

HARRY WHARTON & CO. SOLD INTO SLAVERY!

Read the thrilling complete story inside.

The **MAGNET** 2^D



FIT AND FAT FOR A CANNIBAL KING!



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 Flectivity House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I DON'T think any Editor ever had such a wonderfully loyal band of readers as I have! You will remember that, some little time ago, I published a letter from a reader of thirty years of age who had taken the MAGNET since 1914. I asked if that was a record—and I am very pleased to inform you that it is not—not by a long chalk!

My postbag lately has been bulging with letters from readers who are all anxious to claim the record of being the oldest reader of our paper, and I can tell you that I have been more pleased than I can say to read their enthusiastic reminiscences of the early days of the MAGNET.

I am going to give you a few extracts from some of their letters which prove that the old paper still holds pride of place amongst the reading matter of some sterling old chums of mine.

FIRST OF ALL

comes a letter from R. G. S., of Hillingdon Park, who has never missed the MAGNET since 1908, when it was first published. He and his brother tell me that they can well remember the old stories, and he recalls such incidents as when Billy Bunter picked up Wingate's "fiver"; when Harry Wharton adopted "Toddles"; when the Cliff House girls came to Greyfriars, and Clara addressed the Remove master as "Mr. Squelch"; and dozens of other stories in the days of the "Famous Four"—before Johnny Bull came to the school.

During the War R. G. S. sent every copy of the MAGNET and the "Gem," our splendid companion paper, to the Front, and it does me good to know that our paper helped to keep up the spirits of the boys who were fighting for us in those parlous times. R. G. S. is 27 years of age, and his brother is 31. Thanks very much for your letter, R. G. S., and I shan't forget your request, and hope I shall be able to accede to it before long.

THE NEXT LETTER

comes from an Irish reader, who signs himself "Old Timer," of Belfast, and who is 29 years of age. He has been reading the MAGNET for nearly twenty years, and his earliest recollection of the old "mag" is when it boasted an orange-coloured cover, and cost only 1d. per week! Let me quote from his letter:

"Frank Richards," he says, "has certainly kept up wonderfully well, and may he live long to continue writing clean, healthy yarns. If every boy and girl were to read the MAGNET they wouldn't go far wrong."

And I think you will all agree with him!

ANOTHER OF OUR OLDER READERS, who is 35 years of age, read our paper continuously from its start until 1914, when he joined the Royal Field Artillery, and went out to France to fight for his country. Before he was demobilised in
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1919, he was wounded once, and gassed twice, and earned his promotion to sergeant. As soon as he settled down to home life again he renewed his weekly order, and has read it ever since.

He is A. E. T., of Great Lever, Bolton, Lancs, and I certainly must thank him for the manner in which he has introduced our paper to many younger readers. He does not believe in keeping a good thing to himself! Very generously, he distributes his MAGNETS to schoolboys and Scouts who live in his neighbourhood, and I can just imagine how much they must appreciate this "good turn" of his!

Now let us turn to a letter which comes from

A GIRL READER.

Ladies, as you may have heard, are supposed to be chary of telling their proper age, but this reader of mine does not mind doing so. I suppose I should really have called her a "lady" reader, for Mrs. M. W., of Ross-on-Wye, confesses that she is a married woman of 45 years of age! Still, I am sure that the stories still keep her young at heart, so that is why I call her one of my *girl* readers!

She has been a reader for 22 years, and all her four sons are enthusiastic readers of the old paper. She tells me that the MAGNET always cheers her up, and adds, too, about a very greedy little kitten which she possesses, and which rejoices in the name of "Bunter."

MRS. M. W. almost gets the record—but not quite!

THE RECORD READER OF THE "MAGNET,"

so far as age is concerned, is W. L., of Ealing. He has been a reader and a lover of the MAGNET since 1914, and he is now 58 years of age.

"I agree that the characters seem to live, as Charles Dickens' characters do," he says. "To us old ones they are fast chums. I will say it in all sincerity, the

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!

MAGNET is the up-to-date 'Pickwick Papers.'

In fact, W. L.'s letter almost makes me blush because of the many kind things he says. But I must admit that it also fills me with a feeling of pride, to think that this paper of ours has such loyal and devoted readers.

Naturally, I am going to give the credit for those tributes to Frank Richards. Although we have had a large number of serial and article writers, all of whom have fully maintained the high standard upon which I insist, I don't think there is another boys' writer who

could have continued to write a tip-top yarn every week for so many years—and still keep them as interesting now as ever they were.

This week's chat is going to be something of

A SHOCK FOR FRANK RICHARDS,

for I have not told him yet of these splendid letters from his admirers. When he sees this week's copy, that is the first he will know about them, and I feel sure that he will be every bit as delighted as I am to know that his stories keep his older readers still feeling as young as they did years ago!

Now I owe my younger readers an apology. I hope they won't grumble because I have taken up so much space in dealing with our "Old Timers." Perhaps, in years to come, they will also be "Old Timers," and will be writing to me to remind me of the days when Harry Wharton & Co. made a trip to Africa, and so on. So, my younger chums, please don't grumble if I've left your queries unanswered this week. I promise you that I'll carry on as usual next week.

And don't forget, also, that there is always

A CHANCE FOR YOUNGER READERS

to earn fine leather pocket wallets, and useful penknives. Just help to brighten up your Editor's page by sending along a joke or a Greyfriars limerick, and you may be a lucky prize-winner next week. Here's a limerick, for instance, which wins a pocket wallet for Robert D. Fergusson, of 20, Glen Avenue, Port Glasgow, Scotland.

When old Coker was out on his bike
He met Wharton & Co. on the hike.
So he yelled through the smoke:
"You can go and eat coke!"
And in doing so ran through a dyke!

Do you know, I think sufficient complimentary things have been said about Frank Richards this week, that I won't attempt to praise his next week's story, which is entitled:

"SAVED FROM THE CANNIBALS!"

I'll just say that it's every bit as good as any story he has yet written for us—and you can ask any of my older readers what that means! So look out for it, chums.

And look out, too, for the opening instalment of our grand new serial, particulars of which appear on page 27. A real smasher this, chums, you'll all agree. Of course, there will be another rib-tickling "Greyfriars Herald," not to mention a special contribution by the Greyfriars Rhymester.

Au revoir, chums, until next week!

YOUR EDITOR.



THE CITY OF TERROR!

Thrilling Complete Story by Popular **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In the Hands of the Slave-Trader!

WHAT price Greyfriars now?"
"Oh, don't!"
"The fellows will be back for the new term—"

"I jolly well wish we were, too!" said Johnny Bull.

"And football—" said Bob Cherry.

"Football!" repeated Harry Wharton. "My hat! It doesn't seem much like it here!"

It was a sweltering day in Central Africa.

The idea of football seemed rather ludicrous to fellows who found it almost too hot and enervating to breathe.

There was no doubt that, at Greyfriars School, in far-off England, fellows were giving keen attention to the winter game.

Here on the Congo it was difficult to remember that there over was any winter.

"They say a lot of things about the jolly old British climate!" said Bob Cherry. "But what would you men give for a north wind now?"

"Oh, don't!" repeated Frank Nugent. Merely thinking of a keen north wind was too tantalising.

The chums of Greyfriars would have given all the sunshine of Africa, with all the treasures of the Dark Continent thrown in, in exchange for one dark, dismal damp day of an English autumn.

North wind, or even east wind—any old wind, in fact—sleet or snow or rain or hail, would have made them rejoice.

Lowering skies, scowling rain clouds, dense fogs, would have been welcome as a glorious change from the unending blaze that burned and baked down on them as they floated in the canoe on the sluggish, evil-smelling river.

It was a large canoe, formed by burning out the interior of a huge tree. It was not a handy vessel, but there was plenty of accommodation in it.

The Famous Five of Greyfriars sat in a group, trying to breathe; and even that was a trouble, for there hardly

Harry Wharton & Co., on holiday in the African Congo, seized and sold into slavery . . .

seemed to be any air, and what there was was stuffy.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was fanning himself with a leaf he had picked out of the river, floating by.

Billy Bunter lay and snored.

Bunter could find forgetfulness and comfort in sleep, and the amount of sleep that Bunter put in during the voyage down an unknown river to the mighty Congo was amazing.

If he did not quite sleep the clock round, he very nearly succeeded in doing so.

Many sounds were heard on the canoe—the wash of the sluggish waters among

the foul mangroves that lined the banks, the roar of lions from the bush, the howl of wandering hyenas, occasionally the splash of a paddle in the hands of a lazy Arab. These sounds were intermittent. But one sound was almost continuous, like the unending melody in Wagnerian music, though perhaps a trifle less musical, and that was the snore of William George Bunter.

That hefty snore, which no longer awoke the echoes of the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, startled the crocodiles along a Central African river.

"I don't know what time it is in England now," remarked Bob Cherry; "but if it's lessons at Greyfriars, I'd be glad to be in the Form-room with old Quelch."

"The gladfulness would be terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, wiping a trickle of perspiration from his dusky brow.

Even the Nabob of Bhanipur found it hot in the Congo country.

"And if they're playing footer—" went on Bob.

"Don't talk about footer here, fat-head!" groaned Nugent. "It gives me a tired feeling."

"What price a rag on Coker of the Fifth?" asked Bob.

"I couldn't rag a bunny rabbit at the present moment!"

Vernon-Smith glanced at the Famous Five with something like a sneer.

"You fellows seem to be keeping up your spirits," he said. "Like the idea

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of bein' sold as slaves in Central Africa?"

"Not the least little bit!" answered Bob Cherry. "But you do enough scowling for the whole party, old bean, and Bunter does enough grousing; and we may as well keep our peckers up if we can."

"A stiff upper-lip is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "And the darkest hour is always before the pitcher goes to the well, as the English proverb remarks."

"Good old English proverb!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Give us a few more, Inky; they cheer us up."

"My esteemed idiotic Bob——"

"The game's up for us!" growled the Bounder, savagely gritting his teeth. "That fat fool, Bunter, can snore, and you fellows seem to like the situation; but the game's up, and we're done for. By gad! If I could twist that villain Krantz's neck before I see the last of him——"

"The twistfulness of his esteemed neck would be a terrific boon and blessing, my absurd Smithy. But——"

"While there's life there's hope," said Bob.

Bob Cherry's spirits, always exuberant, had been rather dashed by the strange and terrible situation in which the chums of Greyfriars found themselves. But they always bubbled up again, somehow. It seemed a physical impossibility for the cheery Bob to remain downcast for long.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and, dark as the outlook was, Bob refused to give up hope.

"Hope!" grunted the Bounder. "Where's the hope, you fathead? Our only hope was in Kikolobo, and he's been thrown off the track by these scoundrels taking to the water; or else he's got fed-up, and chucked it and gone back to Uganda."

"Rot!" said Harry Wharton.

"Bosh!" said Nugent. "You know that's unjust, Smithy. Kicky will never desert us."

The Bounder gave an angry grunt.

He stood up in the swaying canoe, and stared along the river.

In the bow of the canoe sat Ludwig Krantz, the half-Arab, half-German slave-trader, his light-blue eyes glinting from his coppery face, a cheroot between his discoloured teeth. There were six of his gang in the canoe—dusky ruffians, of mingled Arab and negro blood, in turban and dingy burnous. Behind came a smaller canoe, with four more of the slave-hunting gang in it, and a pile of baggage.

The canoe floated slowly on the current, the ruffians too idle to paddle in the burning heat.

They sprawled under a tattered awning, which gave them some protection from the blaze of the sun.

But there was no protection for the schoolboy prisoners, who baked and perspired in the heat.

Still, it was something to be sitting at rest in the canoe, instead of tramping weary, endless miles under the crack of the rhinoceros-hide whip.

The river flowed between banks thickly clothed with forest—gigantic trees soaring to a height of a hundred feet or more—and the margin was thick with mud and mangroves.

A myriad insects flashed and buzzed over the water; but the schoolboys had become almost indifferent to mosquito-bites by this time.

What hope was there, the Bounder asked himself savagely?

The juniors were prisoners in the

hands of the slave-trader, and he was taking them down to the Congo to be sold as slaves in a native town hundreds of miles from any white man.

Far off in Uganda, on the shore of Lake Albert, Mr. Vernon-Smith was moving heaven and earth in the search for his missing son; but he might as well have sat idle.

His son had vanished into the trackless heart of Africa, and unless by a miracle, the millionaire was never likely to see him again.

There had been one hope. Kikolobo, the faithful Kikuyu, had followed the track of the slave-traders, by forest and jungle, by swamp and stream, and several of the gang had fallen under his spears.

But a night and a day and another night had passed since the slave-hunters had taken to the canoes, and Krantz believed that he had thrown the hunter of Kenya off the track. The juniors could not help fearing that he was right.

With black, scowling brows, the Bounder of Greyfriars stared along the river—that ran like a tunnel of sunshine between the high walls of dense, dark forest.

Ludwig Krantz glanced round at him sourly.

He read the schoolboy's thoughts easily enough.

"Nein, nein, my young herr!" chuckled Krantz. "There is nothing—nothing! You will never see the Kikuyu again, my young herr! Ach! Do you repent now that you lashed me like a dog on the Nairobi road in Kenya?"

Vernon-Smith did not reply.

Savage and bitter words trembled on his lips, and he was in a bitter and desperate mood. But he remained silent. Barak, a brawny Arab, lolled near him, the rhinoceros-hide whip across his knees. He was lazy and inert, but not too lazy to lay the heavy thong across the Bounder at a sign from Ludwig Krantz.

The slave-trader laughed harshly.

"Ach! You grow tamed, my young herr!" he grinned. "You have learned a lesson that will be useful to you when you are in the kraals of Tofoloko, the slave of a black chief. A week ago you would have answered me—now you dare not speak."

The Bounder's eyes blazed.

"You cur!" he broke out savagely.

"You slave-trading hound, you lie!"

"Ach!" The light-blue eyes glittered at him. "Barak, give him a dozen blows with the whip! The young herr is not tamed yet."

Barak grinned and lounged to his feet.

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands desperately. Harry Wharton & Co. made a movement towards him. The slave-hunters interposed, and drove them back to the stern of the long canoe with raining blows.

Barak's brawny grasp closed on Herbert Vernon-Smith. He struggled, but in a moment he was flung down in the canoe.

The slave-hunter's arm went up, the rhinoceros-hide whip in his hand. The thong came down on the Bounder with a crack like that of a rifle.

Up went the brawny arm again, the Arab grinning down at the panting schoolboy as he aimed the second stroke.

But the second stroke never fell.

From the dark shades of the forest, scarce a dozen feet from the gliding canoe, something whizzed like a flash of light.

Barak, the Arab, gave a choking cry, and fell forward across the Bounder.

From the back of his burnous the haft of a throwing-spear stuck out.

The spear had passed completely through his burly body; evidently hurled by an arm that did not lack muscle and sinew.

"Ach, himmel!"

Krantz leaped up with a yell, grasping his rifle, and glaring at the high wall of foliage from which the spear had flown.

"Bismillah!" panted the Arabs.

Every eye in the two canoes was turned on the bordering forest. Harry Wharton & Co. watched the thick bank of foliage eagerly.

For a moment the foliage parted, and a dark face and a pair of bright, keen eyes looked out.

The juniors and the slave-hunters had a second's glimpse of a tall figure in striped monkey-skins; the figure of Kikolobo, the Kikuyu.

Crack, crack, crack!

Shots were loosed off from the canoes on the instant. But it was only for a split second that the Kikuyu was seen. He vanished into the dense forest, and the bullets tore leaves and twigs and trailing vines.

The Kikuyu was gone.

Splash, splash, splash! The slave-hunters were paddling now, regardless of the heat and the sun-blaze, thinking only of getting out of the cast of a spear from the bank. The canoes fled fast down the winding river.

Not till miles had been covered did they slacken, and pause to toss the dead man overboard to the crocodiles. Then they continued to paddle, though at a reduced speed. And from moment to moment their eyes roved up and down the forest-clad bank in fear.

But the fear of the slave-hunters was hope to the hearts of their prisoners.

If Kikolobo of the Kikuyu had been thrown off the trail, he had found it again. The faithful hunter was still following the slave-trader and his prisoners, and hope was strong in the hearts of the schoolboys that he would yet save them before they were sold into slavery.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"**W**E'RE moving!" remarked Bob Cherry.

The sunset was red in the west.

The river lay a bar of crimson between the high banks of green forest. The current, that had been slow and sluggish all day, had increased in velocity, and now the long canoe, with the smaller canoe behind, was moving rapidly.

The slave-hunters were no longer paddling; only keeping the canoe steady to the current with an occasional stroke.

The river had narrowed considerably, the mangrove-lined banks encroaching on the water. But that was not the only cause of the increase in speed in the current. The Greyfriars fellows guessed that they were approaching a waterfall or rapids, of which there were many on the tributaries of the Congo.

If the fall was considerable, the slave-hunters would have to land, and make a portage with the canoes. But they could guess that Krantz would not land if he could help it. He was still in fear of the pursuing Kikuyu, and the thickly-wooded bank would give the Kenya hunter his chance if he was still at hand.

Swifter and swifter they glided down the stream, under the crimson sunset,



Harry Wharton grasped Vernon-Smith and frenziedly dragged him aboard the canoe just in time. The sound of the crocodile's snapping jaws sent a shudder through every member of the party!

Harry Wharton & Co. scanned the silent banks, walled with green foliage.

Not a sign had been seen or sound heard of the Kenya hunter who was seeking to rescue them, since the hurling spear had stricken Barak dead in the leading canoe.

And on shore, in the tangled forest, no man, even one so swift of foot as Kikolobo, could have kept pace with the canoes.

But the river had many windings and bendings, and it was likely enough that the Kikuyu would cut across the loops, saving many miles of distance, and so keep in touch with the slave-hunting crew.

It was evident that Ludwig Krantz feared it, for he sat with his rifle across his knees, his light eyes in his dark face roving incessantly, watching for danger.

Billy Bunter was still snoring.

He had awakened once, and stayed awake long enough to devour a big bunch of plantains. Then his little round eyes closed again behind his big round spectacles, and he forgot his troubles once more in slumber.

But, hot and drowsy as it was, and lulling as was the wash of the river and the incessant buzzing of the insects, Harry Wharton & Co. were not disposed to doze.

Still less so was the Bounder.

He was aching from the savage cut of the rhinoceros-hide whip, and his temper was growing more savage and bitter.

The other fellows eyed him rather anxiously at times.

Escape was constantly in their thoughts, as in Smithy's, and gladly

enough they would have joined in any attempt to turn the tables on their captors, had it been possible.

But there was nothing doing. Unarmed it was futile to think of entering into a struggle with twice their number of ruffians, armed to the teeth. And Krantz had ordered his men to fire instantly if they attempted to leap from the canoe. Even without that certainty of death from the rifles of the slave-hunters, they would hardly have thought of making the attempt, for the river was alive with crocodiles, basking in the sun among the mangroves, or floating like logs on the water. A swimmer would not have had one chance in a hundred of escaping the shearing jaws.

Bitter as it was, they had to make up their minds to grin and bear it, or bear it, at all events, if they could not grin.

But the Bounder was in a savagely reckless mood, and the famous five feared every moment to see him begin some futile outbreak, which could only lead to lashing from the rhinoceros-hide whip, or even death. It was useless to provoke brutality that could not be resisted.

The Bounder stirred and sat up. His eyes went to the river and to the mangrove-lined bank, closer now that the stream had narrowed. Wharton could read the desperate thought in his mind, and he whispered:

"Don't be a fool, Smithy! There's no chance."

The Bounder gritted his teeth. "I'm not standing this!" he muttered. "Better go into the jaws of a croc than knuckle under to that hound."

"While there is life, there is

absurd hopefulness, my esteemed Smithy!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the jawfulness of a crocodile would be the ridiculous finish."

"Oh, rot!" grunted the Bounder. "Give it a miss, old man!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder did not trouble to answer. He stared over the side at the swirling water.

Though the slave-hunters were not paddling now, the canoes ran swiftly. Ahead came a deep murmur of distant falling water.

It was plain that they were approaching a fall, and the current ran swifter and harder as they drew nearer.

The Bounder's face set hard, and his eyes glinted. He was making up his mind to a desperate act.

Ludwig Krantz stood up in the canoe, staring at the forest-lined banks with keen, uneasy eyes. His glance went along the rapid stream to where tossing foam and spray marked the fall ahead.

The juniors could see that he was undecided.

How deep the fall was they could not tell; but it was clear that it was perilous to shoot the descent in the canoes.

But for fear of the pursuing Kikuyu, Krantz would not have thought of it. He would have landed above the fall, dragged the canoes along the muddy bank, and launched them again on the lower stream beyond the fall.

That meant landing his prisoners, and marching them along the bank for a considerable distance.

The juniors' hearts beat at the thought.

If the Kikuyu was at hand, as they hoped, and as the slave-trader feared, it was a chance for them.

The Kikuyu was a master of bush-fighting, and in the tangled wilderness along the banks his spears would take a deadly toll. But Krantz was as well aware of that as his prisoners, and finally, with a savage scowl and muttering curses, he seemed to make up his mind not to land, for the canoes remained gliding down the centre of the stream. The fall was near at hand now, and the murmur of falling waters was deepening to a roar.

Herbert Vernon-Smith clenched his hands hard.

Wharton touched his arm.

"Smithy!"

"I'm going!" muttered the Bounder. "You fellows can do as you like. I'm going to take my chance."

"It's madness!"

"I don't care."

"My esteemed, idiotic Smithy——"

"Oh, shut up!"

The Bounder was savagely determined. The slave-hunters were hardly heeding their prisoners now. Between the peril they feared on the shore, and the certain peril ahead, their thoughts were fully occupied, and they seemed almost to have forgotten the juniors. Doubtless they considered the crocodiles a sufficient guard against an attempt at escape—as, indeed, they were, had not Smithy been utterly reckless.

Wharton set his lips.

It was death to make the attempt, and he knew it, if the Bounder did not.

"Take your chance with me!" whispered Vernon-Smith. "They've got their eyes off us. We've got a chance. Jump for it!"

"There's no chance——"

"Rot! I'll go alone, then."

The Bounder set his teeth and flung himself over the side of the canoe. Instantly Harry Wharton grasped him by the collar and held on. Instead of shooting away into the rushing water, Smithy was held to the side.

He struggled and spluttered, with the water to his neck.

With an exertion of strength he would not have been capable of at any other moment, Wharton dragged him back bodily into the canoe.

He sprawled, panting and gasping.

Snap!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry, staring fascinated at a crocodile almost touching the canoe, whose huge jaws had snapped only a second too late.

Vernon-Smith sat up, streaming with water.

"You—you fool! You cheeky rotter!" he panted.

"Look, you idiot!" gasped Bob.

Vernon-Smith's gaze turned on the scaly head and the dull, glassy eyes only a couple of feet from him. He started and shuddered. The crocodile, disappointed of his prey, plunged and disappeared.

"You fool, Smithy!" breathed Wharton. "If I hadn't caught you——" His face was white as chalk.

The Bounder did not speak. He knew what a narrow escape he had had, and that he would not have succeeded in getting two yards from the canoe alive.

There was a harsh laugh from Ludwig Krantz.

"Ach! Do you want to feed the crocodiles, my young herr? Ach himmel! Jump again if you wish; not a hand shall be raised to stop you!"

But the Bounder did not stir.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Over the Falls!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter woke up.

He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked round at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

Harry Wharton & Co. made no reply to that.

If Billy Bunter was hungry, the matter was no doubt urgent. But they did not heed the Owl of the Remove.

They sat with their eyes fixed on the tossing spray ahead of the rushing canoe, rushing now at great speed.

The roar of the fall was in their ears.

Above the fall the stream was narrow, and the water swelled deep at the banks, whirling and splashing through the muddy mangroves. Branches of huge trees on either bank stretched across the river, almost meeting over the centre of the stream. From the leafy branches, black-faced monkeys blinked down at the canoes passing below.

Bunter sat up.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go to sleep again, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Better go to sleep, Bunter," said Harry.

What was coming, in a few minutes now, was no sight for Billy Bunter's eyes.

"I've said I'm hungry!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Fathead!"

"What's that fearful row?" asked Bunter, blinking round. The roar of the fall was deep and loud. "I say, you fellows——"

"Shut your eyes, idiot!" grunted the Bounder.

"I'm hungry. Are there any more bananas?" asked Bunter. "Those beasts have let us have plenty of bananas—they're cheap! Look here, you fellows, you might hand a fellow a bunch of bananas!"

Frank Nugent tossed a bunch of bananas to the fat junior. Bunter grabbed it, and started peeling one of the succulent fruit. The juniors had been on short commons since they had fallen into the hands of the slave-trader. But bananas and plantains, at least, were plentiful. They could be gathered by the boatload, if wanted.

Bunter jammed a banana into his capacious mouth, with a grunt of fat contentment.

It was not the grub he wanted, but it was grub. And anything in the shape of grub was welcome to Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, these bananas ain't bad!" he remarked, with his mouth full. Filling his mouth to capacity was Bunter's usual preliminary to conversation. "I'm getting pretty sick of them; still, they ain't bad! They keep a fellow going!"

Having bolted the banana, he peeled a second one. The second banana was half-way to his mouth, when he uttered a sudden startled ejaculation.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Feed and shut up!" said the Bounder.

"Beast! I say, is that a gorilla?" gasped Bunter. "I say, if he jumps down on us——"

Ahead of the canoes a mighty branch stretched far across the stream. In a minute or less the canoes would be passing under it.

Bunter's startled eyes, through his big spectacles, were fixed on a figure that lay along the branch, almost hidden by foliage.



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The attention of everyone else, slaves and slave-hunters, was concentrated on the fall; but Bunter had not even seen the fall yet, and did not know it was there. So he had attention for other things.

But as he pointed up to the overhanging branch ahead, the juniors looked up.

Harry Wharton caught his breath.

It was not a great ape that clung to the branch over the stream, as the short-sighted Owl of the Remove supposed.

Wharton had a glimpse of a dark, determined face, and of a figure in striped monkey-skins.

It was the Kikuyu!

"Oh crikey!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Kicky!" breathed the Bounder.

All the juniors saw the Kikuyu. Had the slave-hunters looked up they must have seen him.

But they were not looking up. Their eyes were fixed on the rushing waters sweeping over the fall.

Whether the Kikuyu intended to hurl a spear as the canoes swept under him, or whether he intended to leap down as they came, the juniors did not know; they could not guess. But he was there, on the branch over the stream, watching like a leopard, with glinting eyes.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" hissed the Bounder. He dreaded to see the attention of the slave-hunters drawn to the figure above.

"But, I say, if it's a gorilla—"

"Will you shut up?"

"No, I won't!" howled Bunter, staring in alarm at the high branch. "I say, you fellows—yaroooh!"

Vernon-Smith, grabbing him by the collar, up-ended him into the bottom of the canoe. Billy Bunter rolled over with a spluttering roar.

"Ach, himmel!"

Whether Bunter had drawn his attention to the unseen danger, or whether it was his own watchfulness, Ludwig Krantz had glimpsed the figure in monkey-skins extended on the branch.

He grasped a paddle.

One swift stroke drove the canoe out of the course it was following, and it shot away to the right, clearing the end of the high branch.

Krantz had been only in time.

A spear from above missed him barely by a foot as the canoe rocked and plunged away in the racing current.

But the second canoe passed directly under the branch. There was no time to yell a warning to the four Arabs in the following canoe, and they had not seen the danger. It was a matter of split seconds.

Even as the leading canoe whirled away from the danger under Krantz's rapid paddle-stroke, the second canoe came gliding under the extended branch, under the gleaming eyes of Kikolobo of the Kikuyu.

From the foliage above a dark form shot down.

It landed in the second canoe.

The clumsy craft rocked and plunged wildly under the shock, and the four Arabs sprawled, yelling in amazement and alarm.

But the Kikuyu did not lose his footing.

Standing in the rocking canoe, with his long Kikuyu spear in his right hand, a bundle of throwing spears in his left, Kikolobo towered over the yelling, sprawling slave-hunters.

The long spear flashed with lightning-like swiftness.

Blow after blow fell from the broad, two-edged blade—thrice the Kikuyu struck, and each swift blow dealt death.

And the fourth Arab barely escaped the thrusting spear by flinging himself into the water, and the rushing river tore him away to his fate in the falls.

From the leading canoe the juniors stared back, dumbfounded by the swift happenings. But the slave-hunters did not look back. The larger canoe was whirling down to the falls, and the efforts of the ruffians were all directed to keeping it steady to shoot the descent.

If they knew what was happening to their comrades behind, they did not heed. In the shadow of terrible danger, they thought only of themselves; as heedless of their comrades as a pack of jackals.

The canoe rushed on like an arrow.

"Kicky!" panted the Bounder.

"Good old Kicky! He—oh gad!"

"He's over!" gasped Wharton.

The second canoe, plunging and rocking wildly, had gone gunwale under.

THE JUDGE CHUCKLED,

now it's your turn to laugh at the following storyette which has earned for James E. Curtis, of Hill Farm, South Walsham, Norwich, Norfolk, one of this week's useful pocket-knives.



Sambo: "Hey, Rastus, is you goin' to pay me that money you owes me?"

Rastus: "I ain't sayin' I ain't."

Sambo: "I ain't askin' is you ain't, I asks you ain't you is?"

Look lively with your efforts, chums! You raise the laugh, I'll supply the prize!

The tall figure in monkey-skins went headlong into the swirling water.

The juniors caught their breath.

Kikolobo of the Kikuyu had conquered; four of the enemy had gone down, but now the brave Kikuyu was fighting for his life in the whirling, swirling waters, and he vanished from the anxious eyes of the schoolboys.

"We're going!" gasped Nugent.

"Hold on!"

"Yaroooh! I say, you fellows—groogh! Hold me—oh crumbs! Ow!" Billy Bunter, conscious of the danger at last, spluttered with terror.

Wharton, holding on to the canoe with one hand, grasped Bunter by the back of his collar with the other.

The canoe was shooting the fall, amid a wild rush of water and tossing masses of foam.

Slave-hunters and prisoners crouched and held on for their lives as the canoe shot down.

Wild spray and foam, and a roar of falling waters! To the juniors, blinded by the spray, deafened by the roar, it seemed the end of all things.

Hundreds of tons of water thundered down after them; it seemed a miracle that the canoe was not overwhelmed.

Flooded, drenched, half-drowned, they swept through the torrent, and shot away into the lower stream.

Wharton dashed the spray from his eyes and stared dizzily back.

The fall was behind the canoe now, thundering down. The canoe ran swiftly on, flooded fore and aft. It was almost sinking under their feet, and the slave-hunters baled frantically with gourds.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry gasped. "We're through. We're through, old beans."

"Groooooogh!"

"All serene now, Bunter, old top."

"Ooooooh! I'm drowned! Grooogh!"

"But—Kicky!" muttered the Bounder, staring back at the falls.

But of Kikolobo the juniors could see nothing. That he must have been swept over the fall was certain, but whether he had survived, or perished in the wild waters, they could not tell—they could only hope for his safety!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

News from the Wilderness!

MR. VERNON-SMITH, millionaire and financier, stood in the veranda of Mr. Jarram's bungalow, near Butiaba, in Uganda, and stared across the waters of Lake Albert.

The portly figure of the millionaire had a drooping look, and his face, usually plump and self-satisfied, was haggard.

Days and nights had passed since his son had vanished across the lake, a prisoner in the hands of the half-breed slave-trader.

Since then there had been no news.

Harry Wharton & Co., going in search of their comrade, had fallen into the same savage hands. The millionaire felt real concern for the schoolboys who were travelling in Africa in his charge. But almost all his thoughts were concentrated on his own son.

Hard and worldly as he was, Mr. Vernon-Smith did not count his immense fortune at a pin's fee in comparison with Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Where was his son?

Bitterly did the millionaire regret that he had allowed Herbert and his friends to accompany him in that journey to East Africa. Yet no one could have foreseen such a disaster as this.

The Greyfriars fellows had jumped at the chance of a holiday in "British East." It was impossible to have foreseen such an outcome.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of natives were searching the lake and its wild shores in the hope of earning the munificent rewards offered by the millionaire.

Captain McCann, the man-tracker of Uganda, and his askaris were at work. But the schoolboys had vanished into the unknown heart of Africa; and even from Kikolobo, the Kikuyu who had gone in search of them, had come no word.

Mr. Vernon-Smith had almost given up hope.

The business matters which had brought him to Africa were forgotten. Coffee-lands and cotton-plantations, railway concessions and timber concessions did not interest Mr. Vernon-Smith now. He thought only of his son.

Sitting on the rail of the veranda was a little, wiry, bronze-faced man, with

eyes like sharp steel; Captain McCann, the man-tracker. His horse was tethered below. His abrupt voice broke in on the millionaire's gloomy meditations.

"There is hope, Mr. Vernon-Smith!"

"I shall never see my son again!" muttered the millionaire, without glancing round.

He stared across the shining lake, as if he would penetrate the wilderness beyond with his haggard eyes.

"There is hope!" repeated McCann. "It is certain now that Kikolobo, the hunter, has followed Krantz. My men have found unmistakable traces, in an old crater on the Congo side of the lake, where the slave-hunters were camped and hidden. They have found unmistakable sign left by the Kikuyu, to show the way he followed. I shall follow on with my men—and I have every hope of bringing that scoundrel Krantz to book."

But the millionaire's gloomy face did not brighten.

"In that vast wilderness—thousands of square miles of untrodden forest—he muttered. "Krantz has vanished into the heart of a continent with my son—neither of them will ever be seen again."

There was a step on the path below the veranda, and Mr. Jarram, the Eurasian planter, came up the steps.

Behind him followed a black man, in a loin-cloth—a man upon whom Captain McCann's eyes fixed instantly, with keen curiosity.

To Mr. Vernon-Smith he was a black man, such as he had seen in thousands between Mombasa and the lakes. But to the man-tracker he was something more.

At a glance, McCann saw that the man was not of a race that belonged to either Kenya or Uganda. He came from beyond the lakes, from the wild regions of the Congo.

"Holy mackerel!" ejaculated the man-tracker. "This may be news. That is a man from Mabode country."

Mr. Vernon-Smith had never heard of the Mabode country, and he gave no heed.

Mr. Jarram came up the steps.

The hospitable Eurasian, at whose bungalow the Greyfriars party had been staying, was full of sympathy and concern. He gesticulated sympathetically with both hands, as he came into the veranda, and spoke in his peculiar English.

"Estimable friend, there is a hope!" he exclaimed. "The darkest hour, as you English say, is before sunrise of one new day. A black man has come across a lake in a canoe."

"Is that man from the Congo?" asked Mr. Vernon-Smith. There was a faint gleam of hope in his face.

"That is correctly stated," said Mr. Jarram. "A man makes a travel in a forest on foot, and crosses a lake in a canoe, with a word from a Kikuyu."

"Oh!" breathed Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"A man speaks a tongue I do not understand," went on Mr. Jarram. "But he say a word or two of which there is understanding on my poor part. He say a name of a Kikuyu, and he say a name which indicates my esteemed friend and guest, so I think he carry one message. Yes!"

The Mabode tribesman entered the veranda, and stood waiting. He was a man of powerful frame, strong and brawny, but he showed very evident signs of fatigue and hard travel.

The millionaire approached him eagerly.

"Have you news of my son?"

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The man stared at him uncomprehendingly.

"He speaks no English," said Captain McCann. "I will try him in Swahili. Leave him to me."

The man-tracker addressed the Mabode in a language that was flowing and musical, but utterly mysterious to Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The black face lighted.

Evidently the man from the interior understood.

He answered in his own tongue, which was comprehensible to the captain, though a succession of meaningless sounds to Mr. Vernon-Smith, and to Mr. Jarram.

"Lord," said the tribesman, "I carry news from Kikolobo, a chief of the Kikuyu people who dwell in the shadow of the Great Mountain. This brave and handsome chief sends news of the white boys, of whom one is the son of this old fat lord."

Mr. Vernon-Smith was listening eagerly, though without understanding. It was, perhaps, as well that he did not know how the Mabode was describing him.

Captain McCann smiled faintly.

"O strong and brave man of the Mabode," he said, "let my ears hear your message, and I will tell it with my lips to the old fat lord."

"The evil Mzungu, who is called Krantz by the white lords, came with his men to our town on the river," said the tribesman. "They slew many with their fire-sticks, and stole our canoes. They fled in the canoes on the river, towards the waters of the great Congo, taking with them the white prisoners. Of these there were seven."

"Your son and his friends live, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the captain. "This man has seen them in the hands of Krantz."

The millionaire nodded.

"After they had fled," resumed the tribesman, "there came to us a brave hunter of the Kikuyu, who was in pursuit of them. And at first we would have slain him, for in our land a stranger is an enemy; but he made the sign of peace, and with his handsome lips he told us that he was the enemy of our enemies, and in proof of this he showed us the head he had taken from one of these wicked men who had fallen under his spear. This head he gave us in token of friendship."

This part of the message McCann did not translate to the millionaire. The savage manners and customs of Central Africa were not likely to have a reassuring effect on the man whose son was lost in the wilderness.

"To this brave Kikuyu we gave bread and meat and cool water," continued the tribesman, "also we gave him spears, that he might slay more of the wicked ones when he followed them in the forests. And at my master's order, I, Motongo, came hither with his message. He said also that the father of the boy he called Bwana-wangu would give me a great reward."

"Your reward shall be great, O Motongo," said McCann. "But tell me the words of the brave Kikuyu."

"His words were these, lord," said the tribesman. "Watching the evil men and following them in light and darkness, the Kikuyu heard words that they spoke to one another, and so he learned that the wicked one, Krantz, travelled to the land of Tofoloko, who is a great king in the land of the Congo. And in that land he designs to sell the white boys as slaves to the king Tofoloko. And he spoke also these words, saying

that if the father of Bwana-wangu desires to save his son, he must send many askaris to the land of Tofoloko."

Captain McCann's eyes glinted.

"Holy mackerel!" he ejaculated.

"The news—the news!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "In Heaven's name, McCann, what is the man telling you?"

"All that I could have asked," answered the man-tracker. "Kikolobo has found out that Krantz is heading for Tofoloko's country on the Upper Congo, and now we know where to seek him."

"And where is that?"

"In the heart of the Congo wilderness—a region never subdued by the Belgian Congo Government; a region where no white man has ever ventured to set his foot," answered the captain, rather dryly.

Mr. Vernon-Smith gave a snort.

"One white man will venture to set his foot there, if my boy is there," he snapped. "I start within the hour."

"Nothing of the sort, sir!" said McCann. "You would be useless, or worse than useless, on such an expedition. I have the commission of the Congo State to hunt for Krantz on their side of the border, and I shall follow Krantz wherever he goes. But such a journey will tell severely on me and on my men, and you cannot possibly undertake it."

The millionaire's plump jaw squared.

"I am going!" he said.

"My dear sir, if you desire to help, such an expedition will be costly, and that is where you come in," said the man-tracker.

"My whole fortune, to the last sixpence, if necessary," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "But I shall not stay idle here while other men are marching to rescue my son. I am going, Captain McCann, with you or without you."

"Without me, you would not live a day after crossing the lake," said the captain, smiling faintly. "I warn you that you are facing death in a thousand shapes—"

"Rubbish!"

"Swamps thick with fever, cannibals, and wild beasts, labour and fatigue that would break down many a strong man half your age, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"And at the finish, when we get to Tofoloko, a good chance of winding up in the cooking-pots," said McCann coolly.

"What the dickens does all that matter to me?" snapped the millionaire. "If you are facing all this, because it is your duty, I suppose I can face it, when my son's life is at stake? I am going."

McCann shrugged his shoulders.

The millionaire was resolved, and there was nothing more to be said.

When Captain McCann and his askaris crossed the lake, to take up the trail in the Congo country, Mr. Vernon-Smith went with them.

With them also went Motongo of the Mabode, to guide them as far as his native country, and he went loaded with gifts for the news he had brought.

And if the man-tracker expected Mr. Vernon-Smith to turn back, when he found what the dangers and difficulties of the journey were really like, he discovered that he was mistaken. There was no turning back for Mr. Vernon-Smith, and the untrodden wilderness of Central Africa swallowed the millionaire as it had swallowed his son.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Camp in the Hills!

"W!" Billy Bunter yelped.

Billy Bunter often complained without cause, but he had cause this time. The cause was a heavy Arab foot that clumped on the fat junior and rolled him over in the canoe.

"Unbelieving dog!" said the Arab. "Get ashore!"

"Yaroooh! Keep him off!" howled Bunter.

The Arab kicked again.

Bunter sprawled and yelled.

Since the passage of the falls, the day before, the slave-hunters, never gentle, had been more brutal than ever in handling their prisoners.

Ludwig Krantz's evil, coppery face had been set and savage, his temper vile. He was quicker with a blow than with a word, and the rest of the gang—what were left of them—followed his example faithfully.

Kikolobo had not been seen, and the slave-hunters hoped that he had perished in the rushing waters, but they still feared him.

Like the angel of death he had tracked the retreating gang, from far-off Lake Albert, on the British border, to the heart of the Congo country.

Man after man had fallen under his spears, and of the gang who had marched with Krantz from Lake Albert only six remained, with the half-breed included. Four had perished at the falls, and the ruffians could only hope—and could not be sure—that the pursuing Kikuyu had perished with them.

Terror was in the very bones of Ludwig Krantz and the five Arabs who remained of his slave-hunting gang.

They knew, as the juniors knew, the cunning and ruthless plan that was in the mind of the Kikuyu.

Openly the native hunter, armed only with spears, could not tackle men, white or half-white, armed with rifles. Neither could even so famous a warrior as Kikolobo, of the Kikuyu, have dealt with such odds, if the whole gang could have piled on him.

It was his cunning game to tackle them singly, taking them by surprise, decimating them one by one.

And in that game he had so far played a winning hand. Fifteen men had marched from Lake Albert. One had fallen in the fight with the Mabode natives from whom the canoes had been seized. Eight had fallen to the Kikuyu.

Terrible and merciless as such bush-warfare was, the Greyfriars fellows could only hope that "Kicky" would succeed, for unless he saved them before they reached the land of Tofoloko they were doomed.

To the slave-hunters every shadow of a stirring branch, every rustle of a lurking leopard hinted of the Kikuyu, and fear was never out of their watchful eyes, weapons seldom out of their hands.

For their comrades who had fallen they cared no more than jackals for other jackals in the pack. But for



Unconscious of the danger ahead, the Arabs in the canoe glided under the extended branch. Suddenly, from the foliage above, the dark form of Kikolobo shot down towards them!

their own dusky, unwashed skins they cared very much indeed.

Beside the Kikuyu there were many other dangers in the cannibal country on the Upper Congo, and so small a party was hardly secure.

Moreover, Ludwig Krantz had planned to carry out slave-trading on his way to King Tofoloko, to have black slaves as well as white to sell to that Central African potentate.

That plan he had had to abandon. His men were now too few for successful attacks on native villages, and with the fear of the Kikuyu upon them they would have refused to provoke other enemies. They were only too glad to creep through the savage country unmolested.

The juniors were aware of that, and it helped to reconcile their minds to the terrible methods of the Kikuyu. The ruthless slaying of the slave-hunters had saved scores of natives from death or slavery.

It was now near the close of the day, and the canoe at last had come to land. The rest of the journey, the juniors guessed, could not be made by river, reluctant as Krantz was to abandon that swift and safe means of transport.

Blows from the rhinoceros-hide whip drove the juniors from the canoe to the muddy bank, where they were roped together in a "string" to prevent escape on the march.

Billy Bunter, more slow than the

others, was savagely kicked out of the canoe, and he tottered ashore yelling.

"I say, you fellows! Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Bunter. "I say, keep off, you beast! I'm getting out, ain't I? Oh, you rotter! I say, you fellows, help!"

But the other fellows could not help Bunter.

Kicked into line, he was roped with the rest.

Such baggage as had to be carried was packed on the backs of the school-boy slaves. Most of it, however, had been in the canoe that had sunk in the falls, and had been lost with the canoe. And the juniors, as they started to march under a burning sun, were glad of it.

The canoe was stove in and sunk when the slave-hunters left it. Then the gang turned their backs on the river and marched through the jungle.

The way lay by a narrow path, barred in on either side by high elephant grass, and the looks of the ruffians showed with what uneasiness they entered on it.

If the Kikuyu was near at hand there was ample cover for him within hearing of the footsteps of the slavers, and the hurried glances to and fro showed that the wretches feared every moment the thrust of a long Kikuyu spear from the thick, high grass.

Had Kikolobo survived?

The juniors wondered and hoped.

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If he yet lived it was most likely that he was far behind, for the savage crew had fled down the lower stream at almost frantic speed, helping the current with the paddles.

Given time he would overtake the rascals again. If they camped for the night he would be heard, if not seen. But the juniors knew that Krantz was not far from his destination now, and once they were in the land of Tofoloko the Kikuyu would be powerless to aid.

No time was lost on the march.

After the long rest day after day in the canoe, both slave-hunters and their prisoners were capable of exertion, and they marched as rapidly as the heat and tangled jungle permitted.

Even Billy Bunter put on a good speed, urged by the heavy thong that cracked across his fat shoulders when he lagged.

Under a burning sunset they wound along the jungle path, with constant backward glances from the Arabs.

The sun dipped in the crimson west, and shadows rolled over the jungle. But if the prisoners hoped that Krantz would call a halt, they were disappointed.

The march went on.

Evidently Ludwig Krantz felt by no means sure that the Kikuyu had perished, and he was giving the pursuer no chance if he could help it.

But if the brave hunter of Kenya was following he would gain on them, the juniors felt sure of that. The powerful, agile Kikuyu travelled faster than the slave-hunters, driving their weary prisoners. And they felt confident that he would not lose the track, careful as the ruffians were to leave no sign they could avoid.

Darkness fell on the jungle.

It was a relief from the glare of the sun, but it brought new terrors to the slave-hunters. In every shadow they feared to see the tall figure in striped monkey-skins.

Milo after mile, long and weary, lapsed under the tramping feet. The jungle gave way to forest, the forest to swamp.

Under the glittering stars of Africa they tramped on, by a path through oozy swamps, where myriads of foul insects rose round them, and crocodiles blinked at them with glassy eyes.

Beyond the swamp, oozy and foul-smelling, poisonous to the breath, came a stretch of arid, sandy plain, rising towards a range of hills in the dim distance.

The schoolboys were tottering with fatigue, and from the slave-hunters came loud grumbles and imprecations. Krantz still tramped on ahead, giving no sign to halt.

But even the iron-limbed slave-trader gave in at last. They had reached the lower slopes of the stony hills when a halt was called.

How many miles they had covered since leaving the river the juniors did not know, but they knew that the distance was great.

Billy Bunter sank to the earth with a grunt the moment he was allowed to stop. Krantz came towards the juniors and lifted his hand to point to the hills, dim in the starlight, with an evil grin on his coppery face.

"Look!" he snarled. "Beyond those hills lies the land of Tofoloko! To-morrow you will see him!"

The juniors did not speak.

As they had guessed, the end of the weary march was at hand. Kikolobo, if he was yet pursuing, had little more time.

The weary juniors sank down to rest, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—NO. 1,235.

almost too tired to eat the hard dhurra bread, and drink the brackish water that was given them.

They pillowed their heads on their arms and slept.

Round them snored the five Arabs.

But Krantz did not close his eyes, weary as he was. He sat leaning back against the rock, his rifle across his knees, his light-blue eyes gleaming watchfulness.

He had chosen the camp with care. The halt had been made in a narrow, rocky defile, with high walls of rock on either side. Between the high rocks was a space of not more than fifteen feet, and for some distance down the defile Krantz could watch the way he had come. In the bright starlight it was scarcely possible for a pursuer to approach unseen while he was wakeful.

He dared not close his eyes.

He could not have trusted his weary followers to watch, and he dared not leave the camp unguarded. If the Kikuyu was still following he would not be halting to rest; he was as tireless on the trail as the hunting leopard. The halt gave him the chance to cover the ground he had lost. Ludwig Krantz realised, with a shudder, that if he closed his eyes he might never open them again.

Suddenly he gave a start.

HERE'S A CLEVER GREYFRIARS LIMERICK, CHUMS!

When Bunter tried to smoke a
cigar,
A strong one he'd pinched from
his pa,
Sick and dizzy was he.
Said his dad: "Now I see
What a 'real' 'giddy' boy you
are!"

A pocket wallet has been forwarded
to: A. W. Henton, of 33, Grove
Street, Leamington Spa, for the
above winning effort.

Amid the shadows lower down the narrow defile a form stirred.

Krantz breathed hard.

He lifted his rifle, his light eyes glaring over the levelled barrel, and waited.

Something was stirring among the rocks.

Fearful as he was of the Kikuyu, the slave-trader was no coward. Nothing would have pleased him better than to see Kikolobo in the open, where he would have a chance of using his superior weapons.

With burning eyes he watched the shadow that stirred, and was still again, and stirred once more. His finger was on the trigger.

The camp was sleeping. Prisoners and slave-hunters were sunk in the deep sleep of weariness. Only Krantz was awake; and he knew now, beyond a doubt, that his eyes, once closed, would have remained sealed for ever.

For it was the Kikuyu. The creeping shadow in the starlight grew clearer as it neared, and became a figure in the striped skins of the colobus monkey. And the slave-trader knew that he was staring at his enemy over his rifle.

His savage eyes burned with the desire to kill.

It was the Kikuyu! The black man loves the bush, but Krantz's choice of a camp had given the Kikuyu no choice.

There was little cover among the rocks

of the defile. What there was, the creeping hunter took advantage of; but from moment to moment the striped monkey-skins showed in the starlight, as Kikolobo, silent as a snake, crept closer to the camp.

Krantz, deep in the shadow of the rock, unseen even by the keen eyes of the creeping Kikuyu, dwelt on his aim. He had to make certain of the first shot, for well he knew he would have no chance of a second. His burning eyes watched the Kikuyu creeping closer and closer, as he waited, finger on trigger, till it should be beyond doubt that the bullet, when it flew, would be buried in the heart of the brave Kikuyu.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stirred in his sleep, and opened his eyes.

Some crawling insect of the rocks had bitten, and bitten deep, and it had awakened the Bounder.

Hardly conscious of what had awakened him, too weary to stir, Smithy lay with his head pillowed on his folded arm, staring round him in the dim starlight in the defile.

The night was growing old; already the stars were paling.

Deep silence was round him in the gloom. The thought of the Kikuyu came into his mind the moment he was awake. Only this night remained. It was his faithful friend's last chance. On the morrow the string of slaves would be descending the slopes of the hills into Tofoloko's country, and the game would be up.

Had Kicky perished at the falls? Was he still on the track of the slave-trader? Was he dead, or was he, even in those still moments, drawing near to the Bwana he sought? Hope was not yet gone, though it was going. The Bounder raised his head to look round him.

Not more than six or seven feet from him he saw Krantz—not asleep, as he had supposed from the stillness.

There was a rifle at Krantz's shoulder, and he was crouching and watching.

So intent was the slave-trader on watching the creeping figure lower down the defile, that he did not notice the Bounder's slight movement.

Smithy watched him for some moments idly. Krantz was taking aim at something—probably a jackal or hyena wandering near the camp.

Vernon-Smith glanced in the direction in which the rifle aimed.

He caught his breath.

From a shadowy rock at a distance a figure darted, silently, and disappeared behind another rock.

It was only a second's glimpse that Smithy had of it, but he knew that long-limbed figure in monkey-skins.

And he knew now at what Krantz was taking aim.

The figure that crept and dodged and twisted among the boulders gave chances for a shot, but Krantz was waiting for a certainty. And when the Kikuyu was closer he would be certain.

But it was only a matter of moments. Any second the death-shot might ring out.

Vernon-Smith set his teeth hard.

He could not stir from where he lay. His limbs were free, but the strong rope fastened him in a "string" with his companions. They lay close round him, fast asleep.

To intervene, to save the slave-trader's intended victim, would draw upon him the wrath and vengeance of the baffled

ruffian; it might draw upon him the bullet that the Kikuyu escaped. But the Bounder did not think of hesitating. It was to save him that Kikolobo was there, and not to save his life would he have hesitated to save the Kikuyu.

His hand groped on the earth beside him, his quick fingers detached a small stone.

A jerk of his arm, and the stone flew. It was little more than a pebble, but as it struck the coppery face bent over the rifle, it gave Krantz, in that tense moment, a sudden and convulsive shock.

The finger that was half-pressing the trigger pressed harder as the slave-trader started.

Bang!

The rifle roared.

But the muzzle was jerked up as Krantz started, and the bullet whizzed away high in the air.

The report awoke a thousand echoes in the hollows of the hills. The slave-hunters and the prisoners jumped into wakefulness.

A terrible oath broke from the slave-trader.

He leaped to his feet, blazing away shot after shot in the direction of the Kikuyu.

But he knew that it was in vain.

The first ring of the rifle had given the Kenya hunter warning, and he was not likely to quit cover.

Crouching behind a boulder, the Kikuyu lay still, while hot lead spattered on the rocks round him.

The slave-hunters were on their feet, glaring round them in the dimness, grasping their rifles, with a babble of startled exclamations.

The Bounder lay still.

Whether Krantz was aware of his action, he did not know; the ruffian did not glance towards him.

It was likely that he had seen nothing. The shock of the pebble striking his face had come as a complete surprise to him. The Bounder, his head pillowed on his arm, affected sleep, with a lurking grin on his face.

Bang, bang, bang!

The slave-hunters blazed away at random, and bullets crashed on the rocks all round the camp.

There was a yell, as a figure in monkey-skins was seen for a moment. But it vanished among the boulders.

Twice again it was glimpsed for a second, but it vanished two swiftly for shooting. Then the Kikuyu was gone.

Not a man in the slave-hunting gang followed. Not even the enraged slave-trader made a step from the camp. In the shadows of the rocks they dared not hunt the Kikuyu.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, is—is—is it a lion?" stuttered Bunter, through his chattering teeth. "I—I say, keep round me, you fellows! D-d-don't let him spring at me, you know."

"It's Kicky, you fat ass!" whispered Bob.

Krantz snarled to his men to cease the wild and random firing.

He came over to the juniors, glaring at them suspiciously. The Bounder sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"What's the row about?" he asked.

"Get up!" snarled Krantz.

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

There was murderous rage in the eyes of the slave-trader. But it was clear that he did not suspect the Bounder.

Possibly he did not even realise that it was a pebble that had struck him, and might have supposed that it was the impact of some buzzing insect. The tap on his face had been slight, though sufficient to make him start and disorder his aim, and save the life of the Kikuyu. And the Bounder, reckless as

he was, was glad that the slave-trader did not know. A savage beating from the whip of rhinoceros-hide, if not death, would have been his reward.

The camp was broken at once. The weariest of the slave-hunters was not thinking now of sleep.

With blows and curses they drove the prisoners to the march again, and they tramped up the rocky defile, Krantz bringing up the rear, watchful as a leopard.

Under the paling stars they tramped on, and though no sound was heard from the Kikuyu, all knew that he was not far behind.

Night gave place to day, and with daylight the slave-hunters breathed more freely. They could see a long distance down the defile, looking back, and it was now impossible for the pursuer to draw near them unseen.

Higher and higher into the arid hills they tramped, under blazing, aching heat, as the sun rose in the cloudless heavens.

The defile led them up to a narrow gorge, a deep split in precipitous cliffs. Through this the path ran, with walls of rock almost as perpendicular as the walls of a house, on either hand.

Far ahead the juniors had a glimpse of lower country beyond—a verdant valley that lay on the other side of the rocky hills.

That, they knew, must be the country of Tofoloko—their destination. Smiling and verdant as it looked, in comparison with their arid surroundings, their hearts sank at the sight of it. Little hope remained now.

For a mile or more the gorge rived the hills. Rugged rocks were stacked on either side by the soaring cliffs, as if scattered like pebbles by a giant's hand. The sun blazed down, turning the gorge into an oven of heat, the rocks burning to the touch.

Muttering curses in Arabic, the slave-hunters drove their limping prisoners on in single file.

There was a sudden roar and a crash. From high up the side of the gorge a great boulder, detached from the cliff, came thundering down.

It missed Krantz, who marched ahead, by hardly more than a foot, crashed on the earth, rebounded, and smashed into the next man, pinning him against the cliff.

There was an outbreak of startled yells, and the party halted. Every eye turned upward.

High up the side of the gorge, crouching on a narrow ledge, was a figure in monkey-skins.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

In the Land of Tofoloko I

KIKOLOBO of the Kikuyu stared down.

His dark eyes burned at Ludwig Krantz.

It was for the slave-trader that the falling rock had been intended, and Krantz's escape had been narrow.

The Arab whom it had struck, pinning him against the side of the gorge, uttered no sound; he lay half-buried under the great rock, crushed out of life at a blow.

The others glared up in startled terror.

"Kicky!" gasped the Bounder.

The juniors gazed up at the Kikuyu. For a moment he was visible on the ledge sixty feet up; then he crouched back from sight as the slave-hunters began to loose off their rifles.

Krantz spat out a German oath. "Ach! The Kikuyu! Ach himmel! Forward!"

He hardly needed to give the command.

After a spattering volley at the figure, hidden now by the projecting ledge high above, the slave-hunters hurried on.

Two of them ran at top speed, heedless even of the prisoners; but the other two, with Krantz, drove the juniors savagely on. And they kept close to the prisoners, grasping some of them as they hurried through the gorge. They gave the Kikuyu no chance of dislodging another rock upon them without equal risk of crushing the schoolboys.

The rhinoceros-hide whip lashed and cracked on the panting schoolboys. The two fleeing slave-hunters had vanished ahead, the others were wildly anxious to get out of the gorge.

Faster and faster they dragged and drove the schoolboys with blows and curses, snarling with rage and fear.

Harry Wharton cast a despairing glance back.

He had a glimpse of a figure in striped monkey-skins scrambling down the rocky wall of the gorge.

Kikolobo of the Kikuyu was in pursuit.

But Wharton knew that it had been the last chance, and that it had failed.

Had the falling rock crushed Ludwig Krantz, as Kikolobo had hoped, it was likely enough that the Arabs would have fled, and at the eleventh hour the brave Kikuyu would have saved the schoolboy slaves.

But the last throw of the dice had gone against him.

Nothing remained now to the Kikuyu, except to abandon the pursuit, or to rush desperately on the rifles of the remnant of the gang.

It was the latter course he had decided on evidently, for he was scrambling down the rocks with the activity and swiftness of a mountain goat.

Had the slave-hunters turned on him then it was only too certain that he could have been picked off with a rifle as he clambered recklessly down.

But terror drove the wretches on, and they hardly looked back at all. They fled for their lives towards the open country beyond the gorge.

Long before the Kikuyu could reach them they would be out of the gorge; and if he followed, it would only be to fall under their fire.

Faster and faster Krantz and his companions drove the prisoners on, and they panted and stumbled out of the gorge

(Continued on next page.)

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to the slopes of the hills on the valley side.

There a dense forest received them, and the pace slackened as they followed a path under giant trees through thorny bush.

From somewhere in the distance came a dull, droning sound—the sound of the tapping of an African drum.

The firing in the gorge had been heard, and the alarm was given in some village that lay near at hand.

Ludwig Krantz wiped the perspiration from his dark brow. There was relief in his coppery face.

The slave-trader counted himself safe now.

He was in the land of Tofoloko, King of the Moteli, and the drum-taps told of the gathering of Moteli warriors.

"Halt!" snarled Krantz.

There was a rustling in the brake. A tall form stepped into view with shield and spears. Behind him crowded thirty or forty blacks, armed with spears, bows, and arrows.

Krantz grinned with satisfaction.

He addressed the tall savage in a tongue unknown to the juniors.

"O Mofobo, my eyes are glad to see you!" said Krantz. "For I have come to this land with handsome slaves to sell to your master, the great King Tofoloko; also I have a gift for him of a fat slave for the cooking-pots on the day of the feast."

It was as well that Billy Bunter did not understand the tongue in which the slave-trader spoke.

"O handsome Mzungu, you speak well!" said Mofobo. "And I and my spearmen will lead you into the presence of the great king."

The march went on in the midst of a swarm of natives. More and more blacks appeared through the openings of the forest till there were more than two hundred swarming round the school-boys.

Evidently the slave-trader was well known there; it was not his first visit, by many a one, to the land of King Tofoloko.

He was among friends now, and the haunting terror of the Kikuyu was a thing of the past.

The juniors saw Mofobo address some lesser chief among the blacks, and the latter turned back, followed by fifty men or more, in the direction of the gorge in the hills.

It was easy to guess that Krantz had told of the pursuit of the Kikuyu, and that that numerous force was sent to hunt for him in the hills.

They tramped on with heavy hearts.

Kikolobo's pursuit was ended now. If he was following, it was only to fall in with overwhelming enemies.

Doubtless the Kikuyu would elude them in the wild recesses of the hills. But for further help from him the juniors could not hope. From Lake Albert to the heart of the wild Congo country he had followed, and many of their enemies had fallen under his spears. He had done all that man could do, and he could do no more.

"The game's up, you men!" muttered the Bounder.

"Looks like it!" said Harry.

"You might as well have let that croc get me."

"While there's life there's hope, old man," said Bob Cherry. "The prospect doesn't look rosy, but Greyfriars never gives in."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Cheer up, old fat man!" said Bob.

"I say, I'm frightfully hungry!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"My legs are nearly dropping off," said Bunter pathetically, "and I could

eat a horse. I say, are these awful beasts never going to let a fellow sit down?"

"We shan't be long now, I think," said Harry.

"I'm famished!" groaned Bunter.

The other fellows were hungry, but they were not thinking of that. But Billy Bunter was not likely to think of anything else when he was hungry.

From the forest they entered on a fertile plain, watered by many streams that flowed down from the hills, where cattle were grazing.

Villages lay here and there, surrounded by maize fields, and the inhabitants crowded out to stare at the passing cortege.

The Moteli were evidently a numerous people. The juniors saw several thousands of them, at least.

Many of the blacks followed on, and it was quite an army that marched towards the chief town of Tofoloko, where the "great king" had his residence.

The town was reached at last.

It was extensive, surrounded by a "boma," or thorn wall, crowded by native houses in regular streets.

Armed guards stood at the gateways in the boma. By the principal gateway Krantz and his companions entered, and marched up a wide street, with a staring crowd swarming on either side.

They reached a wide square in the centre of the city, on one side of which stood a collection of huts larger than the rest, which the juniors could guess was the royal residence.

Krantz drove them into a hut and left them, with an Arab guarding the door, though in the crowded city a guard was little needed.

Billy Bunter slumped down at once.

The weary juniors sat on the earthen floor, glad to rest at least.

"I say, you fellows, do you think they're going to bring us any grub?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, dry up!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Beast! I say, you fellows, wake me up if they bring in the grub."

And Bunter went to sleep.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Tofoloko of the Moteli!

HARRY WHARTON looked from the narrow doorway of the hut which was, for the time, the prison of the Greyfriars juniors.

Some hours had passed since they had arrived in the city of Tofoloko, King of the Moteli.

Food had been brought, and pitchers of water, and the juniors had been glad to eat and drink, especially Billy Bunter.

After which they laid down to rest again.

They needed rest, but only Bunter slept. The thoughts of the others were too busy for slumber.

Billy Bunter's snore echoed through the hut. The other fellows lay on the hard, earthen floor, speaking every now and then in low tones. Wharton at last rose and looked out.

Sunset was at hand, but the day was still hot. Natives could be seen, most of them clad in loin-cloths; a few men, of greater importance, in more elaborate costumes.

In spite of the situation of the school-boys, there was interest in looking at the life of an African town.

Women passed in his sight, carrying tall pitchers of water on their heads, as

women had carried them for thousands of years in the East and the South. Women came in from the fields, with roughly shaped hoes in their hands and baskets of vegetables. Men could be seen engaged in building a hut, which contradicted the first impression that the women did all the hard work. Undoubtedly they did most of it, as in all savage countries, the men giving their attention to such "noble" pursuits as war and hunting, which they deemed more worthy of their savage dignity. But the men built the huts, at least.

Most of the black men whom Wharton could see were loafing and lounging in the happy manner of the black man where there is no white man to exercise authority and turn him from a happy loafer into a discontented workman.

The wants of the savages were few, and those few could be supplied by the labour of the women, which cost nothing, except, perhaps, a few blows from a strip of elephant hide.

Judging by what Wharton could see from the prison hut, life ran on cheerful lines in the city of Tofoloko.

But that appearance was due chiefly to the unthinking, unreflecting nature of the barbarian.

Certainly he could see, in the crowds of black faces, no traces of the stress and worry which could have been seen in the faces of any equal number of men in a white man's city.

That was because the savage was incapable of "looking before and after" like a white man.

The black man gave no thought to the past, and little to the future. He ate when there was plenty of food, drank his palm wine if he had any, hunted when the spirit moved him to do so, and rested when he was tired, and slept when he was sleepy. Wants of the body were easily satisfied in a fertile valley; wants of the mind he had none. And if it pleased King Tofoloko to order his head to be taken off, off went his head, and there was an end of him.

In times of plenty there was gorging; in times of famine there was cannibalism; and at all times there was uncertainty whether a man who was alive to-day would be alive to-morrow, which might have worried the black man if he had given it thought, which he did not.

Wharton watched the shifting scene in the city for some time, and found it interesting enough to watch.

He noticed that a good many natives were gathering on the edges of the big square facing the royal huts, as if in expectation of seeing something happen.

Outside the royal huts a number of soldiers were on guard—brawny men, with spear and shield.

The prison hut stood at a little distance from the "palace," facing the square, giving Wharton a full view of the latter.

Of Krantz and his men he saw nothing. No doubt they were still resting after their journey.

"Anything on?" Bob Cherry joined Wharton at the doorway.

"There's a crowd collecting," said Harry. "Perhaps his royal highness is going to show himself soon."

"We're for it, old chap!" said Bob.

"Looks like it!"

"I hope Kicky got away! The old black bean can't help us now. I hope he's saved himself."

"I think he has," said Harry. "Kicky can look after himself. But, as you say, he can do nothing for us here."

"No chance of bolting," said Bob, with a faint grin.

The slave-hunters and their schoolboy prisoners crouched and held on for their lives as the canoe went shooting over the fall, amid a wild rush of water and tossing of foam!



The Arab who had guarded the doorway was gone, but a black soldier stood outside, leaning on a long spear.

The juniors had been left in the hut free of bonds. But it was futile to dream of escape, in the heart of a teeming city, in which there could not have been fewer than three thousand inhabitants.

They could only await their fate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that johnny up to?" asked Bob.

From the royal huts a black man emerged, followed by others who were evidently slaves. They carried a chair of carved wood, which was set up in the open. Over this the slaves held a sort of canopy, apparently destined to shelter some important person from the sun.

"The jolly old king's coming out, I suppose," said Bob. "Here, you men, come and look on royalty!"

Nugent and Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, and the Bouncer, joined them at the doorway. Bunter snored on. Something more important than royalty would have been needed to draw Bunter from his snooze.

There was a sound of a gong beating. The soldiers outside the royal huts ceased to lounge and chatter, and stood stiffly at attention. Evidently his majesty was about to appear.

On the farther side of the square the swarm of natives was now very numerous. There was fear in their looks, as well as awe and curiosity, as

they watched the royal huts from a respectful distance.

From a curtained doorway, the curtain drawn aside by a slave, emerged a tall and powerful black man, clad in a garb of leopard-skins, with many necklaces, bracelets, and anklets, and rings in his ears.

His strongly marked face was black as the ace of spades, and his air of haughty dignity proclaimed him royal, though, to the eyes of the British boys, it was almost ludicrously at variance with his black face, thick lips, broad nose, and savage decorations.

There was a roar of sound as the soldiers clashed spear on shield at the appearance of the monarch.

Every native in the crowd across the square bent low at the sight of King Tofoloko, some of them touching the ground with their foreheads.

Tofoloko, of the Moteli, advanced to the royal chair and sat down under the canopy held by his black slaves.

Two young slaves stationed themselves on either side of him, with fans of ostrich feathers, to brush the flies from his majestic countenance and his fuzzy, woolly head.

The king of the Moteli spoke, his deep and powerful voice reaching the juniors where they stood.

"Bosango!"

They wondered for a moment what the word implied, till they saw the captain of the guards advance and fall on his knees before the king.

His next words were incomprehensible to the juniors; but evidently they were an order to Bosango, for the latter rose, backed away, and departed.

He returned in a couple of minutes, followed by Ludwig Krantz.

Krantz glanced at the juniors and grinned. Then he saluted Tofoloko, and talked to him in a strange tongue.

Six of the soldiers came towards the prison hut.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"They're coming for us!"

Bob stepped back into the hut and shook Bunter by a fat shoulder.

"Wake up, old bean!" he said.

"Ooooooogh!"

Shake!

"Beast! Lemme alone!" murmured Bunter. "'Tain't rising-bell, you beast! I'm not going to gerrup!"

Evidently in the mists and shadows of sleep, Billy Bunter fancied that he was back in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

"Wako up, ass—"

"Groogh! Lemme alone! I say, you fellows, 'tain't rising-bell!" mumbled Bunter. "Tell Quelch I'm ill!"

"You fat chump!"

"Look here, I'm not coming down to prayers! I—oh!" gasped Bunter, sitting up, as he realised where he was.

"Get up, old fat bean," said Bob. "The jolly old king is sending for us, and we can't keep royalty waiting, you know."

"Blow the beast!" grunted Bunter.

"Fathead! You can't blow an African king who can have your head chopped off if he likes."

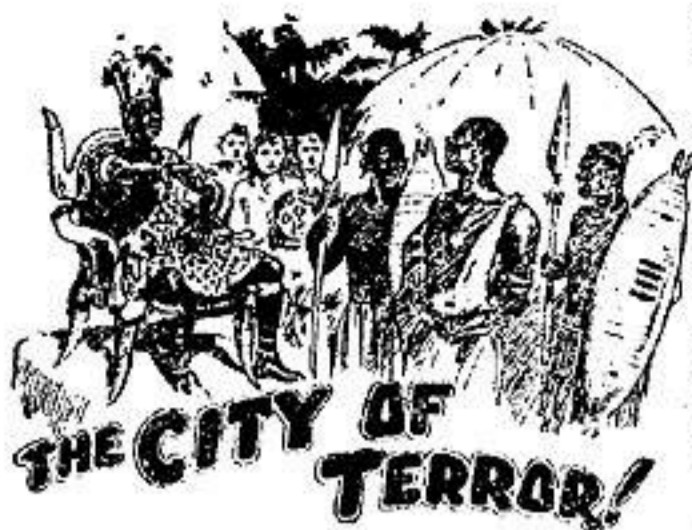
"Oh crikey!"

Bunter leaped to his feet.

The soldiers reached the prison-hut. They signed to the juniors to come out with them, and as there was nothing else to be done, the signs were obeyed. The Greyfriars fellows stepped out of

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

the hut; Billy Bunter blinking round him through his big spectacles with a terrified blink.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he stammered.

"Brace up, old man!" said Nugent.

"I—I say, there's that beast Krantz—"

"Come on."

"I—I say, who's that big black beast in the chair?"

"That's the jolly old king," grinned Bob; "and you'd better not call him names, he may understand English."

"Oh crumbs!"

Guarded by the soldiers, the schoolboys were led before King Tofoloko.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Slaves!

KING TOFOLOKO of the Moteli stared at the white boys as they stood before him, with hard, keen, dark eyes.

Ludwig Krantz was speaking to him in his own tongue; no doubt pointing out the good points of the wares he had to sell.

Tofoloko scanned each in turn, but it was upon Billy Bunter that his gaze rested longest.

For some reason he seemed more pleased with Bunter than with the rest.

The juniors could see it, though they could not guess the reason. He made a sign, and Bunter was pushed towards him, till he was in reach of the royal black hand.

Almost fainting with terror, the fat junior blinked at the African chief.

Tofoloko stretched out his hand and touched him. He pinched him several times, as a dealer might pinch some fat animal.

Obviously he was pleased.

Bunter, in spite of his terror, could see that the black man was pleased with him. He could not imagine why, but it was a relief.

Tofoloko signed to him to stand back at last, and the Owl of Greyfriars backed away to the group of schoolboys.

"O, Tofoloko," said Krantz, in the language the juniors fortunately did not understand, "six slaves I have brought hither to sell for ivory; but the Small Fat One I give you as a gift, this being my tribute to the great king whose name is feared in all lands."

"O man," said Tofoloko, "these six slaves I will buy, and my treasurer shall count out the tusks in payment; and the Small Fat One I will accept as a gift, and on the day of the Great Feast he shall be slain by the knife of M'toko, the wise man, and delivered to the cooks. And the others shall serve me in my huts, and shall learn obedience under many blows."

He clapped his large, black hands and a fat black man appeared, followed by a

slave bearing a rush basket packed with tusks.

Then followed a scene of chaffering which detracted a little, perhaps, from the lofty royal dignity of Tofoloko.

Krantz evidently desired more ivory for the slaves than the black chief was willing to give, and the argument was long and wordy.

But the matter was settled at last; and the allotted number of tusks counted over to the slave-trader.

Then Krantz stepped towards the juniors.

They eyed him grimly.

"I go!" grinned Krantz. "I leave you here—and my last advice to you is to serve Tofoloko as faithful slaves."

"You hound!" muttered the Bounder, clenching his hands.

"You've sold us?" said Harry Wharnton in a low voice.

"I have sold you into slavery!" said Krantz, "as I told you I would do, when you beat me on the Nairobi road in Kenya! You are here, slaves of a black king for the remainder of your lives—which will probably not be for long, for the temper of Tofoloko is somewhat uncertain. Take care that you are useful and obedient slaves—"

"You cheeky rotter!"

Krantz chuckled.

"I advise you for your own good!" he said. "Tofoloko keeps torturers for those who displease him. If you fall into the hands of the skinners you will be sorry for yourselves."

He laughed and turned away.

A few minutes later, the juniors saw him passing down the street to the gateway in the boma, followed by the four Arabs who remained of his slave-hunting gang.

They disappeared.

Krantz's business in the city of Tofoloko was finished, and he was gone.

He was gone, leaving the seven Greyfriars juniors in the hands of Tofoloko, sold into slavery.

The juniors stood with pale, set faces. Billy Bunter groaned dismally. Tofoloko was speaking in his own strange tongue to the fat man who had counted over the tusks, and who was evidently some sort of an important officer in the royal household.

The fat man came towards the juniors at last.

Somewhat to their surprise, he addressed them in English. In that remote region of the heart of Africa, they had hardly expected to hear their own language spoken. But the English he spoke was that of the Gold Coast.

"You lib for slave," he said. "You lib for serve Tofoloko. Mo Bubu, me give you order."

"The orderfulness from your esteemed self will be terrifically gratifying!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bubu looked puzzled.

"Yes!" he said. "All right! Bust my topsails!"

Apparently Bubu had learned some of his English among sailormen on the coast.

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

Bubu smiled.

"Yes! You right! Me lib for coast long time ago, lib for serve on white man him ship! Yes! Speak English same white man. Shiver me! Yes! Douse my deadlights! What?"

"The speakfulness of the esteemed English is terrific!"

"Tofoloko likum white man slave," said Bubu. "You lib for hut in um palace, plenty good food. You no make Tofoloko angry, you all right! You make um angry, skinners take off skin. Sabbey?"

He grinned.

"You go in hut," he said. "Small Fat One come with Bubu. Tofoloko him likum Small Fat One. Him no slave!"

Billy Bunter opened his eyes behind his spectacles. This was good news to Bunter.

"No slave!" repeated Bubu. "Him no work, him eat! Him lib for eat plenty, all he want! Him have dickens of good time! Yes!"

Bunter brightened.

"I say, you fellows, they're not such beasts, after all," he said. "I say, Mr. Bubu, you mean that?"

"Shiver timbers! Yes!" said Bubu.

"I'm not to do any work?"

"No work! Eat!"

"Plenty to eat?"

"All the best food, all can eat! Easy time! Fat and lazy!" said Bubu, grinning. "You no slave! Slave wait on you!"

Bunter beamed.

The other fellows wore in hard luck, but fortune seemed to be smiling on the Owl of the Remove. He little suspected the reason. Bubu had no intention of telling him. The fat junior would not have stuffed himself like a turkey for Christmas had he known the reason. Even Billy Bunter's appetite would have failed him.

"Slave wait on me?" he repeated.

"Yes! Just so! Tofoloko order! All good thing for you, Small Fat One! You come with Bubu!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter heartily.

He blinked at the other fellows through his big spectacles.

"Sorry for you chaps," he said. "But make the best of it, no good grousing, you know. Grin and bear it!"

"You fat ass!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! No good being jealous of a fellow, you know! That nigger, Tofoloko, seems to have a lot of sense for a nigger," said Bunter. "He's not going to treat me as he treats you fellows! He can see that I'm not the sort of chap he could make a slave of!"

"Fathead!"

"You come, Small Fat One," said Bubu, touching Bunter on the arm. "You have good hut, plenty food, all nice, shiver timbers!"

Bunter winked at the Famous Five and followed the fat Prime Minister of King Tofoloko.

His black majesty rose from the chair of state and disappeared into the royal hut again. The royal audience was over.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Fat of the Land!

BILLY BUNTER grinned.

So far as Bunter could see he had cause to grin.

Sitting under a shady tree outside the hut that had been assigned to him, Bunter leaned back on the trunk, lazed, and grinned.

Three days had passed since the schoolboys had been sold to King Tofoloko of the Moteli.

Six of them were slaves, one of them was the favourite of fortune, idling away the sunny hours and living on the fat of the land.

Bunter was pleased.

This was an utterly unexpected outcome to his disastrous adventures in the heart of Africa.

If this went on Bunter had little to complain of. He could not help thinking that it was better than Latin prose with Quelch in the Fore-room at Greyfriars School in far-off England.

Food, he found, was good in the Moteli city. Not only one slave but several waited on Bunter, and they waited on him hand and foot.

They could not speak a word of English, but Bunter easily made his wants known by signs, after he had recovered his fat confidence, by kicking and whacks from a bamboo.

Bunter was the fellow to spread himself when he had a little power in his fat hands.

The slaves were of the Dinka tribe, who had been sold to Tofoloko by Krantz on some previous occasion.

With the terror of the king's torturers on their minds, they were willing and obedient, and willing and obedient slaves were the very thing to please William George Bunter.

While he loafed and lazed and spread himself and ate till he could eat no more, the other fellows found slavery a very real and painful thing.

It pleased King Tofoloko to have white slaves about him, a sort of distinction that took his fancy. The juniors were employed in the royal huts. They had the duty of fanning Tofoloko with fans of ostrich feathers, of placing his sleeping-mat for him when he was pleased to slumber, of helping him to food at the royal meals, and so on.

It was irksome enough and humiliating enough, but it was useless to kick. The juniors could only endure it, thinking constantly of escape.

Escape at present seemed hopeless, and resistance was out of the question. Death lurked in the air in the palace of Tofoloko.

More than once in the three days that had elapsed, the schoolboys had heard the shrieks of some hapless wretch who had displeased the king, and had been given over to the torturers.

That fate hung over their own heads, and it made them careful and wary. Even the Bounder controlled his angry and reckless temper.

Meanwhile, Bunter was exempt from all such services, and he seemed to be a person whom the king delighted to honour.

Several times the king came to his hut to see him, and every time he looked at him with a pleased and satisfied grin.

Why Bunter was selected for such special favour he did not know, and the other fellows did not know.

Bunter took the view that Tofoloko had recognised him as a person of importance in his own country, as a fellow who was not to be treated like common fellows. That was the sort of view Bunter would take!

Anyhow, for the present Bunter was living on the fat of the land and having a good time, and he was fairly content.

Sitting under the tree before his hut, Bunter grinned at the sight of his less fortunate schoolfellows.

King Tofoloko had come forth, and on either side of him walked Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent with fans of ostrich feathers to brush away the flies.

Bob Cherry followed, carrying a stool for the king to sit on when he felt so disposed. Johnny Bull carried a leopard-skin cloak. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh bore the royal shield, and Vernon-Smith the royal spear.

Probably it did not occur to Tofoloko that the Bounder, as he carried the spear, debated in his mind whether to run it through Tofoloko or not.

Certainly it was only fear of the consequences that saved the black monarch from the point of his own spear.

Bunter blinked at the party through his big spectacles and grinned. These fellows wore slaves, and Bunter was waited on by slaves! This state of affairs was just as it ought to be, of course! Obviously—to Bunter's fat mind—Tofoloko realised that he was a fellow of some distinction and was treating him accordingly.

Leaning back on the tree Bunter closed his eyes and went to sleep. Bunter could do with a great deal of sleep, and in the city of Tofoloko he was able to sleep as much as he liked.

He slept and snored. Natives who passed him stared and grinned, as his snore rumbled like the roll of distant thunder.

He enjoyed a long and happy nap, and he would have enjoyed a longer one, had he not been awakened by a tap on his fat shoulder.

He opened his eyes behind his big spectacles and blinked at Bubu. His fat brow wrinkled in a frown.

"Look here, what are you waking me up for?" he demanded. "Can't you let a fellow have his nap out?"

"You lib for eat," said Bubu.

Generally, such an invitation would have interested Bunter at once. But

Bunter had lately stacked away an enormous meal, and even Bunter was not yet ready for another feed. Even Bunter had his limit.

Three Dinka slaves were with Bubu, and each of them carried a dish full of food.

But Bunter shook his head. "I'm not hungry yet," he said. "Later!"

But the Bubu also shook his head. "You lib for eat!" he repeated.

"Now look here," said Bunter. "Let a fellow alone! I'm much obliged to old Tofoloko for doing me so well and all that, but there's a limit! I'll be ready to eat in an hour or so. Take it away!"

At a sign from Bubu the Dinkas set the dishes down before Bunter.

"You lib for eat!" said Bubu.

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "Do you want a fellow to eat when he's not hungry?"

"Tofoloko order."

"Rot! Take it away!" said Bunter peevishly.

He leaned back on the trunk again and closed his eyes. The next moment

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS HEROES

No. 5.

This week our Greyfriars Rhymester is taking a holiday by the briny, because Dick Penfold insisted on writing his own poem about his own hero.



My hero shall, of course, turn out a poet,

Those great soft-hearted, softer-headed men;

You needn't point that out to me—I know it;

A rhymester gains no credit from his pen.

But I don't care a cent for that, and so it

Must be a hero like myself; but then,

The only point that now is troubling me

Is, who the dickens shall my hero be?

The choice is very large, and I must hope

To find a decent hero, and admire 'un;

Shall it be Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, or Pope,

Or shall I choose the brilliant wit of Byron?

In many hundred others I may grope

To find a heart of gold—a nerve of iron;

Names by the score I'd readily rehearse,

And every choice is bad; but this is verse.

Then whom do I admire—the really true one?

John Milton, with his dim religious calm?

No, no! 'Fraid not. I'll have to seek a new one

To whom to chant my great heroic psalm.

Since here my verse is copying "Don Juan,"

To Lord George Byron I should give the palm;

My hero's laurel wreath—to him I'd hand it,

For his bright wit, if I could understand it.

But as I can't, I really must pass on,

And give it to the man whom laurel earns;

I mean, of course, the famous Tennyson;

But no, on second thoughts I'll make it Burns.

And yet to Dryden, prosy Honest John,

My mild, uncertain fancy fondly turns.

Yes, yes! 'Tis Dryden whom I would be crowning;

Oh, dash it all, I'd clean forgotten Browning!

That's rather bad. I must be growing denser

To leave out Robert Browning in that way;

But, I don't know! I feel I could commence a

Sonnet upon the Elegy of Gray.

Yet, after all, I think I'll vote for Spenser.

Southey, Macaulay, Cowper, or Mackay.

Stay! I know now! I'll choose Sir Walter Scott,

Or, rather—blow!—I'll take the blessed lot!



he opened them with a howl. Bubu was shaking him with a vigorous hand.

Bunter glared at him.

Then he quailed.

Hitherto the fat face of Bubu had worn a good-humoured grin. Now it was hard and ferocious, and his eyes glared.

"You lib for eat!" he snapped. "You no lib for eat you go to skinners. Tofoloko order."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He ate.

The food was good and appetising. Bunter, fortunately, could eat even worn a good-humoured grin. Now it one of the dishes without an effort. Then he leaned back again.

"That's enough," he said.

"Tofoloko order! You lib for eat!" said Bubu.

And his glare was enough for Bunter. The fat junior started on the second dish and emptied it.

By that time Billy Bunter, whose desire generally was to eat, desired nothing so much as to leave off eating.

But he was not allowed to leave off.

For the first time on record the fat junior had to go on eating after he wanted to leave off.

The contents of the third dish disappeared very slowly.

Bubu grinned when it was empty.

"Good!" he said. "Bust my topsails! Fine!" And the grinning Dinkas carried the empty dishes away.

Bunter leaned back on the tree quite feebly. He had overdone it; he knew that he had overdone it. Hospitality was all very well, and it was something to be distinguished in this way while the other fellows were condemned to slavery. But a fellow did not want to be fed like a turkey fattened for the market. Even Bunter didn't!

The fat junior's eyes closed again behind his spectacles, and he slept. And if he dreamed, he certainly did not dream of the real meaning of Tofoloko's over-pressing hospitality.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter All Over!

"I'm not standin' this!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith muttered the words between his teeth.

Several more days had passed.

The chums of Greyfriars had been more than a week in the city of Tofoloko, slaves of the black king.

So far they had not been ill-used, though the temper of the savage king was extremely uncertain, and no one could tell what the next hour might bring.

They occupied a hut, one of the group that formed the king's palace, and except when they were waiting on Tofoloko, they were left free to do as they liked.

It was morning now, and the king had not yet left his sleeping-mat. The juniors were lounging before their hut, with time on their hands, while the life of the African town went on round them.

Not for an hour had they ceased to think of escape. But the more they thought of it the more impossible it seemed.

Had they succeeded in getting away uncaptured, they had hundreds of miles of unknown wilderness to traverse before they could reach safety. But that chance they were more than ready to take.

But getting away was the problem. They were neither watched nor guarded, but soldiers swarmed in the vicinity of

the king's palace, and the streets with other natives.

At night the gateways in the boma were closed, watched, and guarded. From sunset to sunrise there was no exit.

Often they thought of home, often of Greyfriars. Always they thought of escape. But day followed day hopelessly.

"I'm not standin' it!" repeated the Bounder, gritting his teeth. "We've got to make a break somehow, you fellows."

"The breakfulness does not seem a terrific possibility, my esteemed Smithy," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh ruefully.

"Nothing doing!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Are you satisfied to stay here for the rest of your lives?" snapped the Bounder.

"Rot!" said Wharton. "We've got to get out of it somehow. But I can't see any chance at present. If you can, point it out."

"Better get hold of a spear, stick that black scoundrel Tofoloko, and die fightin' than knuckle under to this!" snarled the Bounder.

"That's a last resource," said Bob Cherry.

"And not so easy, either," said Frank Nugent quietly. "They torture their prisoners here, Smithy. No good asking for that."

"I'm not standin' it. We're done for, anyhow. I thought that Kicky might be able to help us somehow, but he's gone if they haven't found him and killed him. Our friends in Uganda can't help us; they can't even guess where we are. We've only got ourselves to depend on."

"I know that," said Harry. "But—"

"That dirty dog Tofoloko kicked me yesterday," said the Bounder, with smouldering eyes.

"That was mild for Tofoloko," said Bob. "If he hadn't paid high for us in ivory we might get worse."

"Well, I've had enough," said the Bounder moodily.

It was evident that Smithy's reckless temper was rising. The Famous Five liked the situation no more than Smithy did, but they realised that it was useless to kick. That was clear enough to Smithy, too, as a matter of fact, but he was getting desperate.

"For goodness' sake don't be a fool, Smithy!" said Harry earnestly. "We may get a chance some day if we watch for it. It's no good kicking at present."

"I'm goin' to kick!"

Billy Bunter rolled over from his hut with a fat grin on his face. He gave the juniors a careless nod.

"I say, you fellows, how do you like it? He, he, he!"

The Bounder glared at him savagely.

"Bit tough, what?" asked Bunter.

"Still, you'll get used to it. Matters might be a good deal worse, what?"

"How do you mean, fathead?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, they might have made me a slave, like you fellows."

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, really, Bull! That nigger Tofoloko's got a lot of sense," said Bunter. "I dare say you fellows are surprised at his picking me out like this to treat decently. But it's not surprising, you know. Natural superiority comes to the top everywhere, even in a nigger town in Africa."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm not having a bad time," said Bunter. "The only trouble is that they overdo the hospitality. They really make a fellow eat too much. It's a fault on the right side, of course, but they overdo it."

"Fancy Bunter complaining of having too much to eat!" grinned Bob. "They wouldn't believe that at Greyfriars."

"They mean it as a distinction, of course," said Bunter complacently. "They want to make too much of me."

"The muchfulness is preposterous," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bunter's fatfulness is terrific."

At Greyfriars Bunter was supposed to have reached the limit of circumference, but there was no doubt that since he had dwelt in the city of Tofoloko he had grown fatter. Undoubtedly the blacks were making "much" of Bunter—more than there had been before. Like the young lady described by Sam Weller, he was "swelling wisely."

"If ever we get on the go again we shall have to roll Bunter along like a barrel," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I've been thinking—"

"Gammon!"

"Don't be cheeky, Cherry!" said Bunter warningly. "I've got influence here, and it will pay you to be civil. I've not the slightest doubt that Tofoloko would give you the rhinoceros hide if I asked him."

"Oh crumbs!"

"He's only a filthy nigger, but he's got some gumption. He thinks a lot of me," said Bunter, with fatuous satisfaction. "I dare say he may make me his Prime Minister or something. That may be the idea. Anyhow, you can see for yourselves, jealousy apart, that he thinks a lot of me. I may use my influence in your favour if you're civil. Otherwise you've nothing to expect from me."

The juniors gazed at Bunter.

Obviously the fat Owl was "spreading" himself! The distinction with which he was treated by Tofoloko was getting into his head, like wine.

"As I said, I've been thinking," went on Bunter, blinking at the juniors, "I'm not satisfied with those Dinkas as slaves. They don't understand what a fellow says, and it's a lot of trouble kicking them, in this beastly heat. I'm thinking of asking Tofoloko for one of you fellows to wait on me."

"What?" gasped the Famous Five.

"I suppose you'd rather wait on a white man, and a gentleman, than a beastly black nigger," said Bunter.

"Ye gods!" said Bob Cherry.

"I'm going to put it to Bubu, and tell him to put it to Tofoloko, as I can't speak his idiotic language," said Bunter. "Which of you fellows wants the job?"

"The whichfulness is terrific."

"Don't all speak at once," said Bunter.

Apparently the fat and fatuous Owl concluded that the juniors were going to jump at this offer.

They did not jump at the offer.

They jumped at Bunter.

Bump!

The fattest fellow in Africa smote Africa hard.

"Yaroooogh!"

"There!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That's for your cheek, you fat villain!"

"Whooooop! Help!"

"Give him another!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bump!

"Yow-ow-woop! I'll have you thrashed!" howled Bunter. "I'll jolly well have your heads cut off! Whooooop!"

"And another—" said Nugent.

Bump!

"Whoooooopp!"

"Now all kick together," said Harry Wharton.

Bunter bounded to his feet. He made a wild leap to escape. He crossed the short space to his own hut at a speed



The slave-hunters were driving their prisoners on when there came a sudden roar and a crash. From high up the side of the gorge a great boulder, detached from the cliff, thundered down towards them!

that was amazing, considering the weight he had to carry.

Vernon-Smith rushed after him.

Bunter reached the doorway just as Smithy reached Bunter. The Bounder's foot established contact, with a crash.

"Owl! Wow! Whooop!"

Bunter disappeared into the hut. And for a considerable time the fat Owl was not seen again; though for a long time he was heard gasping and spluttering.

And he did not make his request to Babu for one of the juniors to be assigned to wait on him in the place of Dinkas. Perhaps he realised that his fat comfort would not be increased thereby.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Kikuyu!

"TAKE care, Smithy!"

The Bounder made no reply; but his eyes were smouldering under his knitted brows.

The chums of the Remove were uneasy. An outbreak on the part of one of the schoolboy slaves could only be followed by cruelty, perhaps by murder; but Smithy was evidently in a reckless mood.

Tofoloko was not in a good temper that morning.

Perhaps deep draughts of palm wine over night had not wholly agreed with his royal interior.

There was an evil look in his eyes,

and his guards and counsellors and attendants and slaves were very wary, and evidently in fear.

For no reason except that it pleased him to do so, the black king struck Nugent as he came near him, and sent him spinning. Frank scrambled up, with blazing eyes; but an imploring look from Wharton calmed him. There was death in the atmosphere of the palace that morning. King Tofoloko was unwilling, perhaps, to order the death of rare white slaves for whom he had paid a good price in ivory. But a defiant word or look certainly would have drawn the order from the irresponsible savage.

Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on Tofoloko, and Bob Cherry whispered to him anxiously. At that moment the Bounder was very near an outbreak that might have been fatal to him.

"Keep cool, Smithy, you ass!" breathed Johnny Bull.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

Fortunately Tofoloko's eyes did not fall upon him, or the looks of the Bounder might have drawn the black tyrant's savage cruelty on his head.

Bosango, the captain of the guards, presented himself in the doorway of the royal hut.

"O Tofoloko," he said, "a stranger from a far land has come into the city, with words to speak to your ears."

"Let him wait," said Tofoloko, "and if his words are welcome to my ears, he shall live; and if I like not his words, he shall die."

"This I will tell him, O Tofoloko!" said the captain of the guards, and he left the hut.

There was a sound of many footsteps, and murmuring voices, in the great square on which the royal huts fronted.

Many of the king's attendants looked out into the brilliant sunshine, curious to see the stranger who had come from a far land, and who was waiting outside the building until it pleased Tofoloko to give him an audience.

The stranger stood under a tree before the huts, where it was customary for Tofoloko's chair of state to be placed.

A crowd of natives stared at him from a distance, some of them approaching near enough for him to hear their comments.

He was a tall man, of powerful frame, dressed in a garb of the skin of the striped monkey of Kenya, and had the Greyfriars juniors seen him, they would have recognised Kikolobo of the Kikuyu.

The land of the Tofoloko was too many hundreds of miles from Kenya for the Kikuyu race to be known there, and to the eyes of the natives he was merely a stranger from a far land.

Kikolobo stood erect, silent, motionless, like a rock, his hand resting on his long Kikuyu spear; his rhinoceros-hide shield on his left arm, in his left hand three throwing-spears.

There was no trace of any kind of emotion in his dark, handsome face, with its noble features; he seemed

blind to the curious gaze of the crowd, and deaf to the murmuring voices.

Yet he understood every word that was spoken round him, and the words he heard were far from reassuring.

"This is a fine man!" said one of the Moteli. "And if it be Tofoloko's will to give him to the torturers, he will live long under the knives of M'toko and his slaves."

"There is much meat upon him," said another, "and Tofoloko may give him to us on the day of the great feast, which is the day of the full moon."

Many such remarks were passed in the hearing of the tall Kikuyu, though they produced no effect on his stoic calmness.

He waited.

He had been standing for more than an hour under the spreading branches, before it pleased Tofoloko to step forth.

The black king came out of the hut, surrounded by his guards.

Behind him came a swarm of attendants, and with them the Greyfriars juniors. Their eyes almost bulged at the sight of the Kikuyu.

"Good heavens!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Kicky!"

"Kioky!" muttered the Bounder.

Kikolobo must have seen the schoolboys, for his glance, as it rested on the king, was directed towards them.

But he gave them no heed, and the juniors were quick to take the hint. They could guess easily enough that the Kikuyu did not desire Tofoloko to guess that he knew the white prisoners. It was to help them that he had come, and that intention could not be kept too secret. In entering the city, he had placed his life in Tofoloko's hands.

The black king stared at him, and spoke to Bosango.

"Who is this man who carries spears in the presence of the king?" he said. "Let his spears be taken from him."

Bosango stepped towards the Kikuyu and repeated the order.

Obediently, Kikolobo laid his spears and his shield on the earth, and stood unarmed.

"O Tofoloko," he said, "my hands are empty, for it is not as an enemy that I come to this great city!"

"Speak," said Tofoloko, "and I will hear you with my ears. Whence do you come?"

"I come from the land of the rising sun, O Tofoloko," answered the Kikuyu, "and first of all it is my desire that my eyes should see the great king who is feared in all lands and countries."

"Look well, O Man," said Tofoloko, "for it may be that your eyes will see no more beyond the walls of my city."

"My life is in your hands!" said the Kikuyu, bowing his head. "But let your ears hear me."

"My ears hear you," said Tofoloko.

"In my own land they call me a great hunter," said Kikolobo. "I have slain the lion, the leopard, and even Tembu, the elephant, and many enemies have I slain with my spears, even the powerful warriors of the Masai."

"Of the Masai I have never heard," said Tofoloko coldly. "Is it this that you have come to tell me?"

"In my land, as in all lands, there is much talk of the greatness of Tofoloko, of the Moteli," said the Kikuyu, "and it has long been in my thoughts to serve so great a king. In my own land I am a chief, but in the city of Tofoloko I shall be greater than a chief of the Kikuyu, if it be Tofoloko's will that I shall serve him as a hunter."

Harry Wharton & Co. listened intently to the words of the Kikuyu, but they understood nothing of them.

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They saw Tofoloko stand silent, as if in thought.

Wharton turned to Bubu, who was near him.

"What does he say?" he asked, in a whisper.

Bubu grinned.

"Him say he lib for come serve Tofoloko, all same hunter," he answered. "Blow my topsails! S'pose Tofoloko him good temper, he say all right! S'pose he no good temper, he say kill! No good temper now."

The juniors understood.

Had the Kikuyu found the black king in a propitious moment, his offer of service would probably have been accepted, for he was obviously a powerful fighting-man and a useful recruit to a savage king engaged in incessant warfare with other tribes.

But the moment was not propitious. Tofoloko was in an evil temper, and his black eyes glinted coldly and cruelly at the stranger from a far land.

Kikolobo waited.

Well he knew the risk he had taken. A stranger in the land of the Moteli was more likely to be received as an enemy than as a friend.

"O man," said Tofoloko at last, "I have many brave hunters, and it is not my desire to take a stranger into my service."

"My ears hear you, O Tofoloko, though my heart is heavy to hear these words!" said the Kikuyu. "But if your eyes do not look with favour on me, I will go from your city as I came."

Tofoloko grinned savagely.

"The gateway of my boma stands open for all to enter," he said, "but it does not stand open for all to leave. And it is in my thoughts to give you up to M'toki, the old and wise one, for I am assured that so brave a hunter, who has slain the lion and the leopard, will not shrink to look on death."

One long, deep breath the Kikuyu drew.

He knew his fate now.

Instantly Bosango and the soldiers closed round him. Spears were placed to his broad chest, and hands laid on him.

"Let him be bound with strong cords," said Tofoloko, "and let him be placed in the hut of those who are to die. And let word be sent to M'toki, the wise one."

The Kikuyu did not resist. It was futile, surrounded by enemies, and with a quiet dignity he submitted to his bonds.

With his hands bound behind him, he was led to a hut, one of the group that formed the king's palace, and disappeared from the eyes of the juniors.

Outside the hut a black soldier stood on guard.

The juniors looked at one another.

"What does this mean, Bubu?" asked Wharton, in a husky whisper.

"Him die!" said Bubu. "Tofoloko likum kill. Him no good temper. When Tofoloko no good temper, plenty die!"

The juniors stood silent in sheer horror. Kikolobo had taken a desperate chance to help them in their extremity, and the chance had gone against him. The brave Kikuyu had come to the city of Tofoloko to find his death there.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Smithy!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

The juniors did not heed Bunter.

The long, hot day had been one of horror to the white slaves of King Tofoloko, of the Moteli.

In the death-hut, guarded and bound, lay Kikolobo, and through the open doorway they had had several glimpses of him.

Now it was night.

In the day, and in the evening, the slaves had been in attendance on their black master. There had been music and dancing before the king's huts, in the cool of the evening, and until these ceremonies were over the slaves had been on "duty." As a European monarch of the Middle Ages liked to have black slaves about his court, so King Tofoloko liked to have white slaves in his entourage, and as they were not allowed to sit in the royal presence, they were thoroughly weary when at last they were released, which was not till the king had retired to the royal sleeping-mat on the royal floor.

But the schoolboy slaves were not thinking of their weariness, or even of their own prospects of perpetual servitude and captivity. Their thoughts were of the brave Kikuyu, who had taken so desperate a chance to aid them, and who lay now under the sentence of cruel death.

It was almost difficult to believe that even a savage, ruthless African king would doom a stranger to death for no better reason than that he happened to be in an evil mood. Yet that was the case, and there was no doubt about it, and no hope that Tofoloko would relent.

Already M'toko, the witch-doctor, had seen the Kikuyu, and marked on him the mark of death.

It was not, perhaps, surprising, for in Tofoloko's own tribe heads fell like leaves in autumn when the king was angry. Life in the royal black court was held by a very uncertain tenure.

It was horrifying to the juniors, and it drove their own situation from their minds. The Kikuyu had come to save them. He had hoped to enter the ranks of the king's hunters, and to find an opportunity to rescue them. He might have succeeded; but he had failed, and he was to die for his devotion.

Over the silent forests that surrounded the plain, the crescent moon soared. Moonlight glimmered down on the wide maize fields surrounding the city, and on the streams that intersected them.

Round the innumerable huts that formed the city the high thorn boma circled, high and dark. There were four gateways in the boma, and at night each was guarded by armed men. Outside the king's palace was a numerous guard, under the command of Bosango, and, lazy and sleepy as the blacks were, not a man in the guard closed an eye.

In a group before their hut the Greyfriars juniors conversed in low tones, when Billy Bunter rolled over and joined them.

Many natives could be seen in the square and the streets, strolling and chatting in the soft African moonlight. The evening was growing old, but the city was not yet slumbering. On the farther side of the square a numerous crowd of natives surrounded an old black man who was relating some story—the professional tale-teller being an institution in Central Africa as in the East.

And in the death-hut lay Kikolobo, with the mark of death chalked on his broad chest.

"I say, you fellows."

Billy Bunter, at that hour, was generally fast asleep. But the Owl of the Remove was wakeful now. He seemed troubled.

"I say, it's rather rotten, you chaps,"

said Bunter. The fat Owl was evidently not so contented as usual.

"It's horrible!" said Wharton, in a low voice.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Well, I'm glad you can see it," he said. "You're generally so beastly selfish, you know."

Wharton stared at him.

"It's not like you to think much of other fellows, is it?" said Bunter.

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" muttered the Bounder. "We've got to think this out somehow. Don't cackle!"

"Well, I'm glad to see you thinking of somebody else beside yourself," said Bunter. "Look here! Something will have to be done."

"We're trying to think that out," said Frank Nugent.

"Oh, good! It can't go on," said Bunter, shaking his head. "It was all right at first, but it's getting a bit too thick. I say, you fellows, something's really got to be done about it. I can't stand it!"

"We're not going to stand it!" snarled the Bounder. "They shall kill us all first, the savage rotters!"

"I've talked to Bubu," said Bunter. "He seems a good-tempered sort of beast as a rule. But on this point he's hard as iron!"

The juniors stared at Bunter. They had not expected the fat Owl to be so deeply concerned about Kikolobo. Generally, Bunter was only concerned about one person, and the name of that person was William George Bunter.

"You've spoken to Bubu?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes; fairly begged him to chuck it," said Bunter. "But he only scowled, and pointed a spear at me."

"Well, I suppose you meant well," said Harry. "But it would have been better to say nothing about Kicky. It will make matters worse for him if they find out that he came here after us."

Bunter's eyes opened wider behind his big spectacles.

"Kicky!" he repeated. "Who's talking about Kicky?"

"Aren't you, fathead?"

"Eh! No!"

"Then what the thump are you talking about?" snapped Wharton, puzzled and irritated.

"Eh! You know what I'm talking about," grunted Bunter. "You said you were trying to think it out. About those black beasts making a chap eat when he's not hungry—"

"Wha-a-at?"

Evidently it was not the terrible situation of Kikolobo of the Kikuyu that was troubling Bunter.

More important matters than that occupied the fat mind of the Owl of the Remove.

"You see, it can't go on," said Bunter. "It's altogether too thick. I don't say that I haven't got a good appetite—a fellow likes to eat. But the thing can be overdone. Hospitality is all very well; it seems to be a custom of these niggers to feed a chap when they want to make much of him, and I'm not saying that it's not a fault on the right side. But there's a limit—and that idiot Bubu doesn't seem to see it."

The juniors gazed at Bunter in silence. "They've made me scoff another

supper," went on Bunter. "I'd had one—and a good one. Then they made me eat another, and that beast Bubu actually poked a spear at me when I wouldn't eat! So I scoffed the lot! But I can't sleep! A fellow can't keep on stuffing like this! I say, you fellows, what's going to be done about it?"

Bunter blinked inquiringly at the Famous Five.

Apparently he supposed that their concern was for him, as undoubtedly his own concern was.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"Feed till you burst, you fat idiot!" he snarled. "Get out! If you say another word I'll kick you!"

"Beast!"

"Don't be a fool, Bunter," said Harry. "We're thinking about Kicky—he's in that hut yonder, and they're going to—"

"If you fellows are going to think about a nigger instead of me—" began Bunter warmly.

The Bounder, who was stretched on the earth, rose with a glitter in his eyes. Billy Bunter, fortunately, read the danger-signal in time, and rolled away.

He rolled dismally back to his own hut, but his snore was not heard as usual. Bunter, generally only too eager to eat twice as much as was good for him, if not three or four times as much, was now "fed-up"—in every sense of the word. For the first time in his fat career Bunter turned in, loathing the thought of food.

"The fat frump!" growled the Bounder, as he sat down again.

"It's rather odd—the way they're

(Continued on next page.)

The heat of the game



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stuffing Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "I can't quite make it out."

"Hang Bunter!" growled the Bounder. "Look here, what are we going to do? Kicky came here to save us. We're not goin' to leave him to it if these black hounds cut us into little pieces."

"That's agreed," said Harry quietly. "Luckily, they don't know there's any connection between us—that fat ass hasn't mentioned him, thank goodness. It's just as well that he was only thinking about himself."

"Trust him for that!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Look here, we've got to help Kicky. If we're spotted it means death all round. I'm taking the chance—but you fellows can stand out if you like."

"Don't be an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The sinkfulness or the swimfulness together is the proper caper, my absurd Smithy," said the Nabob of Bhanipur quietly.

"He's tied up in that hut," went on the Bounder. "They're not watching us—they don't know we've ever seen him before. They haven't the faintest notion that he's the man who followed Krantz from Lake Albert. I've got hold of a knife!" He tapped his sleeve. "I got hold of it to stick into Tofoloko if he punched me as he did Nugent this morning. But never mind that!"

"Certainly never mind that," said Wharton sharply. "It's not ourselves we've got to think of now."

"I know that! If Kicky got loose he might get out of the place—we can't; but he might, especially with a knife in his hand. He's the man for it, and it's a chance for him, anyhow."

"That's so; but—" "I could get that black brute who's watching his hut," said Smithy, between his teeth. "and I'll stick him like a pig, and glad of the chance. He won't see the knife till he gets it in his neck. Then—"

"Keep cool!" said Bob. "That's not the way—and it's a jolly good deal too like the niggers themselves. We've not come here to learn from Tofoloko."

The Bounder laughed savagely. There was a hard and ruthless strain

in his nature, and it had come well to the fore now.

"I'd wipe out the whole town if I had half a chance, and not leave a black brute of them alive!" he snarled. "If you can think of a better way than getting that nigger with a knife, cough it up. Kicky came here to stand by me, and I'm standing by him, if they torture me afterwards."

"If we give the alarm the game's up, for Kicky as well as ourselves," said Harry, "and if we can help him without being spotted, all the better. I'm not anxious to sample M'toko's tortures!"

"That's right, of course. But—" "It's no good making a move till the town is asleep; and we'd better make out that we're asleep ourselves. This isn't a matter for going like a bull at a gate. Let's get into the hut."

The Bounder grunted an assent, and the six juniors retired into the hut.

There a whispered consultation continued.

Meanwhile, the loiterers in the streets, the crowd in the square, melted away, and sleep descended on the African town.

In all the swarming city only the guards at the palace, and the guards at the gateways in the boma, remained wakeful and watchful—and the school-boy slaves, most wakeful of all. And the Kikuyu, bound in the hut of death, and the sleepy soldier at his door.

Midnight was long past when the juniors came to a decision. The Bounder drew the hidden knife from his sleeve, tested its edge with his finger, and gripped it by the handle.

"Leave it to me!" he said.

"I'd rather you left it to me," said Harry.

"Rot!" "For goodness' sake be careful then—every life here is at stake."

"My own, too," said the Bounder. "I'm not chucking it away if I can help it. I'm going—and if I don't come back, you fellows keep mum."

The Bounder was cool as ice. He crept to the doorway of the hut.

At a little distance, Bosango and his soldiers were loafing, but their drowsy eyes were turned in the direction of

the royal hut. The Bounder waited till a drift of clouds passed over the crescent moon. Then, on his hands and knees he crept out of the hut. Silently, but swiftly he reached the back of the death-hut unseen.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited, listening, with beating heart. It was late, and they were weary; but they were not likely to sleep.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Escape!

KIKOLOBO of the Kikuyu stirred, without a sound.

The Kikuyu was not sleeping though he lay stretched on a mat on the floor of the death-hut.

It was dark in the hut, only a glimmer of moonlight falling in at the open doorway.

Outside the doorway the black soldier on guard had sat down, his spear across his knees, resting against the wall.

He was wakeful; the fear of Tofoloko was enough to keep his heavy eyes open. But to his mind the prisoner in the hut was safe enough. He lay bound, cruel cords knotted on wrists and ankles. And round the hut lay thousands of sleeping natives; round the city the thorn boma, guarded by soldiers. That any of the slaves of Tofoloko would take the fearful risk of attempting to help him was not likely to occur to any of the Moteli; neither could they have guessed that the school-boy slaves had any interest in the prisoner. The soldier leaned on the wall of the hut and stared sleepily across the moonlit square, suspecting nothing.

But the faintest of sounds was enough to cause the Kikuyu, in the dark interior of the hut, to raise his head, his dark eyes glittering watchfully.

That faint sound came from the back of the hut.

The building was of the flimsiest materials, like all the buildings in the city of Tofoloko. An unbound prisoner could have escaped from it easily enough. The sound that the Kikuyu heard was caused by a keen knife sawing through fibre cord that fastened flimsy slats in place.

The Kikuyu sat up. No enemy could be coming by such a way; it was a friend who was trying to reach him.

Doubtless it had crossed the Kikuyu's mind that the schoolboys he had come to aid might seek to help him in his extremity. He did not need to be told that the sawing knife was in the hand of one of the juniors.

The sound was faint, and if it reached the soldier who sat outside, it fell on sleepy, heedless ears.

It ceased. There was another sound—of a body squeezing through an opening. In the gloom the Kikuyu discerned it faintly.

He caught the gleam of a knife. "You're awake, Kicky?" It was the faintest of whispers.

But the Kikuyu knew the voice of Bwana-wangu—the "Lord" to whom he was devoted. His eyes shone. It was Bwana-wangu who was taking the terrible risk of aiding him.

"O Bwana, my eyes see you!" whispered the Kikuyu.

The keen edge of the knife sawed over the cords that bound his powerful limbs. They dropped in fragments on the sleeping-mat, and the Kikuyu was free.

There was a stirring outside the hut. Some slight sound had reached the sleepy black man outside. His shadow was seen to fall across the doorway as he rose.

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Heedless of the terrible risk he was taking, Vernon-Smith drew the keen edge of his knife over the cords that bound Kikolobo. They dropped in fragments on the sleeping-mat, and the Kikuyu was free!

The Bounder's heart almost missed a beat. He knew that the man was about to look into the hut.

The hand of the Kikuyu slid over his own, grasping away the knife. He caught the terrible light in the Kikuyu's eyes and understood. Life and death hung on the next few seconds for both of them.

The Bounder crouched back into the darkest corner of the hut. The Kikuyu stretched himself on the sleeping-mat, the knife hidden under him.

A moment more and a head and shoulders were put in at the doorway, and the soldier of Tofoloko peered in.

"O man," said the soldier, "do you sleep, or does the thought of the tortures of M'toko on the night of the full moon keep you wakeful?"

The Kikuyu was silent.

For a moment the Bounder hoped that the soldier would turn away. But either the man was suspicious, or the fear of Tofoloko's wrath made him doubly cautious. He stepped into the hut and bent over the still figure of the Kikuyu to ascertain beyond doubt that he was safe in his bonds.

What passed next passed with lightning swiftness.

The Bounder, crouching in the darkness, heard the low moan and the slump of a falling body. Peering in the gloom, he saw the Kikuyu on his knees wiping the knife on the loin-cloth of a still form that lay beside the sleeping-mat.

Vernon-Smith shivered.

The Kikuyu rose to his feet.

"O Bwana-wangu," he said, "it is done, and this dog of the Moteli has gone to the ghosts."

He thrust the knife into his own girdle and picked up the fallen soldier's spear.

"This spear," said Kikolobo, "is not so strong as a spear of the Kikuyu, but it will drink much blood before bonds are placed again on Kikolobo. O Bwana, you have saved your servant."

"You think you can get out of the city?" whispered the Bounder.

The Kikuyu smiled.

"The gateways are guarded," said Vernon-Smith, "and there is a thorn wall round the whole place."

"O Bwana, this Kikuyu, who can fight like Simba the lion, can also crawl like Nyoke the snake," said Kikolobo.

"My knife will find a way through the boma, and beyond the boma lies freedom for this Kikuyu and for the lord whom he has followed from the great lakes."

"My friends—" muttered the Bounder.

"O Bwana, so many could not escape the eyes of the Moteli, especially the Small Fat One, who is lazy and a coward. It was to save Bwana-wangu that this Kikuyu came; but afterwards, when my lord is in safety, I will give my life to save the other white lords."

The Bounder shook his head.

"All or none!" he said. "If you think there's a chance for us, Kicky, we'll come—and die fighting if the Moteli stop us. But if not, go alone, and help us afterwards if you can."

The tall Kikuyu stood silent for some moments.

His own escape was by no means certain, but there was a good chance for him now that he was free, with weapons in his hands. That chance would be very greatly diminished by taking Bwana-wangu with him. It vanished almost to nothing if the whole party made the attempt.

The Bounder knew it. Only by creeping and crawling, winding and twisting from shadow to shadow, could the Kikuyu hope to reach unseen the boma that circled the city. It was doubtful whether Bwana-wangu, in his company, would succeed; it was fairly certain that the whole party could not; and quite certain that Billy Bunter could not.

"Go!" said Vernon-Smith quietly. "While you live, Kikolobo, we have hope. Go and save yourself, and help us if you can."

"My ears do not hear you, Bwana," said the Kikuyu.

"Your ears must hear me, Kicky," said the Bounder. "Without my friends I cannot go, and they could never get away undiscovered. Go alone—and live to help us."

"My ears do not hear!" repeated the Kikuyu obstinately. "O Bwana-wangu, let your handsome feet tread in the footsteps of this Kikuyu—and, by the name of N'gai, who dwells on the Great Mountain, I swear that I will return to save the other white lords, or die for them."

"All or none!" said the Bounder.

The Kikuyu drew a deep breath. "Then, O Bwana, call the other white lords, and it may be that N'gai, who sees all things from the summit of the Great Mountain, will watch over us with his eye, and save us from the knives of the Moteli."

"If there's a chance—" muttered the Bounder, his eyes gleaming. He was ready to take the most desperate chance of escaping from slavery.

He peered from the doorway of the hut.

The king's guard were still lounging

idly in the distance before the royal hut where Tofoloko slept. But Bosango, the captain of the guard, was looking directly towards the death-hut, and the Bounder detected a puzzled expression on his face in the moonlight. It rushed into his mind that Bosango had noted the absence of the sentinel at the death-hut—the wretch who now lay dead at the feet of the Kikuyu.

He caught his breath.

Even as he looked Bosango detached himself from the crowd of soldiers and came towards the death-hut.

Vernon-Smith stepped back quickly to the Kikuyu.

"The game's up!" he whispered. "They're coming; they'll find out in a minute or two what's happened!"

The Kikuyu gave a glance from the doorway into the moonlight.

His eyes burned. His sinewy hand closed harder on the spear.

"O Bwana," he whispered, "now there is no escape. Go back to your friends, O Bwana, and let it not be known that you have helped me, for only so shall you escape the torture. And if I live to flee from this city, let it be in your thoughts that I shall be near, and that this Kikuyu will save you and the other white lords. Go, O Bwana!"

The Bounder pressed his hand and slid out of the hut through the opening in the back wall. He crept through the shadows with throbbing heart.

The Kikuyu waited. Bosango, the captain of the guard, reached the open doorway and peered in.

Kikolobo crouched back in the darkness. Every moment saved helped the Bounder to get clear and to keep secret the part he had played. The Kikuyu made no sound.

"Soldier," said Bosango, peering in, "let my eyes see you."

Evidently Bosango knew that the sentinel had entered the death-hut, though he was perplexed to know why he did not emerge.

There was no answer, and the captain of the guards stepped in.

He peered about the hut.

"Soldier—" he began again.

He never finished the sentence.

From the shadows a spear-point flashed, and, with one low groan, Bosango fell on his face, struck to the heart.

Kikolobo looked down at him.

"O Man of the Moteli," he said, "give this Kikuyu good words in the land of the ghosts, where I have sent you."

He looked calmly from the doorway.

Several of the soldiers had followed Bosango, and an excited jabber of voices told that they had heard the dying groan of the captain of the guards. They came on towards the death-hut at a run.

Kikolobo stepped to the opening cut in the back of the hut, squeezed through, and emerged into the open behind the building. While the soldiers, with startled cries, crowded round the body of Bosango, the swift Kikuyu was gliding among the crowded huts of the city, seeking escape.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Hope!

"SMITHY!"

Harry Wharton breathed more freely as the Bounder crept back into the hut where the juniors, wakeful and watchful, waited for him.

"Smithy, old chap—" muttered Bob.

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"My esteemed Smithy—"

The Bounder was breathing hard, and there were clots of perspiration on his brow. He had crept back to the hut unseen, and it had only been a matter of moments; but every moment had been long.

"What—" whispered Nugent.

The Bounder whispered a few words. "Then Kicky's loose?" breathed Johnny Bull.

"Yes, with a spear in his hand," said Smithy. "It's a hundred to one he won't get clear, but some of those black brutes will get the business end of the spear before they get Kicky."

"Listen!" muttered Nugent.

From Billy Bunter's hut, near at hand, came a sound of deep snoring. The Owl of the Remove was sleeping at last. There was a sound of padding feet; and Wharton, peering out, saw soldiers crossing towards the death-hut. He saw them break into a run.

He held his breath.

The next moment there was a startling outbreak of cries and shouts. The juniors listened, with an anxiety that was almost an agony.

In that tumult they dreaded to hear the death-cry of the Kikuyu, falling under a rain of blows from savage hands.

They crowded the doorway of the hut, watching. They saw the excited soldiers emerge from the death-hut carrying two bodies. But they could see that the dead men were both of the Moteli. One of them was the soldier who had watched the death-hut; the other was Bosango the captain of the guards.

The Bounder smiled grimly.

"Kicky got him!" he muttered. "He's cleared; they haven't got Kicky! If only he gets away—"

"Heaven help him!" breathed Wharton.

The whole guard was clustered now before the death-hut, babbling with alarm and amazement. The juniors saw Bubu emerge from one of the royal huts, evidently in great wrath.

"Soldiers, will you wake Tofoloko with your clamour?" exclaimed Bubu. "Is it your desire to die under the knives of the torturers?"

"O Bubu," said one of the soldiers, trembling, "the stranger has escaped, and he has slain Bosango with a spear."

"If the stranger has escaped it is well for Bosango that he was slain with a spear, for Tofoloko would not have permitted him to die so swiftly," said Bubu grimly, "and if the stranger escapes from the city there is death for all who were on guard! Let him not escape!"

The alarm was spreading now. The guards, joined by a swarm of other soldiers, began to search for the Kikuyu. The droning boom of a native drum awoke echoes far and wide, and the natives turned out of their houses in buzzing crowds.

From end to end of the city of Tofoloko there was wild alarm and uproar.

Long minutes lengthened into hours, and still the uproar up and down the crowded native city continued.

That was as good as good news; for it told that the frantic search for Kikolobo was still going on; he had not been captured yet.

There was a glimmer of dawn in the eastern sky.

The juniors watched it with haggard eyes. Day was coming; and if the Kikuyu was still within the boma his fate was sealed now. They hoped that he had succeeded in getting clear while darkness lasted; and it looked like it, for the hunting was still going on.

The sun leaped up over the horizon and it was day.

Several times the juniors caught sight of Bubu hurrying to and fro. Crowds of natives passed in their sight, and soon after dawn a swarm began to collect in the great square.

Bubu appeared at the doorway of the royal hut, and beckoned to the juniors. It was now well on in the morning, and it pleased King Tofoloko to raise his royal, sooty limbs from the sleeping-mat. It was time for the slaves to resume their duties about the person of the monarch.

Tofoloko was scowling darkly, his eyes glinting, his thick lips snarling; and his attendants moved in his presence in fear and trembling.

The shadow of death was over all the city of Tofoloko that morning.

Tofoloko strode out of the royal hut, and the buzzing of the crowd in the square died down.

Bubu stood before the black king, his fat knees almost knocking together, cringing with fear.

"O Bubu," said Tofoloko, "my ears hear that the stranger, whom I doomed to die under the knives of the torturers, has escaped from my city."

"It is true, O Tofoloko," said Bubu, shivering; "but there are many hunters following him, and he will surely be brought back to this city to die."

"Let my eyes see the soldiers who kept guard when the stranger escaped from my city," said Tofoloko.

Twenty soldiers, disarmed, were led towards the black king, between lines of armed men.

They stood in a trembling crowd.

Tofoloko fixed his eyes on the doomed wretches. For a long minute there was silence, while they awaited their fate, as if the savage king enjoyed their terror, as was doubtless the case.

Then he made a sign.

Harry Wharton & Co. turned their faces away as the spears rose and fell; and the bodies were dragged away, to be cast outside the city for the jackals.

Another sun rose on the city of Tofoloko; and another, and another.

Days of slavery for the schoolboys; in whose hearts there lingered only one hope.

The Kikuyu had escaped.

The king's hunters had returned from a futile search, and many of them had been given over to death as a punishment for failure.

Kikolobo was still free; and if Tofoloko thought of him at all, he thought that the stranger from a far land had fled from the country of the Moteli, and would take great care never to be seen there again. In a few days the savage king had dismissed the episode from his mind.

But the juniors knew that Kikolobo was not gone; that when the hunt for him ceased he would be near that city of terror and death; that while life beat in his heart the faithful Kikuyu would never desert them. That knowledge—all that remained to them—helped to keep hope alive in the hearts of the schoolboys who had been sold into slavery.

THE END.

(Next week's yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., in Africa, is entitled: "SAVED FROM THE CANNIBALS!" and is undoubtedly the best in the series. Make certain of your copy by ordering it from your newsagent to-day.)

WANTED—A CHEF!



Another Smashing Complete Yarn of the Wild West!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Beans—and More Beans!

THE Buckaroos of the old Leanin' L Ranch sat on the rails of the hoss corral, or squatted in the dust of the ranchyard, smoking and yarning.

"High" Jinks glanced at Nippy Nolan, who was sitting somewhat apart with a somewhat gloomy look upon his usually cheery little countenance.

It had been a hard three days' work on the range driving in from three to five thousand head of cattle in preparation for the approaching round-up, and all were tired, just a bit bored, and very hungry.

"What's th' matter wi' our Cockney friend?" asked High, in pretended low tones to Doc Low, which he knew Nippy could easily hear. "Somethin' ain't agreein' wi' our angel child. Think he's sickenin' for somethin'?"

"Growin' pains, I guess," responded Doc, taking up his cue, whilst the other cowpunchers grinned in anticipation of the expected leg-pull.

The three "Must-get-theirs" could chaff each other as much as they pleased, but woe betide any outsider who essayed to take a liberty with either. The slogan of "One for All—All for One" would come into force, and the other range riders had a wholesome respect for Nippy's fists, High's marvellous shooting, and Doc Low's quiet but stinging sarcasm and keen brains.

"Ho might have th' pains, but I'm blowed if he's growed much, eether in length or width!" grinned High.

"Grow? Strike me plurry pink purple—who's likely to grow on th' bloomin' grub we're gettin' now-a-days?" growled Nippy. "Stinky never

was much clawss as a cook, but 'e might at least give us a bit o' variety. Wot 'ave we 'ad of late—I awsk yer? Same ol' thing day arter day; no plurry change, an' a change o' diet's good for man an' beast!"

"Which class do yuh come under, li'l one?" asked Low.

"Aw, yer can larf, but it's gettin' me dahn. We know for certain wot every durned meal's goin' to be, 'cos w'y? Monday—beans. Toosd'y—beans. Wen'sday—good ol' beans! An' for spechul occasions an' as a appetiser—**BEANS!**"

"Nippy's sure spat a bibful!" agreed a solemn-faced fence rider, Tom Hatto, known as Tomato. "Havve any o' yuh fellers in th' last dorg's age tasted a

What the rancher pals wanted was a square meal . . .

What the cook wanted was a square deal . . .

steak smothered in mushrooms? Have yer any rec-collection o' what a chicken dumplin' looks like? An' pies! W'en I thinks o' th' pies my ol' mother useter make—"

"An' doughnuts!" chimed in another, smacking his lips. "I c'udn't dare try one now—it might pizen me. I ain't used to high livin'!"

The form of Stinky, the cook, appeared, and his voice boomed out in the familiar "Come an' git it!" as he banged the iron triangle lustily, which did duty for a call bell.

Stinky might look a bit soft, but he knew just how things were. His ears

had been well open to the sarcastic remarks which came from the 'punchers at every meal of late concerning his cooking. But a ranch cook who can't put up with a bit of chaff is not much good, and Stinky could give as good as was sent upon occasion.

All the same, he had his pride in his job, and tried again and again to give the boys some variety in their grub as far as lay in his power.

But his experience had only been upon ranch or round-up, and as a cook his powers were somewhat limited. He was a good plain cook, and in the ordinary way nobody ever dreamed of finding fault with his cooking, but cowpunchers are very like grown-up schoolboys, and once a grouse starts on the food question everything, no matter how good, comes under the fire of criticism.

Stinky knew this, and was getting somewhat fed-up with the sarcasms. He stood in the doorway between the eating shack and his kitchen, pretending not to be listening, but all agog for any remarks.

The 'punchers lowered themselves into their seats as if for an unpleasant operation, with deep sighs of resignation and rolling, cynical eyes at the steaming grub. Whatever the quality, there was certainly quantity and to spare, but they sat back and eyed the stew disdainfully as Doc Low, at the head of the table, ladled it out and opened the fire of would-be witticisms on the hapless cook.

"Once more, gents," he announced, in the manner of a chairman making a speech; "once more air we fine up-standin' cow nusses gathered around this yer festive board. Starin' us in th' dial is a banquet—no less. Good ol' beans, good ol' hash, good ol' corfee—which 'ud

float a flat-iron. Pass one o' them cream puffs, Tomato!"

"Them ain't cream puffs, Doc; them's biscuits a la Stinky. It's his own recipe brought all th' way from Missouri whar he was foreman on a ceement plant," said Tomato.

"I haven't dared try 'em since I busted a hull month's wages buyin' a noo set o' grinders last time I gnawed one!" put in High. "I reckon th' Stinky's motter must be 'A leetle goes a long way,' for a leetle o' some o' this yer alleged grub 'ud last ye to th' grave!"

"Ow, don't be down'carted, fellers; there's lots o' other vittels!" said Nippy. "There's 'ot dorgs jest shoutin' for attention. Good ol' friends that we've known from child'ood. I knows 'em all by name, an' they'd come friskin' appily to me if I jest called 'em, waggin' their little tails. They're well trained and quiet in their 'abits—orl except that one in the sou'-west corner wi' th' bulgy tummy. I don't like 'is looks; 'e's got too much Airedale in 'im!"

"Gents, th' opcenion o' th' meetin' is unanimush, we air all of one mind!" boomed Tomato. "If we was low down an' mean we'd be hollerin' out complainin' o' th' grub. But no—we air strong silent men who never complain. We don't say nuthin' a-tall, jest bears up. We air like them South Sea Highlanders as Doc was readin' to us about t'other night in th' bunkhouse. W'en grub's short, them cokernut wallopers goes out into th' swamps an' fills their tummies wi' blue clay until they swells an' th' pangs is satisfied. Sometimes I envies them savidges their blue clay w'en I tastes some o' Stinky's grub—"

"Listen, yuh nit-wits!" snarled the cook, aroused at last. "Ain't it bad enuff for a self-respectin' gent to have to sling hash for a bunch o' locoed polecats like yuh? Was yer ever used to any decent grub afore yer came to th' Leanin' L? In th' slums an' reformatories whar yer was brought up, did yer ever have anythin' but slumgullion an' hardbake wi' yer dessert out o' th' pickin's from a garbage tin? Pah, yer makes me dead tired!"

"Why, if thar isn't dear ol' Stinky all th' while!" cried Doc, turning in assumed surprise to the cook. "I caught sight o' somethin' in th' doorway an' I thought it was one o' them nice red hams th' boss brought back. Must have been Stinky's dial. Yuh fellers ought not to talk thus afore a gent's face. Yuh might have hurt his feelin's!"

"Keerful, Doc, his eyes is a-rollin' an' thar's foam on his lips. I see a locoed wart-hog onct, an' I knows th' signs. When yer see Stinky's bristles go up an' he starts spittin' fire, bolt for th' open an' burn th' dust!"

"As for yuh, yer poor weed, yuh thet wears th' seat o' yer pants atween yer shoulders," snarled Stinky, addressing the lengthy one, "for two pins, if yer was wuth it, I'd jest natterally fold yuh in three haffs an' chuck yer in the river! Lissen hyar, yuh collection o' drug-store cowboys! It's a long worm thet has no turnin', an' I've reached th' limit. Say what yer likes about me, but lay off my grub, or thar'll be trouble in the camp, an' thet goes!"

"Gee, but thet's hot—thet's all-fired hot!" cried High, fanning himself with a tin plate. "Gimme air! Doc, thet

blarmed door has swung closed ag'in an' I'm 'most stiffin' wi' fear. Hand me somethin' ra'al heavy to hold it open wi', or I'll swoon!"

Solemnly Low lifted one of Stinky's loaves from the breadpan and tossed it across to High, who, affecting to nearly drop it, staggered across to the door as if he was carrying a hundredweight of coal, and propped the door open with the loaf.

There was a peculiar choking, gurgling sound from the cook. He put his hands to his throat as if he were choking, his face turned purple, and his eyes positively glared. Then his frame gradually relaxed, his chin dropped on to his breast, and, tearing off his apron and throwing it to the floor, he turned and slowly went into his kitchen with lowered head, closing the door gently behind him.

"What's bit him?"

"'E never said a blinkin' word!"

"Never even ticked us off—jest stole a-way!"

They had all been expecting the offended cook to go off the deep end, but this silent departure took the wind out of their sails.

"Boyees, he's hurt—he's plumb hurt—wounded in his feelin's," said Doc Low solemnly. "He kin stand all th' joshin' we like to give him, for Stinky's a ra'al good feller an' a sport, but it was my fault. W'en High asked for somethin' heavy to hold th' door open with I ought have known better than to hand him one o' Stinky's noo loaves. If thar's one thing he fancies himself as a pastmaster it is bein' able to make light bread, an' to give him his doo, his bread wants beatin'. 'Twas thoughtless of muh, an' I'm man enough to go an' apologise. I'll soon put matters to rights. Wait hyar an' see!"

He smoothed his hair, settled his horn-rimmed specs firmly on his Roman nose, and strode majestically to the kitchen door—to find it firmly locked and barred. There was no response to his repeated knocks, and he rattled the handle.

"Oh, Stink—er—cook!" he called in honeyed tones, and with his best accent. "Open the door. I wish to speak to you—"

"Go 'way, yer polecat!" was the gruff response.

"But listen—th' boys were only joshin'. We all like your cookin'. It's Al, an' yer bread's good, too—it cain't be beat! I didn't mean anything when I gave High thet loaf to prop th' door open—"

"Git out, yer buzzard!"

"But St—er—cook—"

"Can th' sob-stuff. Put an egg in yer sock an' beat it, yer four-eyed bug-wump! I've finished—d'yer hear—finished!"

Later, in the bunkhouse, the boys were sitting discussing the situation when Colonel Lou Luttrell, the boss, came in. He understood his cowpunchers as he understood his cows, and he went straight to the point.

"Boys," he said solemnly, though there was a twinkle in his eye, "a good cook is more to be considered in the scheme o' things in runnin' a ranch than even th' cowpunchers, for to work proper yuh must eat, an' to eat yuh have to have yer grub cooked. Our cook is a gent as is skilled in his profession, an' bein' an artist he has sensitive feelings—he has his soft spots—"

"That's more'n 'is bloomin' biscuits 'as!" grinned the irrepressible Nippy.

"He has been barin' his soul to me over at my office, an' I durn nigh had to hold him down in his chair. He says yuh guys insulted him, an' he called for his time an' pro-claimed that he was rollin' his blankets an' shakin' th' dust o' th' Leanin' L from his number tens!"

"Quittin'? Goin' for good? Bunchin' et? Pullin' his freight?" gasped the boys in their different ways.

"Jest thet!" responded the owner. "However, whatever yuh mavericks may think, I valoo Stinky, an' I'm plumb sorry!"

There were sly grins amongst the boys. After all, there was a silver lining to the cloud, and they might get a cook who would introduce a bit of variety into the monotonous grub.

"Bad luck, bawss, but it cain't be helped!" said Tomato.

"Poor ol' Stinky!" grinned Low. "How would et be if we went over to his room wi' tears streamin' down our faces an'—an' helped him to roll his blankets?"

"Yeah—an' see he don't leave nuthin' bee-hind?" High went on. "It'd sure break us all up if he let' any soo-venira. In days to come we'd shake or haids mournful an' say: 'Look, men, we had a ra'al, honest to goodness cook onct. Hyar's his powder-puff an' lipstick to prove et—'"

"Knowin' how sad an' sorry yuh stiff would be at losin' th' best rough cook on this yer range," said the unruffled boss, regarding them with a gleam in his eye, "I compromised with Stinky. He's goin' to stay over at Denver wi' his ol' pal H-Bone, who runs a boardin'-house thar, for one month—then he reeturns."

There was a hollow groan from Nippy, and the other boys breathed sighs of disappointment, but they knew their boss.

"Now, I b'leeve thet yuh three guys have been loudest in yer joshin' o' Stinky, so et's on'y fair thet yuh should go find us another cook. Yuh will take th' buggy to-morrer mornin', drive him into town, an' see him inter his train—"

"An' kiss 'im goo'-bye!" grinned Nippy.

"And reeturn hyar by evenin' wi' one cook, no age, race, creed, or colour barred. Th' on'y thing is thet havin' see-lected said cook your own selves—thar must be no more gousin' or back chat. I wish yuh luck. Gents, adoo!"

Low to the Rescue!

IT was evening of next day, and High, Low and Nippy were standing disconsolately in the middle of deserted Main Street, feeling and looking like three balloons from which the gas has escaped. They had seen a haughty Stinky off by the train, joshing him to the last. But Stinky had given a parting thrust which they afterwards had reason to remember.

"Goo'-bye, yer haff-witted polecats!" he cried, as they affected to dry their eyes on huge bandanna handkerchiefs. "Yuh won't be no wiser w'en I gits back, 'cos yer ain't built thet way. But yuh'll sure be a heck lot more experienced w'en some vittle spiler has done his worst to yer. Yuh'll be goin' down on yer marrer-bones an' beggin' me to give ye some ol' time grub—"

The pals realised that there was a lot truth in what their late cook had said. They had searched high and low for something in the shape of a cook without avail, tramping hither and thither in their tight, high-heeled riding-boots until they were footsore and weary.

"Whar air th' perishin' cooks? They useter be three for a cent a few months back, but now they're scarce as white blackbirds!" growled High.

"Yuss, if we wanted di'mond cutters or tight-rope dancers we c'udn't 'ave 'ad more blinkin' trouble!" moaned Nippy. "My pore blinkin' feet are nigh raw. If I don't 'ave a rest I'll drop. Wot abaht a spot o' somethink, Doc?"

Doc Low fumbled in his pocket and produced two five-cent pieces which he surveyed mournfully. It was the end of the month, and they were all "stony."

"Ere, I've got a dime, 'Igh's got a nickel. Let's gi' it to Doc so's 'e kin go into th' First an' Last an' see if 'e cawn't kid ol' Jake to make us a drink an' some grub. 'E's got th' gift o' th' gab—"

A few minutes later Doc Low was leaning up against the bar of the saloon exchanging easy converse with the proprietor. He caught sight of a party of half a dozen from whom came shouts of merriment. One of them was a little roly-poly man with an enormous moustache and imperial chinpiece, who was making more noise than any and gesticulating freely.

His face seemed vaguely familiar to Low, and his eyes gleamed as he saw that the men were playing poker. What Low did not know about the game and card manipulation generally was not worth knowing.

"Why th' hilarity?" he inquired. "Who's th' li'l tub?"

"Aw, a li'l Frenchy. Missed his train to Denver. He's goin' to th' Waldorf thar as cook. Sheff they calls 'em in them high-toned places."

Low's mind worked double quick. "Jake," he whispered earnestly, "I'd like to sit in that game, for a special reason. Stake me ten dollars, will yuh; pay-day Tuesday—"

"Why, of course, any time for yuh three boys, an' I've seen yuh play, Doc. Git to et, an' good luck!"

The loyal Doc fetched in his two pals, seeing that they had grub and that their thirst was quenched first. Then he sauntered casually over to the table and bought chips. He found that the little Frenchman had been having amazing luck, and had a pile of notes and chips before him. He could certainly play poker, but relied mainly on his luck. Doc did not. Time was short, and he needed that little Frenchman's money—for a purpose. He manipulated the cards as he had never done before. The excitable chef became more and more agitated as his money disappeared, but although he was game, when it came to eleven o'clock he threw up his hands in despair, almost with tears in his eyes.

"A bas les fortunes—ah, sapristi! I have lose my all! M'sieur, you have ze luck of ze diable himself! Now, vat s'all I do? My tcecket to Denver is in my bag vich has gone on vis ze train. I have no money. I.a, la; I go to a job in Denver! How do I get zere—how do I leevo?"

"Say, I guess you're in luck, after all, m'sieur, for we can fix yuh up for a month as cook at fifteen dollars per week. Would yuh take it on—cookin' for cowpunchers? Mebbe we'd git yuh yer ticket to Denver as well, an' yuh'd have a good time. Our last cook was

with us five year? What might your name be?"

"Moi? I am M'sieur Hyacinth Legros, of Paree; ze chef of chefs!"

"Great! Then if yuh was let loose in a cookin' shack, be it ever so humble, yuh c'ud turn out most anythin', huh? Stoo, an' flapjacks, doughnuts, pies, etcetterer?" queried Low, whilst the other boys listened with their eyes goggling and ears almost flapping, whilst they licked their lips in anticipation.

"Pah, dose t'ings are for ze cook ordinaire. Moi—I am ze gr-r-reat artiste! For moi ze soupe, ze entree, ze omelette, ze compote; dishes fit for ze king upon 'is throne—"

"Say, yuh come with us an' I'll give yuh your first week's wages right now," said the wily Low, peeling off the amount from the chef's own wad of bills which he had won.

In ten minutes he had cajoled the forlorn little man to take the job on, and they all adjourned to the village store where Hyacinth Legros ordered things which made the grocery man's eyes goggle out of his head.

"Say, yuh gorillas up at th' Leanin' L

cigarettes, and propped themselves against the corral rails, gazing before them with the air of those who, having seen a miracle, would ease their eyes by gazing at familiar objects.

A Flash in the Pan!

FORTY year have I rode this yer range, man an' boy," murmured old Blobnose Brown, the oldest hand, "an' I have lived to see grapefruit on a ranch brekfuss-table. An' chocolate wi' whipped cream a-top! Lissen! If I'm dreamin' have peety on a old man an' don't wake muh—"

"We're all dreamin'!" said Tomato. "I dreamt o' toast thin as th' ace o' hearts, steak tender as a mother's love, wi' bacon like gold leaf an' mushrooms on th' side. Then thet omelick—light as a powder-puff an' big as a feather bed—it trickled down me gullet like a warm breeze from th' south!"

"It cawn't lawst!" murmured Nippy, rubbing his tummy appreciatively. "No livin' man c'ud go hon cookin' like that

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are goin' in heavy for style, ain'cher? I guess yer in luck, for this Frenchy's bought most o' th' stock that th' bawss bought from a ho-tel in Denver that went bust. Patty-de-four grass, sparrer-grass, delicatessens I never heard on, but he seems to know all about them. Next time I see yer gabezas I reckon yer'll be wearin' high hats an' spats—"

"Mind yer businay," said High loftily. "We're goin' to live on real grub for th' next month, an' don'tcher forgit it. Gee, but thet gorconsolyer cheese huns a bit. Cain't yer rope it an' throw it?"

Hyacinth beamed on them as they sped ranchwards, but High leaned across from the driving-seat and whispered to Low:

"Say, yuh sure had some luck at that game, Doc. Was it straight?"

Low took off his specs and wiped them, then shook his head mournfully.

"I regret to say it was not!" he replied. "I c'udn't hold a cyard an' thet li'l stiff w'ud have got away wi' my ten spot, so I wangled 'em! But, o' course, I'll give et him back. But we had to git us a cook, didn't we?"

Next morning, twenty cowpunchers came out of the grub shack, rolling

—e must go orf. It's jest a flash in th' pan!"

But, far from going off, Hyacinth improved with every meal they ate. Finding such appreciative appetites to cater for, he excelled himself and invented new dishes to tickle their palates with. Ordinary beef and mutton, potatoes and cabbage, assumed new and wonderful forms under his magic touch.

Nearly every day Col. Lou looked into the grub shack and noted the rich and fragile dainties with which his bunch of roughnecks were daily regaled. He said nothing, but there was a sardonic gleam in his eyes which only Low noted.

"Somethin's goin' to come unstuck!" he muttered to himself. "I never saw old Pokerface with thet kinder puckered-up grin but what he had somethin' up his sleeve. What's th' game?"

A night or two later he was awakened by Nippy tugging at his sleeve. He was groaning dismally, and rubbing his thin tum-tum.

"Doc, 'avo yer got any o' them aunty-bilious pills o' yours left?" he whispered. "I dunno wot's wrong, but I've

WANTED—A CHEF!*(Continued from previous page.)*

got a pain in my innards like to wrench me in 'arf!"

"Run el'ar out o' 'em, boyee," replied Low. "I been takin' three a-night myself, an' two or three o' t'other boys have borrowed em. High took six, night before last!"

Col. Lou found that the men were apt to drop into his office on some pretext or another and beg something from the medicine-chest—generally for stomach trouble, and his wry-mouthed grin became more pronounced than ever.

At the end of a week Hyacinth noticed something about his guests. They were loud in their praises as ever, but he sensed something forced in their compliments, and redoubled his efforts to give them new and dainty dishes.

But that night the sleeping men were awakened by loud yellings coming from the cooking shack where the Frenchman slept.

They got into their clothes and tumbled in to his rescue. They found Hyacinth standing in the middle of a muddle of scattered foodstuffs which strewed the floor, clad in pyjamas that made the men blink.

"Thieves, burglars, assassins!" he yelled. "T'ree of zem! Zey assault me, rifle ze larder, an' away. Ah, la, la, vat a countree!"

Colonel Lou glanced over the assembled boys and noticed that High, Low, and Nippy were not amongst those present. He said nothing, but smiled wryly. He went to the corral and noted that the three Must-get-theirs horses were not there. He saddled his own steed, muffled its hoofs, and rode out, watching the trail of recent hoofprints and judging where he would be likely to find the truants.

Sure enough, in a little hollow about three miles from the camp, he saw a small fire burning, concealed amongst the rocks. As he approached, he sniffed the air. The appetising smell of sausages, steak grilling over an open fire, coffee fragrantly boiling in an old billy-can, pork and beans simmering in

their own native tin, was wafted towards him, and as he crept near he heard voices raised in praise.

"Ra-al he-men's grub ag'in!" chuckled High. "Me—I've been cravin' for somethin' plain, solid, an' simple for days! Larks' tongues, tootty frooty, patty-dee-four grass, an' perfumed seafoam have got muh down, an' I don't mind admittin' it."

"Me, too," sighed Nippy, taking his sixth sausage from the frying-pan. "Beans an' bacon for me arter this. That 'igh-toned diet o' Cynthy's is too bloomin' rich arter a while. I've felt seasick every time me 'orse cantered an' felt like frowin' up if 'e galloped!"

"Who says another piece o' steak?" asked Doc, who was officiating at the fire.

"I do!" came a deep voice behind him, and he swung round to find the boss grinning down at him from his muffled-hoofed horse. "Now, yuh boys had better explain, an' we'll see what can be done about things!"

He sat down beside them and listened to Low's tale of how they had acquired the little French chef.

He chuckled as he heard of the "crook" poker game, for he knew of Doc's skill with cards.

"So yuh're all tired of Hyacinth's classy cookin'?"

"All th' boys air," said Low. "He's a good li'l cook sheff, but too good. What we want is—"

"He-men's food. We're too hard-boiled to live on frothy kickshaws. Haff an hour arter one o' th' Frenchy's blow-outs I feel like a punctured back tyre!" broke in High. "We want a cook, not a sheff. We want a hard-boiled maverick 'what stirs his beans wi' a spade, an' has th' deesposition o' a Army mule—"

"Like Stinky?"

"Like thet very he-man!" assented High stoutly. "We craves for grub as sticks to a man's innards. Beefsteak wi' brown gravy an' mashed spuds. Cabbage an' beans, done plain an' simple; ham an' aigs, not omelicks. Corfeo thet thick it 'ud float a flat-iron—"

"Like Stinky's?"

"Liko Stinky's!" the three yelled emphatically; and Low added: "Boss, if so be yuh can dope out some way o' gettin' rid o' Cynthy wi'-out hurtin' his feelin's—for any sake jump at it! I gives him back his dough, o' course, an' I'll pay his month's wages out'n my own if yuh'll stop it—"

"All three o' us!" growled High.

"One for all—"

"All for one!" finished Nippy. "We're all in this, an' we'll see it through together—"

"Waal, boys, if it'll ease yer minds any, yuh may as well know that Stinky comes back to-morrer. I've been watchin' points, an' I'm not goin' to have a lot o' sick cowpunchers, languid as locoed cows, loungin' about my ranch. I got on th' long distance phone to Hyacinth's boss in Denver, an' he needs him at once. I'll fix up about expenses."

Next morning the inhabitants of Merrivale who lived near the railway were astonished to hear loud whoops and crackling of six-guns as the train from Denver steamed in. A no less astonished cook, of the name of Stinky, was hauled out and forcibly seated in a beribboned buggy. Then the whole cavalcade tore through the town and sped at the full speed of six half-broken horses across the prairie.

Once more the boys of the Leanin' L were all united; once more the old-time, plain, but healthy grub was served out. And as the familiar yell of "Come an' git it!" and the rattle of Stinky's triangle sounded across the ranchyard, they pushed their way in with creaking harness and much chaff for the grinning cook, who would give as good as they sent; happy in his triumph, and the fact that the boys had discovered that "A shef is a shef—but a ra'al cook's a dandy!"

THE END.

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Languid Earl's Surprising Speed

THE REASON

Lord Maulverer, our prize slacker and champion snoozer, had to go down to the village after dinner last Thursday.

It's not often that Mauly's seen abroad between dinner-time and afternoon classes. Usually his habit is to report to his study and indulge in a spot of slumber till Sir Jimmy Vivian's thumb and forefinger applied to his ear remind him that the round of toil is upon him again. But even Mauly has to go out sometimes, and he went out after dinner last Thursday.



Afternoon classes begin at two-thirty. At five minutes past two, Mauly was seen coming through the gates, his mission ended. Two or three fellows who happened to be looking in that direction at the moment promptly fainted. For Mauly, for the first time in all history, was sprinting!

Sprinting hardly describes the pop he was putting into it as he went up the drive towards the House. He was positively flying along.

A crowd of Removites, almost falling over themselves with surprise, rushed to intercept him.

"Half-a-mo, Mauly!"

"Oh, gad! What's the time?"

"Five-past-two. But what—"

"Can't stop!"

And Mauly accelerated, leaving the crowd wondering whether they were seeing things. Wingate met him on the steps of the House. He jumped three feet in the air.

"Maulverer! Is it—can it be—"

"It is, old bean!" gasped Maulverer. "How's the time?"

"Ten-past-two. But what—"

"Oh, gad! Simply can't stop!"

And Mauly shot through the doorway. In the Hall, Mr. Quelch met him. The Kenmore Beak recoiled against the police-board at the unusual sight.

"Maulverer, my dear boy! Stop!"

"Oh, dear! I'm in an awful hurry, sir—"

"Then pray go on, Maulverer!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is a shock to see you hurrying, but I confess I am quite pleased!"

Maulverer had already vanished!

A curious crowd, wondering what miracle had effected such a surprising change in the Remove slacker, tore up to his study.

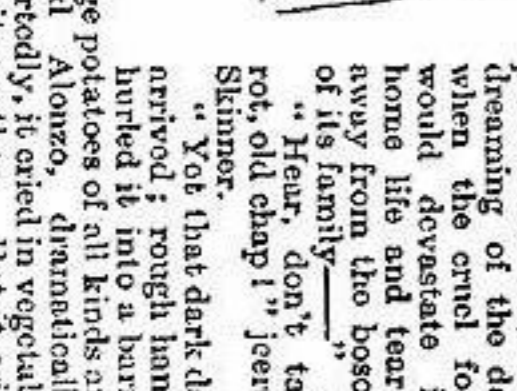
There, to their amazement, they found Maulverer on the sofa, fast asleep!

Mr. S. Q. I. Field, the celebrated explorer, has just returned from an expedition into the heart of the little-known Rag Country which extends from Mr. Twig's room to the uncharted territory beyond the Second Form-room.

A "Greyfriars Herald" representative secured an exclusive interview with Mr. Field soon after his arrival back in form of a spidery-looking serpent. The explorer bore visible wounds which he had encountered in a state of extreme barbarism. These tribes are ruled over by ferocious chiefs named Tubb and Nugent respectively, and a continual state of warfare exists between them.

The weapons used are mostly of a primitive kind. Darts with heads strangely reminiscent of pen-nibs are in great favour, as also is a kind of blowpipe rather like the pea-shooter we civilized people use.

When the tribes go into battle, they daub themselves freely with blue-black and red war-paint, and



the sight presented when these hideously-painted little men fling themselves with shrill cries into the fight simply beggars description!

The language of these savages is very difficult to understand owing to the speed and excessive loudness with which they speak. Their writing appears to take the form of a long, thin, pointed object with which they beguile the natives.

Mr. Field's most surprising discovery was that of a bar of soap which he found under a pile of rubbish in one of the native encampments. When the article was brought to light, it caused such consternation that the explorer could only conclude that the mysterious taboo regarding soap exists among these primitive people.

Possibly it was left there by a previous explorer?

Mr. Field will give a lantern lecture in the Rag to-morrow evening on the subject of "Life Among the Dribbarians." Admission will be by ticket only obtainable from S. Q. I. Field, Study No. 14, Kenmore Passage.

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INTREPID EXPLORER'S DISCOVERIES

Soap Among the Savages

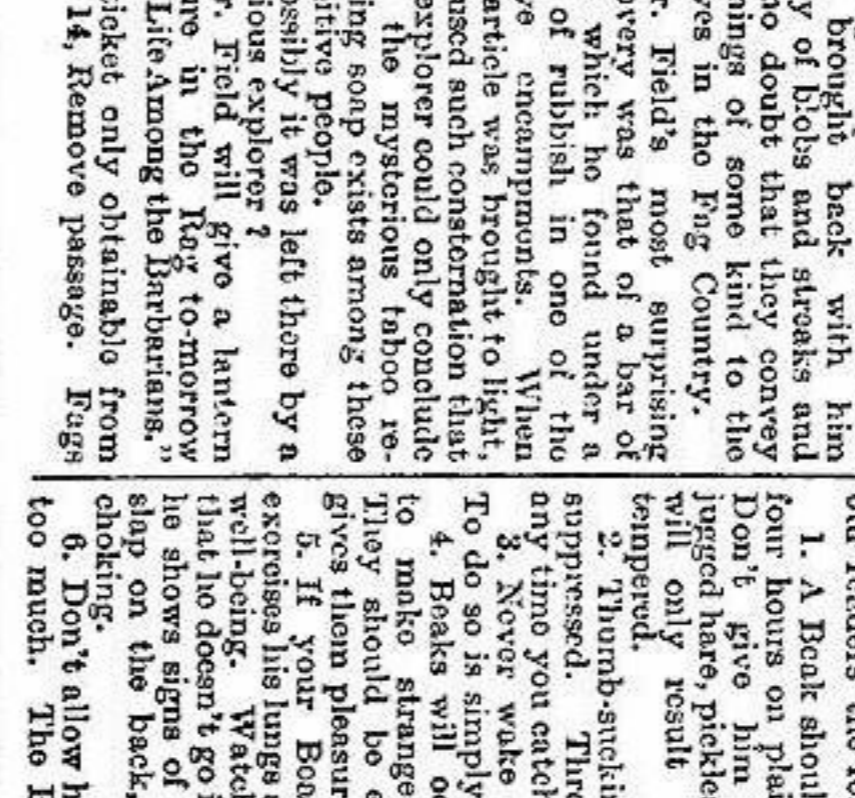
WARLIKE NATIVE TRIBES

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BRINGING UP BEAKS

How to Rear a First-class Master

EXCLUSIVE HINTS

In response to numerous requests from readers we are giving a few hints this week for the benefit of those who have the care and responsibility of bringing up Beaks. We all know what a lot depends on the early training of a Beak, but not many of us know just what sort of training he should receive. In the hope that they may prove of great benefit to anxious Beak-rearers, we commend to our readers the following tips:

1. A Beak should be fed at intervals of four hours on plain, easily-digested food. Don't give him lobster, roast pork, jagged hare, pickles, or curry. Such dishes will only result in his becoming bad-tempered.
2. Thumb-sucking should be sternly suppressed. Throw an ink-pellet at him any time you catch him doing it.
3. Never wake him during the night. To do so is simply to ask for trouble.
4. Beaks will occasionally be observed to make strange, unintelligible noises. They should be encouraged in this. It gives them pleasure.
5. If your Beak howls, let him. It expresses his lungs and improves his general well-being. Watch carefully, of course, that he doesn't go into convulsions. When he shows signs of this, give him a hearty slap on the back, and you will prevent choking.
6. Don't allow him to have his own way too much. The Beak that is your pride

SPARE THAT SPUD!

Potato Protector's Public Protest

Alonzo Todd, our champion tame human, rushed up to Snoop the other day when Snoop was sitting on a stool at the tuck shop counter consuming a creation called a potato-fritter. Chitching him conversationally by the elbow, he cried:

"Fie, fie! For shame, Snoop! How can you have the heart to sit shamelessly consuming a number of the potato species which I am sure, done you no harm? Do you not realise, my good Snoop, that the potato has feelings?"

"Feelings or peelings?" was Snoop's not altogether satisfactory reply.

"The mangled remains of a noble plant which you hold on your fork surely have their rights as well as you, my dear Snoop!" babbled Alonzo. "Think, my good fellow! There was a time when this potato was a mere baby—"

"A chip off the old block, so to speak!" remarked Skinner, who was standing near.

"Exactly!" beamed the unsuspecting Alonzo. "There it stood, on the threshold of life, in the first blush of potatohood, little dreaming of the day when the cruel fork would devastate its home life and tear it away from the bosom of its family—"

"Hear, don't talk rot, old chap!" jeered Skinner.

"You that dark day arrived; rough hands hurried it into a barrel huddled it in vegetable language for its mother. But it cried in vain; its mother was in another barrel!"

"Lucky she didn't know how her offspring was going to fritter away his life!" contributed Skinner.

"But, look here, Todd—"

"I ask you—nay, I implore you," said Alonzo, earnestly appealing to Snoop, "to pause and consider the

potato when next you make a meal. What would be your feelings if a potato took you and made a meal of you? I know you wouldn't like it, nor does the potato!"

Having shipped a dozen pamphlets into Snoop's hand, the Potato Protector quitted the tuckshop in search of further prospective converts!

We've heard quite a lot about Alonzo's latest, since then. He has made public protests against potato-eating at dinner in Half, addressed a public meeting on the subject in the Rag, and written a 30,000-word letter to the "Greyfriars Herald."

Of course, there's no telling what may happen. A "Greyfriars Herald" reporter who was called to Skinner's study last night was just in time to observe him pick up an onion with the evident intention of eating it, then put it down and melt into tears instead. It's wonderful how the humanitarian movement gains strength, isn't it?

GOOD OLD COKER!

The Fifth Form practice game was held up for 10 minutes yesterday while Coker had an argument with the referee. We understand that the argument was distinctly heard outside Uxelo Clegg's bunsop in Fritardale. Now we understand why Coker always calls it "FOOTBAWL!"

10 BUNS A WEEK FOR LIFE AT THE AGE OF 55!

64. a month, payable for 40 years, secures a pension of 10 buns a week for life at the age of 55. Rates quoted for insurances with or without curant! Make sure of a good tuck-in when your old and feeble by joining the GREYFRIARS TUCK PROVIDENT AND MUTUAL PENSION SOCIETY (President: G. Bulstrode), Study No. 2, Kenmore Passage.