

"THE VENGEANCE OF THE WOLF!" THRILL-PACKED SCHOOL-BOY ADVENTURE YARN IN THIS GRAND . . . **Free Gift Issue!**

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Hi! You Can't Do That There'Ere!

The VENGEANCE of the WOLF!

By
FRANK
RICHARDS



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Lively Log!

"PUTRID!" said Billy Bunter. It wasn't nice. Even the cheeriest member of the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove did not think it nice.

But it was, as Bob Cherry remarked, all in the day's work.

The chums of the Remove had not come out to Brazil expecting everything to go like clockwork.

Bunter apparently had!

Nobody liked sinking to the knees in soft, sticky, slimy, smelly mud. Least of all did Billy Bunter! This meant washing, when he got in. One wash a day was enough for the Owl of the Remove. Extra washes had no appeal for him.

Bunter, being the shortest of the party, sank deepest. Being the clumsiest, he gathered more mud. His fat hands were covered with it; his fat face smeared and spotted. Where his podgy countenance was not yellow with mud, it was crimson with exertion. Mud a foot deep was hard going.

"Rotten!" groaned Bunter.

"Buck up, old man!" said Bob.

"Beast!"

"Your own fault!" grunted Johnny Bull. "We ought to have taken the path. We should have taken the path, if you hadn't been too lazy. It was your idea to take a short cut across that creek."

Snort—from Bunter.

The fact that it was his own fault seemed to be no consolation to him.

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"I'm muddy!" he snorted.

"Aren't we?" asked Harry Wharton mildly.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snapped Bunter.

Obviously, the muddiness of the Famous Five was a matter of very little consequence.

Squelch, squelch, squelch!

"Oh lor!" mumbled Bunter.

It was a glorious day—the hot sun of South America blazing down from a sky of cloudless blue. March on the Rio Rexo, in the back-country of Brazil, was rather different from March at Greyfriars, in far-off England. Fellows' hats would be blowing off in the old quad at Greyfriars, while Harry Wharton & Co. perspired under brilliant sunshine.

The chums of the Remove had been some little time at Boa Vista, the plantation belonging to Mr. Peter Valentine.

Peter was a busy man, though he gave as much time as he could to his nephew's guests. Jim Valentine, their old pal at school, was usually the juniors' guide, philosopher, and friend in their excursions up and down and round about the fazenda.

But Jim was not with them now. Had he been, they would never have taken that short cut across one of the innumerable creeks of the Rio Rexo.

They had gone for a walk on their own. This was the result! Coming back from the forest, they could see Boa Vista in the distance—the white-walled house, surrounded on three sides by a deep, shady veranda, half-hidden by trees and shrubs and gorgeous flowers. In the clear sunlight of

Brazil it looked quite near—but it was farther off than it looked.

Bunter, of course, was tired. The shallow creek lay in the way. Following the path meant another half-mile, at least. Bunter proposed to wade the creek, taking a short cut.

They waded it! On the hither side they had stepped off from a praia—a smooth sandbank. The going looked good. But on the farther side there was no praia. There was mud! There was lots of mud! It looked at a distance firm to the tread. But appearances, as they so often are, were deceptive. Only the upper crust, hardened by the hot sun, was firm. It cracked like thin ice under the tread—and let the juniors down!

They squelched onward up to the knees. The mud was thick, it was soft, it was clinging, and it smelt like anything but attar of roses! Strange, weird scents arose from it. All sorts of scents—none of them nice!

Butterflies, six or seven inches broad, brilliant in hue, hummed over that wide mudbank and over the squelching schoolboys. Under them, the mudbank hummed, in the slangy sense of that word.

"It's thick, and no mistake!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"The thickfulness," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, "is terrific! And the smellfulness is also great!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, come on, Bunter!"

"What about taking me pick-a-back?" suggested Bunter. "That would keep me out of the mud."

He blinked inquiringly at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles. They gazed at him.

This seemed quite a good idea to Billy Bunter. But it did not seem to evoke any enthusiasm on the part of the Famous Five.

"After all, I don't weigh much!" argued Bunter.

"You don't weigh much!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"No! It isn't as though I had feet like yours, old chap!"

"Why, you fat owl—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come on, you podgy porpoise!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I'd carry you with pleasure, if—"

"If what?"

"If I were a two-ton lorry—"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

He came to a halt. He was tired. All the party were tired, if it came to that. But the Famous Five wanted to get on, and get out of the mud.

Bunter wanted a rest.

He blinked round for a suitable spot.

Tired as he was, and lazy as he was, even Bunter did not want to sit down in mud that came over his fat knees. He did not want that mud to come over his fat neck!

"Are you coming?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"No," snorted Bunter, "I'm not! You've landed me in this, and now you can wait while I take a rest, see? That tree-trunk will suit me."

At a little distance, just showing over the mud, was a dark object that looked like a log. Bunter squelched towards it. A fallen tree was exactly what he wanted to sit on. As the top showed over the mud, it seemed secure enough as a resting-place.

"Look here, you blithering ass, we're not sticking in this smelly mud to wait for you!" bawled Johnny Bull. "Beast!"

Bunter squelched on.

"Prod him!" suggested Bob.

Each of the juniors carried a stout stick. Bob's suggestion caught on at once, and they squelched after Bunter to prod him.

They could not very well go on and leave him on his own in the swamp. They were not disposed to stand about knee-deep in mud, and nose-deep in scents, while Bunter sat on that log and rested. So prodding seemed to be the only resource.

They had seen how the Brazilian ox-drivers prodded their oxen onward. It seemed quite a good idea to apply the same method to Bunter.

Splashing mud, they tramped after the fat Owl.

Bunter reached the log. He sat on it. Sitting on it, in great relief after his exertions, the fat Owl of the Remove blinked back at the pursuing juniors through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows you look round for a log to sit on!" he said. "I'm not going on yet! About half an hour—"

"Get off that log!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Shan't!"

"You're going to be prodded—"

"The proddfulness will be terrific!"

"Get up!"

"Come on!"

Billy Bunter sat tight. He was not going to get off that sunken log. At all events, he was determined that he wasn't. But suddenly, to his great surprise, the log stirred and heaved under him.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Yaroooh! Oh crikey! It's an earthquake!"

He clutched hold, wildly.

"Why—what—what—" gasped Bob Cherry.

The juniors, about to prod Bunter, stopped, dumbfounded. Certainly, it was not an earthquake—nothing else was stirring round them, except that log. But the log was stirring in the most extraordinary manner.

How a mass of dead wood, sunken in soft mud, could lift itself, of its own volition, without any visible means of support, was a startling and amazing mystery to the chums of Greyfriars. And that was what the log was doing!

But the mystery was quickly elucidated.

The log, as it lifted, disclosed an immense tail at one end, and an immense head at the other.

It was not a log. It was an alligator, sleeping peacefully in the mud till Bunter's weight on its back disturbed it.

What Bunter had taken for rough bark, smothered with mud, was the

Off the beaten track in the tangled forest bordering Jim Valentine's home lurks Harry Wharton & Co.'s deadly enemy, O Lobo—defeated, but, as they know only too well, desperate and determined, and counting life very cheap!

scaly back of the river monster. Up went the alligator's back, and off it went Bunter—spinning!

Splash! Squelch!

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter sat in mud—he sat in it up to the neck! And as he sat his eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the glinting red eyes, and gigantic jaws of an enormous alligator, yawning wide open just in front of him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble With An Alligator!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stopped dead, spellbound with horror.

They, like Bunter, had supposed that the mass half-submerged in the mud was a rough log; and they were as much taken by surprise as the Owl of the Remove, when it suddenly turned into an alligator.

It was a huge beast, more than twenty feet long; and the gigantic mouth, armed with fearful rows of teeth, opened like a yawning cavern.

Bunter gazed at those yawning jaws, petrified.

Luckily the alligator was as surprised as the juniors. Floundering in the mud, it blinked at Billy Bunter, who blinked back with starting eyes.

Harry Wharton was the first to recover from the spell of amazement, and horror. He plunged forward, splashing mud; gripped the fat junior by the back of the collar, and dragged at him.

Billy Bunter rolled backwards through mud, spluttering.

The alligator made a movement—whether to attack or not the juniors did not know. But Bob Cherry plunged desperately between Bunter and the terrible reptile, whirling up his stick.

With all the strength of his sturdy arm, he brought the stick down on the beast's snout. The force of the blow wrenched the stick from his hand, and it flew into the mud. The great jaws snapped shut with a horrid sound. The blow, hefty as it was, probably did not hurt the alligator much. But it disconcerted the beast. It floundered and waddled wildly. And Johnny Bull, springing after Bob, dealt the brute a blow under the ribs.

The alligator swung round, and, to the intense relief of the juniors, started waddling and splashing through the mud towards the creek.

In the water it would have been much more dangerous; but ashore it was heavy and clumsy, which was fortunate for the Greyfriars fellows. They dodged it easily as it floundered away, only too glad to see its tail instead of its jaws. Those jaws could have bitten any of them into two at a snap.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"It's going!" panted Nugent.

"Thank goodness!"

Waddling and squelching, the alligator floundered down the bank, and, with a heavy plunge, disappeared into the waters of the creek.

The juniors gazed at the spreading ripples on the water where it had plunged, their hearts almost in their mouths. They could hardly believe that the fearful brute was really gone.

"Urrrrggh!" came from Bunter.

Wharton, in his haste and excitement, had dragged the fat Owl over on his back, and dragged him six or seven yards through the mud before he stopped.

Bunter sank in mud, which came over his fat face. Spluttering wildly, he scrambled up, and stood unsteadily on his podgy legs.

"Urrgh! Grooogh!" Bunter spat out mud. "Urrgh! I say, you fellows! Keep it off! Help! Gurrgh! Rescue! Wurrgh! Oooer! Ooogh!"

"It's gone!" panted Wharton.

"Urrrrggh!"

Billy Bunter dabbed flowing mud from his face, and blinked wildly through muddy spectacles. The vision of those terrible jaws was still before his horrified eyes.

"Ow! Run for it! Help!" spluttered Bunter.

He started at a squelching run, splattering mud on all sides. With the mud on his spectacles obscuring his vision, he mistook his direction, and plunged off towards the creek—on the track of the alligator.

This Issue Contains

TWO MORE SPLENDID PICTURES

For Your Magic Spectacles

Frank Nugent squelched over to him, and grasped him by a fat arm.

"Hold on, Bunter!" he gasped.

"Owl! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Run! Don't stop me! Yaroooh!"

"Stop!" gasped Nugent. "I tell you—"

Unaware that he was heading for the creek, and in the full belief that the fearful jaws were about to snap on him, Bunter was desperate. He turned on Frank, and smote with a fat fist.

"Oooooop!" gasped Nugent, as he caught that unexpected swipe with his chin; lost his footing, and sat down. Mud closed round him up to the shoulders as he sat.

He lost his hold on Bunter. Released, the fat junior floundered frantically on.

"Bunter!" yelled Bob.

"You fat chump!" shrieked Johnny Bull.

Unheeding, Billy Bunter floundered through the mud as fast as he could flounder. Had he been left to his own devices, undoubtedly he would have toppled into the creek where the alligator had plunged in; and he certainly would not have escaped from a second encounter so luckily as from the first.

But the juniors plunged after him, and Bob Cherry, grabbing, caught a fat ear in a firm grip.

Bunter had to stop, then.

He yelled and howled as he was tugged to a halt. Wharton and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh hastily shoved in between him and the creek, and barred his way.

"Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Yaroooh! Help! Leggo! Keep it off! Save me! Yoop!"

"You fat idiot!" shrieked Johnny Bull. "The brute's gone, and you're going after it!"

"Eh?" gasped Bunter.

"It's all right now!" gasped Wharton. "Safe as houses, you fat frump!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Frank Nugent struggled to his feet. He streamed with slimy mud—as muddy as Bunter.

Billy Bunter grabbed out a handkerchief, rubbed mud from his spectacles, and set them on his fat little nose again. He blinked round him with bulging eyes, and was relieved to see only the mud flats glimmering in the sun, and the shallow creek shining.

"Oh!" he gasped. "It—it—it's gone!"

"Yes, you ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "Do you want to dive in after it?"

"Beast!"

"Lucky Bunter was with us," said Bob Cherry. "It was you who frightened it off, Bunter. Our faces would never have done it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows! Let's get out of this!" gasped Bunter. "I'm all muddy! Look at me!"

"And look at me!" roared Nugent.

"Oh, don't jaw! Let's get out of it!" howled Bunter. "I'm not going to stay here to be chewed up by alligators to please you."

"Don't you want a rest?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "There's another log over there. Of course, it may be an alligator—"

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter started for Boa Vista at a squelching run.

The Famous Five tramped after him, splashing. The Owl of the Remove seemed to have forgotten that he was tired. Clearly he did not want to take

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another rest on another log in the mudbank. After what had happened, Billy Bunter was likely to regard all logs with a very doubting and suspicious eye.

For once the fat junior did not need urging on the way. He set the pace—and it was quite a good pace. Crimson and breathless, panting and gasping, he floundered on, splashing and spattering liquid mud right and left, the Co. grinning as they followed.

They were out of the mud at last, though they carried a considerable quantity of the mudbank with them when they got out of it—especially Billy Bunter and Frank Nugent. There was tall grass farther on, and they gathered handfuls of it to brush off as much of the mud as they could.

But it was a very muddy party that tramped on the way to the fazenda, and arrived at last at the veranda steps of Boa Vista.

Jim Valentine was in the veranda, and he jumped at the sight of them.

"What the dickens—" he exclaimed. He stared at the bedraggled juniors with amazement in his handsome sunburnt face.

Harry Wharton laughed ruefully.

"We've been collecting most of the mud in Brazil, I think," he said. "Bunter found a short cut across a creek."

Jim chuckled.

"A short cut is sometimes the longest way round—especially in Brazil," he remarked. "You might have barged into an alligator, too—"

"We did; but Bunter frightened it off!" said Bob Cherry.

"Bunter did?" exclaimed Valentine in astonishment.

"Yes; his face is his fortune."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"What we want now is a wash and a change," said Bob. "Even Bunter wants a wash. He washed the day we left Greyfriars, and he's made that one do till now, but he will have to have another after this."

Billy Bunter snorted and rolled in. A wash and a change restored the Famous Five to cleanliness and cheerfulness, but they restored Billy Bunter to neither. There were plenty of traces of mud about Bunter's hair and ears when he turned up to lunch, and his frowning fat brow revealed the important fact that Bunter was not pleased.

But everybody else was in cheery spirits, and did not seem even to notice that Bunter was displeased. If they noticed it they did not mind—which, as Bunter sardonically reflected, was exactly what he might have expected of them.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Just Like Bunter!

B UZZZZZ!

"Oh lor'!" groaned Billy Bunter.

It was a hot afternoon. Billy Bunter had remarked several times in an accusing sort of voice that it was hot—as if it was somebody's fault.

But the other fellows did not need telling that it was hot; the warmth of midday in Brazil made itself felt; it could not be ignored.

The wide, deep veranda of Boa Vista was shady and as cool as it was possible to be; there were deep cane chairs very comfortable to sit in while the hot hours passed.

Strenuous fellows as the Famous Five of Greyfriars were, they gave in to the custom of the tropics of taking a rest

in the heat of the day. They did not sleep—as Bunter did when he could—but they sat it out.

Even Peter Valentine—the lean, hardy, healthy planter—sat in the shade for the period of the "siesta," when all activity ceased. He sat in the veranda, smoking a black cheroot, making few remarks. Jim's uncle was a man of few words; he was a young man, and Jim always called him "Peter." The juniors liked him very much, but Bunter was rather doubtful about him. More than once Bunter had fancied he detected disapproval in the clear, quiet eyes of the young planter when they rested on him; perhaps it was not wholly fancy on Bunter's part.

Now, as Bunter yapped at the buzz of the mosquitoes, Mr. Valentine's quiet glance turned on him for a moment, but he did not speak; he seldom spoke to Bunter, unless in answer to the fat Owl. Smack!

Billy Bunter slew five or six mosquitoes, drew his net over his fat face again, and tried to compose himself to slumber.

Even at home Bunter liked an after-dinner nap when he could get one; he liked it still more in the tropics.

But there were mosquitoes. Bunter did not like mosquitoes, but they seemed to like Bunter.

Perhaps the cause was the chunk of rapidura that Bunter held in a fat hand. Bunter disliked most things he found in Brazil, but rapidura had his wholehearted approbation. It was a kind of toffee, very sweet and very sticky. The supply was unlimited, which suited Bunter. He found a lot of comfort in rapidura; so, it seemed, did the mosquitoes and flies.

Every time Bunter chewed at that chunk he disarranged the mosquito net over his fat face, and the mosquitoes and flies did not lose the chance; they clung to Bunter as if they loved him like a brother.

"Oh lor'!" said Bunter, for the tenth time—if not for the twentieth. "I say, you fellows, I wish you'd brush these beastly flies away! They don't seem to be worrying you like they do me."

"We're not sticky all over," remarked Johnny Bull.

"You're attracting them, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry. "You're such an attractive chap!"

"The attractiveness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"It's a putrid country!" grunted Bunter. "Flies and snakes and bandits and wild beasts and mosquitoes and alligators! How the dickens do you stand it, Valentine?"

Jim did not answer that polite question.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Bunter.

Looking at Bunter, however, produced no effect on him whatever. Bunter was peeved, and when Bunter was peeved his manners—such as they were—quite failed him.

Buzzzz!

Quite a big mosquito came sailing in from the sunlight with a buzz almost as loud as a humming top; it headed at once for Bunter's fat face.

Bunter had arranged a gauze netting over that fat face to bar off insect visitors; but as he had pushed it out of place to convey a chunk of rapidura to his mouth the enterprising mosquito found an opening; it settled on a fat chin, and Bunter gave a howl.

He brushed it off before it could sting; then it settled on a fat nose, and again a fat hand brushed it off.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—"

"Give us a rest!" yawned Johnny Bull.

"Beast!" Bunter struggled out of his chair. "There's a beastly mosquito on me, and it's just going to bite!"

He clawed wildly and drove the mosquito off. But it was clear that Bunter's fat face had an irresistible attraction for that small inhabitant of Brazil; it buzzed round Bunter's head, apparently looking for a landing place. Bunter's fat hands swept the air, to an accompaniment of incessant buzzing.

"Will you fellows drive it off?" he roared.

"Oh dear!" Bob Cherry heaved himself out of his chair. "Anything for a quiet life! There it is, on your ear, you fathead!"

"Squash it!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, all right!"

Smack!

Billy Bunter rubbed a burning ear; his little round eyes gleamed through his big round spectacles at six smiling faces. The Famous Five were amused, and Peter Valentine seemed amused—though Billy Bunter utterly failed to see anything amusing in the incident.

"You can cackle!" he roared.

"Thanks!" yawned Johnny Bull.

"We will! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed his comrades.

Billy Bunter gave them a withering glare, which did not have the effect of withering the Famous Five; rather, it seemed to increase their merriment.

Breathing hard, the Owl of the Remove turned and rolled away to the steps of the veranda.

At the top of the steps he turned, the chunk of rapidura in his hand. Bunter had chewed off quite a lot of that toffee, but there was still a big chunk left. His

talking at his feet, his hand going to his nose, which spurted red.

"Oh! Ah! Ow!" spluttered the planter. "What— Oh! Ow! Ooogh! You mad young ass— Ooooooh!"

The claret ran through his fingers as he pressed his hand to his damaged nose.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the planter, horrified at what he had done. The Famous Five jumped out of their chairs.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"That blithering idiot—" stuttered Nugent.

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Bump him! Squash him! Burst him!"

"Serag him!"

Billy Bunter turned and made one frantic jump to the bottom of the steps. Then he flew!



"You—you—you beast!" gasped Bunter, realising, at long last, the nature of the mosquito that had been troubling his repose. He reached out, and made an infuriated smite at Bob Cherry's grinning countenance. Bob backed away, the hammock swung, and Bunter overbalanced!

"Yaroooooh!"

The mosquito was squashed. There was no doubt about that! Bob Cherry's hefty smack squashed it at once. It seemed to have produced the same effect on Bunter's ear.

That mosquito was slain! To judge by Bunter's yell, he was very nearly so. He roared.

"Ow! You silly idiot! Wow! Wharrer you smacking my head for, you beast! Ow! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've nearly cracked my napper!" shrieked Bunter.

"My dear chap," expostulated Bob, "you asked me to squash that mosquito, and—"

"Beast!"

"And I've squashed it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, some fellows are never satisfied!" said Bob, as he sat down again. "You can squash your own mosquitoes after this, Bunt!"

fat hand rose in the air, and he gave Bob Cherry's grinning face, across the shady veranda, a deadly blink.

"There, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

"Take that!"

His fat arm swept through the air, and the missile flew.

That chunk of rapidura weighed about a quarter of a pound, and was as hard as a brick. Had it smitten Bob's face it certainly would have damaged it; but Bob Cherry saw it coming, dodged his head, and escaped the chunk, which whizzed by a foot from him. Peter Valentine, who was sitting a little farther back in the shade, was not so lucky.

Every bullet has its billet. The same rule applied to that chunk of rapidura. Missing Bob Cherry, it landed on the planter's nose with a startling and unexpected shock.

There was a roar from Peter.

He bounded to his feet, the chunk

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed across the veranda. By the time they reached the steps Bunter had vanished beyond the shrubberies, and, heedless of the simmering heat and the glare of the sun, he barged on across the fazenda, at about sixty m.p.h.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Ambush!

"BUNTER!"

"Bunt!"

"Bunt!"

Billy Bunter heard. But, like the gladiator in the poem, he heard, but he heeded not.

The Famous Five might be anxious to find Bunter. Bunter was not anxious to be found. He was, indeed, very anxious not to be found.

Bunter had no desire to be bumped.

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burst, or scragged! And he had no doubt that the five were looking for him with those fell intentions.

Neither did he desire to see Peter Valentine again till the planter had had time to cool down.

Peter was a good-tempered man, and he was Bunter's host at Boa Vista—still, a crash on the nose was the sort of thing to make even a good-tempered man a little cross. Bunter had left him with his nose streaming red, and a very excited expression on his face. It was only tactful to give him plenty of time to recover, and to remember what was due to a guest!

Billy Bunter had left the coffee fields behind him and plunged into the forest that bordered the fazenda, down the river. Boa Vista was a cultivated spot in the midst of a wilderness that was almost primeval. Hundreds of acres had been cleared and planted with coffee, and rubber and Indian corn. Every year more land was cleared and planted up. But it was only a step from the cultivated fields of the fazenda into forest or campo as untamed as in the days when the first Portuguese discoverers landed in Brazil.

Here there was plenty of cover for Bunter—or for ten thousand Bunters, for that matter.

He did not venture far into the wood. The deep shadows of the forest had no attraction for Bunter. They rather alarmed him. His fat imagination peopled them with jaguars, snakes, and bandits.

Just within the wood, Bunter was completely hidden from sight. He sat at the foot of a gigantic tree, the trunk of which was a dozen feet in thickness. Rope-like lianas were suspended from all the branches, screening Bunter all round. It was hot; but it was shady—

and it was safe! The beasts could go on hunting him as long as they liked—indeed, the longer they fagged about in the blazing sunshine, the better Bunter liked it. Serve them right! After all he had done for them, this was how they were treating him! He charitably hoped that they would get jolly hot and jolly tired!

"Bunter!" came a roar.

Bunter grinned, and sat tight.

Evidently, they guessed that he had headed for the timber. No doubt some of the workers on the fazenda—there were more than a hundred of them, mostly Italians and negroes—had seen him in his flight, and given the news. Anyhow, the searchers were close at hand.

"Bunter! Bunt! Bunt!" came Bob Cherry's roar.

Grinning, Bunter listened.

There was another shout, but fainter this time! The juniors seemed to be moving along the edge of the wood towards the river.

Bunter was glad to hear them go.

He was in no hurry to return to the house. It was shady under the big tree; he was comfortable, and he was lazy; and there was no need to turn up at Boa Vista till the next meal-time. By that time, Bunter hoped, Peter would be in a good temper.

Bunter grinned, leaned his head back against the tree, and closed his eyes behind his spectacles. But he did not doze off to sleep. There was a rustle in the hanging lianas, and Bunter's eyes opened suddenly and wide behind his spectacles, and his fat heart jumped.

It might have been anything that caused the rustle—a parrot, a monkey, even a lizard. But it might have been a jaguar, a python, or even a bandit! Bunter sat and quaked.

He made no sound. He hardly breathed. Peter had told him that there were no dangerous animals close to the plantation. That was all very well, but the fat Owl did not like that rustle so close at hand.

It was a relief to glimpse a hat through a slit in the liana screen. It was not a jaguar creeping on its prey, not a huge python billowing its folds through the thickets. It was a human being!

But the fat junior sat tight, without sound or motion. Possibly it was one of the native or Italian workers, who had gone into the wood. But Bunter wanted to be sure. It seemed to him that there was something stealthy in the way the unseen man was stepping lightly, making only a faint rustle as he brushed foliage from his way. Whoever he was, he passed within four or five feet of Billy Bunter, totally unaware that he was there.

The rustle ceased.

But the man was not gone. He had only stopped. From the sound he had made, Bunter knew that he had stopped to the edge of the wood, and was looking out from the trees, across the open spaces of the plantation. He was still within a few yards of Bunter. From a distance, echoing, came a shout from one of the juniors.

"Bunter! You ass, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter was less likely than ever to reply, with that unknown figure standing so near him. Who was it? Why was the unseen man standing there, so still and silent, watching the plantation and the distant house?

Bunter knew that Brazil was as safe as Europe, so long as a traveller kept to the beaten tracks. But the Valentine fazenda was far off beaten tracks. It was deep in the back country of Brazil, more than a hundred miles from the nearest railroad point. Only the waterway of the Rexo river made it possible for cultivation to be carried on there; all its communication with the outer world was by water, as in the greater part of the vast interior of Brazil.

And on the boundless campos, in the tangled forests, there were outlaws and outcasts—lattered and desperate men, who counted life very cheap—many of them more savage than the native Indians. Bunter had heard, since he had been in Brazil, of the "canga-ceiros," and he did not want to see one of them at close quarters—very much indeed, he didn't!

But as the minutes passed, the fat junior stirred at last, rising very cautiously to his feet and peering through the lianas. He wanted to know, but he was very careful not to reveal his presence.

Through an opening of the thick vines and creepers he had a back view of the man a few yards away. He saw a rather burly form, in leather trousers and boots, with a cotton shirt, and a vast hat. There was nothing alarming in that; but why was the man standing there, watching, in dead silence?

As Bunter blinked at that back view the watching man moved a little, to look across the sunlit plain beyond the trees, and Bunter had a glimpse, for a second, of his profile.

His fat heart jumped.

That glimpse showed him a dark, hard face, a beaky nose, and a pointed black beard. It was a face Bunter knew—the face of O Lobo—the Wolf!

The fat junior shrank back into deep cover.

During the week or more that the Greyfriars fellows had been at the fazenda they had seen nothing of O Lobo, the man who had tracked

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them from England to Brazil. Peter Valentino had had the rascal hunted for, but he had disappeared, and it was concluded that he had sought safety in flight. No doubt he had done so, but evidently he had not gone for good, for here he was, only a few yards from Bunter!

"Oh lor'!" breathed the fat Owl inaudibly.

He could guess now why the man was watching. Skulking in the forest, he had heard the calling voices of the juniors, seeking for Bunter. He dared not venture out into the sunshine, in the open, lest he should be seen, but if one of the juniors strayed into the wood the watchful bandit was ready for him. That Bunter was there, clearly he had no suspicion. But he had only to change his position a few yards, which he might do at any moment, to stumble on the quaking, fat Owl.

"Bunter!"

It was Harry Wharton's voice, quite near.

Bunter trembled.

A faint rustle told him that the bandit of the Rexo was backing a little deeper into the trees, into deeper cover. That looked as if he saw the captain of the Greyfriars Remove approaching. If he came on Bunter—

Shaking in every fat limb, Bunter crept to the back of the immense tree. The great trunk was between him and the bandit now.

But if O Lobo came round the tree, as was quite likely, if he sought deeper cover, Bunter knew that his number was up. The fat junior did not remain there. The vast trunk was easy to climb—it was like a slanting wall of bark. Had it been difficult, Bunter would have essayed to climb it, in his terror. But it was easy, and he clambered up swiftly into the huge branches that spread like a roof for forty feet round the trunk.

He heard a rustle below.

Had the bandit heard him? It was probable; but, on the other hand, it was most likely that O Lobo would attribute a rustle in the thickets to some wandering animal—a monkey or a peccary. Billy Bunter crawled out on a great branch, so thick that it was wide enough to hide even the ample figure of the fat Owl of the Remove. Lying on the branch, he blinked down through the masses of foliage through his spectacles.

Almost directly below him was the crown of an immense grass-hat—on the head of the Wolf! O Lobo was behind the tree now, standing almost on the very spot that Bunter had squatted.

The fat Owl was deeply thankful that he had got clear in time. He watched, almost in agony, to see whether the huge hat tilted for the bandit to look up. The branch was not more than five or six feet over the crown of the hat. If Bunter had swung by his hands, he could have kicked O Lobo's hat off! With the bandit so close, he dared not move again. But to his unspeakable relief O Lobo did not look up.

He was watching through the creepers intently. The fat Owl, over his head, heard the bandit draw a hissing breath. There was a rustle—someone was coming into the wood.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Enemy's Grip!

"THE fat ass!"

"The blithering idiot!"

"The terrific duffer!"

"We've got to find him!"

said the captain of the Remove. "The unspeakable ass will land in some

trouble if we leave him to wander. It's pretty clear that he went into the wood!"

"Then he's lost by this time!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Perhaps a night out will do him good, and teach him a little sense."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Bunter can't be taught sense—and we can't let him have a night out. Scatter along the wood, and kick him as soon as you spot him. As soon as we hear him yell, we shall know he's found."

"Good egg!"

The Famous Five and Jim Valentine scattered along the edge of the forest.

On the side towards the plantation the forest had been cut clean. The vast mass of greenery rose like a wall. The great trunks, mingled with smaller trunks and wiry tangled creepers, looked impenetrable, but at close view there were many openings.

It was easy enough to enter, but it was not so easy to get out again for anyone inexperienced in Brazilian forests. Bunter had been prudent in not going deep in. For even at only a dozen yards from the open, it would have been quite easy to lose oneself in the forest, the view on all sides being thickly barred; and a fellow once out of sight of the open, might have gone wandering in the wrong direction—and

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might never have found his way out again. That was what the juniors were afraid might happen to Bunter if he was not found in time.

It was not, as the fat Owl supposed, with hostile intentions that they were hunting for him—though undoubtedly they intended to kick him, when found, for having given them so much trouble. But immediately they heard from some of the fazenda hands that the fat junior had scuttled into the forest, they realised that he had to be found without delay.

Whether he was within the sound of calling voices or not, they had, of course, no means of telling. In a mingled state of anxiety and exasperation, they scattered to hunt for the fat Owl along the wood.

A red macaw scuttling from a tree drew Wharton's eyes, and concluding that something had disturbed the bird, he approached the spot. He shouted Bunter's name as he came, receiving no reply, and he stopped under the great branches of the gigantic tree on the edge of the forest, and shouted again.

"Bunter! You fat ass! You blithering bloater! Bunter!"

His call came clearly to the ears of the fat junior, hunched on the branch on the other side of the great tree.

Bunter made no sound. He dared not, for his fat life, with the bandit standing below him. But Bunter knew now whom O Lobo was watching through the creepers. Harry Wharton, utterly unconscious of his enemy's presence, was walking fairly into his hands!

It came into Bunter's fat mind to shout a warning. But he dared not draw O Lobo's attention to himself.

"Bunter!" shouted Harry. "Answer if you can hear me, you piffing porpoise! You'll get lost, you howling ass! Do you hear?"

He listened for a reply. He heard no reply—but there came a rustling sound from round the vast trunk.

A rustle in the wood did not alarm Harry, as it had alarmed Bunter. He suspected at once that Bunter was there, and that he was moving farther off. Immediately the captain of the Remove came scrambling through the lianas hanging from the branches round the tree—little dreaming of the trap into which he was falling.

Bunter, above, listened to his movements in an anguish of terror.

Evidently O Lobo, understanding that Wharton was in search of someone he believed to be at hand in the wood, had deliberately caused that rustle, to draw the unsuspecting schoolboy.

The ruse was perfectly successful, for Wharton, with hardly a doubt that Bunter was there, scrambled, and plunged through the creepers round the great trunk; and, as he parted a mass of lianas, he came into sudden contact with a lurking figure.

"Bunter, you ass—"

He broke off. It was not Bunter. A hand that fastened like a steel vice gripped his shoulder, two jolly eyes glittered at him, and there was a flash of bare steel in the dusk of the greenery. Wharton, catching his breath, felt a keen point touch his neck.

"Cal-a-se vossa merco!" came the hissing voice of the Rexo bandit. "Be silent, little senhor. One call to your friends, and it is your dead body that they will find when they seek!"

Wharton panted.

"O Lobo!" he breathed.

He stared blankly at the bandit. In the days on the fazenda, he had almost forgotten the existence of the Wolf of Brazil.

He stood quivering.

The steely grip on him was far beyond his strength to unloose, sturdy as he was. And the knife was at his neck.

He did not need O Lobo's words to tell him that his life hung on a thread. The look in the glittering black eyes was enough. One thrust of the "facaon" in the swarthy hand, and it was the end of all things for the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

He quivered, his heart jumping in great throbs. But his teeth came together hard, and he kept cool.

"You!" he muttered.

O Lobo, gripping him, listened. From the distance came a shout in Jim Valentine's voice.

"Bunter!"

O Lobo breathed hard.

"Hope, little senhor, that your friends will not come this way!" he whispered. "If they come, they will not find me—they will find you, as dead as Vasco de Gama! Silence!"

At the sound of Jim's shout, Wharton felt, for a moment, hope.

But it died away at the bandit's fierce whisper. If his friends came they would not find him living. It was almost a relief to hear Jim's voice again, fainter and farther off.

"Bom!" breathed O Lobo. He listened like the wolf he was. But there was no sound at hand. "This is my chance, little senhor! Did you believe that I was gone?"

Wharton nodded, without speaking. With that vice-like grip on him, with the knife at his neck, he was helpless;

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his life was O Lobo's, to spare or to take. But he was cool, with a tense coolness, waiting, watching, hoping for a chance. His friends could not help him, but he hoped yet to help himself.

What the ruffian's intention was, he could not begin to guess. After his previous experiences of O Lobo, on the way out from England, at Lisbon, and at Tenerife, and on the journey up-country from Rio de Janeiro, he would have expected instant death at the bandit's hands. But that, it seemed, was not the miscreant's immediate intention.

"Espere!" muttered O Lobo. "Wait! When they are gone, we shall go, little senhor. I have a canoe on the Rexo, far from here. But wait!" He grinned, as he whispered. "I have been watching for days and nights for a chance, and now—Corpo de Deus!—it has come! Os diamantes! Has the fazendeiro told you of the diamonds?"

"Mr. Valentine has told me nothing of his own affairs," answered Harry Wharton quietly. "Why should he?"

"But you know!" grinned O Lobo. "You know that the Senhor Valentine made a discovery of diamonds in the Montanha Fria."

The Montanha Fria—Cold Mountain—could be seen from the windows of Boa Vista, far away across the forests to the west. It was a barren mountain, many long miles from the fazenda. Harry Wharton & Co. were aware that Jim's uncle had discovered diamonds somewhere along the Rio Rexo, but they were not aware of the locality.

"Did you not know?" snarled O Lobo. "I knew—Nossa senhora! Well I knew! Sim, sim! And I knew that the Senhor sent his manager, Joao Frulo, to Inghilterra, with a letter to bring friends here—I have many ways of getting information, little senhor! I did not suit me to have a crowd of English in this place, to tell tales of what might happen! Nao!"

Wharton's lips curled contemptuously.

O Lobo had spied on the planter, perhaps with assistance from some of the crowds of natives employed on the fazenda. But his cunning had overreached itself.

Apparently he had concluded when Joao Frulo was despatched with the letter to England, that it was in connection with Peter Valentine's discovery of diamonds.

It had not occurred to his dark, suspicious mind, that that letter was merely an invitation from Jim Valentine, to his old friends at school, to ask them to join him for a holiday in Brazil.

The juniors would, in fact, have heard nothing of the diamonds, had they not encountered O Lobo: it was from the Wolf himself that they had heard of Peter's discovery.

The bandit had followed Joao Frulo across the ocean, attempting to intercept the letter. He had failed: and he had tracked the Greyfriars party back to Brazil—doubtless surprised when he found that the party consisted of schoolboys, but nevertheless determined to keep them away from Boa Vista, if he could.

On the lonely upper wastes of the Rio Rexo, many a dark deed could be done, no word of which would reach the outer world. But with a crowd of English visitors on the spot, it was a different proposition.

Likely enough, the Wolf might have gathered a numerous crew of savage outcasts, and attacked the fazenda, and massacred Peter and Jim Valentine. Such deeds were not unknown on the

borders of the untrodden "sertao" of Brazil.

But a numerous party staying with the planter and his nephew, made such a desperate plan difficult, if not impossible. If that ferocious scheme had been in O Lobo's savage mind, he seemed to have abandoned it.

The bandit was listening again, his dusky ears pricked like an animal. Faint in the distance, came a shout—too faint and far for the voice to be recognised. The juniors were still seeking Bunter, along the wood—but nowhere near the spot where Harry Wharton stood in the grip of his enemy.

"Espere!" muttered O Lobo. "They are seeking the fat one, is it not so? When they come to seek you, little senhor, they will not find you. This night, you will be far away—with me!" He showed his gleaming white teeth, through the black beard, in a snarling grin. "My canoe waits—and in the sertao, who will find you?"

"What do you mean?" muttered Wharton. "Why?"

"What will the Senhor Valentine give in ransom for the life of his guest?" grinned O Lobo.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

He understood now—understood why the murderous knife was withheld. The bandit had striven hard to keep the Greyfriars party away from the fazenda, and he had failed. Now he had changed his plans. If their presence prevented him from carrying out one scheme, it helped him in carrying out another—the one he had now formed.

"You see?" grinned O Lobo. "Sim! Yes! With you in my hands—you or another, I care not—I shall make terms with the English senhor! You see? Os diamantes—I have sworn that they shall be mine! It was an ill day for you, little senhor, when the lure of the diamonds drew you to Brazil."

"You fool and rascal!" muttered Wharton. "I never knew anything about the diamonds—it was not for that we came!"

O Lobo shrugged his shoulders.

"True or false, it matters little," he said. "Para mim e tudo o mesmo! You come where you are not wanted, little senhor, and you and your friends are in the way: and you take the consequence! Did I not warn you, at Lisbon, to turn back—again at Tenerife! Now it is too late! Below on the Rexo my canoe waits—we go through the forest, senhor!"

Harry Wharton drew a deep, hard breath. The bandit's eyes blazed, and the knife touched the schoolboy's throat.

"You or another!" he muttered. "Give me trouble, and I leave you here for the peccaries—and watch for another! Tome cuidado—take care!"

"I am in your hands," muttered Harry. "But—"

"Bastante—enough! Venha!"

The bandit sheathed his knife, closed his grip yet harder on Wharton's shoulder, and drew him away. As he made the first step, to lead his prisoner into the dark depths of the forest, something large and round and heavy hurtled through the air from the branch above. It crashed on the head of the Brazilian bandit, and stretched him half-stunned on the earth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bites for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER had not intended it.

Stretched on the thick branch, over the bandit's head, the fat Owl of the Remove clung on, only

hoping that O Lobo would not look up and see him there.

No doubt he was concerned for Harry Wharton, a prisoner in the clutch of the desperado. But he was much more concerned for his fat self.

Indeed, it did not even occur to his fat mind that it was possible to help the bandit's prisoner. Certainly he would have been of no use in a struggle: and O Lobo was armed, and would have used his knife without hesitation or scruple. Bunter only thought of remaining unseen till the bandit went, and he longed to see him go.

He clung and huddled silent on the thick branch—but it was not easy to keep still, or easy to keep silent, after he had been there a few minutes. For Billy Bunter was not the only climber in that tree!

Like many of the trees in the South American forests, it was a harbour of ants. Ants swarmed on the gnarled wood: and in a few minutes they were swarming on Bunter.

Like the other tropical insects, they seemed to find the fat Owl to their taste. At the first nip, Billy Bunter wriggled, and then came another nip, and another and another! And then dozens, if not hundreds!

Bunter had not counted on that. He had clambered into the tree as a refuge from danger, never dreaming that he was disturbing a whole population there. The ants, certainly, were better than the bandit: but they were awful—fearful—horrible! They crawled over Bunter in battalions, in whole armies. They nipped, and nipped, and nipped.

They were bigger and fiercer than the ants of his native land—had enough, if a fellow got them about him! And they were numberless.

Bunter wriggled. He tried to still his wriggling, fearful of O Lobo catching a sound or a movement in the tree overhead.

He would have yelled, and howled, had he dared make a sound. He dared not—but he had to shut his teeth hard to keep back his howls.

It was a fearful ordeal. Bunter simply could not keep still—he could hardly keep silent. He longed for the bandit to disappear, so that he could scramble down from the nest of tiny enemies. But the bandit, waiting till he was sure that none of the other juniors were at hand, did not go. Ten minutes of it made Bunter almost frantic.

In spite of the danger of being spotted from below, he released one fat hand, to rub bitten places, and brush off eager biters. Had O Lobo glanced up, he must have seen him.

But the bandit, never dreaming that anyone was hidden in the foliage overhead, did not glance up, and if he heard a brushing in the twigs and leaves, took it for granted that it was made by monkey or parrot, without giving it any attention.

Bunter rubbed, and brushed, and wriggled and suppressed agonised squeaks; almost dizzy with the pain of innumerable bites, and the horrible feeling of countless insects crawling over him. Three or four savage nips, coming together, made him wriggle so wildly, that he slipped off the branch. He had been in danger of it several times, and suddenly it happened.

Forgetting even the biting ants, as he slipped off, the fat junior made a frantic clutch to save himself.

His fat hand grasped twigs, that broke in his grasp, and he shot downward from the branch.

A few moments more, and O Lobo would no longer have been beneath him. But Bunter fell before the bandit had left the spot.



As the canoe drifted under the drooping branch, Bunter stood up and clutched. His fat hands closed on the branch and the canoe rocked away. "Urrgh!" gasped Bunter. Clutching desperately, he struggled and scrambled, gasping and gurgling wildly for breath.

The high crown of the great grass-hat was directly beneath Bunter, as he shot downward: and the fat junior landed fairly on it, smushing in the high crown, and almost smushing the head it covered.

O Lobo crumpled up, under that sudden stunning shock, like a concertina.

What had happened, he had not the faintest idea. He sprawled on the ground, half-stunned, and Billy Bunter sprawled over his face, gasping.

Harry Wharton was dragged half-over by the grip on his shoulder, as the bandit fell: but the fingers were relaxing, and he wrenched himself loose.

He jumped clear, panting, as astonished by the sudden and amazing occurrence, as O Lobo himself.

The next instant he recognised the fat figure that sprawled over the bandit.

"Bunter!" he panted.

"Ow! Help!" shrieked Bunter.

Wharton jumped at him, grasped him, and dragged him up. Bunter was blind and helpless with confusion and terror: but Wharton kept his wits. O Lobo, for the moment, was knocked out: but he was not likely to remain so for many moments. The captain of the Remove wrenched Bunter to his feet. The fat junior scrambled up, planting a foot on a dark-bearded face as he did so.

"Quick!" panted Wharton.

"Yow-ow! I say—ow!"

"Quick!"

Wharton dragged him away by main force.

Bunter, with Wharton's grip on his collar, tumbled headlong after the captain of the Remove, as he tore away round the great tree.

To get out of the timber, to get into the open, was Harry's one thought, before the bandit could reach him again. He had only seconds, but the distance was only a few yards.

As he plunged madly through the hanging creepers and the tangled undergrowth, dragging Bunter, O Lobo began to scramble up. He was dazed from the shock, and even yet did not realise what had happened. But the Wolf of Brazil was swift to pull himself together.

He scrambled to his feet, whipping his knife from its sheath, and plunged through the lianas after Wharton.

The creepers swayed and tore behind the breathless junior. He knew that his enemy was close behind him. He could almost feel the knife in his shoulders. Madly he tore on, and burst from the edge of the timber into the open, brilliant sunshine.

"Run!" he panted.

Bunter would have fallen, helplessly, but for Wharton's grasp. That grasp kept him on his feet, and he ran blindly, with the captain of the Remove dragging at him. Once in the open it was easy going.

But behind him Wharton heard the patter of swift feet.

There was a chance that the bandit would not venture into the open—it seemed, indeed, the juniors' only chance. But the desperate ruffian burst from the trees in pursuit; and Wharton knew that he was close—that he could not escape. Unless help came, it was the finish for him.

He released Bunter, who sagged over and rolled helplessly on the ground, and spun round desperately to face the danger.

He was already a dozen yards from the nearest trees; but O Lobo was crossing that space with swift bounds, coming straight at him, the knife flashing in his hand, his black eyes gleaming murder over the knife.

It was useless to run—and he had no weapon. With despair in his heart,

Wharton faced him. He had no time to give even one glance round to see whether anyone was in sight. With clenched hands—useless enough against the long, gleaming "facaon" in the bandit's grasp—he faced the wretch rushing down on him, while Bunter gasped and whimpered at his feet.

A shout rang through the hot air. There was a sound of running feet.

Sharp and clear, a glad sound to Wharton's ears in that moment of peril and threatening death, came the crack of a pistol.

He had been seen—his friends were coming—and he knew that it was Jim Valentine's automatic that barked; none of the Greyfriars fellows was armed.

O Lobo was almost upon him—but at the crack of the shot, the bandit's spring was suddenly cut short. He stopped, panting, and glaring like a wild beast; then, as another shot rang, he made a backward leap.

In a split second he vanished from Wharton's starting eyes, into the wall of greenery he had left a few moments before. Lianas fell in a thick screen behind him as he disappeared.

"Oh!" panted Wharton. "Oh, Heaven!" He stood unsteadily, almost dizzy from his fearfully narrow escape.

Jim Valentine was at his side the next moment, his face set, the automatic in his hand. He passed Wharton, dashing into the trees. Twice, from the forest, sounded the sharp bark of the automatic. From various directions, the rest of the Co. came running—drawn to the spot by the sound of firing.

Billy Bunter sat up.

He blinked round him dizzily, spluttering for breath. Bob Cherry reached the spot, running like a deer.

"What—" he exclaimed.

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"O Lobo!" panted Wharton.
"That villain!"

Johnny Bull, Nugent, and the nabob came up breathlessly. Billy Bunter staggered to his feet, wriggling wildly. The danger was over, and Bunter was thinking of the ants. The ants were thinking of Bunter. His clothes were swarmed with those small but deadly foes, and he wriggled, and writhed, and squeaked, and squealed.

Jim Valentine came out of the trees, his brow black. His look told the juniors that O Lobo had escaped; but they hardly needed telling. Once in the thick forest, the bandit disappeared from sight, and searching for him would have been like searching for a needle in a haystack.

"He's gone!" muttered Jim. "He was not hit—he's gone! You're not hurt, Wharton?"

"No!" panted Harry. "But if you hadn't come up—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, wriggling wildly. "Ow! Wow!"

"I never knew that villain was hanging about the fazenda!" said Jim. "He must have been watching for a chance. I saw you running out of the trees—"

"He had me!" breathed Wharton. "I was looking for Bunter, and ran into him. Bunter was in the tree, and fell on him."

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Bunter.

"Is Bunter hurt? What—?"

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Ants!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm smothered with 'em! They're biting me all over! Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Oh lor'! I say, you fellows, I'm being bitten to pieces! Wow!"

The juniors stared at Bunter. He seemed to be suffering from a severe attack of St. Vitus'! He fairly danced.

"Ants!" repeated Wharton.

"Ow! That filthy tree was swarming with them!" howled Bunter. "They crawled all over me—they're biting me! Biting me all over! Oh crikey! I fell out of that beastly tree—"

"Lucky you did!" gasped Wharton. "If the ants made you take that tumble, I'm much obliged to the ants!"

"Ow! Beast! I'm bitten! Ow!"

Bunter jumped convulsively. "I say, you fellows— Oooooogh! Ow! Wow!"

"Better get back to the house and tell Peter, you fellows," said Jim Valentine. "I'll look after Bunter! Come on, Bunter, old man!" He caught the howling fat junior by the arm, and rushed him away towards the house.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed. As they went, they cast many backward glances at the wall of green forest. Somewhere in the depths of the tropical forest lurked their deadly enemy—defeated, but, as they knew only too well, desperate and determined, and still to be reckoned with.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Invalid!

PETER VALENTINE was on the veranda when the chums of the Remove came out to breakfast the next morning. Black servants were laying the breakfast on the veranda, where the planter and his guests had most of their meals.

Billy Bunter was not up yet. Billy Bunter was ill—or, at all events, he claimed to be ill.

Certainly he had been very severely bitten. Hundreds of ants had taken samples of Bunter. But a native ointment had been rubbed all over the fat junior, to soothe the irritation, and by morning Bunter was little the worse for his painful experience.

Bunter, however, was not the fellow for a quick recovery. He chose to be ill—and nobody chose to say him nay. So Bunter was ill, and he was going to stay in bed, and breakfast in bed, and assume to be a great sufferer. Which, as it enabled the rest of the party to breakfast without his fascinating company, met with general approval.

Peter was not alone in the veranda when the juniors came out in the early freshness of the morning.

A man was standing there to whom the young planter was talking in Portuguese, mingled with some sentences in some Indian dialect. Harry Wharton &

Co. looked at the stranger with some interest.

He was an Indian. They had seen a good many Indians since arriving at Boa Vista. But this man was rather different from any they had seen before.

He was tall, darkly red-bronze in complexion, with a stern, impassive face, and black eyes that looked as keen as an eagle's. He was not dressed like an Indian of the forest and the campo, whose clothing, indeed, was chiefly conspicuous by its absence. He wore leather trousers tucked into mosquito boots, a shirt that had once been khaki, and an immense hat of plaited grass—the latter now held in a bronze hand as he stood talking to the planter. On his dark cheeks two circles had been cut long years ago. They gave the Indian a strange appearance of having an extra pair of eyes. Which the juniors could guess was some tribal mark.

"Conto de reis!" the planter was saying, and the Indian bowed gravely.

The juniors knew that that term implied a thousand milreis. A thousand milreis was a large sum among the natives of Brazil. In English money it varied according to the exchange—and they had already learned that there was an unofficial exchange on more liberal lines than the official one fixed by the Government. But it was, roughly and more or less, about twenty pounds.

"Sim, senhor!" said the Indian, in good Portuguese.

Peter Valentine glanced round at the juniors, and nodded and smiled. The Indian's dark eyes turned on them gravely.

"This is Chico, my boys," said Peter. "Chico o cacador—Chico, the hunter—well known from the Parana to the Araguaya. You are looking at a hunter who has killed scores of jaguars in their native haunts."

The juniors looked at the Redskin with great interest.

"Adeus!" added the planter to the Indian; and Chico made a bow, over his immense hat, put the latter on his head, and left the veranda.

"A hunter?" asked Harry, his glance following the tall, active, supple figure of the Redskin, as it crossed the fazenda towards the forest.

"Yes, a Caraya Indian," answered Peter. "A hunter and guide by trade. Sometimes he guides hunting-parties from Rio. He killed off the jaguars in this district when I first made a clearing for a plantation. He has often hunted for me—now he is hunting again, a brute more dangerous than a jaguar."

A grim smile flickered over the planter's lean, bronzed face.

"O Lobo will not find it safe to lurk near the fazenda, once Chico is on his trail!" he added.

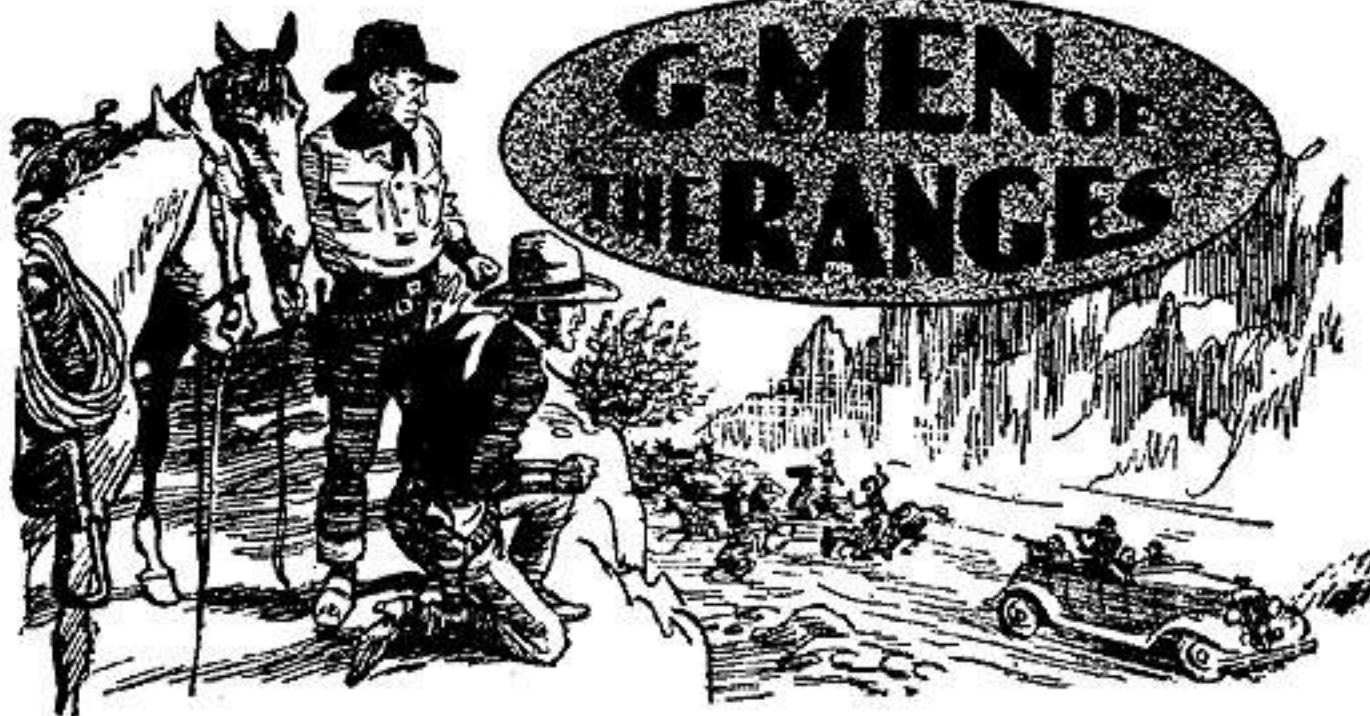
"Oh!" exclaimed Bob. "You're sending him to look for that brute?"

Peter Valentine nodded.

"There is little law, up-country here," he said. "O Lobo has snapped his fingers at it, such as it is, for years. In Rio, or San Paulo, he would be seized at once—but on the Rexo he swaggers a free man, though he is known to have half a dozen murders to his credit. But I do not think he will threaten your safety again, while you are here."

The juniors understood now the mention of the "conto de reis." The cacador was to receive a reward of a thousand milreis for hunting down O Lobo.

Peter gave them no further particulars; but they had a suspicion that that reward was to be paid for the Wolf,



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alive or dead. It was not likely, indeed, that so savage and desperate a ruffian would be taken alive.

After breakfast, the chums of Greyfriars walked down to the landing-place on the Rexo, to meet a boat coming up the river. On that boat Mr. Joao Frulo was returning to the fazenda.

They had not seen Mr. Frulo, who had brought them out from England, since leaving Rio, and they were glad to see the effusive, good-tempered, copper-complexioned gentleman again. Bob Cherry gave Bunter a call before they started.

Bunter was in bed, sitting up, and dealing with an extensive breakfast, brought in by one of the black servants.

The Famous Five slept in hammocks, to which they had very soon become used; but Bunter preferred a bed, and had a bed. The fat Owl of the Remove never hesitated in making his wishes known, and hospitality at Boa Vista was unlimited.

"Coming, old fat man?" asked Bob. Bunter blinked at him.

"I'm ill!" he answered, with dignity.

Bob grinned. The tray on Bunter's knees was loaded with foodstuffs, and the load was being reduced at considerable speed. If Bunter was ill, his illness did not seem to have affected his appetite.

"Frulo's coming back to-day," said Bob. "You remember old Frulo, that we left behind at Rio—"

"Blow him!" said Bunter. "I don't want to see him! He was cheeky to me on the steamer! I've advised Mr. Valentine to sack him."

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Bob. "Yah!"

"What did Peter say?"

"He didn't say anything," answered Bunter. "I think he must be a bit deaf. He just looked at me and then walked away without answering."

"I suppose he can't smack your silly head for your impudence, as you're a guest here!" assented Bob. "But you shouldn't keep on asking for it, Fatty. Look here, turn out of bed, and come along, you fat slacker!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not turn out, and Bob rejoined his friends, and they went down to the river with Jim Valentine.

Billy Bunter remained in bed, and having parked a breakfast that made the eyes of Domingo, the black servant, roll in his head with astonishment, he took another nap.

It was a couple of hours later that the fat Owl turned out. He had almost made up his mind to be ill all day, and stay in bed. But he did not receive the sympathetic visits that an invalid had a natural right to expect, and Bunter was a gregarious animal; he was tired of his own company, fascinating as it was.

So he turned out and rolled into the veranda, which he found vacant. He expressed his feelings in a scornful snort.

It was just like those beasts—to go out and leave Bunter on his own! Ill as he was, they seemed to have forgotten his fat existence.

He leaned on the rail and blinked through his big spectacles across the sunlit fazenda. Far in the distance he could see the landing-stage on the Rexo, where black men were loading a boat to send down the river.

In another direction, he had a

glimpse of the juniors, in company with Mr. Frulo, in the coffee-fields.

He gave another snort.

Harry Wharton & Co. took a good deal of interest in the work of the plantation, and liked to learn about it. It did not interest Billy Bunter in the very least. He was not going to join the party if that old ass Frulo was jawing to them about coffee-planting, and hoeing and weeding, and pruning, and drying the coffee in the "terreiro," or coffee-barn, and husking the beans, and the rest of it. A fellow might as well have been listening to instruction from Mr. Quelch, in the Form-room at Greyfriars!

Bunter went for a walk on his own.

Half-way between the house and the river was a shady grove of trees. Under one of the shady trees a hammock was slung from a branch.

Bunter's walk extended as far as that hammock!

Having walked a couple of hundred yards, Bunter was tired. He clambered into the hammock for a rest. Sitting there, he disposed of a couple of dozen Brazil nuts, which he had thoughtfully stacked in his pockets

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Having disposed of the nuts, he extended his fat person in the hammock and went to sleep.

Half an hour later, Harry Wharton & Co., coming back to the house by way of the grove, heard a familiar sound—a sound familiar in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars!

Snore!

And they gathered round the hammock, and gazed at the fat youth therein—Bunter, extended on his back, his eyes shut and his mouth open, snoring away with an incessant whirr like the rumble of distant thunder.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not a Mosquito!

SNORE!

"Urrrrgh!" Bunter stirred in his sleep. Something was tickling his little fat nose.

For several minutes interrupted snores mingled with grunts and gurgles. Then Bunter awoke.

He grabbed at his fat nose with a fat paw.

"Urrgh! Those beastly mosquitoes!" grunted Bunter.

He waved a fat hand to wave away the insect enemy.

If it had been a mosquito, that mosquito was gone. Bunter settled down again, shut his eyes and opened his mouth, and snored.

There was a suppressed chuckle under the trees. Five juniors were there, looking round the trunks of the trees at the hammock that bulged with the fat figure of the slumbering Owl.

One of them—Bob Cherry—had a long stalk of pampas grass in his hand. He reached out and tickled Bunter's nose again with the tufted end.

Again the fat junior stirred, and mumbled and grumbled. The tickling tuft whisked away, as his eyes opened behind his big spectacles.

The juniors, suppressing their chuckles, backed behind the surrounding trees again. Bunter sat up in the hammock, snorting.

It swung to and fro as he did so, and he clutched hold, to keep from pitching out.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Wow! Where's that beastly mosquito? I'll smash it! Ow! Can't get a minute's rest in this putrid country! Blow it!"

He glared round for the mosquito.

There was not a single mosquito to be seen. Had there been any in that fragrant grove no doubt they would have been giving their attention to Bunter. But, as it happened, there weren't any on the spot.

Bunter blinked round for his tormentor in vain.

"Beasts!" grunted Bunter, unaware that the beasts to whom he referred were within hearing, and, in fact, only a few feet away. "Rotters! Leaving a fellow on his own when he's ill! After all I've done for them, too! Any decent chap would sit by a fellow when he was ill, and brush the insects off! Catch them doing it! Rotten lot!"

Bunter settled down again.

This time it was two or three minutes before his snore re-started after the interval.

But it re-started at last; and Bunter sank into slumber, and a happy dream of a spread in Smithy's study at Greyfriars.

That gorgeous vision was interrupted! Again came a tickling at Bunter's fat little nose, and again he woke—and again the tuft of pampas grass whisked away.

"Blow that mosquito!" roared Bunter. "Blow it! Bother it! I wish I was out of this rotten country! Urrgh!"

He sat up again, glaring round him through his big spectacles. Not a single mosquito was visible; there was no sound of buzzing. The fat junior glared in vain.

Blotted from sight behind the trees, the Famous Five waited for him to settle down. But Bunter did not settle down again this time.

He was tired of being woke up by that troublesome mosquito. He was going to squash that mosquito before he settled down again.

Sitting up in the hammock, the Owl of the Remove waited and watched for that mosquito to return, with a fat paw ready to smack the instant it re-appeared. His little round eyes glittered with wrath behind his big round spectacles.

Bob Cherry tiptoed behind the fat junior as he sat. He reached out again with the long stalk of pampas grass, and the tufted tip tickled the back of a fat neck.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

It seemed as if that wary and cunning mosquito knew that Bunter was

on the watch, and had attacked him in the rear. Billy Bunter spun round frantically to get at his enemy.

The hammock swung, and only a quick clutch at the rope saved the fat junior from rolling out. He sprawled and clutched and spluttered.

"Ow! Ooogh! Oh crikey! Woogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a sudden yell of laughter. Harry Wharton & Co. were unable to suppress their feelings any longer. They yelled.

Bunter righted himself again, and sat up in the hammock. He blinked at five laughing faces.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" roared Bunter. "I say, there's a beastly mosquito keeps on settling on me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter bitterly. "I dare say you think it's funny for a fellow to be bitten all over by mosquitoes when he's ill. A fellow can get malaria from mosquito bites."

"You won't get malaria from that mosquito bite, old fat man," chuckled Bob Cherry. "That mosquito was quite harmless."

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" snorted Bunter. "It was the biggest mosquito I've ever seen."

"Seen?" gasped Bob.

"Yes; a big black one, buzzing all over me. I think you fellows might squash it for me. It's here somewhere. It was on my nose at first, and then on the back of my neck. I nearly had it twice, but it got away."

"Oh crikey! Sure you saw it!"

"Yes; you fathead! A great big mosquito—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

Billy Bunter blinked at them wrathfully.

He could see nothing whatever to laugh at. He was not aware that the "mosquito" was in Bob Cherry's hand; and that it was a tuft of pampas grass. His statement that he had seen that mosquito made the juniors yell.

"Look here, you cackling idiots, I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you catch that mosquito for me?" bawled Bunter.

"That's all right!" gasped Bob. "I've caught it!"

"Oh, good! Have you squashed it?"

"Nunno; not exactly. Here it is." Bob Cherry held up the pampas grass. "Here's the jolly old mosquito that was tickling your boko, old fat bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the pampas grass. He blinked at the grinning faces surrounding the hammock. He realised, at long last, the true nature of the mosquito that had been troubling his repose.

"You—you—you beast!" he gasped.

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's wrath boiled over. He reached out, and made an infuriated smite at Bob's grinning countenance with a fat fist.

Bob Cherry backed away in time, and the fat fist swept a foot away from his nose. The hammock swung, and Bunter overbalanced.

He gave a breathless squeak as he rolled over the side; and Bob Cherry jumped forward again, to save him from the fall.

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Bunter's thrashing arms clutched at his neck, and fastened there. Bob staggered. Bunter, rolling out of the hammock, threw his whole weight on Bob, and hurled him backwards.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bob.

He crashed.

On him crashed Bunter.

Bob being underneath, Bunter's fall was broken. To judge by the agonised sounds from Bob Cherry, he was broken, too.

"Ow! Oh! Wow!" gasped Bunter. He sat up blindly, unconscious, for the moment, that it was Bob Cherry's face he was sitting on. "Ooogh! I say, you fellows—Ow!"

"Urrrrggh!" came in a muffled howl from Bob. "Gerroff! Urrrrggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrggh!"

Bunter, in the confusion of the moment, did not realise that it was Bob's features he was sitting on. Bob did. Bob realised it very clearly.

The Co., howling with laughter, rushed to drag Bunter off. The fat junior was rolled aside, disclosing Bob's face, crimson with wrath and suffocation.

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I'll smash that fat idiot! I—I'll spifficate him! I—I—" Bob staggered to his feet, gurgling for breath. "Where's that blithering idiot? I'm going to burst him all over South America!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Billy Bunter was already in motion. He forgot that he was tired, and forgot that he was ill as he sprinted for the house. The Famous Five followed him—four of them laughing, and one of them gurgling and gasping.

Fortunately for Bunter, Bob had recovered his breath, and his temper, by the time they got in.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

"YOU like?" asked Joao Frulo, his coppery face beaming with a cheery smile.

"Yes, rather!" answered the Famous Five, with one voice.

"Bom! You go along to a desembarcadouro," said Mr. Frulo. "Vinto minutos—yes."

Mr. Frulo lifted his immense hat with a bow, and walked away. The polite manager of the fazenda seldom did anything without lifting his hat and bowing.

There was a grunt from Billy Bunter.

"What's a desembarca? What's its name?"

"A desembarcadouro is a landing-place, fathead!" answered Bob Cherry.

"And what's a vinto minutos?"

"Twenty minutes."

"Well, I shan't be ready in twenty minutes," declared Bunter. "You can tell him to wait, or I jolly well shan't come!"

At which the Famous Five looked at William George Bunter very expressively.

"You're not coming, anyway," growled Johnny Bull. "We're going thirty miles down the river, putting up for the night at a place called Verde, and coming back to-morrow. You're too lazy and too slack to do anything of the kind."

Billy Bunter sat upright in his chair in the shady veranda.

"I'm coming," he said.

Thirty miles down the Rêxo on a hot afternoon did not appeal to Bunter. Putting up for the night in an up-country "aldeia," or village, appealed to him still less, for he could guess only too well what the accommodation would be like. For only one reason did Billy Bunter make up his fat mind that he was going. He was certain to be such a nuisance that the other fellows wanted him to stay behind. That was enough for Bunter.

"If you think you're going to leave me out—" he snorted.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Bunter!" said Harry impatiently. "You know you won't like it. You'll hate it. And it's not fair on Mr. Frulo, either. You can't be civil to him."

"Blow him!" said Bunter. "I'm coming!"

"No end of mosquitoes on the river," said Frank Nugent.

"Rats!"

"And alligators," said Johnny Bull.

"I'm not so much afraid of alligators as you fellows are," said Bunter calmly.

"A jaguar might jump into the boat," suggested Bob.

"All right; I'll look after you, if one does," said Bunter reassuringly.

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Yah!"

"You haven't had a nap yet," said Bob. "You parked six or seven lunches, one after another, and you haven't slept them off. Go to sleep, old fat man, and we'll wake you up when we come back to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter, in point of fact, was much more disposed to go to sleep than to go down the Rêxo in a "bataloa" loaded with produce, and unsheltered from the burning tropical sun. But he was not going to sleep. He made up his fat mind—he was going with the other fellows!

Bunter's fat mind being made up, the chums of the Remove resigned themselves to their fate. Bunter was coming!

Mr. Frulo, at the "desembarcadouro," was seeing to the preparations for the river trip. The bataloa—a clinker-built river-boat thirty-five feet long—was being loaded by negroes with the produce to be taken down the stream. It was going down with a current, with a couple of black oarsmen, and the kind-hearted Mr. Frulo directed a canvas awning to be put up over the stern, to shade his passengers from the sun.

As the juniors had twenty minutes to wait—and especially as a Brazilian twenty minutes was likely to last forty or fifty minutes—they remained in the shade of the veranda till it was time to go. Jim Valentine and his uncle were gone to a distant part of the plantation that afternoon, and the river trip with Mr. Frulo was arranged chiefly for the entertainment of the visitors. Harry Wharton & Co. were keen enough to see all they could of life in Brazil, during their stay with their old school pal at Boa Vista. Billy Bunter was not in the least keen, but he was very obstinate.

Leaning back in his deep cane chair, the fat Owl watched the juniors with suspicious eyes, through his big spectacles.

They were quite capable of walking off quietly and leaving him on his own; just because he was a worry, and because he couldn't be civil to that old ass Frulo! Bunter was going to watch it!

It was hot. It was drowy. Bunter was sleepy. Still, he could sleep on



"Senhor!" panted Chico. "Oh, senhor!" Billy Bunter stumbled forward and, almost blindly, hacked at the cord that fastened the Indian to a tree on the bank. There was a splash in the mud—the alligator was terribly close!

the bataloa—when he got there! He determined to keep awake for the next twenty minutes.

But a Gargantuan lunch, added to the drowsy heat of the tropical day, proved rather too much for Bunter. His eyes closed behind his spectacles.

He opened them again. They closed again. Then it occurred to Bunter that he could listen easily enough with his eyes shut. As soon as he heard the fellows move he would be warned that they were going, and would be able to frustrate their knavish tricks!

So Bunter listened, with his eyes shut!

About three minutes later a sound like the roll of distant thunder rumbled through Boa Vista. Bunter was asleep.

Bob Cherry glanced at him, grinning.

"Oh, listen to the band!" he murmured.

"The bandfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton looked at his watch.

"Nearly time to start!" he remarked.

"Step lightly!" Grinning, the juniors rose from their chairs, stepping lightly.

Really, it was not necessary to step lightly to avoid waking Billy Bunter when he was once safely in the embrace of Morpheus. But they were not taking risks. On their own, they were prepared to tolerate the troublesome fat Owl, but they agreed that it was not cricket to land him on Mr. Frulo.

So, like the Arabs who folded their tents, the Famous Five of Greyfriars stole silently away.

The steps of the veranda creaked as they went down. But that sound did not disturb Billy Bunter. Bob Cherry looked back, with a grinning face, from the top step. Bunter, fast asleep, snored.

"Safe as houses!" said Bob, as he followed his comrades; and, with a chuckle, they walked down the path through the coffee fields, to the Rexo.

Twenty minutes had elapsed when

they joined Mr. Frulo on the desembarcadouro. But, as they had expected, a good twenty minutes remained before the bataloa was ready to start. Hours count for little in Brazil, and minutes for nothing.

Waiting on the timber landing stage, the juniors glanced back at Boa Vista, half-expecting to see a fat figure come rolling in pursuit. But Bunter, once asleep, stayed asleep. The bataloa was ready at last, and the Famous Five went on board—crowding at the stern under the awning so thoughtfully provided by Mr. Frulo.

The two negro oarsmen were forward, half-hidden by stacked cargo. Mr. Frulo sat on a thwart, shaded by his immense hat, and smoked a black cigar, and his coppery face shone with good-humour and perspiration.

"The fat one, he did not go to come?" asked Mr. Frulo. "Bom!"

And the bataloa pushed off, and rolled down the sluggish current of the Rexo.

Until the white walls of Boa Vista disappeared across the coffee fields, the juniors looked back, but they saw nothing of Bunter. Bunter's snore was still rousing the echoes of the fazenda. It was probable that the fat Owl would put in two or three hours at the nasal solo.

No doubt Bunter would have done so, if his old enemies, the mosquitoes, had left him alone. But some of those disagreeable insects discovered him, and proceeded to give him attention.

Whereupon Billy Bunter woke. He swatted mosquitoes and blinked round him for the other fellows. Vacant chairs met his blink.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

He bounded up.

His inclination was to go to sleep again. Seldom did Billy Bunter resist his inclination. But this time he did. Those unspeakable beasts had left him behind. Bunter was not going to be left behind.

Snorting with wrath, he rolled across

to the steps and bundled down. With an unaccustomed speed, he cut down the path to the landing stage on the Rexo.

The bataloa was gone. Bunter had seen it there in the morning, in the process of loading. Now it was gone. They had started.

He blinked down the river with an infuriated blink. The bataloa was not in sight. It had, as a matter of fact, been gone nearly an hour.

Bunter breathed wrath.

There were several canoes tied up to the landing place. Bunter was aware that a loaded bataloa travelled very slowly, and that a canoe could travel very quickly if a fellow knew how to handle a paddle. His mind was quickly made up. The bataloa could not be very far ahead, and he could picture the faces of the beasts when he overtook them in a canoe!

One of the canoes had a double-bladed paddle lying in it. Bunter rolled into the canoe, picked up the paddle, shoved off, and started down the Rexo in pursuit. It was hot, and paddling was work—and Bunter hated work! But he was consoled by the thought of the expression on five faces when he should come whizzing up behind the bataloa.

But the fat junior was soon saved the trouble of paddling.

He had seen Indians and negroes paddling on the Rexo, and had not the slightest doubt that he could do it better than Indians or niggers. But there seemed to be something in it that Bunter had not mastered. The canoe zigzagged into the middle of the Rexo, and then the paddle—Bunter never knew how—slipped from his fat hands and slid out of his reach.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

There was no other paddle in the canoe. The current bore it onward. Bunter sat in it, in a state of dismay, and blinked at the banks gliding by.

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(Continued from page 13.)

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter and the Redskin!

"**O** H lor'!" said Billy Bunter. Boa Vista dropped out of sight astern. The canoe drifted slowly down-stream at the rate of the sluggish current of the Rexo. Bunter realised that, at this rate of progress, he would never overtake the bataloa.

Slowly as the bataloa travelled, it went faster than the current, with two brawny blacks pulling. Whether it was near or far, Bunter did not know, but it was certain that, wherever it was, it was drawing farther and farther away from the fat pursuer.

It did not take Bunter long to make up his mind to abandon the pursuit. Out of sight of the fazenda, he was only anxious to get ashore, and to get back. But getting ashore soon proved as difficult a matter as overtaking the bataloa.

The canoe was in midstream. It remained there, drifting. Every now and then some eddy drove it towards the bank, and Bunter watched for a chance of catching at a bush or a branch. But every time it whisked away again into the middle of the stream, and drifted onward.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter. It began to look as if he would have to follow the bataloa all the way to Verde, whether he wanted to or not. But thirty miles at his present rate of progress seemed likely to land him there in the middle of the night, if not next morning. Bunter was not looking for a night out.

He had to get ashore somehow. Already the sun was sinking in the west, glowing red and gold behind the summit of the Mantanha Fria. But, at last, the fat junior saw his chance.

Ahead of him, a vast mass of branches seemed to block the whole river. As he drew slowly nearer, Bunter saw that it was an abrupt curve of the Rexo, rolling round a jutting tongue of land. On the extremity of that spit grew a vast tree—one of the giants of the South American forests. It was a ceiba, well over a hundred feet high, with enormous branches that jutted out on all sides, and, on the side towards the river, almost spanned the water. Billy Bunter watched it hopefully as he drifted down to it.

The canoe was going to drift under the branches. One of them hung low; low enough for a fellow to catch hold, by standing up in the canoe. Under the stretching branch, the water shallowed to the bank ridges of yellow mud showing through it here and there.

Billy Bunter watched and waited. It looked easy enough to grab hold of that massive branch as he passed under it and hang on.

Then it would be easy to clamber on the branch, crawl along it, and get to firm ground. Luckily, it was on the

same side of the river as the fazenda. Once landed, the fat junior would only have to walk back to Boa Vista.

But his fat heart beat unpleasantly as the canoe drifted nearer and nearer to the great tree.

There was no help for it, however; and as the canoe at last drifted under the drooping branch, Bunter stood up and clutched.

The canoe rocked wildly under him as he did so. But his fat hands closed on the branch, which was within easy reach.

Under his whisking feet the canoe rocked away, and drifted on down the Rexo. Beneath him now was water and mud, especially mud.

"Urrrgh!" gasped Bunter.

He had a safe hold on the branch. But it was not so easy as he had supposed to clamber up on it.

Most fellows would have done so easily enough, but Billy Bunter had an unusual amount of weight to lift.

Clutching desperately, he struggled and scrambled, gasping and gurgling wildly for breath. If he dropped, it meant going shoulder deep in oozy mud and water and scrambling ashore in a horrid state. Desperately he strove, and at last—at long last—he got his arms over the bough and struggled on top of it.

"Oooogh!" panted Bunter.

He lay on the thick branch for several minutes, getting back his breath. Then he started crawling along it towards the parent trunk.

That was easier work.

He drew nearer and nearer to the huge trunk, from which numberless branches jutted over and round him. Beneath him the water shallowed more and more, closer to the bank, till it gave way entirely to a stretch of yellow mud.

Suddenly Bunter stopped crawling.

He heard a rustling sound in the thickets tangled at the back of the big ceiba. Something was stirring there.

Thoughts of jaguars, alligators, and of O Lobo rushed into the fat junior's mind. Something was there, stirring. What was it? Who was it?

Bunter, blinking in terror from the branch, saw a great mass of lianas stirring. He saw a dark hand emerge from the creepers, parting them to give place to the man as yet unseen.

He blinked at that dark hand in terror.

The lianas parted wider, and a face looked through—a red-bronze face, with strange circles cut on the cheekbones—the face of an Indian. The sharp black eyes glared at Bunter in astonishment. But to the terrified fat Owl it was a glare of ferocity.

He gave a yelp of horror, and slipped off the branch.

Splash!

"Yooop!"

The mud at that point was about a foot deep. It would have reached to Bunter's fat knees had he stood in it. Unfortunately, he sat in it.

Liquid mud surged and splashed round him.

The Indian, staring at him in great astonishment, pushed through the thickets and stepped into the shallows, grasping at Bunter.

"Yaroooh!" howled Bunter. "I—I say, keep off! I say, you beast, you lemme alone! I won't be scalped! Yarooooh!"

Unheeding, the Indian grasped the fat Owl's collar and jerked him to his feet. He drew him out of the mud, through the thickets, into an open space on the landward side of the ceiba.

Bunter struggled and kicked and howled as he was dragged. When the

Redman released him, he squatted on the grass, roaring.

"Ow! Morcy! Go away! Yaroooh! Help! Oh lor'!"

"Que ha?" exclaimed the Indian.

"Yow-ow-whoop! Gerroff! Beast! Help!"

"Que ha?" repeated the Redman.

It dawned on Billy Bunter that the Indian was speaking in Portuguese. It dawned on him, further, that the red-bronze face expressed, not ferocity, but utter astonishment, with a trace of amusement. And he remembered that Jim Valentine had told him that there were no "wild" Indians within some hundreds of miles of Boa Vista.

He realised that he was not going to be slain and scalped. The Indian was making reassuring gestures.

"Chico!" he said, tapping his chest to indicate that he was giving his own name. "Chico o cacador! Muito bem! Entende vossa merce?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He had not seen the Indian before, but he had heard the juniors speak of the Caraya hunter who had been dispatched to hunt for O Lobo. If this Indian was Chico, the fat junior evidently had nothing to fear. It was a friendly hand that had dragged him out of the mud of the Rexo—not the grip of a ferocious Redskin about to flourish a scalping-knife.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Chico!"

"Sim, sim. Chico!" said the Caraya, with a grin that wrinkled the circles cut on his cheekbones, and made them look more than ever like eyes.

"Oh, all right!" stuttered Bunter. He staggered to his feet. Chico was a friend, not a foe. And now that he understood it, Bunter was glad he had fallen in with him. "I say, thanks for pulling me out of that filthy mud! I say, I want to get back to the house!"

"Que quer vossa merce?"

"Oh, of course, you don't understand English!" grunted Bunter. "None of the silly idiots in this silly country seem to understand plain English! Lot of silly fools, if you ask me!"

"Nao entendo!" said Chico.

"Boa Vista!" said Bunter. "See? I want to get back to Boa Vista! Got that, blow you?"

The Indian's face lighted with comprehension. He did not understand the English—which, perhaps, was just as well—but the name of the fazenda was, of course, familiar to him. He understood what Bunter wanted.

"Boa Vista—sim!" he said. "Venha!"

Bunter knew that "venha" meant "come." Chico led the way through the thick and tangled forest, and the fat Owl rolled after him. Chico stopped in a narrow track that wound away among the trees. It was a forest path, though so faintly marked that Bunter would not have recognised it as a path had not the Caraya pointed it out to him.

"Por aqui," said Chico, pointing. "Em linha direita."

Bunter did not know that Chico was saying: "This way! Straight on!" But the Indian's gesture was enough. Thankful to find that he was on a path leading back to the fazenda, the fat junior rolled on his way. Chico stood gazing after him till Bunter disappeared from sight.

Then the Indian returned to the thicket by the bank of the Rexo, where he stopped, his eyes fixed on faint marks that showed in the earth.

It was a footprint, though so faint that it would have been visible only to an Indian's keen eyes.

Chico had been picking up a trail when Bunter's disaster in the canoe had drawn his attention to the fat junior.

Now, having disposed of Bunter, the Indian had returned to his task.

His dark eyes were glinting as he scanned that faint track; but suddenly he stiffened, like an animal at the tread of the hunter, and leaped up. But if he had heard a sound of alarm; it was too late; for even as the Caraya leaped to his feet, an iron ball shot through the air, a rope curled round the Red-skin, and he was dragged over, with a stunning shock, to the ground—caught in the "bola" flung by the hand of the man he was hunting—O Lobo, the Wolf of Brazil.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Tables Turned!

"SILLY ass!" growled Billy Bunter.

He came to a halt.

He blinked round him through his big spectacles with an angry, anxious, and uneasy blink.

"Fathead!" hissed Bunter. "Block-head!"

He was not, as might have been supposed, addressing those compliments to himself. They were addressed to the Caraya who had set him on his way.

Bunter had already lost his way. In that Brazilian forest that hot afternoon there certainly was a fathead. But his name was not Chico; his name was William George Bunter!

True, the track through the tropical forest was very dimly marked. To Chico or any other Indian it was as easy to read as an open book—easier, in fact, for of books the cacador knew nothing. To the white man's eye it was not so easy; and Bunter was afflicted with limited vision, and still more limited intelligence.

For a time Billy Bunter tramped hopefully on. The path, narrow and winding, passed between great trees, hung with lianas and Spaniards' beard, and the visibility was never more than a few yards. Bunter dragged down creepers, smashed twigs, and left a trail behind him that a blind man might have followed. But the path ahead of him was a different proposition. Halting at last, he blinked round him in despair.

Whether he was a mile, or two or three miles from the fazenda, he had no idea. Whether he had missed the forest path he could not be sure. But if he had not missed it, it was no longer plain enough for his eyes or his spectacles to read. He blinked about him in vain, and wondered dismally which of a dozen different openings among the great trunks he should take.

"Idiot!" hissed Bunter.

That ass, that fathead, that blockhead, that idiot of an Indian had told him this was the way home! For all Bunter knew he might already have turned his back on Boa Vista, and might be heading for the valley of the Amazon, or for Bolivia, or Paraguay.

Over the forest the sun sloped westward. Shadows were deepening, though the heat was still intense. Flies of all sorts and sizes were innumerable, displaying their usual fondness for Bunter's fat, perspiring face.

The fat Owl groaned.

Going on seemed a hopeless proposition. Going back did not seem much easier for he had forgotten the way he had come. If he could only get in touch with that ass and fathead of an Indian again he would jolly well make him guide him to the fazenda. But could he?

Bunter's luck was in. Turning back, to see if he could discover his own route, he spotted torn creepers, and

trampled grasses and ferns—unmistakable signs of his own passage.

With a gasp of relief he started on the back-trail.

It seemed to him that he had been panting for hours and hours through that suffocating forest, but his watch told him that it was not more than a quarter of an hour since he had parted with Chico.

He was finding the way back fairly easily. Obviously, he could not have covered much distance.

If only that ass, that fathead, of an Indian was still there, it would be all right. At any rate, he would sight the river again, and once he sighted that invaluable guide he would not lose it to sight. Sooner or later a canoe or a batavia would be bound to pass, and he would get a lift back to Boa Vista for a handful of milreis, even if he failed to find Chico.

Hot and tired, and in a fearfully bad temper, Billy Bunter retraced his steps, stopping every now and then to blink round for traces of his own passage, and make sure that he was not

wandering. Luckily, those traces were ample.

Through a slit in the thick greenery he suddenly had a gleam of light, and knew that it was a glimpse of the Rêxo, rolling in the sunset.

He lost sight of it again as he trudged on; but that glimpse of the river was encouraging. He knew that he was close now to the spot where he had parted from Chico.

Suddenly the fat junior came to a halt, with a quick thump of the heart. A sound came to his ears from the direction of the river, through the thick wood. It was a laugh.

A laugh, generally, would have been a reassuring sound. But the laugh that Bunter heard was so hideous that it sent a cold chill through him. It might have been the laugh of a hyena, so horrible did it sound to his fat ears. But he knew that it came from a human throat.

It did not come from Chico, he knew that. The Indian did not look like a man who laughed much, neither was he likely to utter that sound, full of
(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

"It's hard graft earning your living writing poems," says the Greyfriars Rhymester, "even though your subject may be a bloated aristocrat!" This week he introduces

PERCIVAL SPENCER PAGET,
the highly-connected youth of the Third Form.

(1)

So aristocratic this lad is
That I was afraid of rebuke
Because, as it happens, my dad is
Not even a duke!
No title we've managed to snaffle,
The luck seems determined to baffle
Our chance of a prize in a raffle,
For titles are won by a fluke!

(3)

Could I, a poor wretched non-starter,
Dare walk up to meet him, and speak?
For I'm not a Knight of the Garter,
Not even a Sheikh!
I did, though! I went to his study,
And cried: "Oh, Magnificent Buddy,
I'm Lord Bumbledoodle McMuddie,
The Grand Duke of Foozle and Freak!"



(5)

He told me to hop it, with vigour,
But I had discovered that I,
If not well-connected, was bigger
Than this little guy!
I thought this a state of attraction,
And took off my jacket for action.
"You'll give me," said I, "satisfaction,
Or I'll give you one in the eye!"



(6)

No chap could act prompter than he did,
The table was ready for tea,
To up-end the lot he proceeded,
It landed on me!
Pinned under the table, and roaring,
I struggled about on the flooring,
While Paget was calmly restoring
The unbroken crocks (there were three).



(7)

Preventing the tea from escaping,
By carefully fielding the pot,
He poured in my mouth, which was gaping,
The whole bally lot!
I gurgled and guggled and spluttered,
And Paget, without a word uttered,
Then plastered some toast, newly buttered,
Right over my face! Was it hot?



(8)

"Now if you'll talk calmly," he
chanted,
"With no threats of punching my
eye,
I'll give you whatever you wanted,
At least, I will try.
There's not much to tell you worth
knowing.
But still, if I must make a showing—
You don't mean to say that you're
going?
Well, well! Who'd have thought
it? Good-bye!"

sardonic ferocity, if he did laugh. Who—what was it?

Billy Bunter stood listening and trembling. He heard another sound—the sound of a voice—and recognised Chico's.

The Caraya was speaking in Portuguese, of which Bunter understood not a word. But his tones were of fierce and intense anger.

The laugh was repeated—that laugh of savage mockery and fierce derision. Bunter realised with a shock, that it sounded only a few yards from him. A great mass of hanging lianas screened him from the spot where the unseen man stood who laughed that horrible laugh.

With a chill of terror running through his fat limbs, the Owl of Greyfriars blinked through a slit in the thick lianas and saw what was passing beyond.

Chico, the Indian hunter, lay in the herbage, with a long, sinuous cord wound round and round him, binding arms and legs so that he could not stir a limb.

It was the cord of a "bola" that was bound on the Indian. Bunter could see an iron ball at both ends of it.

The hunter was a helpless prisoner. But there was no fear in the Indian's red-bronze face. His snarling lips, gritting teeth, and burning black eyes expressed only hate as he stared at the man who stood over him.

Billy Bunter felt his fat brain almost swim as he saw who that man was. Only the screen of lianas hid him from the fierce eyes of O Lobo!

He stood stock still. Two or three mosquitoes settled on his fat face, a tree spider dropped on his neck. Bunter did not heed them; he did not even know they were there. Petrified with terror, he blinked through the slit in the lianas at the Wolf of Brazil. The bandit was not ten feet away from him.

It was O Lobo who laughed; and now he laughed again, as the Indian stopped, breathless, after an angry outburst of fierce words. The ferocity in the bandit's evil face was blood-curdling to see.

It was several days since Peter Valentine had set the cacador on the trail of the Rexo bandit. Evidently O Lobo had become aware of the pursuit, and had, in his turn, hunted the hunter!

And it was the Wolf who had been successful. Caught by the whirling balls of the bola, and flung to the earth, the Caraya had fallen a helpless victim to the bandit. Now, with the cord knotted about him with a number of knots, the hunter lay helpless—at the bandit's mercy. That O Lobo did not intend to spare him was only too plain from his ferocious look. But he did not touch the knife in his belt.

For a long minute the bandit stood staring down at his captured enemy, while Bunter blinked in horror through the thick lianas.

Then O Lobo stooped and grasped the bound man by the shoulders.

He dragged him away through the herbage and trailing vines in the direction of the water, which murmured close at hand.

Bunter did not move, but his terrified eyes followed the bandit's movements. Near the great ceiba, on which Bunter had scrambled, the bandit left his victim lying, his feet sunk in mud, at the water's margin. Then he fastened a loose end of the rope to the tree.

Chico was not speaking now. The gust of rage had passed, and his bronze face was expressionless. Standing over

him, O Lobo spoke in Portuguese, and the hissing voice reached Bunter's ears. He could not understand the words, but he knew that the bravo was taunting his victim. For a full minute O Lobo taunted; the Indian's still face expressed nothing.

Then the bravo snapped off a branch from a tree and stepped farther out into the muddy shallows. To Bunter's amazement, he began stirring and thrusting in the mud.

What he was doing was a mystery to Bunter. It seemed to him that the bandit had taken leave of his senses.

Then suddenly he saw something rise from the mud. It was a hideous, scaly head, with little eyes that glinted. It was the head of an alligator. Bunter heard the snap of the jaws as the river reptile snapped at O Lobo, who jumped back, easily escaping.

The brute lumbered after him, wallowing in the mud. With a lithe spring, O Lobo leaped back to the spot where the Caraya lay bound.

Grinning down at the Caraya, with a flash of white teeth through his black beard, he pointed to the alligator, now crawling up the muddy bank.

The Indian lifted his head, and Bunter saw the firmness in his bronze face waver for a second. Then it was expressionless again. O Lobo laughed—the horrible laugh that had already set Bunter's nerves on edge—stepped away, and plunged into the forest. The lianas that hid Billy Bunter swayed and rustled as the bandit brushed by, passing within six or seven feet of the petrified Owl of the Remove, and disappearing into the forest.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

From the Jaws of Death!

BILLY BUNTER did not stir. Motionless, with the sweat running down his fat face, he stood, hardly able to breathe, while the bandit's footsteps died away in the forest and the rustle of his movements faded away into silence.

O Lobo was gone. For a long minute Bunter stood there as if petrified, turned to stone, after there was silence.

He hardly dared peer through the lianas again. He knew only too well what he would see—the Indian lying bound in the mud at the river's margin, the snout of an alligator nosing towards his prey.

That was the vengeance of the hunted bandit on the man who had hunted him.

Bunter blinked at the Indian and saw two great drops roll down the bronzed face. Chico bound as he was, was able to raise his head and watch his creeping enemy, and even the hardy Indian's iron nerve was scarcely proof under the ordeal. The alligator, deliberately disturbed and attracted to the spot by the bandit, was crawling slowly through the mud in the direction of the bound Indian. The hideous brute did not seem hurried; every now and then it stopped, as if in doubt. But at every movement it approached nearer to the man who lay bound and helpless, watching him with glassy eyes of horror.

Bunter's teeth chattered. Nothing could save the Caraya. It might be a matter of minutes before the alligator reached him—of a few minutes, or many minutes—but the end was inevitable; the huge jaws would snap on him at last. Bunter could see that the Caraya was straining his strength to break his bonds—in vain! O Lobo had done his work too thoroughly for his victim to have

the remotest chance of breaking loose. His doom was fixed. The ruthless bandit had left him to a torture of suspense till the inevitable end came.

The alligator was crawling slowly, but it was quite possible that when it realised that its prey was helpless a rush would come. Bunter knew it, as he watched, with distended eyes, behind his spectacles.

The mere sight of the alligator frightened the fat junior almost out of his wits. The impulse to take to his heels, to dash away out of all possible reach of those fearful jaws, was almost irresistible. But, somehow—Bunter never knew how—he resisted that almost irresistible impulse.

What would one of the other fellows have done in Bunter's place? Only too well Bunter knew what they would have done—at any risk, at any cost, they would have made an attempt to save the Caraya from the terrible fate that threatened him. But the thought of approaching nearer than he was to those fearful jaws, made Billy Bunter's blood run cold.

What could he do? The alligator's snout, nosing through the fluid mud, was hardly a dozen feet from the bound Indian. The brute had seen its prey—the red eyes gleamed at the Caraya. But, unless it made a sudden rush, there was still time to help Chico.

It was hot in the tropical forest—but Bunter felt cold. His teeth chattered. Hardly aware of what he was doing, he groped in his pocket, and found himself opening his pocket-knife. It was a subconscious action, for Bunter had not made up his mind to act—indeed, his mind was made up to go no nearer the alligator's teeth than he was at present. But—

Bunter was afraid—horribly afraid. But there was some spark of British pluck hidden somewhere under Billy Bunter's layers of fat. Scared out of his fat wits, hardly daring to look at the danger before him, he knew, all the same, that he could not turn his back and leave a man to that awful death. Whatever happened, he could not.

He could not—and he did not! Somehow, Billy Bunter screwed his courage up to the sticking-point—and it stuck! With the open knife in his right hand, he parted the thick lianas with his left, and shoved through.

The faint sound he made caught the sharp ears of the Indian.

Chico's lifted head twisted to look round, the black eyes burning with hate; his look showing that he expected to see O Lobo again, coming back to gloat over his vengeance.

That look changed to one of blank astonishment at the sight of Bunter.

The fat junior stumbled towards him. His podgy legs bent under him. His foot caught in a trailing creeper, and he fell—and scrambled up again, and ran desperately towards the Indian, squealing with terror as he ran.

"Senhor!" panted Chico. "Oh, senhor!"

There was a splash in the mud. The alligator was moving more quickly. Bunter dared not look in its direction.

Almost blindly he hacked at the cord that fastened the Indian to the tree on the bank. It parted under frantic hacks.

To release the Caraya from the cord which was wound and knotted round him was impossible—it would have taken too much time. The surging and splashing in the mud was too terribly close.

Bunter grasped the Caraya, getting a

hold on the knotted cords that bound him, and dragged.

Fear, which is said to lend wings, lent Billy Bunter strength.

The Caraya was not a heavy man, but he was not a light-weight. At any other time Bunter could never have dragged him along. Now, tugging desperately, frantically, madly, he dragged Caraya headlong through the clinging mud—out of the mud, and on to the dry bank.

Behind him as he dragged and tugged and wrenched he heard a sound of wallowing. The alligator was behind him with open jaws.

Whether he was yards behind, or only inches, Bunter did not know, and could not know. But in those fearful moments it seemed to him that the hideous snout was touching him—that the jaws were closing on him, the fearful rows of teeth rending flesh and bone. Yet he did not let go the helpless Caraya.

Frantically, he dragged at the bound man, dragging him on and on. They rustled and crashed through the lianas from behind which Bunter had watched.

There, utterly exhausted, the fat junior pitched over, sprawling over the Indian's legs.

He sat up dizzily.

There was a sound of splashing and wallowing. For a second it gave Bunter a shock of terror. Then he realised that it meant that the alligator was still in the mud. The brute had not crawled on the dry land. Disappointed of its prey, it was wallowing back to the river.

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Bunter.

He sat with a spinning brain. He could not have moved if the alligator's snout had come nosing through the lianas.

But the alligator was gone. The wallowing and splashing died away on the river.

Bunter gasped and gasped for breath. The Indian lay in the grass, his head half-lifted, gazing at him, a strange expression on the bronze face. Bunter came to himself, and groped for his knife.

He found it in his pocket, though he was quite unconscious of having placed it there. Mechanically, he began to saw at the cord on the Indian's limbs. Not a sound or a word came from the Indian as the Owl's clumsy, shaking hand sawed bronze skin as well as knotted rope.

Once the rope was cut through Chico was able to unloosen the coils, and he shook himself free. He rose to his feet and gave Bunter a hand up.

The fat Owl blinked at him dazedly through his spectacles. Then he gave a faint squeak and pitched over in a dead faint. The Caraya's strong arm caught him as he fell.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter All Over!

JIM VALENTINE stared.

The boy planter was standing among the rows of coffee-shrubs, directing a number of Italian labourers occupied in weeding—a necessary and incessant business on a fazenda, where the jungle, driven from the clearings, creeps back as fast as it can.

Jim forgot the business in hand, however, as he stared at the figure emerging from the forest in the distance—Chico the Caraya, bent almost double under the weight of a heavy burden.

"What the dickens—" he ejaculated.

He out across the fazenda by the nearest path, to meet the Caraya as he came. Chico, strong man as he was, was feeling the strain of his burden—Billy Bunter was no light weight.

The Owl of the Remove was quite unconscious, his eyes closed behind his spectacles. The Caraya, bending forward, carried him like a sack of Brazil nuts.

Jim came panting up.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed. "Que ha?"

Without waiting for an answer, however, he eased the Indian of his burden, and they carried the insensible Owl between them to the house.

Chico panted for breath, and the perspiration ran down his bronze face as Bunter was borne up the steps of the veranda. He had carried the fat junior three miles on his back, and he was almost at the end of his tether.

Bunter gave a faint grunt as he was carried into his room and placed on his bed. It was the first sign of returning consciousness. Jim Valentine gazed at him, mystified and puzzled. Billy Bunter had been playing the part of an invalid, but it looked now as if he really was ill. It was clear that he was in a faint.

Jim bathed the fat forehead with cold water, and the Owl's eyes opened, blinking.

"Urrrgh!" grunted Bunter.

"All right, old chap!" said Jim soothingly.

"Where's my specs?"

Jim had taken off the fat junior's big spectacles to bathe his face. Bunter groped for them.

"Here they are, old fellow—safe and sound!"

"Look here, wharrer you pinched my specs for, you silly ass? Wharrer you mopping water over me for?" grumbled Bunter. Then suddenly recollection returned, and he gave a shrill squeak. "Ow! Oh crikey! Keep it off!"

"Keep what off?"

"Ow! Help! The alligator!" yelled Bunter. "Oh lor! Help!"

He struggled to rise from the bed, blinking wildly at Jim's astonished face, and then fell back, unconscious again.

"What the dickens can have happened?" exclaimed Jim Valentine, in puzzled wonder. He could see that Bunter had been frightened by an alligator, which was not, of course, surprising; Bunter was a fellow to be frightened by a pampas rabbit. But he had suffered no harm, so far as Jim could see.

"Funk, I suppose!" concluded Jim. Leaving Bunter in bed, he went back to the veranda, where the Indian was waiting. Chico was resting, squatting on the floor; but he rose at once to his feet as the boy planter came out.

Jim questioned him. He had supposed that Bunter had gone on the batalon with Mr. Frulo and the Famous Five, and he was quite perplexed. He was still more surprised

when the Indian, in concise words, told him what had happened.

He stared blankly at Chico as he listened.

It was difficult to believe that Billy Bunter had acted as the Caraya described. But it was impossible to doubt it. The fat funk of the Remove had saved the Caraya's life—saved him from a fearful death, at the risk of falling himself into the jaws of the alligator.

Jim listened like a fellow in a dream.

When the Indian had told his story he departed quietly, and Jim went back to Bunter's room. There was quite a curious expression on his face as he stood looking at the fat junior.

Bunter's eyes opened again. He lay for some moments, blinking; and then gave a sudden start and stared round him, with lifted head, his fat face full of terror.

Jim touched him on the shoulder gently.

"It's all right, old chap!" he said softly. "You're home again—in bed at Boa Vista! Chico brought you in! You're safe now!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, he nearly got me!"

"I know, old fellow."

"That fearful brute!" Bunter shuddered. "Oh dear! I—I say, it—it was awful, you know! His jaws—" He broke off, trembling from head to foot.

"Safe as houses now!" said Jim reassuringly. "Don't think of it, old bean. You're all right now, and you've done a jolly plucky thing!"

"Eh?"

"You've made no end of a friend in Chico," said Jim, with a smile. "He thinks you're the pluckiest kid he's ever heard of."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He lay silent for a few minutes. The recollection of what he had been through made him shudder and tremble. But he realised that he was safe now, that the danger was over and done with; and slowly he pulled himself together.

"How did I get here?" he asked at last.

"Chico carried you in on his back."

"I don't remember," said Bunter, blinking at him doubtfully.

"You fainted, old chap."

"I didn't!" said Bunter positively.

(Continued on next page.)

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"Don't be an ass, Valentine! I'm not the fellow to faint, I hope."

Jim smiled. Bunter, evidently, was recovering! He blinked round him, picked up his spectacles, and jammed them on his fat little nose, and gave the boy planter a severe blink.

"Look here! Don't you get making out that I fainted!" he said. "I never did anything of the kind!"

"All right, old bean. Just as you like!" assented Jim.

"Don't you get telling the fellows that I fainted, when they come back!" said Bunter. "I didn't, you know! As if I'd faint!"

"Not a word!" agreed Jim.

"What was there to faint for, if you come to that?" argued Bunter. "You don't fancy I was frightened, do you?"

Clearly he was recovering.

"Well, any fellow might have been scared a bit, in the circumstances," said Jim Valentine. "I'm not a funk, I hope, but I shouldn't have enjoyed it."

"Very likely," agreed Bunter. "But it was just pie to me."

"Oh!"

"You see, I've got pluck!" explained Bunter.

"I—I see!"

"You remember me at Greyfriars, you know," went on Bunter. "You were only there one term, Valentine, but you got to know me pretty well. You knew I was the pluckiest chap in the Remove!"

"Oh!" gasped Valentine. He certainly did not remember Billy Bunter as the pluckiest chap in the Greyfriars Remove! Far from that!

Still, there was no doubt that Bunter had shown pluck on this occasion. All the more, perhaps, because he had been obviously scared out of his fat wits by the danger. Somehow, he had forced himself to act courageously, while in a state of the bluest funk.

"Think I could leave that chap to be chewed up by an alligator?" said Bunter. "Some fellows would have—you might have, you know."

"I hope not!" said Valentine.

"That's all very well; but I fancy you would have been scared! So would the other fellows! I wasn't!"

"Oh!"

"I never turned a hair!" said Bunter.

"I shouldn't, you know! I'm not the fellow to brag, of course——"

"Oh!"

"But pluck's my long suit!" said Bunter. "That's how it is!"

"Oh!" gasped Jim. "That's—that's how it is, is it?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "Don't you get making out that I fainted! If that Indian says I fainted, he's a boastful fibber. I'll jolly well tell him so, too—at least, I would if I could speak his silly language. After all I've done for him, too!" Bunter grunted angrily. "I must say it's just like you, Valentine, to make out that I fainted! You all over!"

Jim breathed rather hard.

"I say, I'm hungry!" said Bunter.

He sat up on the bed.

Bunter's adventure had not affected his appetite, it seemed. He rolled off the bed, and, having cleaned off some of the mud he had gathered on the Rexo, he rolled out into the veranda, where the evening meal was taken. Peter Valentine was there, and he greeted Bunter with a friendly smile, for once full of cordiality towards the fat Owl.

"My dear boy," exclaimed Mr. Valentine, "I've heard from Jim what has happened. You have acted very courageously."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Bunter.

Mr. Valentine looked at him. That answer seemed to damp his cordiality a little.

"Lucky for that Indian that I was there, what?" said Bunter.

"Yes, very."

"I mean, lucky it wasn't one of the other fellows! They wouldn't have done what I did."

"I think they would, Bunter!" said the planter, with a complete return of his old, dry manner towards the happy Owl.

"That's where you're mistaken," said Bunter calmly. "They wouldn't! You see, it needed pluck!"

"Oh!"

It was rather a silent meal that evening, so far as the planter and his nephew were concerned. However, Billy Bunter talked enough for three. His topic was W. G. Bunter—a topic of which he never tired, though perhaps it palled a little on his hearers.

Bunter was in high feather. How he had done what he had done, the fat junior hardly knew. Still, he had done it; there was no getting out of that. And Bunter was the man to make the most of it—forgetting the ancient proverb that self-praise is no recommendation.

The fat Owl went to bed that night in a state of happy self-satisfaction. In the morning his self-satisfaction was, if possible, increased. He was, indeed, almost in danger of bursting with it. He was anxious to see the bataloa come back up the river, with the Famous Five on board. They were going to hear of Bunter's glory—from Bunter!

In the sunny morning Bunter posted himself on the desembarcadouro, to watch the river for the returning juniors. And he grinned with satisfaction when the bataloa came rolling up the Rexo, and bumped on the landing-stage.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Doubting Thomases!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped ashore from the bataloa. The Famous Five were in cheery spirits.

They had enjoyed the trip down the river; they had helped in unloading the boat at Verde, and slept soundly in hammocks slung in a coffee barn. They came back from the trip merry and bright, and were rather surprised to see Billy Bunter waiting for them on the landing-stage, grinning all over his fat face.

They had, as a matter of fact, rather forgotten Bunter's existence during their absence. Being reminded of him by the sight of his fat face on the landing-stage, they hardly expected to see him looking so bucked. Bunter had been left behind the previous day, so they would naturally have expected accusing blinks rather than a happy fat grin.

"You've woke up!" said Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"We left you asleep, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I bet you won't guess what's happened while you've been gone!" grinned Bunter.

"Has anything happened?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather! I've been in fearful danger!" said Bunter impressively.

"Tired?" asked Bob.

"Eh? No! Why?"

"I mean, you're not much of a sprinter," explained Bob, "and if there

was any danger around, I suppose you put in some running."

"The runfulness was probably terrific!" chuckled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter blinked at them.

He blinked at them scornfully. He looked them up and down. They gazed at him. With a fat nose turned up, a fat lip curling with scorn, Bunter looked them up and down—with withering scorn. Instead of being withered, however, by Bunter's scorn, the chums of the Remove smiled.

"What the dickens are you making faces for, Bunter?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"You silly ass!" gasped Bunter. He was not making faces, so far as he knew; he was looking the beasts up and down! It was just like them to suppose that he was merely making faces!

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton, and the juniors started across the desembarcadouro to walk up to Boa Vista.

Bunter spluttered with wrath. They did not seem to want to hear what had happened. They did not, indeed, believe that anything had happened at all.

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter. "I say, I was going to tell you how I saved that Indian from being chewed up by an alligator——"

"What!"

The Famous Five halted and stared at Bunter. He had succeeded, if not in impressing them, at least in astonishing them.

"You whatted?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I'm going to tell you!" snapped Bunter. "I've been in fearful danger. The alligator nearly got me. His jaws snapped just behind me—not that I cared, you know. I wasn't scared as you fellows would have been!"

"You wouldn't be scared!" grinned Bob. "Not you! I can see you walking right up to an alligator and punching him in the eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows don't want to hear what I've done——" yapped Bunter.

"But we do!" said Harry, laughing. "It sounds as if it's going to be one of your best. Go it!"

"Pile it on!" said Nugent.

"Not too thick, though!" said Johnny Bull. "You never seem to remember that there ought to be a limit."

"Will you let a fellow speak!" hooted Bunter. "After you sneaked off and left me yesterday, I followed on in a canoe. I lost the paddle somehow, and had to clamber ashore on a tree——"

"That sounds true!" remarked Bob. "That's the kind of clumsy ass you are, old man! Is that all?"

"No, it isn't, you beast! What I mean is, I decided not to follow you after all, and landed—I can manage a canoe all right—I landed simply because I preferred to walk back. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't believe me——"

"Well, which are we to believe—the first or the second edition?" asked Harry. "You might tell us which."

"Oh, don't be an ass! Then I came on that Indian chap, Cheeky——"

"Cheeky?" repeated Bob. "Oh, Chico!"

"That's it—Cheeky!" said Bunter, who apparently preferred his own pronunciation. "That beast O Lobo tied him up and left him for an alligator——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He cleared off before I could handle him——"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Were you going to handle him?" "Of course I was!" "Let's have it clear!" said Frank Nugent. "Who were you going to handle—O Lobo, or the Indian, or the alligator?"

"That beast Lobo, of course! He didn't see me—I mean, I dare say he did see me, but he was jolly careful to steer clear of me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

The idea of the ferocious bandit taking care to steer clear of Billy Bunter was rather too much for them.

"You can cackle!" sneered Bunter. "You wouldn't have cackled if you'd been there! There was that Indian chap, tied up to a tree—bound hand and foot—there was the alligator, crawling across the mud at him, and there was me—"

"In a blue funk?" "No!" roared Bunter. "Cool as ice! Rushing forward I—"

"You seized the alligator by his tail, swung him round your head, and threw him across the river?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co. "No!" howled Bunter. "Of course I couldn't!"

"My hat! Is there something you couldn't do?" asked Bob, in surprise. "Why not make it a good one while you're about it?"

"Beast! I rushed forward—"

"You don't mean backward?" "No!" yelled Bunter. "I don't! I rushed forward, taking no notice whatever of the alligator—"

"I can see you doing it!" agreed Bob. "You're not the fellow to take any notice of a trifle like an alligator."

"Then I cut—"

"That sounds more like it! If there was an alligator about, I've no doubt that you cut!"

"I mean I cut—"

"You needn't tell us that; we know you cut, if there was any danger."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I cut the Indian loose!" shrieked Bunter. "Just in time, with his jaws snapping right at my elbow—"

"What was the Indian snapping his jaws for?"

"Not the Indian, you silly idiot—the alligator. He was snapping his jaws right at my elbow—in fact, he tore off a bit of my jacket—this very jacket I'm wearing this minute—"

"I don't see a bit missing—"

"I—I mean, he nearly tore a bit off my jacket—"

"A miss is as good as a mile!" said Bob. "Go it!"

"Then I dragged Cheeky out of danger, with the alligator after me, snapping his jaws just behind me, like—like—like billy-oh!"

"That isn't all, is it?" asked Bob, as Bunter paused.

"Yes, you beast—isn't that enough?" snorted Bunter.

"Oh, quite; but I had expected something more! Didn't you pick up the Indian with your left hand, and knock the alligator head over heels with your right?"

"No!" howled Bunter.

"Well, you might have, while you were about it! Mean to say you let that alligator get away alive?" asked Bob. "That was rather careless."

"Look here, you beast—"

"Next time you spin this yarn, old chap, put a bit more kick into it," suggested Bob. "Why, I could do better myself though I haven't had anything like your practice at fibbing. Suppose

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

HERE we are again, chums, with another bumper issue of your jolly old favourite. Of course, you've seen this week's set of magic pictures? Exceptionally good, aren't they? And you'll say the same about next week's free magic pictures.

If you have missed any of our previous issues, you can still obtain them by writing to our Back Number Dept., Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, E.C.4, enclosing the cost of issues required plus the postage.

FROM R. F. F., a reader living at Richmond, Surrey, comes a query regarding

THE LIGHTING OF LIGHTHOUSES.

He wants to know if acetylene gas is used in lighthouses. Yes. Practically every known method of lighting is employed in lighthouses. Electric light is used in some, but the majority use oil, although acetylene has been successfully employed. Acetylene is largely used for light buoys, which are charged up about every three or four months, the charge being sufficient to keep them provided with light for that time. When examined by the spectroscopic, acetylene light is found to resemble sunlight more nearly than any other artificial illuminant. Acetylene was discovered in 1862 and brought into commercial use in 1888. Many big country houses use acetylene for lighting, and it is also largely used for dock lighting, military searchlights, and so on.

Here's a curious, yet perfectly true, yarn. You would hardly believe that a railway engine could vanish completely and never be seen again, would you? It happened once.

THE VANISHING ENGINE

was built by a man who subsequently went mad. Determined to drive this particular engine, he made his way to the shunting yard where it was kept, threw the driver and fireman out of the cab, and set the locomotive in motion. He opened it all out, taking no notice of signals or stations. The engine came uncoupled from the four vans it was drawing, and tore onwards at terrific speed. From that time it was never seen again, although the dead body of the madman was found alongside the line.

The engine is presumed to have plunged down into a ravine, the bed of which was dry sand. The railway company spent thousands of dollars in an endeavour to find the vanished engine, but they never succeeded. This happened in Sand Creek, America, in 1885.

"THE KIDNAPPED HEADMASTER!"

By the way, chums, I cannot let pass this opportunity of putting you on to another great story. After you have read the MAGNET I'm sure you would all like another long school yarn to read. The one I most strongly recommend is that which appears in our popular companion paper, the "Gem." It is a

thrilling yarn of sensational happenings at St. Jim's—the kidnapping of the Head, who is held to ransom by crooks! All readers will revel in this yarn—as I did. You can read it to-day. Ask for the "Gem," on sale now, price 2d.

Now for two

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to readers' queries.

How Much Money is Spent in Cinemas in a Year? Over forty million pounds per year is paid into cinema box offices, of which nearly seven million goes to the Government in Entertainment Tax. Altogether 957 million visits were made to the cinema last year by people in this country!

What is the Oldest Lighthouse in this Country? The one at Dover Castle, Kent. It was built by the Romans to guide their vessels over the Channel.

I THINK I have just enough room to answer this last query from Bob Halden, of Greenock. He has been puzzled by the expression

"MOUNTAIN TIME,"

and wants to know what it means. It is the name given to the standard of time used in the mountain States of the U.S.A. and Mexico, and also in Canada west of the 103rd meridian. It is seven hours slow on Greenwich time. No less than six different zones of time are in use on the American continent. "Eastern Time" (five hours slow on Greenwich) is used in the Eastern States, "Central Time" (six hours slow) in the central portions, "Mountain Time" in the mountain States, and "Pacific Time" in the Pacific Coast district. Then comes Alaska which gives us two more zones of time.

Now a word or two about next week's programme. Frank Richards will be well to the fore with a top-notch yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. entitled:

"THE GREYFRIARS DIAMOND-DIGGERS!"

I have been highly gratified by the number of letters received recently regarding our present series, and I can assure you that next week's story is of the usual high standard which you have learned to expect from Frank Richards. Aware of the fact that Jim Valentine's uncle has found a fortune, O Lobo, the "Wolf," is desperately determined to capture one of Jim's guests from Greyfriars and trade his life for the secret. You'll find fun and thrills galore in this grand yarn.

"Supporting this tremendous feature"—as the cinema people say—will be more stirring chapters of "The Lost Squadron!" a "Greyfriars Herald" supplement calculated to raise roars of laughter and another "Interview" in verse by the Greyfriars Rhymester. A final word:—this issue will also contain more stunning pictures for your magic spectacles!

YOUR EDITOR.

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you seized O Lobo with one hand, and the alligator with the other, and knocked their heads together—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That would be a bit more thrilling, and just as true!" said Bob. "But I'd leave the Indian out of it, if were you! You see somebody might ask the Indian, and he might mention that it never happened."

"But it did happen!" shrieked Bunter. "I tell you I shaved his wife—I mean, saved his life—and then—"

"Then you woke up?"

"No, you beast! Then—"

"Well, if that's the best you can do, I don't think much of it!" said Bob, shaking his head.

"It's true!" yelled Bunter, almost frantically. "You beasts! Don't you believe me?"

"Believe you!" gasped Bob. "Oh, my hat! Not quite!"

"The believfulness is not terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Come on!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's done his funny turn!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on to Boa Vista, laughing. Billy Bunter stood and glared after them, with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles. He had not, after all, impressed the Famous Five with his tale of derring-do! Five doubting Thomases walked off, laughing—leaving Billy Bunter glaring, speechless with wrath.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Brave!

"TRUE!"

"Yes!"

"Look here, Valentine—"

"Really and truly, true!"

said Jim Valentine. He laughed. "I know it's a bit of a surprise!"

"A bit!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"The bitfulness is preposterous!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull. "You must be an ass, Valentine, to let Bunter pull your leg to that extent! You've forgotten what that fat fibber is like, since you've been away from Greyfriars."

"I had it from Chico," said Jim. "I shouldn't have believed Bunter—though I hardly like to say so now, as it's really true! That awful villain, O Lobo, got the Indian with a bola, tied him to a tree by the Rexo, and left him for the alligators. Bunter got him out of it."

"Fan me!" murmured Bob.

"He did," said Jim. "And there was an alligator right on the spot—Lobo stirred him up and attracted him to the spot before he cleared. I gather that he was in rather a hurry to get off, after stirring up the alligator. And Bunter—"

Johnny Bull rubbed his nose hard.

"Chico told you all that?" he asked.

"Yes; before Bunter started blowing off steam," Jim grinned. "Bunter's bound to do a song and dance on the subject—that's his way—but it's true."

"Wonders will never cease!" said Frank Nugent.

Jim Valentine, laughing, left them—in a state of utter wonder. And wonder was mingled with remorse. They had laughed at Bunter's story—taking it for granted that it was "gas" from start to finish. And it was true! The fact that Bunter was swanking about it, did not make it less true.

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"Well," said Bob, "you never know a chap till you find him out."

"You never do," agreed Nugent.

"Bunter's got a chunk of pluck in him somewhere. Who'd have thought it?"

"Nobody!"

"I—I wish now we'd known he was telling the truth," said Bob. "But how was a fellow to guess that one?"

"A fellow couldn't," said Nugent.

"The guessfulness was not the esteemed possibility," declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head.

"Blessed if I can quite get it down now!" said Harry. "Still, Bunter's done a plucky thing."

"Well, why shouldn't he?" said Johnny Bull. "Would any fellow have turned tail, and left a man to be chewed up by an alligator? Bunter only did what any fellow ought to have done."

"Fellows don't always do as they ought," said Harry—"especially Bunter. And he was telling the truth, after all."

"Bragging," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, yes; but it was true, and it was pretty decent—especially for Bunter."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

Billy Bunter came up the path to the house.

The Famous Five turned to meet him as he came, with rather mixed feelings.

Bunter had done a plucky thing. He rather spoiled the effect by boasting about it. Still, he had done it.

They really could not blame themselves for not having believed Bunter. Nobody ever believed Bunter. Still, as it turned out, they were sorry they had laughed at his startling story, and were willing to acknowledge the same.

The fat junior gave them a scornful blink as he came up. Evidently Bunter was wrathful and indignant.

"Bunter, old man—" said Bob amicably.

"You needn't talk to me," said Bunter loftily. "I saw you talking to Valentine. You know all about it now. Yah!"

"Yes; and—"

"If Valentine made out that I fainted, he was telling whoppers. I never did anything of the sort."

"Oh!"

"I'm not the fellow to faint, I hope. You fellows might have."

"Um! Well, we've heard from Valentine what you did."

"I told you what I did."

"Oh! Ah! Yes! But—"

"You doubted my word," said Bunter scornfully. "You needn't deny it! You jolly well know you did!"

The Famous Five did not deny it. Really, there was no denying it.

"Now you know," resumed Bunter, in the same tone of lofty scorn. "Yah! Would any of you fellows have done what I did? I ask you?"

"I hope so," said Harry mildly.

Bunter laughed. It was one of those sardonic laughs.

"I can see you doing it," he sneered.

"Look here! You cheeky ass—" growled Johnny Bull.

Snort!—from Bunter.

"Go it! Call a fellow names!" he said. "Rotten jealousy all round! You've always been jealous of my good looks; now you're jealous of my pluck."

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackle!" said Bunter scornfully.

"I set you an example of pluck, and

all you can do is to cackle! Yah! Don't talk to me! I'm done with you! Fellows who doubt a fellow's word should—"

"Hem! You see—"

"As for fainting," said Bunter, "I didn't! That chap Cheeky carried me home because I was—was tired. I mean, he never carried me home. I walked."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Walked every step of the way. Catch me fainting!" said Bunter derisively. "I dare say you fellows would have. You'd have been in a funk. Not me! I was perfectly cool and collected. If you'd seen me facing that alligator, with his jaws snapping just behind me—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five wanted to be nice to Bunter. He had done a plucky thing, and they wanted to acknowledge it. But really it was hard to keep grave at the extraordinary description of the fat junior facing an alligator, whose jaws were snapping behind him.

"Cackle!" sneered Bunter. "I'd like to have seen you fellows facing him as I did."

"But, my dear chap," gasped Bob, "if you were facing him—"

"So I was—facing him as firm as a rock!"

"With his jaws snapping behind you," gurgled Bob.

"Oh, I—I mean—"

"You mean you were facing him with your back?"

"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses—"

"All serene, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton soothingly. "You've done a plucky thing, Bunter, and I take back a lot of things I've thought about you. But don't spoil it by gassing."

"I'm not the fellow to gas, I hope. If a fellows happens to be as brave as a lion—"

"Oh!"

"It just happens," said Bunter. "Pluck's my long suit. Firm and fearless, and all that."

"Oh!"

"The fact is, I don't know what it is to be afraid," explained Bunter. "Some fellows are like that. I don't brag of it; it just happens. You fellows would hardly understand it, I dare say. You're rather a funky lot. But the fact is, I don't think I could feel afraid of anything if I tried."

"Is that a snake you're treading on?" asked Bob Cherry suddenly.

"Yaroooh!"

Something crumpled under Bunter's boot. He yelled and leaped a good foot from the ground.

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

"All right; it's only a bit of sugar-cane!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "You silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go on, Bunter, old bean! You were telling us you couldn't feel afraid if you tried."

"Beast!"

"You mean, you couldn't feel afraid of anything but a bit of sugar-cane."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!"

Bunter gave the stick of sugar-cane a doubtful blink, snorted, and rolled away. The Famous Five chuckled as they followed him in to lunch.



"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter. The fat junior's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles in sheer terror, as a huge, cat-like form leaped suddenly into the glade. Bang! Bunter hardly knew that he pulled trigger. But he did! Then a wild, screaming roar woke the echoes of the forest!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

CHICO came up the veranda steps, his big grass-hat in his hand.

It was a day or two later, and the Greyfriars party had finished breakfast in the fresh sunny morning, and were discussing plans for the day.

Billy Bunter, who was still breakfasting, was too busy to speak, his jaws being otherwise, and fully, occupied. But the fat Owl ceased to park the provender as the Caraya appeared, and bestowed a benevolent blink on the Indian.

The juniors smiled as Chico, having saluted Mr. Valentine and Jim, turned to Bunter, and bowed deeply over his hat, speaking at the same time in Portuguese. What he was saying they did not know; but his tone was of profound respect. Peter and Jim smiled as they listened; but the Caraya was very grave and earnest. Bunter almost purred.

The other fellows could say what they liked, and snigger as much as they liked; but in Chico, at least, Billy Bunter had a convinced admirer. Bunter had saved him from the alligator. And Chico knew even better than Bunter did what a risk he had run. And being unacquainted with Bunter's language, save for a few words, Chico was unaware that the fat Owl had filled Boa Vista from end to end, with self-glorification.

Harry Wharton & Co. were willing—more than willing—to give Bunter his due. But they were tired by that time of hearing about Bunter's pluck—from Bunter. Really it was not a subject for Bunter to be eloquent upon; and he never gave it a rest. Moreover, Bunter was not satisfied with pointing out that he was fearfully plucky. He pointed out that the other fellows

weren't! He persisted in regarding them as a feeble, funky lot, compared with his heroic self—which was not pleasant.

To the Indian's simple mind, however, Bunter really was the fearless fellow he fancied himself to be. His respectful admiration was plainly expressed in his bronze face; and it was pie to Bunter.

"I say, you fellows! What is he saying?" asked Bunter, as the Indian ceased to speak.

"Construe, Valentine!" said Bob, with a grin.

Jim Valentine grinned.

"Chico is saying that Bunter is as brave as the boldest warrior of the Caraya tribe," he answered.

"He knows me," said Bunter complacently.

"He says that Bunter has more courage than the puma of the forest and the wild horse of the pampas."

"Good!" said Bunter. "Sensible chap."

"He says that on the hunting path he would like no braver companion than Bunter to face the jaguar in his lair."

"I'll jolly well go hunting with him some day," said Bunter. "I'd like to take a jaguar-skin home to Bunter Court."

"You've got a chance," said Jim gravely. "I haven't told you all yet. Chico has picked up sign of a jaguar in the forest up the Rexo, and he is going after it. He wants to know whether you'd like to hop along, Bunter."

"Eh?"
"He's spotted the jaguar's lair," said Jim. "If you'd like to join up, he's ready to guide you there."

"Oh!"
The expression on Billy Bunter's fat face changed considerably. There was no doubt that he would have liked to take a jaguar-skin home with him after

his trip to South America. There was equally no doubt that he would have preferred somebody else to take it off the jaguar.

"By gum, we're all on in this!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the fat Owl remained silent. "Can we go, Mr. Valentine?"

"It's a rather risky business," said the planter doubtfully. "I shall go, and take Jim with me, but you boys are—"

"We're not funky, sir," said Harry—"especially Bunter! Bunter's as keen as a razor."

"The keenfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You can't leave us out, sir," said Johnny Bull. "If Jim can go, we can go."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent.

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

"Chance for you, old chap," said Bob. "Buck up! You're not afraid of jaguars after the way you've handled alligators."

"Of—of course not. But—but it's going to be hot to-day, and—and I'm a bit tired and—and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm as keen as anything, but—but I've got a pain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Indian glanced from one laughing face to another, evidently puzzled. His dark eyes fixed again on Bunter's fat, dismayed face.

It was clear that Chico expected the brave one to be keen on this; indeed, it was in grateful acknowledgment of what Bunter had done for him that he was giving the brave one this chance at a jaguar. It was a grateful acknowledgment with which Billy Bunter would willingly have dispensed.

The Famous Five were all on their
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fect now. They were keen on a jaguar-hunt, whatever Billy Bunter might be feeling like.

Bunter sat tight. He did not want to let himself down in the opinion of the Caraya—the only inhabitant of South America who admired Bunter; but he did not want to get anywhere near that jaguar—very much indeed he didn't!

"Bunter had better stay here, I think," said Mr. Valentine, smiling. "If you boys are keen, I will order a montaria to be got ready, and we'll start and make a hunting party of it."

"What-ho!" said Bob.

The Caraya went down the steps and stood there waiting. Mr. Valentine called to a black servant and gave orders for a montaria to be manned; then he led the juniors into the house to prepare for the hunting trip. All the Famous Five could handle a rifle, and had had some practice at home, and they were keen and excited at the prospect of potting the jaguar. When they came out with the planter, Bunter was still sitting in the veranda.

He blinked at them.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Coming, old fat man?" grinned Bub.

"I—I'd like to come, but—but I—I've got a touch of—of malaria, or—or something——"

"Or funk?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

The juniors, grinning, went down the steps. The Caraya did not follow them as they went down the path to the river; he seemed puzzled. Mr. Valentine, glancing round, called to him.

Chico ascended the steps of the veranda again. Bill Bunter blinked at him uneasily. The Caraya addressed him in Portuguese with a puzzled, earnest face. It seemed that he could not understand why Bunter was not coming, and supposed that the fat junior did not understand that he was offered a chance at a jaguar—rare in the vicinity of Boa Vista.

Bunter did not understand the Caraya's words, but he understood his meaning clearly enough—and he sat tight.

Chico at length took hold of his arm and pulled; with his other hand he pointed to the distant forest.

Bunter breathed hard.

It was only too painfully clear to him that if he refused to go the Indian could not fail to guess his reason. With an effort the fat junior made up his mind. He was a hero in the Caraya's eyes, if in nobody else's; he wanted to stay a hero if he could.

"All right!" he gasped. "I'm coming! Oh lor! I—I mean I—I'm jolly keen on it! Oh dear!"

Chico smiled with satisfaction at being understood at last. He stepped into the house, and came back with a rifle for Bunter. The fat junior took it in rather a gingerly manner; he had no love for loaded firearms. A loaded rifle in Bunter's fat hands was likely to be more dangerous to the hunting party than to the jaguar—but Bunter's chief worry was that it might be dangerous to himself.

He held that rifle very carefully as he went down to the bank of the river with the Caraya.

The montaria—a clinker-built boat smaller than the bateloa—was ready at the landing stage with two negro paddlers in it, one fore and one aft. The Famous Five were already on board, with Mr. Valentine and Jim; they were waiting for the Indian hunter—and they stared when Bunter arrived with him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coming, after

all?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Good man! I feel safe now!"

"Yah!"

"Not so jolly safe with a gun in Bunter's paws!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Don't poke it into my ribs, you fat idiot!"

"Beast!"

Bunter hesitated on the desembarcadouro, but the Indian helped him into the montaria, and there was nothing for it but to go. Bunter sat down in the boat, the Caraya stepped in after him, and the two blacks paddled away up the Rêxo.

It was quite a keen and eager hunting party—with one exception. Every fellow but one was eager to get after the jaguar. Billy Bunter, from the bottom of his fat heart, hoped that the jaguar would not be at home when they called.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Luck!

"**P**OR aqui!" said Chico—which meant, "This way!"

The montaria glided into a creek several miles up the river from the fazenda. The hunting party landed on a swampy bank, and Chico led the way into the dusk of the forest.

Peter Valentine went ahead with him, followed by Jim, and the Famous Five followed on, their rifles under their arms, their hearts beating a little; behind them trailed Bunter.

Progress was slow through the thick forest. Billy Bunter trailed more and more slowly behind; there was a sly gleam in his little round eyes behind his big round spectacles.

It was easy enough to drop out of sight behind in the thick tropical forest—easy enough for a fellow to lose the party and wander back to the boat.

So it seemed to Bunter—and so it would have been, but for the grateful Indian's devotion to his brave rescuer!

Chico, looking back, missed Bunter. Immediately he turned and hurried back, spotting the fat junior in the very act of retreat.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter, as the Caraya bore down on him.

He was strongly tempted to take to his heels and leave the astonished Indian to think what he jolly well liked of that performance.

But even Bunter could not quite do that. With an inward groan, he submitted to his fate and allowed the hunter to lead him on again and rejoin the party, who grinned as he was brought up.

Bunter looked for another chance, but he had no other chance. The Caraya, anxious that his brave rescuer should not miss the jaguar, kept Bunter with him, and the fat Owl had no chance of losing the way again. From the Caraya's point of view, the whole thing was got up for Bunter's benefit; to his simple mind, Bunter was the goods. Bunter was very eager to continue to be the "goods," so far as that went, but it cost him an effort. Deeper and deeper grew his earnest longing that that beastly jaguar would not be at home.

Chico halted at last.

About half a mile from the river they reached a partly open glade. Facing them, on the other side, was a dark, cavernous opening under the jutting roots of a gigantic tree.

The Indian pointed.

That deep, dark, earthy cavern was the jaguar's lair.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, is—is—is he there?" stammered Bunter.

"Step in and see!" suggested Bob.

"Oh lor!"

"Steady, the Buffs!" said Jim Valentine. "Keep your guns ready, you fellows! If he's there, Chico will rouse him out."

"Ready!" said Peter. "Give him a volley if you see him!"

His rifle was to his shoulder, and the juniors followed his example. Billy Bunter essayed to do the same, his rifle sagging in his shaking, fat hands.

Chico stepped in advance of the party, and fitted an arrow to his bow. They watched him eagerly.

Peter and Jim were cool enough; it was not their first jaguar-hunt by many a one. But it was a new and thrilling experience to the Famous Five, and their hearts were beating. But they held their rifles clamped firmly to their shoulders, ready for a volley if the jaguar was roused out.

The Indian's bow twanged, and the arrow shot into the earthy cave. No sound came from the darkness.

Peter Valentine pulled trigger, and sent a bullet after the arrow.

They waited tensely for the roar of the startled brute, the swift leap of the spotted, sinuous body. But there was no sound, no movement.

"Not at home!" said Bob Cherry, breaking the tense silence.

Bunter gasped with relief.

Twice again the planter fired into the dark den. It was clear then that the jaguar was not in his lair, for there was no sound. The Caraya plunged into the dark opening, and the hunters followed him to the entrance. Billy Bunter remained where he was; that dark, earthy den had no attractions for him.

The Indian's voice was heard from the gloomy interior.

"What's the news?" asked Harry.

"The den's still warm; the brute isn't far away, Chico thinks," said Jim Valentine. "Gone down to the water to drink, very likely."

The juniors curious to see a jaguar's den at close quarters, bent their heads to look in. In the gloom they could see scattered gnawed bones, the remains of the fierce brute's prey.

Billy Bunter watched them impatiently. The jaguar was, luckily, not at home, and Bunter was anxious to go before he came home.

"I say, you fellows——" called out Bunter.

He broke off suddenly.

There was a deep, horrible, growling sound, a stirring of the vines and lianas, and a huge cat-like form leaped suddenly into the glade.

The sinuous, spotted body landed, light as a cat, between Billy Bunter and the hunters peering into the cave. The jaguar had not been far away.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter.

The spotted brute was not ten feet from him. His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles in sheer terror.

Bang!

Bunter hardly knew that he pulled trigger.

But he pulled it, and the rifle roared, and the whole party at the mouth of the lair spun round, grasping their weapons to fire.

A wild, screaming roar woke the echoes of the forest.

The jaguar spun over and stretched in the herbage. One of the fierce, glaring eyes had been blotted out like a candle extinguished.

For a moment the great brute kicked and struggled, tearing up the earth with lashing claws, and then lay still. There was no need for the hunters to fire. The jaguar was dead!

The rifle dropped from Bunter's fat

(Continued on page 28.)

THE LOST SQUADRON!

By Geo. E. ROCHESTER.

The Log-Book!

FOLLOWING an all-night flight through a terrific storm, Squadron Leader Akers and his youthful navigation officer, Flight-Lieutenant Ferris, land on the Goodwin Sands to make the terrible discovery that England has been submerged beneath the sea and the ocean bed has risen up.

Meeting Sam, a stoker from a derelict freighter, they set out and discover a loaded tanker from which they fill the fuel tanks of their machine. Taking off, they make a brief survey, only to find that Western Europe is also submerged. Returning to their base, they hoist the British flag and formally claim the new land on behalf of and in the name of the British Empire.

"What I suggest we do now," said Akers, when he and Ferris had returned to the cabin, "is use the bomber and explore this land as fully as possible. There may be quite a number of castaways alive on it, and if there is it would be rather a good idea, I think, to form ourselves into a camp, or colony, because goodness knows how long it'll be before we're rescued."

"If ever we are rescued," said Ferris glumly. "Ye gods, Akers, just imagine if we've got to spend the rest of our lives in a place like this!"

"Oh, come, man!" responded Akers cheerily. "It won't be as bad as that. Rescue can only be a matter of weeks, or months, at the most. And in the meantime, as I say, I suggest we make a thorough search of the country. It's quite possible that there are people on it in urgent need of assistance."

"Yes, that's true," nodded Ferris. "Right-ho! We'll start in the morning."

And in the morning, after giving the machine a thorough overhaul and placing stores and two loaded drums proved difficult and laborious, owing to as thorough a search as possible of this strange land which had risen up from out of the sea.

Keeping a few miles inland, they flew as slowly as possible at a height of five hundred feet, and continually Ferris swept the desolate and barren ground below with a pair of powerful glasses which Sam had found aboard the tanker.

Wreckage and derelicts they sighted in plenty, token that it would be long before they would want for food. After being in the air for an hour, they saw their first sign of life in the form of a tattered ensign flying on the broken foremast of a small and rusty-hulled cargo boat lying wedged amongst some great rocks.

"What do you make of it?" asked Ferris, handing the glasses to Akers.

Pressing the glasses to his eyes, Akers earnestly studied the derelict.

"There is no one moving about," he said, "and the noise of our engines should have attracted anyone down there. But that flag must obviously have been nailed to the mast after the vessel was cast away. We'd better investigate."

Pushing forward the control column, he closed the throttle and circled downwards. At less than fifty feet above



With a fearful snarl, the massive black hound hurled itself at Akers and his companions!

the rusty hull of the small tramp he opened up the engines again, and, roaring low over the derelict, landed the machine on a stretch of sand a mile or more away.

The subsequent trek back to the wreck proved difficult and laborious owing to the broken and uneven nature of the boulder-strewn ground. But they accomplished it at length, and as they drew near, they saw that the name of the vessel was the Black Swan.

She was of no more than one thousand tons burden, and, like almost every other derelict they had sighted during their sojourn on that desolate land, all that remained of her deck-house, bridge, and galley was splintered wreckage.

There was no movement aboard her—nothing to give any token of life at all except the tattered ensign which flapped lazily at the top of the broken foremast.

"It looks to me," said Akers, "as though she's been abandoned. But someone's been moving about here"—he indicated footprints on the sand between the boulders—"as these tracks very plainly show."

The derelict, jammed hard and fast on the rocks, was lying almost upright, and mounting a rope ladder trailing over-side, Akers gained the deck, followed by Ferris and Sam.

The wrecked and deserted galley

showed signs of recent cooking having taken place there, and, going below, Akers thrust open a cabin door at the foot of the ladder.

As he stepped across the threshold he came to an abrupt halt, for seated at a table, his back to the door and his head resting on his arms asprawl on the table, was a man in reefers jacket, serge trousers, and sea-boots.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Ferris, staring over Akers' shoulder. "Asleep, is he?"

Akers did not answer. Instead, he stepped quickly forward, and, placing his hand on the man's shoulder, looked at him for one brief instant. Then he turned to Ferris and Sam, and his face was grim.

"He is not asleep," he said. "He's dead!"

From the table he picked up an automatic lying beside the cold and rigid fingers of the man.

"He's shot himself?" ejaculated Ferris.

"Apparently so," nodded Akers.

"Well, I'm not surprised, if he found himself here alone!" said Ferris, with a shudder. "Hallo! What's that, Akers?"

"The ship's log-book," replied Akers, examining a thin volume which had been lying open on the table. "It looks as though he's been writing in it."

For a brief moment he studied the closely written entry in the log-book, then, closing the book, he placed it on the table, and slipping the automatic into his pocket, turned to Ferris and Sam.

"There is some mystery about this shooting," he said. "But before we do anything else we'd better get the poor fellow out of here."

Some time later, having completed the sad task of burying the dead man deep in the sand, a last prayer for him being said by Akers, they returned to the cabin.

"What's this you said about a mystery?" demanded Ferris. "Personally, I should have thought his being alone in this confounded place was sufficient to make him shoot himself."

"He wasn't alone, that's just it," replied Akers, picking up the log. "He appears to have had at least three companions. Listen to this!"

Ferris and Sam listened in silence as Akers commenced to read from the log:

"Although it cannot be long I, Martin Ratler, mate of the Black Swan, have lost all count of the days which have passed since we were cast away on this terrible land of silence and death. Our bearings show it to be the bed of the English Channel, which in itself is enough to send a man mad."

"How many others have lived through that awful storm and tidal wave I do not know. We have seen no living creature at all except ourselves. At first we were buoyed up by the hope of rescue. But no rescue has come. Why is everything so silent? Why has a rescue party not appeared?"

"Day after day it is the same. Only once has there been a sign that the outside world still exists. A few days ago—I have lost count just when—Mattison said he heard the noise of aeroplane engines. But if he did, the noise was soon lost in the distance and, maybe, it never existed except in his imagination."

"It was that same night that Mattison died. The Evil Thing got him. We found him next morning lying on the sand with his throat torn out. Carson was the first to be taken by the Evil Thing. That was three or four nights—I cannot be exact—before it got Mattison. We had heard its cries out there in the dusk like the dreadful wailing of a lost soul, and when morning came we found Carson on the deck with his throat torn out."

"Last night, Moffat and I heard the Thing howling again, and this morning I found Moffat lying on the floor of his cabin with his throat torn out."

"Always it is the throat which the Evil Thing goes for. It has got Mattison, Carson, and Moffat. I am the only one left, and it will be my turn next; my nerve is breaking. What this Evil Thing is I do not know, but its wails are a message of death, and here alone, my three companions dead, I dread hearing the awful sound again."

"Perhaps if I had the courage to live on, rescue would come. But I feel in my heart that before then the Evil Thing would get me. Therefore, I am taking the only way out, for I can see nothing ahead save death or madness."

"Signed,

"MARTIN RATLER."

"Poor devil!" exclaimed Ferris, as Akers concluded. "Quite mad, undoubtedly!"

"I'm not so sure," said Akers. "This explanation as to why he decided to shoot himself, whilst being somewhat disjointed, is lucid enough."

"But, look here, man!" exclaimed Ferris, staring. "That reference to an Evil Thing. Surely you don't believe that?"

Akers looked him full in the eyes.

"Have you not yet learned, Ferris," he said quietly, "that in this grey and sinister land anything is possible?"

"Then you really think that those three fellows, Mattison, Carson, and Moffat, were killed as he says?"

"I do!" affirmed Akers. "And what is more, it's a mystery of which I intend to get to the bottom!"

"How?" demanded Ferris.

"By spending at least one night aboard here," returned Akers. "In some shape or form an Evil Thing is moving abroad under cover of night. It has already killed three men and caused the death of a fourth, and I'm going to find out just what it is."

Ferris was silent a moment, then he picked up the log-book and perused it.

"Yes, I think perhaps you're right, Akers," he said, after a while. "Personally, I hate unsolved mysteries, and if we don't investigate this one I'll always keep wondering if this Thing actually existed or not!"

Having decided, therefore, to remain at the Black Swan Akers and Sam returned to the bomber to fix the picket ropes and engine and cockpit tarpaulins.

Left alone on deck, Ferris seated himself on the hatch and gazed out across the grey stretch of boulders, the desolation of which even the sunlight could not dispel.

The tragic tale told in the log seemed almost too fantastic for credence. But Akers had been right when he had said that anything was possible in this sinister land of mystery and death.

Returning from the machine with Akers, Sam prepared a meal, for there was food in plenty aboard the derelict. Then followed a period of inactivity whilst the sun dipped slowly down towards the distant horizon and the coming night shrouded in grey shadow the hushed and silent land.

It was when dusk had deepened into night that Akers, Ferris, and Sam took up their watch for the Evil Thing. Seated on the deck in the darkness, they conversed in low and desultory tones. But each was on the qui vive for the slightest sound.

An hour dragged by, and then another, but nothing broke the tense and brooding stillness save the low murmur of their voices.

"I knew it," said Ferris restlessly, when the hour was nearing midnight. "We're on a wild-goose chase, Akers, and I vote we turn in—"

Abruptly he broke off, rigid and motionless, as faint and from away in the darkness came a thin, long-drawn wail. Eerily it rose on the still night air, then died slowly away.

"Ye gods!" gasped Ferris, and his face was a white blur in the darkness.

"Listen!" warned Akers, and from his pocket he drew the automatic with which the mate of the Black Swan had shot himself.

A moment of tense silence followed. Then there came again through the stillness a long-drawn wail, rising in blood-chilling cadence to die slowly and sobbingly away.

"It ain't human, whatever it is,"

muttered Sam, taking a fresh grip on the makeshift cudgel which he had fashioned for himself from a piece of wreckage.

Another period of silence was broken by the wailing cry, so much closer now that to the ears of the three men its timbre had deepened into that of a dreadful howl.

"It's coming this way, whatever it is!" exclaimed Akers.

"Yes, and coming pretty quickly!" observed Ferris shakily, as he felt a strange stirring at his scalp as from near at hand in the darkness there rose again that awful long-drawn howl.

"Can you see anything, sir?" asked Sam hoarsely of Akers.

"No, nothing," muttered Akers, peering into the darkness. "But the Thing's almost here."

"I can feel it!" shuddered Ferris.

Akers and Sam made no response. But practical and unimaginative men though they were, they too, were conscious of some evil presence close at hand.

Then suddenly there came a soft thud somewhere near them on the deck and two eyes gleamed blood-red through the darkness.

"Look!" screamed Ferris.

Simultaneously with a fearful snarl, the Thing hurled itself at the three men. In that same split instant of time Akers' revolver cracked viciously, lurid flame stabbing through the darkness.

The impetus of the Thing's spring carried it on and it crashed into Akers, sending him heavily to the deck. Sam leapt forward and brought the heavy cudgel down with crushing force on the Thing's head, smashing in the skull.

"It's a hound!" exclaimed Ferris. "A great brute of a dog!"

Hastily Sam produced a hurricane lantern and lighted it, and by its dim illumination they examined the dead beast.

It was a massive black hound, but so pitifully thin and emaciated that its great ribs showed plainly through the skin.

"It must have been desperate with hunger," said Akers weakly. "Poor brute, I suppose it came from one of the wrecks."

"And was probably mad," commented Ferris. "Well, thank goodness we've killed it!" He mopped at his brow with a handkerchief. "But I must say it's been a dashed unpleasant experience."

The Land of Yesteryear!

SHORTLY afterwards, having dumped the body of the hound overside to be buried in the morning, they turned in, this time sleeping on deck.

The trio were astir with the dawn, and after breakfasting on a meal cooked by Sam, they buried the hound in the sand and thankfully quitted the ill-fated Black Swan.

Reaching their machine they soon had the picket ropes untied and engine and cockpit tarpaulins off. A few moments later the stillness of early morning was shattered by the reverberating roar of the powerful engines, and after running them up on brief test, Akers took the air with Ferris seated beside him and Sam in the rear cockpit.

At a height of five hundred feet Akers thundered westwards the while Ferris continually scanned the ground below.

Wreckage and derelicts could be seen

in plenty, but never a sign of life at all, and it was not until they had reached the point where the land mass swung north that Ferris touched Akers on the arm and handed him the glasses. "What do you make of that down there?" he asked.

Pressing the glasses to his eyes, Akers focused them, and through the powerful lens studied a great scattered mass of blackened ruins on the ground below. "It's been a town of some sort once," he said.

"Yes, and a big town," nodded Ferris. "What about investigating it?"

"We may as well," assented Akers, handing back the glasses and turning again to his controls.

Throttling down, he pushed forward the control column and the bomber went gliding earthwards to land on a flat stretch of sand. Waiting until the machine had come to a jolting halt the three men vacated the cockpits and stood for a moment looking about them.

Throughout their flight westwards the ground had steadily become more and more rugged, and about a mile away a gaunt and barren hill reared itself some three hundred feet into the air.

Between them and the hill lay the scattered ruins of what had, indeed, at one time been a big town. Drawing his chart from his pocket, Akers glanced at it and then looked queerly at Ferris.

"Can you name it?" he asked, nodding towards the ruins.

Ferris shook his head.

"No," he answered. "Can you?"

Akers pointed north-eastwards towards the sea.

"Over yonder," he said, "lay Land's End and the coast of Cornwall. Therefore—and you will pardon my flight of imagination—I fancy that this is the country of Lyonesse and these the ruins of Camelot."

"Camelot!" gasped Ferris. "Are you serious, Akers?"

"I was never more so," responded Akers. "Both Cornish and Breton folk-lore is full of references to Lyonesse which was supposed to lie off the coast of Cornwall. Come on, let's have a look at these ruins. We may be able to tell their period by the architecture."

They moved forward and were soon clambering over great stones blackened with age and long immersion in the sea; stones which had been hewn and fashioned by long-dead hands.

Although in many places the ruins were buried beneath the sand, there were other parts of that age-old city where foundations and roads were apparent, and once they came to the ruins of what had obviously been a great castle.

"Camelot, or I'm a Dutchman!" exclaimed Ferris, seating himself at length on a big carved stone which at one time had been part of a turret. "By jove, Akers, can't you picture it:

"An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two—"

He broke off, gazing about him, hands clasped between his knees.

"When I was a kid," he went on, "I used to love those verses of Tennyson, and I couldn't read enough yarns about King Arthur and Sir Lancelot and the whole of that Noble Company of the Table Round. And there's nobody going to convince me that this isn't

Camelot. My hat, Akers, to think that perhaps they rode past this very spot, journeying out to seek adventure in the trackless realms of Lyonesse or returning from some foray in triumph to Arthur's court."

"I understand!" smiled Akers.

And indeed he understood, for he himself felt strangely stirred at the thought that perhaps in their time these ruins had seen grand scenes of pageantry and splendour; had seen fair ladies, armoured knights, and all the golden pomp of Camelot, until had come that fateful day when for long:

"... the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their Lord."

Yes, in the hushed stillness of these age-old ruins it was easy to dream of days long past. And if this was not Camelot then what city could it be, for history spoke of no other country here save Lyonesse?

Fascinated by their discovery, Akers and Ferris spent the remainder of the day exploring the ruins, and many were

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the pieces of broken masonry they found which were unmistakably of British medieval times.

The greatest find of all, however, was a rusted and battered shield. To whom had it belonged and what onslaughts of sword and lance had it withstood? None would ever know. But after centuries had passed it had been delivered up by the sea to be handled once again by man.

With the dusk, Sam was dispatched to the machine for stores, and there amidst the ruins of Camelot—for Camelot they insisted upon calling it—Akers and Ferris dined.

They turned in at length after arranging that Sam should take first watch, Akers the second, and Ferris the third. For by now they knew enough of this strange and desolate land to realise that a watch was advisable if they were to sleep with any sense of security from attack by some giant crustacean or attack by some other stranded denizen of the deep.

The night passed uneventfully, however, and when the rim of the sun was creeping up above the distant horizon they left Camelot, determined some day to return, and filling up the tank of the bomber from one of the petrol drums aboard, they clambered up into the cockpits.

"Unless we find another oil vessel,"

said Akers, "we'll have to turn back. We've got just about enough juice left in the drums to see us back to the tanker."

A few minutes later they were in the air and thundering northwards, keeping a few miles inland and flying at a height of five hundred feet.

As before, Ferris scanned the barren, boulder-strewn ground below with his glasses, and it was after they had been in the air about an hour that he suddenly straightened up and pointed eastwards, towards where a thin spiral of smoke was rising into the still air of morning from a spot near where the shimmering sea lapped the rocky shore.

"There's someone yonder with a fire going!" he exclaimed.

Akers nodded, and pressing on the rudder bar, swung the machine eastwards towards the pillar of smoke.

Thrusting forward the control column he lost height and a few moments later the bomber roared low over a camp-fire beside which two men, clad only in trousers and shirts, were standing waving frantically at the machine.

Closing down the throttle, Akers circled in search of a landing-place, and selecting one of the many stretches of sand below, he brought the machine gliding down.

It was a perfect enough landing, but as the tired wheels of the undercarriage touched the sand they sank deeply, stopping all way on the swiftly moving machine and causing her to pitch nose foremost into the sand with tail whanging up.

Hurled forward against the dashboard and control column by the force of the crash, Akers and Ferris, bruised and shaken, struggled out of the cockpit and joined Sam who, with a gash across his forehead, had already dropped to the sand and was standing staring dazedly at the wrecked machine.

"That's ripped it," groaned Ferris, lifting first one squealing boot and then another from out of the wet and yielding sand. "Even if we can level her up, she'll never take off in this confounded quicksand."

"She's settling now," said Akers grimly, eyeing the crumpled nose and the undercarriage wheels which were already sinking deeper into the sand. "All we can do is salvage our stores and gear. Get the compass off the dashboard, Ferris. Can you lend a hand, Sam?"

Sam could and did, and whilst he and Akers salvaged the stores from the rear cockpit, Ferris stripped the dashboard of watch and compass and collected his charts, navigation instruments and Very pistol from the forward cockpit.

They were still busy when there arrived on the scene the two castaways whom they had sighted and who were the innocent and indirect cause of the crash.

The newcomers were a couple of rough-looking and unshaven fellows.

At a word from Akers they willingly set to work salvaging the stores and gear, and at length the slowly sinking machine was stripped of everything that mattered.

"Sorry you crashed, mister," said one of the men, when the final journey had been made from the doomed bomber to the rocks which fringed the sand. "You're from the mainland, I suppose?"

"No," said Akers, "we're not. I'll explain that in a minute. Who are you?"

"We were cast away aboard the trawler, *Kylo*, after the tidal wave had disabled us," replied the other. "My

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name's Baines and my mate is Crawley."

"Well, Baines, and you, Crawley," said Akers, "I've got some bad news for you, I'm afraid. You asked if we were from the mainland. There is no mainland left, if you meant England."

He thereupon launched into a brief but concise account of the catastrophe which had overwhelmed Britain and the whole of Western Europe.

At first Baines and Crawley listened open-mouthed, then their incredulity began to give way to anger and impatience.

"Here, chuck it!" cut in Baines roughly. "We're not believing any of those lies. What do you mean by telling us that England and Scotland and France and all them places are below the sea?"

"They are below the sea," returned Akers patiently. "I know it sounds a bit incredible at first and takes a bit of getting used to, but it's none the less true."

"I don't believe it!" snapped Baines. "And let me tell you something, mister"—his fists clenched menacingly. "My mate and I have had a pretty rough time since we were cast away, so don't try taking a rise out of us, or there'll be trouble, see? We've stood just about all a man can stand, and if you're trying to be funny—"

"I'm not trying to be funny," cut in Akers wearily. "If you don't believe that Britain and Western Europe have been submerged, just take a look at us, will you? Do we look like a rescue party which has just come from the mainland?"

Doubt and indecision crept into the bloodshot eyes of Baines and Crawley as they surveyed the lean and unshaven faces of Akers, Ferris, and Sam, and noted the salt-rimed field boots and seaweed-stained leather flying jackets of the two former.

Sam, also, in his rough serge trousers and collarless shirt, did not seem to fit in, somehow, with their conception of a rescue party fresh from the mainland. And it was Sam who spoke, driving grudging conviction home on Baines and Crawley that Akers had, indeed, spoken the truth.

"Listen, fellers!" said Sam. "This gent, Mr. Akers, ain't lying to you. You can take that from me. The mainland's gone, and this land what we're on now is the bed of the Irish Sea. You say you've had a rough time. Well, you ain't had no rougher a time than what we have. Show 'em that chart of yours, Mr. Akers."

Akers did so, explaining how he had roughly drawn it after a brief aerial survey, and telling of the many and

repeated bearings which he and Ferris had taken.

"Well, and now that you've crashed your aeroplane, what are you going to do?" Baines growled.

"That is what we must discuss!" answered Akers shortly.

And discuss it he did with Ferris and Sam, whilst Baines and Crawley stood listening in sullen silence, and eventually it was decided to trek back to Camelot, and there establish their headquarters.

"We were making the present flight," Akers explained to Baines, "to try to discover if there were any besides ourselves alive on this barren land. Near this place, Camelot, of which we have been speaking, there is quite a high hill. On the top of this hill we'll light a bonfire, which we'll keep going day and night. Not only will such a beacon attract any castaway who sights it, but it will act as a signal to any rescue ship or aeroplane."

"Then you think we will be rescued sooner or later?" growled Baines.

"I am sure of it," replied Akers.

Baines nodded.

"Well, I hope it's soon!" he grunted.

"And as we'd better stick together, Crawley and I will come with you to Camelot!"

That Baines and Crawley were far from being an acquisition to their party, Akers and his two companions soon discovered.

They were a pair of rough, lazy fellows, for they looked askance at Akers when he split the stores into five equal loads and ordered them each to shoulder one.

However, they said nothing then, and the southward trek to Camelot began, Baines and Crawley, with packs on their shoulders, slouching along by themselves in the wake of Akers, Ferris, and Sam.

"Confound those fellows!" exclaimed Ferris, glancing back. "They certainly weren't worth losing the machine for!"

"I agree with you," said Akers. "It's not much use kicking ourselves now, though."

"No," agreed Ferris. "But somehow or other I don't think we're going to be a particularly happy party!"

And that forecast proved perfectly correct, for trouble broke out when Akers called a halt for the midday meal, and ordered Baines and Crawley to find some driftwood for the fire.

"No, thanks!" said Baines, slipping off his pack and seating himself on a boulder. "You and your mates go and look for some. I've done enough for one morning!"

(Baines and Crawley look like causing a spot of bother, what say you? Be sure and read next week's exciting chapters of this powerful yarn boys!)

THE VENGEANCE OF THE WOLF!

(Continued from page 24.)

hands. He sagged against a tree, his fat knees giving way under him, too terrified to realise that his lucky shot had struck home and that the danger was past.

"Ow, ow, ow! Oooogh!" babbled Bunter.

"The jaguar—"

"Bunter—"

"Dead!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"Bunter, old bean—"

"My only hat!"

It was a howl of astonishment from the juniors. Bob Cherry rushed across to Bunter and clapped him on a fat shoulder.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Wow! Keep him off! I say, you fellows— Ow! I say—"

"He's dead!" roared Bob.

"Eh!"

"Dead as a doornail!"

"Wha-at!"

Bunter blinked. He blinked again. He blinked at the juniors; he blinked at the dreadful form stretched on the earth. He gasped.

"Did—did—did I hit him?"

"Looks as if you did, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Jolly old miracle!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The Caraya had leaped out of the den, knife in hand. He stood over the dead jaguar, gazing at it. Billy Bunter pulled himself together. The jaguar was dead—Bunter had shot it. That his shot, fired almost at random, had struck the brute in a vital spot by the wildest chance was a mere detail—a detail that Bunter decided to forget at once.

"Morto!" said the Indian.

Bunter swaggered forward.

"Pretty good shot—what?" he said. To the Indian it looked a marvellous shot. The jaguar had been shot through the brain—killed on the spot.

"Rather lucky I came along, you fellows!" said Bunter breezily.

Billy Bunter seemed to be walking on air as the hunting-party went back to the montaria. Like the young lady at the tea-party, he swelled visibly.

"After this," said Bob Cherry, "there'll be no holding Bunter!"

And Bob was right—there wasn't!

THE END

(Who says another thrilling yarn like the one you've just read? All of you? Then look out for "THE GREY-FRIARS DIAMOND DIGGERS!" You'll find it in next Saturday's MAGNET, which will also contain MORE STUNNING PICTURES for your magic spectacles!)



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When Answering Advertisements Please Mention This Paper. 14-5-36

Wit and Wisdom Sparkle in the Sixth!

Says H. VERNON-SMITH

As everybody knows, the Sixth have all the brains in the Sixth. When you get a number of them together, as you do of an evening in Prefects' Common-room, the wit and wisdom, to put it in Inky's English, are simply terrific!

For this reason I've always had a dizzy ambition to get among the "big noises" unobserved and listen to some of their profound discourse and rapier-like repartee.

I never thought that ambition would be fulfilled this term. But it has been. Last night, I gumbled on a pair of beetling eyebrows and bared my fangs in a savage snarl in the hope that I might be mistaken for Loder. Sure enough, when I strolled into the Prefects' room, the Sixth Form men didn't give me a second glance—and I was able to bury myself in an armchair behind a newspaper and listen as much as I liked!

And do those prefects talk? Does their philosophical eloquence flow out in a seemingly never-ending stream? Do their dazzling shafts of wit leave you wondering whether lightning is dancing round the room? I'll tell the world!

Just to give you a slight idea of what it's like, here are a few of the gems I heard:

"Dashed rotten day!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Mind closing the window?"

"No, old top!"

"I say, a fag poked his tongue out at me this morning."

"Cheek!"

"Oh, rather. I clouted him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyone like a game of draughts?"

"No fear. There are quite enough draughts about since they've taken the screen from the door without starting more of 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! What a scream you are!"

"Awfully funny! 'Draughts'—'draughts'! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pretty intellectual, what? I can tell you, by the time I came away I was breathless with admiration.

Or breathless from some cause or other, anyway!

(We strongly advise our readers to take Smithy with a large grain of salt!—Ed.)



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 179.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

March 14th, 1936.



Have You Cockroaches In Your Study?

Asks HAROLD SKINNER

Have you cockroaches in your study? I have, and they're beginning to make themselves a dashed nuisance. It's true there are only two of them, but I know for a fact that the moment I go out they invite in all their pals and start wading into my grub, so there might well be a dozen!

While I'm there, of course, they lie low and say 'nuffin'; but even so, it's bad enough to put up with them, crawling about the place.

The moment I come in I can feel those ugly insects giving me black looks.

But they don't give me half a chance to get at them; I only have to raise my foot to send them scuttling for cover like mad!

As to squashing them with words, that's utterly impossible. As Micky Desmond once said about something else, it's like water on a duck's back—goes in one ear and out of the other!

But I'd give a lot to get rid of 'em, and if any of you chaps would like to swap 'em for a couple of tame rats or a brace of worms, the deal's on!

That is, of course, assuming that they don't soon make amends for scoffing all my tuck while I was out the other evening. If they do make up for that, then I shall be quite willing to go on entertaining them.

And now you know all about the cockroaches in my study.

Or almost all. I nearly forgot to tell you their names.

They're called Snoop and Stott!

The Head kept his ears open—and a few minnits later, received the shock of his life!

"Gentlemen, chaps and fellows!" cried Sir Frederick.

"What I have to say can be said in a very few words. THE GUVVERNORS HAVE DECIDED TO ABOLISH ALL FORMS OF PUNISHMENT AT ST. SAM'S!"

"Few!"

"From now on," cried Sir Frederick in ringing tones, "the birch is banned and the cane is kyboshed! Lines and gatings, too, are a thing of the past! The rain of cruelty is over! Hail the new era of kindness!"

For a moment the boys were dumb with astonishment. Then their joy found expression in a deafening roar of cheering.

"Hooray!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!"

Doctor Birchmell went back to his study almost in a state of collapse.

Scarcely had he sat down before there was a thunderous rat-tat at the door and in walked Swotter and Swankleigh and Barrell, grinning all over their dials.

"Please, sir, we've come to be birched black and blue!" they cried in chorus.

The Head pointed limply to the door.

"Birchings are off!" he muttered. "Go!"

And the three went—and outside the Head heard their roar of mocking laughter echoing away down the passageway.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A new era had dawned with a vengeance—and it looked like being an era of Skoolboy Dictators!

(Doctor Birchmell without a birch! Can he survive it? For the answer read next week's laughable instalment.)

The SKOOLBOY DICTATORS!



First Instalment of a Ten-Smiles-a-Minute Serial by DICKY NUGENT

Frederick Funguss looked out. He started violently as he saw Doctor Birchmell dancing up and down the passageway with hot coffee streaming down him.

"Birchemall!" he cried sternly. "I trusted that this is not an absurd practical joke of yours!"

"Grooooo!" Nunno, Sir Frederick!"

"It was this foolish woman, spilling coffee over me. Ow! It's burnt my neck and scalded my face!"

"Eggstraordinary!" barked Sir Frederick. "Surely you are big enough to be seen, Birchmell!"

"Ow! Ye-es, Sir Frederick! But you see, I was crawling on the floor, looking for a collar-stud I dropped!"

gasped the Head. "Please don't think I was eaves-dropping at the keyhole. I assure you I wouldn't stoop so low!"

"Well, well, we will say no more about it!" said the Chairman of the Guvvernors gruffly. "Pick up the day-bree, my good woman, and go back and make some more coffee. Birchmell! I advise you to postpone looking for your collar-stud till we have gone!"

"Ow! Yes, Sir Frederick!"

Certainly, Sir Frederick!" gasped the Head.

And after that he fairly fled from the scene of his humiliation!

There was a dangerous gleam in Doctor Birchmell's somewhat greenish eyes, as he tramped off to the Form-rooms. The nollidge that the Guvvernors were dissatisfied with the skool had made him wild to begin with; and the hot coffee had given him grounds for feeling wilder still.

If the Guvvernors hadn't been on the premises, he would have seized his birch and made a toor of the skool, giving out wackings galore!

But he couldn't very well do that at present, so he did the next best thing and went round booking up wackings instead!

Crash!

He bust into the Sixth Form Room like a tornaydo. Monsure Froggy, the French master, who was taking the Sixth in German, looked quite alarmed.

"Doctaire Birchmell! Vat is ze mattaire, isn't it?" he began; but the Head cut him short.

"Shut uppy-vo, Froggy!" he snapped, lapsing into French with skollarly ease.

Then he turned to the Form and barked: "Swotter!"

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Swotter.

"There is a blob of red ink on your collar. Report to me after classes and I will birch you black and blue!"

Swotter stared at the Head almost incredulously. Burleigh, the skool kaptin, jumped to his feet indignantly.

"Sir! I should like to remind you that Swotter is a senior and a prefect!" he cried. "Ain't you rather hitting below the belt, sir?"

"Certainly. As a matter of fact, I intend dusting the seat of his trousers!" retorted Doctor Birchmell. "Sit down, Budge. Froggy! Proceede with the lesson."

And he swept out of the Sixth Form Room, leaving the Sixth almost paralysed with rage and surprise.

Doctor Birchmell was properly on the warpath now. In search of further victims for his birch, he entered the Fifth Form Room like a hurricane.

Hair Guggenheimer, the German master, who was taking the Fifth in French, hastily jumped off his stool and boughed.

"Hair Doctor! Vor der matter is!"

"Shut up mit you, don't it, mine hair!" snapped the Head, switching off into German with the same fluency as he had previously spoken in French. Then he faced the Fifth and roared:

"Swankleigh!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Swankleigh.

"How many inches are there in a foot?"

"Twelve, sir!"

"TWELVE!" shrieked the Head. "You have the ordassity to stand there and tell me there are twelve inches in a foot!"

"Well, sir, there are, aren't there?" gasped Swankleigh.

"How is it possible to tell before you know whose foot I am talking about?" hooted Doctor Birchmell.

"Do you mean to tell me that every foot is the same?"

"That my foot, for instance, mezzures the same number of inches as Midgett minor's?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then you are konvikted out of your own mouth! Report to me after classes, Swankleigh, and I will endeavour to birch some branes into you!"

And the Head quitted the Form-room, leaving the Fifth gasping.

Half-a-minnit later a yew-man cyclone entered the Fourth Form Room, and Mr. Lickham of the Fourth promptly stopped his lecture on joggrafy as he reckornised the Head. This time, Doctor Birchmell turned his attention to the Form at once.

"Barrell!" he cried. "You are hiding something under your desk! Bring it to me immediately!"

Tubby Barrell, wobbling like a jelly with fear, rolled out before the class and handed the Head a small slab of toffy.

The Head's glare as he took it was simply terrifying.

"Toffy!" he roared. "Toffy in class! Are there no limmits to what you yung raskals will do?"

He stuffed the toffy into his own mouth with a lightning-like movement and glared at Tubby.

"For this offence there can be but one punishment!" he cried. "Report to me after classes, and I will birch you till you shriek for the mercy you will never get!"

"Yarooooooo!"

Ere Tubby's wail of woe

had died away, Doctor Birchmell had bounded out of the room—bent on roping in yet more viktns from the Third, Second and First Forms.

But before he could finish his toor, there came an amazing interruption. It was the clanging of the skool bell for a General Assembly!

Doctor Birchmell was staggered. The only man at St. Sam's with the power to order a General Assembly was himself. Yet, in spite of the fact that he had told nobody, somebody had told the bell!

Like a man in a dream, the Head joined the crowds that were swarming out of the Form-rooms.

When he reached Big Hall, he soon realised who had called the skool together, for on the platform were the entire Board of Guvvernors. The Head

galloped up to Sir Frederick in a state of grate eggstement.

"Sir Frederick Funguss! What is the meaning of this here?" he inquired.

"Keep your ears open, Birchmell, and you'll soon hear!" was Sir Frederick's kryptic answer.

(Continued from foot of column 1.)

glue, so that chaps won't have a chance to cut up rough over their borrowed belongings.

As an extra precaution, introduce your aunt as soon as you spot any fellow whose property you've confiscated.

The introduction, by the way, should be brief and informal. Just say: "This is So-and-so; he's an awful worm." Then step behind your aunt and make derisive faces at the embarrassed fellow whose hand she's shaking!

Invite one or two hard eggs like Bolsover major to the tea. After your aunt has gone, they will then obligingly chip in when your infuriated victims attack you.

I think that's about all I can tell you just now. Mind you, I'm not recommending this method of aunt-entertaining myself. It's Hazeldene's patent. I'm merely one of the mugs!

Study No. 7 in the Remove passage possesses four distinctions—in Peter Todd it has the tallest, in Alonzo Todd the frailest, in Dutton the dearest, and in Bunter the fattest fellow in the Remove. They "rub along" astonishingly well, however, under the "legal" guidance of the schoolboy lawyer, Peter Todd!

Asked whether he preferred his heavily-jewelled turban to a Greyfriars school cap, "Inky" plumped instantly for the less troublesome cap. He prizes the cricket cap awarded him for sterling bowling performances last summer more than the most dazzling turban. Bunter would sooner have a turban—and pawn the jewels!

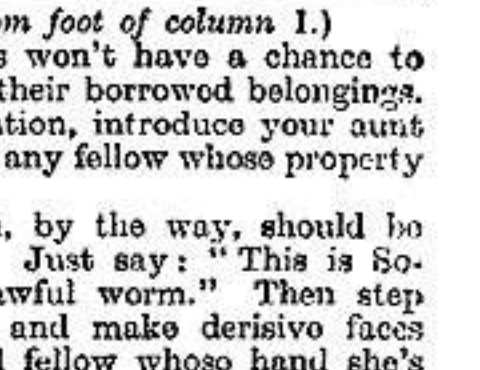
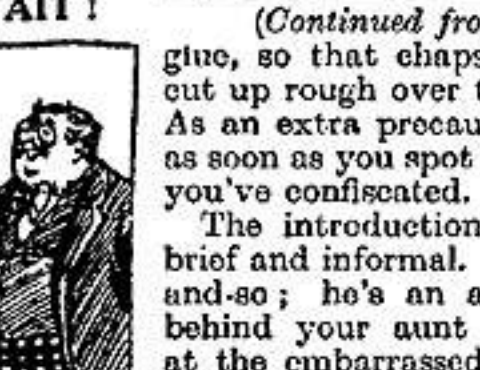
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WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



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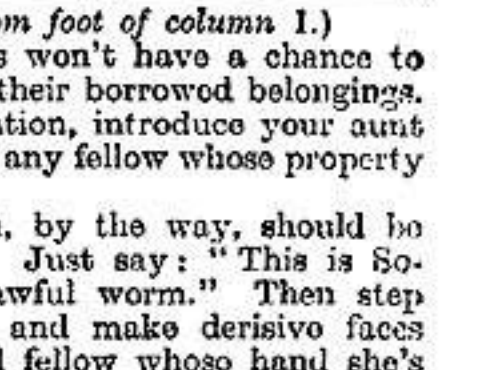
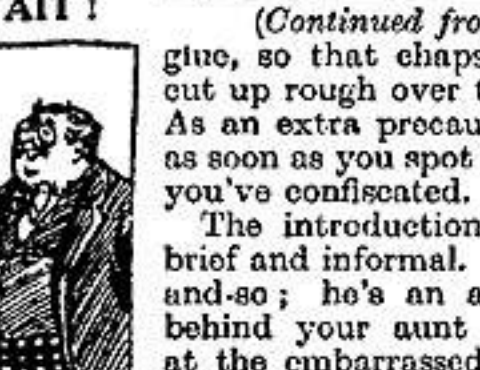
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Entertaining An Aunt

By SQUIFF

The first thing to do when you're entertaining an aunt is to lay in a good supply of tuck for tea. If you're on the rocks and the other chaps in the study can't do the needful, borrow all the tuck available in studies at the other end of the passage. It saves time and disappointment, incidentally, if you help yourself without asking the owners' permission.

Decorate the study tastefully with flowers pinched from other fellows' garden plots.

Put on your best bib and tucker before meeting your aunt. If short of clobber, take what you want from other chaps' lockers.

When your aunt arrives, stick to her like

(Continued at foot of extreme right-hand column.)