Kikuyu for company; but he was sulkily determined that the Famous Five should find him gone when it pleased them to come back. He told himself bitterly that they should find that they could not treat him as if he were a fellow like Bunter.

"Bwana!" said the Kikuyu, as the canoe shot away over the sunny lake.

The Bounder glanced at him.

The Kikuyu's dusky finger pointed across the gleaming water.

"My eyes see the other lords, Bwana!" he said. "If it be your will, this Kikuyu will take you to them."

Vernon-Smith stared across the lake in the direction indicated by the Kikuyu's pointing finger.

Far in the distance he made out a boat, with a canoe trailing behind on a rope. He could see Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Johnny Bull pulling at the oars, Hurree Singh in the bows, and Mr. Jarram in the stern. Of the prisoner who lay in the bottom of the boat he saw nothing.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh had evidently sighted him, for he was waving a dusky hand.

A sneer crossed the Bounder's face.

"Keep on!" he said.

So they were coming back, the Bounder reflected, expecting to find him hanging about till it pleased them to return from a row on the lake—a row that must have taken them a good many miles. Well, they would find that they were mistaken!

The Kikuyu eyed him a little dubiously. Loyal as he was to the "Bwana-wangu," probably Kikolobo had not failed to discover that his master had a hasty, and sometimes unreasonable, temper.

"Keep on!" snapped the Bounder.

"My lord does not desire to meet the other lords?" asked the Kikuyu, hesitating.

"No. Give that boat a wide berth!"

"My ears hear you, Bwana!" said the Kikuyu, and he obeyed, though his dark face was very grave.

The canoe shot on, keeping well away from the course of the returning boat.

The Bounder, with a sardonic face, watched the Famous Five. They were small in the distance, but he could make out the faces of all the juniors, as they were turned to look at the canoe. He could see that the oarsmen looked tired, as if they had pulled long and hard that morning—as indeed they had. He saw that Bob Cherry shouted to him; but the distance was too great for him to hear even Bob's powerful voice.

He noted that the juniors rested on their oars for a few moments, as if undecided whether to change their course and run down to the canoe.

"Faster!" he snapped.

The long paddle flashed in the hands of the Kikuyu. The boat grew visibly smaller as the Bounder watched it, the faces of the Famous Five indistinct to his view.

He saw, however, that the boat pulled on towards the landing-stage. Harry Wharton & Co. had had one long and hard chase already, and were far from disposed to undertake another. Probably the Bounder's action puzzled them, but they were thinking chiefly of getting ashore, landing their prisoner, and getting breakfast.

The Bounder's canoe was fairly flying now, under the swift strokes of Kicky's paddle. The boat disappeared from his sight. The Bounder snapped his fingers after it as it vanished.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner!

"**A**NYBODY feel tired?"

Bob Cherry asked that question with grim humour, as the Famous Five scrambled out of the boat on the timber landing-stage.

The juniors were tired, there was no doubt about that. And they were hungry, with appetites that would not have disgraced Billy Bunter.

In the keen eagerness of running down Ludwig Krantz, the juniors had hardly noticed—and certainly had not cared—how far they rowed out on the lake. It was after the capture of the slave-trader, when they came to return, that they noticed the distance. And then they noticed it very distinctly. In the chase of Krantz they had rowed hard and fast, putting every ounce of beef into it, but in the return journey they had to take it easily. Hurree Janset Ram Singh relieved each of the oarsmen in turn, to give them a rest all round, and when at last the boat bumped on the landing-stage, five thoroughly fatigued juniors scrambled out of it.

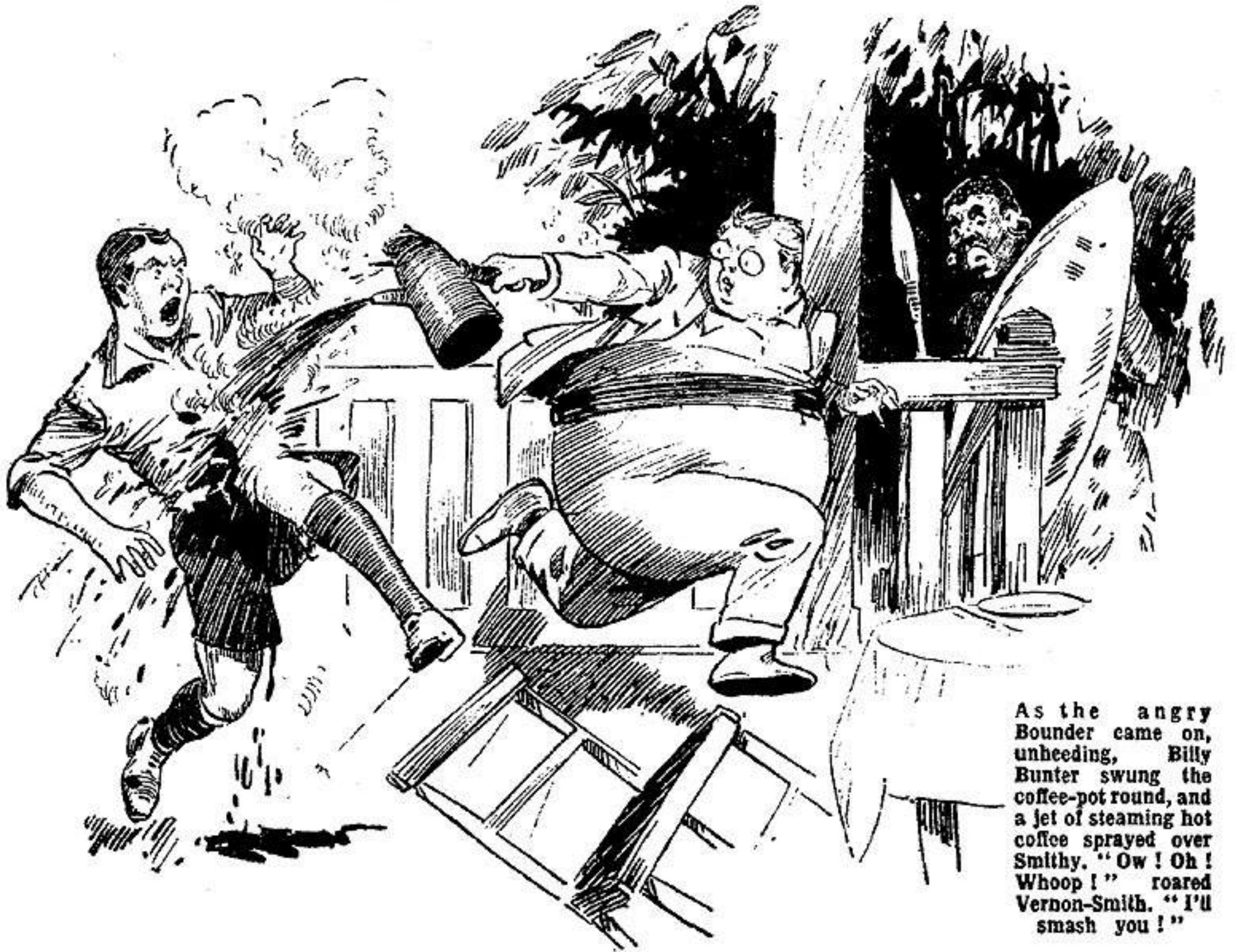
Mr. Jarram was not tired, though, no doubt, he was hungry. He stepped out of the boat and clapped his hands and shouted. Three or four natives came running down from the house.

"Good egg!" said Bob. "They can hag that beauty and yank him out of the boat. Blessed if I feel energetic enough to kick him, at the present moment."

"The fatigue is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, wiping his dusky brow, "and the lateness of the esteemed brekker is also preposterous!"

"I could jolly well eat a rhinoceros!" said Johnny Bull, with deep feeling.

"Same here!" said Bob. "I feel like Bunter, half an hour after dinner—"



As the angry Bounder came on, unheeding, Billy Bunter swung the coffee-pot round, and a jet of steaming hot coffee sprayed over Smithy. "Ow! Oh! Whoop!" roared Vernon-Smith. "I'll smash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll see this scoundrel fixed up safe first," said Harry Wharton, as the Baganda blacks, under Mr. Jarram's direction, hooked the bound slave-trader out of the boat and marched him across the landing-stage.

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "We don't want the brute to get away. Smithy would be jolly glad to see that we've got him, if he were here."

"Smithy seems to have gone off with Kicky," said Bob. "I dare say he wondered where we were, and got tired of waiting. You've got a safe place to stick that villain in, Mr. Jarram?"

The Eurasian gentleman nodded and grinned.

"There is a safe place for a villain," he answered. "Also, I will send a word to Butiaba that askaris may come to a bungalow and take away a villain to a prison."

"Good!" said Harry. "The sooner the authorities have hold of him, the better. He is wanted for a dozen crimes."

The prospect of breakfast called the juniors towards the bungalow; but they followed the slave-trader, to see him safely disposed of, first. Under Mr. Jarram's direction, he was led round the building, to the sheds in the rear. The Eurasian gentleman opened the door of one of the sheds.

"Here a shed is empty," he said. "A villain will remain safe in a shed, with a lock on a door. But first a rope will be tied very strong on a villain."

One of the natives, at Mr. Jarram's order, brought a rope, and it was wound

round and round the prisoner, fastening his arms down to his sides, and knotted with many knots.

The juniors looked at it carefully. They knew that they could not be too careful with such a man as Ludwig Krantz.

He was safe enough. Obviously, he had no chance of getting loose without aid.

He stood in the shed, silent, his discoloured teeth set hard, his light blue eyes glittering at the juniors under his sullen, haggard brows. His look told what they had to expect from him if ever Ludwig Krantz had the upper hand again.

Harry Wharton glanced round the shed. It was empty, save for a large heap of sacks in one corner. The building was strong enough, at least, to hold a man whose hands were securely fastened.

"A scoundrel is safe!" said Mr. Jarram reassuringly. "Very soon askaris take a scoundrel to a prison, don't it? Yes! Afterwards there is a rope for a neck, and this enormous villain is—what you call?—kicking a bucket!"

He closed the shed door and locked it, taking out the key.

The junior waited while he dispatched a Baganda to Butiaba, with news of the capture of the notorious slave-trader. Then they went into the bungalow, and gladly joined Mr. Jarram at breakfast in the shady veranda.

It was late in the morning now; the Famous Five had seldom breakfasted so late. They did full justice to the belated meal. Mr. Vernon-Smith was gone out, and the Bounder, they knew,

was on the lake with Kicky; but they were rather surprised to see nothing of Bunter. Generally, the Owl of the Remove made himself both seen and heard.

Still, nobody wanted to see Bunter, and his fascinating society was not missed very much.

Breakfast was rather prolonged: the grub, as Billy Bunter had declared, was good—and it was ample—and the juniors had healthy, youthful appetites, rendered unusually keen by a row of several hours on the lake.

Mr. Jarram beamed over the breakfast table.

He was highly delighted with the happenings of the morning. He told the juniors that Krantz had once stolen natives from his plantation, getting them across the lake in canoes at night, to sell as slaves in the interior. The ruffian was known as a kidnapper and man-stealer, all through Uganda and Tanganyika, and more than once he had carried on his rascally business in Kenya; the juniors remembered they had heard that he had stolen men from the kraals of Kikolobo's tribe in the Masalindi hills. Mr. Jarram had intended to shoot ducks that morning, and he was immensely elated at having bagged bigger game.

"An enormous scoundrel, my young friends!" said Mr. Jarram. "An immense scoundrel! A tremendous villain! Yes! But we have the scoundrel safe now, like a pig in a poke, as you say in English. Don't it?"

The juniors had finished breakfast at last, when there was a clatter of horses' hoofs on the path under the trees, and a

horseman came dashing up to the bungalow at a gallop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's McCann!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Looking down from the veranda, the juniors instantly recognised the little, wiry, bronze-faced man in the saddle.

It was Captain McCann, the man-tracker of Uganda, who, they knew, had been commissioned to hunt down the half-blood slave-trader.

McCann's grim, bronzed face, generally impassive as that of a graven image, had an excited look now. Apparently he had been in Butiaba when the news arrived of Krantz's capture, and he had lost no time in galloping out to the Jarram plantation.

He drew in his horse and jumped down, threw his reins over a post, and tramped up the steps into the veranda.

Mr. Jarram beamed at him.

"Top of a morning!" he exclaimed. "Top of a fine morning, sir! You come to see a scoundrel who is a prisoner, don't it?"

"That's it." The captain gave the juniors a nod and a smile. "Is it true—is Krantz here?"

"As large as life, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "We got him on the lake this morning."

"The godfulness was terrific."

"Holy mackerel!" said Captain McCann. "I could not believe my ears when the news was brought in. I got into Butiaba last night, after losing track of the scoundrel. I've got a dozen men out hunting for his traces along the lake. I've been fairly on his heels all the way from the Victoria Nyanza to the Albert Nyanza—and he has doubled and twisted and turned like an eel. A dozen times I nearly had him. But I reckoned that at last he had beaten me, and got across the lake into the Congo country. Holy mackerel! And you schoolboys got him!"

"Just luck!" said Harry.

"And pluck, too," said the captain.

"Tell me how it happened."

"I go to shoot a duck before a breakfast," said Mr. Jarram. "Young English come with. A canoe is gone. I say, a thief has taken a canoe. I think a nigger, don't it, yes. But it is not a nigger—it is an enormous scoundrel Krantz. We row a boat with considerable quickness for extensive distances on a lake. A villain in a canoe he paddle with tremendous velocity. But we catch. A villain makes a fight, but we give him, what you call in English, one kybosh. We knock him with a boathook, with an oar. We catch him and we tie, don't it? Yes. We lock a villain in a shed."

The captain smiled.

"You've actually got the man locked up here?" he exclaimed.

"Safe in a shed with twenty feet of rope wound round him," said Bob Cherry. "Safe as houses, sir."

"Krantz won't be quite safe till he has handcuffs on and an askari each side of him!" said Captain McCann. "Show me where he is at once."

"You follow in a footstep," said Mr. Jarram, and he led the way, and the man-tracker and the juniors followed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Luck of Ludwig Krantz!

BILLY BUNTER quaked. It was warm under the heap of sacks in the shed; but Billy Bunter, for once, was not thinking of the discomfort.

He was thinking of the Kikuyu and

of what awaited him if the Kikuyu found him.

For half an hour Bunter had lain hidden under the sacks, without daring to move, scarcely to breathe.

After that, he ventured to put out his head and listen. And the sound of approaching footsteps made him draw back his bullet head under the sacks, like a tortoise popping back into its shell.

He lay and palpitated.

Vague sounds came to him; but under the heap of sacks he could hear only indistinctly. He had not the faintest idea of what was going on; but he had no doubt that the Kikuyu was hunting for him. He lay in momentary terror of seeing the sacks hooked off and feeling the heavy hand of Kikolobo.

He heard a door shut, and wondered whether the beast was gone. But there were still sounds in the shed; and he remained where he was, perspiring, listening, and quaking.

Someone, so far as he could make out, was moving about the shed, keeping in incessant motion. If it was the Kikuyu, it was difficult to imagine what he was up to; for the shed was empty, save for the heap of sacks in the corner, and a glance was sufficient to search it. But Bunter was taking no chances. He was in cover, and he remained in cover, listening in a state of palpitating funk to the incessant footsteps.

He little dreamed who was pacing the locked shed; as little as Ludwig Krantz dreamed that anyone was hidden under the sacks.

The slave-trader, his arms immovable in the coiled and knotted cords, paced to and fro, his eyes burning, his coppery face distorted with rage.

His reflections were bitter enough.

Escape was impossible; and under an hour the askaris would be there to take him. With manacles locked on his limbs, he would be sent back to Entebbe for trial and judgment—which could only end one way.

It was McCann, the man-tracker, whom he had feared; yet he had escaped McCann, only to fall a prisoner in the hands of a crowd of schoolboys. That was bitterest of all to the ruffian.

Many times before he had ventured into the British East African territories to carry on his nefarious trade, and he had always escaped pursuit. But he had made the venture once too often. He had ventured even into Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, and got clear; he had pursued the Greyfriars party in their safari in Kenya, and escaped the askaris; he had waylaid Captain McCann in Entebbe, and again he had got away. But he had tempted fortune too often, and now it had turned against him.

After his flight from Entebbe, he had been remorselessly hunted by the little, bronzed man-tracker and his askaris; danger had haunted his footsteps; dingy, ragged, footsore, half-famished, he had dodged and twisted from forest to forest, from jungle to jungle. He had resolved that, if his escape was once made, he would keep on the Congo side of the lakes afterwards, and tempt fortune no more.

But in the very hour of escape, when the swift canoe was bearing him towards the impenetrable wilderness of the Congo, he had fallen into the hands of the schoolboys. Now he was a prisoner, and the game was up!

He paced and paced within the narrow limits of the shed, like a wild beast in a cage.

Hatred and rage and bitterness rioted in his breast. He was a prisoner, doomed to suffer for his crimes; and even vengeance was denied

him; he was going to grim justice, to be hanged and forgotten!

Even the boy Vernon-Smith, who had thrashed him like a dog on the Nairobi road, who had scarred his face with a knife-cut in the fight at Entebbe, had escaped his vengeance; he would return safely to England and school, and contemptuously forget the enemy who had been unable to harm him.

Weary at last of pacing the shed, the slave-trader threw himself on the heap of sacks in the corner, to rest, while he awaited the coming of the askaris from Butiaba.

"Ach!"

Something wriggled under the sacks.

Krantz bounded up, his first impression being that it was a snake that had crawled into the shed and coiled in the corner. But from under the sacks came a squeal that certainly could not have been uttered by a snake.

"Ooooooh!"

"Ach! Himmel!" ejaculated Krantz, in amazement and wonder.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!" came a terrified howl. "I'm not here! It isn't me! Keep off, you beastly nigger! Oh dear! Ow!"

Krantz kicked away the sacks.

His eyes almost started from his head at the sight of the squirming, fat figure of Billy Bunter.

Bunter squirmed and yelled.

"Ow! Keep off! Go away, you beast! You lay a finger on me, you rotten nigger, and——"

Bunter broke off suddenly.

His eyes bulged through his spectacles at the sight of the dark, coppery face of the slave-trader.

Terror held him dumb.

He had fancied for the moment that Kikolobo had found him. But Kikolobo and all his tribe of the Kikuyu would not have terrified him so much as a single glimpse of the slave-trader.

He fairly goggled at Krantz.

The slave-trader, equally amazed, stared at him. He recognised Bunter at once as one of the Greyfriars schoolboys. Bunter was the only member of the party for whom the ruffian did not nourish a bitter and deadly hatred. That was for the simple reason that Bunter was beneath anything of the sort. His only feeling towards Bunter was one of contemptuous disregard, though had the Greyfriars party fallen into his hands Bunter would have shared the fate of the rest—sold as a slave in the dark interior of Africa.

"Ach! You!" said Krantz, at last.

Bunter found his voice.

"Oh! Oh lor! Oh dear! Oh crumbs! I thought it was that nigger! Oh crikey! I—I—I say, Mr. Krantz, I—I—I——"

"Silence!"

Bunter quavered into silence.

Krantz bent his head and listened.

There was hope in his heart now. At the very nadir of his fortunes the wheel was taking another turn!

There was no sound from without. The sheds were at a little distance from the bungalow. No one was likely to come till the askaris arrived from Butiaba. That could not be long delayed; but as yet there was no sound of their coming.

"Get up!" muttered Krantz.

Bunter crawled to his feet.

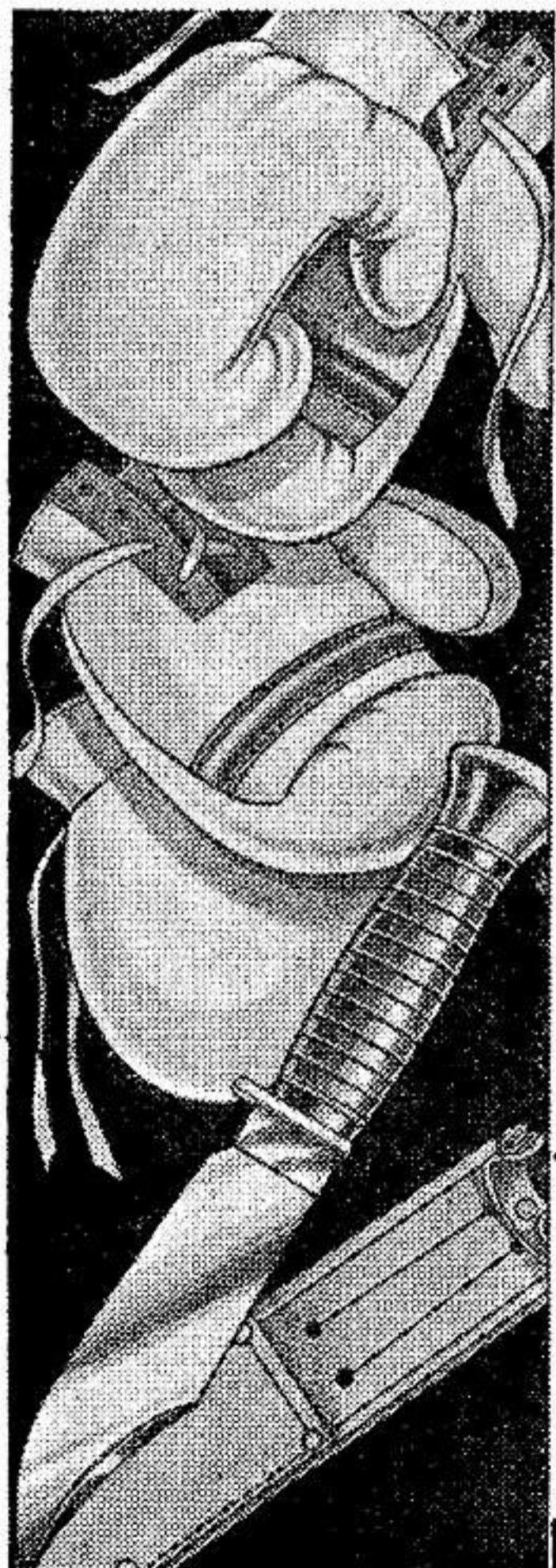
He observed now that the slave-trader's arms were bound, but that gave him little comfort. He was shut up in the shed with the ruffian, and Krantz, had he so desired, could have stamped the life out of the hapless fat junior. He eyed the ruffian in shivering terror.

The light blue eyes gleamed at him.

(Continued on page 12.)

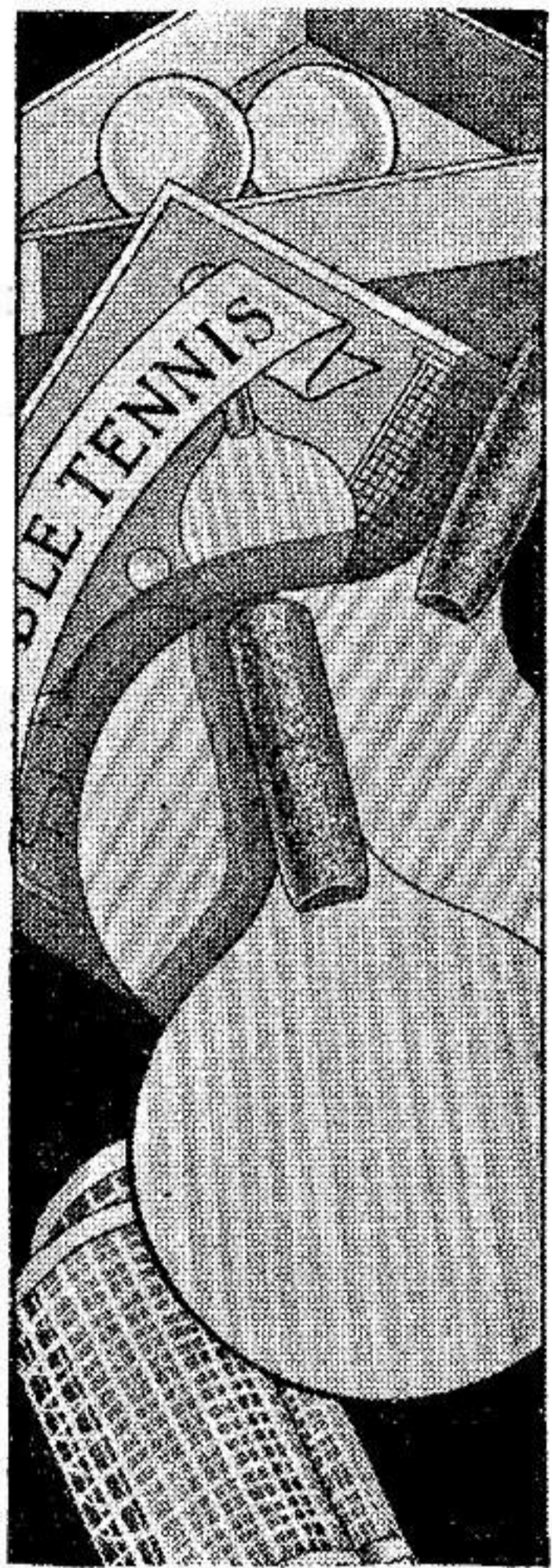
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THE SLAVE-TRADER'S VENGEANCE I

(Continued from page 10.)

"You need not fear!" snapped Krantz contemptuously. "Do not call—one cry to bring your friends here, and I will trample you with my boots and crush you like a snake! I will kill you like a mosquito if you utter one cry, fat fool!"

"I—I'm not going to call out, Mr. Krantz," groaned Bunter. "I—I like being here with you, you know."

"What!"

"I—I like you, you know," gasped Bunter. "I—I think you're such a—a nice man, Mr. Krantz."

The slave-trader stared at him blankly. Then a sour grin glided over his savage face.

"Ach! What you are doing here I know not, and I care nothing! My good fortune has sent you! Ach! Listen to me, boy! I will not harm you, have no fear! But untie these cords quickly, if you value your life."

Bunter blinked at him. Then he cast a longing blink at the door. But he realised that the door must be locked on the outside, as the slave-trader was a prisoner in the shed. He realised that the sounds he had heard had been made, not by the Kikuyu hunting for him, but by someone bringing the prisoner to the shed and locking him in. Now he was locked in with the ruthless ruffian, and utterly at his mercy.

"You hear me?" Krantz's voice hissed like the hiss of a snake. "Lose no time! Untie me, fat fool!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

The slave-trader moved towards him, and Bunter backed to the wall of the shed, palpitating with fear. The gleaming light blue eyes seemed to burn into him.

"Do you wish me to stamp out your fool's life?" hissed Krantz. "Do you think your friends could come in time to save you? Ach! If I am taken to Butiaba by the askaris they shall find you dead on the earth here, stamped out of recognition! You hear me?"

"Ow! I—I—I'll untie you with—with pleasure!" groaned Bunter. "I—I was just going to offer—"

"Lose no time, fool!"

Bunter fumbled with the cords.

There was no choice for the hapless Owl; it was obedience or death, and he realised it very clearly.

His clumsy, fat fingers trembled and fumbled.

"Fool! Have you a knife?" hissed Krantz.

"I—I—I've a penknife—"

"Cut the cords."

"Oh dear!"

Bunter sorted out his penknife, opened it, and sawed at the cords. He dared not disobey, and he dared not hesitate. He longed to hear the sound of footsteps approaching the shed—even the footsteps of the Kikuyu. But there was no sound, save the distant voice of some native singing at his work.

In a few minutes the slave-trader stood free.

He drew a deep, deep breath as the cords fell from him.

"Ach! Free!" he breathed. "Mein Gott! Free!"

His light blue eyes turned on Bunter with a look in them that made the fat junior's blood run cold. The hapless Owl fell on his fat knees.

Krantz gave a curt laugh.

"Fool! Do not fear!" he said. "You—you are nothing to me!"

He took a length of the cut cord and bound the fat junior hand and foot. A knotted end of rope was thrust into his

mouth to gag him. Then the ruffian pitched him contemptuously on to the heap of sacks, and Bunter remained there, half-fainting with terror.

Krantz listened at the door. Still there was no sound; the askaris had not yet come.

He had time—if only a few minutes! The shed was not built to secure a strong and desperate man who had the use of his hands. With his arms bound Krantz had been a helpless prisoner; but the case was altered now. He soon found a loose board that he was able to drag away from the wooden wall. He wrenched it out, and then another.

The opening was large enough for him to squeeze through.

A few moments more, and he was out of his prison at the back of the shed.

Behind the sheds there was a space of open ground, with a grove of trees beyond. The light blue eyes glared round warily. Two or three natives could be seen in the distance, but they were not looking towards him. He had to take the chance of being seen, and with the swiftness of a leopard he darted across the open space towards the trees.

Almost in a moment the desperate man was in cover of the trees.

He panted, and wiped a stream of perspiration from his dark brow. Unhoped-for freedom had come; but he was still in dire danger—unarmed, in the midst of foes, shut off by the wide rolling lake from the wilderness which was his only refuge.

He crept through the trees towards the lake. The boat and the canoe would be tied up on the shore—if he dared cut across in sight of the bungalow and the huts of the native servants!

Thud, thud, thud!

The beat of a horse's hoofs on a path under the trees made him cower back into cover.

Hidden by foliage, he watched the horseman who passed, riding swiftly towards the bungalow.

The veins stood out, knotted on his forehead, and he bared his teeth like a wild animal as he recognised Captain McCann.

Had there been a firearm in the desperado's hand at that moment the career of the man-tracker of Uganda would have come to a sudden termination.

But the wretch had no weapon. And he could only crouch in deep cover while the horseman thundered by, and disappeared towards the bungalow.

He ground his teeth when McCann was gone.

The man-tracker had arrived; the askaris would not be far away. It was a matter of minutes now. He had no chance of getting at the landing-stage and the craft there. He dared not dream of it, now that McCann was on the spot. He ran back through the trees, and, bending low, followed at a rapid run a path through a wide field of Indian corn leading away from the lake.

There was a startled exclamation, and a Baganda boy started up in his path, staring in amazement.

The next instant Krantz's clenched fist, hard as iron, sent the black boy spinning, and the fugitive ran on, leaving him half-stunned.

Beyond the field of Indian corn was a section of uncleared land, and the slave-trader panted with relief as he twisted into the bush.

He was on the run again. In a few minutes pursuit would be hot at his heels; but he was on the run, and there was hope once more in his desperate heart.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter I

HARRY WHARTON & Co. followed the man-tracker and Mr. Jarram round the bungalow to the shed where Krantz had been locked in and left a prisoner. Captain McCann walked quickly; the little, plump Eurasian panting as he kept pace with him. Grinily glad as McCann had been to learn that Krantz was a prisoner at the Jarram plantation, it was plain that he did not feel sure of him till his own eyes rested on the scoundrel. Not, as he had said, till Krantz with the manacles locked on his limbs, stood between two armed askaris, would the man-tracker feel sure that he had him safe.

"It is a safe scoundrel in a shed," declared Mr. Jarram, who easily guessed the thoughts of the man-tracker. "There is a lock on a door, and a rope is tied with enormous security round and round a villain. I see him tied with a very watchful eye, don't it? Yes, do not have a doubt."

All the same, Captain McCann seemed relieved when they arrived at the shed, and found that the lock on the door was intact.

"Looks safe," he remarked.

"Safe as houses, sir," said Harry Wharton. "You can depend on it that we took no chances with such a villain."

"He is a slippery scoundrel," said McCann. "He has been in irons more than once; but the irons did not hold him. But it certainly looks as if he is safe. I can hear someone in the shed. You locked him in alone, of course?"

"Yes; tied up like a turkey."

"Good!"

Mr. Jarram inserted the key in the lock and turned it back. He threw open the door, and waved a plump, olive hand to the captain.

"Please to enter a shed," he said. "You will find a villainous prisoner safe in a rope—oh, yes!"

Captain McCann stepped in, the planter and the juniors close behind him. There was no window to the shed, and the interior was deeply dusky. A figure was seen squirming on the heap of sacks in a dim corner, and Captain McCann strode towards it with an exclamation.

"Krantz—at last!"

Then a roar of rage broke from the man-tracker.

"What—what foolery is this?"

The wriggling figure on the sacks turned a crimson fat face towards the astounded juniors.

"Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"B-Bunter!" stuttered Harry Wharton.

"Oooooogh!" came feebly from Bunter, through the gag that closed his usually active jaws.

Captain McCann glared down at the hapless Owl, and then stared round at the planter. His eyes were glinting.

"What does this mean?" he roared. "Where is Krantz?"

Mr. Jarram could only gasp.

The juniors stared round the shed. Save for fragments of cut ropes on the earthen floor, there was no sign of the prisoner. But they immediately spotted the opening at the back of the shed, where two boards had been wrenched out of place.

"He—he's gone!" gasped Nugent.

"The gonefulness is terrific!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed door was locked, yet the idiotic Bunter is here!"

"I am amazed!" gasped Mr. Jarram. "I leave a felonious person tied up in

a shed, and I find a boy who come to my house in company of honourable Mister Vernon-Smith. I do not understand a small piece. I am knocked into one cock-hat."

Captain McCann grasped Bunter by a fat shoulder, and swung him, gurgling, to his feet.

"Speak, you young fool!" he snapped. "What—"

"Mmmmm!"

"He's gagged!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

McCann tore the gag from the fat Owl's mouth. Bunter, tied hand and foot, hung like a heavy weight on the captain's strong arm.

"What has happened here?" roared McCann.

"Groooogh!"

"Speak, you young idiot!"

"Ooooooh!"

"It is a boy!" said Mr. Jarram, in tones of dazed wonder. "It is not a felonious villain that I leave locked in a shed. It is a boy who come with honourable Mister Vernon-Smith. I ask you to tell me how this thing happen, don't it?"

McCann shook the Owl of the Remove.

"You young imbecile—"

"Groooogh!"

"Speak, idiot!" roared McCann.

"Ow! Where's my specs?"

"What?" yelled the captain.

"Where's my specs? Mind you don't tread on my specs! They fell off when that beast chucked me into the corner. Look for my specs! I say, you fellows, find my specs for me!"

Bob Cherry spotted the spectacles glimmering in the gloom, and picked them up. He jammed them on Bunter's fat, little nose.

"There you are, Fatty," he said. "Now tell Captain McCann what has happened here, and don't waste time!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Will you speak, you young fool?" demanded Captain McCann, in a tone of concentrated rage.

"Ow! Yes! Leggo!" Bunter blinked at the captain. "It was all Smithy's fault. I shouldn't have hidden under the sacks if he hadn't set that nigger, Kicky, after me. If you fellows think I'm going to be walloped by a nigger—"

"You were hidden under those sacks!" roared Bob. "Were you hidden there when we brought Krantz in?"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent.

"You benighted idiot!" roared Johnny Bull. "Mean to say you were hidden there all the time?"

"I didn't know it was you," groaned Bunter. "When I heard somebody, I thought it was that nigger. Smithy sent him after me, because I spilled some coffee over him, by sheer accident. It's all Smithy's fault. Oh dear!"

"Holy mackerel!" said Captain McCann. "This fool was frightened of something, and he was hidden under the sacks when Krantz was locked in. Did Krantz find you there, you born fool?"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Answer me, idiot!"

"Of course he found me!" snorted Bunter. "Think I showed up because I wanted to meet him?"

"But he was bound—a prisoner!" exclaimed Wharton. "You weren't idiot enough to untie him, surely?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Captain McCann put his head in through the opening again.

"Get Kikolobo here!" he snapped. "Krantz cannot be gone far—the Kikuyu will find his track, if a human eye can do it. Lose no time."

"Oh, my hat! Kikolobo's gone on the lake with Smithy!" answered Harry Wharton.

McCann crushed an oath between his teeth.

"You're sure of that?"

"Yes—we saw them going as we came back with Krantz. They were a mile out on the lake then."



Krantz kicked away the sacks, and his eyes almost started from his head at sight of the squirming, fat figure of Bunter. "Ow! Keep off!" yelled the terrified Owl. "Go away, you beast!"

"A person was tied with a rope in a shed," exclaimed Mr. Jarram. "He was tied with a very strong rope, under my eye which was of enormous and careful watchfulness."

"Did you set him free, Bunter?" asked Captain McCann, with a look in his eyes that reminded Bunter of the look Krantz had given him.

"I—I— You see, he—he," babbled Bunter—"he—he was going to jump on me. He said he would stamp me to death. What was a fellow to do, locked up with that awful villain?"

"Anything but what you did, you cowardly fool!" snarled McCann. "P..."

He flung Bunter aside, and the fat junior collapsed on the sacks again, with a howl.

McCann strode to the gap in the rear wall of the shed, and squeezed through. His brow was black with rage. Once more the slave-trader of Tanganyika had been almost in his hands, and once more the villain had escaped by a hair's-breadth.

"I say, you fellows, lemme loose!" howled Bunter. "I say, can't you untie a chap? I say—"

"Hang the luck!"

"If we can help—" said Bob.

"You can't help! Yes—run along the road towards Butiaba and meet my askaris, who are following me—send them after me, here."

"Right!"

Harry Wharton & Co. ran out of the shed. The howling voice of Billy Bunter followed them, yelling to be untied. But they had no time to waste on Bunter just then.

Captain McCann, with a gleaming eye, picked up the sign left by the fleeing slave-trader, and tramped across to the trees.

"I say, you fellows, help!" wailed Billy Bunter. "I say, Mr. Jarram—I say, come and untie me, you beast! Oh dear!"

The planter turned back into the hut. He was a kind-hearted gentleman, though certainly he was intensely exasperated with Billy Bunter, now that he knew the part the fat junior had played in the escape of Krantz. He opened a pocket-knife and cut the fat Owl loose.

"You are one very enormous fool!"

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

he said. "If it was not that you come with honourable Mr. Vernon-Smith, a guest in a bungalow, I hit you with a foot, very hard indeed, on a trouser! Yes!"

With that Mr. Jarram hurried away.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter; perhaps by way of thanks for being released.

And he rolled out of the shed.

A few minutes later a dozen askaris, the military police of East Africa, had joined Captain McCann, and were searching for the escaped slave-trader. They came on a Baganda boy rubbing a bruised face in the maize field, and learned from him the way Krantz had gone. With the askaris at his heels, Captain McCann hurried on the traces of the fugitive. Krantz was free again; but the wide waters of Lake Albert barred him off from the Congo wilderness, and the man-tracker still hoped to get his man.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Foe!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sat in the swaying canoe, moored by a long line to a stump on the shore, in a little shady inlet on the British side of Lake Albert. The Bounder was handling rod and line, and already he had tossed several fat fish ashore to the Kikuyu. Kikolobo was gathering wood in the thickets to build a cooking-fire.

The sun was sinking westward to the wilds of the Congo; the lake was a shimmering sheet of gorgeous hues. Vernon-Smith's face was thoughtful as he sat with rod and line; the sullen expression had left it. The Bounder had enjoyed the day on the lake, and vigorous hours in the open air had had the effect of banishing irritation and sullenness.

The inlet where the Bounder and his companion had camped was nearly twenty miles down the eastern shore of Lake Albert from the Jarram plantation.

Looking about him the Bounder might have fancied that he was in a wilderness, where a white man's foot had never trodden.

The primeval forest grew down to the water's edge; and over the inlet the vast branches of trees were arched and intermingled, forming a complete roof of foliage that shut out the burning sky.

Only here and there on the banks were open patches; and one of these had been selected for a camp. That inlet was rich in fish, as Kicky well knew; the Kikuyu was well acquainted with the chain of great lakes in the heart of Africa, and Lake Albert was almost as familiar to him as the Victoria Nyanza and Lake Naivasha in Kenya.

While the Kikuyu, on the shore, gathered wood for the cooking-fire, on

which to broil the fish, the Bounder made catch after catch, tossing the fish ashore as he unhooked them.

Save for the faint wash of the waters of the lake, all was silent; the silence of the Central African solitude.

Vernon-Smith was thinking; certainly not of danger, though danger, had he known it, was creeping silently upon him in those very moments. The thought of Ludwig Krantz was not in his mind. He had wondered whether he would ever see anything more of his bitter enemy; but in the days that had passed since he had last seen the man, a hunted fugitive in the forest, he had almost forgotten him.

If he had thought of Krantz at all, he would have thought of him as twisting and turning, starving and desperate, in the mazes of the thick forest, hunted for his life, or as fleeing across the lake and vanishing for ever in the trackless wilderness of the Congo.

But he did not think of him. He was thinking of the fellows he had left behind at the bungalow, and whose waved greetings he had ignored when their boat passed on the lake.

It was not uncommon for the Bounder's suspicious temper to cause him to take offence, and for calmer reflection afterwards to make him doubt whether he had not made a fool of himself.

He had enjoyed his day on the lake with the faithful Kikuyu; but undoubtedly he would have enjoyed it more with the cheery company of the chums of the Remove.

He was wondering whether they had, after all, gone off and left him on his own, without a word, regardless of the arrangements that had been made for the day, as he had suspected.

He realised that Bunter's fatuous jecs had helped to confirm his sullen suspicions, and it was not agreeable to reflect that he had been influenced into quarrelling with his friends by a fatuous fool like Bunter.

After all, it was likely enough that the fellows had only gone out for a row before breakfast, and that something had delayed their return.

They had left him kicking his heels for hours; and it was difficult to imagine what could have kept them away, but—after a day in the open air—it was clear to Smithy that he had acted hastily.

At least he might have run the canoe down to the boat, as the Kikuyu had desired him to do, and heard what they had to say.

Sullen temper and resentment had got the upper hand; and he had cleared off and left them to their own devices. Now that he thought it over coolly, the Bounder wished that he had acted otherwise.

He had left the other fellows, who were his guests and his father's guests, to hang about the bungalow. That was all very well, if they did not want his company, but if he had been too suspicious and distrustful—

He coloured uncomfortably at the thought.

He little dreamed of the far-reaching consequences that were to accrue from the indulgence of sullen and suspicious temper. It was the Bounder's arrogant way to indulge his temper, and often enough it had landed him in trouble. But never had it landed him in such trouble as it was destined to do on this occasion.

He hooked another fish and tossed it to the bank. Kikolobo came out of the trees with an armful of wood, and tossed it down on the spot selected for the cooking-fire. The Bounder idly watched the tall figure in striped skins

as it disappeared into the forest again to fetch more wood for the fire.

Then he cast his line once more in the calm, shady waters of the inlet. The canoe swayed gently at the end of the long rope.

Over the floating canoe the great branches arched like a roof, a mass of foliage through which hardly a slit of the sky could have been seen. The Bounder, intent on his fishing and his rather troublesome thoughts, did not think of glancing upward.

As silent as a creeping leopard, and as fierce and implacable, a tattered figure was crawling out on a thick branch overhead.

Had the Bounder looked up, he would have seen a coppery face and a pair of haggard, light blue eyes watching him.

But he did not look up.

From the arched branch, ten or twelve feet above the canoe, Ludwig Krantz glared down, his eyes burning with gloating hatred and malice.

He knew the Bounder at a glance, and his burning eyes gloated on the schoolboy for whom he felt a savage hatred.

Across his coppery face was the livid scar of the knife-cut the Bounder had given him at Entebbe. He was marked for life by the hand of the Greyfriars schoolboy. But vengeance, as well as escape, was within his grasp now.

Through tangled forests and hot jungle, the fugitive had skulked southward since he had fled from the Jarram bungalow. He knew that the askaris were hunting him; more than once he had heard footsteps and calling voices in the forest. But the mazes of the tangled woods had saved him, and he had covered weary miles on his southward journey, aching with fatigue, foot-sore and scratched with thorns, hungered and athirst, but still pressing on with desperate determination.

He knew that the alarm must have been sent all along the eastern shore of the lake; that the natives in the fishing villages had been warned to guard against the stealing of a canoe. But he kept the lake in sight in his desperate flight, still hoping to seize some craft that would carry him across to safety.

If he failed, his only hope was to twist and turn for endless weary miles through the forests and jungles, and get round the lake at its southern end; an attempt that might have appalled any man not utterly desperate with his life at stake.

He knew the inlet where the Bounder was fishing; knew that it was known for its fish, and that native canoes sometimes put in there for a catch. It was in the hope of catching sight of a native canoe that Krantz had climbed the tree overhanging the inlet. He would not have hesitated to attack three or four natives in the attempt to steal a canoe with nothing but his bare hands. His heart throbbed at the sight of a canoe in the inlet with but a single occupant; and he could scarcely repress a howl of savage glee as he recognised the Greyfriars schoolboy.

But he was in no hurry. He lay along the branch and watched. It was unlikely that the schoolboy would be there alone, though he was alone in the canoe. Covered by the thick foliage, Krantz watched the banks of the inlet to discover who was with the Bounder.

If the other schoolboys were there with their rifles the attempt on the canoe would be hopeless; he would be riddled with bullets long before he could deal with the Bounder and get away. In that case, Krantz could only turn his back on the hoped-for prize and creep unseen away.

But he heard no voices; he saw nothing of the schoolboys. But he detected the heap of fuel that was being prepared for the cooking-fire, and at length he glimpsed the Kikuyu.

Then he understood.

Vernon-Smith was alone there with Kikolobo.

The Kikuyu had more terrors for him than all the Famous Five of Greyfriars with their rifles in their hands. But the Kikuyu was on the bank; the Bounder was in the canoe. At close quarters the Kikuyu's spear was too terrible for the half-blood to dream of facing it; but the Kikuyu had no firearms. And he had gone back into the forest, and for the moment, at least, was out of sight.

Krantz's teeth came hard together.

Escape—and vengeance! A swift canoe to carry him across the lake, and the English boy whom he hated a prisoner in his hands, to be sold as a slave, as he had long ago threatened. Once across the lake in the Belgian territory, his lawless gang of slave-hunters would rejoin him; he would have nothing more to fear. Later, he would find an opportunity of dealing with the rest of the Greyfriars party, once he was free of the deadly danger that dogged his footsteps on the British side of the lake. That could wait. Now—

Herbert Vernon-Smith gave a start and pitched over as the canoe suddenly rocked, as something heavy dropped into it from the branches above.

"What the thump—" gasped the Bounder.

His rod and line slipped from his hand into the water. The Bounder half rose, staring round.

He had a glimpse of a coppery face with light blue eyes; but only a glimpse. A crashing fist struck him, and he fell in the bottom of the canoe, almost stunned by the savage blow.

The canoe was rocking wildly and shipping water. Krantz's weight dropping into it from the branch had almost caused it to capsize.

Krantz tore at the mooring-rope and tore it loose. He grasped the long, double-bladed paddle.

Splash, splash, splash!

The canoe shot away down the inlet towards the open lake.

With desperate hands the outcast drove at the paddle.

Every moment he expected to hear, behind him, the yell of the Kikuyu, and to feel the whiz of a hurtling spear.

The paddle flashed like lightning in swift strokes on either side of the canoe. Like an arrow the canoe shot towards the lake.

The Bounder, with reeling brain, dragged himself on an elbow and stared dizzily up at the man who stood to the paddle.

"Krantz!" he breathed.

He made an attempt to rise, but sank back again, his brain spinning.

He was unarmed; he had not thought of bringing his rifle on the trip on the lake. Not that he could have used a weapon, had one been there. It was only because he was knocked out and helpless that the ruffian did not waste a second in stunning him with a blow from the paddle.

Krantz hardly heeded him. Desperately he drove at the paddle, and the canoe flew under his rapid strokes. Once he was out of the cast of a spear—

"Kikolobo!" groaned the Bounder.

His only hope was in the hunter of Kenya. He breathed the name like a prayer. And as if in answer there came

from the dark shades of the wooded bank a terrible yell, as fierce as the cry of the hunting leopard. It was the yell of the Kikuyu.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Hard Pressed I

KIKOLOBO stopped dead.

The bundle of firewood he had brought out of the forest fell at his feet unheeded. For an instant the tall Kikuyu stood transfixed, staring with starting eyes at the gliding canoe and the figure of the copper-faced half-breed, driving madly at the paddle. The change in the calm, grave face of the Kikuyu was terrible. His eyes blazed with fury, his lips drew back in a savage snarl, his teeth flashed.

Bwana-wangu, the white lord who had saved him from the lion, was in the hands of his bitter foe; of the "evil Mzungu" who designed to sell him into slavery in the far-off Congo country. The rage of the Kikuyu was like the boiling lava flood in one of the volcanoes of his native land. The yell that burst from him rang echoing through the forest and across the lake; a yell of which the savage intensity struck a chill even to the desperate heart of Krantz.

The Kikuyu leaped to the water's edge. His fighting-spears were in his hand, for even in gathering sticks and dead bark for a cooking-fire the wary Kikuyu did not leave his weapons. Standing knee-deep in water, the gleaming eyes of the Kikuyu fixed on the fleeting canoe, his right arm swept up and a spear whizzed through the air after Krantz like a streak of lightning.

It was well for the slave-trader that he had lost no time, and that he had gained a distance before the Kikuyu emerged from the forest and sighted him in the canoe.

For the spear flew with an accuracy that the best shot with a rifle could not have excelled, straight for the tattered figure standing to the paddle.

It dropped short; but only by a yard. Its force spent, it clattered on the stern of the canoe and slid into the water.

Krantz heard it rather than saw it, and knew how narrow his escape had been. Only the mighty arm of Kikolobo could have hurled the spear such a distance, and only luck and desperate paddling had saved the slave-trader from being spitted like a bird.

He caught his breath for a moment, and drove harder with the flashing paddle.

Without daring to waste a fraction of a second looking round, he knew that the Kikuyu was racing along the bank of the inlet towards the lake.

The deer chased by the hunting leopard was not swifter than the Kikuyu as he ran.

His cast had failed, but he had still two spears, and there was yet a chance. He ran and leaped like a buck along the inlet; and fast as Krantz drove the canoe, the Kikuyu was faster. But fortune was on the side of the escaping ruffian, for the inlet widened where it joined the lake, and Krantz was sweeping away from the side on which the Kikuyu ran; so though the racing hunter beat the canoe in point of speed, he did not approach near to the fleeting craft.

Where the inlet joined the lake Kikolobo was forced to halt; and though the distance was now a little greater than before, he attempted another cast with a spear—putting into it all the mighty strength of his arm, all his fierce devotion to the white lord who was being carried off under his eyes.

Whiz!

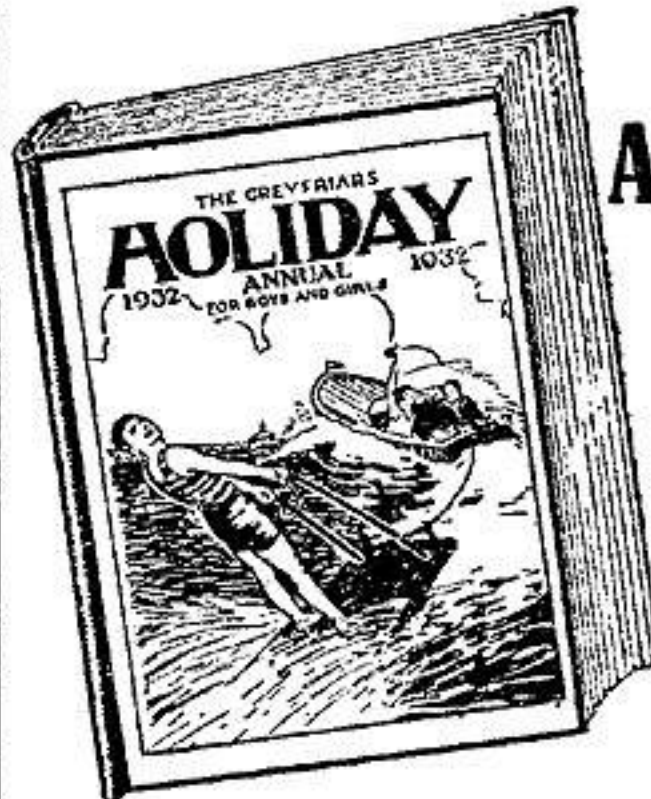
This time the desperation of the Kikuyu drove the whizzing spear farther. It reached Krantz, and for a second the Kikuyu's eyes blazed with a fierce hope.

But it was in vain. Krantz felt the blow on his shoulder, but the force of the cast was spent when the spear touched him, and the keen point of the blade did not even penetrate his skin. The spear fell away into the lake with a light splash and vanished.

Krantz gave a hoarse cry of relief and triumph. His second escape had

(Continued on next page.)

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been narrower than his first, but he had escaped.

The Bounder groaned.

He had seen the flash of the whizzing spear, and knew how near he had been to rescue. Had Krantz fallen to the spear it would not have taken the Kikuyu long to swim out to him. But Krantz was still unhurt and paddling with savage strength and determination.

Vernon-Smith made another effort.

He rose as far as his knees, with swimming brain. Krantz's eyes burned at him. He kicked out savagely, and the Bounder, struck on the chest, rolled over helplessly, only half conscious.

The paddles dashed and splashed incessantly.

But there was another dashing and splashing behind. His third spear it was futile for the Kikuyu to hurl; and he was gripping it between his strong white teeth as he swam after the fleeing canoe.

With long, mighty strokes, the powerful Kikuyu cleft the gleaming waters of the lake.

Krantz looked back.

He was far beyond a spear-cast now, and he could afford to look back. His sunken eyes glittered at the dark head of the Kikuyu darting across the shining water.

He gave a hoarse, savage laugh.

The strongest swimmer could not hope to overtake a canoe driven by a paddle in sinewy hands.

But the Kikuyu seemed to cleave the water like an arrow, fairly shooting towards the canoe.

Krantz remembered—what the Kikuyu had not forgotten—that a little distance from the mouth of the inlet there was a muddy shoal out in the lake—one of the numberless shoals of Lake Albert Nyanza. He remembered it in time to steer clear; but to clear it he had to sweep round from his direct course towards the open lake, to the right, and it was on his right that the Kikuyu swam with rapid strokes, aiming to intercept him before he could get past the shoal.

The wary Kikuyu had counted on the shoal; Krantz was aware of that, as the dark head on the water swept rapidly nearer to him.

He paddled almost frantically, exerting every ounce of his failing strength.

If the Kikuyu reached him matters were desperate. Gripped between Kikolobo's teeth was the third spear; destined, perhaps, to drink the life-blood of the escaping outcast. If the powerful hands of the Kikuyu once grasped the canoe—

The paddle flashed and flashed.

Taking in his desperate haste the shortest sweep round the muddy shoal, Krantz cut it too close, and the canoe bumped into the mud. It lost way, with a shock that almost threw the ruffian off his feet.

He recovered himself, and shoved the canoe clear with the long paddle. But seconds had been lost, and seconds were precious. As he drove fiercely on again the dark head of the Kikuyu shot down on him.

The Bounder, trying to drag together his scattered senses, lifted himself on an elbow. He sighted the dark head of the swimmer, with dizzy eyes. The swimming Kikuyu came down on the canoe with almost incredible speed. The slave-trader could not clear the shoal in time.

Standing in the rocking canoe, grasping the long double-bladed paddle with both hands, Krantz eyed the dark head with blazing eyes of rage and hate. He

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struck; but a swift movement saved the Kikuyu. A dusky hand grasped at the canoe.

Madly the ruffian struck again, and this time he had better fortune. The Bounder, with a groan, saw the dark head sink beneath the water.

Krantz panted.

The paddle flashed once more, and the canoe fled on. Behind it, as it fled, rose the head of the Kikuyu. A trickle of blood ran down under the thick black hair, mingling with the wet on the dark face. The spear was still between the Kikuyu's teeth.

Kikolobo was still swimming, fast and hard. But the canoe was clear of the shoal now, and speeding on to the open wide waters of the Nyanza. The swimmer had lost his last chance.

He realised it, and knew that he would never reach the canoe, never lay hands on the desperado who was carrying off Bwana-wangu. He grasped the spear from his teeth, his right arm rose from the water, and from the water he made a last desperate cast.

Desperate as the chance was, it came near to success. Krantz felt the wind of the spear as it passed, grazing his

LOOK, LADS,
HERE'S A CLEVER GREY-
FRIARS LIMERICK!

Said Wharton to Frank and Bob:
"I think it's a jolly good job
That Bunter is fat,
Or else, well, my hat!
The world of a sight he would
rob!"

One of this week's leather pocket
wallets has been dispatched to
I. Randall, The Post Office,
Sandwich, Kent, author of the
above winning effort.

If you have not won a prize
yet, SET ABOUT DOING SO
NOW!

neck; and it dropped ahead of the canoe into the lake.

A shudder ran through the ruffian. Only by a hair's-breadth had he escaped death.

But he had escaped; and the Kikuyu had no other weapon save his knife; and he was falling hopelessly behind in the race.

Krantz stared back, savagely exultant.

In mocking defiance, he waved his paddle at the Kikuyu, grinning at the rage and grief in the face that was falling behind.

Swiftly the canoe ran on. Yet for a long, long time the dark head of the Kikuyu was still visible on the shining water astern; still the faithful Kikolobo was swimming in pursuit, hopeless as he now knew it to be. Farther and farther, careless whether he ever regained the shore or not; life was nothing in the eyes of the Kikuyu if he could not save his Bwana.

But the dark head grew a mere speck to Krantz's searching eyes; and at last it vanished.

It was gone!

The canoe glided on into the sunset, darkening now as night approached. Night fell on the lake, like a black velvety cloak; the brilliant stars of Africa came out, gleaming down on the rolling waters, and still the weary arms of the fugitive urged the canoe to the westward; till at last it struck the mud of the Congo shore.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Smithy!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Oh, chuck it, fathead!"
"Look here——"
"Go and eat coke!"

Billy Bunter snorted.

The fellows were making out, as Bunter termed it, that he, William George Bunter, was responsible for the escape of Krantz from the locked shed.

Generally, the Famous Five were patient with the fatuous Owl; but now they had very little patience to waste on him.

At lunch time no news had come in from Captain McCann and the askaris. They were still hunting Ludwig Krantz through forest and jungle; but as the fleeting outcast had not been captured yet, the juniors doubted whether he would be captured at all.

It had been a feather in the cap of the Famous Five to make the capture. It was extremely irritating for the outcast's escape to be due to a member of the Greyfriars party, though only such a very inconsiderable member as Billy Bunter.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had come back to lunch. In the afternoon he had rolled off in a rickshaw again, to keep another of his many business appointments.

He had asked where his son was, and learned that Smithy had gone out on the lake with Kikolobo. Why Smithy had gone without waiting for his friends he did not inquire.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rather at a loose end. Vernon-Smith's departure with the Kikuyu had knocked on the head the programme for the day. They rather wondered whether he intended to remain absent the whole day, and what he was up to, anyhow. But they were thinking more of Captain McCann and Krantz than of the Bounder, hoping to hear that a capture had been made in the forest.

Mr. Jarram, exuding smiling politeness, showed the juniors over the plantation, and told them many things of interest; but in the afternoon the Eurasian gentleman was called away on business matters, and the chums of Greyfriars were left to their own devices.

They had tea in the veranda, and discussed whether to go exploring along the lake, as it was pretty clear by this time that the Bounder was not coming back for them.

Five separate and distinct glares were turned on Billy Bunter when he joined them. The Owl of the Remove tea'd with a frowning, indignant brow, though fortunately his wrath and indignation did not affect his appetite. It was pretty thick, Bunter considered, for these fellows to make out that he was responsible for that brute Krantz's escape. What could any fellow have done in the circumstances except what Bunter had done?

"I say, you fellows——" recommenced Bunter.

Bob Cherry picked up a juicy mango. "Where will you have it?" he inquired.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Look here, Bunter, shut up," said Harry Wharton. "We're fed-up with you. I suppose you can't help being a howling funk, but you've done a lot of harm, and the less you say the better, so shut up!"

"What was a fellow to do, you beast?" roared Bunter. "Think I was going to be stamped on by that hulking brute?"

"You shouldn't have been in the shed at all, idiot."



The Kikuyu, gripping a spear between his strong white teeth, seemed to cleave the water like an arrow, fairly shooting towards the canoe. Krantz looked back and eyed the dark head with rage and hate!

"That was Smithy's fault."
 "Oh, rats!"
 "Think I was going to be walloped by a blinking nigger because Smithy was in a rotten bad temper?" snorted Bunter. "He was going for me, the beast, when I chucked the coffee at him. Besides, I never chucked it at him. It was a pure accident!"
 "Will you ring off?"
 "No, I won't! Making out that a fellow is to blame!" said Bunter warmly. "I'd like to know what you fellows would have done in my place. Fainted, most likely! You haven't my pluck."
 "Oh crikey!"
 "It was all Smithy's fault, as you jolly well know! Going for a chap, after giving him a pressing invitation for a holiday in Africa! Nice manners to a guest! The beast was actually going to kick me, simply because I mentioned that you fellows had gone off for the morning and given him the 'go-by.'"
 "What?" roared Harry Wharton.
 Bunter jumped.
 "Don't yell at a fellow like that, you beast! What's the matter with you now?"
 "Oh, squash him!" growled Johnny Bull.
 The Famous Five looked at one another. They had wondered, with some irritation, at the Bounder's conduct that day, wondering, impatiently, whether Smithy had his back up about anything. Bunter's words let in light on that subject.
 "My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Was Smithy such a silly fool as to get his back up about nothing? I know he's done it before. Is that why he cleared off with Kicky on his own?"
 "He, he, he!" came from Bunter. "I

can tell you he was jolly wild! Frightfully savage, in fact."
 Harry Wharton frowned.
 "Of course, he was kept hanging about, and he never knew the reason," he said. "If he'd known we got after Krantz—"
 "He would have known, if he'd stopped to speak when we waved to him on the lake, coming back," grunted Johnny Bull. "If Smithy's got his back up he can keep it up, and be blowed to him."
 "It's a bit awkward, as we're his guests here," said Harry. "But I dare say Bunter is only talking his usual rot."
 "Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "Shut up, you fat freak!"
 "Pretty thick, I call it, treating guests like this," said Bunter. "I was going to shoot a hippopotamus on the lake to-day—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. You fellows may be afraid of hippopotamuses! Not me! If you had half my pluck—"
 "I'm going to kick him," said Johnny Bull, rising. "The sneaking funk let Krantz get away, and we haven't kicked him! If he won't shut up, I'm going to kick him till he does."
 "Beast!"
 Bunter rolled away down the steps of the veranda. He did not want to shut up; but still more he did not want to be kicked.
 "Well, what about a pull on the lake?" asked Bob. "The day's been mucked-up; but we may as well get a pull on the lake. Jarram says we can have the boat if we want it."
 "May as well," said Harry.
 "May meet Smithy coming back, and soothe him!" said Nugent, with a laugh.

"If he's got his jolly old back up the sooner he gets it down again the better."
 Grant from Johnny Bull.
 "Blow Smithy, and his blessed back!" he said. "He can keep it up till we go back to Greyfriars, for all I care; and all next term, if he likes."
 "My esteemed Johnny," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "the soft answer is the stitch in time that saves the cracked pitcher from going longest to the well. Let us soothe the esteemed and ridiculous Smithy with the soft words that break the bones of a parsnip, as the English proverb says."
 "Good old English proverb!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I think Mr. Jarram must have had some lessons from that jolly old moonshee who taught you English at Bhamipur, Inky. Come on, you slackers."
 The juniors walked down to the lake and pushed off in the boat. They rowed along in the direction of Butiaba, and had a view of the lake steamer leaving for Nimulo. They rowed back in the sunset, and kept their eyes open, as they neared the landing stage, for Vernon-Smith. But nothing was to be seen of Kikolebo's canoe.
 The sunset was deepening to dusk when they landed and walked up to the bungalow. Bunter was in the veranda, busy killing mosquitoes. The mosquitoes of Lake Albert, like those of the Victoria Nyanza, seemed to have a special fancy for Bunter's fat face.
 Whack, whack, whack! came the sound of a fabled copy of the "British East African Leader," as Bunter slew his small but irritating enemies. Since landing in Africa, Bunter, like Samson of old, had slain his thousands and his tens of thousands.
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"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy in yet?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Eh? Blow Smithy!"

"Is he in yet, fathead?" asked Wharton.

"No. Old Smith is in, if you want him!" snorted Bunter. "Called me names when he came in—making out that it was my fault that brute Krantz got away. He seems to have seen that other beast, McCann, in Butiaba, and the silly ass hasn't caught Krantz yet. I wonder what the Government pay him for? Waste of money, in my opinion, if he can't get hold of a blinking slave-trader! I'd do it fast enough."

"Smithy ought to be in by now," said Nugent, with a glance at the darkening sky.

"Oh, he's safe enough with Kicky!" said Harry. "He'll be in at dark, I suppose."

Mr. Vernon-Smith looked out of a lighted doorway into the dusky veranda. "Is Herbert with you?" he asked.

"No; we haven't seen him since this morning," answered Harry.

The millionaire grunted.

"He ought to be in by now! Why did he go off alone?"

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter. "Yaroo! Whoop! Who's that kicking me? Yow-ow-ow!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at Bunter, and then at the Famous Five.

"You boys haven't been quarrelling, I suppose?" he grunted.

"No, no!" said Harry hastily. "I dare say Smithy got tired of waiting for us this morning, and went off. No harm done."

"Well, he ought to be back by dark—especially with that scoundrel Krantz loose in the vicinity—"

"Kicky's with him," said Bob.

The millionaire nodded, and went back into the house. The juniors heard him grunt as he disappeared. They heard the voice of Mr. Jarram a few moments later.

"Take assurance, my distinguished friend; a boy is tremendously safe in a canoe on a lake with a Kikuyu."

Apparently the millionaire was growing uneasy. And the juniors, as they stood on the veranda looking towards the darkening lake, where the night was falling with the swiftness of the tropics, began to wonder whether there was cause for uneasiness.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Camp in the Crater!

"KOMM!" grunted Ludwig Krantz.

He followed the word with a blow.

Herbert Vernon-Smith staggered from the canoe, knee-deep in the mud of the Congoland shore.

Over the mud loomed the dark branches of trees, shutting off the stars. He could see hardly a foot before his eyes.

Where he was, except that he was on the Congo side of Lake Albert, the Bounder did not know.

But it was evident that Krantz knew the place well. Even in the dense darkness, there was no hesitation or uncertainty in his movements. He had landed at a spot that was familiar to him.

But the Bounder could guess, at least, that the spot was far away from any of the settlements on the shore of the lake. On the Belgian side Krantz had much less to fear than on the British side: but the authorities of the Congo State

would have been glad enough to lay him by the heels if opportunity had offered. The slave-trader was not likely to have landed near a white man's house or a native village.

Vernon-Smith staggered through the thick, oozing mud, with the grasp of the slave-trader on his shoulder. He found himself at last among the trunks of trees. There the ruffian halted.

With a rope from the canoe, he bound Vernon-Smith's wrists behind his back, and knotted the end of the rope to a branch.

It was impossible to resist. The Bounder was still dizzy and sick from the blow on his head; but had he been his usual cool and assured self, he had no chance against Ludwig Krantz—he was little more than a child in the powerful grasp of the ruffian.

He was left secured to the branch, while the slave-trader tramped back down the muddy shore of the lake.

A sound of heavy blows came to the Bounder's ears, through the silence of the forest. Krantz was staving in the canoe, with a large stone or a log of wood—beating a hole through the light craft to sink it. That told the Bounder that he intended to strike inland from the lake, and had no further use for the canoe. He was sinking it to cover up his tracks.

Krantz was breathing hard as he came splashing back to the spot where he had left his prisoner.

He released him from the branch, leaving his hands still bound, and took the end of the rope.

"Komm!" he repeated, in a savage grunt.

The Bounder tramped on with his captor, through clinging darkness and the smell of foul mud.

His heart was like lead.

Kikolobo, if he had escaped—and the Bounder was not sure of that, for he knew that the faithful Kikuyu had followed the canoe far into the lake—would seek him, would carry the news to his father and his friends. There would be hunting for him all along the shores of Lake Albert. But what search was likely to find him?

The canoe was sunk; no clue remained where he had landed. Was even the eagle eye of the Kikuyu likely to discover where he had been taken ashore in the endless miles of the lake-side? Even so footprints would not remain long in the mud. There was no hope.

All his friends could know, or guess, would be that Krantz had carried him off into the trackless Congo wilderness.

Krantz's light blue eyes glittered at him in the dusky shadows under the trees, through which he threaded a way he knew.

"Ach! At last!" said the slave-trader. "Twice I have failed; but this time—this time pays for all! Ach! I am glad now that the schoolboys seized me this morning on the lake—but for them I should have escaped. But now I escape with my enemy in my hands! Ach!"

The Bounder started.

"They—my friends—got you on the lake?" he exclaimed.

Krantz grinned savagely.

"You did not know! Nein, nein! I did not see you when they dragged me to the Jarram bungalow. You were not there, I remember. Ach, ja! They seized me when escaping in the planter's canoe, after following me far—but I snap my fingers at them, and at Captain McCann!"

"So that was why—" breathed the Bounder.

If anything could have made his heart heavier, that news would have had the effect. That was why Harry Wharton & Co. had left him hanging about on his own—they had been after this scoundrel and had captured him, though he had since escaped. And in his suspicious, sulky resentment, he had taken offence where there was no offence, and the outcome was—this!

He was a helpless prisoner in brutal hands, with the prospect before him of being sold into slavery in the unexplored depths of Africa; and the blame was on his own head.

He tramped miserably on.

How many weary miles he tramped in the clinging darkness of the forest he did not know. His legs ached with weariness; but if he lagged, a savage jerk at the rope dragged him onward. The sinewy slave-trader was fatigued, and the Bounder heard him grunting and cursing in the darkness. But he did not halt. It was evident that he was heading for some fixed destination, and that he did not intend to stop till he had reached it.

Under the Bounder's feet, as he tramped wearily on, he felt stones cropping from the soil, among gnarled roots. Fragments of lava crumbled under his feet. Round the shores of Lake Albert, he knew, were many extinct volcanoes, hidden from sight among impenetrable forests. He guessed now that it was some old crater for which the slave-trader was heading.

The ground was rising before him, though not steeply. It was thickly clothed with trees and high, thorny bush. Many times he felt the scratches of the thorns; many times Krantz cursed in mingled German and Arabic as he pushed on, and the long thorns tore him in the gloom. But here and there were open spaces, where the lava-crust was too solid for vegetable growth. Long centuries since a volcano had poured floods of burning lava down to the shore of the lake, where now grew mighty, majestic trees, hundreds of years old.

Starshine glimmered down again.

The Bounder looked round him with weary eyes.

The trees were scattered now and the bush was thin. The lava fragments were thicker under his feet. He was treading the rim of an ancient crater, partly crumbled away, but its shape still easily discerned in the gleam of the stars. Now the ground descended as he advanced; Krantz was leading him into the interior of the crater, down a gentle slope.

A bright gleaming ahead came from water, shining in the stars, deep down. The Bounder remembered that he had heard of the numerous crater-lakes in the region of Lake Albert. This was one of them—one of scores. The interior sides of the old volcano were thickly clothed in green.

He tramped wearily on after the slave-trader, understanding that he was reaching his destination at last. This was the hiding-place of the outcast of Central Africa; probably one of many.

Through the silence a shrill whistle burst from Krantz, awakening eerie echoes in the hollow of the old crater.

It was answered from the darkness below.

If Herbert-Vernon-Smith had had a glimmering of hope left, it fled now. It was no longer Krantz alone with whom he had to deal—others of the slave-trading gang were there.

Krantz tramped on.

Dimly, on a high bank overlooking the crater-pool, the shapes of wattled huts loomed up. Dark figures started

into view—dusky Arab faces, with gleaming black eyes.

There was a muttering of voices in a tongue the Bounder did not understand, and the gleaming eyes of the ruffians were turned curiously on him. Then a swarthy hand grasped his arm, and he was led to one of the wattled huts, and flung into it, and left alone.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Black News!

KICKY!" "Thank goodness!" breathed Harry Wharton.

The hour was growing late. Harry Wharton & Co., in the veranda of the Jarram bungalow, were feeling more and more uneasy as the hours crawled by.

Many times Mr. Vernon-Smith had stepped out, and gone in again, with a frowning and puckered brow.

In a deep cane chair Billy Bunter had nodded off to sleep, and his snore rumbled from the shadows.

The Bounder had not returned, and it had now been dark several hours. That Smithy would have intentionally remained out so late was not to be supposed. Yet it seemed impossible that any accident could have happened to the Bounder, in company with the brave and faithful Kikuyu.

The thought of Krantz was at the back of the juniors' minds. It seemed unlikely, but it was possible that the escaping ruffian might have fallen in with the Bounder. Even so, he was unarmed, and the Kikuyu was armed and well able to protect himself and Smithy.

Yet the Bounder did not return. Of the juniors and their uneasiness he might have been careless; but he would not have caused his father anxiety if he could have helped it. And Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was anxious and growing more anxious with every passing minute.

Searching for Smithy in the darkness of the unlighted lake, along its wild and jungly shores, was out of the question. The juniors did not even know where he had gone in the canoe with the Kikuyu, only that he had taken a southerly direction when they saw him from the boat.

Something had happened. Yet what could have happened? The minutes passed on leaden wings, and anxiety grew into alarm.

And then at last came a heavy tread on the path below, and in the starshine a tall figure in striped monkey-skins loomed into view.

With deep thankfulness the juniors recognised Kikolobo.

For the moment they did not doubt that the Bounder was with him. Kicky could hardly have returned alone.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. "Kicky, thank goodness! I—I was beginning to think—" He broke off.

"Same here," muttered Bob. "But what's happened to Kicky?" asked Nugent, in a low voice.

The tall Kikuyu came up the steps of the veranda with a heavy, but evidently fatigued tread. He was not carrying his generally inseparable spears. And his magnificent attire of the skin of the striped colobus monkey was soiled and stained and torn. His dark, grave face was deeply clouded, his proud, steady eyes drooped.

And Smithy did not follow him in. It dawned on the juniors that their

missing comrade was not, after all, with the Kikuyu.

"Kicky," exclaimed Wharton, "what has happened?"

It was obvious now that something had happened. Kikolobo had returned—but he had returned fatigued, spent, and alone. What had become of the Bounder?

"O Bwana!" said the Kikuyu, in a low voice. "N'gai is angry with this Kikuyu! My eyes have seen a great misfortune."

"Smithy!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

There was a throb of dread at their hearts.

"Bwana-wangu is far away," said the Kikuyu.

Mr. Vernon-Smith hurried out at the sound of voices. He gave a gasp of relief at the sight of Kikolobo. Then, as he saw that his son was not with the Kikuyu, his face paled.

"Where is my son?" he asked. The Kikuyu bowed his tall head.

"O Bwana-m'kubwa, this Kikuyu would have died to save him from the hands of the evil Mzungu, but it was not the will of N'gai."

The millionaire's face became white. "You mean Krantz?"

"Even that man of evil," said the Kikuyu. "At my lord's order, this Kikuyu landed on the lake shore to light the cooking-fire, to broil the fish for my lord to eat. From the shore, O Bwana-wangu, my eyes saw the evil Mzungu, who had climbed into the trees like Kima, the monkey, and dropped from a branch into the canoe where my lord sat, leaping on his prey like Tiu, the leopard. My lord lives, but he is a prisoner of the evil Mzungu, who has fled across the lake."

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

He leaned a hand on the doorpost for support. The news had stricken the portly millionaire like a heavy blow.

"You—you let that villain carry away my son?" he breathed.

The Kikuyu winced.

"O Bwana-m'kubwa, he fled so fast that my spears fell short, though I hurled them with more than the strength of the greatest warrior of the Masai. But I, Kikolobo, swam after him as he fled, and with the paddle he struck me deep into the waters, and escaped my hands. Yet still this Kikuyu followed till the canoe was gone into the sunset, and my eyes could see it no more. And it was only because the eye of N'gai watched over me, from the summit of the Great Mountain, that I, Kikolobo, came alive to the land again, and came with weary feet to this place to tell what my eyes have seen."

"My son!" groaned the millionaire.

The juniors stood silent. That the Kikuyu was not to blame; that he had done his best, they well knew, without questioning. His look was that of a man weary to the bone—a man who had exerted himself even beyond his great strength. And the grief and sorrow in his dark face were not to be mistaken.

But in his fear for his son's safety, Mr. Vernon-Smith had no eyes for what the juniors saw.

"My son! I trusted him to you. He saved your life. He saved you from the lion in Kenya, and you have lost him! You have lost my son! You have lost him—a prisoner in the hands of that villain, across the lake! Lost—lost to me for ever! My son!"

"O Bwana-m'kubwa!" said the Kikuyu humbly.

The millionaire made a fierce gesture. "You—I trusted you to guard him! I had faith in you! Why did you leave him alone in the canoe—why?"

"I obeyed my lord's commands, O Bwana-m'kubwa!"

"Fool! Villain! You have lost my son!" groaned the millionaire.

A trembling ran through the Kikuyu's mighty frame.

"Lord, if I have lost your son, whose handsome face was brighter to my eyes than the sunrise over the forests of Masalindi, I, Kikolobo, will die for my fault," he said, in a faltering voice. "For it is in my thoughts, lord, to follow the evil Mzungu, even to the end of the Great River, and slay him with a Kikuyu spear, and save Bwana-wangu from his wickedness. And if I fail, lord, this Kikuyu will not return a living man, and his eyes will see no more the houses of his people. And though my limbs are heavy with weariness, lord, this night will I cast a stone on the margin of the water, in the name of N'gai, and take a canoe to follow Bwana-wangu into the unknown country where he is gone."

(Continued on next page.)

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And with those words the tall Kikuyu turned, and strode away from the bungalow, vanishing into the darkness under the trees.

The stricken millionaire hardly heeded his going.

He almost tottered into the house.

The juniors looked at one another in silence. Their faces were pale. From the shadows came the undisturbed snore of Billy Bunter. They heard the distressed voice of Mr. Jarram.

"An enormous misfortune has happened, don't it? Take a courage in a heart, my friend. I send a messenger with immense speed to Butiaba, where there is Captain McCann. A terrible villain will not escape with a prisoner, sir—no! In an inconsiderable time he will be caught, and a rope will be round a neck. Yes, do not give up a hope!"

"My son!" groaned the millionaire.

"Smithy, in the hands of that scoundrel!" said Harry Wharton, in a low voice. "Kicky did all he could—we know that. But they're across the lake—in the Congo forests."

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

"We're not leaving him to it, you men. We're going after him."

"Sink or swim together!" said Johnny Bull.

"At dawn," muttered Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded. In the darkness there was nothing to be done. But at the first gleam of dawn—the Famous Five, without even discussing the matter, had resolved on what they were going to do.

From the bungalow a swift Baganda ran by shadowed paths to Butiaba with the news for Captain McCann. Half an hour later there was a tramp of horses' feet, and the man-tracker of Uganda arrived with his askaris.

He had a few words with Mr. Vernon-Smith, a few words with the juniors. He learned all that the Kikuyu had told them. Of Kikolobo they could only tell him that the Kikuyu had gone, with the intention of obtaining a canoe and crossing the lake. McCann knitted his brows. He would have been glad to take the Kikuyu hunter with his own party. But there was no time to be lost. In a very short time Captain McCann and the askaris were gone.

To a hint from Harry Wharton that the schoolboys would be glad to go with the party, the man-tracker only replied with a curt shake of the head. It was no work for schoolboys, in the captain's opinion; and no doubt he was right.

But that made no difference to the Famous Five's resolution. If there was no news of Smithy at dawn—and none was to be expected—they were going after him. That was settled and fixed.

have spent his immense fortune to the last shilling, and cared nothing. He was going down to Butiaba now to do all that could be done—instituting search-parties, offering munificent rewards to set all the natives along the lake into motion. The business matters that had brought Mr. Vernon-Smith out to Uganda were cast aside now as things of no moment. Appointments were forgotten, letters unopened. The millionaire's thoughts were concentrated on the rescue of his son.

The chums of the Remove had already resolved to search for Smithy themselves. But Harry Wharton mentioned that intention to the millionaire as he was stepping into the rickshaw to go down to Butiaba. As the schoolboys were under Mr. Vernon-Smith's charge, it was only right to ask his leave and approval.

Mr. Vernon-Smith's reply was short and sharp.

He was too worried and distressed to have any patience with stuff and nonsense; and that was his opinion of the Co.'s plans.

"But—" said Harry.

"Stuff and nonsense!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith, and he called to the rickshaw boy and rolled away.

Wharton smiled faintly as he looked at his friends.

"Well, that's that!" he said. "It may be stuff and nonsense, you men; but we're going, all the same."

"The stuff may be terrific, and the nonsense preposterous," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the go-funness is the proper caper."

"That's settled," said Bob. "It would have been rather awkward if the dear old gent had refused us leave to go, as we're in his charge here. But he hasn't done that."

"We're going!" said Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter."

The juniors went into the veranda to speak to Mr. Jarram. The Eurasian planter was full of sympathy, deeply distressed by the misfortune that had happened to his honoured guest. But his olive face grew very long and grave when the juniors told him what they intended.

"It is a stuff and a nonsense!" protested Mr. Jarram. "You go into a danger and a tremendous peril, don't it? Yes! Better stay in a bungalow, where all is safe and sound!"

"We're going," said Harry Wharton. "Smithy's our pal, and we can't leave him to it."

"Captain McCann seek that enormous villain," said Mr. Jarram. "Honourable Mr. Vernon-Smith set all Butiaba in one huge and big flutter on this painful subject. A hundred, a thousand natives go in a canoe to seek. Yes! Huge reward will be offered! All niggers round Lake Albert will seek. A word will go to Belgian persons across a lake, and soldiers will make a search for a missing schoolboy. You young persons can do nothing. I beg you stay safe in a bungalow."

"We're not thinking of safety, specially with Smithy in danger, sir," answered Wharton. "We're going. If you can help us—"

"It is a duty to keep a boy safe in a bungalow," said Mr. Jarram, shaking his head.

"Well, if that's how you look at it, sir, we'll manage somehow," said Wharton. "We can hire a canoe along the shore somewhere."

Mr. Jarram gesticulated with both hands.

"You give an ear to word of wisdom

from elderly person!" he urged. "I give you a good advice and a wise tip. But if you have an immovable intention to go, I wish you a good luck. It will occupy a time and make an amusement to sail on a lake. Yes! You shall have a boat and a sail and a Baganda."

"Thank you, Mr. Jarram," said Wharton gratefully.

"The thankfulness is terrific."

"And the sooner the better!" said Nugent.

Mr. Jarram, it was quite clear, looked on the expedition simply as a sail on the lake to fill in a dismal day of anxiety, and to give the juniors something to occupy their troubled minds. But Mr. Jarram was welcome to look on it just how he liked. The Famous Five knew what they meant to do, and they were going to do it.

The juniors sorted out their rifles and cartridges, and packed baskets of provisions in the boat. Mast and sail were taken down to the landing-stage by a cheery, grinning Baganda boy, who was used to sailing the boat for Mr. Jarram. The mast was stepped, the provisions and rifles and ammunition packed in, and other necessaries for a trip that might be prolonged. Mr. Jarram urged the juniors to be back before dark; and he had little doubt that they would realise the hopelessness of their quest, and return by sundown. In the native tongue, he impressed Gobongo, the Baganda boy, to see that the juniors got into no danger.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter came scuttling down to the landing-stage as the juniors were getting into the boat.

The Famous Five had forgotten Bunter's existence; but the Owl of the Remove had an eye on them.

"I say, you fellows, hold on—I'm coming!" roared Bunter.

He panted down to the boat.

"You fat ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "Why couldn't you stay in bed? Go back and get another snooze."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Go back and have another brekker!" advised Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Don't be an ass, Bunter," said Harry Wharton impatiently. "We're going on what may be a long trip—"

"If you fellows think you're going to leave me behind while you go out for a day on the lake—"

"You ass, this isn't an excursion. We're going to look for Smithy."

"Then you'll want me," said Bunter.

"What?"

"You jolly well know that it was I that rescued Smithy when that villain Krantz got hold of him in Kenya," said Bunter warmly.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"For goodness' sake, shut up and clear off, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "We can't be bothered with a fat idiot on this trip."

"Shove off!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter took hold of the gunwale. His little round eyes fairly glittered with indignation through his big spectacles.

"You rotters!" he gasped. "You're going for a day's picnic on the lake, and you think you're leaving me out."

"It's not a picnic, you fat chump!" roared Bob.

"Gammon!"

"We're going after Smithy!" howled Nugent.

"Lot of chance you've got of finding Smithy!" grinned Bunter. "Looking for a needle in a haystack would be a joke to it. Besides, I'm the man to find Smithy, if he can be found."

"Clear off, ass!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

"STUFF and nonsense!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted out the words.

He was stepping into a rickshaw.

The plump face of the millionaire was lined, almost haggard. He looked as if he had not slept during the night.

At dawn there was no news. Kikolobo had vanished into the unknown. Captain McCann and his askaris were on the trail. News was not to be expected.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was not the man to leave a single stone unturned where his son's safety was at stake. He would



The boat was leaving the landing-stage and Bunter made a sudden bound to reach it. Crash! Bump! He landed headlong in the boat, grasped Bob Cherry round the neck, and they both went sprawling.

"Shan't!" said Bunter.
 "Give him a shove with the boat-hook!" growled Johnny Bull.
 "Beast!"
 Evidently William George Bunter was convinced that the Famous Five were going for a sail and a picnic, and that they wanted to keep him out of a good thing! Bunter was not going to be left to hang about for a whole day at the bungalow on his own; not if he knew it.
 Looking for Smithy on the endless forest-clad shores of the lake was all rot, in Bunter's opinion—and, indeed, it might have seemed so to older and wiser heads than Bunter's. Not that he believed that the juniors were really in earnest. This was only an excuse for leaving him out, in Bunter's opinion.
 That the Famous Five were in anything but a mood for picnicking, with their comrade missing, naturally did not occur to Bunter. Bunter was always ready for a picnic; or for any other function in which eatables played a prominent part. Bunter could have picnicked with fat satisfaction if all the inhabitants of British East Africa had been missing.
 He held on to the gunwale.
 "I say, you fellows, don't be beasts!" he urged. "Leaving a chap to hang about on his lonesome all day! Do you call that pally?"
 "You beighted bandersnatch," hissed Bob Cherry. "We may not come back for days, if we come back at all."
 "Pile it on!" said Bunter.
 "We're going to look for Krantz——"
 "He, he, he!"
 "You'll be frightened out of your silly wits if we get within a mile of him!" snapped Nugent.
 "You won't get within fifty miles of him," grinned Bunter, "and if you did, I'm the man to handle him."
 "Oh crumbs!"

"The fact is, I refuse to be left behind," said Bunter firmly. "I refuse distinctly. You've brought me out to this beastly country, making out that it was going to be a holiday; and now you want to leave me out of everything that's going on. I call it mean."
 "My esteemed idiotic Bunter——"
 "You can't come, Bunter," said Harry. "You'd be in danger, and you'd be in the way. Go back and feed."
 "Beast!"
 "Give him a tap with the boathook!" snapped Johnny Bull. "We've no time for his chin-music now."
 "Look here, you rotters—— Ow!"
 Bob Cherry gave the fat Owl a shove, and Billy Bunter sat down on the timber landing-stage.
 "Oooooogh!"
 "Shove off!"
 Boathook and oars shoved the boat away. Bunter scrambled to his feet. His very spectacles scintillated with wrath.
 The boat was leaving the landing-stage. Three feet of water separated it from Bunter.
 The fat Owl made a sudden bound. Even Bunter could jump three feet with success.
 Crash!
 Bump!
 The fat junior landed headlong in the boat, and sprawled. He caught Bob Cherry round the neck and dragged him down, and they bumped into Nugent and Hurreo Singh, and sent them sprawling.
 For some moments there was a gasping, wriggling heap in the bottom of the boat.
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Wow!"
 "Yaroooooooogh! Help! Gerroff! Oooooogh!"
 The juniors scrambled up, crimson and breathless. Billy Bunter still

sprawled, yelling. The boat glided away from the landing-stage under the impetus of the shove. The Baganda boy, grinning, was shaking out the sail, to catch the wind that blew off shore.
 "Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Chuck him out!"
 "Ow! Beast! Ow!"
 "Chuck him overboard!" howled Johnny Bull.
 "Ow! Rotter! Wow!"
 Harry Wharton knitted his brows. On such an expedition the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove was the very last fellow whose company was wanted. But he was landed on the party now. The boat was shooting away from the shore.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Across the Lake!

"BETTER land for lunch!" said Bunter.
 "What?"
 "Blessed if I see what you want to run out into the middle of the lake for!" said Bunter peevishly. "Suppose a storm came on!"
 "Fathead!"
 "Well, there are storms on these African lakes," said Bunter. "Of course, I should be all right—I've got pluck, I hope. But you fellows——"
 "Dry up, ass!"
 There was a steady wind behind the boat, and the Baganda boy handled it well. If the wind had fallen, the juniors were prepared to row; but they were glad to be saved the labour of pulling many weary miles. The boat glided swiftly through the water, and long since the British shore of Lake Albert had sunk to a dim, dark line. The torrid sun of noon blazed down,
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and there was little shelter in the boat. Bunter grunted and grumbled and fanned himself.

Still, the fat junior found the morning a fairly satisfactory one. He had taken a series of substantial snacks from the provision baskets, and he had enjoyed a long nap with a handkerchief screening his fat face from the sun. But at midday Bunter was naturally thinking of lunch. Any number of snacks during the morning made no difference to that.

Lunching in the boat was rot, in Bunter's opinion. He preferred a comfortable seat under a shady tree. And he was irritated, and a little uneasy, at finding the boat's prow turned incessantly to the west. It began to look as if these beasts really intended to cross the lake; which was not only rot, but stark, staring, raving lunacy. Ludwig Krantz was on the western side of the lake, and Congo cannibals—to say nothing of innumerable lions and leopards and gorillas and other fearsome creatures. It was better, Bunter considered, to keep to the safe side of the lake for a picnic.

"I say, you fellows," Bunter began again, "when are we going to have lunch?"

"Begin as soon as you like, ass."

"I'd rather lunch ashore."

"Then you'd better wait till we hit Congoland!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But that won't be for a jolly long time yet. This is one of the small lakes, as lakes go in Central Africa; but it's a good step across it."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "Look here, I think we've come far enough. A sail is all very well, but you can over-do it. We shall be out of sight of land if we keep on much farther."

"We shall be in sight of the land on the other side, if land's what you want," answered Bob.

"And there's one thing you haven't thought of—"

"What's that, Fatty?"

"How are we going to get back against this wind?" demanded Bunter. "It's been blowing behind us all the morning."

"Yes, that's just good luck."

"It means a lot of tacking, and hours and hours perhaps!" grunted Bunter. "I suppose that means that we've got to lunch in the boat. You fellows know jolly well that I should prefer to picnic under a tree. I've told you so."

"Don't tell us any more!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Have a little sense!" hooted Bunter. "It may take all the afternoon to get back to Jarram's bungalow with this wind. Better put about at once, or we may not be in by dark."

"I rather fancy that we shan't be in by dark!" chuckled Bob. "You would come, fathead, now you'd better make up your mind to it."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "It may be jolly dangerous to stay out all night! If you're thinking of that—"

"We are—we is!"

"You can't pull my leg, you beast! Making out that you're going among a lot of cannibals and slave-traders to look for Smithy!" sneered Bunter. "Well, I'm going to have lunch."

"Stack it away, if you've got room for it—and shut up!"

"Yah!"

Bunter evidently had room for it, for he proceeded to stack it away at a great rate. Harry Wharton & Co. sat about the boat and ate a rather lighter lunch than Bunter's.

Having packed away all the pro-

visions that his ample circumference would hold, the Owl of the Remove went to sleep again. His rumbling snore mingled with the wash of the water lapping round the gliding boat.

The wind held, which was a great satisfaction to the Famous Five. They watched the dark line of forest on the Congoland shore growing larger and clearer in the brilliant sunshine. The difficulty, almost the hopelessness, of their quest, was borne in upon their minds as they watched. They had no doubt that Krantz had succeeded in crossing the lake in the night; there was no hope of sighting the canoe with the slave-trader and his prisoner in it. Somewhere in that endless line of untrodden forest he had landed and vanished. Hunting for him was a great deal like hunting for a needle in a haystack, only more so, as Johnny Bull observed. But difficulty, and even hopelessness, made no difference to the juniors' determination. They could not remain idle while the Bunder was carried away into slavery; a hopeless quest was better than idle waiting.

It was late in the afternoon when Billy Bunter awoke. He jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose and blinked round him.

"Are we nearly home?" he asked.

The juniors did not trouble to reply to that question. The boat was running into the sunset. The wind was now lighter, but it was sufficient to keep the boat under way. Billy Bunter sat up, and stared at the forests ahead.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, which— which side of the lake is that?" he ejaculated.

"The Belgian side, ass."

"Haven't you turned back yet?" yelled Bunter, in alarm.

"You silly ass, when will you get it into your thick head that we're not turning back?"

Bunter blinked at the juniors. It was driven into his fatuous brain at last that this was not, after all, a day's excursion, but an expedition into unknown perils.

"You—you—you silly idiots!" he gurgled. "We can't stay out all night in the boat—you jolly well know we can't!"

"We'll try!" said Bob.

"It's jolly cold of a night—"

"We've got our camping outfit."

"You—you—you rotters!" gasped Bunter. "Mean to say that you're really thinking of going after Smithy—"

"Get it at last?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"And what about me?" roared Bunter.

"Nothing about you, old fat bean."

"You—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

Words failed the Owl of the Remove. For quite a long time the fat Owl sat silent, blinking at the juniors, and at the approaching shore of the Belgian Congo.

"You—you—you're not landing there?" he gasped at last.

"Not yet," said Harry. "We're going to coast up and down in the boat for a day or two, looking for sign. No good landing till we know where to land. We've got to find out somehow where Krantz got ashore from the canoe."

"A—a—a day or two!" gasped Bunter.

"A week, if necessary—"

"We haven't grub for a week!" shrieked Bunter.

"We shall have to chance that!"

"Why, you—you—you potty dummy!"

Words failed Bunter once more. But words would have been wasted on fellows who were so hopelessly potty as to be

prepared to "chance" such a thing as grub. Bunter, thrilling with wrath and indignation, sat and blinked. There was really nothing else that he could do.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Attack in the Night!

TROPIC night!

Stars in myriads were reflected on the shimmering lake. But under the stretching branches of the mighty trees, in by the shore, was deep darkness. Through the gloom, fire-flies flashed.

Harry Wharton sat with his rifle on his knees, watching.

The other fellows had turned into their blankets. Billy Bunter's snore rumbled through the gloom. Gobongo, the Bagarda boy, was curled up fast asleep. Whether it was necessary to keep watch at night the juniors did not know, but they were taking no chances. Certainly it was necessary, if they were anywhere near the man they sought.

Wharton was wakeful enough, taking his turn to watch. The boat was tied on to a long drooping branch extending far from the bank. A wide margin of water lay between it and the muddy shore. Quarters in the boat were very close for camping, but it was safer than camping ashore in unknown country. If there were enemies—and there might be many—the boat was more difficult for them to reach than a camp on the shore would have been.

If the juniors succeeded in getting on the slave-trader's track they had to abandon the boat and follow him. But until that time came—if ever it did—they were sticking to the boat. The only plan they could form was to cruise slowly along the shore in the daylight, landing here and there in likely places to search for sign, and questioning any natives with whom they might fall in, with Gobongo as interpreter. To plunge into the trackless forests without a clue was futile.

But there was another hope at the back of their minds—a hope that spelled deadly danger. They knew that Krantz had planned to seize the whole party and sell them as slaves in the interior. Now that he was safe in the Congo wilderness, it was likely that he would think less of further flight than of glutting his vengeance. Likely enough that he would linger within sight of the lake, watching for pursuit; watching for a chance of getting hold of the friends of the fellow already in his hands. Well they knew his ruthless and revengeful nature. And if that was Ludwig Krantz's game, the juniors were pretty certain to come into contact with him. The risk, terrible as it was, they were prepared to face, for the sake of getting in touch with the desperado who had seized Herbert Vernon-Smith. Knowing well what it might mean to them, they still hoped that the slave-trader was watching for them, waiting for their coming.

Likely enough, the boat had been seen, and watched, by some spying eye hidden in the forest. From the bottom of their hearts the juniors hoped that Ludwig Krantz was lingering in the wooded shore of the lake, and had not been driven to flight into the depths of the Congo wilderness by fear of McCann and the askaris.

Wharton watched.

It was midnight. From somewhere in the black distance a deep long roar pealed through the night—the roar of Simba. It echoed eerily through the forest and over the waters of the lake.

(Continued on page 28.)

'DEATH'S HEAD' DICK!



Spreading terror in town and on trail by his ruthless raids, the Skeleton Bandit went his way unchallenged, until High Jinks got a hunch!

High just pointed to a tiny cloud which appeared through a gap in the range opposite, and the dust from some vehicle which had passed below.

"That's easy enough if yer got eyes an' some savvy. I know what time th' stage comes thro', an' I see that dust—it don't take a Sheerluck Bones to read that!"

"Wot sight!" grinned Nippy. "Heyes like a link!"

"Oh, Nippy, you pain muh!" cried Doc Low in pretended horror. "Such a display of ignorance! Lynx is not the plural—there is no such animal as a 'link.'"

"Ho, ain't there? That's where yer wrong for once, Per-fessor!" yelled Nippy,

who had been working up for just this, to take a rise out of both his pals at once. "Wot abaht th' 'missing link?' 'E's more like that than hany hother hanimal! 'Ooray—one for our side!"

As usual, the little Cockney had to dodge High's ready quirt, and, leaning forward in his saddle, he dashed ahead of the other two at racing speed into the gap which led to the main trail on the other side of the ridge.

As he did so, there came a burst of rifle shots from the distance, followed by the rapid, staccato bark of a machine-gun—then all was silence again.

"Sufferin' cats, wot's up?" Nippy muttered; and giving Pueblo the rein, he galloped straight for the gap.

He had just reached it when a figure dashed through on a magnificent coal-black horse—a strange, sinister-looking figure that Nippy no sooner saw than his hand dropped for his rifle in its bucket.

There was a snarling curse, the quick drawing of a couple of gold-mounted sixes, and the stranger fired at Nippy point-blank. If the Cockney was not much of a shot compared to his long pardner, he was a lightning-quick mover, and he dodged down and swung himself over the side of Pueblo in a hurry.

It was well he did so, for he felt a tweak at his ear, whilst his hat went flying from his head, so close did the horseman's bullets come to ending his career. The great-striding black was away in a flash, the man turning in his saddle to send other leaden messengers at the tenderfoot who had dared to intercept him.

One of them must have struck Pueblo, for, with a squeal of fear, the little pony gave a dozen buckjumps, which probably saved his master's life, and dashed into the gap at top speed.

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Smashing Complete Western Yarn of High, Low, and Nippy, the 'Puncher Pals.

THE FIRST CHAPTER I

A Ruthless Raider!

"HIGH" JINKS rode a few paces in advance of "Dr." Low and "Nippy" Nolan, one long leg crooked round the horn of the saddle, his lips pursed up in the motion of whistling, though no sound came from them.

Low came next, lying back in his saddle with his back comfortably propped against the high roll of his blanket and slicker, which he had arranged in such a way that he could ride practically reclining, with his hat drawn down to his arched nose, from which issued a gentle snore.

Nippy brought up the rear, leaning far over to one side of the saddle to watch the gait of his little racing Indian pony, Pueblo. The other boys always averred that Nippy kissed his little hoss "Good-night," and he certainly looked after the pretty little animal as tenderly as a nurse would a favourite child.

"Yuss, goin' hon okay, old feller!" he murmured, patting the arching neck.

Pueblo responded by whinnying softly, and twitching his ears back and forth, doing a playful few dancing steps to show that the foreleg, injured in an accident a few days ago, had completely recovered.

"Golden eagle; first I've seen in these hills for five year," High called over his shoulder, pointing upwards.

Nippy peered up in the direction indicated, screwing his eyes up, and endeavouring to locate the spot. But no sign of any such bird could he see, in fact, the pure blue sky looked singularly empty.

"Garn, come orf it!" he jeered. "You an' yer beagles. Tryin' to make out nah that yer can see up to Mars, I s'pose. But yer can't kid me, I ain't so green as I ham cabbage-lookin'!"

"What is it, children?" yawned Low,

tilting his hat back and squinting through his specs from one to another. "What is the dispute? Anything that papa can settle?"

"Yuss, bring out them bi-noculars o' yours an' tell this long 'umbug that 'e's a screw loose," answered Nippy. "'E says as 'e can see a golden heagle up there in th' blinkin' sky, and it's as empty as a cowpuncher's pocket at th' end o' th' month—an' it c'udn't be no emptier then that!"

Without moving from his comfortable reclining position, Doc Low fished out his glasses and focused them in the direction indicated by High's long forefinger. He shook his head after sweeping the skies with the glasses.

"No, can't see any eagle, High!" he announced.

"Haw, haw! Wot did I tell yer!" said Nippy, bursting into a jeering laugh. "Swank, nothin' but swank an' 'ot air. If a pair o' fifty 'orse power bi-noculars cawn't see th' heagle, it stands to reason there ain't no heagle! Come orf it, long 'un, an' own up yer swankin'—"

"No, by hokey, he's right. I kin see it now—look, it's swoopin'! Gee whiz, High, your eyesight is prodigious—positively prodigious!"

They watched the wonderful dive down from the heights, until even Nippy could see the great twelve foot wing-spread as the mighty bird swooped. Then, of a sudden, it swerved aside from its quarry and flew rapidly upwards again.

"Somethin' startled him; he was swoopin'!" said Low, watching through his glasses.

"Stage-coach coming through Ghost Hole Gap," said High.

"Marvellous sight—miraculous!" murmured Low.

"I sh'ud shay sho!" jeered Nippy. "See thro' a ridge o' hills an' bout t'other side, an' spot a stage-coach wot ain't there. Coo, wot eyesight!"

"Old up, can't yer, I wanted to see where th' perisher went to!" yelled Nippy. "'Ope 'e runs inter them other two; 'e's just abaht 'Igh's mark—'e'll give 'im sharp-shootin'!"

But no more sounds of shooting reached Nippy's ears, and when at last he managed to pull his little mount to a standstill, he was well into that cleft in the hills known as Ghost Hole Gap from some old legend of the gold-rush days.

The little Cockney waited for his pals, and they came galloping up with eager questions.

"What was it?" yelled High. "What was th' frin'?"

"Didn't yer meet 'im?" asked Nippy. "I thought 'e'd run right on top of yer!"

"Who?" demanded Low and High in chorus.

"'Oo else but—Death's 'Ead Dick!" proclaimed the Cockney. "Ah, and 'e took pot shots at me, 'e did—not 'arf!"

"Gee whiz, an' we missed him!" cried High disappointedly. "What's he like, Nippy; no ono's ever seen him as close as that—an' lived to tell of it!"

"I sh'udn't if Pueblo 'adn't done a war dawnee an' put th' blighter orf 'is aim!" grinned Nippy. "But, fellers, it warn't me 'e was after—I reckon there's been dirty work at th' cross-roads down below there. 'E was carryin' a great sack all bulgin' with loot, I guess—'oldin up th' stage for a dollar!"

"C'mon, boys, we may find some trail he's left," cried High, setting spurs to his horse and dashing up the trail. "Gee, if it was Death's Head Dick, he'd be wath capturin', but thar won't be a soul left alive on th' blamed stage—an' it was poor ol' Pete's last turn as driver. He's retirin'!"

"Did yer git a good look at this Death's Head feller?" asked Low, as he and Nippy galloped shoulder to shoulder. "What was he like, kid?"

"Like we was told; a real skelling-ton face with just skin over it, an' a black half-mask like one wears at a fancy-dress dawnee. I tell yer—it gimme th' shivers for a minnit, or I might have potted 'im afore 'e got me!"

"Not yuh, Nippy," said Low. "thar's on'y one feller as'll ever be quick enough for Death's Head Dick—thet's our lynx-eyed pal yarnder!"

"Yuss, I reckon yer right," agreed Nippy, who had no false ideas about his own shooting compared with High's, and gave praise where due ungrudgingly. "Crum's, wouldn't I like to see 'im an' Death's 'Ead shoot it out togever—not 'arf!"

He little thought that he was to have his wish very shortly, and under circumstances more peculiar than he could imagine!

There came a shout from High, and, as they breasted the ridge of the Gap, they saw the reason as the keen-eyed sharpshooter pointed below to the trail.

The stage was an almost total wreck, the two front wheels smashed to atoms. Luggage and various articles were strewn in the dust, five of the horses were stone dead, whilst the sixth stood with one foreleg shattered, screaming in pain and terror.

High gave it one glance and sent a merciful bullet crashing to its brain to end its tortures.

"Th' durned skunk!" he muttered. "To leave th' poor beast like that!"

The sight of five men lying apparently dead did not seem to affect him so much; it was what he had been expecting, for he knew the story of Death's Head Dick's ruthless raids, when not a soul was left to carry the tale of his cunning ambushes, or to give evidence whether they were carried out by one man or a gang. That had always been the mystery of the skeleton outlaw; that and the method by which he succeeded in getting away without leaving a trace or the shadow of a clue as to his identity.

"By hokey, but thar's one of 'em alive—an' it's Pete Dorner!"

When they got down to the scene of the robbery they found that the old stage driver was alive—but only just. Doc Low set to work to try with what skill he could to save the old fellow's life, but it was useless, for a bullet had penetrated his lungs.

The old boy knew it, too, but he smiled up at High as the long cowpuncher propped him up in his arms.

"A goner is Dorner!" he whispered feebly. "I'm glad yuh t'ree guys got hyar in time to see th' last o' muh. Listen! Death's Head is a fake! I lay low an' played possum an' tried to jump him w'en he was lootin' th' Express chest. In th' struggle his mask slipped aside, an' th' false face wi' it. I knoo him once, 'way up in Wyoming. He wuz an actor named—named—oh, sakes, it's gone all dark—his na—"

The three pals carried the poor old driver's body to the stage and set it upon the high seat he had occupied so often, then started at a gallop for the town to tell the latest story of the skeleton outlaw.

"Boys, not a word about what Pete told us," warned High as they neared the town. "It might put this guy on his guard, for I've a hunch he may be someone well known 'bout th' country, who is lyin' doggo an' laffin' up his sleeve all th' time. Keep mum, an' we may find somethin' out. I'm goin' inter this bald-haided, for thet pizen crittur thet maims hosses an' shoots defenceless ol' men has sure got my goat!"

High's Hunch!

THE news spread like lightning when the three cowpunchers rode into the little cow town, and in a few minutes scores of armed and angry men were assembled outside the sheriff's office. They knew that Bill Gunter would be hot on the trail, and they were willing to offer themselves as his willing aids.

As they clustered around the door there came a peculiar and somewhat musical cry from the outskirts of the crowd.

"Poor old blind Cha-a-arlie, spare a cent for th' blind!"

They made way for the wizened figure of the blind man who tapped his way through the crowd. He was a familiar, though pitiful figure, and the citizens saw to it that his battered old hat was often filled with small coins. It seemed that the prevailing excitement had not attracted his attention, for he hobbled along down the street without stopping, his pathetic musical cry raised now and again mechanically.

High, Low, and Nippy were chosen for the sheriff's posse by right of their

having been on the spot almost at the time of the skeleton bandit's latest exploit, and eager were the questions which were showered upon Nippy, as being one who had seen the dreaded outlaw face to face, and had escaped to tell the tale.

High stayed behind to fasten one of his long Texas spurs which had the chain loose, and he galloped down the long, narrow street after the posse some fifty yards in the rear.

"Hully flies, they'll run him down!" he muttered, for the galloping cavalcade were bearing down in the centre of the road along which blind Charlie was tottering.

Totally blind, with both legs partially paralysed, the pitiful figure was barely able to creep about with two stout Malacca canes which had been given him as being light and very strong, by some benevolent person in the past.

"Keep still, Charlie, we'll ride around yer!" bawled the sheriff.

The old chap stood tremblingly to allow the crowd of horsemen to pass him.

As he did so, one of the stout canes dropped from his feeble hand and rolled into the gutter.

"Poor ol' feller!" muttered High.

Before he could come to the rescue, however, old Charlie picked up the cane himself, and resumed his hobbling walk to his own shanty up on the side of the hill near some old mine workings.

High watched him, with a somewhat puzzled and curious expression on his face. He pulled his long nose in a way he had when puzzled, and spurred his horse on after the others, shaking his head doubtfully. "Um, durned funny; guess I'm seein' things!"

The posse rode out to the scene of the robbery, and the best scouts amongst them scattered to seek some trail of the outlaw. But beyond the Gap there was no sign as to the direction Death's Head Dick had taken.

Giving in at last, the posse, disappointed and dejected, returned to the town with the dead bodies of the men who had been on the stage.

"Wa'al, I wish 'em all th' luck with findin' this skeleton feller," announced Low next morning after breakfast. "But it strikes me thet he's a bit too fly for 'em in these parts. Likewise it strikes me thet we three ain't got no time to waste loafin' around in this yer dead city. What we gotta do is to mosey over th' Ridge, collect five hundred head 'o longhorns for Colonel Lou Luttrell, our good an' kind bawss, an' kinder nuss said longhorns over th' range to th' old Leanin' L."

"Yuss, business must be attended to, an' we have lost a lot o' time a'ready," said Nippy. "Look at ol' Tiny, 'e don't arf look mournful. 'E 'asn't found anuvver widder, 'as 'e?"

"Shurrup, yer inseo'!" growled High. "Doc, couldn't you an' Nippy fetch them steers on yer lonesomes, an' kind o' pick me up on th' way back? I c'ud do wi' a coupla days' rest!"

"Why, what's the giddy game?" asked Nippy anxiously.

"Wa'al, I'll own up, boyees," said High at last. "Yuh'll mebbe laff like blazes when I tell ye—I b'lieve I've got a line on this yer Death's Head Dick, an' I jest want two, t'ree days to foller it up—thet's all!"

At last it was agreed that Low and Nippy should fall in with High's

wishes and return with the cattle in a couple of days.

For the first day of his detective work High certainly did not seem to do much searching after clues, for he sat on the stoop of the ramshackle old hotel talking to the landlord, who was the survivor of the days when the cow town was a prosperous gold city.

The two watched old blind Charlie tapping his way along, and they each dropped a few small coins into the battered old felt hat.

"Ol' feller's been hyar some time, I guess?" High inquired casually of the landlord.

"Some time? I'd say so!" replied that worthy. "He wuz hyar twenty year ago, lookin' but mighty leetle diff'rent to what yuh see him now. He was a fine figger o' a man afore he was blowed up in a explosion on th' old Regan mine, an' it kinder affected his brain as well as takin' his sight an' haff paralyzin' him. See his fingers all twisted? It's a wonder how he holds them canes o' his, yuh'd think!"

It was well on towards dusk when High rode out of the town and took the trail towards the Gap.

He paced his horse slowly along the top of the ridge running parallel with the stage trail. With a powerful electric torch he examined the ground until at last he suddenly came across what he had been looking for; definite tracks which led upwards to the top of the ridge overlooking the town. Tethering his horse, he slowly snaked his way up over the rocks, using his torch as infrequently as possible, and keeping his eyes and ears both on the alert.

"I've got it!" High muttered exultingly at last. "My hunch was right, an' I'll have that bird as sure as—"

"Put 'em up—reach for th' stars, hombre, an' mighty pronto!" thundered a deep voice behind him.

Beaten to the Draw!

HIGH whirled like a flash and ducked at the same time, his long, lean hands leaping for his guns in a lightning draw. But even as they were half-drawn there were two ear-splitting reports, and they dropped feet behind him whilst his fingers tingled, half-paralysed with the tremendous concussion of the heavy bullets.

A masked man, the lower part of his face a bony skeleton, stepped from behind a rock and advanced towards him with two gold-mounted forty-fives held in expert hands. His coal-black eyes glared evilly at the puncher through the slits of the mask.

"Try somethin' an' I'll put a slug thro' each of yer arms," he threatened. "I ain't goin' to kill yuh, 'cause I gotta use for yer. Tchah! You are th' sharpshootin' hombre I been hearin' so much guff about, huh? Too durned slow, fella, too slow. Turn around!"

High's teeth gritted together at his humiliating position, and if he had had the faintest hope of success he would have taken a chance, but when a determined man holds two six-guns, of which he has already proved himself to be master, arguments are useless.

He felt a rawhide rope expertly twisted around his wrists and tightly tied behind his back. Then the masked man prodded him in the back and ordered him forward.

Sullenly High obeyed, his eyes keenly observant as they approached the rock behind which the man had been con-

cealed. As he suspected, it revolved on a pivot and was the hidden entrance to some old mine workings.

Far back in the old tunnel they passed through a crude door, then down and down into the bowels of the mountain, the old workings of the defunct Regan mine. They stopped in a large cavern, with water dripping from its rocky roof, and here the bandit lit a large oil lamp and set it down on the floor.

"I'm jest goin' to tie yuh up hyar whilst I go an' do a coupla jobs down in th' town," jeered the masked man. "I'm takin' toll of th' Cattlemen's Bank to-night, an' I'll leave one o' them Texas spurs o' yours behind me for evidence. Then I'll come back an' kill yuh, fix up my double masks on yer ugly dial, an' they'll think yuh are Death's Head Dick. They'll gimme time to bring off another coupla coups I've got fixed before I vamoose—a rich man. Like th' idee, puncher?"

"Fine!" replied High, and suddenly threw himself forward and launched a well-aimed kick which sent the bandit staggering back.

High bored in again, but it was no use; the barrel of a six-gun crashed against his forehead, and he sank to his knees with the blood pouring into his eyes.

"Dang yer, I'll make yer pay for thet!" howled the scoundrel.

Next second High was against the wall, with his head jerked back and the feel of the keen, cold edge of a razor-sharp knife cutting his skin. But with a violent effort the man regained his control and gave a harsh laugh.

"No, yuh'll be more useful alive—for a day or two!" he snarled. "Take thet to remember me by!"

He crashed his fist into the defenceless puncher's face, then, as High staggered back half-senseless from the blow, the scoundrel smashed his heavy boot into his ribs until he dropped.

High came to himself to find a thin streak of daylight trickling through some opening high up in the rocky wall, and also to find that he was soaked to the skin, as he had fallen just in a spot where a puddle of water had accumulated from drippings of the roof. He rolled over, and, with the exertion, the thongs which bound his wrists behind him seemed to stretch like elastic.

"By hokey—th' wet's softened th' deerskin!" he muttered triumphantly, and worked away to stretch it still more.

For two hours he persevered, and, at last, was able to get his wrists wide enough apart to enable him to rub the thongs on a sharp rock.

There was excitement in plenty that morning, for it was found that the Cattlemen's Bank had been broken into, some thousands of dollars stolen, and the old watchman lying dead with half a dozen bullets in him. There was still more excitement when it was seen that two or three scrawled posters bearing the following notice had been pasted up in conspicuous positions in the town.

"This is NOT my job. Thar's a feller tradin' on my name. He is amatoor. DEATH'S HEAD DICK."

Then a long Texas spur was found lying under the old watchman's body, and it was instantly recognised. There were muttered threats of a lynching, but Bill Gunter soon put a stop to that.

"He goes to gaol an' stands his trial," he thundered, quelling the crowd

with his eye. "Justice'll be done an' done 'cordin' to law—"

"By gosh, hyar he comes!" yelled a man; then as another horseman galloped after the first: "No, it's his two pals. Do we take 'em, too, sheriff?"

But even as Low and Nippy entered the long main street by one end, the lengthy figure of High Jinks came tearing in at the other.

The sheriff advanced and laid his hand on High's shoulder, with a six-gun pressing into his stomach.

"Yer a pris'ner!" he growled. "Murder an' burglary at the Cattlemen's Bank—"

Woof!

A tremendous blow behind the ear sent Bill Gunter staggering back. It came from the diminutive Nippy, whom no one had paid much attention to, as he threw himself from his pony. Then a pair of six-guns appeared in the hands of the Must-Get-Theirs, and they slowly backed across the street, to stand with their backs against a stone wall.

"Now, go plenty slow, boys," High warned. "Yuh've seen us do some shootin' an' know what chance yer'd have ag'in us. Gimme three minnits an' I'll prove—"

"Poor old blind Cha-a-arlle, spare a cent for the blind!"

The plaintive musical cry came as the crowd parted to let the blind man through the crowd.

"Stand away from behind me—th' shootin's startin' right now!" High whispered to his two pals; then stepped forward with his thumbs stuck into his belt just above his holstered six-guns.

Slowly the blind man tapped his way along, and High approached him, his head thrust forward, his eyes half-closed, tense, watchful.

"Th' jig's up, Death's Head!" he cried. "Go for yer guns, hombre!"

"Hi, stop thet," shouted the sheriff. "Yuh leave thet poor old feller be—"

"Back!" roared High. "This is my fun'ral. Go for yer guns—actor!"

Quick as light, his own guns leapt from their scabbards, and a howl of rage went up from the men as the blind man's two canes were smashed to smithereens. He suddenly sprang upright with a furious oath, a pair of gold-mounted sixes appeared from under his long, tattered old coat. Again High's guns roared, and the supposed crippled blind man crashed to the ground with a bullet through each shoulder.

"Thar's yer skeleton bandit, sheriff!" yelled High. "Take off thet beard an' th' specs an' see for yerself!"

"But how an' when did yer guess?" asked the sheriff, after the bandit had been safely lodged in gaol. "We've known ol' Charlie for over twenty year!"

"He's been dead for th' last three," said High dryly. "Killed by thet snake who took his place. Thar's plenty o' proof back thar in th' old mine workin's—an' all his loot, too! I spotted him th' time yuh nearly run him down an' one of his canes slipped out of his hand. He didn't have to feel around for it—he jest went straight for it an' picked it up—"

"Gee, but you've got mighty quick eyes!" said the wondering sheriff.

"Ha, ha!" sang out Nippy, patting his long pal on the back and winking at Low. "Lynx eyes—Jink's eyes—some lynx, I'll tell th' cock-eyed wor-r-ld!"

THE END.

(High, Low, and Nippy come up against another bunch of trouble in next week's complete Western yarn. Be sure you read it. chums!)

THE SLAVE-TRADER'S VENGEANCE!

(Continued from page 24.)

The sound sent a thrill to Wharton's heart. But there was no danger from lions in the boat moored so far off shore. Once the watching junior thought he detected two burning eyeballs glaring from the blackness under the trees. But if a lion had come down to the water he rustled away again in the darkness.

Splash! Wharton started as the slight sound came from shorewards. A fish perhaps—or some jackal or hyena coming down to drink—or a falling twig from some overhanging trees—or— The junior peered through the gloom, his rifle ready in his hands.

Another faint splash—and another! Then silence. A ripple ran on the shadowed water.

Wharton's heart throbbed. A hippopotamus, possibly, moving along the muddy bank—something, at least, was stirring in the shallows. Then his eyes caught a glimmer of something that moved on the surface of the water—an object indistinguishable in the gloom, but from which two eyes gleamed—not the eyes of an animal. And he knew that it was the head of a swimmer coming out to the boat.

Kneeling, he levelled his rifle over the swaying gunwale.

"Stop!" he called sharply but steadily. "Come nearer and I shall shoot!"

His voice awakened his comrades. They were on their feet in a twinkling, rifle in hand.

"What—" breathed Bob Cherry.

"A swimmer—look out! Fire if anyone gets near the boat!"

"You bet!"

—It might be an enemy, or only some pilfering native. They watched intently, ready to fire, but reluctant to pull trigger unless driven to it. Bob shook the sleeping Baganda boy.

Gobongo sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"A swimmer's coming off," said Bob. "Call out to him to keep clear—he may not understand us."

The Baganda boy jumped up. He stared into the darkness and shouted, in the Baganda tongue. No answer came from the gloom.

But several splashes were heard now, and the glimmer of faces as well as the glitter of eyes could be discerned in the deep shadow. More than one swimmer—six or seven, the juniors fancied—came rippling through the black water. It was impossible to hesitate longer.

Bang!

Wharton fired, and the sudden roar of the rifle rolled like thunder through the silent forests.

A loud and terrible cry answered the shot.

Wild splashing followed as a wounded man struggled in the water.

A loud, harsh voice shouted from the darkness, in a tongue the juniors did not know; but the voice they knew. It was the harsh voice of Ludwig Krantz, the slave-trader.

Face after face glimmered from the water as the swimmers crowded down on the boat. It was the slave-hunting gang, and it was certain now that the boat had been watched on the lake, that Ludwig Krantz was there, and that he had planned to take the boat's crew by surprise in the blackness of the night.

Crack, crack, crack! pealed the rifles, and the bullets splashed up the water, and yell after yell told that men had been hit.

A dusky hand grasped the gunwale of the boat.

A coppery face, with light blue eyes, glared at the juniors for a moment before a rifle-butt crashed on Ludwig Krantz, and he fell back into the water.

"Ach! Ach!"

They heard him grunt as he fell.

"I say, you fellows!" came a terrified squeal.

The firing had awakened Billy Bunter.

But no one heeded Bunter. He blinked and squealed unregarded. Standing in the swaying boat, the Famous Five poured lead at the savage crew swimming down on them. Again a hand grasped the gunwale, but the assailant vanished with a shriek as a rifle-butt crashed on the clutching fingers.

The voice of Krantz was heard again, yelling in mingled German and Arabic. Flashes of fire came from two or three places on the dark bank. The attempt at a surprise had failed. The slave-hunters were firing now, and bullets hummed over the boat.

Harry Wharton muttered a word. The mooring-rope was cast off, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull put out oars. Dimly, like faces seen in a dream, dark savage faces glimmered over the water, and three of the juniors pumped bullets among them, while the other two pulled.

The yelling, savage voice of Ludwig Krantz died away. As the boat glided out from the shadow of the trees into the starlit open lake the last swimmer disappeared behind.

The wind had fallen with night; the sail was useless. But two more oars were put out, and four of the juniors

rowed. The shore became a dark blur astern.

They rested at last, when a mile of shadowy water lay between them and their late mooring-place.

"I say, you fellows—" quavered Bunter.

"Hallo hallo hallo! Enjoying life, old bean?"

"I—I say, was—was—was that Krantz?" gasped Bunter.

"That very identical sportsman," answered Bob cheerfully.

"I say, what have you stopped for? For goodness' sake get on before they get after us!"

"If they get after us, old fat man, they won't find us in the dark—unless they hear you snoring."

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We're in luck!" he said. "Krantz has stopped somewhere near the lake—that's certain now. Smithy's with him. The rotters must have watched us before dark—they knew where to find us. We've won the first round, and tomorrow—"

"Tomorrow's the second round, and a win for Greyfriars," said Bob.

"We must hope so, at least."

"The hopefulness is terrific."

There was a yelp from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you silly idiots! Look here, we've got to get back to Jarram's bungalow as fast as we jolly well can!"

"Fathead!"

"Look here, you dummies—"

"Oh, go to sleep!"

But it was long before Billy Bunter could sleep again. For a long time he argued—to deaf ears. But at last he settled into his blankets once more, and his snore mingled with the wash of the water.

There was little more sleep for the Famous Five that starry night. They watched and waited for dawn—the dawn of the day when their lives were to be set on a cast. Somewhere beyond the dark line of forest that loomed black against the sky, their comrade was a prisoner, doomed to a terrible fate unless they could save him. Either they would save him, or they would not live to tread again the old quad at Greyfriars.

The dawn that came glimmering at last over the lake was the dawn of a fateful day.

THE END.

(*Chums, there's a thousand thrills in next week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "WHITE SLAVES OF THE CONGO!" If you fail to read it, you'll be missing the treat of the week!*)

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WEATHER FORECAST!

A deep depression is centred over the Fifth Form passage, and violent storms may be expected this evening in the Games Study. Coker has just decided to demand a place in the Form Footer Team!

FUN IN THE FORM-ROOM

Strange Outbreak of Mirth

FORM-MASTER COLLAPSES

Remarkable scenes were witnessed one morning recently in the Remove Form-room. Quelchey came in to take us in English History, looking as if he was going to have a morning on the warpath. He had a cane tucked under his arm and kept his hands folded tightly behind him—sure signs of trouble in the office.

When he reached his desk, however, a strange change came over him. The frown relaxed and a broad smile took its place. He passed his hand over his brow as though something unusual was happening to his brainbox.

"History, my boys!" he remarked. "That's it—History! Ha, ha, ha!"

We sat up and blinked. Quelchey laughing at History! Surely the time had come for the heavens to fall!

Skinner got up, a little nervously. "P—please, sir, I'm afraid I didn't do any prep last night. The reason, sir, is that—"

"Why worry about a reason, my dear Skinner?" asked Quelchey, in a strange, quavery kind of voice. "You are excused. Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner sat down. He almost fell down!

Quelchey sat on his stool. He was grinning from ear to ear, though why, was a mystery.

"I will continue my lecture on English History from the point where I left off," he said. "In 1066, Henry VIII. fought Alfred the Great at the Battle of Bannockburn. It was on that celebrated occasion that he made his famous remark to the effect that the Battle of Bannockburn was won on the playing-holds of Greyfriars."

"Oh crickey!"

We fairly gasped. None of us knew a great deal about English History; but we have a vague idea that there were one or two quite notable inaccuracies in that statement.

"After the battle," went on Quelchey, warming to his task, "Joan of Arc and William the Conqueror and Queen Anne set up the Triple Alliance, which led to the Wars of the Roses. Ha, ha, ha!"



"Great pip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Quelchey. "Ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha!"

"M-m-m-hat!"

Suddenly there was a crash. Quelchey had collapsed under his desk, shrieking with laughter.

Bolsover, who happened to be nearest, dashed out to help. Then, to our utter amazement, Bolsover underwent a sudden change. First he smiled, then frowned, then chuckled, then laughed, then roared, and, finally, shrieked and howled with mirth which apparently could not be controlled.

While we were still rubbing our eyes and wondering whether we were seeing things, there was a knock

Greyfriars Herald

No. 65.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

LATEST
EXTRA
GOOD
EDITION

October 3rd, 1931.

FISHY'S STUDY SERVICE

Unique Scheme

"Say, folks!" bawled Fish, bursting into the Rag, the other evening. "I got the dandiest hunch ever! I'll say it's a row! 'Whoopee!'"

That was how we first heard of Fish's Study Service.

It certainly did sound an attractive scheme, when Fishy got down to details. For the modest sum of 2s. 6d. per week—half a buck, in real money, as Fish remarked—Fish's Study Service undertook to supply subscribers with tea and supper and keep the study tidy and the washing-up done.

"However will he do it?" asked Trevor. "Tea and supper alone can't possibly be done under sixpence a head. Then there'll be labour to pay for the washing-up, and so on."

"Sounds impossible," said Russell. "Any-

Promoter's Mysterious Bankruptcy

The Remove was soon overwhelmed with subscriptions to his new Study Service. Tea and supper duly came round to the subscribers, delivered by fags whom Fishy had hired for the occasion. Neither was what you might have called a banquet; but, considering we were going to have the same all the rest of the week for a mere half-a-crown, they seemed exceptionally generous.

Afterwards the fags took away the dirty crockery and returned it reasonably clean with not more than 25 per cent break-ages. Taking it all round, Fish's Study Service seemed to have made a good beginning.

And then we woke up!

Next morning a notice appeared in the Hall.



"PETITION IN BANKRUPTCY. FISH'S STUDY SERVICE.

Creditors of the above concern are requested to turn up to a meeting in the Rag at 5 p.m. to-day. The chair will be taken by P. Bolsover, Esq., Official Receiver."

We all turned up. Prompt to the minute, the official receiver stood up and addressed us.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," he said. "I have been through the books of Fish's Study Service and find that all the assets have already been swallowed up in the expenses of providing the excellent meals you enjoyed last night."

"Oh crickey!"

"Under the circumstances," said the official receiver, "I declare the concern wound up. There will be a dividend of nothing in the pound."

"My hat!"

"So that there will be no misunderstanding," added Mr. Bolsover, "I should like to say that I am performing my duties in connection with this bankruptcy without any financial reward. Thanks, old bean!"

He concluded, as Fishy shipped a ten-shilling note into his palm.

Fishy stood up.

"I guess I'd like to second that motion," he said. "The question is now put to the meeting and carried unanimously. That concludes the business, gentlemen, and it only remains for me to wish you a very good evening."

And that was the end of Fish's Study Service!

General Knowledge for the Young

Things YOU Ought to Know

- Q. What are exercise-books?
- A. Exercise-books are things you stuff in your bags before calling on the Head.
- Q. What is tea in hall?
- A. Three doorstops and a mug of fish-water.
- Q. What is prep?
- A. Work you do at 6.30 each evening, provided not otherwise engaged.
- Q. Describe a prefect.
- A. A prefect is a superior person with an ashpant.
- Q. What is cheek?
- A. What you mustn't give a prefect.
- Q. Where is the neck?
- A. The place in which you get it when you do cheek a prefect.
- Q. What is a fag?
- A. A creature bearing a slight resemblance to a human being, found principally in Form-rooms, frying herrings on poekholders.
- Q. Where do we find ink?
- A. On the hands, nose, and ears of the fag; also, occasionally, in inkwells and fountain-pens.

PETER TODD, Consulting Lawyer

Specialist in Truck-shion Law, Impot and Ashplant cases, the Law of Fag and Prefect, etc., etc. Cases argued before Prefects, Form-masters and Headmasters in weather permitting. Fees moderate and inclusive. Why go to others to be robbed? Come to me!—PETER TODD, Consulting Lawyer, Study No. 7, Remove Passage.

FOOTER TO THE FORE AGAIN

New Season's Prospects

OPINIONS VARY

Again, the "plonk, plonk" of the merry old football is heard on the playing-fields. Once more the "Goal!" and "Goal!" go up—not to mention the inevitable yells of laughter as Coker performs his favourite trick of putting the ball into his own goal!

Opinions as to the season's prospects seem to vary. Those who stave a good chance of being included in the representative School teams are unanimously of the opinion that Greyfriars is in for a jolly good season.

On the other hand, those who have already been given the frozen mitt, think the outlook was never bleaker.

Probably the truth will be found somewhere between those two extremes. We don't expect it to be First Eleven to win the English Cup, for instance. On the other hand, we're perfectly sure they'll give a rattling good account of themselves throughout the season.

One thing is certain—the good old game of Soccer was never more popular at Greyfriars, and if enthusiastic counts

Our Photographic Column

Expert Criticism of Your Snaps

"Micky" (Study No. 6).—Your picture, "Calm," is the finest photographic study of a storm at sea we have seen for a long time.

"Horace" (Fifth Form).—Snap-shot of a Fifth Form J-woman Astride a Donkey. Taken on my Hollidays. We have submitted the snap to our experts, who can't see two donkeys, but no "gentleman." "Event" (Top Brown) (Study No. 2).—Shooting the Rapids. eh? We've looked it up every way and even looked on the back without making out head or tail of it. Our feeling is that the photographer, not the rapids, should be shot!

P. "Fravor" (Masters' Passage).—Shooting Big Game in the Rockies. is certainly a fine nature study. We are interested and intrigued, too, to see that the Rockies contain a notice-board: "WHIPSNADE ZOO, THIS WAY OUT!"



"To HALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. Next time you young gents knock off my 'elmet with a football, I'll take steps to see that you are prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. Take 'eed, before it's too late!"

BY HORDEE, P.-c. TOZEE.

WARNING!

way, no harm in investing half-a-crown. Even if Fishy finds himself out of funds at the end of the week, we shall have had our money's worth."

A good many fellows seemed to think on the same lines, with the result that the business man of the Remove was overwhelmed with subscriptions to his new Study Service.

Tea and supper duly came round to the subscribers, delivered by fags whom Fishy had hired for the occasion. Neither was what you might have called a banquet; but, considering we were going to have the same all the rest of the week for a mere half-a-crown, they seemed exceptionally generous.

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