

THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!
FREE REAL PHOTO INSIDE!

No. 772. Vol. XXII.

Week ending Nov. 25th, 1922.

The Magnet 2^d

Library
of
School & Detective Stories.



READ ABOUT
FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE, IN THIS ISSUE.

KING BUNTER OF THE CONGO VISITS HIS "SLAVES"!
(An amazing incident from our Stirring Long Complete Story in this issue.)

Here You Are, Boys! Another Grand Full Programme of School, Adventure and Detective Tales! MORE FREE REAL PHOTOS!

The Editor's Chat



Address your letters to: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

I start my Chat this week by giving you a few details of the story for next week. It is entitled:

"ON THE IVORY TRAIL!"

By Frank Richards,

and for sheer excitement and interest, this story will take a whole heap of beating.

The chums of Greyfriars are still lost on the Congo—lost, that is, from Captain Corkran's protection. In the meantime, you will know how Billy Bunter has made himself King of the Congo—and he's some king! Trust old Billy to look after himself!

Well, in our next story, chums, Billy is shown carrying out his royal duties—and Bob Cherry has as much as he can do to stop carrying out Bunter and dropping him in the river. However, he refrains from doing that, for Billy Bunter has a great power, and could easily sentence him to be "chopped," by which is meant eaten! And Billy, duffer as he is, might give the order and then find himself too late, or too bewildered, to quash the command.

The chums meet with Corkran, and their meeting is strange, not to say thrilling. A hungry lion on the warpath thinks it is Sunday, and that Corkran would be a nice Sunday joint. Harry Wharton gets the lion at the end of his rifle, and there's no end of a do then.

The meeting of Corkran and King Bunter provides topiche amusement, and even when the boss of the show comes up again, Billy can't forget that he commands the natives. Poor old Corkran goes through the hoop, and no mistake.

Corkran himself is nearly killed a little later, for the chums are attacked when digging up the ivory, and almost before they know what to do they find a dozen or so treacherous cannibals hot on their trail. It's a case of kill or be turned into outlets, so the chums have to kill.

But that is not nearly all about the next grand, extra-long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. which I shall put before you next week. Mr. Frank Richards has taken twenty thousand words to describe the thrill and danger the chums experience, so I cannot possibly do it in less, can I?

Make no mistake, then, chappies, but get round to the newsagent and tell him that King Bunter will make "chop-chop"

of him if there is no "Magnet" Library for you next week. As a matter of fact, the newsagents of this country are jolly obliging chaps, and they make no charge for taking down orders—in fact, they like 'em!

Get your moniker on the top of the list, and then you'll not be disappointed.

OUR NEXT FERRERS LOCKE STORY.

How would you like some creepy old fellow to put the fluence on you and make you rob a few safes? That's what happens to one poor man, for whom Ferrers Locke and his assistant, Jack Drake, have a great deal of sympathy.

The adventure is related in the story entitled:

"THE CASE OF THE HYPNOTIST!"

By Owen Conquest,

which will be found in our pages next Monday. Ferrers Locke has to fight the hypnotist, and that's no easy job. When I read the story I was sitting before the office fire, and I thought then I'd much rather be there than with old Ferrers. Fight! This hypnotist, stunt gets me guessing; but it's a jolly good job for the good name of Justice that there is one man in the world who doesn't care a worn-out tram-ticket for hypnotists or any other birds of that kidney. Ferrers Locke tackles the case, but he has to go right through the mill before he emerges triumphant.

There will also be another grand, four-page supplement, chaps, and a report of the Greyfriars Parliament meeting, at which several fellows are awarded handsome money prizes. There's one for you, incidentally, if you can send along a speech. You know what I mean, anything that you think will interest your fellow-readers. Send it along to the Greyfriars Parliament, care of this office, and if it strikes me as being one of the best of the bunch, then a postman shall bring you a cash prize.

There will also be another chance for you to win a handsome money prize in our splendid and popular ONE-WEEK FOOTBALL COMPETITION.

OUR FREE PHOTOS.

Isn't this week's Photo a stunner? There will be ANOTHER GRAND FREE REAL PHOTO OF A FAMOUS

FOOTBALL TEAM NEXT MONDAY WITH THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY. DON'T FORGET—DON'T MISS IT! My Scottish readers will be particularly pleased with this next free gift; it is a portrait of Celtic F.C.—one of the finest teams Scotland ever saw.

Now what about the Companion Papers, eh? I think my group of papers can boast of THE FINEST FREE REAL PHOTOS EVER GIVEN AWAY.

In the "Boys' Friend," which is now on sale, there is given away TWO FREE REAL HAND-COLOURED PHOTOS OF FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS, to wit, W. R. Waincoat and John Elkes, who play for Barnsley and Southampton, respectively. Next week, THE "BOYS' FRIEND" IS GIVING AWAY ANOTHER TWO HAND-COLOURED FREE REAL PHOTOS OF FAMOUS FOOTBALLERS. Keep your eyes open, then, boys, and get hold of a copy of the "Boys' Friend" at all costs.

The merry old "Popular" pops up again to-morrow, and in it you will find a FREE REAL PHOTO OF A FAMOUS SPORTSMAN—IT'S IN THE "POPULAR" now on sale, mark you! There'll be another next week, and another the week after, and still more to come. The "Pop" has also got twenty-eight pages crammed with stories of the kind you like.

THE "GEM" ON WEDNESDAY WILL GIVE AWAY, ABSOLUTELY FREE, A REAL PHOTO OF ALAN MORTON, WITH HIS AUTOGRAPH ON THE BOTTOM—NO FAKE, HIS REAL SIGNATURE, SPECIALLY SIGNED FOR THE BOYS WHO READ THE "GEM" LIBRARY. Twenty-eight pages crammed with stories of sport, school, detective, and adventure, that's a Companion Paper well worth praising.

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Your Editor.



Your Editor wants to hear from his many chums. Drop him a line right now!

Known all over
the world as
**THE BEST
BOYS' PAPER
WITH THE
BIG SCHOOL
STORY.**

No. 772. Vol. XXII. Week ending Nov. 25th, 1922.

The Magnet

28
Library PAGES

**EVERY WEEK
A WONDERFUL
PROGRAMME
OF STORIES
OF SCHOOL,
SPORT,
DETECTIVE
AND
ADVENTURE.**

THE SCHOOLBOY KING OF THE CANNIBALS! In search of their captive chum, Harry Wharton & Co., the Schoolboy Adventurers, wander through the great wilds of the African jungle. Almost dead with exhaustion, they come to a native village where Nugent is kept prisoner. Through another trick of his ventriloquism, Billy Bunter is made king of the cannibals. He rules the roost with a rod of iron—monarch of all he surveys!



Another Rollicking Extra Long Complete Story, dealing with the breathless adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the Famous Chums of Greyfriars, in the Wilds of the African Jungle-land. The Finest Thriller ever written for boys, by an author who knows something about it.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the splendid tales of Greyfriars now appearing in the "POPULAR.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In the Heart of Africa!

"HUSH!"

Harry Wharton whispered the word.

The first flush of dawn had spread over the River Congo.

On a little wooded peninsula jutting out into the great river, six juniors of Greyfriars School had been sleeping, by the edge of a thicket of tamarinds.

A golden glimmer in the east announced the coming of the dawn, and Harry Wharton had awakened at the first twitter of the birds in the thick branches.

He sat up, rubbing his eyes, hardly realising where he was. In slumber, his dreams had been of the old school, so far away now from the adventurers on the Congo.

As he sat, the dawn brightened—the first glimmer was followed swiftly by a rosy flush, and then it was daylight.

Sunshine fell on the great river, and

on the deep, dense forests that clothed its banks.

Bob Cherry was the next to wake.

He sat up, rubbed his eyes, and yawned.

Johnny Bell, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh awakened, and sat up in turn. The sixth member of the party did not awaken. Billy Bunter was good for at least three hours sleep yet, if he was not disturbed. His deep, unmusical snore sounded on, steadily.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry drowsily. "Here we are again!"

Wharton raised his hand.

"Hush!" he whispered.

"What—"

"Somebody's coming."

"Oh!"

The Famous Five of Greyfriars were silent enough then. Only Bunter's steady snore sounded through the tamarinds.

Harry Wharton & Co. rose silently to their feet.

A narrow neck of land connected the

peninsula with the bank of the river, and it was from that direction that Harry had heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

Keeping in the cover of the thicket, the juniors peered out, and watched the beaten track that led from the bank. That track had been worn hard and dry by the tread of unnumbered feet. In the glade close by the Greyfriars camp the great wooden idol with the green glass eyes stood, towering and hideous, surrounded by the offerings of the superstitious Congo blacks. Evidently it was a native who was approaching; and the approach of a native spelt danger for the chums of Greyfriars.

"There he is!" breathed Bob Cherry.

A man came in sight of the narrow neck. The juniors could scarcely help shuddering as they looked at him.

He was a black man, clad only in a leopard-skin, with two or three gaudy feathers stuck in his greasy hair. Round his neck and round his fat waist he wore strings of what looked

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like shiny bone ornaments, glistening in the sun. But as he came closer, the juniors could see that the ornaments were human skulls.

His face, black and wizened, was animal-like in its brutality. Harry Wharton & Co., in their journey up the Congo from Boma, had seen his like before, though at a greater distance; and they knew that he was a 'ju-ju' man—a priest or medicine-man of a black tribe.

The savage was approaching cautiously, as though he feared some danger on the peninsula; yet it was evident that he was not thinking of the juniors, and did not suspect their presence there. But there was uneasiness in his looks and his hurried glances to right and left.

"He will hear Bunter!" whispered Nugent. "Better wake Bunter."

Wharton nodded, and turned towards the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was deep in the embrace of Morpheus. With his mouth open, and his eyes closed, Bunter snored on as steadily and comfortably as he had been accustomed to snore in the old Remove dormitory at Greyfriars School.

Wharton shook him gently by one fat shoulder, at the same time placing his hand over Bunter's capacious mouth.

"Groooh!"

"Quiet!" whispered Harry.

"Grrrrrrh!"

Wharton's hand over the fat junior's mouth silenced his grunting. Bunter opened his eyes, and blinked at the captain of the Remove, bending over him. It was an enraged blink.

"Groo!"

"Silence!" breathed Wharton. "Danger!"

Billy Bunter was about to squirm away from the controlling hand, and express—loudly—his opinion of a fellow who awakened him out of a lovely dream of jam-tarts and dough-nuts.

But the word "danger" was enough for Bunter.

He gave a gasp, and lay quite still, his round eyes rolling wildly.

"Don't make a sound!" whispered Harry.

He turned back to his comrades, and peered through the tamarinds. The ju-ju priest was on the peninsula now, and advancing through the trees towards the glade, still peering and sniffing cautiously about him. What was the danger he evidently feared, the juniors could not guess; for he did not once glance towards the tamarinds that hid them.

He stopped in front of the big, wooden ju-ju, and stared at it.

Already the juniors had seen the idol visited by a gang of blacks, who had brought offerings of foodstuffs, which they laid before it with every sign of reverence.

But there was no sign of reverence in the manner of the black medicine-man. His look was mocking as he stared at the idol, and he shrugged his bare, black greasy shoulders contemptuously. Evidently the priest did not share the superstition of his dupes. The idol to him was a piece of trickery by which he deceived and defrauded his tribesmen. A number of grass baskets, ranged before the idol, contained the offerings of the blacks—and the ju-ju man moved from one to another, picking what he fancied out of each and putting the loot into a sack he carried over his arm. The juniors could guess that when the natives revisited the idol, and found their offerings gone, they would believe

that the wooden image had consumed them, as the ju-ju rascal taught them.

But all the time, the black man was looking to and fro, and peering over his shoulder, in uneasiness. And the explanation occurred to Wharton at last. He remembered how the last visitors to the idol had fled in terror, the Greyfriars ventriloquist having made the idol speak. Evidently the terror-stricken blacks had returned to their village with the news that the ju-ju had spoken—startling news enough to the ju-ju priest, to whom the magic image was simply a block of wood. Wharton smiled at the thought that the priest, astonished by that wonderful development of powers on the part of his own idol, had come there to investigate the mystery, choosing an hour when none of his tribesmen would be likely to appear on the spot.

"The awful rotter!" breathed Bob Cherry, the same thought passing through his mind. "I say, it would be a good idea for the idol to speak again."

"Good egg!" murmured Nugent.

"Bunter!" whispered Wharton.

"I—I say, you fellows, are—are they gone?" quavered William George Bunter.

"There's only one of them," whispered Wharton, "a ju-ju priest. You can scare him off as you did the others yesterday."

Yes, my chums,
another FREE
Real Glossy
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Week's Issue!

"Oh!" muttered Bunter. "All right! Leave it to me."

He groped for his spectacles, and set them straight on his fat little nose. There was already swank in the manner of the Owl of the Remove. The Greyfriars ventriloquist had had so much success in his dealings with the superstitious Congo blacks, that he had unbounded faith in himself and his wonderful powers. Swank supplied the place of courage; and Billy Bunter was quite cool and self-possessed as he peered through the thicket.

The juniors waited in silence, as Bunter gave his fat little cough. That fat cough apparently reached the ears of the ju-ju priest, for he started and stared towards the thicket.

Suddenly from the wooden image there came a wild wailing, and the ju-ju man jumped clear of the ground in his astonishment.

He started back, and stood with his eyes fixed wildly on the hideous face of the Congo idol, gasping, with his mouth open.

Then the idol spoke.

"You lib fer run, one time, or you die!"

The ju-ju man stared blankly, as those words came from the hideous wooden idol. It was evident that he could scarcely believe his ears. He backed away, his eyes rolling and staring, his jaw dropping. Suddenly, with a howl,

he turned and bolted, in his wild haste scattering on all sides the loot he had taken from the baskets of offerings.

In less than a minute the terrified ju-ju priest was out of sight in the forest, fleeing as if for his life.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chuckled gleefully.

And the juniors burst into a laugh. The flight of the medicine-man from something so absurd as Bunter's ventriloquism struck them as funny. They roared.

Bob Cherry clapped the Owl of the Remove on the shoulder.

"You're a giddy asset, Bunter!" he said. "Nobody could call you ornamental; but you're jolly useful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" was Bunter's reply to that.

"And now for brekker!" said Wharton.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

An Old Enemy!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. breakfasted in the glade on the peninsula, in cheerful spirits.

They had been through hard times since they had been lost on the Congo; and they had come near to perishing of hunger and thirst in the trackless tropical forest. But the worst of their troubles seemed to be over now. They had no idea in what direction to look for the steam-launch, on which they had come up the Congo with Captain Corkran. But at least they had food and water in plenty; and Bunter's ventriloquism was a check on the savage natives who swarmed on the banks of the great river.

The juniors helped themselves from the baskets of offerings placed before the Congo god. There were fruits of all varieties, and dried goats'-flesh, and gours of milk—now turned sour. The juniors picked out what they wanted; certainly it was of no use to the wooden idol, and they had as much right to it as the ju-ju priest, at all events. And they were hungry.

During the meal they discussed their plans.

Bunter's plans were simple.

"I'm going to stay here!" he announced. "There's lots of grub; that's the important thing. And I can keep the dashed niggers off with my wonderful ventriloquism. It's a safe place, and I'm sticking here till Captain Corkran finds us."

"He may never find us here," said Harry.

"Just as likely to find us as we are to find him, rooting about in these rotten swamps," said Bunter. "Anyhow, I'm staying."

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful.

"We may as well make this our camp, you fellows," he said. "As fatty says, it's a fairly safe spot, and there's plenty of grub. That's something. We can make our headquarters here, and search for the launch from this spot. What do you think?"

"Good idea!" agreed Nugent.

After breakfast, the juniors started. Bunter remained in the camp; he had no inclination whatever to exert himself in the tropical heat that was already settling in.

Whether the steam-launch was up or down the river, the juniors did not know; in their wanderings in the forest they had completely lost their bearings. Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurren Singh went upstream, while Harry Wharton

MORE THRILLING ADVENTURES OF HARRY WHARTON & CO. IN AFRICA.

and Bob Cherry took the opposite direction. They agreed to return to the camp before sundown, and to keep close by the river, or at least in sight of it, so that they could not lose the way home.

Wharton and Bob Cherry proceeded downstream, and in a few minutes were out of sight of their comrades.

They carried their rifles ready for use; there was no telling whether at any moment they might fall in with savage tribesmen, and the Greyfriars ventriloquist could not come to their aid now.

At a distance of a mile from the peninsula Bob Cherry halted suddenly, shading his eyes and staring out across the shining river.

"Hollo, hallo, hallo!" he ejaculated. "What is it, Bob?" asked Wharton, following his gaze.

"It's a canoe."

"Better take cover—"

"There's a white man in it, I think," said Bob. "May be Corkran, looking for us."

Wharton stared intently at the little object bobbing in the distance on the shining waters of the Congo, disappearing and reappearing among masses of driftwood that floated on the sluggish current.

It was a native canoe, with two black rowers, and in the stern a man sat, half-hidden by a wide-brimmed hat.

They could not see his face; but the hat, and what they could see of his clothes, indicated that he was a white man.

"Corkran, most likely!" said Bob.

"Very likely. But—"

"Precious few white men in these parts," said Bob.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"We want to be careful, though," he said. "We'll keep in cover."

"Right-ho! I'll get to the top of one of these big trees, and get a better view of the outfit," said Bob.

He slung his rifle over his shoulder, and began to climb a huge tree, covered and tangled with creepers, that towered to the height of a hundred feet by the bank.

Harry Wharton moved on closer to the river, taking care to keep in cover of the thickets.

The canoe was heading for the bank, and as it came closer and closer he made out more clearly the brawny, greasy figures of the two black paddlers plying their flashing paddles without ceasing. But the white man, his face shaded by the big wide hat, remained invisible to him. The canoe shot into the mangroves that lined the bank, and disappeared from his sight.

Was it Captain Corkran?

Wharton knew that the captain would be searching for the missing party, and it was possible that he was using a native canoe to search the banks of the river. Keeping in cover, the junior waited for the canoe to reappear.

Quite close to where he stood, he heard the canoe bump into the mud of the Congo, and the sound of footsteps on the shore. A thicket intervened, completely screening the Greyfriars junior from view. He heard the movements of the landing-party, and the murmur of voices speaking in some native dialect. Through a gap in the thicket he obtained a view of them at last, and at length he saw the white man's face—a swarthy Spanish face with a scarred mouth.

Wharton started, and his heart beat faster.

It was the face of Pedro Casco, the Spanish adventurer who had followed the

explorers up the Congo, and led the blacks to the attack on the steam-launch. The Greyfriars junior grasped his rifle. It was evident that Casco had no knowledge of his presence, and did not suspect it. He was giving directions to the two blacks in their own tongue, to what effect Wharton could not even guess; he did not understand a word of the dialect used by the Spaniard. But the two blacks, after the Spaniard had finished speaking, turned to leave the spot, apparently to carry out his directions; and as ill-fortune would have it, they came tramping through the thicket directly towards the spot where Wharton stood in cover.

Before the Greyfriars junior could escape, the parting frosts revealed him, and there was a sudden shout from the two blacks.

Wharton sprang back, lifting his rifle. "Stand back!" he shouted.

The two blacks made no motion to attack him, evidently scared by the levelled rifle. They shouted in their dialect to the Spaniard, who came tramping through the thicket.

"Carambo!"

The scarred Spaniard stared at Wharton in blank astonishment. Wild life in the tropical forest had changed the Greyfriars junior—he was tanned by the sun, and his clothes were almost in tatters; but the Spaniard recognised him at a glance.

"You here, nino!" he exclaimed, his black eyes gleaming at the junior.

"Keep your distance!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "I warn you, Pedro Casco, that I shall fire if you advance or touch a weapon!"

The Spaniard's hand was going to his belt; but he withdrew it. His black eyes scintillated, but he laughed.

"You are here alone?" he said. "Where is the launch? Where is the Captain Corkran? What does this mean?"

"That's not your business," said Wharton coolly. "Get into your canoe again and clear!"

Casco shrugged his shoulders. "Caro nino, I am here in search of

your party," he said. "I was just sending my niggers to the native village a mile away to make inquiries whether anything had been heard of the launch in this region. I had lost the track, but, carambo, I have found it again! I am not likely to go at your order, muchacho."

"You will go, or I shall shoot you down, as you deserve!" said Harry, and his voice ran clear and determined.

The scarred Spaniard muttered a word or two to the blacks. Both of them sprang forward together.

Crack!

Instantly Wharton changed his aim from the Spaniard to the blacks, and as they came springing on he fired. There was a fearful yell from one of the Congo men, and he fell backwards.

But the next second Wharton was in the grasp of the other, his rifle was wrenched aside, and he went down in the clutch of the black man.

A knife gleamed over his face as he struggled; but the Spaniard spoke again.

The knife was lowered. Wharton struggled in the grasp of the black, but he was like an infant compared with the muscular savage. The grinning black man held him helpless, while Casco cut a wiry creeper from the thicket and bound the junior's hands. Then Wharton was released and allowed to rise to his feet. He stood leaning against a tree-trunk, panting for breath.

"My turn now!" said Casco, with a grin.

Wharton did not reply. He was thinking of Bob Cherry—near at hand, though hidden in the forest. Bob must have heard the shot; and Wharton knew that he would come to his aid. If he came in time—



"Carambo!" cried the Spaniard. Another shot came from the cane-brake, and Casco, leaping back towards the river, escaped it by an inch. It spun the wide-brimmed hat from his head. (See p. 3.)

Harry Wharton is a boy in a million—and a sportsman all through!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry to the Rescue!

PEDRO CASCO rolled a cigarette in his brown fingers, and lighted it, grinning at the captured junior through the smoke. He was evidently in a state of keen satisfaction at this unexpected meeting. Once more he was on the track of the launch—or he believed so—on the track of Captain Corkran, who held the clue to the treasure of buried ivory. The black man was grinning, too. Neither gave any attention to the black who had fallen before Wharton's rifle, who lay in the thicket groaning away his last moments. "And now," said Casco, blowing out a little cloud of smoke, "I think you will answer my questions, nino."

quietly. "You can believe it or not, as you choose."

"How did you come here, then?"

"One of the party went ashore while Captain Corkran was away—Bunter—"

"The fat fool?" said Casco, with a nod. "I remember him."

"Yes. We went to fetch him back, and we were lost in the forest nearly a week ago. We have not seen the launch since."

The scarred man muttered a Spanish curse.

"Then you cannot guide me to it?" he asked.

"I would not do so if I could," answered Wharton steadily. "But I cannot."

"Where are your friends, then—those

"Muy bien!" said Casco. "Then I have finished with you!"

He turned and spoke to the black, and then strolled away a few paces, rolling a fresh cigarette.

Wharton did not comprehend his words, but the actions of the black man were only too easy to comprehend.

The grinning black jerked the knife from his girdle and advanced upon the bound junior.

Wharton's face was deadly pale now.

There was no mercy in the heart of the scarred man; none in the grinning face of the savage who was about to despatch him at his master's order.

He closed his eyes as the knife flashed before them.

Crack!

Wharton's eyes opened suddenly.



FOOTBALLERS IN THE LIMELIGHT!

MIDDLESBROUGH F.C.

JUST A FEW INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT A VERY FAMOUS TEAM, WHOSE PHOTO IS GIVEN FREE WITH THIS ISSUE.



OF the Middlesbrough club it may be said that they are rather of to-day than of yesterday, which means that they are a comparatively youthful organisation, and with not much to show by way of trophies won in the past. At the present moment, however, they can rightly be regarded as one of the strongest sides in the country, and the team has been built up with such foresight and expert knowledge that the day cannot be very far distant when they will do something really great in the championship or the Cup competition. Up to now, however, they have precious little to show in the way of honours won.

With its ground at Ayrsome Park, the Middlesbrough club started to climb by way of the North-Eastern League, and then in the 1898-99 season they were promoted to the Second Division of the Football League. The men who wore the colours in those days quickly proceeded to show that this promotion had not been gained before the club was ready for it, and in 1901-2 they finished second in the League, and were consequently raised to the First Division.

It says much for the consistency of the side that not since they gained a place in the top class have they ever relinquished it, though once or twice they

have come desperately near to finishing among the last two. On the other hand, they have seldom threatened seriously to walk off with the championship of their section, though at the end of the 1913-14 season—their most successful up to the present—they did manage to find a place in the first three.

Throughout their history the management of the Middlesbrough club has ever been ready to take daring steps to keep the side up to top class, and, as a matter of fact, they were the first team to pay a thousand pounds as transfer fee for a single player. The man concerned in that transaction was Alfred Common, a fine forward who had seen service with Woolwich Arsenal, as they were then known.

For one brief spell, too, they laid claim to Steve Bloomer, that famous forward and perhaps most wonderful goalscorer of all time. Right through the piece they have had men of international standing on their books. The most notable, perhaps, of all is the present goalkeeper, popular "Tim" Williamson, who has the distinction of having been with the club since its entry into Second Division football. This means, of course, that Williamson has kept goal for this same Middlesbrough side for well over twenty years, and the amazing part of it is

that a number of people are prepared to declare that Williamson is just as good a keeper to-day as ever he was. In his time he has played for England, and so has George Elliott, a one-time centre-forward who is now scoring goals pretty regularly from the inside-left position.

To-day, too, Middlesbrough possess the man who is generally admitted to be the best centre-forward in the world—Andrew Wilson—while right full-back Jock Marshall—a real stalwart in defence—was last season captain of the Scottish team.

Davidson, a half-back, has also played for Scotland, while on the books of the club there are no fewer than four members of one Carr family—all of them good footballers. Jackie Carr, the outside-right, would have played for England the other week against Ireland if an injury had not kept him out of the side after he had been chosen. For some mysterious reason Middlesbrough have never proved themselves a good Cup-fighting side, and they have nothing to boast about in the knock-out competition. As manager they have at present James Howie, who in his day was a notable forward of Newcastle United, and who went to Middlesbrough from Queen's Park Rangers.

Wharton did not speak. "At the first refusal to answer," continued the scarred man, "I shall tell my nigger here to cut one of your ears off. Carambo! I do not mean to stand on ceremony with you, muchacho. You understand?"

Wharton understood well enough. He knew that the scarred ruffian was in deadly earnest.

"Now, what are you doing here?" asked Casco.

"Looking for the launch," answered Wharton.

Casco's eyes gleamed.

"It is near at hand?" he asked eagerly.

"I do not know."

"Take care, nino!"

"That is the truth," said Wharton.

who were lost with you?" demanded Casco, eyeing the junior suspiciously.

"We separated to hunt for the launch," said Harry.

"And they know no more than you know?"

"No."

"Then I shall not waste my time upon them," said Casco, shrugging his shoulders. "You have told me all you can, nino?"

"Yes," answered Harry.

"If you could give me information it would be worth your life to you."

"I have none to give; and I should not give it if I had!" said Harry Wharton. He spoke quietly and calmly; but there was despair in his heart now.

Instead of the thrust of the knife, that sudden rifle-shot had pealed out; and as his eyes opened again he saw the black man rolling at his feet, screaming.

Casco spun round, his hand on his revolver, his black eyes blazing.

The shot had come from the forest, and the black savage had fallen at Wharton's feet, with a bullet through his chest. But the marksman was not to be seen.

"Carambo!"

Crack!

It was another shot from the cane-brake, and Casco, leaping back towards the river, escaped it by an inch. It spun the wide-brimmed hat from his head as it whizzed by.

Crack!

"Go it, Bob!" yelled Wharton in

Who is Casco, the Spaniard? You'll meet him above!

had retired to that quiet, shady spot to sleep, and he had slept peacefully all through the time the blacks had been on the peninsula removing the wooden idol. It was fortunate for him that he had chosen a spot far removed from the idol, whence his snore did not reach the ears of the savages.

Bob Cherry stooped and jerked the handkerchief from Bunter's face, and shook him by the shoulder.

"Wake up!" he roared.
"Yaroooooh!"
"You fat duffer!"
"Yow-ow! Lemme alone! Mercy!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, I—I say, you fellows, is it you?" gasped Bunter, sitting up and blinking at the chums of Greyfriars. "I—I thought—oh, dear! Of course, I wasn't frightened!"

"Of course not!" grinned Bob.
"Have you fellows found the launch?" asked Bunter.

"No."
Bunter snorted.
"Just like you!" he remarked. "Pity I didn't come along with you after all. I expect I should have found it."

"Fathead!"
"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"You haven't seen anything of Johnny, or Frank, or Inky?" asked Harry.

"I suppose they haven't come back yet," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

"You're likely to stay hungry for a bit, then," said Bob grimly. "The niggers have been here while you've been snoring, and they've taken the giddy idol away."

"That doesn't matter, if they've left the grub."

"But they haven't left the grub," said Wharton.

"Oh erkey!"
Billy Bunter jumped up. He was wide-awake now. The prospect of missing his supper was more than sufficient to rouse him to the widest wakefulness.

"What are we going to do?" he gasped in dismay. "I say, you fellows, I want my supper. I can't live without grub. You know that."

"Go and eat coke!" was Bob's reply.
"Beast!"

Wharton and Bob returned to the spot where the idol had been. The short twilight of the tropics had set in now, and they were anxious about their comrades. Johnny Bull and his companions should have returned by sunset; and once darkness had fallen, it was doubtful whether they would find their way back to camp.

Billy Bunter did not share the anxiety of his companions. He had more important matters to think of.

The offerings of the superstitious blacks to the wooden idol had been a horn of plenty to the fat junior. It had not occurred to him that the horn might run dry. Bunter was not given to looking ahead. It had run dry quite suddenly, and the awful prospect of a food shortage drove every other consideration from Bunter's fat mind.

He rooted about the glade, looking for any scraps that might have been left unnoticed, and he found a few bananas and plantains, which he promptly disposed of internally—to make sure of them. But half-a-dozen bananas and three or four plantains were but a drop in the ocean to Bunter. He was still thinking with increasing anguish of the supper that would be missed.

Darkness fell with tropical suddenness. Wharton and Bob were thinking of

anything but supper now. Where were their comrades?

"Lost, perhaps, as we were before!" muttered Bob.

"They couldn't get lost, following the river in the daylight," said Harry. "Perhaps they went too far, though, and couldn't get back by dark."

"Or—" muttered Bob.
But it was useless to think of what might have happened. Only too well they knew the terrible dangers of the Central African forest.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Dry up, Bunter, for goodness sake!"

"But what about grub?"
"Shut up!"

"Shut up?" repeated Bunter, in concentrated tones of indignation and wrath. "Shut up—when I'm hungry!"

"The other fellows haven't come back, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, as calmly as he could. "Something may have happened to them."

STAR FEATURES



FOR NEXT WEEK!

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"They shouldn't be such asses, then!" said Bunter. "Might have expected something to happen, going where I wasn't present to look after them."

"Why, you fat idiot—"
"That's enough jaw!" howled Bunter.

"What am I going to have for supper? That's what I want to know."

"Will you dry up?" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"No, I won't! I'm hungry."

Wharton and Bob Cherry wasted no more words on Bunter. They collared him, and sat him down forcibly on the ground. There was a terrific yell from Bunter. The juniors had not noticed a sprawling branch of thorn bush on the ground at that spot.

Bunter noticed it!

He noticed it quite emphatically.
"Yooooop! Yaroooooh! Murder! Help! Whoooooop!"

Bunter rolled over, and grabbed at the thorns that were sticking in his tight trousers. And Wharton and Bob Cherry walked away, and left him roaring.

They stood on the narrow neck of land, close to the bank, watching and waiting for a sign of their missing chums, with deep anxiety tugging at their hearts. There was a rustle in the underbrush, and they grasped their rifles, as a leopard crept into view in the starlight; but the animal, after blinking at them with greenish, glittering eyes, plunged into the brake, and disappeared again.

Where were their comrades? Stopped by darkness on their return, and camping in the forest? Or—A thousand possibilities haunted the minds of the anxious juniors. It was possible that Johnny Bull and his companions had found the steam launch, too late to return that night—and it was possible that the dangers of the forest had closed in on them—wild beasts, wild men, poisonous serpents, treacherous swamps, abounded on all sides—Wharton and Bob Cherry could only watch, and wait, with heavy and anxious hearts.

There came a movement in the fringe of underwoods on the bank, and the juniors started again. A tired and tattered figure limped out into view; and Wharton and Bob cried out together, in great relief:

"Inky!"
"Thank Heaven!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Black News!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH staggered towards his comrades. His dusky face was streaming with perspiration, his clothes were torn to tatters by thorn and briar. The Nabob of Bhanipur was exhausted. And after the first moment of joyful relief Wharton and Bob felt their hearts sink again. For the nabob had returned alone.

They took him by either arm, and helped him to a fallen log, to rest. For some moments Hurree Singh sat and breathed hard and deep, without speaking. But he spoke at last.

"My esteemed chums, I am glad you are safe. Have you discoverfully found the excellent Captain Corkran?"

"No, we had no luck," said Harry.

"And you—"
"The no luckfulness was terrific."

"Where are Nugent and Johnny Bull?"

"The esteemed Bull has not returned."

"No, no! Where—"

"I think Johnny is safe," said the nabob, in a low voice. "He ran for it as well as my excellent self."

"And—and Frank?" muttered Wharton huskily.

The nabob hesitated.

At that moment Harry Wharton felt as if a hand of iron were tugging at his heart. Where was Frank Nugent—his oldest and best chum? The face of the captain of the Greyfriars Remove was white as chalk, in the dim glimmer of the stars. He caught Hurree Jamset Ram Singh by the arm, shaking him in his excitement and dread.

"Where's Frank? Not—not—" He choked on the word.

"No, no! I—I think not—I am sure not!" gasped the nabob. "He is a—a prisoner."

"A prisoner! But who—"

"The blacks!" groaned the nabob.

"Good heavens!"
Bob Cherry gritted his teeth. Frank Nugent—in the hands of the black cannibals of the Congo! This was what

King Billy Bunter is great! Read these stirring chapters!

had come of venturing into the Congo forests to rescue Bunter from the result of his foolhardy folly.

"Tell us what's happened?" said Wharton quietly, though there was a tremble in his voice that he could not control.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter rolled up in the starlight. "I say, have they come back? Is that you, Inky? Have you brought any grub with you?"

"Hold your tongue, Bunter!" muttered Bob Cherry.

And the look he gave Bunter, as he spoke, caused even the Owl of the Remove to become silent, hungry as he was.

"Now, Inky—" said Wharton.

The nabob explained, in a low, faltering voice. Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh had pushed on together up the river, looking for the launch, without success, and had turned back in the afternoon. They were within half a mile of the peninsula, when they came suddenly on a crowd of blacks, marching with the ju-ju priest at their head—the medicine-man whom they had seen that morning near the idol.

The three of them had fled for their lives, taking different directions to escape. The blacks had pursued. Hurree Singh had got clear, and climbed to the top of a tree when he was safe, to look for his comrades. He had caught sight of Frank Nugent, a prisoner in the hands of a swarm of jabbering blacks, being hurried away by a forest path.

"I could not help the esteemed Franky," murmured the nabob. "There were thirty of the black rascals round him, and he was bound, and it was only for a minute that I saw him. I thinkfully reflected that I would return here for my esteemed comrades, and we would follow on, and save the worthy Nugent, or else—"

"Or else die with him," said Harry Wharton huskily. "We'll do that, Inky! But—but if they've already—" He choked.

The nabob shook his head.

"It is for what they call the esteemed 'chop' that they have taken Franky," he said. "He will not be killed until the feast."

Wharton shuddered.

But there was comfort in that knowledge, horrible as it was. The degraded savages of the Congo had taken their prisoner away for a cannibal feast—and

Nugent's life was safe till the time had come for the orgy. But it was probable enough that the feast would take place that very night, while it was possible that it might be delayed for days.

"I came back as quickly as I could," said Hurree Singh. "But there were blacks in the forest—twice. I was nearly caught. Once I was seized, but"—he tapped his rifle—"my esteemed Wharton, it is for you to say whether we wait here for the excellent Johnny to turn up triumphfully, or whether we go at once—fully."

Wharton wrinkled his brows in painful thought.

His impulse was to hurry that instant to attempt to rescue his chum; but he knew only too well the difficulties of the task; its almost impossibility. Nugent, by that time, was in the Congo village, in the midst of cannibal swarms. If there was a faint chance of rescuing him by force, every possible help was needed. But to wait for Johnny Bull meant loss of time—and Johnny might never come.

"Do you know where to look for the nigger village, Inky?" asked Bob Cherry, breaking the silence.

"I think we know that," said Harry, before the nabob could reply. "You are sure you recognised that ju-ju man in the crowd, Inky?"

"The surefulness is terrific."

"Then, it is the same crowd that came here and took away the idol," said Harry. "I dare say they were on their way here when they dropped on our friends. Some of them took Nugent away to the village, and the rest came on here for the idol. It's the same gang; and we shall get to their quarters by following the lot that took the idol away. Such a crowd as that will have left a trail that anybody could follow in the dark."

"That's so," agreed Bob.

"We can find the village easily enough," said Harry. "Most likely it's not very far away, as they kept their idol here. But—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo—Johnny!"

"Thank goodness!"

Johnny Bull came limping through the thickets and joined his chums. He sank down on the log beside Hurree Singh, gasping.

"You're here, Inky? What about Nugent?" he panted.

"The blacks have got him!" said Bob. "Oh!"

"Thank goodness you've got back," said Harry. "You'll have to rest a bit, you're done up. But we're going after Nugent! We know where he is, and we're going to save him, somehow!"

Johnny Bull nodded without speaking. He was utterly fatigued with wandering in the forest after escaping the swarm of cannibals who had seized Nugent. He sat in silence and breathed hard. But words were not needed. His chums knew that Johnny Bull was ready to follow on.

"I say, you fellows—"

Wharton turned impatiently to Bunter. "We're going after Nugent, Bunter. You can come along, or stay here, just as you like."

"Now listen to me," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove through his big spectacles. "This is rot!"

"What?"

"I'm sorry for old Franky," said Bunter. "He was a pal of mine, as you know. I forgive him a lot of things, now, such as refusing to cash a postal-order for me when we were at Greyfriars. It was mean. But I forgive him freely. But going after him is sheer rot. What can we do against five hundred niggers? Don't be an ass!"

"Is that all?" asked Wharton patiently.

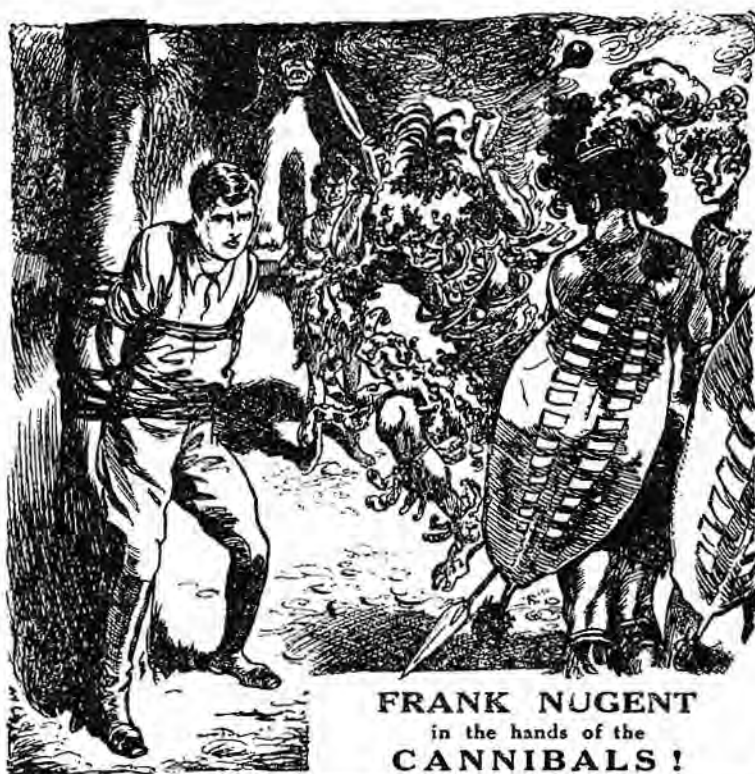
"No, it isn't! I think—"

"You can stay here," said Harry. "You wouldn't be any use in the scrap, and there's no denying that we've got only a ghost of a chance of getting through. I hope you'll get back to the



Harry Wharton & Co. advanced towards the thick thorny wall. In the centre of the native village was a wide space, and there a huge fire had been built. In the dancing light of the fire moving figures could be seen—savages with spear and shield, leaping and winding in a barbarous dance. (See Chapter 6.)

There's excitement, laughter, mystery, and drama in next week's story.



FRANK NUGENT
in the hands of the
CANNIBALS!

The ju-ju man began to dance round the bound figure of Frank Nugent. In the firelight the juniors caught a glimpse of their chum's face, white and tense. (See Chapter 6.)

launch, Bunter. Let's part friends, as we're not likely to see one another again."

"We're not going to part!" howled Bunter. "Think you're going to leave me here alone?"

"Come with us, then!"

"And he gobbled up by the cannibals. No fear!"

"That's enough!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "Shut up, Bunter! You fat rotter, if you were in Nugent's place, Franky would be the first to risk his life to get you out of it."

"That's all very well—"

"Hold on!" said Harry abruptly. "Bunter had better come! In fact, he must come. It's barely possible he may be able to weigh in again with his ventriloquism. He's scared the niggers with it before, and he may be able to do it again, Bunter's coming."

"I won't!" roared Bunter.

"It's risky enough," said Harry. "But is it worse than staying here alone, Bunter?"

"I won't stay here alone!"

"You must do one or the other," said the captain of the Remove, still patient.

"Rot! You fellows are staying with me. Look here, who's the head of this party?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "I am! Well, I order you to stay with me. Got that?"

Wharton did not answer.

From the distance, over the gloomy forest, there came a sudden sound, that continued dully and monotonously through the tropical night.

It was the sound of the beating of tomtoms.

Far across the forest, a mile at least from the river, the Congo blacks were

beating the tomtoms, the sound carrying many a long mile over forest and swamp and river.

The juniors exchanged quick glances. They had heard that sound before, many times, during the voyage of the launch up the Congo. It was the signal for the gathering to a savage feast. They did not need telling what it portended in this case. That dull, monotonous drumming was the signal that the fate of their chum was sealed, and that the remainder of his life was to be counted in hours, if not in minutes, unless they could save him. Weary as they were, Johnny Bull and Hurrec Singh started up from the log where they were resting.

"Come on!" muttered Johnny.

The juniors started. They did not speak to Bunter again; there was little chance that the Owl of the Remove would elect to remain alone upon the peninsula. Every shadow and rustling bush was full of terror for him, if his companions were out of sight.

"Come back, you rotters!" yelled Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not look back.

"Beasts!"

And Billy Bunter hurried after the chums of the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In the Midst of Horrors!

DULL, monotonous, unending, the throbbing of the tomtoms sounded through the hot tropical night. It grew louder as the Greyfriars juniors pushed on through the track in the forest. Scores of feet

had lately trodden that path, and it would have been easy enough to follow the track of the ju-ju priest and his tribesmen. But the juniors did not need to look for the trail, the unceasing beat of the tomtoms was a sufficient guide. Hideous, eerie, terrifying as the sound was, the juniors prayed in their hearts that it would not cease, for they knew that the cessation of the drums meant that the hour of the cannibal feast had arrived. The coming of silence meant the death of the chum they were seeking.

The chums were tired enough with the day's exertions, and in spite of their anxiety their pace was not rapid. It was fortunate that Billy Bunter had rested all the day, or certainly he would have been left behind, moderate as the pace was. The fat junior, grunting and groaning, kept at the heels of the party as they pressed on. Faint starlight filtered through the thick foliage overhead, dimly lighting the way. Suddenly, from the darkness ahead, the red flare of flame caught the eyes of the juniors.

"We're close on now," muttered Bob. "I say, you fellows—"

The juniors hurried on without heeding Bunter. The fat junior followed in deadly fear, but more afraid of being left alone in the dark forest than of keeping with the rescue party.

The crashing of the tomtoms was deafening now.

Amid the roar of the savage drums could be heard the yelling of savage voices and the clashing of spears and shields.

The forest ended almost abruptly, and beyond the trees a green rich plain ran down to the banks of a little stream, a tributary of the mighty Congo. Close by the stream stood the black village, a collection of grass huts in circular form. Round the village was a wall of thick thorny bush, with two wide openings in it on either side of the settlement, one towards the river, the other towards the forest. It was in the direction of the latter that Harry Wharton & Co. were advancing.

In the centre of the village was a wide open space, and there a huge fire had been built. It flared high and red, crackling and blazing, shedding lurid light for a great distance round.

In the dancing light of the fire, moving figures could be seen—savages with spear and shield, leaping and winding in a barbarous dance. Crowds of women and children were among the grass huts watching them, and joining their shrill voices in the yelling.

At a short distance from the fire a stake had been fixed upright in the ground, and to the stake a figure was bound. The juniors had only a glimpse of it in the midst of the continually passing and repassing figures of the savage dancers, but they knew that it was Frank Nugent.

All attention in the black village was centred on the bound prisoner, and the yelling, excited dancers. The juniors reached the wall of thorns and looked in on the wild scene unnoticed.

They halted, rifle in hand, but with no hope in their hearts. They were prepared to die for their chum, if need were, but they knew that the struggle could go only one way. At least two hundred savage blacks were there, and the odds were hopeless.

"You can see it's no good!" whispered Bunter. "Let's cut while we've

Do you know the schoolboy adventurers? Here they are, then!

knew that the wooden god, which he had shaped with his own rascally hands, had no magic powers. Yet it was speaking. It spoke in the Coast English, for Bunter had no knowledge of the Congo dialects.

"No touch white man! You touch white man and you lib for die one-time! You take Npong and make chop."

There was a shriek of terror from Npong. He yelled out something in his own language, staring round at the black faces that were raised from the ground to look at him. His terror at hearing the idol speak was as nothing to his fear of seeing the blacks obey the idol's order. But in every black face that was turned on him the wretched

DON'T FORGET—

trickster read his doom. A more powerful "ju-ju" than his own had come up against him, and in a moment the fetish-man's power was broken.

The voice of the idol boomed again. "You take Npong and make chop, or I send death to all black men!"

The blacks scrambled to their feet. There was a rush, and in a moment the ju-ju man was struggling in the grasp of the savages. A score of spears flashed over him, and in a few moments more Npong lay on the ground, pierced by as many wounds; and the blacks, with wild yells and jabberings, seized him and dragged him away.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes Control!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked on, almost sick with horror. The last yells of the fetish-man died away as he was dragged off the scene by the savages, who a few minutes before had trembled at his frown. It was a sharp and sudden end to the reign of the impostor.

"Good heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry, white to the lips.

Harry Wharton ran forward to Nugent.

All the attention of the blacks was fastened upon Npong, of whom they were "making chop," as the god commanded.

Wharton slashed with his knife at the rawhide thongs that held Frank Nugent to the stake, and in a few seconds the prisoner was free. He reeled against Wharton, almost fainting.

"Harry!" he stammered. "Bear up, old fellow!" whispered Wharton. He pressed the knife into Nugent's hand. "We may have to fight our way out of this!"

"I'm game!" breathed Nugent.

Round the group of juniors the black village was swarming and buzzing like a hornets' nest. Harry Wharton & Co. drew together close to the idol, Billy Bunter in their midst. The Famous Five were reunited; but it was very doubtful whether that wild night was not their last on earth. But Billy Bunter, rather to the surprise of his companions, was full of confidence now and quite cool and collected. There was a grin on his fat face.

"Leave them to me, you fellows," said Bunter. "I'm master here, you know. They won't touch us so long as the idol tells them not to."

"I hope so," said Harry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"It's all right," he said. "You rely on

me. I'm leader of this party, and I'll see you through."

"Here they come!" said Johnny Bull. What had become of the ju-ju priest the juniors did not know—and did not want to know. That he had been killed was certain, and whether the fall of the fetish-chop was to be followed by a cannibal orgy was better left undiscovered.

Npong had been the most potent enemy they had to fear, and he had been disposed of. Now he was gone, there was no reason why Bunter's "ju-ju," more powerful than the black man's, should not see the party through.

As the blacks, spear in hand, surrounded the little party, Billy Bunter remained quite confident. His fat swank had returned in full force, and he felt himself master of the situation—monarch of all he surveyed, as it were.

And there were some grounds for Bunter's swank now, for it was certain that the lives of the whole party depended upon him. There was not more than the ghost of a chance that the juniors could have fought their way out of the swarming village, and certainly not all of them would have escaped with their lives.

All depended on Bunter. The blacks eyed the juniors curiously and savagely, and there were threatening mutterings among those who had not understood the speaking of the idol. Only a number of the blacks understood Coast English; to the rest the words of the ju-ju were a mystery, though the fact that it had spoken filled them with superstitious awe.

—WONDERFUL FREE REAL PHOTO OF—

"Go it, Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry. "You're on in this act."

"You shut up!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"Don't speak to your leader till you're spoken to."

"Why, you fat rotter—" gasped Bob.

"Look here, Bunter—" began Wharton.

"Dry up, Wharton!"

Wharton "dried" up, with an effort.

The Owl of the Remove blinked round triumphantly at his companions.

His leadership—long claimed, and regarded with derision—had to be admitted at last! Bunter was monarch of all he surveyed now.

From the ranks of the blacks an old man came forward—a black man with white hair, clad in a fragment of lion's-skin, with the lion's claws hanging round his neck by way of adornment. He eyed the juniors suspiciously, yet with awe in his manner.

"Koko say no touch white man," he said.

The juniors understood that Koko was the name of the idol.

"That is so," said Wharton. "You touch white man, and you lib for die, all same as Koko say."

"Leave this to me, Wharton," said Billy Bunter. "I'm doing the talking."

All of you shut up, if you want to live till to-morrow!"

"You fat rotter!" hissed Johnny Bull.

"Silence!"

Billy Bunter advanced a pace or two towards the white-haired negro.

"You hear Koko speak," he said.

"You obey one-time, or all black men lib for die. White man's ju-ju very

powerful. Me—Bunter—friend of Koko; him speak when me say."

The old black man looked incredulous.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on in silence. They could hardly believe that it was William George Bunter, the fat slacker of Greyfriars, who was taking hold of the situation in this way.

Billy Bunter was coming out, as it were!

Inflated with swank, the Owl of the Remove was developing into quite a new and surprising Bunter.

"You lib for hear!" said Bunter.

He turned to the idol, blinking at it through his big spectacles, and raised his hand dramatically. A sea of rolling savage eyes were fixed upon the fat junior.

"Koko!" said Bunter, in a commanding voice, addressing the idol.

From the wooden god came a wailing sound, and the black men gasped and prostrated themselves. Only the white-haired negro stood erect, staring alternately at Bunter and the idol.

"Koko! Speak!" went on Bunter.

The voice from the idol answered.

"Me speak!"

The old negro's knees knocked together. The white man's ju-ju was terrifying to his savage mind. Npong, with all his power, had never been able to draw speech from the wooden god.

"All black men, listen!" went on Koko, his green glass eyes glimmering in the firelight. "White man my friend! You give huts, and food, and all things to white men; or Koko send fire to the huts, and death to the cattle, and the children die. You obey white ju-ju, or Koko send fire and burn up village!"

Bunter turned to the old negro again.

"You lib for 'bey one-time," he said.

The old black man dropped on his knees before Bunter.

He touched the fat junior's tattered boots with his forehead, mumbling.

"You sabbey!" asked Bunter.

"Me sabbey. Me—Mpoca—obey little white man with the glass eyes," said the old negro humbly. "Koko no send fire, no send ju-ju."

"Koko will send ju-ju fast enough if you don't toe the line," said Bunter truculently.

"No sabbey."

"You lib for 'bey orders, or Koko send ju-ju."

"Me sabbey," said Mpoca. His glance passed Bunter, and rested on the other juniors. "Little white man friend of Koko. Other white men no friend of Koko. We make chop of dem."

Bunter blinked at his companions.

—CELTIC FOOTBALL TEAM NEXT WEEK!

"You see how the land lies?" he grinned. "But keep your pecker up. I'll see you through. You'll have to behave yourselves, mind, and remember that I'm leader."

"Go and eat coke!" snapped Bob Cherry.

No danger was likely to make the sturdy Bob humble himself to Bunter.

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

He turned to Mpoca again.

"No chop white man," he said. "Dem

(Continued on page 17.)

Billy Bunter's funny stunts will make you chuckle next week!

A GRAND ADVENTURE NUMBER!



THE SCHOOL-MOUSE

Supplement No. 100.

Harry Wharton
Editor

Week Ending November 25th, 1922.

FOOTBALL ON THE CONGO!



FOOTBALL WITH THE SAVAGES! Jungle Jack suddenly pounced upon Frank Nugent, seized him by the middle, and slung him over his shoulder! Nugent alighted on terra firma with a bump and a yell. "Foul, there!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Oh, my giddy aunt! These johnnies seem to think it's a wrestling match!"

WE had halted at one of the native villages on the Congo, and we found that the inhabitants, though very ferocious-looking, were disposed to be friendly.

"I think we might stay here for a bit, my lads," said Captain Corkran. "Doubtless the native chief will find us accommodation of some sort, though it won't be a first-class hotel. We are in no great hurry, and I propose that we spend the day here, and pursue our quest to-morrow morning."

The quest that the gallant captain referred to was for hidden treasure.

African chiefs often save up treasure in the form of ivory, and bury it in remote places. And Captain Corkran was hot on the trail of one of these secret hoards. We—the Famous Five of Greyfriars and Billy Bunter—were assisting him.

We sought out the chief, who, to our surprise, had some knowledge of English.

"We give white friends shelter," he said, in reply to Captain Corkran's questions.

"I say, what about grub?" chimed in Billy Bunter. "We can't live on shelter, you know!"

"We cook big dinner," said the chief.

"Good! Now you're talking sense," said Bunter, with a smirk of satisfaction. "Kill the fatted calf, and let's pile in!"

For once in a way, we did not take Bunter to task for being greedy. As a matter of fact, we were all ravenously hungry, having had only one meal that day, and that was a very unsatisfying one.

The native chief summoned a couple of his devoted slaves, and gave them instructions in a weird and wonderful language that we could not make head or tail of.

Stakes were driven into the ground in the form of a tripod. A fire was kindled, and a huge joint was affixed to the stakes. It was

a primitive method of cooking, but we were too hungry to worry about that.

The chief then took us along to an empty hut, which was more spacious than most, and he told us, in his own quaint way, to make ourselves at home.

"This will suit us admirably," said Captain Corkran, as he lit a cheroot. "We've struck lucky for once, my lads."

"Wish they'd hurry up with the dinner!" grumbled Billy Bunter. "I've got a beastly aching void inside me!"

"Have patience, porpoise!" said Harry Wharton. "Dinner will be along in a jiffy!"

We had to wait nearly an hour, however, before the joint was set before us. But it was a dinner well worth waiting for. We squatted in Oriental fashion on the floor of the hut, and did full justice to the meat. Billy Bunter's only regret was that there wasn't a boiled pudding to follow.

"After dinner, rest awhile," was the

What about another special number? There'll be one next week!

molto of Captain Corkran. He stretched himself out at full length, with his head resting on his arm, and dozed off to sleep.

"The rest of us, however, felt unusually wakeful."

"What can we do to make the afternoon pass pleasantly?" asked Nugent.

Johnny Bull had a brainwave.

"There's a football packed in my haver-sack," he said. "We've had no footer since we left Greyfriars. Let's have some now."

"Good wheeze!"

We found it a troublesome task to blow up the football. We had no pump, so Johnny Bull had to perform the feat with his mouth. It was impossible, in these circumstances, to blow the ball up properly, and when we tested it, after it had been laced up, it was like a lump of lead. However, we decided to make the best of it.

"Going to join in, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather! I'll go in goal, between these two trees yonder, and you fellows can take shots at goal. You'll never get the ball past me, though."

"Bats!"

Billy Bunter took up his position in the improvised goal, and we began bombarding him with shots. On an average, he was beaten five times out of six.

The natives came out of their huts, and looked on with keen interest. The football seemed to fascinate them immensely.

"What do you fellows say to getting up a match?" I suggested. "There are six of us, and we could play a team of six natives."

"But the esteemed and ludicrous natives do not understand football," protested Hurree Singh.

"Never mind! It will be great fun!"

"Go ahead, Bob!" said Wharton, laughing.

I approached a party of natives, and after a great deal of difficulty I managed to make them understand what was wanted. They expressed keen approval, and we took off our coats and prepared for the fray.

Harry Wharton arranged the field, the goals consisting of two trees at each end.

We decided to have one goalkeeper, two backs, and three forwards.

The rival teams lined up as follows:

GREYFRIARS ATHLETIC:

Goal, Bunter; Backs, Bull and Cherry; Forwards, Nugent, Wharton, and Hurree Singh.

CONGO UNITED:

Goal, Coconut Charlie; Backs, Swampy Sam and Jungle Jack; Forwards, Warpaint Willie, Dancing Dan, and Hustling Ike.

(I can't guarantee the accuracy of these names.—B. C.)

We spent about half an hour trying to establish the rules of the game into the wooden heads of the natives. I don't think they were any the wiser by the time we had finished.

Harry Wharton kicked off. He passed to Nugent, and Franky went racing away for goal, when Jungle Jack suddenly pounced upon him, seized him by the middle, and slung him over his shoulder! Nugent slipped on terra firma with a bump and a fall.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Foul, there!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Oh, my giddy aunt! These jollymen seem to think it's a wrestling match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fortunately, Nugent was able to resume. He scrambled to his feet, and gained possession of the ball, and sent in a stinging shot.

Coconut Charlie, the native goalie, cleverly caught the ball. But instead of putting it up the field, he started running with it in his arms. He headed straight for the opposite goal, and we were so amazed that we could only stand and stare.

"The fellow thinks he's playing Rugger!" gasped Wharton.

When he came to within a few yards of Billy Bunter, the native goalie hurled the ball with all his force at the fat junior.

Bunter took the ball in that portion of his anatomy known as the "bread-basket." He toppled backwards, turning a complete somersault.

"Ow-ow-ow!" yelled the fat junior. "What's happened? Where am I?"

Coconut Charlie looked on with a broad grin. He held up his forefinger, as much as to say, "That's first blood to us!"

Billy Bunter tottered to his feet. His hands were clasped in the region of his lowest waistcoat-button.

"You fellows can carry on without me," he groaned. "I've had enough! I'm a goalkeeper—not a blessed acrobat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter limped painfully off the field, and the game proceeded without him.

We soon found that we were no match for the natives—not at their own peculiar style of play, at any rate. They seemed to think it was quite legitimate to pick us up and throw us at each other.

Harry Wharton picked himself up, after a particularly bad fall, and he turned to the natives.

"We give you best," he said. "We shall be stretcher cases before long, if we keep on with the game."

Without waiting to see if his words were understood or not, Wharton limped off the field. And the rest of us followed suit. Football, as played in the Congo, was not suited to our frail and delicate constitutions!

On returning to the hut, we found Captain Corkran awake. He laughed loud and long at our unhappy plight, and if he hadn't been my cousin and a mighty powerful man at that—I should have suggested giving him a bumping.

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## EDITORIAL!

By PETER TODD.

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HARRY WHARTON & CO.—lucky dogs!—are now on the Congo, where they are having their fill of adventure.

Those of us who are left behind at Greyfriars feel jolly envious. Some fellows get all the luck! I only wish I were a clever ventriloquist, like Billy Bunter, or a cousin of Captain Corkran, like Bob Cherry. I should then have accompanied the adventurers.

But we can't have all that we want in this merry old world, and I have philosophically resolved to take it smiling. So have the majority of the fellows.

Coker of the Fifth, however, is still feeling very sore. He can't understand why he should have been left behind. I heard him telling Potter and Greene just now that he would have been the life and soul of the party. "What's more," added Coker, "I've got an unanny knack of discovering hidden treasure. I can smell it a mile off. I'm a sort of human bloodhound."

"I always did think you were a bit of a dog," said Potter.

"Coker's not quite so handsome as the majority of bloodhounds, though," chimed in Greene.

And then Coker promptly knocked their heads together.

There is no doubt that the great Horace would be more of a hindrance than a help, if he accompanied Captain Corkran in his search for hidden ivory. Coker has no tact or diplomacy, and he would be more than likely to rub the natives the wrong way.

Horace feels very embittered at being left behind. So much so that he has written a poem on the subject. It isn't often that Coker's weird poetry finds its way into the pages of the GREYFRIARS HERALD, but this week I am allowing him to ventilate his grievances.

As for Harry Wharton & Co., we all wish them a happy and prosperous trip, and we are awaiting their return to Greyfriars with eager anticipation. That they will have heaps of thrilling anecdotes to relate I have not the slightest doubt.

PETER TODD.

COKER'S COMPLAINT!

On not being permitted to take part in the trip to the Congo!

Tell me, Kaptin Korkran,
If you do not mind,
Why the merry dickens
I am left behind?
You're a curious joker,
Or you'd understand,
And let Horace Coker
Join your little band.

I kousider, kaptin,
That it's rather ruff.
I should be at Greyfriars
Mugging Greek and stuff.
Wharton, Nugent, Cherry,
Bunter, Inky, Bull,
All are gay and merry
While I'm left at school!

It would give me plezzure
More than I can say,
Finding berried trezzure,
Hidden Congo way.
In your undertaking
I should be an aid.
Minus me, you're making
Blunders, I'm afraid!

You have taken Bunter
On this mission big.
He's no trezzure-hunter;
He's a stuffed-up pig!
When it comes to scrapping
He will turn and flee.
Sir, you want a strapping
Fighting-man like me!

Gallent Kaptin Korkran,
I'll forgive you now.
To my lonely fate, sir,
I try head will bow.
May you find much trezzure,
Jools and preshus stones;
Coker, in his lezzure,
Here at Greyfriars groans!

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



REGINALD TALBOT (of St. Jim's)
(The fellow with a dark past—but bright future!)

If "Laugh and grow fat" is correct, all my readers should be like Billy Bunter!

ANCESTORS!



By
PETER TODD.

*The First of the Bunter
Tribe!*

led by Julius Cæsar, invaded the shores of Britain, Rufus Bunter tried to "put the wind up" his neighbours by telling them that Cæsar had brought over a fleet of fifty thousand ships, manned by a million sturdy Romans, who were armed to the teeth.

Rufus was a gifted ventriloquist. Whenever a dragon or a wild beast came after him he would put the monster off the scent by throwing his voice. It was a common trick of his to make his voice appear to come from the interior of his

cave, when at the same moment he would be hastily shinning up a tree in order to get out of danger.

Rufus Bunter was the possessor of an enormous appetite. He lived in a state of perpetual hunger. He lived chiefly on deer and sheep, but he used to send his younger brother on the deer-stalking and sheep-stealing expeditions. He never had the pluck to go himself.

This red-headed ancestor of William George Bunter was not without ambition. On reaching his thirtieth year, he conceived the notion of becoming King of England. He was so confident of success that he actually made himself a crown in advance! Then he summoned a mass meeting of Ancient Britons.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "What price me as King of England?"

"Rats!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Rufus Bunter blinked angrily at the Ancient Britons through his big spectacles.

"Why shouldn't I be King?" he demanded.

"Verily," said an old Druid, "they would never be able to make a throne that would support thy weight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, you cackling chumps!" said Rufus wrathfully. "Whatever you say, I mean to put up for election to the throne."

Rufus kept his word. He put his name down as a candidate for the monarchy; but the other candidate, Alfred the Great, defeated him by a majority of over a million votes.

Rufus Bunter was naturally very annoyed at his failure. He attributed it to personal jealousy on the part of his fellow-countrymen.

In spite of his intemperance in eating, Rufus lived to a ripe old age. The scribes tell us that he was a hundred and twenty when he died, but this statement must be taken with a grain of salt.

History does not tell us whether Rufus Bunter died a violent death, or whether he expired peacefully in his cave. Personally, I should imagine he died of a broken heart, owing to his having no teeth left to chew with! He had to be fed on slops, which failed to satisfy his terrific appetite.

(Next week I shall tell you all about Bolsover the First!)

CONCERNING THE CONGO!

By Mr. H. H. QUELCH, M.A.

THE Congo, broadly speaking, comprises the whole of the region lying along the western coast of Africa.

The first European who reached the Congo was a Portuguese navigator named Diogo Cam. This was in 1482. Shortly after this date large numbers of Portuguese flocked to the Congo, and strenuous endeavours were made in the work of converting the natives. This, of course, was a difficult task, but the Portuguese met with fair success.

In 1816 the British Government sent out an expedition to explore the Congo. The daring band of explorers were under the direction of Captain Tuckey, R.N. Of the fifty-six members of this expedition, no fewer than twenty-one perished, including Captain Tuckey himself. But before he died the captain was able to furnish to the world an account of his adventures.

The natives of the Congo, although they have an established government, are sunk in the same barbarism as the other nations of the West Coast of Africa. Their houses are mere huts, consisting of a few posts stuck in the ground and interwoven with reeds, and their sole wearing apparel generally consists of a small apron of grass-matting tied round their loins. In Captain Tuckey's time the natives were tattooed all over their bodies, and had the two upper teeth filed away, in deference to the prevalent notion of beauty on the Congo.

The place is still in a wild state, and there is much that we do not know concerning the natives and their ways. Many years ago a Frenchman wrote a book giving a full description of life on the Congo; but the book proved to be a fiction, although many of the geographical experts of that time accepted it as gospel.

Although Captain Tuckey and many of his men perished through fever brought on by exposure to the night air, the climate of the Congo is not so unhealthy as might be supposed.

Among the products of the Congo are the following: Yams, maize, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, calabashes, the sugarcane, and tobacco. Bananas, oranges, and pineapples also grow in profusion. Of domestic animals there are goats, hogs, and fowls. Of wild animals, the country abounds with elephants, leopards, lions, buffaloes, large monkeys, antelopes, and wild hogs. Guinea-fowl and red-legged partridges are said to be abundant. The river swarms with crocodiles.

The Congo is just the sort of place that would appeal to a boy keen on adventure. Personally, I prefer to remain in England!

Of course, we all hope that Captain Corkran's expedition will prove a big success, and that Harry Wharton and his schoolfellows will meet with no mishap on their tour. They will doubtless see many strange sights, and undergo many strange experiences, which we shall listen to with keen interest on their return to Greyfriars.

I must now draw to a close, as Mr. Prout has come into my study to tell me all about his lion-hunting expedition, which took place, many years ago, on the Congo!

WHEN I asked Billy Bunter whom he sprung from, he replied:

"Bolsover major."

"Ass!" I exclaimed. "How do you make that out?"

"Well, it was like this, Toddy. I sprung from Bolsover because he threatened to brain me with a cricket-stump."

"You misunderstand me," I said. "When I asked whom you sprung from I meant—who was your earliest ancestor?"

This set Billy Bunter thinking. After a long pause he replied:

"Adam."

"You silly chump!" I roared. "I know that we've all descended from Adam. But I want to know who the first Bunter was, and what he was, and how he earned his living, and all that sort of thing."

Billy Bunter had another long think. Then, he had the audacity to tell me that his earliest ancestor was William the Conqueror.

"Impossible!" I said.

"Oh, really, Toddy— Well, if it wasn't William the Conqueror nor Julius Cæsar, it must have been William of Wykeham. You know who I mean—the chap who invented the famous proverb, 'Tanners makyth man.'"

I could see that it was quite useless to question Bunter further. So I gave it up, and decided, by means of keen and diligent research, to find out by some other means who Bunter's earliest ancestor was.

I have now solved the puzzle. I find that the first of the Bunters was a cave-dweller—an Ancient Briton. He was a fat, flabby, hairy specimen, clad in goatskins, and carrying an enormous spiked club. In those days his name was spelt "Buntarne." His Christian name was Rufus; for, astonishing though it may seem, the first of the Bunters had a shock of red hair. He had a red beard also. If he were alive to-day he would be known as a "King Beaver."

Rufus Bunter was not a popular fellow, by any manner of means. He was heavily detested by his neighbours. He was often found guilty of eavesdropping at cave entrances.

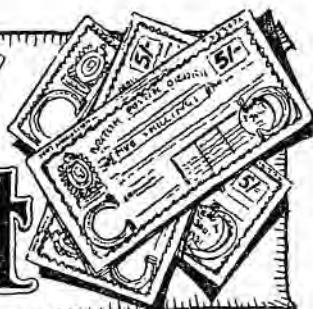
Moreover, he used to try and raise loans on the strength of imaginary pieces of flint he was expecting from his titled relations. Then, again, he could never tell the truth. When the Romans,

He who reads the "Herald" laughs best!

Many MAGNET Readers have won GRAND MONEY PRIZES!
What about you? SEND IN A "SPEECH" TO-DAY!

The Greyfriars Parliament

Grand
Money Prizes
for
"SPEECHES"



AT the usual weekly meeting of the Greyfriars Parliament on Monday last there was a better attendance than usual. This was due to the fact that a report had been circulated concerning news about the Famous Five and Bunter, and their doings on the Congo.

Mr. Peter Todd: "We will proceed straight to business. I propose to read—"

Mr. Reginald Temple: "Let's have the Congo first."

Mr. Peter Todd: "My friend must exercise patience. He will get all information in the 'Magnet.' It is impossible for this House to supply scrappy fragments concerning the adventures of our absent comrades. (Groans.) It is enough for me to say that Mr. W. G. Bunter has not, as yet, been deputed. Our distinguished colleague of Pufftown has, as we already know, been through some stupendous experiences, and he is well."

Several Members: "We want to hear details."

Mr. Tom Dutton: "This is absurd. Of course bears have tails!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "Order, order! The first speech on our list for to-night deals with walking."

Mr. Horace Coker: "Go hon!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "If the hon. member does not care for walking—"

Mr. Horace Coker: "Walking's right enough, but it isn't interesting."

Mr. Mark Linley: "I beg to differ. What about the walk to Brighton?"

Lord Mauleverer: "Dashed silly, I call it, when you can go by the Southern Belle."

Mr. Peter Todd: "You are going to hear what Reader ARTHUR MOORE, 50, Beech Road, Bournville, Birmingham, has to say about the great art of walking, whether you like it or not. Walking is splendid."

Mr. S. Bunter: "As if we were a measly lot of tramps!"

Mr. Peter Todd ignored the remark, and read the following from Reader Moore: "I beg to address a few remarks to the House on the subject of walking, taken as an exercise. Cycling is all very well, and is in many respects an excellent hobby, but in my opinion it plays second fiddle to walking. Many will differ from me, but I think they will revise their previous poor impression. I do not mean that you should undertake terrible tours round Cornwall, or anything like that. Just a day's excursion into the country is enough."

Mr. Bulstrode: "A bit too much!"

Mr. Peter Todd resumed the speech: "Take care not to overdo it. Seventeen to twenty miles a day is a good average to stick to. Many people think the question should be: How far did you walk? It should be: What did you see? Avoid main roads as much as possible. There is very little accommodation for walkers. Sometimes there is no footpath. Luggage must be slight. A raincoat should be carried. In other respects, the

equipment is much the same as for camping. The pastime of walking is not for the slacker. Walking is just as strenuous as footer or cricket."

Lord Mauleverer: "I dare say the bizney is all right for Reader Arthur Moore, but it is too much of a beastly fag for me. I was persuaded to go on a walking trip once. I shall never forget it. Luckily we soon came to a garage. I got hold of a car and went home. I was in bed for a week."

Mr. Tom Dutton: "I have been listening to this speech about talking—"

Mr. Peter Todd: "Walking!"

Mr. Tom Dutton: "I said talking, and, candidly, I have a very poor opinion of it. I consider there is far too much talking. Reader Moore should have a taste of what goes on in our study. I understand he thinks that talking is better than smiling. I do not agree with him. Bunter is bad enough when he smiles, but his smile is better than his speech. Chin-wagging, as some chaps call it, is altogether overdone."

Mr. S. Bunter: "Why go walking when there is a tuckshon handy?"

Mr. Horace Coker: "In the days of last spring I wrote a poem; it was out of a book, but I wrote it down, and one verse ran something like this:

'I'd rather be talking

With you out a-walking

Than rattling after the hounds.

That seems to me to hit the mark."

Mr. Fish: "In my country we always go by car."

Mr. Bulstrode: "Go hon!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "I will now read a speech from Reader DUDLEY EDWARDS, 171, Lower Chancery Road, Bournemouth:

"The subject on which I wish to approach you to-day is, I think, quite an important question, namely: Should games be compulsory in schools? The usual argument in favour of compulsory games is that they are a prevention of slacking. But are they? I myself think it is a question which is open to doubt. While voluntary games should be encouraged to the utmost extent, compulsion should be abolished."

Mr. De Courcy: "I have been listening to everything. I wasn't asleep. I think that chap who said that is right. Blessings on him. I have always been against compulsory games. Beastly fag I call 'em!"

Mr. Peter Todd: "I see that Reader Dudley Edwards appreciates the difficulties offered by the slacker. The slacker has to be shown the error of his ways. Anyway, he is made to play the game. Were he left alone he never would do so." Mr. Ponsonby (Highcliffe): "But suppose a fellow has somethin' better to do?"

Mr. Alonzo Todd: "It strikes me that Reader Dudley Edwards is only thinking of the very earnest-minded fellow—like myself, for instance." (Cries of "Question!" and "Rats!" which compelled the Deputy Speaker to call for order and

threaten the closure). "I repeat, like myself," Mr. A. Todd resumed. "Often and often I am desirous of prosecuting researches into science and literature, but there comes this insistent call to play games. It is annoying!"

It was at this stage that Mr. Quelch, who had entered the House in time to hear Reader Dudley Edwards' speech, said a few words.

Mr. Quelch: "I am convinced that compulsory sports are necessary. Remember, to the majority there is no sense of compulsion. Most fellows want games." (Cries of "Good for you, sir!") "Now I know something about games. I have played them. I am getting old, and it hits me pretty hard that I can no longer join in as once. That sort of feeling comes with a shadow of pain. I was never a specially good oar, but I remember with a sense of gratitude that in the old days I was forced to take my share. You boys need not regret the fact that circumstances make you join in the splendid sports of to-day. You will be sorry afterwards if you draw out, and plead time-worn reasons for not playing. There is time for work and play. We oldsters have to give up and watch what you are doing. For my part I hope that old Greyfriars will never take the too, too easy line of not playing those grand games which put fibre into a man, which bring out his latent energies."

Mr. Peter Todd: "I am sure that Mr. Quelch will permit the House to thank him for his words."

This was agreed to nemine contradicente.

Mr. Peter Todd: "A paper has been handed to me by a member who wishes to be anonymous, asking whether the House will include lady members. I can only state that this matter is under consideration. I have now to read a speech from Reader A. L. IRESON, St. George's Avenue Road, St. Neots, Hunts:

"Perhaps many boys will find it rather expensive this season to buy a new pair of footer boots. Well, here is a hint how to get a cheap pair. First get an old pair of boots, and see that they are not split anywhere. It does not matter how worn the soles are. Across the sole of each boot nail two bars. Two thicknesses of leather will be best for each bar. Then put a bar across each heel. Bars are better for the soles than studs, because they keep the soles more firm. Then get part of a motor-cycle tube, and cut out a section from it about two inches wide. Now put this round the boot which you 'shoot' with. Then get a pair of footer laces, and your footer boots are ready."

Mr. Peter Todd: "The House always welcomes suggestions of this kind."

Mr. Fish: "I don't think much of the notion. In New York, now—"

Mr. De Courcy: "I think the chap who thought of this wheeze a jolly clever fellow, but it's to be hoped his boots would not give way, and land him in difficulties."

The House adjourned after some further discussion, in the course of which Mr. Fish offered to trade a pair of footer boots, as good as new, for seven-and-sixpence.

Don't let this top-hole chance slip by! It's too good to miss!

King Bunter of the Congo!

(Continued from page 12.)

white man my slaves. No chop my slaves, or ju-ju come."

"No chop!" said Mpoa.

"You cheeky fat scoundrel!" said Johnny Bull, in suppressed tones.

"I've saved your lives," said Bunter loftily. "But I'm not going to have any cheek, or any of your neck. Just understand that! I'm master here, and what I say goes. Catch on?"

"Do you want your cheeky nose punched?" roared Johnny Bull.

"You play the goat, Bull, and I'll have you tied up like a turkey, and left to cool your heels like that all night," said Bunter truculently. "I mean business, I can tell you!"

"Let him rip, Johnny," murmured Nugent. "We shall soon be out of this."

Johnny Bull nodded, suppressing his feelings with difficulty.

"We'd better get a move on now," said Harry Wharton.

Bunter stared at him.

"Are you taking it on yourself to give orders, Wharton?" he demanded.

"You fat fool!"

"We're not getting a move on," said Bunter deliberately. "I'm hungry, for one thing. I'm tired, for another. And I don't choose to go."

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Silence! Mpoa!"

"Little massa!" answered Mpoa.

"You take dein slaves and shut up in hut. No chop, no hurt, but keep in hut. You sabbey?"

"Me sabbey."

Mpoa turned to the crowd of blacks and spoke to them in their own tongues. The savages closed round the juniors.

"Tell them to keep off, Bunter, or we shall shoot!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Better not," grinned Bunter. "You haven't a dog's chance. I'm master here, and you fellows are going to understand it. I'll save your lives, but you're going to be brought to heel, and the sooner you catch on to that the better. I'll let you have some supper."

The blacks offered no violence to the juniors; but they hustled them away into a large grass hut, in obedience to Bunter's orders. Bunter watched them go with a grin on his face. The chums of the Remove were receiving a lesson—a much needed lesson, in Bunter's opinion. As soon as they were shut up in the hut, Bunter turned his lordly attention to a much more important matter—that of supper. And, with the whole village at his command, Billy Bunter was soon served with a supper that was a feast of the gods, waited on hand and foot by a crowd of black men, who trembled as they approached the possessor of so powerful a ju-ju.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Under Bunter's Thumb!

"MY only hat!" Bob Cherry made that remark, in tones of astonishment mingled with wrath and indignation.

It was a curious situation for the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove. They were shut up in a big grass hut, with dry rushes on the floor; a comfortable enough quarter, after what they had grown accustomed to of late. Outside the low doorway, where a mat hung

for a door, a brawny black savage squatted on his haunches, evidently a sentinel. No harm was offered to the juniors, but they were prisoners.

The sentinel, certainly, could have been disposed of quickly enough, as the juniors retained their rifles. But a fight was the last thing Harry Wharton & Co. wanted, if it could be avoided. The whole swarm of savages would have fallen upon them, and the end could only have been death for the whole party. They had taken their lives in their hands in entering the negro village. To save Nugent from the fate the cannibals had designed for him they had been prepared to face a death that was almost

NEXT WEEK'S PHOTO!

CELTIC FOOTBALL TEAM.

certain. But Nugent was saved, and with them now; and so long as they were not attacked, the juniors were only anxious to keep the peace.

Sooner or later they would get away from the place; and if it could be contrived without bloodshed, so much the better.

Meanwhile, their fate was in Bunter's hands.

Bunter, of course, did not intend them any harm; this was his way of showing that he was leader, and that he was to be obeyed. Swank had now completely turned the head of the fat junior.

It was obvious that he was intoxicated with his success in controlling the blacks through their ignorant superstition. And Bunter, with his obtuse brain turned with swank and self-importance, was a very peculiar Bunter to deal with.

What was to be done with them rested with Bunter; even their lives depended on a nod from the fat junior.

Indeed, it was plain that the whole crew of black cannibals were keen to attack the juniors and devour them, and that only Bunter's influence stood between Harry Wharton & Co. and that dreadful fate.



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DETECTIVE MAGAZINE 7^p

No. 1 out on Friday, Nov. 24th

The fat slacker of Greyfriars, the shirker of games, the persistent borrower and sponger, was appearing in quite a new character now.

Two blacks came in at the doorway, pushing the mat aside, and the juniors kept their rifles handy. But the two negroes came with food in gourds, which they placed before the five juniors.

"I suppose we owe this to Bunter!" granted Johnny Bull. "Awfully good of the dear fellow to let us have some supper."

"We owe him our lives, as matters stand," said Harry Wharton quietly. "But for Bunter, the blacks would set on us at once."

"We should put up a jolly good fight!" granted Johnny.

"I know that; but a fight of five fellows against hundreds, at close quarters—"

"You fellows shouldn't have come for me," said Frank Nugent. "I—I'm jolly glad you came, of course. But—but I wish you'd kept clear."

"Rats!" said Bob.

"Sink or swim together, you ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Wherever we go, we all go together—even if it's down the gullets of Bunter's friends!"

"I suppose we ought to be grateful to Bunter, in a way," said Harry. "But—but Bunter's a bit difficult to be grateful to. I must admit I feel more inclined to give him the hiding of his life!"

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull fervently.

"The samefulness is terrific."

"This prog seems rather good, though," said Bob Cherry, sniffing at the gourds, which had an appetising odour.

"I—I suppose it's all right?" He hesitated.

"Seems all right," said Nugent.

"I—I mean—I believe they've killed that nigger brute, Npong! I—I—"

Nugent shuddered, and pushed back the gourd.

Wharton smiled faintly.

"They will 'chop' Npong, as they call it," he said. "But they wouldn't pass that kind of feast on to us. Too precious to waste on prisoners."

"What a horrible crew!" said Bob. "Wouldn't I like to see a party of white men come along, and begin on them with machine-guns! That's what they want!"

"The poor brutes can't help it—it's how they're bred," said Harry. "I say, this stuff is good, and I'm jolly hungry. I think it's all right!"

Mpoa looked in at the doorway. There was a rather sour expression on his wizened face.

He looked as if he wanted very much to "chop" the prisoners; but he was in awe of Bunter, who had such a "pull" with Koko, the god of the village, and so he contented himself with looking sour.

"You lip for eat," he said.

"What is it?" asked Nugent, pointing to the gourd.

Mpoa grinned, plainly understanding the uneasiness of the white prisoners on the subject of their provender.

"Goat!" he answered.

"Thanks!"

"What have they done with Npong?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Him die."

"Well, he deserved it," said Bob. "I dare say he's caused hundreds of deaths in his time. Look here, Mpoa, how long are we going to stay here like this?"

"Till little white man say."

Straight from Greyfriars School into the perilous tract of the Congo! Isn't it just great?

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 772.

"Bless the little white man!" murmured Bob.

Mpoca made a gesture towards the rifles.

"You gib fire-sticks," he said.

Wharton shook his head.

"You no gib, we take!" said the black, scowling threateningly.

"Ask Bunter!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The black hesitated, but he retired finally, and let the mat fall into its place over the doorway. The juniors proceeded with their supper, in a very thoughtful mood.

"We're not giving up the rifles," said Wharton. "If it comes to that, we must fight, and take our chance."

"You bet!" said Bob.

"We may bring Bunter to reason to-morrow," went on Harry. "A word from him will be enough for the niggers, and they'll let us go. If not, we've got to get out of this somehow."

"And leave Bunter here?" asked Bob.

"He will have sense enough to come with us, I should think. If not, he can hang on, and be blowed to him!"

The juniors finished their supper, and felt all the better for it. There was silence in the village now, and the great fire was dying down. Harry Wharton stepped to the doorway and looked out.

In the light of the stars, and of the dying fire, he saw a number of blacks at work, building a new grass hut, enclosing the spot where Koko, the wooden idol, stood. Billy Bunter was there, apparently giving directions. The fat junior blinked round, and grinned as he saw Wharton, and came over towards him.

"I say, I've had a ripping supper," he said. "We're going to have a good time here, what?"

"We're getting out of it to-morrow!" snapped Wharton.

"You're not," answered Bunter coolly. "You heard what I told the niggers. You're my slaves!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Take care that I don't have you whipped!" said Bunter.

"Whipped?" yelled Wharton.

"Yes, rather! They have rhinoceros-hide whips here, that they thrash their slaves with," said Bunter. "Just a word from me, and you get some. A bit tougher than a Head's licking at Greyfriars. So mind your eye!"

Wharton suppressed his feelings.

"They've been asking me to let them collar your guns," continued Bunter. "I'm not allowing that. You keep the rifles; I'm going to have you fellows for a bodyguard!"

"You cheeky fat dummy!"

"We're staying here until I decide to move," said Bunter calmly. "I've ordered the blacks to treat you well, but not to let you clear. I'm master here, but I don't care to be left alone among a lot of niggers. If you fellows try to get away, you'll have the whole crew on to you, and you know what that means. Once they start, I mayn't be able to stop them. So you'd better be jolly careful."

Wharton realised that clearly enough.

"I'm going to have a hut to myself, with the jolly old idol in it!" grinned Bunter. "Then I can make Koko talk whenever there's any sign of trouble. They're awfully afraid of Koko. That spoofer Npong made them believe that Koko sent the rain, when he's asked for

it, and sends plagues and enemies when he's angry. I say, they've speared that fellow Npong—rather rotten, what? Of course, he deserved it, but I didn't foresee that. Still, it's safer without that awful rascal hanging about!"

"No doubt about that," said Harry.

"Lives are pretty cheap here," said Bunter. "Like a lot of wild beasts. I could have any man in the village killed by saying that Koko wanted it. That's how Npong used to get over them. If he had an enemy he said that Koko demanded his death, or wouldn't send rain unless he died. One way of keeping rivals off the field, what? I've been rooting through Npong's hut. The awful beast had a lot of poisons there in little wooden gourds. That's how he put 'ju-ju,' as they call it, on fellows who worried him—putting poison in their tommy. I've chucked the whole lot into the fire. Nothing of that kind for me. I'm going to rule them by force of character."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Force of character," said Bunter loftily. "The right man in the right place, you know! The strong, silent man taking the lead, what?"

"By ventriloquial trickery, you mean!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Bull!"

"Do you want me to punch your silly, fat nose?" roared Johnny

"Try it on!" said Bunter. "You'll

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be 'chopped' a minute after. The niggers would tear in pieces anybody who laid a finger on Koko's pal."

He gave a fat chuckle of satisfaction.

"I'm going to be king here!" he went on. "I shall let you fellows be my special body-guard—sort of Prætorian guard, you know. It's an honour for you. Mind you toe the line and obey orders. I may clear out later, or I may decide to stay here for good. I rather like being monarch of all I survey. Remember we ain't at Greyfriars now! I'm master here—king, in fact! Shut up, all of you, and remember to obey orders!"

And Bunter turned and rolled away, with his fat little nose high in the air, feeling like the classical gentleman of old who touched the stars with his sublime head.

"And that's Bunter—the fat rotter we've kicked along the Remove—passage at Greyfriars!" said Johnny Bull.

"The chap who could be kicked by a Third-Form fag!" said Bob, with a grin. "Monarch of all he surveys; with the power of life and death in his podgy paws! And the worst of it is, that it's true; it isn't a giddy dream, but it's a ghastly fact! Oh, my hat! Won't I lick him if we ever get back to Greyfriars again!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

King Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out in the sunny morning. The grass hut was hot and stuffy, and they were anxious to get into the open air. Food was brought to them; but when, after breakfast, they wished to leave the hut, the sentinel presented his spear at them.

"No go out!" he said.

"Look here, we're not sticking in here!" growled Johnny Bull. "If that's the programme, Harry, we'd better make a fight for it at once, and fight our way out the best we can."

The black sentinel called out, and Mpoca came up, with a score of blacks at his heels.

"What you want?" he asked.

"We want to get out of this hut, Mpoca," said Wharton.

Mpoca shook his head.

"No can," he answered. "Koko no give order."

"Where is Bunter?" asked Harry.

Mpoca pointed to the new grass hut.

"Him sleep."

"Tell him to come here."

Mpoca shrugged his shoulders.

"No can! Little chief gib order no wake."

Wharton compressed his lips. A crowd of blacks had gathered round, and every black hand held a spear or a hatchet or a "trade gun." Leaving the hut against orders meant a fight against terrible odds—and the odds were too great for success to be hoped for. A rush of that savage horde would have overwhelmed the Greyfriars party before they had had time to fire more than half a dozen shots. And even if success had been less doubtful Wharton would have shrunk from a scene of terrible bloodshed.

"Are we going to wait for Bunter's convenience?" asked Bull, in concentrated tones of wrath.

"No help for it," said Harry. "We've got to be patient."

"You wait!" said Mpoca.

He walked away, leaving the blacks to watch the hut. The juniors waited, with feelings too deep for words.

But there was no help for it.

As the sun rose higher, and the heat intensified, the hut grew hotter and more stuffy, and the juniors' irritation increased in proportion. More than once Wharton weighed in his mind the chances of forcing a way out of the village. But commonsense overcame wrath—there was no chance, and he knew it. Only as a last desperate resource, if they were attacked, could the Greyfriars party think of entering upon such a struggle.

They waited.

From the doorway of the prison hut they watched Bunter's quarters—awaiting the hour of the great man's awakening.

Bunter was evidently determined to "spread" himself to his fat heart's content, now that the power was in his hands. Rising-bell at Greyfriars was very much a thing of the past.

It was not till eleven o'clock that blacks were seen to enter the new hut, in response to a call from Bunter.

And it was an hour later that Billy Bunter rolled forth, fat and important, saluted with the deepest respect and fear by the negroes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

What Frank Richards doesn't know about writing thrillers isn't worth knowing!

Bunter blinked across at the juniors, through his big spectacles.

Then he turned his back on them, and walked away.

"Bunter!" roared Wharton.

The fat junior did not heed.

Doubtless this was his system of teaching the Greyfriars juniors their place. He walked away loftily down the street of grass huts, with black savages bowing on all sides.

"And we've got to wait till he chooses to speak to us!" said Johnny Bull, in a choking voice.

"Looks like it!" said Harry, shrugging his shoulders.

"Won't I wallop him if we get back to Greyfriars!" gasped Johnny. "Won't I kick him from one end of the Remove-passage to the other!"

"We may as well face the facts," said Harry quietly. "It depends on Bunter whether we ever see Greyfriars again. It's rotten, but there it is. We may as well make up our minds to it."

It was an hour later that William

"They've taken it on," said Bunter complacently. "They're jolly glad to have taken Koko's special pal for their king. They expect me to bring rain for the crops, and so on, by asking Koko."

"And can you do it?" gasped Bob.

"As much as Npong could, anyhow,"

said Bunter coolly. "I know the game.

If the rain didn't come when Npong

promised, he would say there was a bad

influence in the village that made Koko

angry. Then he would pick out a man

to be chopped, and gain time. The rain

was bound to come sooner or later, so

he only had to gain time. I suppose I

can pull their silly legs just as easily.

But I'm not arguing about that, or any-

thing else, with my subjects."

"Subjects!" gasped Nugent.

"Yes, subjects!" said Bunter firmly.

"That's what you fellows are, and the

sooner you understand it the better. I'm

king here—mon-

arch of all I

survey, as I've

told you."

"Don't you ever want to see Greyfriars again?" demanded Bob.

"I'm not sure that I do," said Bunter coolly. "I'd rather be King of the Congo than a fag at school. Anyhow, not yet. Besides, when I go—if I ever go—I'm not going empty-handed. I'm going to collect ivory while I'm king, and take it with me when I bunk."

"You spoofing rascal!"

"Silence! Give your word not to escape, and you can have freedom of my village."

"Your village?" howled Bob.

"My village!" said Bunter firmly.

The juniors looked at one another. The freedom of the village was something, at all events—better than the stuffy hut.

And the alternative was remaining in their prison, or beginning a desperate conflict that could only end in massacre.

"We give our word for to-day!" said



Billy Bunter turned to the old negro. "You lib for 'bey one-time," he said. The old man dropped on his knees before Bunter. He touched the fat junior's tattered boots with his forehead. "Me sabbey! Me obey little white man!" he said humbly. (See Chapter 7.)

George Bunter condescended to approach the prison hut. He came in state. On either side of him walked a tall negro, carrying a large fan of palm-leaves to shield the fat junior from the sun. Bunter was assuming state already. He stood and blinked at the exasperated juniors with lofty haughtiness.

"You fellows have something to say to me?" he asked. "I can spare you a few minutes now."

"You fat rascal!"

"That's enough!" said Bunter, with a wave of the hand. "I'm a rather busy man now—affairs of state to see to, you know. I've got the government of the place in my hands."

"Hail to your Majesty!" said Bob Cherry, with deep sarcasm.

Bunter nodded.

"That's better," he said calmly. "I've told these black fellows that it is Koko's command that I should be their king."

"Oh, my hat! And are they going to take it on?"

"Can you make your black subjects cash postal-orders for you?" asked Johnny Bull. "Have you told Mpoca yet that you're expecting a postal-order?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Bunter.

"Go and eat cake!"

"Any more cheek, and I'll have you whipped!"

"Bunter," said Wharton, as calmly as he could. "We want to get out of this place. We'll take you with us, if you'll come. Anyhow, we want to clear."

"You're staying here."

"Do be sensible, Bunter. We—"

"Nuff said! You're staying! But I don't want to keep you shut up in that hut," added Bunter generously. "Give me your word not to go outside the village, and I'll let you out as far as that."

"We've got to get away. We've got to find Captain Corkran and the launch as—"

"Blow Captain Corkran!"

Wharton at last; and his comrades nodded assent.

"That's good enough!" said Bunter carelessly. "You'll be shut up again to-night!"

And King Bunter gave his royal commands to Mpoca, who translated to the blacks who did not understand English. And at last the juniors were able to emerge from their stuffy prison—by the kind and royal permission of King Billy the First of the Congo!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in All His Glory!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. did not see King Bunter again that day.

His Majesty was busy. Feeding occupied a great deal of his time; and sleeping after his meals took up a considerable part of the royal day. Then no doubt he had affairs of state

The Greyfriars Chums are up to more daring stunts next week!

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to attend to, such as issuing ventriloquial commands from the wooden god Koko.

But the juniors did not miss Bunter's fascinating society. The less they had of it, in fact, the better they liked it.

They roamed about the village freely, eyed but unmolested by the blacks, and found some interest in watching the daily life of the Congo men.

In the fields of Indian corn round the settlement women worked in the sun—the men being far too proud and lofty to think of soiling their sooty hands with so derogatory a thing as labour. Women ground the corn between flat stones, and fetched water in earthen jars from the stream, and caught fish, and, in fact, did all the work of the place. The men went out to hunt, or lolled in the shade, lazing away their idle lives. Little black children squeaked and jabbered incessantly, and gnawed sugar-cane. It was an interesting experience for the Greyfriars juniors, though they were very anxious for it to come to an end.

At sundown they returned to the prison-hut, where they passed the night.

The next morning word had to be sent to King Bunter to ask his gracious permission for them to emerge.

His Majesty kept them waiting an hour or two, and then came along in greater state than ever.

Bunter was in all his glory now.

He was carried in a palanquin, or litter, borne on the shoulders of four brawny negroes.

The palm-leaf roof of the litter protected the majestic head from the tropical sun. Bunter sat in it in great state, and blinked down from that lofty elevation at the staring juniors.

His ragged hat was surrounded by a circle of gorgeous plumes, giving him an aspect imposing in the eyes of the blacks, but absurd in the eyes of the Greyfriars fellows. They could not help grinning as they looked at him; and Bunter replied to the grin with a lofty frown.

"I haven't much time to waste on you fellows," he said curtly. "I think I've told you already that I require obedience from my subjects. It's that or the cooking-pot. I want you to promise honour bright not to leave this place without my leave, not until I choose to give the word. Until you're prepared to do so you stick in that hut. Don't argue! I don't allow argument from my subjects."

"We could not very well go and leave you here, fool as you are!" said Harry Wharton. "But haven't you sense enough to come?"

Bunter raised a fat hand.

"Do you call that proper respect, Wharton?"

"Fathead!"

"Mpoca!" thundered Bunter.

Mpoca approached, trembling at the wrath in the countenance of King Bunter. Bunter pointed to Wharton.

"You take dem slave and beat him!" he said.

Wharton stepped back and grasped his rifle.

"Better stop that, Bunter," he said quietly. "There will be a scrap if the niggers touch us. Keep that in mind, you dummy!"

"What chance have you got against my crowd?" asked Bunter, with a grin.

"We shall chance it, anyhow!"

"The chancefulness will be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

King Bunter paused. Even into his obtuse brain it penetrated that he was venturing too far.

He hastily countermanded his order. Mpoca looked disappointed, but the word of King Bunter was law.

"You'd better take care, though!" said Bunter darkly. "I've already had a dozen niggers whipped. I believe in keepin' 'em in order! Now, I've no more time to waste on you—affairs of state,

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A tale of dash and thrill and endless adventure in next Monday's "Magnet"!

and all that. Do you agree to my terms or not?"

There was a long pause, and then the juniors gave their assent. There was, in fact, no help for it—Bunter was master there. Moreover, exasperating as the Owl of the Remove was, the juniors would have hesitated to make their escape and leave him alone among the blacks. His kingship was real enough for the present, but there was no foreseeing the vagaries of the untutored savage mind—a turn of events might easily come which would put an end to King Bunter's power and send him on the path already taken by Npong, the fetish-man.

In spite of his exasperating ways the juniors would have hesitated to abandon him. So the terms were agreed to, and Harry Wharton & Co. were free—within the limits of the black village and the surrounding fields.

Having brought the juniors to heel, as he would have expressed it, King Bunter sailed away in his palanquin, on the shoulders of his obedient subjects.

"Well, we're in for it now," said Bob Cherry resignedly. "Let's hope that that fat idiot will come to his senses, and clear out with us. Kings ain't very long-lived in this country, and that fat dummy ought to have sense enough to go while the going's good."

But it appeared that William George Bunter had not that amount of sense, for he showed no sign whatever of making a move in the days that followed.

Bunter was enjoying himself to the full, and his kingship over the Congo blacks was a very real thing to him.

Every day some new fat importance crept into his manner, as his head was more and more turned by his amazing elevation.

The juniors saw little of him, only glimpsing the great man when he was carrying about the village in his palanquin.

Bunter was growing fatter, if that was possible. He was living on the fat of the land. Everything in the village was at his royal command; and the fat monarch let himself go without stint.

And he was a severe ruler. He believed in stern severity, like every weak character invested with a little brief authority.

The rhinoceros-hide whip came into use when any disrespect, real or fancied, was shown to the new monarch.

Bunter had not yet reached the pitch, however, of ordering his subjects to execution. There was no doubt that his commands would have been obeyed, backed up as they were by the authority of the wooden god Koko. Fortunately, Bunter, in spite of his African kingship, remembered enough of Greyfriars and England to stop short of that. But there really was no telling at what pitch the fat junior might arrive, if his head went on swelling at the present rate.

Certainly it was only fear of the consequences that kept him from ordering the Greyfriars juniors to be whipped.

That was what they deserved, for their want of respect, in Bunter's opinion. Perhaps somewhere at the back of his obtuse mind lingered the knowledge that he might some day be in need of their help, and so he was restrained, for the present at least, from proceeding to extremities.

How the situation would end was a mystery to Harry Wharton & Co. They had no hope of Captain Corkran discovering them in this remote native village. Even if the captain had arrived, it was very doubtful whether he would have been able to deal with King Bunter.

All depended upon Bunter's deciding to go while the "going" was good, as Bob Cherry expressed it; and Bunter showed no sign of intending to go.

It was a week after the arrival in the black village that the juniors wandering about the settlement, became aware of a stir among their black fellow-subjects of King Bunter. A runner came into the village and was surrounded at once by the blacks, headed by Mpoa, to whom he spoke volubly in his dialect. The juniors looked on, wondering what was up, without understanding more than a word or two of what was said.

But from the looks of the negroes, they concluded that another arrival was expected, and that the runner had brought news of his coming. A crowd of idle blacks watched the path from the forest as if in expectation.

"Some giddy important johnny coming along," remarked Bob Cherry. "If it's a raid from another tribe, King Bunter will have a chance of showing his fighting qualities."

The juniors grinned at the idea. King Bunter was not likely to lead his black subjects to battle; he was far more likely to hide his royal person in some obscure corner and palpitate there in a state of royal funk.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's a giddy white man!" exclaimed Bob a few minutes later.

By the path from the forest a white man came in sight. He was dressed in white linen, torn and tattered, and wore a big sun-helmet. His face could not be seen for the moment, but something familiar about his aspect struck the Greyfriars party.

As he came into the open gateway of the village Wharton saw his face at last, and uttered an exclamation.

"Casco!"
It was the scarred Spaniard!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Casco!

PEDRO CASCO walked into the village carelessly, as if quite at his ease amid the swarm of blacks.

Obviously he had no expectation of seeing the juniors there. He started violently at the sight of Harry Wharton & Co. in the street of grass huts, and stopped, his hand dropping on a revolver in his belt.

Wharton gave him a grim look. "Leave your pistol where it is, Senor Casco," he said. "If you are looking for trouble, you will get more than you want."

"The morefulness will be terrific, my esteemed scondrelly Casco," said Hurree Singh, tapping his rifle.

"Carambo! You here!" the Spaniard exclaimed in great astonishment. "You turn up everywhere, Senorito Wharton. What are you doing here?"

"We're guests of the jolly old king of this delectable spot," said Bob Cherry with a grin.

"Where is the launch and Capitan Corkran?"

"That's telling!"

Casco gave the juniors a black look. "I will tell you why I am here," he said, between his yellow teeth. "I have had dealings with this tribe before, and they know me well. I have friends in this village. They are going to help me find the launch, and then it will be the cooking-pot for your amigo, Corkran. And in the meantime," added the Spaniard with a grin, "it will be the cooking-pot for you, ninos."

"Perhaps!" grinned Bob.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"Make the most of your last minutes," said Casco. "I hear that my old acquaintance, Npong, is dead, and there is a new king here. Well, I shall see him, and the first thing I shall ask of him will be your lives. I have ivory to pay for what I ask; and a Congo king would order his own father to execution for a couple of tusks."

The juniors laughed.

Pedro Casco had heard of the new king; but obviously he knew nothing of that monarch's identity.

Billy Bunter was not likely to order the Greyfriars juniors to execution, for any number of elephant's tusks.

The scarred man stared at the juniors, puzzled and angered by their merriment.

"Go ahead and interview his Majesty," chuckled Bob Cherry. "I warn you that we have rather a pull with the government here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Casco gritted his teeth.

"In five minutes," he said, "you will be overwhelmed by the blacks and doomed to the cooking-pot. Laugh if you like; you will not laugh when I have seen the nigger king!"

"Pile in!" said Frank Nugent.

Casco turned savagely away and spoke to Mpoa. That sooty gentleman approached the royal residence, entering the doorway on his knees. A murmur of voices was heard within.

But the scarred man did not obtain his interview in five minutes, as he had supposed. King Bunter was standing on ceremony.

As a matter of fact, King Bunter had peered out of the royal hut, and his majestic heart had palpitated with terror at the sight of the Spanish adventurer.

It took King Bunter several minutes to recover from the fear with which the sight of the desperado inspired him. It was only the reflection that he was, after all, an all-powerful monarch that prevented his Majesty from sneaking out of the back of the hut and taking to his royal heels.

Mpoa returned alone to the scarred man with a peculiar gleam in his eyes. Casco eyed him impatiently.

"King no see white man yet," said Mpoa. "King say white man gib up firestick before see."

Casco gripped his revolver. He relied upon his influence over the savage tribesmen, with whom he had had many dealings; but he was not disposed to enter the royal presence unarmed. He knew only too well the unreliable faith of Congo kings.

"Tell king that white man no give firestick," he said. "White man come to tell king how to get much ivory."

"King say gib up firestick," repeated Mpoa doggedly.

Mpoa had made a sign to the blacks, and they were closing round Casco. A look of alarm came into the scarred man's face. A dozen times in other days he had trod the street of grass huts in safety, and he did not know how strangely circumstances had changed. But he realised now that something was wrong. His promise of "much ivory" would have moved any other African monarch to grant him a gracious interview. But he had to deal with a very different kind of monarch now, if he had only known it.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on in silence.

They knew why King Bunter had instructed his faithful subjects to disarm

Tell your chums about Billy Bunter! He will make them laugh!

the Spaniard. It was pretty certain that had Casco found himself in the presence of King Bunter, he would have shot him down on the instant, and taken his chance of making his peace with the blacks afterwards. That, in fact, would have been the scarred man's only chance. Billy Bunter was not very bright; but he was too bright to let his enemy into his presence with firearms in his hands.

The Spaniard began to speak loudly and savagely in the native dialect as the negroes hustled him. But there were fifty or more of the blacks round him, and he realised the futility of resistance. He did not draw the revolver—a dozen spears were ready to pierce him on all sides if he had fired a shot. Puzzled and alarmed, the Spaniard adventurer allowed Mpoca to take his revolver from him, and another native unsling the rifle from his shoulder.

"Now take me to the king!" hissed Casco. Even at that point he did not doubt his power of making peace with the native king with a bribe of ivory. It had not crossed his mind for a moment that it was a member of the Greyfriars party who was now king of the blacks.

"Soon take!" grinned Mpoca. "King say tie white man's hands before see."

The scarred man ground his yellow teeth. But resistance was out of the question; the blacks had laid hands on him now, and his swarthy wrists were bound together with a strip of hide.

Then, with a spearman on either side of him, he was led into the presence of the king.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

"Uneasy Lies the Head that Wears a Crown."

KING BUNTER sat in state, on a wooden throne covered with a leopard-skin, his circlet of gorgeous plumes on his round, bullet head. His eyes blinked at the Spaniard through his big spectacles. Casco, led before him in the grasp of the negroes, almost fell down with astonishment at the sight of the new king.

"Bunter!" he stuttered.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Fancy meeting you!" he said.

"What does this foolery mean?" shouted Casco. "What are you doing here? Where is the king?"

"He, he, he!"

"You fat fool—"

"I am the king, old bean!" said Bunter cheerfully. "Monarch of all I survey, you know!" He made a gesture with his fat hand towards the wooden idol towering, black and hideous, in the grass hut. "That's Koko, and I'm his giddy high-priest. Catch on?"

Casco breathed hard.

He was utterly taken aback, and he realised his peril to the full. Amazing as it was, Billy Bunter was king of

the blacks. And King Bunter, whatever his faults, was certainly not likely to help the desperate adventurer against Captain Corkran. He was much more likely to make sure of the scarred man while he had the opportunity.

"Anything to say?" asked King Bunter. "You haven't bowed the knee yet, Mr. Casco. Get down on your knees." The Spaniard panted.

"Let me go!" he said. "Tell them to release me, and I will go."

Bunter chuckled.

"You're too jolly dangerous for that," he said. "You attacked the launch once, with a crowd of niggers, and you're after Captain Corkran's ivory. Corkran never treated me with proper respect, and if he came along here, I should jolly well teach him a lesson. All the same, I'm not letting you go. You're a giddy prisoner."

"Lib for kill?" said Mpoca.

Bunter hesitated, but he shook his head. A week of kingship in a savage tribe had not yet reconciled him to the idea of giving death-sentences.

"Keep him a prisoner," he said. "You tie up bad white man, and see him no lib for forest. You sabbey?"

Mpoca looked disappointed.

Casco burst into a torrent of native speech, and the blacks round him listened, glancing at one another. King Bunter looked alarmed.

"Silence!" he exclaimed. "Mpoca, what is he saying?"

Mpoca gave the new king a strange look. King Bunter realised that his royal power was trembling in the balance.

"Him say god no speak," said Mpoca.

"Him say it is trick of little white man. Him say god angry if we no kill little white man."

Billy Bunter felt a chill run through his fat limbs. In that instant he realised upon how rotten a reed his power over the blacks rested. Once their infantile minds swayed, they would kill him as they had killed the fetish-man Npong—and the scarred man had evidently caused doubts to arise.

For the moment the fat junior was so scared that he sat helpless, trembling on the leopard-skin that covered the throne.

Not only his Congo kingship, but his life, hung in the balance in that terrible moment. The Spaniard's eyes gleamed, and he burst into a torrent of speech again, and the blacks listened with darkening looks.

Fortunately, King Bunter pulled himself together in time, and kept his presence of mind.

"Him say god no speak—only trick!" repeated Mpoca grimly.

"You hear Koko speak!" said Bunter. He waved his hand towards the wooden idol. "Him speak one time."

The eyes of the negroes turned on the wooden god.

From the gaping mouth of the idol a wild wail issued, and the blacks started and trembled. Casco gave a violent

start, but he was not likely to believe that a wooden idol had vocal powers, and in a few seconds he understood. But he had no hope of making the blacks understand what ventriloquism was. He stood dumbfounded; and the voice of the idol was heard.

"Bad white man come to bring evil. Him talk of ivory; him tell big lie! Bad white man lib for chop."

The scarred man burst into a yell, shouting to the blacks in their own tongue. But it was useless for him to tell the negroes that it was Bunter who was speaking, when they heard the voice proceed from the idol. The savages prostrated themselves before the speaking idol, the bound Spaniard standing in their midst, shouting to them frantically, but unheeded.

Bunter blinked at the ruffian through his spectacles. There were beads of perspiration on his brow.

"You've asked for it, you rotter!" he gasped. "I was going to spare you—and you've tried to get me chopped. That's the finish."

The Spaniard shouted to the negroes again, and Mpoca turned on him, and clapped a large hand over his mouth savagely.

"Koko speak!" he snarled. "You no speak when Koko speak."

The idol spoke again.

"Black man chop bad white man. If no chop, sickness come, and no rain! Koko make white man come here for chop!"

"Take him away!" snapped Bunter.

The blacks grasped the hapless ruffian, and he was dragged out of the hut. Billy Bunter mopped his perspiring brow. He had had the narrowest escape of his life, and he knew it. He was not likely to concern himself, at that moment, with what became of the scarred ruffian who had so nearly succeeded in sending King Bunter to the cooking-pots.

Harry Wharton & Co. hurried up, as the bound man was dragged from the hut, and borne shrieking away in the midst of a savage mob. They could guess what was to happen to him, and Wharton rushed into the royal hut.

"Bunter!" he shouted. "Stop them!"

Bunter blinked at him, gasping. All his royal dignity was gone.

"I—I can't!" he gasped. "If I stop them, they'll turn on me. They nearly did a minute or two ago! Oh, lor, I wish I was back at Greyfriars."

"You can't let them—"

A terrible yell came from the distance. Harry Wharton broke off, shuddering. It was too late to help the Spaniard now.

Bunter trembled in every fat limb.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I want to get out of this!" he gasped. "I—I'm fed up with it! I—I—I want to clear! Oh, erikay. I—I say—we've got to get out of this somehow."

It looked as if the end had arrived of the reign of King Bunter!

THE END.

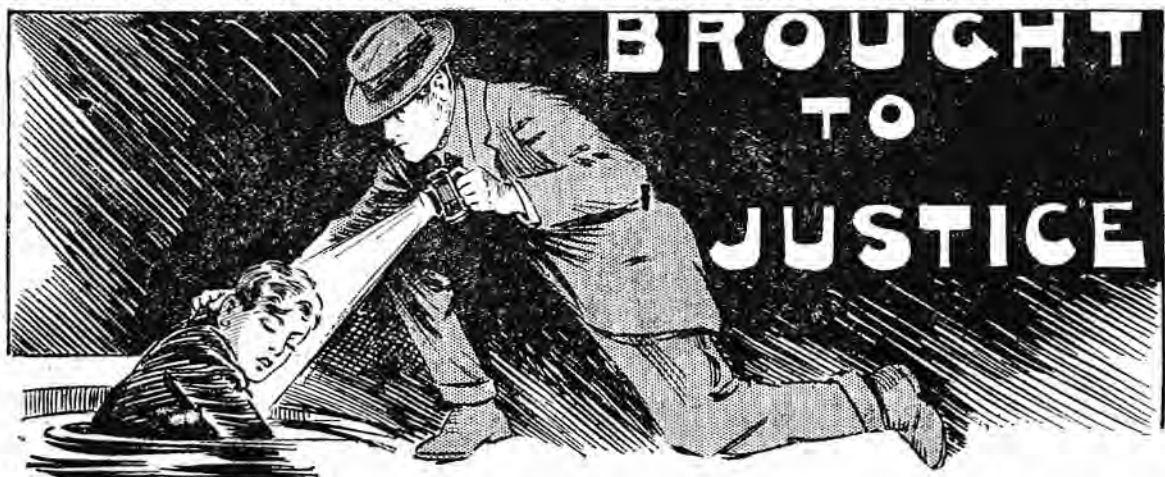
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By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. In Darkness and Despair!

"HELP!" Jack Drake shouted desperately.

He knew that it was useless; that there were no ears to hear. In black darkness, with the rising waters swishing round him, he knew that he was doomed—that there was no help.

But he shouted, and his voice echoed and re-echoed through the dark cellar under the house in the East End in which he had been entrapped.

"Help! Help!"

A hoarse chuckle reached Drake's ears. Through the darkness of the cellar there was a gleam from a lamp.

Drake looked round with dazed eyes over the swishing water.

The door at the top of the stone steps had opened a few inches, and the light gleamed in from above. Through the aperture he caught a glimpse, in the lamplight, of the face of the broken-nosed man, Nosey.

The ruffian grinned down at him.

There was a mark on Nosey's face where Drake's knuckles had struck in his struggle. Jack Drake had hoped, for a second, to see the white, hard face of Dr. Dumaresq Weird, he had hoped that the master-criminal had relented, that he had returned to save the hapless prisoner in the water-cellar. That brief hope died as he looked at the brutal, mocking face at the top of the steps.

"Help!"

Nosey chuckled.

"You can shout!" he said. "Shout away! There ain't nobody to 'ear you, my pippin! Not a soul, but me! And do you reckon I am going to help you?" The ruffian rubbed his bruised face. "Not likely!"

Drake sprang up the steps, clear of the water. His outstretched hand was almost on the door, when Nosey drew back, and it slammed. A key turned in the lock.

Blackness surrounded Drake again, and his helpless hand groped over the surface of the fastened door.

Despair was in his heart.

He had gained a brief respite; the water was rising fast in the cellar, and reaching him where he crouched on the steps by the door.

Higher and higher!

"Help!"

He knew there was no hope; but he shouted. Dr. Dumaresq Weird, the master-criminal, who had trapped Ferrers Locke's boy assistant, was gone—doubtless he was in his car now, on his way back to his mansion in Harley Street.

The broken-nosed man was left in that foul haunt in the stums to deal with the prisoner, and to dispose of the body when all was over. That was to be the end of Drake's career, which had opened with such promise—drowned like a rat in a trap.

He beat on the locked door with his clenched fists.

Where was Ferrers Locke?

The Baker Street detective had set him to watch Dr. Weird's house in Harley Street, to shadow the doctor—and he had shadowed him—here! The shadowed man had led him into a death-trap, from which there was no escape! Ferrers Locke would never know! How could he know? Drake's report would never be made!

Doubtless, at that very hour Ferrers Locke was waiting, in the rooms at Baker Street, for his boy assistant to return with news. Could he guess that Dumaresq Weird had "spotted" the shadower, and led him to this den of crime and mystery, to dispose of him for ever?

Drake groaned.

Locke would never know what had happened—all he would know was that his assistant had gone to his death; he would know that when the body of Jack Drake was discovered—dropped from a car in the hours of darkness in a public street.

"Help!"

Crash! Crash!

He beat furiously on the door, in a wild hope of forcing a passage out by desperate efforts. But the door stood like iron.

Higher and higher rose the water. It was round his waist again now as he stood on the top step—it was rising, rising till it reached his armpits.

Drake backed against the door, struggling to keep himself from being washed off the steps by the swirling water. There was no hope, but he resisted to the last.

The water was under his chin now; it splashed over his mouth, and he choked and gasped. The low roof of the cellar was almost flush with the top of the door—there was no room for swimming. It was a matter of minutes now.

"Help!"

It was Drake's last cry.

The water swirled over his mouth again, choking him. Blackness and death were round him. The boy detective had given himself up for lost; and he was sliding helplessly from the steps, when there was a sudden sound amid the dull swirling of the water.

Click!

A key turned back in a lock, and there was the scrape of a bolt as it was hurriedly drawn.

Drake, reeling against the door, felt himself falling back. Like one in a dream, he realised that the door had opened.

Light flashed on his white face and dizzy eyes.

Had the assassins relented, and returned to save him? He felt himself being dragged from the water—a strong arm was round him. He stared with dazed and dizzy eyes. A cool, clear-cut face was bending over him. In amazement and incredulity he recognised the face of Ferrers Locke! Was it a dream? "Courage, my boy! You are saved!" "Ferrers Locke!"

And with that name on his lips, Jack Drake fainted.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. From the Jaws of Death!

JACK DRAKE opened his eyes.

He was lying on a rough, dirty bed in a dismal room, lighted only by a single oil lamp.

A clear-cut face bent over him. Ferrers Locke smiled reassuringly as the boy's eyes opened dazedly.

"Safe now, Drake."

"You have saved me?" panted Drake.

"Yes."

"But—but how?" stammered Drake dazedly.

"Do not speak for a few minutes—rest!" said the Baker Street detective quietly. "You've had a hard time, Drake, my boy; rest for a few minutes. I will return."

Ferrers Locke quitted the room.

Drake lay exhausted, amazed, but his strength slowly returning. He was saved! By what miracle had Ferrers Locke appeared on the scene, in time to save his life? He could not understand—he could not imagine. But he was saved.

As he recovered, he sat up on the bed and looked round him. He was still in the East End hotel in which he had been trapped—he knew that. Where was Nosey? What had happened? How was it that Ferrers Locke was there, master of the situation, as it appeared, in the den that was one of the secret haunts of Dumaresq Weird and his gang?

There was a step at the door, and Ferrers Locke re-entered.

He did not come alone.

He bore in his strong grasp the broken-nosed man—insensible. He laid the man on the bed from which Drake rose.

Drake watched him in silence.

Nosey had been stunned. There was a black bruise on his dirty forehead, and a trickle of blood from under his scrubby hair. The blood had dried there—it was some time

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since the ruffian had been struck down. Ferrers Locke proceeded quietly to fasten the ruffian's wrists and ankles to the bed, rendering him a helpless prisoner when he should recover his senses.

Then he turned to Drake with a smile.

"Better now?" he asked.

"I'm all right, sir," gasped Drake. "But how—"

"You are surprised to see me here?" asked Locke, smiling.

"It seems like a dream," stammered Drake. "You knew—how did you know? I—I don't catch on—"

"Yet it is simple enough," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I set you to watch Dr. Weir's house—to follow him wherever he went. But in dealing with a man of Dr. Weir's powers, Drake, it was judicious to make assurance doubly sure. You shadowed Dr. Weir—and I shadowed you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Drake.

"It was better for you not to know," smiled the Baker Street detective. "You had your task to perform, and you performed it well. I do not blame you for being led into such a trap—you were dealing with the most acute criminal in London. You never guessed that you were being shadowed while you were shadowing Dr. Weir."

"Never."

"When you were seized, it was done cleverly, suddenly—too cleverly and suddenly for me to come to your aid," said Ferrers Locke. "I heard your cry in the dark alley. When I came up you had vanished. I had lost the track. I feared—for a moment the Baker Street detective's face twitched—I feared that you had paid with your life for following Dumaresq Weir to his lair, Drake. But I did not lose a second. I was on the watch when Weir came out of the house; he was disguised, but of course I knew him. I let him pass me. When he was gone I entered the house." He smiled faintly. "I should have made a good cracksman, as you know, if I had turned that way. I entered by a back window on the alley, and found our friend Nosey, who came for me with a knife."

Locke nodded towards the motionless figure on the bed.

"I stunned him with the butt of my revolver," he resumed. "Then, I searched for you, Drake. It was not easy to find the door of the cellar, hidden in a dark corner underground; but I heard the echo of your blows

on the door, and the sound guided me. Fortunately, I came in time—though only in time."

Drake breathed hard.

"It was just in time," he faltered. "But a miss is as good as a mile, sir. I shall live to see Dr. Weir in the dock yet."

Locke nodded.

"We have proof against the villain now, sir," said Drake eagerly. "What he has done is proof that he is the man who killed Hubert Brandon and Inspector Flemming."

"Proof enough for us, Drake, but not for the law," said Ferrers Locke. "He was in disguise here. It would not be easy to prove the identity of Dr. Dumaresq Weir, the celebrated specialist of Blackman's Alley. But the net is closing round him. We must walk warily, but the days of Dr. Weir are numbered."

A few minutes later the Baker Street detective and his boy assistant were outside the house, in the murky night air. The curses of the broken-nosed man died away in mummings behind them.

"In half an hour's time this house will be in the possession of the police," whispered Ferrers Locke. "Come!"

"But Dr. Weir—"

"I shall deal with him."

"Not alone, Mr. Locke?" asked Drake anxiously.

Locke smiled.

"Alone," he answered. "Come, my boy!"

He hurried away with his boy assistant.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Dumaresq Weir Shows His Hand!

DR. DUMARESQ WEIR came into his study, by the door from the laboratory in the house in Harley Street.

A bright fire burned in the grate, a deep armchair was drawn up to the hearth. An electric reading-lamp glowed on a little table; the room was a picture of cosy comfort.

The hour was growing late.

In the great house all was silent, though until the doctor had left his laboratory the silence had been broken by strange, low sounds—sounds of an animal in pain.

Dr. Weir touched a bell, and dropped into the armchair. The door opened, and Jex, the butler, entered.

Jex, the soft-footed, massive, imposing manservant, looked his part to the life when

the eyes of Dr. Weir's many patients fell upon him during the day. But when he was alone with his master Jex's professional manner dropped from him like a cloak.

Dr. Weir gave him a familiar nod.

"You telephoned to Baker Street, Jex?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Locke was not at home."

"Who answered the phone?"

"The Chinese servant."

"Not Mr. Locke's excellent boy assistant, Drake?" asked the doctor, with a smile.

Jex grinned.

"Not Drake, sir."

"I do not think that excellent youth will be able to serve his master again," said the doctor musingly. "Possibly Mr. Locke has missed him—doubtless he expected him to return before this hour. He may have gone in search of him. A wasted labour, Jex; he will find Master Drake to-morrow."

Jex chuckled.

"Or, to be more correct, Master Drake will be found to-morrow," said Dr. Weir. "Whether Ferrers Locke ever beholds him again depends—"

"You are thinking—" murmured Jex.

"Ferrers Locke has become dangerous, Jex," said Dr. Weir smoothly. "I confess that I did not expect him to become dangerous. How his suspicions turned upon me I hardly know. The fool of an inspector made a discovery, but he died before he could communicate it to Ferrers Locke. A sad end for a useful official, Jex. But he should not have got in the way. What Ferrers Locke knows or suspects I can hardly say; but his eyes have turned in this direction. It is time they were closed."

"When he knows that Drake is dead—"

"Exactly! He set Drake to watch me—and the boy vanishes. That will turn Mr. Locke's suspicion into something like certainty. Proof is another matter. But he has become dangerous. I am sorry he was from home when you telephoned; I desired very much to see him to-night."

Jex started.

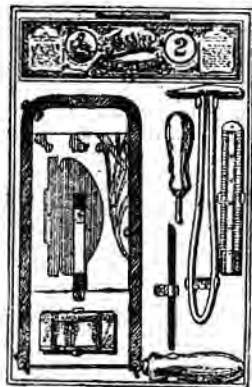
"Not here, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Here!" assented the doctor.

"But the risk—"

"Where is the risk?" smiled the doctor. "Ferrers Locke has called upon me before, and left in safety. Could anyone imagine that harm could come to him in the house of a celebrated Harley Street specialist? Impossible! I should have been very glad to

(Continued on page 25.)



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see him, Jex. I should have been glad to deal with him before Drake's death was known."

Buzzzz!

"That is the bell, Jex. We do not usually have callers at this hour. If it should prove to be Ferrers Locke, show him in at once."

Jex breathed hard.

"You'll want my help, sir?"

"Not at all! You do not dream that there will be a struggle—a vulgar scrap—in my study?" The doctor's lip curled. "My dear fellow, all will be done quietly, in a gentleman-like way. You will hand us something to drink."

"Oh!"

"Then you will retire. Go to the door now, Jex."

"But—hut after?" muttered Jex.

Dr. Weir made a gesture towards the laboratory.

Jex shuddered, and left the room without another word.

Dr. Weir settled down comfortably in his chair, and lighted a Havana cigar. A couple of minutes later the visitor was announced.

"Mr Ferrers Locke!"

The somewhat lean, athletic figure of the Baker Street detective appeared in the doorway.

Dr. Weir rose to his feet, with a smile of welcome on his hard white face.

"Mr. Locke! Come in, my dear fellow!"

Locke entered.

Dr. Weir shook hands cordially with his visitor, and motioned Locke to an armchair on the opposite of the fireplace.

"I am glad to see you, Locke!" he said. "I hope that this visit means news. I telephoned to you this evening, but you were absent from Baker Street."

"I was told of the call when I returned," said Ferrers Locke. "You wished to see me?"

"I did! I am glad you have been able to come!" said Dr. Weir. "This is really my only free time in the day—you know how overworked I am. Now I have an hour at my own disposal. Is your car waiting?"

"No; I came in a taxi."

"Jex!"

Jex—once more the staid, respectful butler—came forward with soft footsteps.

"I may offer you a whisky-and-soda, my dear Locke?" asked the specialist, with a smile.

"I shall be glad of it!"

Jex retired softly from the room after ministering to the wants of the doctor and his visitor. The door closed.

If Locke had suspected the doctor of trickery with the liquor, he had to admit it himself that there seemed no room for suspicion. Dr. Weir helped himself to the same whisky, the same soda, and drank with apparent relish.

Locke's glass was nearly full, and he raised it to his lips. The doctor turned away to stir the fire—perhaps to conceal the glitter of malicious triumph which he knew was in his eyes.

Locke gave a sudden start, and his glance turned towards the door of the laboratory.

"You have a patient there, doctor?"

Weir looked up.

"A patient? No! I have no resident patients," he answered, raising his eyebrows a little.

"Did I not hear a cry?"

"A cry! Impossible!" The doctor smiled. "That is my laboratory, Locke. You have, I suppose, no old-fashioned, so-called humane opinions on the subject of vivisection? Of course, I use anaesthetics when convenient. Sometimes, I fear, there is a little pain." He sighed. "Science justifies all! You think you heard—" He rose to his feet. "I will glance into the room. But it is impossible!"

He crossed to the laboratory door, opened it, and switched on the electric light in the room.

He turned back, smiling.

"Quite a mistake, my dear Locke! My latest subject has now reached the limit of its usefulness—it is dead."

Locke's glass was to his lips, and it was nearly empty. Dr. Weir sat down again, and smiled as the detective placed the nearly empty glass upon the table.

"Help yourself, my dear fellow!" he said.

"Thank you, no more!" said Ferrers Locke.

"You have some news for me?"

"Not precisely. I have received very startling news myself," said Ferrers Locke.



CORNERED AT LAST! Before the amazed and dazed villain realised what was happening Ferrers Locke changed his grasp from Weir's wrists to his throat. Backwards went the tall figure under the weight of the sudden attack. (See Chapter 5.)

"My assistant—doubtless you noticed him at Baker Street—"

"A rather handsome lad, named—was it Drake?"

"That is it."

"I trust nothing untoward has happened to him?"

"I hope not," said Locke. "But he disappeared this evening."

"Disappeared?"

"Yes. He was engaged upon a task of shadowing, and my chauffeur left him at Holland Park Tube Station. Apparently he took a tube train after that—"

Locke paused.

"After that?" said the doctor.

"That is all," said Ferrers Locke. "He should certainly have returned to Baker Street before this. I cannot help thinking that something has happened to him."

"You are engaged upon a dangerous case, my dear Locke," said Dr. Weir. "I fear that you have a desperate criminal to deal with."

"There is not much doubt about that," said Locke. "I was wondering whether you could give me any information?"

Dr. Weir raised his eyebrows.

"I do not quite see—"

"Drake was on duty in Harley Street," said Locke.

"Why in Harley Street?" The doctor smiled. "He was not watching my house, surely?"

Dr. Weir had taken out his watch, and was holding it upon his knee. He watched the hand creeping round the dial as he talked.

Four minutes had elapsed since Ferrers Locke had set his empty glass upon the table. Now the doctor's eyes were upon the second hand, as it glided round.

"Why do you suggest that, Dr. Weir?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"A minute more!" said the doctor.

"Why, my dear fellow, it occurred to me that possibly—for some reason best known to yourself—you might have set your valuable assistant to watch my house. To leave the subject for a moment, Locke, have you

ever observed how slowly the seconds seem to pass when one is counting them?"

"I suppose everyone has," said Locke.

"But—"

"Each second seems an hour, when each second is precious," said the doctor. "Ah! There goes the last! My dear, poor friend, do you feel a heaviness creeping over you, weighing down your eyelids, and weighing your limbs as if with lead?"

Ferrers Locke's eyelids drooped—as the doctor was speaking.

Weir rose to his feet.

He stood upon the hearthrug, his long, lean figure drawn to its full height, and his strange magnetic eyes blazed down at the Baker Street detective.

"My dear friend," he said, in a soft, soothing voice. "Is it possible that the whisky—so little of it, too!—has been too much for you?"

Locke seemed to make an effort.

"I—I—" He mumbled drowsily. "What—what the dickens is the matter with me?"

"I—I feel—"

Weir raised a thin, manicured hand.

"You need not describe your symptoms, my dear fellow," he said smoothly. "They are perfectly well known to me."

Locke stared at him drowsily.

"I—I—" he began. His voice was thick, and seemed to trail away helplessly.

The smiling face looming over him was the face of a fiend. Implacable cruelty gleamed in the eyes that looked down on him.

"You find it difficult to speak, my dear Locke?"

The detective nodded.

"Your limbs are as heavy as lead—is it not so?"

Another nod.

"Yet your brain is clear—quite clear, though you have lost the use of your limbs and the power of your voice?"

A slighter nod—almost imperceptible. Locke's eyes were fastened on the cruel eyes above him, and his head sagged helplessly on the padded back of the chair.

"And you realise," went on the doctor, in

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a low, monotonous voice—"you realise that you have swallowed a drug?"

No motion now from the detective. Only his starting eyes stared up at the cruel, white face.

"Had you any suspicion when you entered?" smiled Dumaresq Weird. "If so, was it not disarmed by seeing me drink from the same liquor? Poor fool! My system has been hardened to it—I could swallow ten times as much of the drug without hurt. But to you, Locke, it is now and strange—and you are its helpless victim."

He laughed.

"You have become dangerous, Locke! I do not allow men who are dangerous to cross my path. Can you still nod your head?"

No movement.

"Close your eyes to answer 'Yes,' said the doctor. "For some minutes more you will retain power over your eyelids. Be reassured, you will not lose your senses till the end comes. You set Drake to watch my house—to watch me?"

Locke closed his eyelids.

"Did you come here suspecting that I had led him into a trap?"

The eyelids closed again.

"You can afford to be frank," smiled the doctor. "I am frank, as you see. Disguises are finished with between us, my dear Locke. The buttons are off the foils now. Did you come here, suspecting that I had dealt with Drake, and hoping to make some discovery, taking me, perhaps, off my guard?"

For the third time Locke closed his eyelids.

Dumaresq Weird laughed.

"And now you know that I have drugged you—a drug of my own concoction, my dear fellow, sometimes used in my laboratory. Do you expect to leave this house alive?"

The eyelids did not move again. All power of motion seemed to have left the Baker Street detective. He lay still, inert, only his wide, staring eyes turned fixedly on the lean figure before him, lowering over him.

Dr. Weird touched a bell, and Jex entered. The butler gave a slight start at the sight of the inert figure in the chair. "The house is locked up for the night, Jex."

"Yes, sir."

"Very good! Close the door. I shall want you to help me carry Mr. Locke in a few minutes. Help yourself to the whisky in the meantime."

And Jex, with a grin, helped himself—though not to the same whisky. Motionless as a lifeless figure, Ferrers Locke lay back in the chair, his fixed eyes staring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Detective's Doom!

DR. WEIRD lighted a fresh cigar, as he stood on the hearthrug, towering over the helpless man in the chair. He was enjoying his triumph to the full.

"And this is Ferrers Locke!" he said. "Ferrers Locke, the terror of evil-doers—the relentless tracker of criminals. More than once, ere this, we have almost come into contact, Locke—more than once our paths have almost crossed. You suspected the existence of a master-criminal behind more than one affair that baffled you. You suspected, I think, that the unknown man was not to be discovered in the criminal class—that he occupied some position that placed him above suspicion. You did not suspect that he was a specialist in Harley Street—a man whose fame was known throughout Europe. Would that have ever dawned upon your mind, Locke—if you had lived?"

There was a gurgle, as Jex drank his whisky. Oppressive stillness hung upon the room.

Outside, there was a faint sound of a motor-car, whirling its way down Harley Street towards Cavendish Square.

In the still, silent room there was a quiet as of the grave, till the doctor spoke again. The still, fixed eyes of the Baker Street detective were fastened upon him unblinkingly, the only sign of life in Ferrers Locke's spellbound form.

"How much did you suspect," resumed the doctor, "that I, the only relative of Hubert Brandon, had done him to death, to inherit twenty thousand pounds—that Inspector Flemming had learned of Brandon's visit to my house that night and died in consequence? Did these suspicions pass through your mind, Locke? If so, I can congratulate you upon your keenness—you were right."

Jex, the butler, chuckled hoarsely.

"Did you connect these tragedies, in your mind, with other tragedies that had occurred earlier? The mysterious discovery of dead men in the streets—left there by unknown means? My poor fellow, if your suspicions had been given time to grow, you might have turned your investigations towards my garage—you might have learned of the existence of a motor-car with a trap in the floor, by which a dead man could be dropped in the middle of the street, leaving no clue behind. You understand now, Locke? Before the end comes, is it a pleasure to you to have this mystery cleared up?"

No sign from the detective.

"Your excellent assistant, Drake, will be picked up in Baker Street to-morrow morning," continued Dr. Dumaresq Weird. "But the same fate will not be yours, Locke. Can you guess what it will be?"

He paused, his eyes glittering, and made a gesture towards the door of the laboratory.

"You know my pursuits, Locke—my scientific investigations. You know that I experiment upon the living animal—in the cause of science—for the benefit of the human race at the cost of suffering to the lower creation—" He laughed. "That is good enough for the public, but I will not insult the intelligence of Ferrers Locke with such cant. My investigations are a hobby—nothing more or less—an unbolty pursuit, perhaps, but of intense interest to me regardless of pain. But in vivisection there is a limit—the human subject is forbidden. That is the decree of the law—but the law has been eluded before now. You will not be the first human subject in my laboratory, Ferrers Locke—though the most distinguished one. Do you understand now?"

Ferrers Locke did not move; like a log he was lifted from the chair, still to all appearance lifeless, save for his eyes.

The laboratory door was opened, and Ferrers Locke was carried through, his shoulders and feet in the grasp of Dr. Weird and the butler.

"Lay him on the operating-table."

Locke was laid down upon the table where so many hapless creatures had suffered.

With a final glance at the detective on the operating-table, stretched as still and stiff as a dead man, only his eyes seeming to live, Jex quitted the laboratory. The door closed dully behind him.

For some minutes the doctor was busy; and there was no sound or movement from the man on the table. Weird came back towards him at last, and stood looking down into his face.

"We are now about to commence, my dear Locke," he said.

The thin, white hand was stretched over Ferrers Locke, to remove his coat.

The next instant Dr. Dumaresq Weird staggered back with a cry of mingled horror and fear.

For his wrist was grasped in a grip of iron that almost broke the bone, and Ferrers Locke rolled from the operating-table, still with the bend in human form in his grasp.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Justice At Last!

FERRERS LOCKE did not speak.

Before the amazed, dazed villain realised what was happening he changed his grasp from Weird's wrist to his throat.

Backwards went the tall, lean figure under the weight of the sudden, amazing attack.

Crash!

A panting cry broke from Dumaresq Weird. He crashed on the floor on his back, and the detective's knee was planted on his chest.

The back of his head struck the floor with violence, and for some moments he was dazed, half-stunned.

In those moments his thin, white wrists were dragged together, and there was a metallic click.

The handcuffs fastened upon Dr. Dumaresq Weird of Harley Street.

Ferrers Locke rose to his feet.

There was not a trace now of the spell that had bound him—or seemed to bind him. His athletic frame was full of vigour, his face full of expression, his eyes gleaming.

The handcuffed man stared up at him with the rage of a demon in his white mask of a face. He realised now that he had been tricked—tricked to his ruin.

He panted out incoherent words. The calmness of the master-criminal had deserted him now. He twisted like a wild-cat, struggling with the handcuffs.

"My turn now, Dr. Weird!" said Ferrers Locke calmly.

The man on the floor spat out a curse.

"You understand?" said the Baker Street detective, unmoved. "I knew you were seeking to drug me, and if I had swallowed the drug, your programme would have been carried out without a hitch, you scoundrel. Do you remember the cry in the laboratory—the cry I did not hear?" Ferrers Locke smiled grimly. "Your back was turned for a few seconds, which were enough for me. The drugged drink went under the armchair, my dear doctor—somewhat soiling your valuable Persian rug, I fear. I have been in such situations before, Dr. Weird—Ferrers Locke is not so easily caught as all that."

Furious eyes blazed up at him.

"After that, knowing your game, I played up," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I hoped to make discoveries—and I have made them, more than I hoped. You scoundrel, you are at the end of your tether at last."

The door opened.

In an instant Ferrers Locke's revolver was raised, and levelled at the portly figure of Jex, the butler.

Jex staggered back with a cry.

"Put up your hands, my man!" said Ferrers Locke grimly. "Your life depends on it."

"I—I heard—" stammered Jex, his eyes going wildly to the handcuffed man on the floor. "I—I—"

"Put up your hands!" rapped out Ferrers Locke.

Jex's hands went up unresistingly. The game was up, and he knew it. The crack of the falling doctor had brought him to the room, suspecting that something was wrong, but certainly he had not suspected this. Ferrers Locke advanced upon him, the revolver still levelled, the detective's finger on the trigger.

"Now, then—wrists!" rapped out the detective.

The handcuffs clicked on Jex's wrists.

A minute later the master detective was standing on the steps in Harley Street, a police-whistle to his lips.

Jack Drake ran out of the shadows, and bounded up the steps.

"Mr. Locke—"

"All safe," said the detective quietly. "The case is complete now, Drake, and Dumaresq Weird is a prisoner. Come in, inspector."

The arrest of Dr. Dumaresq Weird, the famous specialist of Harley Street, caused a sensation. The charges against him were heard with incredulity at first. But proof were soon forthcoming. In many recesses of the great house in Harley Street the loot of many robberies was found, stored in secret places, proof that over a period of years the doctor had been the chief of a daring and successful gang.

And when the trial came both Jex and Nosey weakened, and told all they knew—though the evidence was complete enough without them.

When the trial was over, and the sentence given, Ferrers Locke left the court and returned to Baker Street. Jack Drake met him there with an inquiring look.

"It is over," said Ferrers Locke. "Justice will be done. And now, my boy, I think we have both earned a rest, and a couple of weeks away from Baker Street will do us good."

And Jack Drake was glad to assent.

THE END

(Don't miss next week's amazing story of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake in "The Case of the Hypnotist!")

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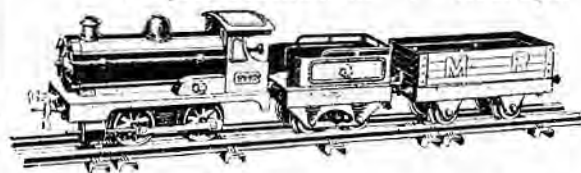
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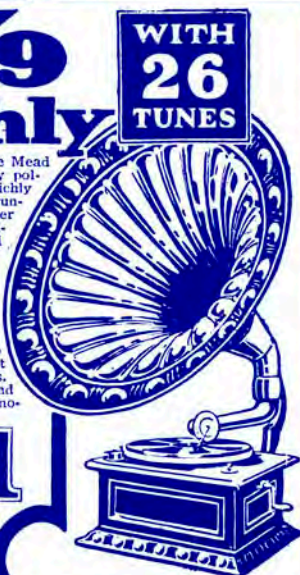
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