

"WHITE SLAVES OF THE CONGO!" Harry Wharton & Co.'s
Big Thrill in Africa.

The **MAGNET** 2^D





Come Into the Office, Boys!

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

TO kick off with, I have a letter here from Joe Loewenthal, of Lower Edmonton, N.9. Joe, who, after saying some very complimentary things about the MAGNET, goes on to ask about

"SOUND-ON-FILM" PROJECTING.

This method of "talkie" projection is the most elaborate, and does away with the necessity for having synchronised gramophone records. The sound is "photographed" actually on the film at the same time as the "shots" are taken. The sound vibrations cause a delicate needle to make a continuous line down the side of the film, alongside the photographic scenes.

When this film is run through the projector, there is a tiny lamp shining behind the part of the film on which the sound-track is depicted; and this flashes the ever-changing sound-line on to a delicate instrument, which causes similar vibrations to the original to be set up. These are amplified, and carried into the theatre by means of loud-speakers. Thus the method of "sound-on-film" consists of the following processes:

(1) Turning sound vibrations into light, thus making a line on the side of the film, and

(2) Turning the light waves set up by the line back into sound vibrations.

There is one serious drawback to the "sound-on-film" method. As you know, films sometimes break in the projector, and when this happens a certain amount of film is cut to make a join. The film cannot be cut without the sound-line also being cut, so that where a join has been made in a film, a portion of a word, or even a whole word may be omitted.

Another thing is that if the "sound-line" gets dirty, the vibrations will be interfered with, and a spot of grease—or even a thumb-print—may cause an entirely unexpected sound effect!

ONE of my Irish readers is anxious to know what are

THE THREE LONGEST WORDS

in the English language. I think I mentioned some time ago that the longest word I have ever heard of is "protanti-transubstantiationableness," which contains thirty-four letters. Then there are "tetrahydroparamethoxyquinoline" and "paraoxymenthamethoxyallylbenzene," which contain thirty-two and thirty-one letters respectively—and both of which are to be found in treatises on chemistry.

But the three longest words in ordinary English are "antidisestablishmentarianism," "disestablishmentarianism," and "honorificabilitudinitary." The latter word appears in Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost." Aren't you sorry for the amateur actor who has to play the character who speaks that word?

SPECIAL NOTICE!

To all of you wishing to make sure of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—NO. 1,234.

your MAGNET, let me remind you to place a regular order with your newsagent. That's the only way to make absolutely certain of your copy every week. You'll be pleased once you've done that, so will your newsagent—for the regular order helps him to please his customers, too! 'Nuff said!

ONE of my lucky readers this week is John Byrne, of 147, Paget Street, Loughborough. By this time he will be the owner of a splendid penknife which I am presenting to him for sending me the following joke:

"What are you crying for, my lad?" inquired the old gent of a little lad fishing from a canal bank. "I've just lost my mate!" sobbed the little one. Divesting himself of his clothing, the old gent dived into the river.

After swimming round for some time without result, he came to the surface again, and inquired how big the mate was. "I don't mean that mate," said the little boy; "I mean the 'mate' off my hook!"



Tom Taylor, of Barnsley, wants to know why Mexicans wear such

BIG HATS?

The reason is that the greater portion of Mexico is south of the Tropic of Cancer, which means that in the summer the rays of the sun pour down vertically—not slanting as they do in this country. The Mexican sombrero is so wide that it throws a large circle of shade, and thus its wearer carries his own shelter with him. The Mexican may be used to the heat—but he doesn't like it! Promptly at noon every day, he drops everything he is doing, makes for the nearest shadow, and goes to sleep for a couple of hours. If you were to enter a small Mexican town at one o'clock midday, you would think you were in a city of the dead, for the shady sides of the streets are littered with men—all fast asleep!

WHO SAYS

A DANDY LEATHER POCKET WALLET or a USEFUL POCKET KNIFE?

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

HAVE A SHOT AT WINNING ONE OF THESE TOPPING PRIZES TO-DAY!

The wealthy Mexicans spend a great deal of money on their sombreros, which are expensively decorated with silver cords and ornaments. The poorer Mexicans have to be content with sombreros of straw, which are made by the Indians, and sold in the streets. As a matter of fact, straw sombreros are about the lightest and most comfortable tropical head-dresses it is possible to obtain.

Interested in dogs? Of course, you are—what British boy isn't? Here is

A DOG STORY

that is absolutely true. An Airedale which moved with its master from Richmond to Putney evidently considered that it did not like its new home as much as it did the previous one. So it promptly disappeared. For thirty-six hours it was lost—and then it turned up, quite cheerfully, at its former home. Dogs, of course, have a wonderful sense of smell, and that is how they find their way home when they are lost. I once had a dog that beat this Airedale, however!

I was taking him home in an electric train, when, getting rather scared of the noise of the train, he nipped out at a station just as the train was moving off. I had to go on to the next station, and then return, but by that time there was no sign of the dog. I gave him up for lost, for he was twelve miles away from home, and being a valuable dog, I thought someone must have collared him.

A fortnight passed, and then—as I opened the front door to go to business one day, there he was—covered with mud and dust, but as happy as a sand-boy at getting back after his long journey. It had taken him a fortnight to cover the twelve miles—but he had managed it.

COME on, you would-be poets! Can you beat this clever Greyfriars limerick, which has earned a fine leather pocket-wallet for N. Wadham, of 14, Oakley Road, South Norwood, S.E.25.

Billy Bunter, a dabster at miking, Once, by way of a change, went out biking.

He was sorry that day, For his machine gave way— And he finished his long journey, hiking!

Send along your efforts. I'm just longing to hand out useful prizes for every one published!

SPACE is running short again, so I had better delve into the black-book and see what I can bring to light for you, next week.

"THE CITY OF TERROR!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of next week's long complete yarn of the Greyfriars chums. As usual, it is packed with excitement and thrills, and written in this fine author's splendid style. There's plenty of fun in it, too, and you'll chuckle at some of the things William George Bunter gets up to in this top-notch yarn!

High, Low, and Nippy will be going strong again, and next week's complete story of their adventures will make you wish it were twice as long. There will be another ripping issue of "The Greyfriars Herald," and I shall be "in the office," as usual, waiting to have another chat with you.

YOUR EDITOR.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN AFRICA.



WHITE SLAVES OF THE CONGO!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Objects!

DAWN on the Albert Nyanza. The boat rocked on the rippling waters, ruffled by a light wind that came with the sunrise. Up from the far hills of Kenya the sun leaped, and it was day on the forests and jungles of Uganda.

Within a mile of the Congo shore of Lake Albert the boat drifted, with Harry Wharton & Co. on board.

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove had long been awake, and they were glad to see the rosy flush of dawn in the sky.

Billy Bunter was still fast asleep.

Rolled in blankets, with his eyes shut and his mouth open, William George Bunter slept and snored.

That deep snore, which was wont to awaken the echoes of the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars School, in far-off England, now rumbled over the glimmering waters of a Central African lake.

In balmy slumber Billy Bunter forgot slave-traders and cannibals, lions and leopards.

He dreamed of a gorgeous spread in the study at Greyfriars, and a fat smile illumined his podgy visage as he snored.

At the other end of the boat Gobongo, the Baganda boy, slept.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were wide awake.

As the sunlight strengthened, their eyes turned on the line of dark, almost impenetrable forest that clothed the western shore of the lake.

Beyond that forest lay the Belgian Congo—the vast wilderness of the land of the Great River.

Thousands of miles away in good old England lies the ancient pile of Greyfriars, now almost a fanciful dream to Harry Wharton & Co., fast prisoners in the hands of a tyrannical Congo slave-trader!

Somewhere in those savage wilds lurked Ludwig Krantz, the slave-trader, with their schoolfellow a prisoner in his hands.

It was the dawn of a fateful day. The Famous Five were going to rescue Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, from the clutches of the slave-trader, or share his fate. And resolutely hopeful as they were, they could not help knowing that the chances were against them.

They sorted out food from the pro-

vision baskets, and ate a cold breakfast with good appetites.

Then Bob Cherry awakened Gobongo by the simple process of jamming the toe of a boot into his bare black ribs.

The Baganda boy sat up, and rubbed his sleepy eyes and grinned.

"Wake up, old black bean!" said Bob cheerily.

"Mo wake, sar!" said Gobongo.

He rose and stretched his black limbs.

"There's enough wind for the sail! Get her going!"

"Sabbey, sar!"

Gobongo chewed bananas while he unfurled the leg-of-mutton sail. The boat moved through the water, gliding slowly towards the western shore.

Billy Bunter opened his eyes.

Perhaps, in his strange surroundings, the Owl of the Remove was sleeping less soundly than usual. Anyhow, the motion of the boat, the creaking of the mast, and the trampling heavy feet of Gobongo, awakened him.

He sat up and blinked.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, go to sleep, Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"Where's my specs?" Billy Bunter sorted out his spectacles and jammed

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them on his fat little nose. Then he blinked at the looming forests on the Congo-land shore. "I say, you fellows, that ain't the way back!"

"Go hon!" said Frank Nugent, with deep sarcasm.

"We're not going back without Smithy, fathead!" said Bob Cherry.

"The go-backfulness, my esteemed Bunter, is not the proper caper, in the ridiculous circumstances," explained Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in the English he had not learned at Greyfriars.

"You silly chumps!" said Bunter, in measured tones. "Mean to say you're still keeping it up that you're going to look for Smithy?"

"Just that, old fat pippin!"

Bunter breathed hard.

It really was difficult for Bunter to keep patient with these fellows, who were bent on running into incalculable dangers, when they might quite easily have put the boat about, and scudded back to Butiaba, on the British shore of the lake.

On the British side there was safety, and Bunter's lifelong maxim had always been "Safety First." At Mr. Jarram's bungalow there was a shady veranda and unlimited grub, and a comfortable long chair for a fellow to stretch his fat limbs in.

Bunter thought of the comforts of the Jarram bungalow, as the Israelites of old pined for the fleshpots of Egypt.

Regardless of Bunter, the chums of the Remove were turning their backs on all these attractive things; thinking only of rescuing Smithy from the slave-trader; just as if Billy Bunter did not matter more than whole tribes of Smiths, with Joneses and Robinsons thrown in.

"Look here, you fellows!" said Bunter. "I object!"

He spoke firmly. It was evidently a time for firmness.

"Bunter objects!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose that means that we're to chuck the whole thing!"

"The chuckfulness will not be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It means exactly that!" said Bunter firmly. "If you want to play the goat, you can land me first. I'm going back!"

"Mean that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Every word!"

"Well, get on with it," said Johnny. "Nobody objects to your going back, old fat man. You'll have to swim for it. But you've often told us you're the best swimmer at Greyfriars! Best of luck!"

"You silly chump!" roared Bunter. "Think I can swim miles and miles? The boat's got to turn back. I thought it was a picnic when I came with you yesterday. You know I did! Think I'd have jumped into the boat when you started if I'd known what you were up to? You've got me here on false pretences. That's what it comes to."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You talk a lot about Smithy!" went on Bunter witheringly. "Of course, I'm sorry for the chap! But we shall never see him again. That man Krantz has got him. It was really his own fault; he fairly asked for it. I'm sorry; but there it is! Leave off thinking about Smithy for a bit! Think of me!"

"I'd rather think about something a bit more agreeable, if you don't mind!" said Bob mildly.

"It's too late to cackle now, Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We warned you not to come, and you would come."

"I thought it was a picnic on the

lake!" howled Bunter. "You jolly well know I did!"

"Now you're for it! You can't go back till we send the boat back. Make the best of it."

"What's to stop us from sailing back to Jarram's bungalow now?" roared Bunter.

"We're going after Smithy."

"You—you—you idiot! That villain Krantz is watching for us, with a gang of slave-hunting ruffians. They attacked us last night! They'll get us in a bunch if we're idiots enough to go ashore on the Belgian side! Have a little sense!" shrieked Bunter.

"The rest of the speech may be taken as read!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Old Smith is at Butiaba, setting the natives to look for Smithy! Captain McCann and the askaris are hunting for him. What chance do you think you fellows have got?"

"More chance than anybody else, as it happens," said Harry. "I was afraid that Krantz had cleared off into the interior with Smithy. But we had proof last night that he was hanging on near the lake. He guessed that we might come after Smithy; and he's looking for a chance to bag the whole party. That means that we can get in touch with him."

"You—you howling ass!" yelled Bunter. "Mean to say you're going to give that villain the chance he's looking for?"

"Not if we can help it! But I'm jolly glad he's after us, because that's our only chance of getting after him."

Bunter fairly gasped.

"You—you chump! You call that sense?" he articulated.

"We're going to save Smithy, or take what's coming to us, Bunter. It's a case of sink or swim together."

"That's the Greyfriars way, old fat bean!" said Bob. "Dash it all, Bunter, you must have an ounce of pluck somewhere in your fat carcass. Sort it out and screw it up."

"Beast! Turn this boat round!" howled Bunter.

"Bow-wow!"

"Blow Smithy! What about me?"

"Nothing about you, fatty! Nothing at all. Not the least little bit in the jolly old wide world."

Billy Bunter gave the Famous Five a glare that might almost have cracked his spectacles. He heaved himself to his feet, and grasped Gobongo by the arm.

"Here, you nigger!" he hooted. "You turn this boat round, see?"

The Baganda boy grinned.

"No sabbey!" he said.

"Turn the boat round, you grinning black image! Turn round at once, or I'll jolly well kick you!"

Gobongo made a gesture towards Wharton.

"Master order!" he said.

"Never mind that silly ass! Take your orders from me!" howled Bunter. "I order you to go back to Jarram's bungalow."

"No can!"

"Don't be a silly owl, Bunter!" said Harry. "Mr. Jarram lent us the Baganda to sail the boat for us. He's under our orders."

"Will you turn back, you black beast?" yelled Bunter, unheeding.

Gobongo only grinned, and Bunter shook him by a black arm.

"You can kick him if you like, Gobongo!" said Bob.

"Sabbey, sar."

Possibly Gobongo did not like being called a nigger, and a black beast, and shaken. At all events, he was prompt

to take advantage of Bob Cherry's permission.

He cleared the sheet, and turned on Billy Bunter, and grasped him in a large black hand.

Bunter was slewed round into a suitable attitude for kicking.

He roared in anticipation.

"Yaroooh! I say, you fellows—Whooooop!"

Thud!

Gobongo's foot was bare; but it was large, and it was heavy. It smote Bunter's tight trousers with a mighty smite.

Bunter flew.

"Yarooooooop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sprawled in the bottom of the boat and roared. Gobongo grinned.

"Kick um more, sar?" he asked. Gobongo seemed to have enjoyed the performance more than Bunter had.

"Ha, ha, ha! No—leave it at that!" chuckled Bob. "I dare say that will do for Bunter. Will it do, Bunter?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Have you had enough, fatty?"

"Ow! Beast! Yow-ow-wooop!"

Apparently Bunter had had enough.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Landing I

HARRY WHARTON & Co. watched the shore intently, rifles in hand, as the boat glided slowly before the light wind.

The dark mass of forest was almost impenetrable to the eye; but they knew that keen eyes might be watching from the banks of thick foliage. Every advantage was on the side of the slave-trader; but that knowledge did not make the chums of the Remove any the less determined. If fortune proved their foe, they knew what to expect; but they had the courage to face it.

But they did not steer directly for the spot where they had encountered the slave-hunters the previous night. That would have been asking for trouble; for the boat's crew were completely exposed to fire from the shore. Krantz and his men might still be there, or a spy might have been left on the watch; and a single marksman hidden in the trees could have picked them off one after another, once they were within rifle-range. The juniors were prepared to take terrible risks; but they did not intend to throw their lives away.

They headed for the shore several miles farther south. There they intended to land, and trek back through the forest to the spot where they had last seen the enemy.

That they were watched was soon proved, as they coasted along within sight of the Congo-land shore.

A puff of white smoke streamed from the dark banks of foliage, and the whip-like crack of a rifle followed.

There was a splash and a ripple in the lake, as the bullet struck the water a hundred yards short of the gliding boat.

"The esteemed and ridiculous enemy is looking for us!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ow!" squeaked Bunter.

"We're out of range," said Harry Wharton. "They can't get us here. And we shall soon be out of their sight."

"They'll go along the bank and be ready for us!" groaned Bunter.

"Fathead! We go ten times as fast

in the boat as anybody could go through that forest. They won't know where we land."

"They want us to land, you dummy!" said Bunter. "That's the very thing that beast Krantz wants. He wants to bag the lot of us, to sell us to the niggers on the Congo."

"I know that."
"And you're asking for it, you fat-head!" groaned Bunter. "Just sitting up and begging for it, like a dog begging for biscuits."

"Likely as not!" said the captain of the Remove quietly. "We're taking the chance, anyhow; we've got to, unless we're to leave Smithy in the hands of that villain."

"Blow Smithy!"
But Billy Bunter was the only

they did not see the smoke or hear the shot.

The shore was irregular, and jutting banks of forest soon hid the boat from the watcher.

If, as Bunter suspected, he was following along the bank, he had to hack a way through thick forest and brake, following the irregularities of the shore; and he was certain to be left hopelessly behind. The juniors had no fear of being watched when they landed. They could choose any spot they liked for landing, for miles and miles along a forest-clad shore.

you're silly idiots enough to go ashore, you can send the boat back," said Bunter. "Gobongo can sail it back, with me, see? I want to get back to the other side."

Harry Wharton nodded.
"If we have to follow Krantz, Bunter, we shall send the boat back," he said. "You can tell Mr. Jarram and Mr. Vernon-Smith where we are gone—and they may be able to send help. And—and if we have bad luck, there's no need for you to share it. You'll be all right."

Bunter grunted.



Gobongo slewed Billy Bunter round into a suitable attitude for kicking, and then let out with a heavy bare foot. Bump! "Yaroooop!" Bunter sprawled in the bottom of the canoe and roared.

member of the Greyfriars party who was disposed to "blow" Smithy.

To go back to safety and leave the Bounder to a terrible fate seemed impossible to the other fellows—though they admitted the likelihood that they were only going to share that fate. Well they knew that the Bounder, with all his faults, would have stood by his comrades to the last drop of his blood. They could hardly do less.

Another puff of smoke came from the trees, another crack from an unseen rifle. But the ball rippled the water far astern of the boat.

The wind was light; but the boat travelled well. Gobongo was a good lake-seaman; and he coaxed all the speed possible out of the leg-of-mutton sail. If the spy in the trees fired again,

Billy Bunter was making a dismal breakfast. For once, the fat junior's Gargantuan appetite seemed to have deserted him. He ate hardly as much as any two of the other fellows had eaten.

His eyes blinked apprehensively through his big spectacles, as the boat drew in at last to the shore. His fat heart palpitated in his podgy breast.

"I say, you fellows!" he mumbled.
"Oh dear! What is it now?"

"I'm jolly well not going to land!" said Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to stay in the boat."

"If you try to land, you fat idiot, we'll duck you in the lake!" growled Johnny Bull. "You're trouble enough where you are."

"Beast! Look here, you fellows, if

"Of—of course, I'm not afraid of those beasts," he said. "I'm not thinking of—of getting out of danger, or—or anything like that, you know."

"We know," said Bob Cherry gravely. "You want to get back to the safe side of the lake, simply because you're bursting with pluck. We know!"

"The knowfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"The—the fact is, I'm really thinking of you fellows," said Bunter. "As for pluck, if you fellows had as much all round as I have in my little finger you'd do!"

"Oh crikey!"
"Run her in, Gobongo!" said Harry.

"Sabbey, sar!"
The boat ran into a little creek, where a shallow stream came glimmering

down from the dark forest. Trees and bush grew down to the water's edge, gnarled roots tangling in the mud. The creek was miles from the spot where the hidden marksman had watched, and there was no doubt that the juniors were far out of sight of the enemy.

The boat bumped in the mud. Coolly and quietly the juniors packed food and water-bottles in their rucksacks, and examined their rifles and cartridges. Billy Bunter watched them with uneasy eyes through his big spectacles; Gobongo with the cheerful indifference of a black "boy." Mr. Jerram, the planter of Butiaba, had ordered Gobongo to see that the school-boys did not go into danger, but how the Baganda boy was to carry out that order was a riddle that Gobongo did not attempt to solve. Certainly no member of the Famous Five would have given ear to any remonstrance from him.

The juniors stepped from the boat into the mud. Harry Wharton paused to give the Baganda his last directions.

"Stay here and keep watch, Gobongo," he said. "If we're not back by sunset, get back to your master at Butiaba."

"Sabbey, sar."

"Keep watch—and clear out into the lake if you see a sign of an enemy," said Harry. "In that case, stand off shore and wait till sundown for us."

"Sabbey, sar."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well?" said Harry gently enough, turning to the Owl of the Remove. "You will be safe here, Bunter, if you keep watch, as well as Gobongo. Don't go to sleep, and keep your eyes wide open all day. Keep the boat well off

the bank, ready to run if the enemy show up."

"That's all very well, but—"

"But what?" Wharton tried to be patient.

"I think one of you fellows had better stay with me," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I don't want to be left here alone with that nigger."

"Don't be an ass!"

"Beast!"

Wharton followed his comrades through the mud up the bank. Gobongo shoved off at once into the middle of the creek, leaving a margin of a dozen feet of water between the boat and the bank.

So long as the two in the boat kept watch and fled out into the lake at the first sign of danger they were safe enough. Billy Bunter realised that, and he was a little comforted.

But he blinked very uneasily after the juniors as they went. In a few moments they had vanished from sight in the thick forest.

Bunter blinked at Gobongo.

The black boy sat down to eat, and, having eaten as much as he could hold, he lay down on a sleeping-mat, closed his eyes, and snored.

That, apparently, was how Gobongo was going to carry out his instructions to keep watch.

Bunter blinked at him, with deep indignation.

As the sun rose higher, and the drowsy heat intensified Bunter was feeling disposed for a nap himself. But he realised only too clearly that watch had to be kept, and the black boy was snoring as peacefully as if lying on his sleeping-mat in his hut at the Jarram plantation.

"Here, wake up, you nigger!"

snapped Bunter, giving the Baganda a poke in his black bare ribs with the business end of the boathook.

Gobongo started suddenly and convulsively from slumber.

He glared at Bunter.

"Keep awake! Do you hear?" growled Bunter. "Is that how you're going to keep watch, you cheeky nigger?"

"You no hit!" said Gobongo. To the Famous Five Gobongo had been very respectful and obedient. But evidently he had no respect to waste on Billy Bunter. "You hit more, me kick, Sabbey?"

"Look here—"

Gobongo closed his eyes again.

Bunter blinked at him and laid down the boathook. He had felt the weight of Gobongo's foot once, and did not want to repeat the experience.

"Beast!" he grunted.

He sat down.

Mosquitoes buzzed in swarms over the little creek. The heat grew and grew as the sun rose higher over the lake. For a long time Bunter was busy killing mosquitoes. Gobongo, happily indifferent to mosquitoes, snored undisturbed. Bunter yawned and stretched himself in the boat.

He was not going to sleep. It was not safe to go to sleep. Safety came even before snoozing.

But he considered that he might as well rest on the blankets. So he rested—not wisely but too well. The drowsy heat and the buzzing of insects lulled Bunter to slumber, and before long his deep and resonant snore mingled with the snoring of the Baganda.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Fight in the Forest!

"THICK, isn't it?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"And hot!" breathed Nugent.

"Fan me, somebody!"

"There is no doubt, my esteemed chums, that it is terrifically warm," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Even the dusky junior from India's coral strand found that it was warm in the thick tropical forest.

The other fellows found it baking.

They mopped perspiration in streams from their burning faces. They smacked mosquitoes in swarms with death-dealing smacks.

And they struggled on through dense brake, trailing roots, hanging branches, masses of ferns taller than themselves, clinging vines, and thorny bush.

As the morning advanced the sun grew hotter, though through the dense foliage overhead they saw little of the sun, only here and there a shining ray that filtered down almost like the beam of an electric torch in the dusk under the branches.

But though they did not see the sun they felt it—sorely. Breathless heat baked in the forest, the roof of branches shutting them in like the lid of an oven.

Uganda was hotter than Kenya, the juniors already knew, but they had not known how hot it was till this torrid morning of struggling through dense tropical growths.

Here and there were openings in the undergrowth; here and there tracks left by some creeping or crawling beast. But for the most part the thickness of the forest was, as Hurree Singh declared, terrific.

Only by an occasional glimpse of the lake on their right could the juniors be sure that they were not wandering hopelessly away into the unknown heart of the wilderness.

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But there was no help for it, and they took it as cheerfully as they could. They could not have landed at a spot where the enemy watched for them. They had to work their way along the shore, through the thick forest, towards that spot, to pick up the traces of Krantz—and, hard and hot as the going was, they did not slacken.

Smack!

Bob Cherry slew his thousandth mosquito and gasped. His face, always ruddy, was now like unto a freshly boiled beetroot in hue. He wiped his crimson face with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief came away a wet, limp rag.

"Anybody like a vanilla ice now?" asked Bob.

"Oh, don't!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Or a long iced lemonade?"

"Shut up, you ass!"

The mere thought of such things was anguish.

"I don't know what's going to happen when we meet Ludwig Krantz," went on Bob. "But whatever it is, it won't be warmer than this. I'm rather keen to meet that sportsman and get it over."

"Keep your rifles ready, you men," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We can't be far off the spot now."

Hot and tired as they were, the juniors were on the alert. In many places it was necessary to slash a way with bush-knives, and every now and then, from sheer heat and fatigue, they had to stop and rest. But all the time they kept their eyes warily about them.

"I wish old Kicky was with us!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather! But it's not much good wishing that," said Harry. "We've got to rely on ourselves."

The juniors thought often of Kikolobo, the Kikuyu hunter. They knew that "Kicky" was somewhere in search of the Bounder.

But it was unlikely enough that they would fall in with the Kikuyu, glad as they would have been to see him.

They knew, too, that Captain McCann, the man-tracker of Uganda, was hunting for Ludwig Krantz. But he had no clue to the slave-trader's retreat; all he knew was that Krantz had fled across the lake from the British territory. McCann and his askaris might be within a mile, or they might be a hundred miles away. There was no telling.

Harry Wharton & Co., of all who were in search of Krantz, were the only ones that had a clue; and that was simply because Krantz was also in search of them. They had got in touch with him, because he wanted to be in touch. Well they knew that he had been glad to learn they had pursued him across the lake; that he looked on it as a chance to "bag" the whole party, and carry them off into the interior.

Knowing that, they knew the terrible risk they were taking. Yet to abandon their comrade in the ruffian's hands was unthinkable; and they faced the risk with their eyes open.

Crack, crack!

"Look out!"

"My hat!"

Whizzing lead cut through the thorny bush.

"Down!" panted Wharton.

Instantly the juniors threw themselves on the earth.

Crack, crack, crack!

Hot lead whizzed over them as they sprawled in stubbly herbage and stinging thorns.

Wharton's eyes glittered over his rifle. "Keep in cover!" he breathed. "Fire if you see a face!"

"You bet!"

Contact with the enemy had come suddenly. While the Greyfriars party had been seeking Krantz, he had been seeking them.

Crack, crack!

The slave-hunters were firing almost at random. The bullets tore through leafy foliage and juicy creepers.

A rustling in the bush told that the enemy were circling round the juniors.

Perhaps at that moment the chums of Greyfriars, for the first time, realised to the full the desperate nature of the enterprise they had undertaken.

The numbers of the enemy they did not know. They knew that the enemy were a gang of desperate outcasts, to whom the killing of a human being was no more than the crushing of a mosquito. And they were men accustomed to savage warfare, used to the handling of deadly weapons, acquainted with every trick of jungle fighting.

But the courage of the Famous Five did not falter. They gripped their rifles and watched for the foe, with steady eyes and steady hearts.

Wharton's hand was steady, his rifle like a rock, as he fired at an unseen form that brushed rustling through the bush scarce six feet from him.

The crack of the rifle was answered by a fearful yell. The juniors heard the crash of the ruffian as he went down.

An outbreak of yelling followed from different directions. The enemy were all round the juniors now; but, judging by the yells that answered one another, there was not more than five or six of them.

There was an outburst of firing; but the juniors hugged cover, and the bullets flew harmlessly over them.

But the hoarse, harsh voice of Krantz shouted, and the firing ceased. From their position now the slave-hunters were as likely to hit one another as hit the juniors.

Wharton, as he heard the shouting voice of the slave-trader, took aim in the direction of the sound.

Crack!

"Ach!" came a spluttering gasp. "Ach himmel!"

The bullet had gone close.

"Look out for a rush!" breathed Harry.

There was a rustling in the trees and bushes all round the juniors. Keeping under cover of the trunks, the enemy were closing in on them.

The juniors watched and listened tensely.

The rush came suddenly.

Five or six wild dark faces flashed from the jungle, and the slave-hunters leaped on the bunch of schoolboys like leopards.

Wharton fired, with his rifle-muzzle touching a brawny chest, and the ruffian rolled over, shot through the body, at his feet.

The other four were fighting hand-to-hand.

Rifles were useless at such close quarters; they dropped them, and slashed with the long, heavy bush knives.

There was a panting cry from Frank Nugent, as he was grasped in the powerful arms of Ludwig Krantz.

Wharton swung round, his eyes blazing, grasping his rifle by the barrel.

The blow he aimed at Krantz's head would have crushed the slave-trader's skull like an eggshell. But a trailing liana from a branch above interposed, and the blow was turned aside.

The next moment Wharton was grasped from behind and dragged over.

He had a second's glimpse of Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree

Jamset Ram Singh fighting fiercely. Then a pistol-butt crashed on his head, a million sparks seemed to fly before his eyes, and he knew no more.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fortune of War!

HARRY WHARTON struggled back slowly to his senses.

His head ached horribly; his eyes were dizzy as he opened them and stared dazedly about him.

He tried to move, and found that his arms were bound behind his back.

He was a prisoner.

With spinning brain he struggled into a sitting position, and looked about him with swimming eyes.

"Ach! You are not dead, then!"

It was a husky, chuckling voice. Ludwig Krantz stood before him, his light German eyes gleaming from his coppery Arab face. Across that coppery face, from the mouth to the ear, showed the livid scar of the knife-cut the Bounder had given him, long ago, at Entebbe.

The half-Arab German grinned down at the dizzy junior.

"Ach! Do you repent now that you followed me across the lake—hein?"

Wharton did not answer.

He stared dizzily round.

Bob Cherry met his eyes, and grinned ruefully.

"Not our game, old man!" he said.

Bob was a prisoner, his arms bound. Near him stood Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, also bound. Frank Nugent lay on the ground, and Wharton, as he saw him, felt a throb of horror.

But he noted that Frank's arms, also, were bound behind him; and they would not have bound him if he had been killed. Ludwig Krantz had planned to take prisoners, not to kill; every one of the schoolboys was worth a sum of money to him, sold in the interior of Africa; and such a revenge was more terrible than death. Nugent had been stunned, and he had not yet come to his senses.

The fight had gone against the Famous Five. But it had cost the slave-hunters dear.

Two of the ruffians were staunching the blood from wounds dealt by the slashing bush-knives. One of them lay inert in the tangled creepers, never to stir again. And in the thick bush lay another—the first who had fallen to Wharton's rifle.

Ludwig Krantz's face was like that of an exultant demon.

"You came to find me—hein?" he chuckled. "Ach! You have found me! Are you satisfied, my young friend?"

Wharton leaned his dizzy head back against a mango-tree.

The game was up.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had told the juniors that their idea of searching for Smithy on the Congo side of the lake was "stuff and nonsense." Mr. Jarram, the planter of Butiaba, had told them it was madness.

They had been right.

Wharton knew that now. The schoolboys had had no chance in dealing with a gang of desperate ruffians in the depths of the tropical forest.

Yet it was difficult to see what else they could have done. Either they had to take the chance of what had happened now, or else abandon their comrade in ruthless hands. They had been bound to stand by Smithy, as they knew that Smithy would have stood by them.

Fortune had proved their foe; and now, like the French king after the battle of Pavia, they could only say that "all was lost but honour."

Frank Nugent stirred.

He sat up dizzily and groaned.

A trickle of blood ran down his forehead from under his hair.

His face, already pale, grew paler as he looked round him. But his look was steady. There was no sign of funk.

"Get up!" Krantz snarled at Harry Wharton. "Get on your feet, you dog!"

Wharton struggled to rise.

With his head spinning and his arms bound behind him, it was not easy. The slave-trader kicked him brutally in the ribs.

"Ach! Get up!" he snarled.

The junior got on his feet. He reeled against the mango-tree, his eyes burning at the half-Arab.

Krantz grinned at him.

"You are in my hands now, boy!" he said. "Do you know why you still live? It would have been easier—ach, much easier—to crush you all like so many mosquitoes! But for my orders my men would have killed you like flies! But that would have been too easy for you! Ach! Do you repent now that you beat me on the Nairobi road many weeks ago?"

"No!" said Wharton, with set lips.

"Ach! Perhaps you will repent, when you meet the fate I have designed for you," grinned Krantz. "You still live, boy, because you are worth a sum of money to me when I sell you on the Congo. For every blow you gave me that day in Kenya you will receive a hundred when you are a slave!"

Wharton shivered, in spite of himself.

The slave-trader chuckled.

"You followed me, thinking to rescue the boy Vernon-Smith! Hein? Now you will join him! But there is yet one more—the fat one with the spectacles. He was in the boat with you!"

Wharton's thoughts turned to the Owl of the Remove, left in the boat on the creek.

Bunter, if he was keeping watch, was safe. It was easy for the boat to run out into the wide lake at the first sign of danger.

There was relief in that thought.

"Where did you leave the boat?" asked Krantz.

Wharton made no answer.

"Fool, dummkopf!" snarled the slave-trader. "Do you think that I shall not easily follow the track by which you came, and find the boat, and the fat fool you have left in it?"

Wharton could only hope and pray that Bunter and the Baganda boy were on the watch. Surely in the midst of such dangers they would not be caught off their guard!

And if Bunter escaped there was hope! He would carry the news back and there would be an attempt, at least, at rescue. Captain McCann would be overjoyed to learn where he could pick up the trail of the slave-trader. Life and hope depended on Bunter's escape.

Krantz watched his face, puzzled by its expression.

"Ach! You fancy that the fat fool will escape me, hein?" he exclaimed. "You will see! You go to join the boy Vernon-Smith—and the fat fool will soon join you also!"

He snapped an order in Arabic.

The five juniors were hustled together in a group, and a rope run from one another till the five were on a "string."

Then one of the slave-hunters, a black-browed ruffian, more negro than Arab, took the end of the rope and tramped away, dragging the prisoners after him. They stumbled on, one after another,

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in the track of the ruffian, savage jerks on the rope keeping them to it.

In a few minutes they were out of sight of Krantz and the others.

For some time they stumbled wearily through thick forest, jerked and dragged by the black-browed ruffian in advance. Then they entered on a narrow forest path where the going was easier.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "We came over the lake to find Smithy, you fellows! We're going to find him now!"

The juniors had no doubt about that. Somewhere in the depths of the tropical forest Vernon-Smith was a prisoner, and they were evidently on their way to the same place. They were going to find their missing comrade; though not as they had hoped.

Mile after mile they stumbled after the black-browed ruffian, aching with the tropical heat, weary to the bone, drenched with perspiration. But there was no halt.

The ground was ascending under their feet. They came at last to the lava-crust rim of an ancient, extinct volcano. From somewhere in the depths below a rifle shot echoed dully.

As they tramped over the rim of the crater, the black-browed ruffian gave a long, shrill whistle, a signal to the camp below.

Trampling through the dusty lava, they followed the slaver over the crumbling rim and down by a winding path into the interior of the ancient crater; through dark thickets and shady trees, towards the crater-pool that reflected back the sunrays far below.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Desperate Attempt!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH came out of the wattled hut in the slave-hunters' camp in the old crater, and stared about him blackly, under knitted brows.

Wattled huts, a dozen in number, stood dotted about the high bank overlooking the deep, glimmering pool that filled the bottom of the ancient crater.

It was a large pool, almost a lake, covering two or three acres in extent, surrounded by the sloping sides of the crater in almost a complete circle, irregular here and there.

Scores of such crater-pools exist in the solitary forest bordering on the south and west of Lake Albert; many of them known, some buried from sight in the heart of impenetrable forest and jungle.

In ancient days lava and floods of fire had welled up from those depths, but that was centuries ago, before the memory of man.

For long hundreds of years the subterranean channels had been blocked by hardened lava, and the pools had formed fifty, sixty, or a hundred feet deep.

The interior slopes of the crater were thickly clothed in trees, bushes, huge ferns, and tangled grasses.

Fish swam in the pool, birds nested in the trees, and many beasts lurked in the woods in the crater.

A safer hiding-place the slave-hunters could hardly have found for a retreat; with ample food and water at hand.

Only a few miles from the shore of Lake Albert, on the Congo side, the crater was quite unknown, save to some wandering native hunters; buried from sight and knowledge by the sweeping forests that circled it.

Ludwig Krantz, hunted for his life

on the British side of the lake, was in little danger there.

The Belgian authorities in the Congo State certainly would have been glad of a chance of seizing him; but he had little fear of them in that remote and hidden spot.

Often had that camp in the crater been Krantz's headquarters on his slave-stealing expeditions. In earlier days he had raided slaves on the British side of the lake; Baganda from Uganda, even Kikuyu from Kenya, and run them across in canoes. But that game grew more dangerous with every passing year, and Krantz's last visit to the British territory had very nearly proved fatal to him. The shores of the lake, and the lake itself, were patrolled now, and slave-running across the water had grown to be too desperate a game even for the reckless outcast.

It was, in fact, only for revenge on the Greyfriars party that Krantz was lingering so near to Lake Albert. It was his intention to get to a greater distance from the British border, and to confine his future activities to the Congo country and the wilder regions of the Sudan and the French Sahara. Slave-raiding on British territory he had resolved to abandon since his last narrow escape. But he was savagely determined that he would not go without his revenge, and fortune had favoured him. Vernon-Smith had fallen into his hands, and in the desperate attempt to rescue the Bounder, Harry Wharton & Co. were now sharing his fate.

The Bounder was scowling blackly as he came out of the wattled hut. With glinting, savage eyes, he looked about the camp of the slave-hunters.

The high bank where the camp lay rose abruptly from the edge of the crater-pool; a vast mass of petrified lava, crusted with earth. On one side was an almost sheer drop of a hundred feet to the pool below.

On the other side, and at one end, thick impenetrable forest shut in the camp. Only at one end of the little lava plateau were ingress and egress possible, where a path wound away through the bush. There one of the gang constantly kept watch.

Twice already in the weary day that had elapsed since he had been brought to the den of the slavers had the Bounder attempted to escape.

Each time he had been seized at once, and scourged with a whip of rhinoceros-hide; and his back was aching and sore from the cruel blows.

Now, on the second day, he was still thinking of escape.

He knew that it was hopeless; for his limbs would not have been left free by the slavers had it been possible for him to elude them. But the thought of escape was incessantly in his mind, possible or impossible.

Now it seemed to him that there was a better chance than before.

Early that morning a messenger had arrived in the camp, and soon afterwards Ludwig Krantz and nearly the whole crew had gone.

The Bounder had caught some of their talk, but it was in Arabic, and it conveyed nothing to him.

But he could gather, from their tones and looks, that they were not anticipating danger, but a success of some sort.

They had been gone since dawn, and it was long past midday now.

Of the whole savage crew, only one man remained in the camp.

He was a half-breed Arab, whom Smithy had heard Krantz address as

Yussuf. He was posted at the opening of the path which led up the crater-side from the camp.

There he sat on a lava rock, leaning back against a tree under shady branches, with a rifle across his knee, smoking and yawning.

A score of times the Bounder had watched him, from a distance, debating whether there was a chance of outwitting him.

But every time he drew near the spot where the Arab kept guard, the gleaming black eyes of Yussuf turned on him, watchfully, savagely. Once or twice the Arab grinned, easily reading the thoughts in the haggard, desperate face of the prisoner. Another time, he lifted his rifle, and sent a bullet humming within a foot of the Bounder's ear, as a warning to keep farther off.

Noon was past now, and fierce heat blazed down into the crater, which was like an oven.

The Bounder had been lying down in the shade of his hut, resting, easing his scourged back. But he came out at last, and again he watched the man on the rock at the path.

Yussuf was leaning back against the tree, his rifle on his knees, his chin fallen on his breast.

He seemed to have nodded off to sleep in the heat of the tropical day.

Vernon-Smith's eyes burned at him.

If the man slept—

Krantz and his ruffianly crew were still absent. Whatever their business was, it was keeping them away from the camp in the crater.

If there was a chance for the Bounder, it was during their absence. He knew that. He knew, too, that if he succeeded in getting past Yussuf, the wretch would shoot him dead rather than allow him to get clear. Even if the man slept, all the chances were against him.

Savagely resolute and desperate as he was, the Bounder was not the fellow to throw his life away recklessly. It was the thought of his father, chiefly, that spurred him on to take the chance. Well the Bounder knew what a blow his disappearance must be to Mr. Vernon-Smith; well he knew that the millionaire's immense fortune weighed not a straw in the balance against his affection for his only son. The thought of his father brought an ache to his heart.

Watching the still figure leaning on the tree, the Bounder set his teeth, making up his mind.

If he got past the Arab there was a chance. Even then he would be lost,



Vernon-Smith turned desperately, as the Arab rushed at him, the lump of lava in his grip. Whiz! Crash! Full in the dark savage face crashed the missile, with all the strength of the Bounder's arms behind it!

alone, unarmed, in the trackless wilderness. But once he was free, he was ready to face the rest.

He stooped at last, and picked up a jagged lump of lava. It was the only weapon that came to his hand.

Then, with set teeth, his eyes glinting under his scowling brows, he tiptoed towards the path up the crater-side. The Arab did not stir.

Closer and closer the Bounder drew, till he was within a few yards of the man seated on the rock, sprawling against the tree; and still Yussuf was motionless.

The Bounder's heart beat thickly.

A few more steps—

As if the ruffian was warned by some sixth sense, his eyes opened, his head lifted, and he stared full at Vernon-Smith.

"Bismillah!" yapped the Arab.

He slung up his rifle.

It was neck or nothing now. The Bounder, with a desperate rush, passed him.

Bang!

The rifle roared behind him, the hurried shot grazing his shoulder. He heard the enraged shout of the Arab, the pattering of swift feet behind.

He raced up the narrow, winding path, winding through impenetrable jungle up the crater-side.

Behind him raced the swift feet of the Arab; faster—twice as fast as the

Bounder, swift as he was, could cover the ground.

Smithy turned desperately, the lump of lava in his grip.

The Arab, within a few feet now, was rushing on him, with eyes flaming with rage.

Whiz!

Crash!

Full in the dark, savage face crashed the jagged lava lump, with all the strength of the Bounder's arms behind it.

Yussuf was bowled over like a ninepin.

The crash in his face sent him spinning backwards, with a husky yell, to land on his back with a heavy concussion.

The Bounder raced on again.

Up and up, winding through the jungle, trampling over lava fragments and dust! Behind him came a sound of hideous yelling and cursing in Arabic, and he heard pursuing footsteps again; but farther off, and slower than before. His heart throbbed with hope. Once out of the crater, once plunged into trackless forest, there was a chance.

High above him, from the rim of the crater, sounded a long, shrill whistle. It was a signal.

He halted.

From behind him came a piercing yell from Yussuf—a warning to the men above that the prisoner was escaping.

The Bounder gritted his teeth. In sheer desperation he ran on, while lower on the winding path behind him pounded the footsteps of Yussuf in pursuit.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No Chance!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stumbled to a halt. Strung along the rope behind their savage, black-browed guide, they were trampling down the winding path into the interior of the crater, when sounds of alarm came from below.

The black-browed ruffian dragged them to a halt, and twisted the loose end of the rope round a branch beside the path.

Then he ran forward a few paces, and stopped in the middle of the path, watching.

Patter, patter, patter!

Swift footsteps came to the ears of the juniors, the footsteps of someone as yet unseen, racing up the winding path.

From farther below there was a yelling voice, yelling in Arabic in tones of mad fury.

"What the thump—" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat! Look!" gasped Wharton. "It's Smithy!"

"Smithy!"

"The Bounder!"

A running figure came in sight round the winding of the path from below. It was Herbert Vernon-Smith, running desperately.

"Smithy!"

The Bounder sighted the Famous Five, helpless to aid him, strung on the rope that was fast to the branch. He sighted the black-browed ruffian standing watchful in the middle of the path.

His escape was cut off.

Behind him Yussuf was coming on; before him stood the slave-hunter with the juniors. The game was up.

But he came on desperately.

The black-browed ruffian half-raised his rifle, but he lowered it again, and leaped at the Bounder, grasping him.

On the narrow path, Smithy had no chance of eluding him. The grasp of the powerful ruffian closed on him, and the Bounder struggled fiercely with the Arab.

"Oh, if a fellow could only get loose!" panted Bob. He wrenched furiously at his bonds.

But it was in vain. The juniors were powerless to aid, and they could only watch with bitter looks, while the Bounder, resisting with all his strength, crumpled up in the grasp of the Arab.

Patter, patter, patter came the footsteps of Yussuf, and he came panting up the path.

He dragged the Bounder away from the other Arab, and flung him down the path. With savage blows, he drove him back the way he had come.

Twice the Bounder turned on him in savage desperation, but he had no chance against the sinewy ruffian.

Blow on blow drove him on, and he stumbled away down the winding path, back to the camp from which he had fled.

The rope was untied from the branch again, and the juniors led on by their conductor, after Yussuf and the Bounder.

They stumbled wearily down the winding path into the crater, their feelings too bitter for words.

They came out at last on the plateau overlooking the crater-pool, and reached the group of wattled huts.

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The Bounder was already there.

He lay on the floor of his hut, his hands bound now, dazed and dizzy from the countless blows Yussuf had rained on him.

The juniors were driven into the same hut, and the black-browed ruffian remained outside the narrow doorway on guard.

They were left with their hands bound, and still tied together by the long rope. Evidently the Arab meant to take no risks with them until his master returned.

The hut was destitute of furniture, save for a ragged sleeping-mat on which the Bounder lay. The weary juniors sank down on the dusty earthen floor.

They leaned in a weary row on the wattled wall. Frank Nugent's face was ghastly white, with a trickle of dried blood on his colourless cheek. Wharton's head ached bitterly from the blow that had struck him down. The other fellows all had bruises and more aches and pains than they could have counted. But they bore it all with as much stoicism

WANTED—

Greyfriars Limericks.

A splendid leather pocket wallet is awarded for every Greyfriars limerick published in the MAGNET.

One of this week's handsome prizes goes to: David McDowell, 23, Hill Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland, whose winning effort appears herewith:

To a big dinner-party, one night,
Billy Bunter received an invite.
Three or four of the guests
Left with very loose vests,
While the Owl's was abnormally
tight!

A pen and paper—a few
moments' thought—and YOUR
limerick may do the trick!

as they could muster. It was useless to grouse.

Herbert Vernon-Smith sat up and stared at them grimly. His hard face was haggard and desperate.

"You fellows!" he said. "They've got you, too!"

"Looks like it," said Bob dismally.

"You missed me, I suppose—"

"Yes," said Harry. "The Kikuyu came back to Jarram's bungalow, and told us that Krantz had got you, Smithy."

The Bounder's face lighted up.

"Kicky! Then Kikolobo got back safe?"

"Quite! He left at once to begin searching for you. I fancy he is on this side of the lake now, somewhere—though goodness knows where."

"Good!" said the Bounder between his teeth. "There's a chance for us, so long as Kikolobo is alive and hunting for us—and if he doesn't save us he will make Krantz pay, at least. Kicky is true as steel—he will follow Krantz across the continent of Africa to get him. He will never leave me in that villain's hands."

He stared at the juniors again.

"But how did Krantz get you?" he demanded. "You were safe enough at Mr. Jarram's bungalow, at Butiaba. Did you walk into his hands and ask for it, as I did?"

"We came after you!" said Wharton quietly.

"Oh gad!" The Bounder whistled. "You came across the lake to try to get me out of this?"

"That's it."

"You hadn't a dog's chance."

"We know that—now! But it was up to us, and we had to try. We might have had better luck."

The Bounder was silent a few moments.

"It was decent of you," he said at last. "I suppose you couldn't leave me to it, but I wish you'd stayed safe. I hate to have dragged you into this awful mess."

"We're not dead yet," said Bob as cheerfully as he could. "While there's life there's jolly well hope. We're all together, anyhow."

"The sinkfulness or the swimfulness togetherfully is the proper caper, my absurd Smithy," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"We haven't an earthly," muttered the Bounder moodily. "We're for Central Africa, when Krantz gets on the trek. Kikolobo is our only hope—and he may never pick up the track of these villains. How"—he caught his breath a little—"how did my pater take it?"

"It hit him hard, of course," said Wharton. "But your father isn't the man to sit down and grouse, Smithy. He will raise Cain all round Lake Albert! He was at Butiaba when we left yesterday morning, getting busy. And Captain McCann and his askaris are hunting for Krantz. I believe we've got a chance of being rescued, unless Krantz gets us away into the interior pretty quick."

"He will do that," said Smithy. "This is a safe hiding-place for him, in ordinary times, but he won't be safe here with my father stirring up the authorities on both sides of the lake. I fancy we shall be on the march soon—in fact, I don't know why he hasn't started yet. He's running risks by hanging on here."

"The scoundrel was hanging on to get us—and he's got us," said Johnny Bull. "Our game's up; but we've delayed him a lot, and that may give the others a chance who are hunting him."

"Something in that!" agreed the Bounder.

"He's after Bunter now," said Harry. "That fat fool jumped into the boat as we were starting yesterday, and came over with us. We left him in a creek with the boat and a Baganda boy a good many miles from here. If Krantz gets him he will have made a full bag, and then I suppose he will start for the Congo."

"He will get him!" grunted the Bounder.

"Not if he keeps his eyes open!" Wharton explained how Bunter had been left.

The Bounder grunted again.

"Anybody else in Bunter's place would be all right, and would get back to the British side, with news where to pick up Krantz's trail," he said. "But that fat chump—"

"Even that duffer will keep on the watch, with Krantz in the offing!" said Bob Cherry.

"Will he?" grunted Smithy.

The juniors fell into silence.

The long, weary, hot hours wore away.

It was stifling in the hut, and neither food nor water was brought to the hapless prisoners.

Aching in their bonds, they lay in misery, and were glad at last to hear sounds of movement and voices in the slave-hunters' camp, though they guessed that it only portended the return of Ludwig Krantz and his gang.

The Bunder moved to the narrow doorway. Harry Wharton & Co. dragged themselves to their feet and followed him.

They looked from the hut into the blinding sunshine.

From the direction of the crater path the burly figure of Ludwig Krantz came into view, followed by his wild-looking crew of ruffians. They tramped on to the camp.

And whatever hope the juniors had founded on Bunter, vanished, as they looked. In the midst of the savage crew rolled a fat figure, with perspiring fat face and spectacles that flashed back the rays of the sun.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Asks for It!

THE boat rocked gently on the creek.

The painter was tied to a long branch that dropped across the creek, leaving a margin of a dozen feet between the boat and the muddy shore.

Had the two in the boat been on the watch little danger could have come to them. A knife-slash at the mooring-rope and the boat would have rocked out into the lake on the current, and a shove of an oar would have sent it far beyond the reach of the enemy.

Harry Wharton & Co., when they had left Bunter and the Baganda, had had no choice in the matter. They had had to trust them, and hoped that they would be vigilant for their own sakes, if for no other reason.

As a matter of fact, neither was to be trusted.

The unthinking black boy thought of only one thing—of having an easy time when the master's eye was withdrawn. He snored on his mat in the bows, giving no thought whatever to the instructions he had received—which had passed in at one side of his woolly head and out of the other.

Billy Bunter, certainly, ought to have been more reliable than an untutored black man. And certainly Bunter had intended to keep wide awake—very wide awake, indeed. His terror of Krantz was deep, and if anything could have kept William George Bunter awake fear for the safety of his priceless fat skin would have done it.

But in the drowsy tropical heat under the branches, with the ceaseless hum of insects in his ears, Bunter was sleepy. And when Bunter was sleepy Bunter slept. He stretched himself on the blankets in the stern of the boat, with the intention of keeping watch lying down. After which his fat eyelids drooped, and, without even knowing it, he glided into happy slumber.

For a long time the silence of the hot creek was broken only by the snores fore and aft, mingling with the insect-buzz.

But at length there came other sounds—sounds of men pushing their difficult way through brake and thorn.

The jungle round the little creek was so thick that the most cautious hunter could not have approached the water's edge without giving some warning of his coming.

There was ample warning for Bunter and Gobongo, had either been awake.

Both of them were fast asleep, and the rustling and swaying of the bushes and branches told them nothing.

Ludwig Krantz emerged from the thickets at last, and stood in the mud of the bank, staring towards the boat.

His light-blue eyes glittered, and a savage grin crossed his coppery face as he discerned the two sprawling, sleeping figures in the moored boat.

"Ach!" he murmured, and he chuckled softly.

Another and another ruffian emerged from the brake, and stared, grinning, at the boat.

Still Bunter and the Baganda snored on.

Krantz made his men a sign to be silent. Even yet the boat might have eluded him had the sleepers awakened. The current tugged at the boat, keeping the painter taut; a slash would have parted it, and the boat would have shot away to the open lake. Krantz certainly would have fired into it, in that case; but there would have been a chance.

But the sleepers slept on as the slave-hunters waded out through mud and shallow water.

In the middle of the creek the water was deep, and rose to the necks of the ruffians before they reached the boat. They had to swim to reach it, and one of them stopped, holding the rifles of the rest above the water, while three swam out with Krantz. A stroke or two and their grasp was on the gunwale of the boat.

The boat rocked and swayed as Ludwig Krantz clambered into it. Bunter snored on, but the Baganda was a lighter sleeper than the Owl of Greyfriars, and his eyes opened as he rolled under the rocking of the boat.

He sprang to his feet with a startled yell at the sight of Krantz half in and the other savage faces crowding round.

For an instant he stared, as if surprised by the sight which, as he had slept on his watch, he might really have expected. But it was the way of the black man to expect nothing till it happened.

Then he leaped to his axe which lay near at hand, grasped it, and with a single slash, cut through the painter.

Instantly the current tore the boat away towards the lake.

A minute earlier the Baganda boy's prompt action might have saved the situation. But it was too late now.

The boat swept down to the lake, with four pairs of hands grasping the gunwale, four of the ruffians sweeping along with it.

Krantz, with an effort, hurled himself into the boat, even as the rope parted. He rolled in, headlong, and the Baganda turned on him with gleaming axe flung aloft to strike. Careless and thoughtless as he was, the Baganda was brave; and he was well aware, too, of the fate that awaited him if the slave-hunter made him a prisoner—a weary trek through forest and jungle, to be sold as a slave in an unknown land.

The axe barely missed the slave-trader's head, as Krantz twisted desperately to elude it. It struck the floor-planks with such force that the edge was embedded in the wood.

The Baganda wrenched it out, but Krantz was on his feet, leaping back into the stern of the rocking boat to avoid another slash.

He trampled over Billy Bunter, and

there was a wild yell from the fat junior as he awakened.

Three more ruffians were clambering in, and the boat rocked gunwale under, and shipped water, almost capsizing under their weight.

Billy Bunter rolled over helplessly, yelling; and Krantz stumbled over him and fell. The Baganda lost his footing, and clutched at the mast to save himself, the axe dropping from his hand.

Krantz yelled hoarsely to his men. While the boat rocked like a seesaw, shipping water alternately to port and starboard, the slave-hunters scrambled at the Baganda like leopards.

A grasping hand slid on his bare black shoulder.

He leaped away, and flung himself headlong into the water. The boat was out of the creek now, drifting on the lake. The Baganda vanished beneath the surface of Lake Albert.

"Ach! Shoot!" yelled Krantz furiously.

But the ruffians had left their rifles with the man on the bank, and the boat was already a hundred yards out.

Krantz dragged out an automatic from a waterproof case, and glared with savage eyes for a sight of the Baganda's fuzzy head as he rose.

Crack, crack, crack! rang rapid shots, as the dark head appeared above the water at a considerable distance.

The head vanished again.

Whether the Baganda had been struck and gone down, or whether he was swimming under water, Krantz could not tell.

He watched savagely, but he did not see the dark head again. If Gobongo had risen, he was screened by some mass of the driftwood carried down into the lake by the waters of the creek.

But the slave-trader was not disposed to search on the lake for him. The waters of Lake Albert were no safe place for the man who was hunted far and wide.

He was anxious to get ashore again; at any moment native canoes might have appeared on the water, and any native who had seen him would have carried the news to Butiaba.

He snarled orders to his men, the oars were put out, and the boat pulled back into the creek.

Billy Bunter was wide enough awake now.

He sat and goggled with terror through his big spectacles.

Bunter was not the fellow to make a desperate leap for life, as the Baganda had done. Not that it would have served him, for he would have gone down like a stone.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

Krantz took no heed of him till the boat bumped into the mud of the creek.

(Continued on next page.)

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Then he gestured to the fat junior to get ashore.

Bunter scrambled out of the boat.

At Krantz's order one of the slavers took the axe and stove in the bottom of the boat. Then it was pushed into the centre of the creek, and drifted out into the lake, slowly filling as it went.

Krantz watched it till, at a few hundred yards from the shore, it plunged under the lake and sank.

Then he turned his glinting eyes on Bunter.

"Komm!" he snarled.

"Oh crikey!"

The slave-hunters tramped away through the jungle, the fat junior stumbling in their midst. Krantz followed them with a grinning face.

His "bag" was complete now. Every member of the Greyfriars party was a prisoner in his hands. One more night in camp in the old crater, and then the march into Central Africa!

Pursuit would follow. The search for him would be long and hard. Captain McCann and his askaris from the British side, Belgian troops on the Congo side, would be hunting him; and hundreds of natives, set on by the rewards offered by the millionaire for his son.

Sooner or later, the camp in the crater would be discovered. But by that time he would be far away. Deep in the wilderness of the Congo he could laugh at pursuit. Once away into those trackless depths, he could snap his fingers at his enemies, as he had snapped them before many a time.

The slave-trader grinned as he tramped on with his men. Long and weary was the tramp through the dense forest; but they reached the camp in the crater at last, Bunter tottering and groaning with fatigue. The fat junior was led to a wattled hut, and a blow drove him in.

He staggered into the dusty interior and blinked at dim faces that surrounded him there.

"So they got you!" said the Bounder savagely.

"I say, you fellows—" groaned Bunter.

"You fat fool!"

"Beast!"

And Billy Bunter slumped down. He was worn out by the tramp through the forest, aching in every fat limb. He pillowed a heavy head on a fat arm, and closed his eyes.

"That's that!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

Snore!

Bunter was asleep again!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Kikolobo on the Trail!

"O N'GAI, that seest all things from the summit of the Great Mountain, deign to look upon this Kikuyu, and guide him in the footsteps of Bwana-wangu!"

Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, murmured the words aloud, in his own musical tongue.

The tall, powerful Kikuyu, in the striped monkey-skins that were the dress of a warrior and a chief, sat in a canoe, gliding on Lake Albert, in the red glow of the sunset.

Night was at hand—the third night since the Kikuyu had left Mr. Jarram's bungalow, near Butiaba, to search for the master to whom he was devoted, Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

The dark, handsome face of the Kikuyu chief was worn and haggard. Sleep had hardly closed his eyes for an

hour, since his Bwana had fallen into the hands of the slave-trader.

Alone in the canoe, the Kikuyu had crossed the lake to search on the Congo side for his vanished master. After leaving the Jarram bungalow, he had stayed only to secure a canoe and fighting-spears to replace those he had lost in his fight with the slave-trader.

His resolve was fixed to follow Ludwig Krantz as far as he fled, even if the chase led him to the mouth of the Great River, where the Congo rolled into unknown seas, to save Bwana-wangu if he could, and, at all events, to slay his enemy. And in all the land of Kenya and Uganda, there was no more determined hunter, no tracker more keen, than the brave Kikuyu.

But his task was a desperate one. Long, long endless miles of trackless forest shut in the shores of the lake, and except that Krantz had fled into Belgian territory he knew nothing of his movements.

Searching the shore in his canoe, landing here and there to hunt for sign, questioning natives in the shore villages when they were friendly—more than once barely escaping with his life when they met him as an enemy—the Kikuyu had not rested by day or by night.

Many times on the lake he had sighted canoes, engaged on the same quest—for the unstinted rewards offered by the millionaire for news of his son had set hundreds of Baganda on the quest. And the news of the seizure of the millionaire's son, and of the riches offered for his rescue, was spreading on the western shore of the lake, setting swarms of natives into motion.

If Krantz remained long near the lake, the deepest and cunningest hiding-place would not save him. The Kikuyu feared that he had already fled into the dim interior.

But there were a hundred ways by which he might have gone, and, without a clue to his route, even the keenest tracker in East Africa was powerless. And so far the Kikuyu had had no luck, no sign of the slave-trader, no whisper of news of him, had met his eyes or his ears.

Now the shadows of Usiku, the night, were rolling from the hills of Kenya, the sun sinking away beyond the vast forests of the Congo. And Kikolobo, as he scanned the shore, growing dim to his eyes, felt something like despair in his faithful heart, and called on N'gai, the dweller on the snowy summit of Mount Kenya, to give his aid.

"O N'gai," said the Kikuyu, "thou knowest well that I cast a stone in thy name on the shore of this great water, and is it not known to all wise men that he who casts a stone by the water's edge shall have good fortune in his crossing? And I do not ask for my life, O N'gai, or to return to the houses of my people in the hills of Masalindi; but only to find Bwana-wangu, who saved this Kikuyu from the jaws of Simba, the lion, and to save the brave and handsome one from the evil Mzungu."

Splash!

As if in answer to the despairing prayer of the Kikuyu, there came a splash in the shadowing waters of the lake.

Instantly the Kikuyu's keen eyes turned in the direction of the sound.

A tree-trunk drifted on the lake, the sport of the changing currents. Squatted on the trunk was the figure of a black man.

The Kikuyu's eyes glistened.

Even at the distance, and in the growing dimness, he recognised the black Baganda whom he had seen at the

Jarram bungalow. How he had come there, and come to be floating on a log on the Belgian side of the lake, the Kikuyu could not imagine; but there was a hope in his heart that Gobongo might know something that would serve him. He seized his long paddle, and it flashed swiftly in his hands, and the canoe shot towards the drifting trunk.

Swiftly it skimmed the water, and bumped on the floating log. The Kikuyu's strong hand drew the Baganda into the canoe.

Gobongo squatted down in a pool of water. He was in a state of almost exhaustion, after floating for long hours on the water, clinging to the log, aching under the glare of the sun.

"O Kikuyu," said the Baganda, "my eyes see you! It was written that a brave and handsome Kikuyu should save me from death in the deep waters."

"O Gobongo," said Kikolobo, "tell me if you know anything of my lord whom my eyes no longer see."

"Of that white lord I know nothing," said Gobongo; "but of the other white lords, I know what will grieve my master when I relate it to him."

"Speak, O Baganda!" said the Kikuyu.

And in the long-winded native tongue, Gobongo told the Kikuyu of the school-boys' expedition across the lake, and its result.

Although the Baganda had seen nothing of Harry Wharton & Co. since they had left him in the boat with Bunter, it was hardly to be doubted that they had fallen into the hands of the slave-hunters. Gobongo was sure of it, and the Kikuyu had no doubt, when he had learned what the Baganda had to tell him.

Kikolobo's dark eyes were gleaming, and there was a satisfied expression on his face. Gobongo knew nothing of Vernon-Smith; but he had seen Ludwig Krantz, and where the slave-trader was, his prisoner could not be far away.

Kikolobo had learned more than he had dared hope to learn. The slave-trader was still on the shores of Lake Albert, and Gobongo could guide him to the creek where sign could be picked up.

The Kikuyu breathed hard and deep.

Once he had picked up the track of Ludwig Krantz, he was prepared to trust to the sharpness of his fighting-spears for the rest. The slave-hunters would not trap the wary Kikuyu in the forest, as they had trapped the schoolboys.

"O Gobongo," said the Kikuyu, when the black had finished his tale, "for you this was a fortunate meeting, since I, Kikolobo, have saved you from sinking into the arms of the ghosts of the lake. But for me it was still more fortunate, for now it is in my thoughts that I shall find Bwana-wangu, and slay the evil Mzungu with my spear. And know, O Gobongo, that I was certain of this, for before I entered this canoe I cast a stone on the shore in the name of N'gai, who dwells on the Great Mountain. And it is known in all countries that he who casts a stone by the water, in the name of N'gai, shall have good fortune in his crossing."

"You speak truth, O Kikuyu," said Gobongo. "What you say is indeed well known, though there are dogs and jackals such as the Arabs of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, who do not believe this."

The Kikuyu's paddle was flashing, un-resting, while they were speaking. A word or two from Gobongo gave Kikolobo his bearings, and as the darkness descended on the lake the canoe swept through the water, heading for



The grasp of the powerful ruffian closed on Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder struggled fiercely, while his chums looked on, powerless to aid!

the creek where the Greyfriars juniors had landed.

Light was long gone when the canoe glided into the murmuring creek. Stars glimmered on the wide lake, but under the branches that over-arched the creek all was dark.

The Kikuyu's searching eyes scanned the black shadows of the shore, and his keen ears listened.

Nocturnal sounds came from the forest—the rustling of creeping beasts, the distant echoing roar of a lion, the laughing howl of a hyena. But there was no sound or sign of human foes; and, indeed, the Kikuyu had no doubt that the slave-hunters were long since gone from the spot.

The tall Kikuyu stepped from the canoe.

"O Gobongo," he said, in a low voice, "even my eyes, which are keener than those of any other hunter in all the land of Kenya and Uganda, see little in the deep forest when Usiku, the night, has cast his cloak over the land. Yet I will seek the track of these dogs, and if I do not find it in the dark I will find it in the dawn. Do you, O Gobongo, return to Butiaba in the canoe, and seek the Bwana McCann, and tell him all things that you know."

"It shall be as you say, O Kikuyu!" said the Baganda.

The canoe slid away into the darkness of the lake.

The tall Kikuyu stood silent on the shore, wrapped in gloom. The splash of the paddle died away.

Kikolobo turned and entered the forest, and the blackness swallowed him.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Hard Luck!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
No answer.
"I say! I'm hungry!"
Billy Bunter's voice was almost a wail. It was charged with pathos. Never had Bunter, in all his fat career, felt so awfully sorry for himself. So sorry for himself was he feeling that he had no time to feel sorry for anyone else.

"I say, I'm thirsty!"
It was another pathetic wail.
Bunter was not in possession of a monopoly of the hunger and thirst in the stuffy, wattled hut. The other fellows were hungry, and they were athirst; and they were aching and sore from fighting in the forest, which Bunter certainly was not.

But the Famous Five did not grouse. Grouching, as Bob said, would not catch them any fish.

Neither did the Bounder grouse. He scowled in savage rage, his eyes burning, his teeth set. But grouching was not in his line.

Grouching was left to Bunter. But William George Bunter was ready to hand out all that was wanted, and a little over, and then some!

"It's hot!" groaned Bunter.
It was not only hot, but stifling in the crowded hut. Night in the camp in the crater seemed little cooler than day, and the prisoners in the hut panted and perspired.

Neither food nor water had been given them so far. The only relief they had was that the bonds had been taken off their limbs.

They were free to move within the

narrow confines of the hut that was their prison.

Outside the doorway, a scowling Arab sat on the ground with a rhinoceros-hide whip at hand.

That whip had fallen heavily on Bob Cherry when he ventured to put his head out, merely to look over the camp.

After which the juniors remained within the hut.

There was no chance of getting out. Escape was in their thoughts all the time, but if a chance was to come, it had not come yet.

Even the savage and desperate Bounder realised that. Smithy was aching and sore, covered with blue bruises from the beating Yussuf had given him, and he moved stiffly and painfully. In such merciless hands it was not wise to provoke brutality; the slave-hunters were as ready with a blow as a word, and their blows were hard and heavy. As they were used to dealing with the hapless negroes whom they kidnapped and sold, so they dealt with the white prisoners.

"I'm hungry! I'm thirsty! I'm hot! I'm tired! I can't sleep!" moaned Bunter. It was quite a catalogue.

The Bounder broke his savage silence. "Hungry?" he asked. "Shall I ring for a six-course dinner? What about turtle soup to begin with? What do you fancy in the way of hors d'œuvres?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"Thirsty?" went on the Bounder in the same sardonic vein. "Shall I call Krantz? Probably he is keeping champagne on ice for you!"

"Beast!"
"If you find it hot, I'm sure the man outside would come in and fan you if you asked him. Put your head out and ask!"

"Yah!"
"And, if you're tired and sleepy, what about a bed of down, and a

(Continued on page 16.)



WHITE SLAVES OF THE CONGO!

(Continued from page 13.)

punkah to soothe you to sleep? Just say what you'd like!"

Groan from Bunter.

"Cheerio, old fat man," said Bob Cherry. "Can't be helped, you know. And we're all hungry and thirsty and hot and tired!"

"Frightfully!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"It's like you fellows to be thinking about yourselves," said Bunter bitterly. "After getting me into this! Selfishness all round! Oh dear!"

"You fat idiot!" growled Johnny Bull. "If you'd kept your silly eyes open in the boat Krantz would never have got you. We left you safe enough!"

"That lazy brute Gobongo went to sleep instead of keeping watch," said Bunter. "I kicked him, and he glared at me like a cannibal. If he'd kept watch——"

"Why didn't you?" snapped Johnny Bull.

"I may have closed my eyes for a minute. It was all you fellows' fault; you jolly well know I thought it was a picnic on the lake when we started, or I wouldn't have come. I say, you fellows, what's going to happen to us now?" groaned Bunter.

"Oh, we'll get away somehow," said Harry. "We've got friends hunting for us, too! This won't last!"

"Gammon!" growled the Bounder. "We might have had a chance if that fat fool had kept his eyes open and taken the news back to my pater where to look for Krantz. Now we're for it! If you want to know what's going to happen, Bunter, we're going to be marched into the interior, where there isn't a white man for three hundred miles, and sold as slaves to some black chief. Krantz will get a lot of ivory for each of us, and make a profit on the business—if that's any comfort to you. And as you're too fat and lazy to be of much use as a slave, it's likely as not that you'll be cooked and eaten!"

"Ow!"

"Shut up, Smithy, old man," said Wharton quietly.

"I say, you fellows, you got me into this and you've got to get me out!" groaned Bunter. "Oh dear! If a fellow had something to eat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes somebody!"

A squat Arab, with a villainous face, appeared in the doorway. He carried a wooden bowl containing food of some sort in one hand, and a tall wooden pitcher of water in the other.

He peered into the dim interior of the hut with black, glinting eyes.

"Unbelieving dogs, eat and drink!" he said.

He placed the bowl and the pitcher on the ground and disappeared.

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"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter. "They ain't going to starve us, after all!"

"We shouldn't fetch much in ivory if they did!" said the Bounder. "Krantz doesn't want us to die on his hands. I dare say we're worth half a dozen tusks to him!"

Bunter blinked into the bowl.

"Oh crikey! Do they call that food?" he grunted.

"Ring for roast beef!" suggested the Bounder.

"Beast!"

The mess in the dish was far from appetising. There was a sticky gruel made from millet, with pieces of hard durrum bread and fragments of gristly meat floating in it. Krantz intended to keep his prisoners alive, but evidently he did not mean to feed them on the fat of the land. Only one large wooden spoon was provided by way of utensils. The water in the pitcher was lukewarm and tasted brackish. But beggars could not be choosers, and such as the fare was, it was welcome.

Bunter took the first pull at the pitcher. He gurgled water down his thirsty neck greedily. A third part of the supply had vanished by the time he stopped to take breath. Probably the rest would have followed had not the Bounder savagely jerked the pitcher from his fat hands.

What was left was shared equally by six parched fellows. Meanwhile, Bunter got on with the food.

He took possession of the spoon and ladled in the unsavoury mess. Fingers had to serve the other fellows. They fished out lumps of bread and meat, and ate.

Unsavoury as it was, it did them good. They were feeling better after eating and drinking, and disposed to take a more hopeful view of things. Bunter, at last, was able to curl up on the floor and go to sleep.

It was long before the other fellows could follow his example. But one by one they dropped off at last, as the night grew older—stretched on the bare earth, their heads pillowed on their arms.

Sleep for a time deadened discomfort and banished bitter thoughts. And they slept till the crack of a whip and the sting of a lash awakened them in the sunrise.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

On the March!

EARLY in the bright sunrise the camp of the slave-traders was astir. The juniors were allowed to leave the hut and to eat a meagre breakfast—washed down by water—in the open air. They could see that the slave-hunters were preparing to break camp; Krantz was lingering no longer in a region that was growing more dangerous for him with every passing hour. More of the gang had come in from other quarters; there was more than a dozen of the desperate-looking ruffians in the camp now.

Ludwig Krantz had succeeded, beyond his hopes, in getting the juniors into his hands, but in doing so he was well aware that he had raised a storm that might overwhelm him unless he was swift and wary. Stealing negroes from the villages and the plantations had caused the Uganda Government to set Captain McCann and the askaris on his track, long since. But the stealing of the white schoolboys was sure to give a new zest to the pursuit of the outcast.

There was no doubt that Krantz's spies had informed him of what was going on on the other side of the lake. Swarms of natives all round Lake Albert had been set in motion, eager to earn, what would have been to them, incalculable riches, offered by the millionaire for the rescue of his son. Krantz's latest desperate exploit had raised up hundreds, if not thousands, of enemies against him.

He was well aware that he had already lingered too long for safety, cunningly hidden as his retreat was in the old crater.

He was anxious to be gone, and the juniors could see signs of haste and stress among their captors.

Under Krantz's directions, the prisoners were secured together in a "string" by a long rope that was knotted to each in turn round the waist, leaving their limbs free.

They were to be marched off like a string of black slaves, and it was made quite clear to them that they had no better treatment to expect than the blackest of the black inhabitants of the Dark Continent.

A heavy package was placed on the back of each, for it was not the way of the slave-hunters to carry their own baggage when they had slaves to bear the burden.

When the march began only one man was left behind at the camp—the squat Arab with the villainous face whom the juniors heard Krantz address as Mustapha.

Even before they started Mustapha was busy dismantling the wattled huts, and clearing up the rubbish about the camp, which he threw over the edge of the plateau into the crater-pool far below.

It was clear that Krantz was not only breaking camp, but that he was abandoning the place for good.

The vicinity of the British border had been made too hot for him, and it was the slave-trader's intention to keep at a safe distance from it in the future, confining his nefarious activities to the wilds of the Congo and the Sahara.

The camp in the crater was to be blotted out of existence, leaving no sign that the slave-hunters had been there, to furnish no possible clue to pursuit.

The juniors saw Krantz in earnest talk with the squat Arab before they started. They did not understand a word of the mongrel Arabic spoken in the gang; but they drew their own conclusions.

They could see that Krantz was uneasy, and that he suspected that sooner or later the keen search for the missing British boys would reach the old crater. Not a sign was to be left of the camp, and they guessed, too, that Mustapha was to remain near the lake and spy on the searchers, and carry information later to his leader.

Leaving the squat Arab alone in the deserted camp, the slave-hunters tramped up the winding path to the rim of the old crater.

Krantz and several others marched ahead, then followed the string of slaves, carrying most of the baggage, and watched by a ruffian with a whip of rhinoceros-hide in his hand, and the rest of the gang brought up the rear.

If the juniors had hoped that there would be a chance of breaking away on the march, they had to give up that hope, for the time at least.

There was nothing for it but to endure; and they endured with as much philosophy as they could.

The hour was still early when they passed over the lava-crusted rim of the

crater, and descended the outer slope of the ancient volcano.

The forests swallowed them.

By a narrow game-path, trodden by the feet of wild animals, they threaded through the vast silent forest. They did not catch a glimpse of the lake, and it was clear that their backs were turned to Lake Albert and the British territory.

That Krantz was in fear of pursuit, and even of being intercepted on the march, was very plain. Every man in the gang was as watchful as a cat, and when one of the juniors, mopping the perspiration from his face, dropped his handkerchief, a volley of curses in Arabic, and a savage blow from the rhinoceros-hide whip, warned him to be more careful, and the handkerchief was picked up and taken by an Arab.

That incident showed how much Krantz feared to leave a clue to the pursuers; and it also put into the minds of the juniors the idea of leaving a clue, if they could. But in the present state of vigilance in the gang there was no chance of that.

Anxiety on the part of their captors meant hope for the prisoners. Whether Krantz feared McCann and his askaris, or soldiers of the Congo State, or natives hunting for a reward, they did not know. But they knew that he feared, and his fears were encouraging to the hapless slaves tramping along under their heavy burdens.

Hour after hour passed on the weary march.

The sun, as it rose higher and higher, was hardly glimpsed through the thick canopy of foliage above; but its burning heat was severely felt.

Many times wild, savage eyes of animals stared at them from the thickets as they passed. Once a lion glared from the bush, and roared with a sound like thunder, but skulked away into the forest again.

It was nearly noon when suddenly, from Krantz at the head of the column, came the sharp crack of a rifle.

From the bush a black figure in a loin-cloth leaped, spinning over and crashing to the ground.

The juniors turned their faces away from the body as they tramped on past it.

Whether it was some native hunting for the lost son of the millionaire, or some hapless hunter who had strayed in the slave-hunters' way, Krantz could not have known. But he was taking no chances, and a black man's life was nothing to the ruffian.

They were not fifty yards from the fallen man when they heard the snarling and howling of jackals gathering from the jungle—for what they know only too well.

Shuddering, the juniors tramped on. The incident meant nothing to the slave-hunters, except that it had added to their alarm. Instead of halting in the heat of noon, they kept on the march, and weary mile after mile dragged under the tramping feet.

The schoolboys were almost sinking with fatigue, and the hapless Owl tottered on, like a fellow in a hideous dream.

It was not till even the hardy ruffians were tired that they halted, and then the rest was brief. After one hour Krantz gave the signal to march again, and weary, savage, and cursing, the slave-hunters resumed their way, and the schoolboys stumbled on with them.

By jungle paths and forest tracks, wading shallow streams, weary mile after mile they went on, till at last the terrible day drew to a close, and aching limbs were allowed to sink to the earth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Pursuer!

THE blazing sun that tortured the schoolboy slaves, many a long and weary mile away in the depths of the Congo forests, burned down on the camp in the crater, on the hot lava rocks, and on a tall figure in striped monkey-skins, with rhinoceros-hide shield and three fighting-spears, that stood on the crater rim.

Kikolobo, the Kikuyu, had reached the slopes of the extinct volcano buried in the forest.

The darkness of night had baffled even the eagle-eyed Kikuyu; but with the first gleam of dawn he was on the trail.

From the creek he had easily found the track of the juniors, as soon as there was light, to the spot where they had fallen into the hands of the slave-hunters.

There he found, also, two skeletons picked clean by the jackals; but the bones were those of full-grown men, and he knew that two of the slave-hunters must have fallen in the fight that had evidently taken place.

Sign in plenty was picked up on this spot by the keen eyes of the hunter of Kenya. As clearly as if he had seen the events with his own eyes, the Kikuyu knew that the chums of Greyfriars had been taken prisoners by the outcast gang, who had afterwards gone down to the creek and secured the Small Fat One.

But from that spot the "spoor" was more difficult to follow. Krantz and his men had picked tracks left by beasts of the forest where they could; and they were too cunning to leave sign if they could help it.

But the keenest eyes in East Africa were watching for sign; and step by step the Kikuyu picked up the track, and step by step followed it, till at length he reached the old dead volcano.

Long hours had passed on the trail, and it was past noon when Kikolobo stood on the crater-rim, and looked down into the hollow, at the bottom of which the deep pool reflected back the sun.

The Kikuyu breathed hard and deep. He had tracked the slave-hunters to their lair, he knew that. But whether they were still in their lair was another question, to which he had to find the answer.

If Krantz was there, Bwana-wangu was there, and though Kikolobo felt a real concern for the other white lords, it was the Bounder of whom he was specially in quest.

The Kikuyu, armed only with spears, was prepared to enter into desperate conflict with a numerous gang of desperados, armed to the teeth with white men's weapons.

But on the Kikuyu's side were the stealthy cunning and caution of the savage trained to bush-fighting, brave as a lion, watchful as a leopard, patient as a crocodile waiting for his prey. The Kikuyu was far from regarding such a conflict as a desperate one.

He looked down into the crater, and watched and listened. Then he trod down the winding path, spear in hand.

Slowly, silently, cautiously he trod, watching every turn of the path before he quitted cover. Had he met an enemy on the path it was not Kikolobo who would have been taken by surprise.

But there was no enemy on the path; and at length, deep down in the old crater, he came in sight of the camp.

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 4.

This week our Greyfriars Rhymester supplies a snappy poem revealing the hero worshipped by Tom Brown—undoubtedly a gallant gentleman like Tom himself.

THERE'S just one man in history
With whom Tom Brown is pally,
And, since it is no mystery,
We'll tell his name—it's Raleigh.
This handsome, dashing courtier
Was such a fearless scrapper,
That nothing could be naughtier
Than knocking off his napper.

His life was so adventurous
That, if we told it fully,
The Editor would censure us
And clip our ear—the bully!
You see, to write that story, all
This paper we'd be using;
There'd be no Editorial
Or Greyfriars yarn amusing.



He lived in days of chivalry,
When Good Queen Bess was ruler;
And there was mighty rivalry
Among the knights to fool her
By standing round and flattering
The Queen with words untruthful;
(When titles she was scattering,
This came in very useful.)

But in the game of favourites
Old Raleigh took the biscuit;
Quoth he "I can save her, it's
A cert for me—I'll risk it!"
When rain came down to soak the way
Where Good Queen Bess was stalking,
He threw an ancient cloak away
And Bessie "kept on walking."

While Bess lived, Raleigh had great
power;
But James the First he dreaded,
And rightly, too, for in the Tower
Poor Raleigh was beheaded.
Old Browney most admires Sir Walter's
Gallantry; but Skinner
Thinks him great because he brought
us
'Baccy from "Virginia."
(He would!)

Hidden by foliage, the Kikuyu halted many minutes, while he watched the camp on the high bank above the crater-pool.

It did not take him long to ascertain that the camp was deserted. On the edge of the plateau, where it dropped sheer to the crater-pool, stood a single figure, of a squat Arab. He was flinging an armful of rubbish into the water below.

A grim smile glided over the Kikuyu's face.

The slave-hunters were gone—probably long gone; most likely at dawn. They had left one man behind to wipe out all traces of their stay; to rejoin them later, no doubt to carry news after spying on the pursuit. It was clear to the keen mind of the hunter.

He could see where the wattled huts had stood—heaps of clutter still remained that Mustapha had not yet thrown over the edge of the bank.

Had the Kikuyu arrived a few hours later he would have found the camp wiped out of existence and the last remaining ruffian gone.

It was in the thoughts of the Kikuyu, for a moment, to creep back silently the way he had come, leaving Mustapha at his work; to lose not a moment in picking up sign of the retreating slave-hunters.

But he dismissed that thought.

The squat Arab was left behind as a spy, he had no doubt, and with many enemies in front of him, the Kikuyu was not the man to leave an enemy also in the rear.

And this wretch was one of those who had laid hands on Bwana-wangu, to drag him away into slavery.

The Kikuyu's dark eyes gleamed at the Arab.

Men of his tribe had been stolen, more than once, by Krantz and his gang, and had vanished into the trackless interior of the Continent. It was not the Kikuyu's way to spare a treacherous foe.

He left his cover on the path, and crept on to the plateau; but he crept without a sound, and without revealing himself. A rock here, a bush there, or a tree, hid the cautious hunter as he stalked his prey.

He needed all his caution, for the squat Arab was on his guard. Busy as he was, carrying out his master's instructions, Mustapha kept his glinting black eyes well about him, and there was a rifle at his back, and pistols in his girdle. If he caught sight of the Kikuyu, beyond the distance of a spear-throw, it was likely to go hard with Kikolobo.

A faint splash came from far below, as another armful of rubbish went down into the crater-pool. Mustapha turned back from the precipice and crossed to the dismantled huts again, and as he moved, his shifty eyes roved to and fro like a wild animal's, and his ears were on the alert.

Few would have succeeded in taking the watchful rascal by surprise; but Kikolobo of the Kikuyu was one of the few.

Creeping, crawling, from tree to rock, from rock to bush, the Kikuyu reached the fragments of the wattled huts, and crouched behind a cluttered heap. Mustapha came towards him, unseeing, unknowing.

Not till he was within six paces of the Kikuyu did Kikolobo leap into view, suddenly, spear in hand.

The Arab made a backward spring, with a sharp, startled cry.

He had no time to unsling his rifle.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,234.

With both hands he clutched pistols from his girdle.

The spring of Simba on his prey was not so swift as the spring of the Kikuyu.

The flashing spear, with its broad, long blade keen-edged on both sides as a razor, was at the Arab's breast before the pistols had fairly left his girdle.

One terrible thrust, and the point of the spear dripped red from the Arab's back.

"O my enemy, my eyes see you!" said Kikolobo.

But Mustapha did not speak. Pistols in hand, the squat Arab sank down at the feet of the Kikuyu, dead before he touched the earth.

With a calm, grave face, the Kikuyu withdrew the spear from the body of the slave-hunter, and wiped the broad blade on the Arab's burnous.

"Give me good words in the land of the ghosts, O my enemy!" said Kikolobo gravely.

And he turned from the Arab and gave him no further glance.

Only for a few minutes more did Kikolobo linger in the deserted camp. Then he faced the winding path up the crater-side again, and tramped up to the lava-crusted rim.

Down the outer slope he went slowly, watchfully. It was not an enemy for whom he watched; he knew that Krantz must be far away. It was for sign of the retreating slave-hunters that he scanned the earth, the bushes, the trees. Little enough sign had been left, and perhaps even Captain McCann, the man-tracker of Uganda, might have failed to pick up the trail. But the Kikuyu did not fail.

And as he went, slow but sure on the track of the wretches retreating to the Congo, Kikolobo left ample sign behind him, for any who might follow. For the Bwana McCann would sooner or later be on the scene, as he had no doubt, and it was his object to leave the track well-marked for the man-tracker if he came with his askaris.

By jungle and forest and swampy stream he followed, tireless in the burning heat, while the long hot hours wore by.

Somewhere ahead of him, far ahead of him in the vast wilderness, was Ludwig Krantz, the "evil Mzungu," and with the evil man was the Bwana he sought. The Kikuyu's feet were not likely to lag on the trail.

And when the sun dipped beyond the far Congo forests, the Kikuyu was still on the trail, wearied but unslacking, fierce, cautious, implacable, as the hunting leopard.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Camp in the Forest.

BILLY BUNTER groaned. Groaning seemed to relieve him a little.

The other fellows saw no special use in groaning, and they were silent.

Aching, almost dizzy with fatigue, they sat by the mango-trees, in the camp of the slave-hunters.

Darkness had fallen on the wild Congo country.

Long, long weary miles lay between them and Lake Albert; how many miles they did not know, but many. All day long the weary tramp had gone on, till at sunset they fell rather than sat down to rest.

Food and drink, little enough of each, were given to the prisoners; but they cared little. Even Billy Bunter gave little thought to provender now. The

grinding ache in his fat limbs filled his thoughts.

He leaned on a mango trunk and groaned.

The Famous Five and the Bounder lay on the ground, all their desires, at that moment, summed up in the one word "rest." They were strong and hardy, but the day's march had worn them down.

Even the slave-hunters, accustomed to long treks in the forest, were fatigued; even Krantz's iron frame showed traces of it. The ruffians sat and lay about, after they had eaten and drunk, in listless attitudes.

But Ludwig Krantz, if the juniors had observed him, was easier in his mind now. The long distance he had placed between himself and the lake spelled safety, at least in his belief.

The slave-hunters had camped by a forest stream, under the shadow of great trees. Krantz sat leaning against a tree, smoking one cheroot after another. No watch-fires were lighted, and the cooking-fire had been stamped out when done with. Safe as he now deemed himself, Krantz was not taking unnecessary chances. He did not believe that even McCann, the man-tracker, could have picked up his trail from the lake, even if he had known where to look for it. Of Kikolobo's movements he knew nothing, and he had no reason to suspect that the Kikuyu had found his trail and followed it. But caution was second nature to the wretch whose life was one long peril. Not a gleam of light shone from the camp between the mangoes and the stream.

The Arabs, rolled in their long cloaks, slept on the earth. They lay in a circle round the prisoners, and as an additional precaution against an attempt at escape, the juniors' hands had been tied behind them.

Escape, however, was hardly in the schoolboys' thoughts now. They were so weary that they could not have fled, had the way been open.

Bunter groaned.

At Greyfriars the fat junior was rather distinguished by his powers as a Rip Van Winkle. Remove follows declared that Bunter would have slept the clock round had he been allowed. But Bunter could not sleep now. He ached too much.

Instead of sleeping, he groaned.

"For goodness' sake shut up, Bunter!" said the Bounder at last. "What's the good of kickin' up a row?"

Groan!

"Keep a stiff upper lip, old fat man!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Groan!

"The stiff-fulness of the absurd upper lip is the proper caper, my fat idiotic Bunter," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The groanfulness is neither grateful nor comforting to our ridiculous ears."

Groan!

Krantz glanced over towards the juniors.

"Silence!" he rapped out.

The Bounder's eyes burned at him. It was bitter to take orders from the ruffian. Bunter quavered into silence. Even groaning was denied him as a solace, and he closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

Darkness thickened on the forest.

Rustling in the bush, distant howling and whining, told that the beasts of the jungle were abroad in the night.

A hyena stalked from the bush and glared at the camp with eyes like green fire in the gloom. One of the Arabs lifted a rifle, but a snarl from Krantz



Unsavory as the food was, Harry Wharton & Co. had to eat it. Billy Bunter took possession of the spoon, and ladled the unappetising mess into his capacious mouth, while fingers had to serve the other fellows.

made him lower it again, unused. A shot would have echoed far in the silent forest, and there was no telling what it might have heard.

Bunter slept at last, and his snores rumbled in the silence. The Arabs slept, only Krantz remaining wakeful, sitting on a log, eyes and ears on the alert. The weary juniors dropped off to sleep, but their slumber was fitful. Aching fatigue and the discomfort of their bonds made peaceful sleep impossible.

The last thing that Harry Wharton's eyes noted ere they closed was the glowing red tip of Krantz's cheroot. But when uneasy slumber deserted him, and his eyes opened again, all was darkness.

Krantz had lain down to sleep with the rest.

Darkness and silence hung over the camp.

Dimly, in the gloom, Wharton made out the figures of his comrades and the recumbent forms of the slavers stretched around, some of them near enough to be touched.

He shifted a little to ease his bound hands as well as he could, and lay wakeful.

All the slave-hunters were asleep, though certainly the wary ruffians would have awakened quickly enough had the juniors attempted to steal past them and get out of the camp.

They were running no risk with the prisoners. But Wharton wondered that they kept no watch. Lions and leopards abounded in the forest, and the country was inhabited by savage tribes, unsubdued, or only half subdued, by the Belgian Congo Government. An attack on the camp by some horde of Congo savages was by no means unlikely. Doubtless the ruffians counted on

waking at the sound of any approach of enemies. There was little discipline in such a gang, and they were accustomed to taking chances.

And, in fact, as Wharton's sleepless eyes watched, there was rustling in the bush close at hand, and one of the slumbering ruffians opened his eyes and lifted his head, muttering in Arabic.

The animal, whatever it was, rustled away again, and the disturbed man laid his head on his arm and slept once more.

Wharton, slumped on the earth, his head and shoulders resting against a mango trunk, remained awake.

He was thinking—wondering what chance the prisoners had of being saved from the terrible fate with which they were threatened.

Mr. Vernon-Smith would move heaven and earth to save his son. Captain McCann would be keen on the track of the man he had long hunted. But this swift flight into the interior was likely to baffle all their efforts, as Wharton could not help realising.

He thought of Kikolobo. Where was the faithful Kikuyu? Unresting in his search for Bwana-wangu. Wharton was certain of that. It was borne in on the junior's mind that the only real hope of the prisoners was in Kicky, and that hope was at best nebulous.

Another rustling in the bush! This time it did not die away. Wharton's eyes turned in the direction of the sound.

A thrill ran through him as he caught the glare of fiery eyeballs. Dimly, terribly, the great head of an African lion, with bristling mane, was thrust out of the bush, glaring at the sleeping camp.

Wharton's heart thumped.

The lion was within a few yards, and

his hands were bound. It seemed to him that he was looking into the eyes of the fierce beast; that their glances met. He lay, frozen.

There was a sudden stirring among the slave-hunters. Some sixth sense, born of their wild life of constant conflict and danger, warned them and awakened them.

Wharton saw the dark figures starting up between him and the glaring lion. Krantz was on his feet, snarling.

Unwilling as the slave-trader was to use firearms in a dangerous country where he desired his march to remain secret, there was no choice for him now.

The lion, crouching in the rustling bush, was about to spring, and the ruffians had to fire, and to fire quickly. A few moments more and one at least of the savage crew would have been pinned down under the leaping beast.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!
The sudden roar of firing awoke a thousand echoes, booming away for miles through the silent forest.

It was followed by a fearful roar from the lion, sounding like thunder.

Bang, bang, bang!
Six or seven bullets tore through the great carcass, and the lion roared and howled and backed into the bushes.

Roaring madly, he could be heard clawing bushes and trees in his fury. But the rain of hot lead had driven him from the camp. A dozen more bullets tore after him as he went, and the rustling and roaring and clawing died away at last.

Krantz muttered curses in mingled German and Arabic. When the sound of the retreating lion had died away, the Arabs lay down to sleep again in their cloaks. But Wharton noted that

for a long time the slave-trader remained awake, sitting on the log, watching and listening. He was fearful that the din of the shooting might have drawn unwelcome attention to his camp, whether from possible pursuers or from natives of the country.

But after an hour of silence the slave-trader stretched himself in sleep once more.

Wharton's eyes closed at last.

Slumber reigned in the dark, hidden camp between the mangoes and the forest stream.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Death in the Darkness!

KIKOLOBO of the Kikuyu lifted his dark head and bent his keen ear to listen.

The tall figure in monkey-skins was stretched in a bed of ferns, at rest, in the heart of the Congo forest.

Long after darkness had fallen had Kikolobo sought for further sign of the retreating slave-hunters. But the blackness in the deep forest had beaten him. Until Siku, the day, came to his aid he could trail no farther, and he laid himself down to rest—rest that even the iron-framed Kikuyu sorely needed, though he would not have taken it had his keen eyes been able to read the trail.

Like a true hunter, accustomed to snatching sleep when he could, the Kikuyu's eyes closed in slumber as soon as he pillowed his dark head on his arm.

But he slept like a leopard, wary even when his eyes were closed.

Those dark, green, gleaming eyes opened, and his keen ear listened with strained intentness as sounds came from afar in the forest.

Far distant were the sounds. A less keen and experienced ear than the Kikuyu's might have mistaken them or passed them unregarded.

But the Kikuyu knew.

Somewhere afar in the forest men were firing. Many rifles were joining in volleying fire.

Kikolobo rose to his feet.

He stood, with tense ears listening, till the last sound had died away. Then he strode swiftly from the spot.

Men armed with white men's weapons were in the forest—either white men or Arabs. It might be only some "safari"—some party of big-game shooters. But it was likely, or more than likely, that it was the party he sought. The Kikuyu meant to know.

After that burst of distant firing there was silence. A white man might have been amazed by the swiftness and certainty with which the Kikuyu hunter threaded the forest paths, never once losing his direction, though he had no guide but the sound that had long since died away.

Swift, silent, patient, the tall Kikuyu glided on, like a shadow in deep shadows. Miles of patient trailing would have lain before him, when Siku, the day, came, but for that outburst of firing in the night. But if it was from the camp of the slave-hunters that the firing came the Kikuyu's eyes would fall on them before the dawn. Fortune was favouring him. To the Kikuyu it seemed that the eye of N'gai, far off on the summit of the Great Mountain, was looking on him with favour.

He halted suddenly.

There was a low, deadly growl, and fierce eyes burned at him in the darkness. A wounded lion lay crouched in a pool of blood, unable to spring, able only to glare and growl with impotent fury.

One swift thrust of the Kikuyu's spear, and Simba was stretched in death.

Kikolobo stood for a moment gazing down thoughtfully on the huge body. It was clear to him that this was the cause of the firing he had heard; the wounded beast had crawled away to die in the bush. He was not far now from the spot where the firing had taken place.

The Kikuyu glided on.

Hardly the rustle of a twig told of his movements; he was doubly cautious now. He was close to the enemy, if it was the enemy—and he had little doubt that it was!

Silent as a spectre, the Kikuyu reached the mango-trees close by the camp of the slave-hunters.

His keen ears picked up sounds. There was deep breathing from many

sleepers, and another sound reached him which he had heard before when on "safari" with Harry Wharton & Co. in the jungles of Kenya. It was the rumbling snore of Billy Bunter.

A faint smile glided over the Kikuyu's dark face.

He knew now that he was near the Small Fat One. It was the camp of Ludwig Krantz that he had approached in the darkness.

The night was growing old.

The darkness was still unbroken, but the Kikuyu knew that dawn was not far away.

Silent in the mangoes, crouching like Simba, but more silent than Simba, the Kikuyu looked on the camp.

Quietly, patiently, he watched, his eyes searching the gloom, till he made out the camp, and the stretched figures of the Arabs, and the group of juniors in their midst.

It was impossible to recognise anyone in the darkness, but he could distinguish the prisoners from the others, and he counted them, and knew that Bwana-wangu was there. There were seven whose attitudes showed that their hands were fastened behind them, and whose stature was not that of grown men. He knew that they were the seven schoolboys—Harry Wharton & Co., Billy Bunter, and Vernon-Smith—whom he called Bwana-wangu or my lord.

He had found those whom he sought.

Still he did not stir.

There were fifteen of the slave-hunters. Great warrior as he was, fully confident in his own powers, the Kikuyu had no idea of engaging so many foes in battle, his fighting-spears against so many rifles. He was not there to share the fate of the wounded lion that had crawled away into the bush to die.

The ruffians were sleeping, but they slept like leopards, or like the Kikuyu himself, to awaken at a sound. One he could slay, if he chose; but the next moment rifles would be roaring in a volley.

The Kikuyu might have been a figure of bronze as he crouched in the darkness of the mangoes, watching. He was picking out his man.

One he could slay, and that one, if he could find him, was to be Ludwig Krantz. With their leader slain the gang would be easier for the trailing Kikuyu to deal with.

But keen as his eyes were, the Kikuyu could not pick out Krantz among the many sleepers wrapped in cloaks.

For long, long minutes he watched. He hoped for some movement, some sign, some mutter from a sleeper, to guide the thrusting spear. But there was nothing. But in the forest there was that almost imperceptible stirring, like the breath of coming life, that told that the dawn was at hand. But a little time more and Jua, the sun, would be rising over the mountains of Kenya, and Siku, the day, would have come. The Kikuyu had no more time to waste.

When he moved it was with the swiftness of the springing leopard. The lightning in its flashing was not more rapid than the thrust of the long Kikuyu spear.

From the sleeping figure nearest to the Kikuyu came a choking, gurgling groan, and no other sound.

But that was enough for the rest. Instantly the slave-hunters were scrambling up, rifle in hand.

A rifle cracked even as the dripping broad blade was drawn back. A hoarse, German voice shouted, and the Kikuyu knew that it was not Krantz whom his spear had slain.

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But he had no time for more.

Swift as the fleeing antelope, with the jaws of Simba behind him, the Kikuyu darted away into the forest.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

The slave-hunters were firing wildly, bullets crashing into trees and thickets all round the camp.

Had the Kikuyu delayed a few seconds he would have fallen, riddled with bullets.

But he was gone.

If any of the slave-hunters had seen him he had sighted, for a fraction of a second, only a fleeting shadow.

In the deep forest the Kikuyu wiped his spear on a broad plantain leaf, with a grim smile on his dark face.

He had found his enemy. He was not likely to lose track of him again. From that hour Ludwig Krantz's march into the Congo wilderness was to be a march of terror and death, stalked by the implacable Kikuyu.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hope!

"A CH himmel!" Ludwig Krantz lowered his rifle, gritting his teeth with rage. Some of the Arabs still blazed away into the forest.

But Krantz knew that the man who had slain his follower was gone. He snarled an order to his men, and they ceased firing.

Stretched on the earth, with a stream of crimson staining his dingy burnous, was the man who had received the thrust of the Kikuyu's spear. In life he was never to stir again.

In the savage gang there was little regard for a comrade's life—little more than among a pack of jackals. It was rage and alarm that stirred the slave-hunters, fear for their own dusky skins.

From the blackness of the forest a stealthy foe had crept, and the life of one of the gang had gone out like a snuffed candle. The enemy had vanished as shadow-like as he had appeared. The fire had driven him off, but the slave-hunters were aware that he had not been hit. His retreat had been too prompt and swift for that.

Somewhere in the dense depths of the forest he was lurking—perhaps watching, perhaps waiting for another chance. The slavers were not likely to close their eyes again.

The juniors were wide awake; even Billy Bunter had been roused by the firing. They were unaware, at first, what had caused the alarm, but the looks of the slavers, and the still form lying on the earth, enlightened them.

On that lifeless figure the Famous Five gazed in horror, and turned their faces away; and Bunter gave it only one horrified blink. But there was a grim satisfaction in the Bounder's face. The man was the one who had struck him with a rhinoceros-hide whip, and Herbert Vernon-Smith had no pity to waste on the wretch.

The juniors understood little enough of the talk of the slave-hunters. But they could make out that the ruffians were puzzled as well as alarmed. They did not know with what foe they had to deal.

Likely enough, some savage who had chanced on the camp might have slain one of the sleepers, from the sheer love of killing. Krantz was driven to believe that that was what had happened. But in that case it was not unlikely that the man might return with a horde of comrades to finish the work, and the

slave-trader did not want a battle with swarming natives if he could avoid it. He growled to his men to be ready to march at the first gleam of dawn.

There were other thoughts in the mind of the Bounder. His eyes were gleaming, he breathed quickly, and a grin lurked on his hard face. The Bounder was thinking of Kikolobo.

The wish, perhaps, was father to the thought, but it was strong in the Bounder's mind that it was the thrust of a Kikuyu spear that had slain the slave-hunter. His heart beat, and his eyes danced, at the bare thought that Kicky was on the trail, and close at hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. could see that Smithy was labouring under some suppressed excitement, though they did not guess his thoughts. To them, as to

slackened down. Many miles had been covered, and the forest had been left far behind, the way lying through a vast jungle of elephant-grass.

In the narrow jungle-path the heat was stifling, and myriads of stinging insects buzzed, and there was audible grumbling from the dusky ruffians as they tramped sullenly on.

They slackened more and more, much to the relief of the weary schoolboys, and at last Krantz gave the signal to halt at a spot where a bunch of trees cast a welcome shade over the hot jungle.

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked back along the winding track by which they had come through the jungle. He could see nothing but the tall, nodding elephant-grass. But there was hope in his heart.

Water and hard dhurra bread was given to the juniors, and they ate with what appetite they could.

Billy Bunter groaned deeply. At the Jarram bungalow, in Uganda—which seemed so far away now—the fat Owl had fed on the fat of the land. He had hoped that the African excursion would be indefinitely prolonged, long after the end of the vacation. Lazy loafing and plenty of grub seemed to Bunter a big improvement on Greyfriars and Latin with Mr. Quelch in the Form-room.

Now the fat junior would have given whole worlds to be back at Greyfriars, with Mr. Quelch in his grimmest mood. "Six" from Quelch's cane would have been a mere jest, in comparison with one blow from the whip of rhinoceros hide.

But Greyfriars was far away. Bunter had no hope of seeing Greyfriars again, and his fat heart was heavy in his podgy breast.

"I say, you fellows," groaned Bunter, "this grub is awful! I could stand the rest if the grub was good! But the grub— Oh dear!"

"Grin and bear it, old fat bean!" said Bob.

Groan. "The bearfulness cannot be helped," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "though the grinfiness is difficult in the esteemed circumstances."

Groan! "It's no worse for you than for us, you fat ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Groan! "Anyhow, shut up that row!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Beast!" Bunter munched. Hard as it was, unsavoury as it was, the maize-bread disappeared. Bunter was still hungry.

"There isn't enough for a fellow, even of this awful muck!" he groaned.

"Have some of mine!" said Nugent. Bunter brightened.

"Well, if you don't want it, old chap—"

He did not wait to learn whether Frank wanted it—he bolted it.

The slave-hunters stretched themselves on their cloaks, in the shade, to sleep in the heat of the day. But Krantz did not sleep. With a rifle under his arm he moved about restlessly, watching and listening. Apparently he did not feel sure yet that he was out of danger.

The Bounder looked at him with a grin. He had an opportunity now of speaking to his comrades unheard. They were settling down to sleep like their captors, when the Bounder spoke in low tones.

"Don't go to sleep yet, you men," said Vernon-Smith, with a sarcastic inflection in his voice.

Snore! Billy Bunter was already asleep. But THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,234.

ANOTHER READER WINS A USEFUL POCKET-KNIFE

for sending in the following winning rib-tickler:



Timid Pedestrian (to policeman): "Do people often get killed at these cross-roads?"
Arm of the Law: "No, sir; only once!"

A pocket-knife has been dispatched to Harold Gray, 82, Junction Street, off Every Street, Ancoats, Manchester.

Krantz, it seemed that the deed in the darkness had been done by some wandering savage of the forests.

But the Bounder did not speak, while the slave-hunters could overhear. If his suspicion was well founded he did not desire Krantz to be put on his guard.

Dawn came gleaming over the forest, and camp was broken at once. A hasty meal was taken at the first glimmer of light, and the shadows were still deep when the gang resumed their march.

The prisoners, as before, were strung on a long rope, their hands released to carry their burdens. Before and behind them marched the slave-hunters.

The dead ruffian was left where he lay. Little thought was given to him by any of the wild crew whose comrade he had been.

The march went on as swiftly as the cracking of the whip could drive the prisoners.

Krantz was making all the speed he could, to get out of the dangerous vicinity.

Rifles in hand, the slave-hunters kept watchful eyes about them, obviously in uneasy fear of seeing some swarm of savage blacks appear.

But there was no alarm. Towards noon the speed of the march

the other fellows looked inquiringly at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"What is it, Smithy?" asked Bob. "I could see that you had something in your noddie all the morning."

Smithy's eyes gleamed.

"I believe we've got a chance!" he said. "I believe there's hope! I believe it was Kicky who speared that scoundrel last night."

The juniors started.

"Kicky!" breathed Wharton.

"I believe so. I hope so, at any rate. If any man in East Africa could find our track, it's Kicky. And if he's following, he could not tackle the whole gang, with their firearms. He would handle them in his own way—the black bush-fighting way. What do you think?"

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

His eyes danced at the mere thought that the faithful Kikuyu might be following on the track of the slave-hunters.

"It's possible!" said Nugent slowly. "Krantz doesn't seem to have thought of it. I'm sure he thinks it was some savage of the forests. But if it was Kikolobo—"

"If it was we shall hear of him again," said the Bounder. "One man against a crowd, he dare not show himself. They would shoot him down like a jackal. But at night, in the dark—"

He grinned. "The juniors did not grin. The stealthy, ruthless warfare of the bush was repugnant to their minds. It was terrible to think of the fierce Kikuyu, creeping like a leopard, silent as a snake, spear in hand, in the dark shades of forest and jungle—of sleeping foes slain in silence.

Yet, though that mental picture made him shudder, they could scarcely help hoping that the Bounder was right; that the faithful Kikuyu was following to their rescue; that fortune would favour him. For Kikolobo was all that stood between them and slavery in the heart of Africa.

"We shall know to-night!" said the Bounder.

"How do you mean?" asked Nugent.

"If it was some wandering savage, we've left him far behind. If it was Kicky, he's keeping on the trail, and those scoundrels will find it out, when the darkness gives him a chance."

Wharton repressed a shudder.

"Or if any of the scoundrels strays in the jungle—" muttered the Bounder, gritting his teeth.

"They're not likely to do that!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Look—What—"

There was a swaying and rustling in the tall elephant-grass near the camp under the trees.

Krantz, at a distance, stared round, quick to take the alarm. He called, and several of the slave-hunters started up. Whiz!

Nothing was seen but the swaying tall grass; not even the sinewy arm that hurled the throwing-spear.

Like a flash it came from the jungle, passing through the body of one of the slave-hunters, the keen point projecting from his back.

The man shrieked, and fell like a log.

Krantz came up at a run. Like madmen, the slave-hunters blazed away with their rifles into the jungle. The high grass swayed for a few moments and was still. Ludwig Krantz made a rush towards the spot, but stopped. In the thick elephant-grass he dared not seek the unseen one whose deadly hand had hurled the spear.

The juniors gazed on, breathless. They saw Krantz draw the spear from

the body of the slain Arab. They heard him curse savagely as he examined it.

"Ach himmel! A Kikuyu spear!" they heard him mutter.

The Bounder's eyes met those of the Famous Five.

They knew now!

It was a Kikuyu spear, and they were far from the land of the Kikuyu. They knew—and Krantz knew! The light blue eyes in the coppery face glared with mingled rage and terror. The wretch who lay on the earth had been slain by the hand of a Kikuyu; and Ludwig Krantz knew that Kikolobo, of the Kikuyu, was tracking him to his death!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Unseen Hand!

BLOWS, curses in guttural Arabic drove the schoolboy slaves onward by the jungle path.

It was still hot, the tropic sun blazing down from an undimmed sky.

But the slave-hunters heeded neither glare nor heat.

Backward glances were thrown over their shoulders as they tramped on, glances of watchful fear.

The juniors, bending under the loads, staggered onward, savagely driven by their captors.

The whole party knew now that Kikolobo, the greatest hunter of the Kikuyu people, the most famous native fighting-man in East Africa, was on the track, and the ruffians hardly tried to conceal their fear.

Had the Kikuyu appeared in the open the desperate rascals would not have feared him—or not so much. But the Kikuyu was not likely to be seen in the open.

Unseen, silent, deadly as the black mamba, he stalked them in the jungle; and even if they had had the heart to hunt for him, it was futile to hunt for one who left no trace to be followed.

The slave-hunters pushed on hard.

Captain McCann and his askaris—a force of Belgian soldiers under white officers—would not have unnerved them like the Kikuyu. Hostile attacks they were prepared for, and would have faced with resolution, with desperation if not with courage. But sudden, silent death from the hand of a hidden slayer was a different matter.

Death lurked in every shadow cast by the tall, nodding elephant grass. Death stalked them as they hurried on.

Somewhere in the dim heart of Africa, in the lands watered by the tributaries of the Upper Congo, was Ludwig Krantz's destination. There he had friends among the native chiefs; there he was to sell his white prisoners for ivory.

How distant the place was the juniors did not know, but they gathered that several days' travel at least lay before them.

Many times they had heard Krantz and the others speak the name of Tofoloko, but whether that was the name of a chief, a tribe, or a country, they did not know.

But whatever "Tofoloko" was, the slave-hunters were heading for Tofoloko. And Tofoloko was yet far away.

In the burning afternoon as they came to the ford of a wide, shallow stream, the juniors sighted a native village, the first they had seen since the march commenced.

It lay between the stream and a dark forest, surrounded by a "boma," or

circling wall of thorn bush, outside which were the cultivated fields of Indian corn, with black women labouring in them.

At the principal gateway of the boma a crowd of black men gathered, armed with spears and bows and arrows, commanded by a chief in leopard skins.

They did not offer to attack Krantz's gang, but were evidently prepared to defend their village against attack by the slave-hunters.

The juniors saw Krantz pause and fix his glinting, light-blue eyes on the crowd of excited blacks at the boma.

He seemed to hesitate for a time.

The primitive weapons of the natives would not have served them well against the rifles of the slave-hunters, and a raid on the village would probably have been successful. From Krantz's looks; the juniors could see that he was thinking of it. Doubtless he had intended to take black slaves as well as white, to sell in the land of Tofoloko.

It was the savage trader's way to steal or kidnap slaves where he could, and march with sometimes as many as a hundred limping wretches, strung one after another like horses on a string.

But if Krantz was irresolute, the outbreak of angry exclamations from his followers decided him, and he scowled and gave the signal to march across the ford.

With the Kikuyu following, watching and waiting for his chance, the slave-hunters were in no humour to enter into conflict with the natives. Their angry looks and words told plainly enough that they would not obey if Krantz ordered them to fall on.

They swung across the ford, and yells of mockery, and arrows that fell far short in their flight, followed them from the natives at the boma.

Fear of the pursuing Kikuyu had saved one native village at least from the horrors of massacre and slavery.

The juniors were glad of that; though had there been a conflict, it was quite likely that Kikolobo would have found some opportunity of coming to their rescue while it was going on.

Not a sign was to be seen of the Kikuyu, yet the juniors and all the slave-hunters were assured that he was treading in the rear, unseen.

As they splashed through the ford the whole party paused to drink deep of the water, and the slave-hunters refilled gourds and water-bottles. The splashing of the water was refreshing in the burning heat; drenched clothes came as a relief to dry and aching bodies.

The ford and the stream were left behind.

The march swung on across an arid plain, dotted here and there by thorn-bush. The juniors guessed that Krantz had altered the direction of the march, taking a more roundabout way, to keep in more open country, where the Kikuyu could have no chance to draw near unseen.

But on the arid plain, the heat of the sun was more intense and overpowering, its glare more blinding to the eyes. Blows and threats could not drive the prisoners on faster than a lagging walking pace. The hapless Bunter staggered as he walked, half-senseless with fatigue. Only the lashes of the whip kept him going at all, and he groaned at every step.

Suddenly, with a heavy lurch, Bunter staggered forward and fell to the earth.



"Fat fool!" cried Krantz, as Bunter sagged under his load. "I shall not delay for you. You go on—or die on this spot! Take your choice! If you cannot march, you will be left for the jackals!"

A savage yell in Arabic, the crack of the rhinoceros-hide whip followed. Bunter groaned, but he did not rise. He could not.

There was a halt. Krantz came savagely towards the sprawling, fat junior and kicked him in the ribs.

"Fool! Dummkopf! Get up!" he snarled.

"I—I—I can't!" groaned Bunter.

"Bunter, old man, buck up." Harry Wharton knelt beside the fat junior. "Bunter, old chap—"

The wretched fat junior groaned.

"I can't move! I can't! Oh crikey!"

Krantz was handling his rifle. The juniors could see in his hard, light-blue eyes the savage thought that was in his mind. If Bunter could not march he would have to be left behind, and if he were left behind it would not be for the following Kikuyu to save. He would be left with a bullet in his brain.

Wharton on one side, Bob Cherry on the other, fairly dragged the Owl of the Remove to his feet.

Bunter sagged between them under his load.

"Fat fool!" said Krantz. "I shall not delay for you! You go on—or die on this spot! Take your choice! If you cannot march you will be left for the jackals!"

The juniors exchanged glances. Sinking under their loads as they were, they took the burden from Bunter and shared it. Relieved of his load, the fat junior made another effort. The look in Krantz's cruel eyes, over the half-lifted rifle, spurred him on.

The march was resumed, the fat junior staggering on somehow. Fear of the slave-trader drove him on when even the rhinoceros-hide whip would have failed.

Harry Wharton cast a despairing look over his shoulder.

At that moment the ruthless horrors of bush warfare were nothing to him; gladly he would have seen every rascal in the merciless gang fall under the broad blade of the Kikuyu's spear.

But as far as the eye could reach, the plain behind was untenanted, save by skulking jackals among the patches of thorny bush.

On went the weary tramp.

The sun was sinking now, a level, red glare falling across the dusty, arid plain. Night was coming—a boon and blessing, when it came, to the slave-trader's prisoners. Merely to sink to the earth, out of the remorseless sun blaze, was all they wanted now.

Sinking themselves, the chums of the Remove continually gave the hapless Bunter a helping hand. It was death for him to fall again, and, knowing it, he stumbled on and on.

The sun dipped beyond a range of low hills to the west. Far in the distance the last red rays glimmered on shining waters—one of the innumerable tributary streams of the Upper Congo. Krantz had been aiming for the river, but it was still far away when the red sun dipped.

He snarled an order to his men, and there was a halt at last. The juniors flung themselves down, and their eyes closed at once in the sleep of exhaustion. The slave-hunters, sprawling on the earth, slept like logs. But there was no sleep for Krantz.

He watched the thickening shadows for an enemy. Only because his men, as well as the prisoners, were sinking with fatigue, had he reluctantly given the word to halt.

In every shifting shadow in the gloom he saw a tall figure in monkey-skins;

in every whisper of the hot wind he heard the hiss of a Kikuyu spear.

For a bare hour the halt lasted.

Then, with guttural German oaths and kicks in the dusky ribs, the slave-trader roused his men, and the prisoners were kicked into wakefulness.

It seemed to the juniors that they had hardly closed their eyes, when they were forced to awake and resume the march.

Through the clinging gloom they tramped on again, hope well-nigh dead in their breasts. There was to be no camping for the night to give the watchful Kikuyu another chance. But the weary march could not go on without rest; even the iron-limbed half-German ruffian must have sunk under it at length. They wondered what Krantz's intentions were. If the march went on all night not a man in the party could have kept his feet till dawn—even Krantz himself.

"I say, you fellows! I—I can't go on!" moaned Bunter.

"Buck up, old chap!"

"I can't!" groaned the hapless Owl.

Crack! rang the whip, and the fat junior gave a faint howl. He staggered on again.

The whip was rising in the hand of an Arab for another blow, when the man gave a sudden, queer gasp and fell on his face.

Krantz shouted savagely at him.

But the fallen man did not stir, and there was a halt. Krantz strode to him and kicked him in the ribs, cursing him in Arabic.

Still the man lay like a log.

There was a sudden, startled yell from Krantz as he stooped over the still figure in the gloom. From the dingy

burnous he drew a throwing-spear which dripped red as he drew it away.

"Ach!"

He knew now why the man had fallen, why he did not rise. With terror in his eyes, the slave-trader glared round into the darkness. From the darkness death had come again, silently, suddenly, swiftly.

"On! On!" panted Krantz.

The Kikuyu was at hand. Hidden by the gloom, he was close on the slave-hunters. Shots blazed out into the night—useless, random shots. Then the march swung on again towards the river that was hidden in the night, a dead man remaining behind for the scavenging jackals.

Faster than before, driven by terror, the slave-hunting gang drove on their prisoners. But the schoolboys tramped on with lighter hearts. Kikolobo of the Kikuyu was not far away, and once more they hoped.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Fight I

STARS glimmered on a wide, rolling flood of water flowing down from the dark hills, winding through forest and jungle, murmuring on its way to join the distant Congo. By a clump of baobab-trees on the bank the string of prisoners had been brought to a halt. A rope, run round them and knotted, fastened them in a bunch to a tree. They sank down from weariness. But only Bunter slept. The other fellows kept their eyes open and watchful, anxious to know what was to follow.

It was a halt, but not for camping and resting. They could see that Krantz had reached the river for which he had been aiming through that long, weary march. So far as the juniors could see in the dim glimmer of the stars, it rolled deep and wide. There was no sign of a ford. But even if Krantz passed the river, he could scarcely hope that that would shake off the pursuit of the Kikuyu. The juniors were puzzled.

They knew that there was some scheme working in the cunning brain of the slave-trader, but they could not guess what it was. Krantz had had some definite object in pushing on desperately to the river.

The prisoners had been roped to the tree, to secure them while the slave-hunters were occupied. How? As yet they could not guess.

Two of the ruffians remained guarding the prisoners, rifle in hand, watching like cats. The rest had followed Krantz.

Every minute of rest was welcome to the weary schoolboys, and every minute of delay meant a chance for the Kikuyu. They peered through the gloom, waiting and watching.

Dimly, at a short distance, a mass of shapes could be made out, and they discerned at last that it was a native village by the river, surrounded, as was usual in the Congo country, by a thorny boma.

Surely Krantz was not slave-raiding, when he and every man in his gang was in terror of the death that lurked behind! The juniors did not think so, but they realised that fighting was to come.

For some reason, as yet unknown to the prisoners, Krantz was designing to attack the natives who dwelt on the bank of the river. They strained their eyes in the gloom.

A calling voice was heard in the night, an outbreak of shouts and yells, and then the rapid, staccato cracking of

rifles. Yells and screams made a hideous din.

"What's this game?" muttered the Bounder. "Krantz has the fear of the Kikuyu in the very marrow of his bones, and yet—"

Crack, crack, crack!

The flashes of the rifles gleamed in the night. The firing was incessant.

The juniors watched and listened anxiously.

They could see little in the darkness, but the continued firing showed that the slave-hunters were certainly not getting the worst of it. It was more likely that they were driving the negroes before them like sheep.

Figures flitted in the gloom. A dragging sound came to listening ears from close down to the river.

"What the thump—" murmured Bob.

Harry Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"They're dragging canoes! That's it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Bounder.

The juniors understood now.

It was to steal canoes, not to steal slaves, that Ludwig Krantz had attacked the village on the river bank.

No doubt the canoes belonging to the village were kept under some guard. Krantz had been unable to seize them without giving the alarm.

The shooting of a dozen or two dozen natives did not trouble the slave-trader so long as he accomplished his object.

Canoes were being dragged down to the water by a number of the ruffians, while the others kept up a hot rifle-fire to drive back the negroes.

A whistle rang through the air—a signal from Krantz to the two Arabs guarding the prisoners, for the juniors were immediately cast loose from the tree and driven down the bank.

Krantz was standing up, and he shouted hoarsely to the men driving the prisoners.

"Unbelieving dogs, get in the canoe!" snarled one of the Arabs.

"Ow! Gimme a hand, you fellows! Ow!" spluttered Bunter, as the whip lashed across his back.

He stumbled into the canoe and sprawled. The other fellows stumbled in after him.

From the native village came wild yelling. Dimly in the darkness savage faces and rolling eyes glimmered, and there was a whistle of arrows in the air.

Krantz shouted orders to his men.

On the bank the slave-hunters poured a volley at the yelling blacks, driving them back with a pandemonium of uproar, and then the ruffians scrambled into the canoes.

They pushed off hurriedly with the long paddles.

The slave-hunters had, in fact, no time to lose. Now that they were aboard the canoes, a swarm of infuriated blacks came pouring down to the bank, and spears and arrows were thick in the air.

While some of the ruffians handled the paddles, others fired back at the swarm on the bank. The canoes glided out into the river, where the strong current caught them and swung them on.

Yelling blacks followed along the bank, and arrows were flying fast. Krantz yelled to his men, and the paddles flashed fast. Aided by the current, the canoes swept on rapidly, the howling mob on the shore soon being left behind.

"Oh, the rotter!" breathed the Bounder. "We're not crossing the river, you fellows. That's not his game. He knows that Kicky would not be stopped by a river, or a dozen rivers.

He's stolen these canoes to get down to the Congo by water."

Krantz's plan was plain enough to the juniors now.

They knew now why he had been so desperately anxious to reach the river.

The terror of the pursuing Kikuyu was strong upon him, and he knew that neither his prisoners nor his followers could have kept on the march much longer.

On board the two stolen canoes the slave-hunters, their baggage, and their prisoners glided swiftly down the river under the pale gleam of the stars.

The yelling of the enraged blacks died away in the distance.

The canoes swept on between steep banks thickly clothed with forest. Krantz stood, rifle in hand, looking back.

He feared pursuit by other canoes, crowded with blacks, but he was no longer fearing pursuit from the Kikuyu.

Kikolobo, at least in the slave-trader's belief, was beaten by that change in his plans. He had left the land, where a trail could be followed, and taken to the water that left no trail. At long last he had, or so he believed, shaken off the deadly foe who had tracked him like a bloodhound from the far shores of Lake Albert Nyanza.

But his perils were not over yet. There was a splashing of paddles behind. A canoe crammed with blacks was in chaso.

Krantz, with a snarl, lifted his rifle and pumped back bullets at the pursuers. Half a dozen of the slave-hunters opened fire, while the others paddled.

An outburst of fearful yells woke the echoes of the dim forests on the banks. The fire was too hot for the savages, and the pursuing canoe never came near the slave-hunters.

The yelling and the splashing of paddles died away. The blacks had fled back to their village.

"Ach!"

Krantz, with a grunt, threw down his rifle.

He stepped towards the group of juniors and looked down at them, his light-blue eyes glinting from his coppery face, his thick lips curved in a sour grin.

"Ach! Did you hope that the Kikuyu would find you?" he grinned. "Did you think to see me fall under his spear?"

The juniors did not speak. Their hearts were heavy.

They feared, as the slave-trader had hoped, that the brave Kikuyu had been thrown off the track, that he had been left hopelessly behind in his pursuit.

Krantz chuckled.

"Forget the Kikuyu. You will never see him again!" he said. "In three days you will see Tofoloko, to whom you will be sold. Do you still dream that a Kikuyu-hunter can save you?"

He laughed and turned away.

The juniors lay silent in the gliding canoe. Billy Bunter snored. The Bounder set his teeth.

"Keep your pecker up, you men!" he said. "That villain fancies that he has beaten Kicky. But Kicky will find us yet, and save us yet. Take it from me that you can bank on Kicky!"

And the chums of the Remove could only hope that Smithy was right as they glided on through the darkness towards the far waters of the Congo.

THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain another thrilling and exciting yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in Africa entitled: "THE CITY OF TERROR!" You simply must read it, chums!)

The 'Puncher Film Stars!



Smashing Complete Yarn of
Wild West Adventure.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wanted—A Boxer!

LOOK at that," murmured Nippy Nolan in surprise. "For th' love o' Mike what is it?"

"Name it and yuh kin have it!" returned "High" Jinks.

"Ssh, boyees, it's a cowpuncher—as they see 'em at Hollywood!" chimed in Doo Low. "What's he got them gloves on for?"

"That's in case his hoss turns round an' bites th' hand that fed him—if that hoss ever has been fed," answered High. "It don't look like it'd hold together cl'ar thru' th' pieter. Hallo, thar's two o' them dude cowboys—are they twinses or what? Got th' same kind o' clo'es on, same gridiron hoss, an'—"

"Whoopce, it's old Lancey Elliott, what useter ride fence wi' me on th' old Closed S down in Texas! Hallo, thar! How goes it, Lance, old-timer?"

The latter speech came from High Jinks as he leapt down off the corral fence and waddled over to where a beautifully-garbed cowpuncher sat a little blood horse which sidged and kicked around, with a wickedly, vicious eye flicking at anything that came near him.

It was always particularly trying to sidle near to the elegant twin horse that was standing demurely with the elaborately got-up cowboy, so like this Lancey Elliott, and yet so unlike him. In much the same way did the two horses resemble each other.

Lancey's horse was the real thing in point of fire and temper, a real bucking brone, that it took a he-man to sit. The other looked very nice in point of looks, but lacked the "ginger" of the fiery little thoroughbred which the ex-Texas puncher bestrode.

As with the horses, so with the men. There was a something rugged and masculine about Lancey, but not so the

other. Although he was arrayed in perfect fitting chaps, an embroidered shirt, a "two-gallon" Stetson of purest white felt and stared around him in a haughty would-be "badman" style, with two huge six-guns dangling low at his hips, you could gamble that those guns would never be drawn in anger, and that if the horse happened to put its foot into a gopher hole the rider would be sailing through thin air in no time.

High Jinks looked his old pal over, and bit his lips.

"Kind o' got 'em all on, hain't yuh, Lancey?" he asked, in a discreetly low voice. "Never see yuh ridin' rango in them glad rags afore. What's it mean?"

"Cut it out, buddy!" was the curt retort. "I know I look like somethin' th' cat's brought in, but it ain't my fault."

Ten dollars a day for being a film actor! It looks like money for jam to High, Low, and Nippy. But it turns out to be a "sticky" job, after all!

Yuh see I've gotta look like him"—a jerk of his thumb at the "dude" cowpuncher on the drawing-room horse—"even to my chaps an' silk hank'chief. Don't rag me, buddy; or I shall sure bust out an' say somethin' right out loud. Th' temptation to ride inter that pieter posteyard over thar an' sock him one on th' gabeza is somethin' ter'ble. I'm nigh breakin' under th' strain!"

"Yeah? So I'd imagine. He kinder makes my blood run hot an' cold all at th' same time!" grinned High. "But wise me up, Lance. What's th' great

idea? Are yuh playin' 'The Course-I-can Brothers,' or somethin', an' yuh are his long lost twin what claims th' estates?"

"D'yuh meanter say yuh don't really know who he is?" asked Lancey, searchingly eyeing his old pal whom he suspected of pulling his leg.

"Cain't say I do," replied High. "Am I displayin' my horrible iggerance as per usual? Ought I to know him? Is it Rockefeller's nephew, or President Hoover's grandson?"

"No, yuh big noodle; it's Reginald Randal, the big noise in Westerns, with his wonder horse, Charmaine, does everything but speak. He gets five thousand dollars per week for sittin' on that blamed rockin' horse an' talkin' slush to it. Meanter say yuh've never heard or seen him say 'Good-bye, old pal, yuh an' I must part?' Honest Injun?"

High shook his head with an air of bewilderment.

"Honest, I never heard o' said Reggie or his hoss that says 'Good-bye, old pal!' an' if anyone else had told me that yarn I'd have pulled 'em off their hoss an' scrowed their noses in th' corral dust! But what's that got to do wi' yuh dressin' up like his twin brother? How come?"

"I'm a double!" said Lancey, leaning over and whispering in High's ear.

High Jinks winked and whispered in return.

"Amble over to th' bunkhouse an' have as many as yuh like, then, but why th' mystery?"

"Tchah, yuh don't unnerstan', yuh thick-headed ol' hayseed, yuh!" said Lancey impatiently. "When his nibs has to do hair-raisin' risky stunts, such as jumpin' from his hoss on to an express train an' back ag'in wi' th' gal in his arms, it's me that does it, dressed in th' same clo'es, see? If his hoss has

to dive over a precipice into a ragin' torrent to rescue th' dame afore goin' over th' rapids—thet's me an' Fireworks byar who does it. Then thar's a close up of Reggie an' Charmaine kissin' each other an' th' orjince says, 'Isn't he a wonderful he-man? Aw, that darlin' hoss!' If they o'ud see this flea-bitten bunch o' terror tryin' to savage Charmaine, they'd mobbe unnerstand somethin' o' th' truth."

High looked at his friend goggle-eyed with amazement.

"Yuh do all th' tricks an' he gets all th' credit?" he cried in amazement. "Why d'yuh do it?"

"Cos I got a kiddy brother thet has to have th' best o' everythin', an' 'cos th' dad's old an' th' blamed ranch is mortgaged—"

"Say no more, buddy, I tumble," said High hastily. "I oughter have known. But c'udn't yuh make as much cow-punchin'?"

"What d'yuh git?" demanded Lancey.

"Forty a month, an' all found. Good pay, huh?" asked High proudly.

"Oh, yep! I git a hundred a day an' all found; thet's th' diff. If it wasn't for thet I'd have loosened a few o' thet dude cowpuncher's teeth long 'nuff ago!"

The reason for this conversation and the "picture postcard" cowboys and trick horses was that Colonel Lou Luttrell had granted the use of the old Leanin' L ranch to the "Reginald Randal Inc.," for the purpose of making a Western picture. He loaned the ranch and all that it contained, with the exception of his cowpunchers and their horses, though he had given permission for any of his hands to take part in the film if they felt so inclined.

"Sufferin' crows, what's this, a circus?"

High gave a gasp as a gorgeous yellow limousine car, glittering with plate glass and silver, drove up to the ranch-house with a Japanese chauffeur in gorgeous livery. Inside it was a vision of beauty that made the susceptible High Jinks go pink all over, and seated next to her was a rather elderly man dressed as a colonel.

"Strike me perishin' lovely—look at th' old boy!" gasped Nippy, who had been staring at the various actors and actresses with critical eyes; his past experience of the circus ring, etc., giving him a sort of right to give his opinion on the subject of make-up and so on. "Lummy, ain't 'e got 'em all hon? 'Ave a dekkio at th' clobber; ain't 'e got up like an 'ambone? Pipe th' frills on 'is shirt, an' thet sorey mouse-tache; 'e's 'ad it curled!"

It was true enough that Colonel Lou had consented to act the part of an old time Kentucky colonel, and had been made-up accordingly. As he stepped out of the big car he cast a hurried glance across at the corral rail, where his range riders were seated exchanging sarcastic comments under their breath.

He coloured under the yellow grease-paint as he caught their curious glances, and for a moment a frown of annoyance puckered his forehead until Doc Low's voice rang out:

"Good ol' Lou! Give th' boss a cheer, boys! Hurrah for old Kentucky!"

A full throated whoop went up as the punchers swung their hats wildly in the air, Stinky, the cook, falling off the fence in his excitement.

One of the directors of the picture

came over to the fence and offered the boys cigars from his case, at the same time scanning the row of hard-boiled faces somewhat anxiously.

"We can use some of you boys at ten dollars per day, you know, if you care to do a bit of acting. There are one or two scenes where I can use a crowd of typical Westerners; but there is one scene in particular where I want one special man, he must be a boxer more or less, and not afraid of being hit a bit."

There was dead silence, and not one of the men looked at Nippy Nolan, though they knew full well he could out-box any man on the ranch, or within a twenty-mile radius, if he chose.

"The idea is that the hero, that is, Mr. Reginald Randal, sitting on that blood mare over there—the celebrated Charmaine—almost human, you know, does everything but speak—"

"Can't she speak?" asked Nippy innocently. "Funny sort o' hoss!"

"Have you ever heard a horse speak?" asked the director, eyeing the Cockney up and down.

"O' course I 'ave! 'Aven't you ever 'eard an 'orse say 'Neigh'? And I've met one as was very free with is 'oof,' too, which is more'n his boss was. That was in Aberdeen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The director gave a sort of forced laugh. "That's very good; you're quite a humorist!"

"No, I ain't, sir; I'm a boxer!" said Nippy innocently, staring at the director with his sky-blue eyes wide open.

"You are?" The director eyed Nippy up and down, and then suddenly called across to his "star."

"Come here a minute, Mr. Randal, will you, please?" he said.

The two held a whispered conversation for a few seconds, then Randal gave Nippy a supercilious look up and down.

"H'm! Rather small, but I dare say— Ah, you wouldn't mind being knocked about a little bit, eh, if we pay you well?" he said languidly. "I am apt to lose myself sometimes, doncherknow, and may hit extremely hard."

"That's orright, sir, yer can punch away at me as 'ard as yer likes," said Nippy cheerfully. "Don't mind me, I'm 'arder than I looks!"

"Ah, and you in return make the fight as realistic as possible, see?" said the star. "Don't be afraid to have a go at me, I shan't mind if you lose your temper." Then he turned to Mr. Torrence. "Okay, sir; arrange terms with this good fellow; give him a good salary. I expect he'll have earned it by the time I've done with him!"

"Say, bo', give him one for me if yuh kin!" whispered High's pal, leaning down from his horse; "but look out for his left—he swings a very dirty hook, and he ain't too particular about fouls."

"No? Nor ain't I. I've allus been ve-ry fond o' poultry," grinned Nippy. "I'll try to keep out o' danger!"

"Can he raily box-fight?" queried the horseman, looking after Nippy's diminutive figure.

"Can he?" echoed High, closing one eye. "Oh, boy, he's some hard-hitter, I'll tell the world!"

"Then if he kin, tell him thar's ten dollars if he blacks th' star's eye, another ten if he bends his nose, and an additional five dollars if he knocks a tooth out."

"Hand over yer dough, Rothschild!" said High happily. "Why don't yuh come every day? Nippy 'ud black a nigger's eye for less'n thet, an' bend a elephant's trunk for haff th' money. Five dollars per tooth? I kin see Reggie's dentist havin' a busy time next week!"

Easy Money!

THE carpenters, property men, and all the huge staff of the moving picture company set up a frame building which was, to use the expression of one of the punchers, "so durned nateral it made tears come to his eyes," to represent the saloon where the hero was to get into difficulties with a crowd of toughs.

Mr. Randal rehearsed this scene himself, being anxious to show off to his audience that although he was handsome and so gentle with his horse, children and ladies, he could yet be a real "he-man" when it came to a rough house.

"Look here, boys," he began, "when I say the words 'then I shall have to teach you manners,' you all form a ring, leaving a space for the cameras. I want you to look as fierce as you can, and always remember to be closer to the camera than I am, so that your short stature won't be so noticeable. Now, we'll just run through the fight once, so that you can get hold of the idea, then we'll 'take' the scene. Now, don't forget, boys, lots of noise, and don't be afraid!"

"Allo, 'allo! This young feller kin use 'is dooks a bit!" thought Nippy, as he blocked a wicked left which flashed up from near the floor somewhere. "This ain't goin' to be a walk-over or pit-a-pat, I can see!"

He was right, for when the great lights were turned on, and the cameramen started grinding, Reggie Randal put in all he knew, and Nippy had to look lively to keep out of danger. There was no need for him to pretend to look ferocious for once, the star ripped up a blow which was decidedly under the belt, and that got Nippy's blood up.

The little Cockney sailed in to give the bigger man better than he sent, and incidentally to win some of Lancey's "blood money." But to give him his due Randal was willing enough, and they stood toe to toe and hammered away at each other in great style, whilst the shack fairly shook with the yells of the boys.

Again Randal ripped up a short arm jab, that landed perilously foul, and Nippy lost his wool. With his ring experience he could, of course, beat the bigger man to the punch, and for three minutes Reggie Randal thought a cyclone had struck him. He, too, lost his temper, and attempted to slug the grim little fighter. But Nippy had him at his mercy.

"Fifteen dollars!" he counted, as he bashed his right into the star's gasping mouth. "Twenty-five," as he drove his left to the graceful Grecian nose, and felt the bone give under the blow; "and jest as full measure for th' fifty yer to gimme for bein' knocked abaht— ooshter! And you're out!"

So he was! Nippy's right swing, which travelled less than six inches, connected with the star's clefted chin just exactly on the spot, and his knees gave way under him, and he was "out for the count," whilst the crowd went

mad and cheered the little cowpuncher ex-boxer to the echo.

Torrence, the director, scratched his head perplexedly.

"I dunno," he said to the cameraman, "it was all wrong according to the story for the hero to get such a pasting; but it was such a tophole scrap that it was worth it. Golly! I don't know what we shall do for a star for the next week or two, Reggie won't be able to appear, that's a dead cert. We'll have to take all the long shots we can with Lancey Elliott doubling."

But if they expected the "star" to either be humiliated or downcast they were mistaken. He had two valets and a trainer with him, and they worked away on his damaged features until they had restored him somewhat to his usual handsome self. He sent for Nippy and grinned at him, with swollen lips, and with one eye under a blanket of cold steak.

"Well, young feller, you certainly sold me a pup that time, eh?" he

minutes scrappin'," grumbled High. "It's up to me an' yuh to make some on th' side as well, hah?"

"Sure; leave it to papa!" responded the brains of the trio. "I've thought out somethin', an' I'm havin' a confab with Torrence in th' mornin'. This picture busnay is simple as fallin' off a log. Me an' yuh will do a stunt the'll make Nippy's look like a heap o' mud. We cain't have him throwin' his chest out an' crowin' over us. I cain't see why thar are film stars anyway, any darn idgit o'ud do it!"

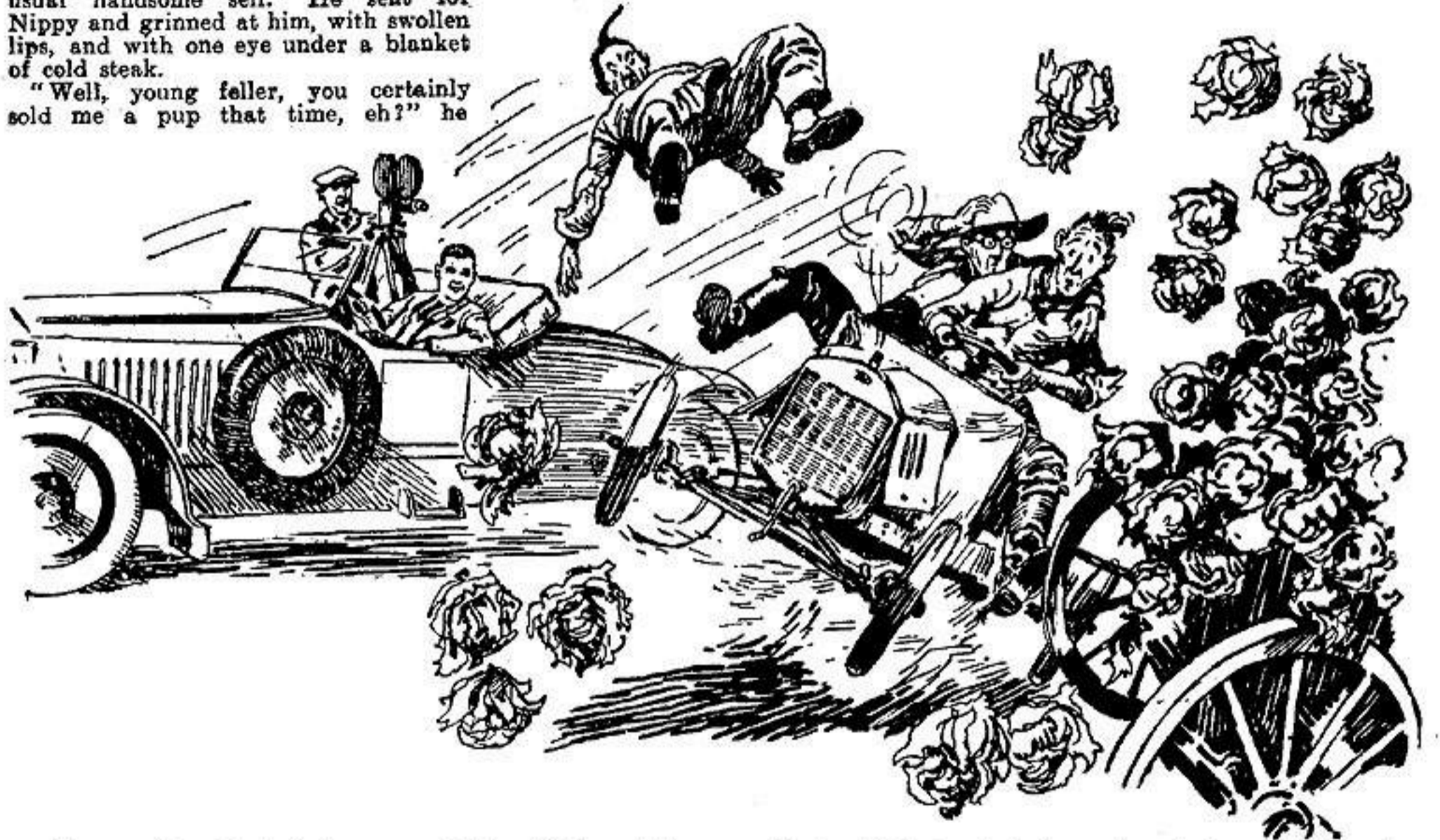
Torrence cocked a shrewd eye at Doc Low when that wily puncher propounded his scheme.

"Sure, you and your pal shall have a little bit to do, but we can't use any more regular cowboy stuff; that would

rence explained that they were to depict two cowpunchers out on a spree with a borrowed car, and take a run of about five miles which he had picked out.

They were surprised to see the number of people and vehicles that seemed to be on what was usually a lonely mountain road, little suspecting that these were experienced "supers," who were to carry out Director Torrence's instructions.

"This is the car you're to drive," he said gravely, exhibiting a deplorable looking "flivver" with no mudguards, and nothing but the skeleton framework, "she's nothing much to look at, but she's a demon to go. I've had her specially tuned up for you, so don't be afraid to step on the gas."



The nearside wheel of the car containing High and Low caught the hind wheel of the cart, and in a second cart, cabbages, and Chink were thrown high in the air!

mumbled cheerfully. "I certainly congratulate you on putting up the best scrap that's been seen on the screen for a very long time, and I'm telling Torrence to give you double pay. We'll have to take a few more shots with the ending slightly different, and you must pull your punches. I mustn't disappoint my public!"

"I can't see that he's sich a bad feller, and 'e certainly took all that was comin' to 'im wiv a good 'eart," said Nippy to Lancey, as they sat in the bunkhouse that night; the ex-cowboy nursing some badly battered limbs from doing "stunts," for which the "star" would receive all the credit.

"Ah, he thought he had somethin' easy when he picked on you, buddy! Wait till you see th' finished picter, an' yuh'll see how he fakes it!" growled the battered "double" sadly. "At the end of each scene he'll pose for a close-up with that durned rockin' horse o' his, an' cop all th' credit for me half breakin' my perishin' neck in his place. I know these stars, sonny! Then they say the camera cain't lie!"

High and Doc Low meantime held a conference.

"Nippy's picked up nigh two hundred dollars dead easy money for about ten

cut into the star's speciality. Can either of you boys drive a car?"

Low scratched his head.

"I've never tried, personally, but High kin drive or ride anythin'; I'll ax him, an' let yuh know, mister."

A Hair-Raising Ride!

THE director grinned to himself after the spectacled puncher had left and spent half an hour drafting out a little scheme. Then he got busy on the telephone, and made certain arrangements with his staff.

"Drive a cyar?" queried High. "No, I cain't say I've ever handled one, but they're sure to be daid easy, considerin' th' darn fools that can drive 'em. I'm willin' to try anythin' onct for easy money. I guess that a bozo who kin ride th' worst buckin' brones on th' rango needn't be hazed by one o' them tin contraptions. Let's go and intervoo one o' them gilt-edged shovers an' git a tip or two. I kin pick it up in haff an hour, I reckon!"

High and Low set out for "location" next morning full of confidence. Tor-

High draped his long body around the steering-wheel and tried hard to remember the instructions he had received from the "gilt-edged" drivers of the film stars' five thousand dollar models. Doc Low managed to crouch in beside him, seated on a fruit-box which had been screwed to the floor.

"Yuh sure yuh've got th' high line on how to ride this thing?" mumbled Low out of the corner of his mouth as High fumbled with the gears.

High Jinks gave a nervous glance behind him as he saw that three or four big cars crowded with grinning cameramen were lined up behind them. There was another somewhat curiously shaped red car all closed in with glass doors at the back.

"Wha-what's that?" he asked feebly of a cameraman who was "shooting" a close-up of the pair from a racing-car alongside.

"That? Oh, that's only the ambulance!" answered the man. "We always bring that as a precaution, but it isn't used—much," he added.

"Ow law!" groaned Low, and shivered down on to his box.

"Ready, cameras!" called the director, and there was a screeching

from the high-powered cars, and the whirl of machines as the flivver was shot from all angles. "Now, remember what you've got to do, and don't be afraid of stepping on it, Jinks. Go!"

High "stepped on it," and that rattling skeleton jumped about six feet in the air, or so it seemed to Low. He gave a howl of dismay, and crouched down to the floor as the machine gave a violent swerve and nearly bashed into the rocky side of the trail.

High twirled the wheel, and the car shot across the road only missing the edge of the drop down to the river by a bare inch. A big racing-car, with whirring cameras dashed past them, the cameramen seeming to Low to grin like fiends as they shot his scared expression and the lanky driver's air of stern determination and concentrated goggling eyes.

One of High's spurred boots wobbled about amongst the pedals, whilst the other dangled over the side frantically spurring the framework as if controlling a bucking horse. He sat back with his arms stretched out as if hanging on to a bridle, and snorted and whistled to the machine as if to an outlaw horse.

"Whoop! Whoa thar, yuh Lizzie, hoss!" he yelled, as the machine swerved round a bend and positively leapt a bush, nearly turning over.

Something clattered out of the car and was left on the road behind them.

"She's full o' tricks as a coconut's full o' milk!" yelled High; "but I'll break her or bust! Up thar, good gall! Hold on round this yer grade, Doc, or I'll be spikin' yuh out!"

"I'm sure glad yuh've got plenty of room, High!" gasped Low, as they shot to one side and crashed through rocks and sage bushes. "Whoops! Thar's somethin' else gone!"

"Mebbe her surcingle broke," said High. "I'll ease her up a bit to git her wind ag'in."

He stepped on what he thought was the brake, and the machine shot forward at redoubled speed.

"Great gophers—this has caused it!" yelled High, as they hurtled round a corner to see a large vegetable cart, piled high with cabbages, occupying most of the trail, with a Chink seated on top of the load.

Half a dozen cameras on either side whirred as the inevitable occurred.

High managed to swerve the car to one side, but even then the nearside

wheel caught the hind wheel of the cart, and in a second cart, cabbages, and Chink were thrown high in the air, whilst the flivver dashed through the wreck and zigzagged down a still steeper grade.

"Slow her up, High!" begged Low, clinging desperately to what should have been the windscreen. "Put yer brake on, man!"

High leant forward, grabbed the hand brake, gave a mighty pull, and the whole lever came away in his hand. He hurled it over his shoulder and desperately tugged at the "bridle."

Again the machine leapt forward as he frantically spurred the accelerator.

A dog ran ahead of them for fifty yards skipping out of the way by bare inches as they roared past. A farmer's wagon with a team of four mules jibbed across the path, and Low was convinced that the car was tilted clean on its side as High drove up on to the bank. It was a miracle of steering, more by instinct than judgment, for the sweat was pouring down High's squiggly nose, and his outstanding ears were flapping in the breeze.

There was a yelp from Low as a tumbledown two-wheeled buggy, with a farmer and his fat wife seated on its high seat, rambled out into the middle of the road. They did not know that this had been carefully planned, and that half a dozen cameras snapped the crash as they hit the old contraption.

By now the flivver was completely out of control so far as checking her pace was concerned, and Low threw his mind ahead to remember what the road was like.

"Keep left, boyee, for my sake!" he bellowed. "If yuh take th' right road we're slick inter th' gorge for sure!"

"Have a bit on me, I've got her colored now. I'll larn her to start sun-fishin' any mo'—oh, great snakes!" High let out a yelp as they got to the parting of the trails, and he saw that the left road was completely blocked by a great wagon laden with lumber.

With a mighty effort he twisted the wheel around, and as they swerved into the gorge road, there was an ominous creak—and the whole steering-wheel came away in his hands!

Then a long, low, super-racing car suddenly swirled around the bend, drove neck and neck with them, whilst cameras whirred on either side. Then Low heard Randal's voice.

"Jump for it, boys, or you'll be into the gorge!" he said, edging his big car close beside them. "When I say now—jump!"

But the flivver had taken charge and suddenly the front wheels twisted. In a flash both Low and High were hurtling through the air to land with a crash in a bush of prickly pear.

As they scrambled out they found cameras on all sides, and a smiling director shouting:

"Splendid, boys, now just one smile—right into the camera—"

Then the ambulance drove up.

Some weeks later the boys of the Leanin' L received an invitation to a special show of Reginald Randal Inc.'s Great New Western Picture, starring Reggie Randal in his wonderful stunts with his wonder horse Charmaine.

They watched Reggie's marvellous feats of horsemanship, and nearly foamed at the mouth when he posed for a close-up at the end of each "stunt" they had seen performed by Lancey Elliott. They saw him fight a desperate battle with a man apparently six feet high, with a most ferocious aspect, whom they could only realise was Nippy by his boxing. They also saw Reggie knocked out, and watched him make a wonderful recovery whilst the audience yelled their delight as the idol proceeded to bash the other to small pieces, the other having his back to the camera.

Finally they heard the audience rock with laughter as that nightmare ride in that awful flivver rolled out its length, until at last it came to the smash in the gorge road—and they sat back and gasped with amazement as they saw Reggie lean out of his super-racing car and with one hand lift one after the other into safety as the flivver pitched over into the gorge.

"Phew! What was that yuh said, Low?" asked High, recovering his composure. "Why are film stars—"

"Thet was what I said, High—why?"

"I dunno. I dunno a-tall, boyee!" said High, wiping his forehead. "I jest know that they are!"

THE END.

(Look out for another gripping Western yarn next week, chums. You'll find High, Low, and Nippy still going as strong as ever!)

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CAN YOU COOK!
If So, Here's Your Chance!
To-morrow night will be held the First Annual Herring-frying Contest, promoted by the Second Form, Herring-eaters' Association. Valuable prizes! Entrance fee, 1d. Pen-shooters and sink-bombs must be handed to the Cashier at the desk, on arrival. Competitors provide their own herrings; pen-holders for frying provided free!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH GREYFRIARS?

By PERCY BOLSOVER
(Temporary Editor.)

What's wrong with Greyfriars, you sportsmen? Perhaps it would be easier to ask, what's right? The answer would be: precious little!

Take yesterday. I had run into young Dicky Nigent, of the Second, in a quiet spot. Naturally, I had taken the opportunity of indulging in a little harmless and necessary arm-twisting. Having tired of this, I was just giving the fag a swing round by the ears, when Quetchy had to step in, march me back to his study, and give me "six." Could anything be more futile?



Again, only last week, Wingate, of the Sixth, had to chip in and spoil a jolly good scrap I was having with Gatty, of the Third. Gatty weighs a more four stone less than I do, so you can all see the fight was perfectly fair and square. Yet Wingate had the nerve to accuse me of bullying—and not content with that, to give me a fearful swishing with his saplant! Enough to make a sportsman's blood boil, isn't it, you chaps?

That's the sort of school to have, you fellows! Well, I've been thinking about all this for a long time now and this is the first time I've had a chance to obtain publicity. Now that I've got it down in black-and-white, I hope it will have the desired effect. Deinks! It's up to you! What about it?

(Note by Sub-Ed.: The censor will probably be found very shortly in the infirmary.)

BRAINS & BRAUN

Coker Thinks They Go Together

It's all rot to say that a chap hasn't brains if he can't have braun and brauns at the same time.

Take me for an example. Nobody's likely to suggest that I haven't got braun. I suppose I'm Natcherially not! My muscles are almost as firm as my far-famed modesty!

What about brauns, then? Well, speaking quite impartially, I can truthfully say that I'm the brainiest chap in the school. That seems to prove the case, doesn't it?

If anyone should doubt what I say, let him merely inquire into my abilities in school work.

He will find that in maths no more brilliant genius ever graced the Fifth. Without an instant's

the following curriculum substituted:
1. Boxing and wrestling.
2. The science of Fag Torture, including arm-twisting and ear-pulling.
3. Weight-lifting.
4. The Use of the Knuckle-duster.
5. The History of Slogging.

Things would be much better if we studied on these lines instead of as at present!

Another thing sadly in need of reform is Discipline among the Masters. They're all frightfully undisciplined just now; any one of them is likely to break out and give a man "six" on the slightest provocation. My view is that it's about time they were put in their place, and the only way to do it is to make it permissible for us to hit back. In the ideal Form-room, this is the sort of thing that would happen:

Beak: "Bolsover! Hold out your hand!"
(Sound of swishing.)
Bolsover: "Ow-ow! Now you're going to get one back, you brute! Take that!"

Beak: "Yaroooooh! Whooooop! Groooooop! Ow! Very well, Bolsover! You are quite entitled by the rules of the School to do what you have done, so I will say no more about it! Ow!"

(Bolsover flicks his knuckles with his pocket handkerchief and stalks majestically back to his place.)

Well, now you know what I think about it. Next time anyone suggests that brauns and braun don't go together, just mention my name and the ignoramus will close up like an oyster and forever hold his peace!

SITUATIONS VACANT.

(Please mention the paper when replying.)

FATHEAD WANTED to assist Horace James Coker in a scheme for dishing the First Eleven. Apply personally to H. J. Coker, Fifth Form. Reward by arrangement.

BRAVE YOUTH required. I O U for any amount offered to the fello who goes to Mr. Quetch books? My spelling speaks for itself; a glanso through this scrub ovt of the pantry last nite Apply W. DUNNICK. Study 7.

SCHOOL SLOGGERS OF LONG AGO BARE-KNUCKLE SCRAP LASTS SIX HOURS

How would you like to pass the school wall with full force every time in five minutes? The response wouldn't be overwhelming nowadays; yet that was what "Cast Iron" Tomlinson, of the Sixth at Greyfriars, did for a year or eighty years ago!

Many another example in the School records is left to remind us that things are not as they used to be. Thomas Tremayne and "Timber" Woodleigh, one fine summer's day in 1825, for instance. These two promising young Fifth Formers had had a quarrel over a buck of footer and settled it with bare fists behind the chapel.

The fight, which ended in victory for "Timber," lasted three hours. We hardly care to dwell on what the principals must have looked like at the end of that time!

Another interesting record, giving us a glimpse into the hectic days of yore, is of a properly-organized knuckle-battle between a team of four hefty Greyfriars seniors and four village louts. This unique event took place in 1839, when there was a lot of bad blood between the School and the village. We can only guess at the rules of the encounter. All we know is that it took place on the village green at Fritardale before a great crowd of villagers and friars, and that, after a stern tussle, the villagers were made to bite the dust.

All the events so far recorded, however, pale into insignificance beside the greatest fight ever known at Greyfriars—a bare-knuckle affair which was fought behind the chapel some 90 years ago between two Sixth-Formers, the Hon. Bertram Broadacre and "Tiger" Snedley. The meeting came off on a half-holiday, starting at two o'clock and continuing without a break till eight in the evening, when both combatants collapsed from exhaustion!

CHAMPIONS HAVE FOUGHT

George Bulstrode Recalls the Past

"So your readers want to hear all about the champions I have fought in days gone by?" remarked Bulstrode, the famous heavy-weight, without troubling to look up from his task of twisting iron bars into corkscrews.

"Delighted, I'm sure! The only difficulty is to know what to tell them about first!"

"There was that versatile boxer, Reggie Brown; I fairly mopped up the floor with him."

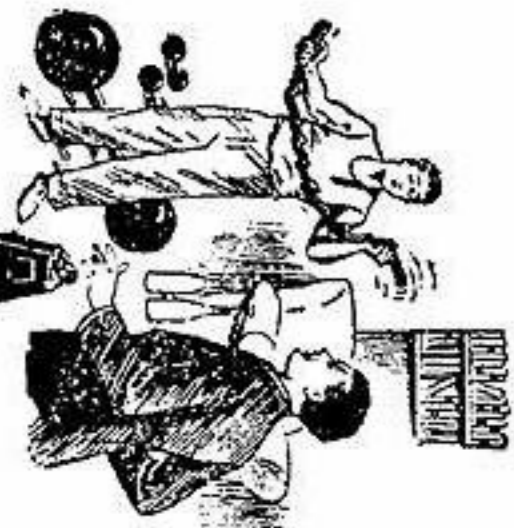
"Then there was Gummie, Laybell; I well remember awful locking I gave that chap."

"Probably you remember a white hopo named Cherry Blossom? Well, I polished him off without an effort."

"Bill Cotton is another name I recall. In the first few seconds, I made him reel!"

"All right, again, was 'pie' to me. I had Strangor tied up in knots before the sound of the gang had died away!"

"Another popular public favourite was Harry Plane. It didn't



ANTI-BOXERS' BEANO INVADED

Startling Sequel

WORMS WHO TURNED

The Annual Curaway-Seed and Lime-Juice Supper of the Remove Anti-Boxing Society in the Form-room last Wednesday evening provided one or two quite unexpected sensations. The proceedings at this function are usually the reverse of thrilling. The supper consists of raw curaway seeds, fried dandelions, and copious draughts of lime-juice-and-water. After supper, Alonzo Todd, Esq., the President, reads the Annual Report and Balance Sheet, which is put to the members and carried.

This concludes the serious part of the business, and the rest of the evening is devoted to recreation, in the shape of Morris dances and exciting games like Oranges-and-Lemons. "Turn the Other Cheek, Lads!" and hand-shaking all round concludes an evening which can hardly be described as boisterous.



This year, however, the customary calm of the gathering was rudely disturbed when the members of Bolsover's newly-formed League for the Revival of Brutal Sports broke in during the reading of the Report and made a violent attack on the startled Anti-boxers.

The L.R.B.S. members taking place in the raid were, we understand, Messrs. Bolsover, Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop, Scott, Fish, and Desmond, while the Anti-boxers numbered five, in the shape of Messrs. Todd, Dupont, Kripps, Smith minor, and Dutton.

Uttering blood-curdling war-whoops, the heroic invaders flung themselves at their hereditary enemies. The fact that there were only seven of them against the imposing army of five defenders left them unorthodox, as they had the assistance of mighty warriors like Bolsover and Bulstrode.

We are at a loss to explain what happened soon

after. At first, the unexpectedness of the attack resulted in the members of the Anti-Boxing Society being forced back. But just as it looked as though they were going to be wiped off the map, Alonzo Todd, Esq., the President, uttered a loud cry:

"We are attacked, my good fellows! Retribution is at hand, and we have no alternative but to fall back on physical violence! Putting it in the vernacular, my dear brethren—go for 'em!"

"What-ho!" came an answering roar from the breathless and indignant Anti-Boxers.

A violent battle was in progress a moment later. Standing outside the room, our reporter saw several bodies hurtle through the doorway and pile up in a heap in the passage. Eventually the Form-room door was closed and bolted from the inside.

Our reporter ventured to approach the groaning heap of casualties, and was surprised to identify them as Messrs. Bolsover, Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop, Scott, Fish, and Desmond.

We understand that the meeting of the Anti-Boxing Society concluded without further incident. Messrs. Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop, Scott, Fish, and Desmond have resigned from Bolsover's League and applied for membership of the Anti-Boxing Society.

BE A HE-MAN

How YOU Can Do It

Professor Skinner Explains
So you want to be a he-man? Believe me, dear reader, nothing could be easier. It's just a matter of observing a few simple rules in your ordinary everyday life.

For example, take getting out of bed in the morning. Doubtless you are accustomed to scripping out feet first, at present. Has it ever occurred to you that by diving out head-first, instead, and landing with a terrific crash on your nappier, you will in the course of time become considerably tougher in the top-

There's an idea, to begin with! Try it to-morrow morning and see how it strikes you—the idea, I mean, not the floor!

Possibly you feel like a little recreation before breakfast? If so, get a friend to bush you for a few minutes with an Indian club. It's exhilarating and strengthens the body considerably.

With the arrival of breakfast-time, take care to shun the fast-food porridge and mushy-pamby. These don't give the jaw muscles sufficient exercise, and nobody can be a he-man without strong jaw muscles! I suggest that you get right down to it and gnaw a couple off the breakfast-table. You may excite a certain amount of comment from the other chaps, but a he-man ignores the voice of the mob!

Perhaps you feel thirsty, afterwards? If so, avoid tea and coffee. Just drink a few gallons of rain-water and your thirst will be fully quenched.

In class, ignore your Form-master completely. This will annoy him and lead to canings and floggings, and the more you get of these, the tougher you'll become.

Class being over, go for a brisk run down the lane. During your run, don't step out of the way of anything short of a two-ton lorry; colliding with motor-cars or horse-teams is first-rate exercise.

Well, now you know all about it. If you still feel like becoming a he-man, simply re-model your life on the above lines; and may success crown your efforts!