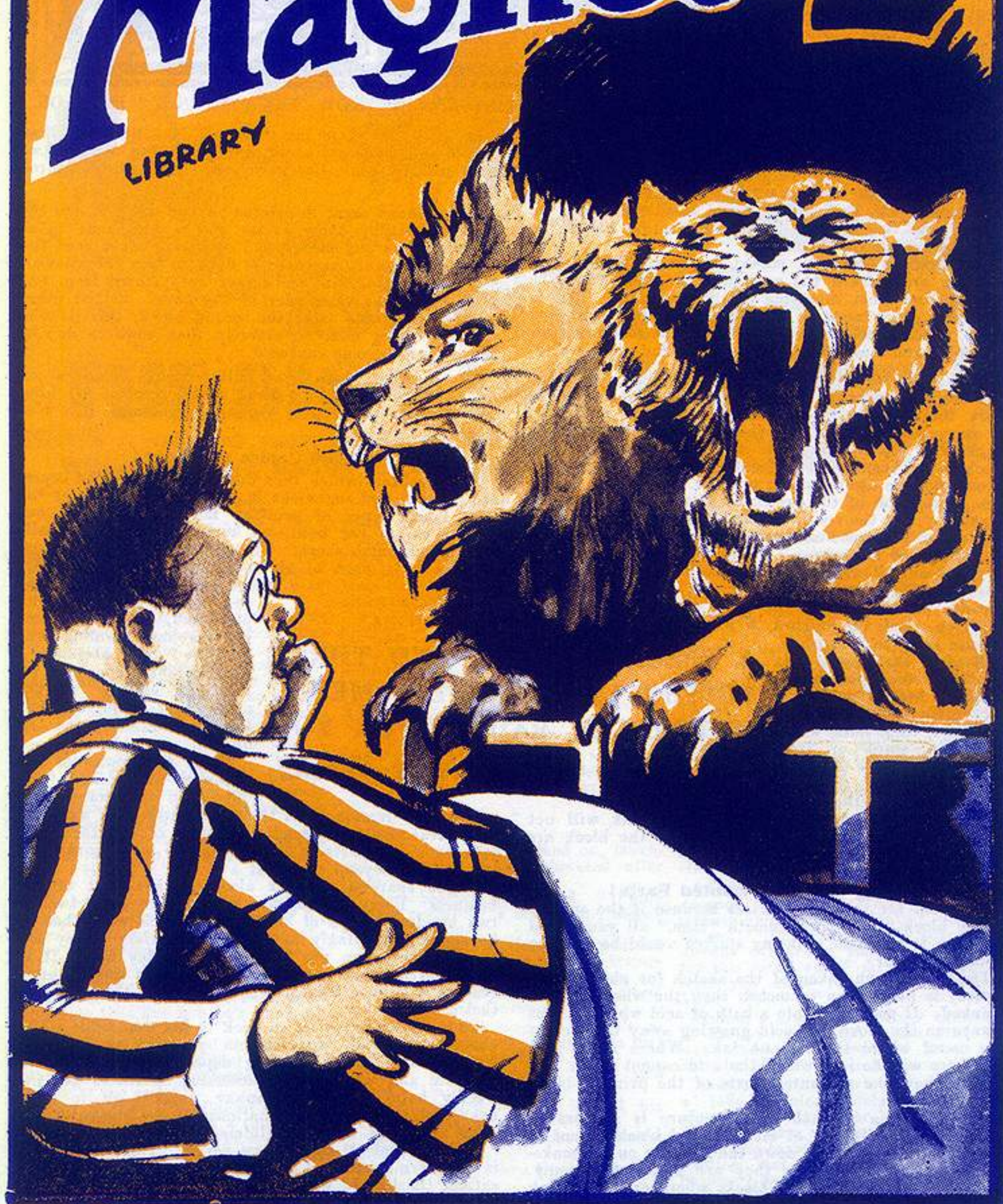


FREE GIFTS FOR YOU, CHUMS! (See page 14 inside.)

No. 1,091. Vol. XXXV. Week Ending January 12th, 1929.
EVERY SATURDAY.

The Magnet 2[¢]

LIBRARY



A SHOCK FOR BUNTER, THE BIG GAME HUNTER!

William George Hunter was dreaming of shooting lions and tigers, but he didn't expect to find 'em in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars! (See the splendid story of the chums of Greyfriars—inside.)



THE CONCLUDING ARTICLE IN THIS NOVEL SERIES TELLING HOW THE "MAGNET" IS MADE.

Ready to Read!

IN this story of the making of the MAGNET we have necessarily had to skip some important processes or deal with them scantily. But though we left the MAGNET last week in its almost completed form, we cannot skip the making of the illustration blocks, so must hark back just a bit.

The artists' work is passed by your Editor, the sketches are marked the required size they are to be printed, and from them the blocks are made. This is done in a department of the works of the Amalgamated Press, which is acknowledged to be the largest and best-equipped, and most efficiently staffed in the whole world.

The Process Department!

A large number of big cameras are constantly at work there, photographing the sketches or photos to be reproduced. Each enormous camera runs on rails to allow of fine focusing, the picture to be made into a block being suspended in front of the camera with a strong electric light glaring upon it.

A photograph of the sketch or photo is taken in the usual way, but the result is very different. For between the lens of the great camera and the sketch or photo to be reproduced is a screen—a glass which is criss-crossed at right angles with very fine lines. The number of lines to the square inch depends on the variety of paper on which the finished picture is to be printed.

Because that screen is in position, the photograph taken is broken up into a very great number of very tiny dots, these dots, which eventually stand up from the surface of the printing-block, being for the purpose of holding the printing ink. Where there are no dots the ink will not print, of course, because those parts of the block are lower than the raised dots.

Getting Rid of Unwanted Parts!

The need for these dots arises because if the surface of the block were just a smooth "face," all you would get from it when the printing started would be an inky smudge or blur.

The photograph taken of the sketch (or photo to be copied) is printed on to metal, then the whole surface is inked. It goes then into a bath of acid which is kept always on the move, the acid gnawing away the face of the metal where there is no ink. Where there is a dot there will be ink, which the acid cannot affect. So you see how the unwanted parts of the printing-block are got rid of!

The result is that the final picture is a mass of raised dots. A "pull" of each finished block is sent to your Editor, who pastes down the pictures on his make-up pages in the position they are finally to occupy. The type is set around the blocks wherever these break or encroach upon the column margins, and the whole page made to look as neat as humanly possible.

Two-Colour Process!

How these pages are corrected, a matrix taken of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.

each, and the whole lot then cast in solid metal and curved to fit the cylinders of the printing machine we have already seen. But there still remains the coloured cover.

The MAGNET cover is printed in two colours, and the process whereby these colour blocks are made is as interesting as any mechanical operation could be. The final printing of the cover is done in two operations—first the portions in one colour are printed from one block, then the remainder of the cover, in the other colour, is printed from the second block, this double-printing being done so cleverly that nowhere do the two colours become confused.

Any wording which your Editor wishes to appear on the cover is written on the "pull" received by him, and then the printing of the many thousands of copies starts.

120,000 Copies per Hour!

The machines which turn out the ready-to-read copies are colossal and ingenious in the extreme. One of the very latest types of printing machine can turn out 120,000 copies per hour—all ready for the bookstalls and newsagents' shops. The miles of paper—in continuous rolls, each of about five miles in length—are

fed mechanically into one end of the great printing press and, with men hovering around tending the machine and keeping a very watchful eye upon its running, emerge at the other end printed, cut, folded, and counted in quires!

Next Week!

There the copies of the MAGNET are seized and placed in the warehouse, where they remain until they are whisked off again to the great railway termini whence commences their journey to all parts of Britain and to many corners of the Empire beyond the seas.

Please spare a thought also for that part of the business. Every newsagent, whether he sells two or two hundred copies of the MAGNET each week, has to be served unfailingly and prompt to time. They say that neither time nor tide will wait for man. It is equally true that neither railway trains nor MAGNET readers will wait for the weekly issue of this paper of theirs.

Your Editor perspires to stick to his time-table. The compositors and block-makers perspire to keep to theirs. And the publishing department do ditto in gigantic and wonderfully successful efforts to get the weekly batches of the MAGNET whisked off to their near and far-distant destinations on the stroke of the hour appointed for the fulfilment of their job.

And you get all this for twopence! The whole thing is a modern miracle of science, engineering, and organisation, the like of which the great Caxton—who set up the first printing press in this country in 1477, a wooden one!—could not have had the faintest conception. The printers of his generation clever as they were, would have forty fits could they visit to-day the varied scenes of the making of the MAGNET!

THE END.

A DIFFERENT BUNTER! In the seclusion and safety of Greyfriars, William George Bunter holds the fixed belief that he's a born big game hunter. Lions, tigers, elephants—why, he doesn't care a snap of the fingers for 'em! But there's a shock in store for Bunter—in fact, a whole series of shocks!



BUNTER— THE BIG GAME HUNTER!

Here's a spirited yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, featuring William George Bunter in an unusual role. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Skinner's Little Joke!

"**N**O luck!" Bob Cherry made the remark with a sigh as he glanced over the letter-rack.

Harry Wharton & Co., better known as the Famous Five of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, had just come in from the footer-field, ruddy-faced and somewhat muddy, and they had halted at the letter-rack on their way to the changing-room, hoping that there would be a letter for, at least, one of them by the afternoon post.

But there was none.

"No luck!" repeated Bob Cherry. "And no letters means no remittances; and no remittances means nothing for tea but toast! Alas!"

"Well, hot buttered toast isn't so bad when you're hungry!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Hallo! There's a letter for Bunter!"

"My hat! So there is!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "I expect it's Bunter's postal-order come at last—the one he was expecting when he was in the Third, you know!"

"Well, let's hope it is!" laughed Harry Wharton. "He'll be able, then, to pay me that five bob he's owed me since he was in the Third!"

"What hopes!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Here's his young brother Sammy! Nothing for you, my infant—no good blinking at the rack!"

Sammy Bunter, Billy Bunter's minor, of the Second Form, gave a sniff as he eagerly scanned the rack. Then his eyes lit up as he sighted the letter addressed to his major.

"I say, yes, there is!" he squeaked excitedly. "That's for me! Hand it down, Cherry!"

"Not much!" said Bob grimly. "That's addressed to your major, Sammy."

"Well, it's from the pater, and is as much mine as his!" snorted Sammy Bunter. "Look here, hand it me—I can't reach it, Wharton! There's some cash in it, I bet, and if Billy gets it he'll keep the blessed lot! I know him; he always does!"

"And if you get it you'll also keep the lot—you always do, you know!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Jevver see such brotherly love, you chaps?"

"No, never!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Still, the letter's addressed to Billy, and Billy should have it."

"That's so. On a matter of principle, Sammy, it can't be done!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "Better wait until Billy gets it, and then grab what you can."

"Oh, but, I say—"

"Rats, Sammy!"

The Famous Five walked on, laughing. Sammy Bunter glowered after them.

"Mean beasts!" he grunted. "If only I could reach—I say, Coker, there's a letter for you."

Horace Coker, of the Fifth, with his chums, Potter and Greene, came tramping into the hall. They had been out for a long walk, and they looked tired, and muddy, and depressed.

All three brightened up a little as Sammy Bunter called out the news that there was a letter for Coker.

"Eh? Letter for me, kid?" said Coker. "Oh, good!"

Coker reached up and jerked his letter from the rack.

"Who's it from?" demanded Potter hopefully.

"Aunt Judy?" asked Greene, holding his breath.

Coker glanced at the hand-writing, and nodded.

"Yes; I rather expected some cash from her to-day," he said in his lordly way. "Right! We'll have a bit of a

spread— Eh? What's that, young Bunter?"

"My letter!" said Sammy meekly. "I can't reach it, Coker. I wish I was a big, strong chap like you, Coker. If you wouldn't mind roaching it down—"

"Right, kid!"

In the ordinary way, Horace Coker, being Horace Coker, would have looked upon such a request from a Second Form "infant" as cheek. But Sammy's flattery was enough. The burly Fifth-Former jerked out the letter addressed to W. G. Bunter, and threw it loftily to Sammy, not even glancing at the initials. Then he walked on with Potter and Greene.

Sammy Bunter chuckled, and scuttled away with his prize. At the window of the landing above he halted to open the letter. His face fell dismally as a sheet of notepaper was disclosed, but nothing else.

"Not even a postal-order for a bob!" groaned Sammy. "The pater gets meaner and meaner! Hallo! What's he say? 'Both you and Sammy have already overdrawn your pocket-money for this term, and I do not intend to send you more for some weeks—' Yah! Mean—"

Sammy's disgusted musings came to an abrupt termination as the letter he was reading was snatched from his hand by Skinner of the Remove.

Skinner was a fellow always ready for a joke. Unfortunately, there was always something mean and unkind in Skinner's jokes. To creep up behind a fellow and snatch away the letter he was reading was a typical specimen of Skinner's peculiar brand of humour.

That was what Skinner did now. The cad of the Remove never played such jokes upon fellows like Harry Wharton, or Bob Cherry, or upon any fellow of his

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own weight—or about it; he knew better. But young Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, was fair game for Skinner's humorous proclivities.

Snoop and Stott were with Skinner. Being admirers of Skinner's special brand of humour, they chuckled as Sammy jumped round, his podgy, youthful features wrathful and startled.

"Here, gimme my letter back!"

"Ask nicely, then, my fat young porker!" grinned Skinner, holding up the letter with one hand and warding off Bunter minor's grabbing hand with the other. "Go down on your giddy knees and beg for it, kid! Hold on, though! Is it your letter? We know what you Bunters are for pinching other people's letters."

"Yah! Gimme my letter back, you—"

"Not yet, my infant—Hallo! I thought as much!" chuckled Skinner, as he glanced at the letter. "It isn't yours at all—it's addressed to your major, you little worm! My hat! Let's see what the dear old pater has to say to Billy. I bet it's something hot and strong! Fancy being pater to a couple of fat worms like Sammy and Billy Bunter, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner chuckled and read the letter aloud, still holding off the wrathful Sammy. The letter ran as follows:

"My dear William,—I have received your letter asking for still more pocket-money. You have overdrawn your allowance for this term, and I most certainly will not send you more for some weeks to come. I cannot understand what you do with your money. It is only three weeks since I sent you two shillings! If you bother me with any further requests I shall be obliged to write to Mr. Quelch, asking him to punish you."

"All are well here. Your Uncle Ted leaves us to-morrow, and is sailing for West Africa on the 14th. To-day he is in town purchasing guns and other sporting equipment, as, while in Africa, he hopes to get in some big game shooting. I have agreed to allow him to take Rex with him. I myself shall be very thankful to be rid of him. Your mother is quite well, and sends her love to you. Your affectionate,

"FATHER."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner & Co. roared at that "affectionate" letter from Bunter senior.

"What a giddy scream!" chortled Stott. "But who the dickens is Uncle Ted, Sammy?"

"Find out!" hooted Sammy Bunter wrathfully, making another grab at the letter. "Gimme my letter back, you rotters!"

"Tell us who Uncle Ted is, then!" grinned Skinner, his eyes glimmering with mischief now.

"My Uncle Ted, of course!" snorted Sammy. "He's been staying with us for some time, and I bet the mater and pater will be jolly glad when he's gone, too! He's going on business for his blessed firm to Timbuctoo, or somewhere! Anyway, blow him! Now gimme my letter, you beasts!"

"Sorry," said Skinner, shaking his head, "but it wouldn't be right to hand you a letter belonging to your major, Sammy!"

"Well, isn't it to me, too?" hooted Sammy. "Hand it over; Billy will kick me if I don't give it to him sealed up again!"

"Can't help that!" said Skinner seriously. "As a fellow of principle I'm bound to hand it over to Billy myself."

and see he gets it safely. You should never open another fellow's letter, Sammy—not even your major's. It's shocking!"

"What about you—reading Billy's letter!" squeaked Sammy indignantly. "Look here, just you gimme my—"

"Buzz off, old infant!"

Skinner playfully planted a foot behind Sammy. Then, leaving the fag glaring speechlessly after him, Skinner led his chums to his study. Inside the room, Skinner closed and locked the door.

Stott and Snoop looked a trifle puzzled.

"What the dickens have you locked the door for?" demanded Snoop.

"And what's the game?" asked Stott, eyeing Skinner's smiling face curiously. "Why didn't you give the snivelling kid his letter?"

"You've not kept it to hand over to Billy Bunter, I bet!" scoffed Snoop. "That's not your style, Skinner!"

"Your little mistake—I am!" remarked Skinner coolly. "I'm handing it over to its rightful owner—dear old Billy! Only I'm going to make a couple of slight alterations in it first! Anybody got a sharp penknife?"

Stott had a sharp penknife, and he handed it over to the smiling Skinner. That humorous youth laid the letter on the study table, and with great care and the aid of the penknife, he erased two of the words in the last paragraph of Bunter's letter. Then he got pen and ink and replaced the two words deleted with two other words.

SEE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS ON PAGES 14 AND 15.

"Oh! It's a jape, then!" grinned Snoop. "I thought you must have some little game on, Skinner! What is it?"

Skinner smiled and handed over the letter for his chums to examine. The last paragraph of Bunter senior's letter now ran as follows:

"All are well here. Your Uncle Ted leaves us to-morrow, and is sailing for West Africa on the 14th. To-day he is in town purchasing guns and other sporting equipment, as, while in Africa, he hopes to get in some big game shooting. I have agreed to allow him to take you with him. I myself shall be very thankful to be rid of you. Your mother is quite well, and sends her love to you. Your affectionate,

"FATHER."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Stott and Snoop, as they read the last paragraph of the letter.

"See the idea?" asked Skinner blandly. "Isn't it surprising what a difference two little words can make! I suppose Rex is the name of that giddy Alsatian wolf-hound Bunter's always gassing about—his pater bought it last holidays, I believe! But won't Billy be pleased when he learns his Uncle Ted is taking him to West Africa?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy I've done that rather well!" remarked Skinner, glancing over the letter again. "I defy—even Quelch's gimlet peepers to spot the alterations! Bunter won't, anyway! Now, where's some gum, we'll seal the letter up again and see that Billy gets it safely."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, while his chums roared, Skinner got the gum and sealed up the letter again. William George Bunter of a certainty would be excited when he received that letter!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Glorious News!

"COME IN!"

Harry Wharton called out the invitation cheerily. A good fire blazed cheerfully in Study No. 1. On the hob a kettle steamed merrily, and a huge plate of buttered toast reposed there also. The pleasant smell of hot toast, the glowing fire and clean, dry clothes, all helped to make the Famous Five very cheery.

Then Bunter insinuated his fat face round the door of Study No. 1.

Had he known it was Billy Bunter at the door, Harry Wharton would certainly not have called the invitation so cheerily, however.

The Owl of the Remove rolled into the study.

"Hallo, it's Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "Well, now you've come in, you can go out again, old fat man!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off, sharp!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hand me the loaf!" said Frank Nugent grimly. "I bet you two to one in slices of toast that I can dot him with it in the eye first time—"

"Here, hold on!" gasped Bunter, keeping a wary eye on the loaf. "I say, you fellows, I've just had an awful disappointment."

"Your postal-order not come?" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Hard lines, Billy! You've been expecting it such a long time, haven't you—years and years!"

"Ages and ages!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Time stands still where Bunter's postal-order is concerned."

"Oh, really, Bull—I say, that toast smells good, you fellows. I think I'll stay to tea for once. You see—"

"You can't stay to tea, but you can have the loaf," said Frank Nugent, raising it aloft. "Now watch me dot—"

"I say, do be reasonable—and don't be mean!" said Bunter pathetically. "Matter of fact, I have been disappointed about a postal-order, you fellows. I expected one this afternoon, but—"

"Wasn't there one in the letter?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Eh? What letter?" said Bunter, staring.

"There was a letter in the rack for you," laughed Harry. "Better go and get it, Bunter. Might be even your postal-order, after all. Miracles do happen, even in these days!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't talk rot! I've just been to the rack, and there isn't a rotten letter for me!" grunted Bunter. "You're only trying to—"

"There was one addressed to you in the rack ten minutes ago, anyway!" said Harry Wharton. "My hat! Perhaps your minor's collared it, Billy."

"That's it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He tried to get us to reach it down from the rack for him. Better go after him, old fat man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove roared at the expression on the fat features of Billy Bunter.

"Well, of all the cheek!" he gasped. "Is that a fact, you fellows? Has my minor got my letter?"

"He was after it, certainly," laughed Harry Wharton. "If it isn't in the rack now, then you can bet your shoes he's nobbled it!"

"Well, the—the—"

Bunter broke off abruptly, fairly gasping with wrath. Then he turned



"What the merry dickens——" roared Peter Todd as Billy Bunter grasped him suddenly and waltzed him round the study. "Stop, you fat idiot!" Crash! "Yaroooh!" There was a loud yell as Peter Todd's head cracked against the mantelpiece. (See Chapter 2.)

and rolled out of the study, leaving the door open after him.

"Well, that's got rid of him, anyway!" chuckled Bob Cherry, closing the door. "Better lock the door, in case the fat freak comes back again. If there isn't a postal-order in his letter he's pretty certain to come back."

"If there was young Sammy will have spent it before this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded with tea—without the charming society of the Owl of the Remove.

Meanwhile, Bunter was making with all speed to the fag quarters, where he hoped to find Sammy. On the way he encountered George Tubb of the Third.

"Seen my minor, young Tubb?" he snorted.

"Who are you calling young Tubb?" sniffed the leader of the Third.

"Old Tubb, then!" said Bunter. "Any blessed Tubb you like will suit me. Where's my minor, old Tubb?"

The fags of the Second and Third had little respect or regard for Billy Bunter. But Tubb, suppressing the cheeky retort that rose to lips, poked an inky thumb in the direction of the fags' quarters.

"In there!" he sniffed.

Bunter made a rush for the Third Form-room, and sent the door crashing open. Just inside, two fags were wrestling together, and as the door whirled back it sent them sprawling, with howls of wrath and pain.

"You clumsy owl——"

"You careless dummy——"

"It's that fat beast, Bunter—young Sammy's silly major! Let's scrag him!"

"You shut up, youngsters!" snorted Billy Bunter, glaring about him. "Where's my—— Oh!"

Bunter had sighted his minor. He rushed at him, and grabbed him.

"Now, you little rotter!" he snorted. "Where's my letter? Have you opened it? If you have——"

"Ow! Leggo!" roared Sammy, realising that retribution was upon him. "Leggo, and stop shaking me, Billy, you rotter!"

"Where's my letter?" roared Bunter, in reply.

"I haven't seen it—at least, I haven't got it!" howled Bunter minor. "Leggo, and stop sh-shaking me! Rescue, chaps! Skinner took it from me just as I was—ow!—bringing it to you."

"I don't believe it," howled Bunter, in great wrath. "You've collared the tip from the pater and spent it. I know you!"

"I haven't. Skinner snatched the rotten letter from me!" roared Sammy. "Yow! Stop shaking me! Rescue, you fellows! Don't let a Remove rotter come here—Yow!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Check!" snorted Gatty, who was one of the fags Bunter had sent sprawling. "We're not standing that fat rotter coming in here throwing his weight about. Scrag him!"

"That's the idea!"

"Collar him!"

"Here, hold on, you little rotters!" Bunter became alarmed then, and stopped shaking Sammy. But his alarm came too late. "The fags strongly resented intrusions into their quarters, and the call to arms was enough. From all sides of the room the fags came rushing, and the next moment Billy Bunter went to the floor and vanished under a swarm of fags.

He bellowed for help, but he bellowed in vain.

He was bumped, and he was rolled in the dust, and ink was dropped over his face and hair. Then he was thrown out into the passage and the door of the Third Form-room closed upon him.

Billy Bunter sat in the passage, and gasped, and panted, and groaned. He felt as if he had been through an earthquake, at least. But he felt better after a while and, staggering to his feet, he rolled off towards his own study. Not for worlds would Bunter have ventured into the Third Form-room again just then.

"Ow! Yow!" he groaned. "Oh, the little beasts! I'll smash 'em all to smithereens—some other time. Ow! Wait until I get hold of young Sammy! Ow!"

Bunter crawled into the study he shared with Peter and Alonzo Todd, and Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. Peter was in, and he eyed Bunter in astonishment.

"Hallo, old fat man!" he exclaimed. "Got caught up in the works of a threshing-machine, or what? Or has one of Mrs. Mimbles' rabbit-pies turned on you?"

"Ow! Ow! It was those young fiends in the Second and Third," groaned Bunter. "I went after Sammy—he pinched my letter, the young thief! I expect he's spent what the pater sent. Wow! Those young beasts went for me just because I was shaking young Sammy. Groooough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter Todd. "You ought to have known better than to throw your weight about in there, Billy."

"Well, wouldn't you if your minor had pinched a letter of yours?" hooted Bunter. "It's nothing to laugh about."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.

My letter's gone, and so has my postal-order that was inside it."

"Your giddy letter's safe enough," laughed Peter. "Isn't that it on the table there, Billy?"

And Peter Todd pointed to a letter reposing on the table-cloth. It was addressed to Billy Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove grabbed it eagerly.

"It was on the table when I came in, a few minutes ago," grinned Peter. "Looks as if your minor's not guilty this time, old fat man!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "And Sammy said Skinner took it from him! He must have opened it, anyway. If he's taken my postal-order—"

"Well, the envelope looks as if it's been opened," said Peter. "Better look inside, Billy!"

Bunter looked inside. Only a sheet of notepaper with his pater's handwriting upon it rewarded his eager, anxious gaze.

He gave an indignant snort as he read the first paragraph of his pater's letter. He almost stopped reading the rest in his great disgust when he came to Bunter senior's remarks regarding his request for pocket-money. But the fat junior read on, mumbling to himself as he did so.

"Mean beast! Fancy asking what I do with the minging tips he sends! Yah! I'll jolly well write and— Oh, oh! Great Scott! Oh, crikey! What the—Whoooooop!"

Billy Bunter's musings changed abruptly as he read the last paragraph of Bunter senior's letter. To Peter Todd's great astonishment Bunter gave a wild whoop of sheer joy and amazement.

"What the merry dickens— Here!" roared Toddy, as Bunter grasped him suddenly, and started to waltz him round the study. "Stop, you fat idiot! What the dickens— Yooooop!"

Crash!

Unfortunately, Bunter had not looked where he was going. His weight almost swung the astonished Peter from his feet, and suddenly Peter's heels came

against the fender, and his head came with a crack against the mantelpiece at the same time.

Peter roared, and sat down violently in the fender with a fearful clatter and crash, the exuberant Billy Bunter sprawling on top of him.

"You fat idiot!" shrieked Peter. "Gerrup! You're squashing me, you fat lump of blubber! Yow! Gerrup!"

As an aid to Bunter to get up, Peter Todd gave his fat study-mate a hefty punch in his fat ribs. Bunter roared with anguish, and scrambled up quickly enough then.

Peter Todd rose, too, red in the face with wrath.

"You fat idiot!" he howled. "You clumsy lump of imbecility! What the thump's come over you? Why, I've a jolly good mind—"

"Oh, crumbs!" Bunter jumped away, rubbing himself. "Oh, crumbs! I say, Peter, it was an accident, old chap! Here keep off—"

Bunter ran round the table as the indignant Toddy made a jump for him.

"Hold on, Toddy!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I tell you it was only an accident! Look here, lemme alone, and I'll ask my Uncle Ted to take you with him as well as me to West Africa. There! I can't say fairer than that, can I, Peter?"

Peter Todd stopped at that, and eyed his study-mate in astonishment.

"West Africa!" he stuttered. "What the thump are you gassing about, Bunter?"

Bunter grinned gleefully. His aches and pains vanishing at thought of what the letter contained.

"He, he, he! You read that letter and see, Toddy," he said. "I think I've told you about my Uncle Ted. He's going to West Africa, you know."

"Yes, you have—just a few million times," sniffed Peter Todd. "In fact, the whole Remove's fed-up with you and your blessed Uncle Ted, Bunter! But you're not going, you fat idiot—"

"Read it and see," giggled Bunter,

his eyes fairly dancing with joy. "Read it, Toddy! My hat! This is great! Simply too perfectly spiffing for words! Whoooooop!"

And Bunter gave vent to a whoop of glee again.

Toddy grunted and picked up the letter. His face changed to a grin as he read Bunter senior's remarks regarding pocket-money. Then Peter came to the last paragraph, and he read it as if hardly able to believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"Well, my only hat!" he ejaculated.

"Tophole news—what?" grinned Bunter. "Wouldn't you like to be me, Toddy?" Already Bunter was beginning to fancy himself and put on airs. "Imagine me shooting lions and tigers, and wolves and things, while you poor chaps are grinding out Latin! He, he, he! I'm sorry for you, Toddy—really I am! But we can't all have wealthy connections who travel and do things, can we? He, he, he!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter, the Big Game Hunter!

PETER TODD read and re-read that remarkable letter from Mr. Samuel Bunter to his hopeful son, William George.

He simply could not believe it. Yet there it was in plain black and white: "I have agreed to allow him to take you with him."

There was no getting away from that.

But why Uncle Ted could wish to take such a fat funk as Billy Bunter with him into West Africa was something quite beyond Peter Todd's comprehension.

"It's—it's written here right enough, Bunter!" gasped Peter dazedly. "But—but, look here, you fat ass! Has your Uncle Ted ever seen you?"

"Seen me?" ejaculated Billy Bunter. "Of course, he has! He knows jolly well what a plucky chap I am!"

"Well, that makes it all the more mysterious," said Toddy. "If your uncle's seen you and knows you—"

"Of course, he does! Why—"

"Then he must be absolutely potty to want to take you with him," was Peter's emphatic verdict. "No chap in his right senses would take you with him, unless it was into a lunatic asylum, or a home for lost dogs."

"Oh, really, Toddy, you're only jealous, you know," grinned Bunter. "I can see through you, youngster."

"Y-youngster!" stuttered Toddy.

"Yes, kid," said Bunter, raising himself to his full height—which wasn't very much—and elevating his fat little nose. "I shall write to you, of course, from the jungle, and I shan't mind if you kids drop me a line now and again. I'll be interested to know how you're getting on with your lessons, you know."

"Why, you—you fat frog—"

"While you kids are mugging up lessons in a stuffy Form-room," grinned Bunter, "I shall be fighting my way through the jungle with gun and—hatchet."

"Hatchet!"

"To cut our way through the impenetrable jungle, you know," explained Bunter. "I'll try to bring you fellows back a few tiger and lion skins."

"Oh, my hat! Can't you bring us a few elephant skins?" grinned Peter Todd.

"Well, I'll bring a few tusks, but the skins will cost rather a lot to bring over," said Bunter calmly. "I expect I shall bag a few wolves, too, Toddy."

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"And polar bears. Don't forget to bag a few polar bears," said Toddy, with heavy sarcasm. "You fat ass! You couldn't hit a haystack if you stood a yard away from it."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"But this beats me hollow!" resumed Peter Todd, blinking again at the letter. "You hadn't any idea of going, had you, old fat man?"

"Eh? Oh, yes, rather! The fact is Uncle Ted thinks a lot of me—admires me no end, you know. And the pater was awfully keen for me to go."

"Yes, it sounds like it here," grinned Peter. "He says he'll be jolly glad to get rid of you, Billy."

"That's only his fun," said Bunter hastily. "He's really frightfully keen for me to go. Travel finishes a chap's education off, you know."

"Well, you'll need a lot of travel to finish off your giddy education," said Peter Todd. "Still, this is good news—ripping news!"

"Splendid!" grinned Bunter.

"Everybody should be pleased, in fact," resumed Peter Todd. "Your pater will be glad to be rid of you. We shall be simply delighted to get rid of you, and you're glad to go, too."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"The only trouble is that you might come back again, Bunter!" said Peter, shaking his head. "Let's hope that a giddy tiger or a Polar bear polishes you off, old chap! This study will be like paradise without you, and there'll always be plenty of grub. We won't have to lock everything up, and fellows won't have to destroy their letters, plug their keyholes up, and keep their study cupboards locked!"

"Beast! Look here—"

"But it beats me why your giddy uncle wants you!" went on Peter, eyeing Bunter very curiously. "Unless he wants you to practise shooting at, or to fall back on when grub runs short. You'll be quite useful playing the part of a camel's hump, Billy!"

"Beast! You'll miss me when I'm gone, anyway, Toddy!" said the Owl of the Remove. "I shan't be returning to Greyfriars, of course."

"Good!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "In fact, ripping!"

"Beast!" sniffed Bunter. "Well, I shan't be sorry; after all, this place is a measly hole!"

"Eh?" snorted Toddy. "What's that?"

"Well, it is!" said Bunter. "I've never been properly understood here, and I've never had justice. As for coming back—My hat! Fancy a fellow facing death every hour of the day like I shall be doing, and then coming back and saying, 'Yes, sir!' and 'No, sir!' and sitting on a blessed form mugging up piffle like Latin!"

"Good! We shan't have that dread always at the back of our minds, then!" said Peter Todd, with a chuckle. "But—but this beats me hollow, Bunter! If your uncle had never seen you, or didn't know you, a fellow could understand it. But—but—"

Peter Todd simply couldn't get over it.

"Don't strain your youthful intellect by trying to understand it!" said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "You're rather dense, if you don't mind my saying so, Peter! I did think, for the moment, of asking Uncle Ted to let you come, too. You could carry my guns, and act as my boy, you know—they call servants 'boy' over there, Toddy. After all, perhaps I'd better not, though. You're rather young and too big a funk to take into dangerous country!"

"Why, you—you cheeky fat frog!" spluttered Peter.

"We'll get into heaps of tight corners in the jungle!" said Bunter. "We can't afford to be bothered with duds and frightened youngsters. I'm sorry, Toddy, but it can't be done! Even as a servant you'd be a frightful nuisance and a washout!"

"Well, you—you—" spluttered Peter Todd.

"You'd be frightened if you saw a mouse!" grinned Bunter. "As for savages—My hat! If you saw one you'd manage to squeeze into a rabbit-hole, Toddy! You're an awful funk, really, and—Here, what—Hold on, Toddy! It's all—Yooooop!"

Bunter broke off suddenly, with a howl, and jumped round the table as Peter Todd grabbed the toasting-fork and made a rush at him. Had the toasting-fork touched him Bunter could scarcely have howled louder. He rushed round the table twice with Toddy in hot and ferocious pursuit, and then made a wild leap for the door, tore it open, and bolted out of the study.

Peter Todd chuckled, and replaced the toasting-fork on the table. If Bunter really acted like that when hunting big game in Africa, there was not any likelihood of his getting any lion skins, tiger skins, or elephants' tusks to present to Peter Todd or anyone else when he returned. Bunter would be lucky to get home with his own fat skin intact!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout Refuses!

"IT'S true, then?"

"Must be; I've seen the letter!"

Fancy that fat ass—"

"The fat duffer!"

"Bunter as a giddy big game hunter! Oh, my hat!"

"Lucky dog, though! I wish I was going in his place!"

"My hat! Yes, rather!"

The Removites were discussing Billy Bunter's astonishing luck in having the chance of going to Africa on a big game hunt. Not that they ever supposed Bunter capable of shooting big game.

It was true that he was going, for most of the fellows had seen the letter. Certainly Bunter had "gassed" a great deal of late in respect to his Uncle Ted and his proposed travels in West Africa. To be candid, the fellows were tired of the subject. Yet the fact that Bunter was now going with his Uncle Ted, made the subject of fresh and remarkable interest to the Remove.

In his joy and delight at the news Billy Bunter had even gone without his tea—merely satisfying himself with a couple of packets of chocolate Lord Mauleverer had carelessly left on the table in his study.

For Bunter to go without his tea was a miracle in itself. But he had done so, having spent the time in spreading the glorious news of his forthcoming expedition far and wide.

Naturally, Billy Bunter had made the most of his sudden fame. He was lofty and dignified.

Almost every fellow in the Remove by the end of prep had been promised either a tiger skin, a lion skin, or a pair of elephant's tusks by Billy Bunter.

They were not likely to be disappointed, however, for, realising Bunter was never likely to shoot anything—except by accident—they cherished no hopes.

Still, Bunter was going! In the Rag that evening the fellows discussed the Owl of the Remove's luck, and, though

they grinned at his swank, they could not help feeling envious.

Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were nearly bursting inwardly with merriment at the sensation "Bunter's Luck" was causing in the Remove.

"Yes, he's lucky!" repeated Harold Skinner, shaking his head seriously. "I've never envied the fat ass before, but I do now!"

"Hallo, here he comes!" gurgled Stott, as the door of the Rag opened and the Owl of the Remove appeared upon the threshold. "Look at his swank!"

"Well, hasn't he cause to swank?" said Skinner. "Come in, Bunter, old fat man! Tell us about the lions and things you're hoping to bag!"

"Sing it over again to us!" suggested Snoop, with a chuckle. "You'll not have to waste much ammunition, Bunter! There are nearly thirty fellows in the Remove, and you've promised lion or tiger skins to all of them, not counting the fellows in other Forms you've promised trophies to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter strutted into the Rag. The laughter did not trouble him at all; he knew the fellows envied him his good fortune.

Skinner obligingly made room for the fat junior by the fire.

"Well, I'm going!" remarked the Owl of the Remove, blinking at the grinning faces around him. "I can't say I'm sorry to leave Greyfriars. After all, a fellow's bound to consider his future. I never was built for mugging up lessons in a Form-room! I'm built for much bigger things. With a gun in my hands—"

"A dough-nut, did you say?" inquired Skinner.

"No, a gun!" snorted Bunter. "With a gun in my hands I'm ready for anything. That's me! Old Prout fancies himself with a gun: he's always bragging about his thrilling experiences in the Rocky Mountains! But you wait and see what I can do!"

"I hope Uncle Ted keeps his head low!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"You shut up Cherry! I say, you fellows, d'you think old Prout would lend me his repeater to practise with?"

"But you don't need any practice, surely?" said Skinner, in surprise.

"Well, that's right enough!" admitted Bunter. "Still, a little practice won't do me any harm. I think I'll run along and see Prout now. It's Wednesday tomorrow, and I'll be able to get in a bit of shooting in the fields."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yes, do!" said Skinner. "In fact, come to that, you could even do a bit of shooting in the Rag, here. Old Prout will be delighted to lend you his cane—I mean his gun! Go on, Bunter—do! I'm just yearning to see you handle a gun, old man!"

"Right! That's rather a good idea, Skinner! I'll show you fellows something!"

Bunter rolled out of the Rag, a chorus of chuckles following him as he went.

"You silly ass, Skinner!" said Harry Wharton. "Old Prout will scalp the fat chump!"

"Well, doesn't Bunter ask to be scalped?" said Skinner. "The fat ass wants some of the swank and conceit knocked out of him. Prout will do that—with his cane!"

All the Remove juniors were agreed upon that point—excepting Bunter himself. That fat youth knocked on the Fifth Form master's study door and walked in, coolly enough. Bunter

had a very good opinion of himself, and he saw no reason, if the other fellows did, why Mr. Prout should refuse to lend him his famous Winchester repeater.

Mr. Prout looked up from the newspaper he was reading, and eyed Bunter inquiringly. The master of the Fifth was a somewhat good-natured gentleman. But at times he was a trifle irritable and difficult to manage. He disliked his leisure being interrupted.

"Well, Bunter?" he demanded.

"Would you mind lending me your gun for a few days, Mr. Prout?" asked Bunter, coolly. "I just want to get in some practice before I sail for—"

Bunter paused, rather startled by the extraordinary expression on Mr. Prout's portly and somewhat pompous features.

"My-gun!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "Bless my soul! Boy! You—you wish to borrow my Winchester?"

"Yes, sir! Only for a—a few days," said Bunter, a trifle uncertainly now. "You—you see, sir, I sail for West Africa very shortly, on a big game hunt, and I thought I'd better get my hand in a—a bit."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Prout laid his paper down and glared at the Owl of the Remove.

"You—you insolent, impudent young rascal!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"I shall certainly not lend you my Winchester!" hooted Mr. Prout. "I'll give you a taste of my cane instead, boy!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, sir—"

"Silence! Upon my word!" boomed Mr. Prout, taking a stout-looking cane from his table drawer. "I can only suppose that your request is a piece of impudence, Bunter."

"Ow! Not at all, sir! I assure you that I am going to shoot lions and tigers and things in the—the jungle!"

"What?"

"In West Africa, sir," gasped Bunter. "It's a fact—I'm sailing on the—"

"Nonsense! I do not believe one word of this rubbish! This, I presume, is intended for a joke, Bunter!"

"Nunno, sir! It—it isn't a joke at all—"

"That is what you are about to discover, Bunter! Hold out your hand! Such impudence—"

"Oh, crumbs! I say, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!" boomed Mr. Prout. "In the ordinary way I should report you to your own Form master, but in this case—a case of exceptional impudence to myself—I shall deal with you, Bunter! Hold out your hand!"

With a groan, Billy Bunter held out his hand.

Swish!

"Now the other!"

"Ow! Yow!"

Swish!

"Yoooooop!"

Bunter's yelp of anguish reached the ears of the fellows in the rag. It was followed by several more, as Mr. Prout gave Bunter two more swishes with his cane.

"I thought Bunter went to borrow Mr. Prout's gun, you fellows," remarked Bob Cherry, listening reflectively. "It sounds to me as if he's borrowing Prout's cane! Hark to the voice of the big game hunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here he comes!" grinned Skinner. A trailing footstep sounded in the

passage, and Skinner threw open the door. Billy Bunter entered the Rag tottering along, nearly doubled up with anguish.

"Hallo, here comes the mighty hunter," chirruped Skinner. "Is this how you face death in the jungle, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wow! Yow!"

"And where's the Winchester, old chap? You said you were going to show us something, Bunter."

"He's only practising stalking now," explained Bob Cherry. "That's why he's trailing along doubled up like that! Where's your gun, Bunter?"

"Yow! Ow-ow! Prout's an awful beast!" groaned Bunter, blinking at the laughing juniors. "He—he licked me! Refused to lend me his blessed gun! Ow-ow! Well, he can keep it, and blow him! After all it's only a—Ow-ow!—kid's toy! I'm used to using real guns! Ow! Oh, the awful beast! Said I was impudent—licked me as if I was a blessed ordinary kid! Me, mind you—a fellow who's going into the wilds to face fearful dangers, while he's cramming blessed lessons into a crowd of grubby school-kids! Ow! Jevver know such a beast! Ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter rolled out of the Rag to seek recuperation in Study No. 7, for a time. There was obviously not to be an exhibition of shooting by the Owl of the Remove in the Rag that evening.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Real Practice for Bunter!

"DON'T do it, Bob," pleaded Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

It was bed-time, and the Remove were on their way up to the dormitory.

The juniors were in rather a hilarious mood. The news of Billy Bunter's proposed travels in West Africa was undoubtedly responsible for this. Envious of the fortunate Billy Bunter, and with no prospects of going themselves, the Removites seemed determined to get what entertainment they could out of the affair.

And Billy Bunter willingly provided that entertainment.

Having got over the licking he had received at the hands of Mr. Prout, the Owl of the Remove returned to the Rag to continue the interrupted process of "spreading himself." Bunter loved the lime-light, and he was having plenty of it now. A fellow who was going into the jungle to face unknown dangers, and to hunt big game, was entitled to spread himself—in Bunter's opinion. When Wingate looked into the Rag to announce that it was bed-time, the topic of Bunter's forthcoming African trip, was still going on. Bunter himself doing most, if not all, of the talking.

He related, with vivid imagination, and in striking detail, what he had done in the past in the line of "bagging" big game and little game, and he explained all he intended to do in the future, in that line. For his yarns of the past, Bunter had drawn upon his vivid imagination, and not on his memory. It was more than likely that his imagination, and not his prowess, would supply his sporting yarns of the future.

The Removites could not help grinning as they listened. They never believed Bunter, and it entertained them to let Bunter run on. Bunter

never seemed to realise his fat leg was being pulled. Nor did he seem to mind the grins, and chuckles, and laughter that accompanied his flow of eloquence.

By bed-time, everybody was fed up with Bunter. At telling "whoppers" the Owl of the Remove had excelled himself. He had more than excelled himself, in fact, as regards swanking and bragging. And all agreed that he needed a lesson to take some of the swank and brag out of him.

To bring about this end, Bob Cherry and Peter Todd—two of the biggest practical jokers in the Form—had put their heads together, and had plotted a deep plot for the discomfiture and undoing of the swell-headed Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton, who was in the secret, did not quite approve of it, however.

"Don't do it, Bob," he urged, half laughingly. "Let the silly idiot alone. You'll frighten his fat wits out of him."

"What! Frighten a mighty hunter like Bunter!" said Bob. "Perish the thought! Bunter's going to face the dangers of the deep, dark jungle soon; he'll be facing lions and tigers every day when he gets there, I suppose. Why shouldn't he get a bit of experience and practice before he leaves Greyfriars?"

"Fathead! He'll be in a frightful funk, and he'll howl the school down! It'll only mean trouble for you, Bob. Chuck the idea, and let Bunter rip!"

Bob shook his curly head.

"Can't be did," he said. "It was Toddy's idea, and we've made all preparations now, old bean! It's rather lucky there's a circus on the go at Courtfield this week. It'll make things more realistic for Bunter! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is. Make room for Bunter, the mighty hunter, you fellows!"

Bunter came stumping upstairs with Skinner & Co. who never seemed to get tired of pulling Bunter's leg. Skinner & Co. seemed to be enjoying Bunter's good fortune much more than anyone else with the exception of Bunter himself. The cads of the Remove looked as if they had been weeping—perhaps at the thought of Bunter leaving; perhaps with laughter!

"Of course," Bunter was saying, "I wouldn't dream of asking any fellow to get up a subscription for me now I'm leaving, Skinner. Still, now you mention it, old chap—"

"Did I mention it, Bunter?" gasped Skinner. "Blessed if I remember—"

"Well, somebody did," said Bunter, quite untruthfully. "It's rather a good idea, and I hope it'll take the form of a purse. I shall need plenty of cash to purchase my sporting outfit, of course. It wouldn't be quite the thing for me to suggest it myself, of course, but—Hallo, you fellows!"

Bunter nodded rather distantly to the Famous Five.

"Shan't be sleeping with you kids much longer," he went on. "Soon I'll be sleeping in the deep jungle, with the roar of prowling man-eaters in my ears!"

"Well, they'll have to roar a bit to be heard above your snore, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Mind you don't dream about lions and tigers to-night, Billy."

"What rot! Take more than a blessed lion or a tiger to make me dream!" grinned Bunter. "There isn't a wild beast living that can do that—or put the wind up me, either! Wild animals aren't really anything to funk. Face 'em, and they'll turn tail quickly



Bob Cherry looked a ludicrous sight as the big lion's head was dragged back from his head. "Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Prout in astonishment. "What—what—Cherry! Bless my soul! Cherry—you—you—you—" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton & Co. (See Chapter 7.)

enough. If only you fellows could see me—"

"We'd just jump at the chance," said Bob Cherry. "Still, on Wednesday, Billy, you'll have your chance—to win five quid, too!"

"Eh?"

"The wild beast show over at Court-field—have you forgotten?" said Bob blandly. "There's a chap offering a fiver to the fellow who'll enter the lion's cage with him. There's your chance to show what you can do, Billy. We'll come and see you do it!"

"Good wheeze!" said Frank Nugent.

"Ripping! Just the very thing!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, crumbs! I—I say, you fellows!" said Bunter, looking quite startled. "That—that's quite impossible!"

"Eh? What rot!"

"I—I shall be too busy packing up to-morrow!" explained the Owl of the Remove. "It's impossible—quite! It's a frightful pity, really, as I should have just loved to show you chaps how I handle wild animals. But—there it is! Hard lines, what?"

And Bunter rolled on hurriedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors went into the Remove dormitory laughing. For once, the chance of earning an easy fiver did not appeal to Billy Bunter. Perhaps he fancied it might not prove to be so easy to earn!

Bunter's chin was still working hard when he climbed into bed. But the fellows were rather tired of it, and as Bunter seemed disposed to continue on the subject of African adventures, Bolsover decided to put an end to it. Bolsover wanted to sleep, not to hear Bunter. A boot left his hand, and

Bunter's eloquence ended in a wild howl as the missile caught his tireless chin.

"Yarroooooogh!"

"Good shot, Bolsover!" chuckled Peter Todd. "What a pity you aren't going big game hunting instead of Bunter!"

"That's just a reminder to Bunter!" said Bolsover. "I've got another boot ready, and I can hit the bullseye again. I want to get to sleep, not to listen to a lot of blessed chin-wag! Going on with it, Bunter?"

"Yow-ow! Oh, you beast! Ow-ow!"

That was all the answer Bolsover got. But Bunter did not go on—the thought of Bolsover's other boot deterred him. Soon silence reigned in the Remove dormitory. But not for long. In a very short while a long-drawn, resounding snore hummed through the room.

It was Bunter—the mighty big game hunter was sleeping.

It was the chance Bob Cherry and Peter Todd, his fellow conspirator, had been waiting for.

As Bunter's rumbling snore resounded through the dark dormitory, the two juniors slipped from their beds, put on their slippers, and donned jackets over their pyjamas.

"Ready, Toddy?" asked Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Yes, rather! All serene!"

Soft chuckles came from various beds. Bob and Peter had made their plans known to a certain trusted few, who kept awake to see them materialise.

"Go easy, Bob!" warned Harry Wharton. "Don't overdo things, mind!"

"It's Bunter who's likely to overdo things!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Well,

cheerio, chaps! We'll be back presently."

Bob Cherry and Peter Todd crept silently from the dormitory. The fellows "in the know" waited patiently to see what happened. It was not long before the door opened softly again, and two figures crept into the dimly-lit dormitory. They crept in on all fours and, reaching the centre of the room where a shaft of moonlight from the tall windows lit up the floor, they became visible to the expectant watchers.

Had the watchers not been in the know, they would have gasped, for the figures that crept into the circle of moonlight appeared to be those of a lion and a tiger!

"M-my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton, sitting up in bed. "Bob, you ass, go easy!"

A chuckle came from the tiger, while from the lion came a half-suppressed gurgle. Then both terrifying apparitions approached Bunter's bed. Possibly Bunter's resounding snore had attracted them.

The tiger raised itself and, with one paw resting on the side of Bunter's bed, gave the sleeping form a hearty thump with the other.

The next moment, the lion, on the other side of the bed, reached out a paw and dragged back the bedclothes from Bunter's bulky form.

Bunter's snore ceased, as he awoke.

"Grooogh!" he grunted, rubbing both his eyes sleepily. "Wharrer matter? Who's jolly well—Why, it ain't rising-bell—"

Bunter's drowsy murmuring tailed off as he sat up and groped for his spectacles. Hastily placing them on his face

nose, he blinked about him. Bunter's jaw dropped the next moment, as his gaze fell upon the ferocious-looking creatures by his bedside.

He blinked from one to the other dazedly—his sleepy eyes growing wider and wider as he did so. Slowly the hair on his scalp began to rise, and a queer, prickly sensation began to creep up his spine. Bunter tried to yell, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. Then, quite unexpectedly, the tiger opened wide its jaws, exposing a set of fine teeth in an apparently excellent state of preservation.

That did it! The spell was broken, and a wild, terrified howl rang out from the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for the Jokers!

"YARROOOOOOOOGH!"

It was a terrific howl, and did credit to even Billy Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank Nugent. "That's done it! Bunter, you fat ass—"

"Yarrooogh!" roared Bunter. "Help! Murder! Police! Yooop! Help! Oh, crumbs! Help! Yarroooooogh!"

"Gr-r-r-r-rrr!" came from the tiger, while the lion gave a most realistic roar.

Really, Peter Todd and Bob Cherry had been practising for some time.

After that final shriek, Billy Bunter dived under the bedclothes, and lay there palpitating; shriek after shriek, and howl after howl coming in muffled sounds from beneath the heaving bundle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites in the know roared with laughter. But the others, wakened suddenly and abruptly from their slumber by Billy Bunter's wild yells, and finding what they imagined was a lion and a tiger in the dormitory, saw nothing whatever to laugh at.

They yelled in alarm. Soon the whole dormitory resounded with roars of laughter, yells of fear, and that wild, muffled shrieking from Bunter's bed.

"Oh, great pip!" gasped Harry Wharton, jumping out of bed. "Bob, you silly ass, hook it quickly! Toddy, you fathead, get out sharp! Oh, crumbs!"

Some of the fellows had left their beds and bolted from the dormitory. Others, like Billy Bunter, dived beneath their bedclothes.

Really, it was scarcely to be wondered at. To be awakened suddenly from sleep by a terrified yell, and to find two such ferocious-looking wild beasts in the dormitory was enough to make anyone lose their head. Moreover, all knew that a wild-beast show was performing at Courtfield, and the thought that these were escaped animals from the show banished all suspicion of a jape—had they ever entertained such a suspicion.

If anything, the jokers themselves were more startled than anyone at the success of their little "lesson" on Billy Bunter. Already faint shouts and questionings could be heard outside the dormitory.

It certainly was time to depart—to take Harry Wharton's advice.

"Hook it, Toddy!" cried Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! That sounds like Quelch's voice! Run for it!"

But the tiger—otherwise Peter Todd of the Remove—was already making for the door, the juniors, amid a chorus of wild yells, dodging out of his path.

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Reaching the passage outside, Peter Todd blinked desperately up and down from beneath the head of the tiger-skin he was wearing. That tiger-skin, like the lion-skin Bob Cherry was wearing, which was tied on to his person with lengths of string, had been presented to Greyfriars museum by a Greyfriars Old Boy at some distant date. And Peter Todd and Bob Cherry knew what to expect if it was discovered they had "borrowed" them.

Bob Cherry joined Peter Todd in the passage, and the two juniors gasped as they discovered the place to be alive with pyjama-clad fellows. Bobbing lights were approaching the Remove dormitory. From somewhere came Mr. Prout's booming voice.

"What ever is the matter? What does this commotion mean, boys? Bless my soul! Can it be burglars—Ah! What is the matter, Mr. Quelch?"

Apparently Mr. Quelch had appeared on the scene.

"Oh crumbs! Run for it!" gasped Bob Cherry. "They'll bolt when they see us—Hullo, they've spotted us!"

It was true enough. From along the passage came a chorus of terrified yells.

"Look out!"

"A lion! Oh, great Scott!"

"And a tiger! Oh, help! I'm off!"

The bolder spirits bolted, while the more timid stood their ground—simply because they were far too terrified to do anything else. They stood as if

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rooted to the floor, their white faces lit up by the flickering candles held by the startled Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout.

In that moment Peter Todd and Bob Cherry acted.

Peter kept his head, and made a wild rush for the group of dimly-seen forms shivering round Mr. Quelch.

"Look out!"

"Owl! Oh, help!"

"Yarrooogh!"

A scene of confusion followed. The fellows stampeded—the sight of a tiger rushing towards them was too much. It was also a little too much for Mr. Quelch, who gasped and dropped his candle.

As he stood in the darkness the Form master had a brief glimpse of a dark form bounding past him, to disappear down the stairs beyond.

Peter had, so to speak, got away with it! Like a flash of lightning he was making for the museum.

But Bob Cherry was not so lucky. Bob had quite lost his head, and instead of following Peter he "jibbed" at facing the gunlet-eyed Mr. Quelch, and he flew in the opposite direction.

That direction lay past the Fifth Form dormitory to the little back staircase that led up to the attics. Only a temporary safety lay that way—as Bob Cherry was soon to find out!

As in the case of Peter Todd, wild confusion followed Bob's desperate dash. And Mr. Prout dropped his candle. In the darkness Bob got past safely—nobody seemed to want to face an oncoming lion!

The Removite fairly flew, and the sound of his pattering feet—or, rather, paws—died away up the attic stairs.

Then a light flared up again; Wingate had struck a match, and an instant later he had found and lit Mr. Prout's candle.

"G-good heavens!" panted Mr. Prout, his face white with fright. "You—you saw it, Wingate! An enormous lion! I glimpsed it as it bounded past me. Ah! Mr. Quelch, I am thankful—thankful indeed, that nobody appears to have been touched!"

Mr. Quelch hurried up, his face puzzled and grim.

"It's all right, sir," said Wingate, appearing to be quite cool and collected. "If that was a lion it was the rummiest one I ever saw. The first time I ever knew a lion race away on two legs. I fancy this must be some joke—"

"Nonsense!" hooted Mr. Prout, in great excitement. "Don't you understand, Wingate—it was a lion—I saw it clearly! An animal escaped from the show at Courtfield! I also saw another animal—it went in your direction, Quelch. Quick! Something must be done, before any one gets hurt!"

"Mr. Prout—"

"Don't stand there like dummies!" roared Mr. Prout, greatly perturbed. "We are wasting time, Quelch! All the junior boys had better return to their dormitories, and lock themselves in. Wingate and the seniors had better help us track down the savage brutes before blood is shed."

"One moment, Mr. Prout! I have a strong suspicion—"

"Quelch, I am surprised—astonished, sir! You do not appear to grasp the fact that the position is desperate!" thundered Mr. Prout, almost dancing about in his excitement. "Quick! But we must be armed—armed, sir! I will fetch my Winchester—"

"Mr. Prout, I beg of you to be calm, sir!"

"Calm! Nonsense, sir! As masters, we are responsible for the safety of these boys under our charge. Do you wish to see bloodshed—"

"But, my dear Prout—"

"I will fetch my gun—"

"Blood will undoubtedly be shed if you do, Mr. Prout—"

"What, what? Mr. Quelch—sir!"

"Pray calm yourself, sir—"

"Am I not calm?" hooted Mr. Prout, almost beside himself with agitated alarm. "But we are wasting time, I tell you, Quelch! I will fetch my rifle without another moment's delay!"

Mr. Prout rushed off into the darkness, the light from his candle flickering and dancing on the passage walls as he went.

It was undoubtedly plucky of the gallant Fifth Form master in such circumstances, and he undoubtedly meant well. He was only away a couple of minutes, and when he came rushing back he had a rifle in his hand.

Hastily he grabbed something from his dressing-gown pocket and crammed it into his repeater. The pockets of Mr. Prout's dressing-gown bulged with cartridges.

"Now we are ready!" boomed the Fifth Form master, his eyes gleaming wildly. "Quick! Before anything serious happens!"

"Unless you point that dangerous weapon in another direction, Mr. Prout," said Mr. Quelch angrily, "something will happen—"

"Nonsense! Quelch, you surprise me! Is it impossible for you, a master, to rise to such an occasion and share with me the dangers— But we are wasting time! Come!" thundered Mr. Prout. "As you appear to be reluctant to share the dangers of the expedition,

Quelch, I would suggest that you join the juniors behind a locked door in the dormitory!"

"Mr. Prout—sir!"

But Mr. Prout, after delivering himself of that last cutting rejoinder, had gone. He dashed away after grabbing a candle from Walker of the Sixth. The crowd followed him—most of the seniors, like Wingate, openly grinning. Possibly, like Wingate, they suspected that the matter was not quite so serious as Mr. Prout supposed.

The master of the Fifth made for the back staircase, his eyes gleaming in the candle-light behind his spectacles. At the bottom of the staircase he stopped and handed the candle to Walker again.

"Hold it high!" he ordered, his voice trembling with excitement. "Ah, that is better, Wingate!"

Wingate had switched on the electric light at the bottom of the staircase. The light lit up the faces of the crowd—many of whom were juniors who had ventured to follow.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Harry Wharton, who was among the party. "If poor old Bob went this way he's done!"

"Awful luck!" groaned Frank Nugent. "The awful ass should have gone—"

Frank Nugent's whispered remarks ended as from up the dark, shadowy staircase sounded a movement. Mr. Prout heard it, and, with his rifle at the ready, he stopped cautiously up the stairs.

"Beware, boys!" he gasped. "You heard it! I distinctly heard a voice—a scuffling movement up above. Be careful! Follow me, and— Ah! Got you!"

Bang!

Mr. Prout had fired; the report of his gun sounded terrifying in the silent school. Fortunately, however, the Fifth Form master's aim was not true—very fortunately indeed for Bob Cherry. For it was Bob right enough. The Remove had reached the little landing at the top of the staircase, only to realise that, if followed, he was trapped up there. He had tried the doors of the attics, only to find them locked.

Then Mr. Prout had arrived with his gun, and Bob realised that the position was indeed desperate.

There was only two things to be done—either to call down and give himself up, or to make a bold, risky bid for liberty.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Bob!

BOB—unwisely—chose the latter course.

He felt sure that the sight of a raging lion bounding down the stairs would be enough to stampede his pursuers, and so give him a chance to get clear.

But he did not bargain for the gallant Mr. Prout.

Mr. Prout had often enough in the distant past—according to his own story—faced ferocious grizzly bears in the Rockies without flinching. On this occasion Mr. Prout was facing a raging lion—or so he imagined—and he had no intention of flinching now.

Nor did he. Without a rifle, Mr. Prout had flinched. But with his trusty Winchester repeater in his hands, he faced the lion. He dropped on one knee as Bob Cherry came bounding down the stairs, and—

Bang!

Nobody had a very clear idea of what followed—least of all Mr. Prout

and Bob Cherry. There were wild yells of warning and alarm, and then—

Crash!

"Yarroooooogh!"

Bob had yelled in sheer alarm as Mr. Prout fired. But he yelled still more as he slipped on the stairs and went headlong down them.

Fortunately, Mr. Prout broke his fall—fortunately for him, but unfortunately for Mr. Prout. The rifle flew from the gallant Form master's podgy hands, and clattered on the stairs.

Mr. Prout and the hapless "lion" rolled down the stair together, landing at the bottom in a heap with Walker and Loder, who failed to get clear in time.

Crash, crash, crash!

"Yarroooooogh!"

"Ow—ow! Yooooop!"

"Help! Oh, my— Yow! Help!"

"My rifle!" bellowed Mr. Prout, from underneath the "lion." "My rifle, Wingate—quick! Good heavens! Quick! My rifle! I will soon— Yow—ow!—account for— Ow! Quick!"

They were all well in the light of the passage now, and Wingate had soon seen all he wanted to see of the "lion." A lion that went about tied up with pieces of string, and with pyjamas showing here and there through joins in its skin, was not a lion to be afraid of in Wingate's opinion.

With a cheerful grin on his face, the captain of the school grabbed Mr. Prout's rifle, and in a couple of seconds he had hurriedly removed the cartridges and slipped them into his pyjama

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jacket-pocket. Then he obediently handed the empty rifle to Mr. Prout.

Only Mr. Prout's head, shoulders, and arms were visible at the moment—the rest of him being underneath the lion. Loder and Walker had already scrambled out from the melee—Loder's face as white as chalk, Walker's heated and wrathful. But Mr. Prout felt the rifle placed in his hand, and he gripped it lightly.

"Now I have him! Ow! Pooooogh! Stand aside, boys!" he roared. "Ow! Now! Stand aside!"

"Yarroooooogh! Help! Don't fire!"

Bob Cherry was badly shaken up by that headlong fall and as he had had the weight of Walker and Loder on top of him, he felt incapable of movement for the moment. But he soon found breath to shriek and howl as he felt the barrel of Mr. Prout's rifle jammed into his ribs. "Help! Don't fire! It's me—yarrooop!—Bob Cherry! Yow! Help! Murder!"

Click!

Failing to hear Bob's desperate appeal, Mr. Prout pulled the trigger. It was just as well for Bob Cherry that Wingate had had the thoughtfulness to remove the cartridges.

Click, click!

"Good heavens! My rifle—" panted Mr. Prout, wriggling desperately. "It has—ow!—missed fire! Good heavens!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate roared with laughter, he could not help it. Nor was he the only one. By this time Mr. Quelch, with a crowd of scared juniors—scared for the most part, that is—had come cautiously along the passage.

They came along just in time to get a good and clear view of the "lion"—through the big slit in the neck of which Bob Cherry's own head, with face flushed and desperate, showed quite clearly.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Cherry! Bless my soul! I guessed—I suspected—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd howled with laughter.

Wingate and Walker dragged Bob off Mr. Prout. The Fifth Form master's face was a sight to behold—amazement, alarm, and anger showing upon it. As yet Mr. Prout could not understand—the laughter amazed and shocked him. But as he staggered up with the aid of Mr. Quelch and Mr. Hacker, who had just come along, his gaze fell upon the lion.

Bob Cherry was on his feet now, and Wingate had dragged the big lion's head right back from the junior's head. Bob looked a ludicrous sight, and Mr. Prout fairly goggled at him.

"G-good heavens! What—what—Cherry! So—so— Bless my soul! Cherry, you—you—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout glared dumbfoundedly at the Remove junior. He gripped his famous rifle convulsively, and Bob jumped back quickly. Mr. Prout certainly looked as if he would have loved to brain Bob Cherry in that tragic moment of disillusionment.

"G-good heavens!" panted the Fifth Form master. "Boy—boy—so it was you! Scoundrel! So—so—" Words failed the gallant Mr. Prout.

"Perhaps you would care to retire to your room to recover, Mr. Prout!" suggested Mr. Quelch, with icy tact. "As you see, there is really nothing to be afraid of, or to make such a commotion about."

"Sir!"

But Mr. Quelch was only human. He had not forgotten Mr. Prout's scathing remarks a few moments ago, and he went on ruthlessly.

"There were really no dangers to face, Mr. Prout. Had you listened to me a few moments ago, this would not have taken place," he said coldly. "I suspected from the first that it was a practical joke on the part of some juniors—that they were juniors wearing skins purloined from the school museum."

"Sir! I—I—I—" stuttered Mr. Prout.

"But the matter is very serious, Mr. Prout," went on Mr. Quelch, fixing the hapless Bob Cherry with a steely eye. "The whole school has been aroused. Such an outrage must be inquired into. The culprits shall be punished with the utmost severity. Cherry, who— Ah! Here is Dr. Locke!"

Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars, came hurrying up carrying an electric torch in his hand. He looked very alarmed and anxious indeed. Bob Cherry groaned hollowly as he sighted him.

"What ever is the matter, Mr. Prout?" asked the Head, in amazement. "I was awakened by the report of firearms! Have burglars— Oh!"

Dr. Locke had sighted the dismal-looking "lion."

"Bless my soul! What—what—Cherry! Why are you wearing that absurd thing?" he said, in an angry voice. "What—what does this nonsense mean, Mr. Quelch?"

Possibly Dr. Locke saw that Mr. Prout was not in a fit condition to explain, and so he turned to the calm and grim-featured Remove master.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.

Mr. Quelch explained in a few brief words. As he proceeded, Dr. Locke's brow grew more and more thunderous. Bob Cherry shivered as the Head turned to him at length.

"Who was your companion in this absurd and monstrous masquerade, Cherry?" he demanded icily.

Bob remained silent.

"Answer me, sir!" thundered Dr. Locke.

"Cherry, answer Dr. Locke this instant!" commanded Mr. Quelch.

Bob would never have answered such a question, come what might, but there was no necessity to do so, as it happened. During the silence that followed, Peter Todd, his face flushed and rather unhappy, stepped forward.

"I was the fellow, sir," he said meekly. "I was the—ahem!—tiger."

There was a giggle, but Dr. Locke's frowning glance round soon silenced it.

"Very well, Todd!" he rasped grimly. "Was anyone else concerned in this outrage?"

"N-nunno, sir! We—we did it on our own, sir!" gasped Bob.

"Very good!" The Head, glanced round the grinning assembly grimly. His face became grimmer still as his eyes rested for a moment on Mr. Prout's famous rifle. "Mr. Prout, kindly oblige me by—ahem!—removing that dangerous weapon to a safe place. I am thankful, indeed, that there has been no serious—ahem!—accident to-night!" he said dryly. "Boys, return to your dormitories as quietly and quickly as possible. Wingate!"

"Sir?"

"You will take the name of any boy found out of bed five minutes from now, and report to me in the morning, Cherry and Todd, you will report in my study at nine o'clock in the morning, when I will go into this—this disgraceful affair."

With that Dr. Locke walked away with his stately tread, and the sound of his carpet slippers died away along the dark passage. Nearly bursting with suppressed mirth, the crowd broke up and hastened to their respective dormitories. They intended to be in bed well within the five minutes. Wingate took charge of the lion skin from the unhappy Bob Cherry.

As the Remove crowded into their dormitory, a fat, scared face peered out from under Bunter's bed.

"Owl! I—I say, you fellows, have they gone—have those fearful beasts gone?"

"No, they've come!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "Look out, Bunter! Here they come!"

"Yarrooop! Help!"

Bunter dived under his bed again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat ass!" cried Harry Wharton, half-laughing. "Come out of it. The lion and tiger were only Toddy and Cherry wearing skins taken from the museum! Now get into bed, you fat funk, unless you want to be reported to the Head in the morning. And if you do any more swanking and bragging about facing wild beasts after this, we'll scrag you for the fat funk you are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owl! Oh crikey!" Bunter crawled out from under his bed, and climbed in between the disordered sheets. The laughter of the Removites had quite reassured him, and he gave a deep groan of heartfelt relief. "I—I say, you fellows, I knew all the time it was only a jape."

"What?"

"That's why I crawled under the bed, you know—to put the wind up you chaps

and help the jape on—see. He, he, he! If you think I was frightened—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was chuckling and grinning all the time, really!" explained Bunter in a cool voice. "It was no end amusing to see you fellows flying about like a lot of frightened rabbits. I never laughed so much in my life. He, he, he! Of all the rotten funks—well, you fellows take the bun! I did think the Remove had more pluck than to—Yarroooooogh!"

Bunter's flow of eloquence came to an abrupt stop as a boot flew through the darkness and caught him in the chest.

After that, the Owl of the Remove refrained from chiding his Form-fellows. And when Wingate looked in, four minutes later, silence reigned in the Remove dormitory.

A few minutes later Bunter's snore was again resounding through the room. But it was a long time before Bob Cherry and Peter Todd slept that night. They were thinking of the coming interview with the Head at nine in the morning.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business!

"H E, he, he!"

That unmusical cachinnation came from Billy Bunter when he met the Famous Five just after afternoon classes the following day.

It was not the first time, by any means; that Bunter had giggled and cackled on meeting Harry Wharton & Co., though his hilarity was directed chiefly against Robert Cherry.

Really, it was no wonder. Bunter certainly had the laugh of Bob Cherry and Peter Todd over the previous night's fiasco, for that morning the two jokers had had a very painful interview with Dr. Locke.

Certainly the Owl of the Remove had not shone as a bold, brave, big game hunter, but he had not got a sound thrashing out of it, like the jokers had. He could afford to laugh, and he did laugh.

"He, he, he!"

The Famous Five were just going down for an hour's footer practice on Little Side. They met Bunter in the passage just outside Mr. Prout's study door. Bunter was hanging about in rather a suspicious manner, they thought. But he quickly changed his attitude as he sighted them, and then gave vent to the above expression of hilarity.

"He, he, he!"

"Something wrong with Bunter's works again!" remarked Frank Nugent. "He's been making that extraordinary noise all day, chaps. Shall we up-end him, and see if any of his loose screws fall out?"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Think you're funny, don't you, Nugent? I think Bob Cherry's no end funny, you know. I bet he knows why I'm cackling. He, he, he!"

"You—you fat ass!" snorted Bob, flushing. "If you don't stop rubbing that rotten affair in, Bunter—"

"He, he, he! Did the Head lay it on, Bob?" asked Bunter. "I noticed you and Toddy couldn't sit still in class! My hat! Nice sort of wild animals, ain't you? He, he, he!"

"You—you fat rotter!"

"Good job I hadn't got the gun instead of old Prout!" grinned Bunter. "If I'd had it there'd have been a dead lion and a dead tiger lying about the school! I wouldn't have missed my shot like Prouty did!"

"Better dry up, Bunter," said Harry Wharton warningly, with a glance at Mr. Prout's door. "Prout's raging about last night. He'll just be glad of a chance to lick some of us Removites, you fat ass."

"He, he, he! Prouty's out. He's gone to Courtfield," grinned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm going to collar his gun. Look here, Wharton, I'll let you have a shot with it if you'll nip in and pinch it now. Mind you get some cartridges, though!"

"You fat idiot!"

"He keeps his 'shooter' in the corner behind the bookcase," said Bunter. "I've seen it there. Nip in and get it, and I'll smuggle it out somehow. He won't know anyone's had it if I return it before he comes back."

"Well, you young idiot!" spluttered Harry Wharton. "If you dare to touch that rifle—"

"I'm a chap who'd dare anything!" said Bunter loftily. "My hat! Think a fellow who's going to face death hourly in the deep jungle is afraid of old Prouty? Rot!"

"You silly duffer—"

"Now don't be such a cowardly funk!" urged Bunter. "It won't take a sec to nip in and get it."

"Why don't you nip in and get it, then?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Why? Oh, well, why should I?" answered Bunter. "I'll run enough risk by using the blessed thing, won't I? You chaps do your bit for once."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Back me up in this, and I'll see about letting you have a shot each," said Bunter generously. "And—and I'll bring you a few things back from Africa—a few skins and tusks, and things like that. In fact," added Bunter, "I may even ask my uncle to take you chaps, too. All depends on how you treat me before I go, you know."

"You burbling chump!"

"There's this matter of a subscription," explained Bunter, a trifle morosely. "I've mentioned it to several chaps—I—I mean, they've mentioned it to me. But nobody seems keen to start a subscription on my behalf. Did you ever hear of such meanness? I'm very disappointed. Not that I want it; but a little present—say, a purse—would bring back pleasant memories when—I'm fighting against great odds in the—the jungle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to laugh at!" sniffed Bunter. "Anyway, the subscription can stand over until after the leaving sale."

"Leaving sale!" echoed Harry Wharton. "Why, how d'you know you're not coming back again?"

"I'm not likely to come back to a measly hole like this!" sniffed Bunter. "After—after living a man's life in the jungle—facing death hourly in foreign lands, you know—is it likely I'd come back to sit and mug Latin with a snivelling swarm of inky-faced kids like you fellows?"

"Why, you—you cheeky owl!" gasped Wharton.

"I'm sorry," resumed Bunter. "But it can't be did—you kids can see that! I shall be holding my leaving sale tomorrow, and I hope all my friends will rally round and back me up. Now what about Prout's rifle? I'll wait here while—"

"Yes, do!" said Bob Cherry. "Wait as long as you like, old lard-tub! But sit down while you're waiting, old chap. Let's help Bunter to sit down, chaps!"

"Certainly!"

"Here, I say, Cherry—why—Yooooop!"

Bump, bump, bump, bump!
Bunter sat down—not once, but many times.

"Yaroop! Yow! Ow!"

Leaving the fat junior seated on the linoleum, roaring, the Famous Five walked on.

It was cold sitting on the linoleum, and Bunter soon tired of it. He scrambled up at last, dusty and breathless and wrathful.

"Beasts!" he grunted. "What awful beasts! Too mean to do a small job like that for a fellow who's leaving for foreign lands in less than a week!"

Bunter paused and blinked at Mr. Prout's study door. If he desired Mr. Prout's famous repeater, he would have to get it himself.

The fat youth looked up and down the passage, and then, having made his decision, he stepped into Mr. Prout's study and gently closed the door. Mr. Prout's study was furnished to suit his sportive tastes. Photographs depicting him, armed with his Winchester, in all sorts of attitudes, lined the walls. Rifles, ancient and modern, hung from the walls with various other sporting equipment. And in the corner, behind the bookcase, were his golf-clubs, fishing-rods, and his Winchester repeating-rifle.

"Oh, good!" grinned Bunter. "My hat! I'll have my photo taken sitting astride a lion or a tiger when I get out there—like old Prouty sitting on that blessed grizzly bear there. I bet he had it taken in a photographer's studio, though. Now, how the dickens am I going to smuggle this dashed rifle out?"

Bunter soon solved the problem, however. Tipping out Mr. Prout's golf-clubs from the bag, he stuck the rifle inside. The barrel still projected somewhat, but the Owl of the Remove got over this snag by wrapping a piece of canvas over it. Then he jammed back the golf-clubs.

It was rather a tight fit, but that was all the better, Bunter reflected. Slinging the bag over his shoulder, Bunter poked his head out into the passage and blinked up and down. There was nobody about, and he emerged and was rolling away along the passage with his prize, when he suddenly remembered cartridges.

"Oh, my hat!" he grunted. "What the thump's the good of a gun without blessed cartridges? Oh, blow!"

Bunter returned to the study, and after five minutes' hunting about he found some cartridges in the table drawer, Mr. Prout having placed them there temporarily only that morning. Satisfied now, Bunter made all speed for out of doors.

As he was crossing the hall—rather hurriedly—Skinner & Co. planted themselves in his path. Bunter eyed them suspiciously. Somehow the knowing grins of Skinner & Co. made Bunter wonder what the sneaks of the Remove were up to, or had been up to.

He little knew!

"Hallo! Here's our giddy big game hunter going golfing, chaps!" smiled Skinner. "Well, my hat! Who's things are those, Bunter?"

"Looks like Prouty's to me!" said Stott.

"Great pip! Bunter, what the merry dickens—"

"You mind your own business, Skinner!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm taking these golf-clubs out to old Prout, if you want to know."

Bunter rolled on. In the doorway he met Peter Todd. That youth blinked at him.

"Bunter, you fat ass! What are you doing with Prout's clubs?" he demanded.

"Prouty asked me to bring 'em out to him," said Bunter calmly. "I'm off golfing with him—see?"

"Caddying?" yelled Toddy.

"Rats!"

Bunter rolled on his way out into the quad, leaving Peter Todd staring blankly after him. That should satisfy Toddy, in Bunter's opinion. Actually it did not; but Toddy was fed-up with Bunter, and for once he "let him rip," as he expressed it. If Bunter wanted to risk a licking by bagging Prouty's golf-clubs he was welcome to the licking—that was Toddy's view.

Scores of fellows eyed Bunter blankly as he ambled on, staggering a little under the weight of the burden. But he reached the playing-fields at last without opposition, and skirting them, Bunter reached the meadows beyond, with a sigh of thankfulness.

"Ow! Thank goodness!" he gasped, dropping the bag on to the ground. "Phew! Now for that blessed gun!"

Bunter removed the golf-clubs after a struggle, and leaving them and the bag lying in the hedge, he scrambled through and shouldered the rifle in the approved style. Through the hedge Bunter could see the distant forms of Harry Wharton & Co. punting a ball about, and he grinned cheerfully.

The fat Remove had stated that he needed no practice with a rifle. But he knew that he needed a great deal of practice—no end of practice, as it were. He was going to get some now.

Bunter paused at last, when well away from any risk of observation, and loaded the rifle. It was one of Mr. Prout's little "treats" to show interested fellows just how to load and unload a gun, and Bunter had seen him do it more than once. So he found the operation quite easy to accomplish.

All ready now, the Owl of the Remove looked about him for game. Even as he blinked about him there was a rustle in the hedge some yards ahead, and a bird rose into the air with a fluttering of wings.

The bird was a wood-pigeon—even Bunter saw that. It flew low for a few yards, and then settled again on the hedge.

"Oh, good!" breathed Bunter.

He raised his rifle to his fat shoulder, took careful aim, and fired.

Bang!

Bunter was really quite startled at the noise of the report. He really had not expected it to sound so loud in the quiet fields. But it did. And the results startled Bunter still more.

The wood-pigeon flew away unharmed, but from beyond the hedge sounded a shrill squealing, and it made the sportsman jump into the air.

Bunter had not hit the bird, but he had undoubtedly hit something else.

"Oh, crikey!" he gasped.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for Bunter!

BANG!

Over the quiet fields that shot from Mr. Prout's famous rifle sounded clearly and sharply. It reached Harry Wharton & Co. on Little Side, and Harry Wharton halted suddenly with the ball at his toes.

"Hallo! Who the dickens is shooting near the school?" he gasped. "That's something jolly unusual, chaps!"

"Perhaps old Prouty!" suggested Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Hadn't we better get indoors for safety?"

Harry Wharton did not grin. A rather scared look came over his face. He was wondering. He glanced in the

direction from which the shot had come, frowning. He could see nothing, however, for high hedges screened his view.

"Only old Farmer Grabble shooting rats, or crows, or something!" grinned Frank Nugent. "Let's get on with the footer."

"Hold on!" said Harry. "What about that fat ass, Bunter? You remember—he was hanging about outside Prout's study. He wanted us to get Prout's gun for him. Supposing—"

"Oh, great pip!"

The rest of the footballers stared at Harry.

"You think that fat ass has boned Prouty's rifle?" gasped Johnny Bull. "But he wouldn't dare—"

"He's ass enough for anything!" said Harry. "But he could hardly smuggle such a thing out of the school. No, it can't be—"

"Can't it?" grinned Peter Todd, who had come down a few moments after Bunter had left him. "I fancy there's something in that, Wharton. I wondered what on earth Bunter wanted with Prouty's golf-clubs."

"Eh? What do you mean, Toddy?"

"Only that I met dear old Bunter going out with Prout's golf-bag and clubs!" grinned Peter, light breaking in on him now. "I thought the bag seemed jolly full and weighty. Bunter was fairly staggering under the weight of it. He said he was going golfing with Prout. I bet he's gone shooting with Prout's rifle. It must have been in the bag with the golf-clubs. That's how the crafty young scamp's smuggled it out!"

"Oh crumbs! That's it! Phew!"

The startled Removes blinked at each other. Then Harry Wharton gave a gasp.

"Quick! That young ass will be doing some damage if he isn't stopped—if it is him! He's about as safe with a gun as he is with other people's grub. Come on!"

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton started off full-tilt for the spot from which that single shot had proceeded, his chums racing at his heels. Long before they reached the high hedge that bordered the school grounds the juniors heard another sound—a shrill squealing that grew louder as they approached.

"He's hit someone or something!" panted Harry. "Oh, my hat!"

They burst pell-mell through the high hedge and then they set off across the meadow beyond. Through another hedge they scrambled, and then they sighted Bunter.

He was standing by the far hedge, the rifle still in his hands, staring through into the field beyond which sloped up to the little farm on the hill.

"It's Bunter right enough!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Bunter, you footling ass!"

The Owl of the Remove wheeled round in startled alarm.

"Here, turn that dashed gun the other way!" howled Frank Nugent. "Look out, chaps. The fat idiot's dangerous!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Drop that gun, Bunter, you fool!" shouted Harry Wharton, dashing up. "Drop it!"

"I jolly well won't!" gasped Bunter, glowering at the panting footballers. "Like your cheek to come butting in like this. You kids sheer off!"

"You footling young idiot!"

"Footling idiot yourself!" snorted Bunter, though he was looking none too easy. "Can't a chap get in a bit of practice—"

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.



BUNTER- THE BIG GAME HUNTER!

(Continued from page 13.)

"But what have you shot?" yelled Johnny Bull. "Listen, you fellows!"

The shrill squealing was still proceeding from beyond the hedge. The juniors jumped to it and peered through. Then they understood.

In the field beyond was Farmer Grabble's donkey, and he was careering about, kicking up his heels and squealing. Bunter's shot had merely lifted off a tuft of the donkey's hair and slightly grazed the skin. But the lifting process had obviously been a painful one for Farmer Grabble's donkey!

"It's only old Grabble's donkey! Nothing to make a fuss about!" said Bunter, with a snort. "What the deuce was the blessed thing doing hiding behind the hedge? If the blessed thing hadn't got in the way I should have got that thumping wood-pigeon!"

"You footling, dangerous young maniac!" yelled Harry Wharton. "You ought to be in a padded cell. Hand me that gun at once!"

"Shan't! You go and eat coke, Harry Wharton!" snorted Bunter. "Watch me hit that— Oh, crikey!"

Bunter was interrupted by a loud, angry shout. He blinked through the hedge and was startled to see two men bearing down towards them from the farm buildings beyond.

"Oh, Great Scott!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Look out, Bunter! Here's old Grabble!"

"Oh crumbs! I say, you fellows, tell him the gun went off accidentally."

"Run for it, you young ass!"

But Bunter had left it too late. Just then heavy feet sounded beyond the hedge. A second later Farmer Grabble, a big man in gaiters, with a red, angry face, burst through the hedge. Behind him was a farm-labourer carrying a pitchfork. Farmer Grabble himself carried a riding-whip.

The sight of this was enough for Bunter. He turned to flee with a wild yell. Unfortunately, though he had a few yards' start, he took the wrong direction, and very quickly came to grief.

Regaining his feet, the fat Removite made for the opposite hedge, and thundered on with the raging farmer in hot pursuit.

Billy Bunter was so shortsighted that he did not see the ditch that ran parallel with the hedge. The next moment he had floundered into it.

Splash!

It was a deep, wide ditch, and well filled with water. Bunter splashed into it, staggered a step, and then fell headlong, mud and water splashing over his portly form and features.

"Yarroooooogh! Gug-gug-groooooh!"

It proved to be the end of the chase.

"Fetch him out, Joe!" bellowed Farmer Grabble to his farm-hand, as that worthy came lumbering up. "Fetch the young scoundrel out! I'll larn 'im to shoot my hanimals!"

Joe obviously did not like the job. But he obeyed, splashing almost knee-deep into the ditch. His horny hand

closed on Bunter, and the fat junior was pulled ashore like a stranded fish.

He collapsed in a dripping heap on the grass, panting, groaning, and gasping.

He was not allowed to rest in peace, however. It was Bunter's unlucky day. Being now in a suitable position for punishment, Farmer Grabble proceeded to punish the fat junior. He brought the stock end of the riding-whip into vigorous action on Bunter's tightly-stretched and dripping trousers.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yarroooooogh!" roared Bunter. "Yooooop! Oh, help! Rescue! Murder! Yooooop! Oh crikey! Help! Murder!"

"I'll larn you!" bellowed Farmer Grabble. "I'll teach you to shoot my donkey, blame you. Take that, and that, and that!"

Bunter took them—every one of them. He had no possible voice in the matter. He only wished he had. He howled and yelled with anguish.

Harry Wharton & Co. came rushing up. They could not help grinning at the sight Bunter presented, though they felt sorry for him.

"Hold on, Mr. Grabble!" gasped Harry. "The fat idiot's had enough!"

"Had enough, has he?" yelled the farmer furiously. "Well, now you kids can 'ave your turn! Collar 'em, Joe—quick!"

It was rather a large order for Joe. But he did his best. He made a grab at Bob Cherry, who happened to be nearest. Bob dodged him neatly, and overbalancing, the luckless Joe sprawled forward on his face on the muddy grass.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a roar of laughter, the footballers bolted out of range, and Joe gave it up. The farm-hand knew from experience how hopeless it was to chase the Greyfriars juniors. He had not lived in sight of the school without getting experience in that line.

"Never mind 'om!" bawled Farmer Grabble. "This 'ere's the young raskil we wants. I seed them others come running 'ere, and I s'pose they 'ad no hand in it. It's this fat young scoundrel. Shootin' my donkey, eh? Crimes! He'd have been shooting my cows if we hadn't come along sharp! Bring him along, Joe!"

"Yow-ow! Oh dear! Yow-ow!" wailed Bunter. "Yow-ow! Lemme go now! Please lemme go!"

"Not likely!" vowed the farmer. "Arter shooting old Ned like you done, you dangerous young scoundrel! I put up with a lot from you young gents, I does. But this 'ere's the blamed limit! Get 'is gun, Joe, and we'll take 'im up to the skool!"

"Oh dear!"

Bunter groaned in bitterness of spirit as he heard that. But Farmer Grabble was deaf to his pleadings. Joe recovered the gun which Bunter had dropped in the ditch. It was covered with mud, and dripping. Joe examined it, and then obeying his master's order, removed the remaining cartridges, and pitched them into the ditch. Then he handed the gun to the wrathful farmer.

With Joe's horny hand on his drenched coat collar, Bunter was led away towards the distant school buildings. It was a sad ending to the first day's practice with Mr. Prout's rifle.

From a safe distance the footballers watched the procession start.

"Bunter's for it!" remarked Frank Nugent. "Poor old Bunter. He's asked for it if anybody did. They're taking him to Greyfriars, I bet!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

Bunter was undoubtedly "for it"—though he had already had more than he wanted. The juniors abandoned all thoughts of proceeding with practice—in fact, it was already growing dusk and time to give up. They followed Bunter and his captors across the meadows and then across the playing-fields to the quadrangle.

"Hallo— Oh, my hat! Prout!" said Harry Wharton, as they came in sight of the School House steps.

"And Quelch!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Now for it!"

"Poor old Bunter!" sighed Peter Todd.

All the Removites felt sorry for Bunter. In the grasp of the farm-labourer, with Farmer Grabble on his other side carrying the muddy rifle, Bunter fairly tottered along towards the steps on which Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch were chatting. The two Form-masters had walked from Friardale together, having met there by chance. And during the walk they had "made up" their little quarrel of the night before. They were chatting quite amicably when they sighted Bunter.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "That—that appears to be Bunter of my Form! What—what—"

"And, if I am not mistaken!" boomed Mr. Prout, his voice growing thunderous in his amazement and sudden anger, "that rifle, in the hands of our neighbour, Farmer Grabble, is my Winchester repeater. Good gracious! This—this—is it possible—"

Quite suddenly Mr. Prout remembered how Billy Bunter had been to his study the previous evening to borrow his rifle. The suspicion became a certainty as he saw the look of anger on Farmer Grabble's face.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped, fixing the hapless Removite with a glare. "Bunter—Bunter!—is it possible that you—"

"Here you are, my lad!" interrupted Farmer Grabble, dragging the hapless junior before the two masters. "Now just you tell your masters what you bin up to!"

But Bunter couldn't. He had caught that gleam in Mr. Prout's eyes, and he shivered.

"What has happened, Farmer Grabble?" demanded Mr. Quelch, frowning thunderously at Bunter. "This boy—this wretched junior—how comes he to be in your hands—in this appalling state?"

"Arsk 'im!" suggested Farmer Grabble, in deep indignation. "You knows as I aron't too 'ard on your young gents, Mister Quelch. I knows as boys will be boys. But shooting at my hanimals is beyond the limit!"

"Good gracious! Am I to understand—"

"Shot my donkey, that's what he done!" hooted the farmer. "Might have killed old Ned! I don't know even now how much the young raskil's harmed 'im! How he's got 'old of a gun like this an'—"

"That rifle is mine!" thundered Mr. Prout, his voice trembling with indignation. "That boy—that wretched young reprobate had the impudence to approach me last evening with a request to borrow it."

"Bless my soul! Mr. Prout—"

"Such is the case, Quelch! I took it upon myself to chastise him. Now—now—" continued Mr. Prout, with a gasp, "he has had the temerity, the astounding audacity, to purloin it, and to—to go shooting in the fields, apparently. And this, Mr. Quelch, is the result! Look at my rifle, sir!"

Mr. Prout almost snatched his rifle from Farmer Grabble's hand. He

groaned as he examined it. Gone was the beautiful polish on haft, and shine on barrel. It was now coated with mud—mud down the barrel, and mud in the works, so to speak. Mr. Prout almost wept.

"Look at it, Quelch!" he repeated, in horrified dismay. "That—that young scoundrel shall suffer dearly for this outrage! I shall insist upon punishment of the utmost severity, Quelch. I shall consider it a favour, sir, if you will allow me to punish Bunter personally, instead of leaving him for you to deal with."

"Bless my soul! Indeed, Mr. Prout, I shall certainly raise no objection to your doing so!" said Mr. Quelch, eyeing Bunter very sternly indeed. "The wretched boy has richly merited punishment."

"Which I don't wish you to be too hard on the kid, Mister Quelch," interrupted Farmer Grapple, who was not a hard-hearted man; "I've already laid into him with my whip. And the kid's had a soaking, too!" he added. "Just a good, sharp talking to, and I'll be satisfied, sir!"

"You may safely leave his punishment in our hands, Farmer Grapple!" said Mr. Quelch politely. "I am thankful, indeed, that you apprehended him before he was able to do further damage. Come with me, Bunter. You had better proceed to your dormitory without delay and change your things, or you will catch a severe chill. Good-day, Mr. Grapple!"

Mr. Grapple and his man departed, and Bunter followed Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout indoors, his boots squeaking dismally, and his fat face reflecting eloquently the nature of his feelings. There was nothing swanky or lofty about William George Bunter just then. He did not resemble, in the least, a dashing, bold, big game hunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. had arrived in time to hear Mr. Quelch's final remarks and they felt very sorry for Bunter. Fortunately they had found Mr. Prout's golf-bag and clubs in the hedge bottom where the Owl of the Remove had left them and Harry Wharton managed to smuggle them unseen to Mr. Prout's room later on.

The Removites felt still more sorry

for Billy Bunter some ten minutes later when they heard wild howls of woe sounding from Mr. Prout's study. Bunter was suffering for his sins.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Leaving Sale!

BUNTER was going! Much as the fellows had heard about Bunter going since that sensational letter had arrived, they simply could not believe that Billy Bunter was actually leaving Greyfriars.

The juniors had not heard Mr. Quelch refer to it, or anyone in authority. They had only heard Billy Bunter mention it—many a time and oft. Young Sammy Bunter, Bunter's young brother, flatly refused to believe it. When Billy had shown him the letter Sammy had almost fallen down with surprise. Actually, the fat Second-Former had not read as far as that paragraph when Skinner had snatched the letter from him. But he had heard

(Continued on next page.)

What are the Ashes?

By "SCORER."

This feature will be of double interest to the hundreds of readers who have written inquiring letters about this subject.

WHEN England and Australia meet on the cricket pitch, the Test matches are always described as the struggle for the "Ashes." Really, however, there are no "Ashes" to be lost or won. How came the word to be used, then? Here is the explanation.

Away back in 1882 a strong England side lost a match to the Australians by seven runs. The defeat of England was most unexpected, for up to then the Australians had always proved "easy."

The surprise result caused an English newspaper to publish a cartoon, showing the death of English cricket, and under it was this "In Memoriam" epitaph:

"In Affectionate memory of
English Cricket,

Which died at the Oval on Aug. 29/1882.

Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends
and acquaintances.

R. I. P.

N.B.—The body will be cremated and the Ashes taken to Australia."

THAT started the idea of England and Australia fighting for the Ashes. But though there have never been "Ashes" officially, the idea has been kept up in succeeding years.

Soon after the first defeat of England, a team went to Australia under the Hon. Ivo Bligh. After two of the three matches had been won by England a number of Australian ladies presented the captain with a small urn containing some ashes. He brought the urn to England, and it is one of the treasured possessions of the Lord Darnley family.

THERE was also another lot of "Ashes" provided. After the England team had won the rubber in Australia in 1911-12. Mr. Tom Pawley, the manager, got one of the stumps used in this match. This was duly burnt, and the ashes were placed in a replica of a cricket-ball, cased in gold. This is also now cherished as a family heirloom.

MEN who are selected to play for England in Test matches receive caps, but those given to men who play in England and in the dominions are different. Both caps are of dark blue. On those given to players who play for England at home, the

badge is a crown and the three lions of England worked in red and gold. The badge on the cap given to England playing in touring sides shows St. George and the Dragon worked in white.

PERHAPS you will be interested to know how much the professionals who are playing for England in Australia get. Here are the conditions regarding payment:

1. Four hundred pounds for each professional, and a possible bonus on the basis of merit and discipline if the tour proves a financial success.
2. First-class fare to Australia and back, and thirty shillings per week on board ship to cover charges for wines, tobacco, etc.
3. Railway fares and travelling expenses in Australia, including lunches and drinks on such occasions, and two pounds per week for personal expenses.

Washing bills are paid, and an allowance made for tips. The special merit men on the last tour received as much as two hundred and fifty pounds each as bonus.

WHEN a Test match was played at Melbourne during the 1924-5 visit of the England team, new records were set up for attendances. On New Year's Day, 49,413 people paid for admission, which was a world's record for a Test match, and during the whole game the amount taken at the turnstiles amounted to the huge total of £22,499.

THAT England makes more changes in her Test match teams than Australia is plainly illustrated by the following facts. No fewer than eleven Australians have taken part in at least thirty Test matches between Australia and England, but only five English players have either touched or passed the thirty total. Jack Hobbs, however, is the only player taking his part in the present series who has played in at least thirty of these games.

HERE is a page of Test match history which you are much too young to remember, and which your father may have forgotten. In a match at the Oval in 1884, Australia went in to bat on a perfect wicket, and the England bowlers were practically powerless to get rid of them. They batted the whole of the first day for only two men out, and in the end totalled 551—a huge score for those days. In the course of that Australian innings, every member of the England side went on to bowl—the whole eleven—and Grace not only kept wicket so that the wicket-keeper could have a turn at bowling, but it is stated that he fielded in every possible position on the field. The best analysis for England in that innings was returned by a lob bowler.

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it read out by Skinner, and he felt almost certain that what Skinner read out was not anything relating to Billy Bunter going with his Uncle Ted.

Sammy, indeed, was rather bewildered about it all. He had even tackled Skinner about it, and had been solemnly assured by that humorous youth that what he had read out was exactly what was now in the letter—that Uncle Ted was taking Billy with him!

Yet, though Sammy had read the letter again, he still flatly refused to credit it. Sammy knew exactly in what regard Uncle Ted held his nephew Billy. Uncle Ted, indeed, had openly called Billy, often enough, a greedy, lazy, useless little nuisance. In Sammy's view, Uncle Ted, indeed, was as likely to take Billy Bunter with him abroad as Dr. Locke would have been!

But there it was—the letter said so, and if Sammy didn't believe it, his brother did. And as he was the fellow concerned, that was all that really mattered.

Bunter was going! At last the fellows were beginning to realise it.

The following morning the Owl of the Remove got up, merry and bright, full of his forthcoming trip to Africa. His aches and pains had gone—or nearly gone. Mr. Prout had laid on heavily, but a night's sleep had eased the pain and blunted the memory of it. Bunter was himself again, full of plans for the present and future.

These included, chiefly, his leaving sale and a subscription. When fellows left, they usually held a leaving sale. It was not an important function, and the business transacted was not big or sensational. Indeed, leaving sales were usually looked upon as a joke and an entertainment.

Bunter was determined that his leaving sale should be important, sensational and businesslike. That morning the fat junior gave big game hunting another rest, while he bent his intellect upon the matter of the sale. Bunter—for reasons of his own—had decided to hold the sale that afternoon—a half-holiday.

This was rather surprising, for the Remove team had an away match on at Rookwood; and Harry Wharton, and most of the important fellows—fellows who were likely to buy things from Bunter—out of kindness only—would be away.

Really, Bunter might have thought of that. Perhaps he did.

At all events, he had decided to hold it that afternoon, and during morning break Bunter and Fisher T. Fish, the cute and sharp business man of the Remove, were seen with their heads together.

The Removites looked upon the forthcoming sale as an entertainment not to be missed.

After dinner a notice appeared upon the notice-board in the Rag. It read as follows:

ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

ROLL UP!

GRATE LEEVING SAIL!

Owing to the approaching departure from Greyfriars of **WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER**, of the **REMOVE**, for West Affrika on a Big Game Hunting Toor, a sail of his goods and chattels will be held in the Rag this afternoon, Wednesday, at three-fifteen prompt, by Mr. **FISHER T. FISH** Esq., of New York, the well-known and world-renowned orkishumer. Masters, seniors, and juniors are kordially invited to attend this

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grate sail, where wonderfull barganes will be given away for praktically nothing.

Signed:

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER.

ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

ROLL UP!

Note: Pleece don't forget to come suplited with cash.

Spesshul Note: Spot cash only—no tic given!

W. G. Bunter.

The Removites roared as they read that striking notice.

"Well, this takes the bun!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Spot cash only! Isn't that just like Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a pity we shan't be here!" said Bob Cherry. "Really, it's too bad of Billy. I wouldn't have missed it for anything—except a football match. He might have considered little us."

"I'm blessed if I can understand why he's holding it this afternoon," said the captain of the Remove, wrinkling his brows. "Why can't he hold the blessed sale to-night?"

"Echo asks 'Why?'" grinned Bob. "You never know when you've Bunter to deal with."

"And Fishy!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "What a combination!"

"Here he comes!" sang out Johnny Bull. "What's this mean, Bunter? Why are you holding your leaving sale this afternoon?"

"Too bad, Billy!" said Bob Cherry reproachfully. "And I did so want to do you a good turn by offering you fourpence for your bike. Can we do a deal before the sale, do you think?"

Bunter grinned—rather a feeble grin.

"I never thought of you fellows," he said calmly. "Quite forgot about that wretched match, you know. Too bad! Still, I've got an idea, chaps!"

"Now for it!" murmured Bob.

"It's rather hard lines on you fellows," said Bunter. "You'll miss all the splendid bargains. Still, I'll be quite fair and generous. If you'd each like to hand me a quid in advance I'll bid for you—just tell me what you want, you know. There's my bike; it's really a splendid machine."

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed, but they did not make any offers.

"Well, please yourselves," said Bunter, somewhat grumpily. "You'll be sorry when you see my bike snapped up by somebody else at an absurd figure."

"We'll bear up, old fat bean," said Bob Cherry.

"Yah!"

Bunter contented himself with that elegant rejoinder and rolled away.

Ten minutes later, Harry Wharton & Co., carrying their handbags, left the school, boarded their brake, and started out for Rookwood.

A crowd of fellows saw them off, and a hearty cheer followed them. Then the Removites returned indoors. Tramps, cycle-rides, and cinemas were "off" for that afternoon. The juniors were too keen to attend Bunter's leaving sale.

The Owl of the Remove had rolled down to the gates to see the footballers off, and having seen them safely into their brake he hurried back into the School House. For an hour after that William George Bunter was busy—very busy!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble at the Auction!

"GENTLEMEN!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Fishy!"

"Tell the world!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of juniors in the Rag were in rather a hilarious mood.

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his bony hands together as he gazed on the assembly. Fisher T. Fish was to have a good percentage of the profits from the sale. The Transatlantic junior had his own opinion as to the ownership of the goods Bunter was putting up for auction.

It was none of Fisher T. Fish's business, however, what Bunter was putting up for sale. His job was to sell the goods, and to get the best prices he could for them—and that job could not have been placed in better hands than Fisher T. Fish, of New York.

The business man of the Remove glanced with great satisfaction at the crowd of grinning juniors. Behind him Billy Bunter's fat face showed equal satisfaction. Skinner was also there in an official capacity, though none of the other fellows knew that. His aid, willingly given for a considerable sum in cash, was to consist of "fake" bids, to encourage other bidders, it being understood, of course, that none of the goods were to be knocked down to him.

"Gentlemen," proceeded Fisher T. Fish, "gentlemen, galoos, and gentle pilgrims. I'm durned glad to see you all here. I guess it's no good me tellin' tall yarns to such a cute and educated crowd as I see before me in this hyer auction-room. I guess I'm goin' to stick to plain facts and figures, and not insult your intelligence with tall, fancy tales."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good for you, Fishy!"

"Get on with the washing!"

"I guess I'm going to!" grinned Fisher T. Fish, picking up an alarm clock from the table before him. "This hyer's lot one and I guess I've never seen a finer ticker. Fit for a duke's mantelpiece, that clock is. You can take my word for it, gents! It doesn't happen to be ticking at this precise moment, but that's solely because my client forgot to wind the thing up last night."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"First-class quality; jewelled in every link," continued Fishy, raising his voice. "A real, gilt-edged bargain, gentlemen. What offers for this silver-mounted clock with bells on, and made in—"

"America!" suggested Bolsover. "I offer tuppence. I want something to take pot-shots at with my new airgun."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, do be serious!" pleaded Fishy. "Now, what offers? One misguided, slab-sided humorist has offered twopence. Waal, to get going we'll start with that absurd figure. What further offers, gents?"

And Fisher T. Fish rapped smartly on his rostrum.

Further offers did not come quickly. The fellows knew that clock. It was a cheap alarm clock that had reposed, for terms, on the mantelpiece in Study No. 7. Bunter had always claimed that it was his clock. Peter Todd allowed him to claim it, simply because Peter would have been ashamed to own it himself. Actually, it had been left behind by a previous owner of the study ages ago.

"Waal, I guess I am surprised," went on Fishy, as no further bids were made. "This handsome clock, gentlemen—just look at it. A real bargain, gents. An



With the raging farmer in hot pursuit, Billy Bunter made a bee-line for the hedge. Unfortunately, however, he was too short-sighted to see the ditch which ran parallel with it. There was a splash as the Owl of the Remove floundered into it. "Yar-ooooogh!" he yelled, water splashing over his podgy form and features. "Gug-gug-groogh!"

(See Chapter 9.)

unredeemed pledge, I should imagine, from Bunter's uncle's pop-shop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even that failed to make the bidding brisker, and at last Fishy, in deep disgust, was obliged to knock down that ancient timepiece to Bolsover. The clock was passed over to Bolsover—after he had handed over the twopence—but it never reached him as a clock. Somehow it descended to the floor, and for several wild and whirling seconds that clock was passed from boot to boot amid an uproar of yells and laughter. By the time Bolsover rescued it it was a badly-bent chunk of metal, springs and wheels, and Bolsover grinned and kicked it through the open window.

Competition was a trifle more keen for the next lot. It was a cricket bat. Once it had had a name printed on the blade, but someone had quite recently scratched it off. Only Bunter himself knew who that someone was.

"Well, I'm blown!" gasped Snoop. "I never knew that fat ass owned a bat at all. He's boned that from somewhere."

"Oh, really, Snoop—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What offers for this really beautiful bat?" bawled Fishy hurriedly. "All the sporting gents present can see what a genuine bargain this is at any price below a quid. Did you say ten bob, Redwing?"

"No, I didn't," grinned Redwing. "But I'll offer five bob, providing I have a guarantee that it belongs to Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any advance on five bob?" shouted

Fishy, his eyes gleaming. "Did you say six, Skinner?"

"That's right—six bob," said Skinner cheerfully.

That bat was well worth more than six shillings—as Skinner could see. But other fellows had come to the same conclusion, and at ten-and-six the bat was knocked down to Vernon-Smith, who wasn't apparently, quite so suspicious of Bunter as his chum Redwing.

The bidding and selling grew brisk after that. A pair of good boxing-gloves fell to Vernon-Smith for five shillings, and a pair of footer boots—obviously not Bunter's own property, though he claimed Lord Mauleverer had given them to him—were snapped up by Cecil Reginald Temple of the Upper Fourth. Then in quick succession a silver pencil-case, a pocket-knife, a silver watch, and another pair of boxing-gloves fell under the hammer, and the eyes of Bunter and Fisher T. Fish gleamed greedily.

Really, it was surprising that Bunter had possessed so many useful things. It was common knowledge, of course, that Bunter had been "cadging" round the fellows for days for things to offer at his auction. But most of the lots were really good, and were certainly genuine bargains. Judging by the results, Bunter had undoubtedly excelled himself at the "cadging" game.

As the money began to roll in, the faces of Fishy and Billy Bunter grew brighter and brighter. Brisker and brisker became the bidding, and Bunter fairly perspired as he handed up the "lots" one by one to the auctioneer, who disposed of them rapidly and efficiently.

Fisher T. Fish was a fellow who loved to drive a hard bargain. It was really surprising that he did not insist upon harder bargains now. Perhaps he was in a hurry to get through with the sale.

Now and again things that obviously had long been Bunter's own property came up for sale—familiar things. A roar of cheers and laughter went up as Bunter's famous gramophone was placed on the rostrum by Fisher T. Fish. The bidding for that was not brisk. It was knocked down at last for a shilling to Tubb of the Third who said he wanted the case to make a cage for his white mice.

Still, a shilling was a shilling, and it helped to swell the pile of cash accumulating on the rostrum.

Billy Bunter grinned benevolently.

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his bony hands together.

"What about Bunter's bike?" yelled Russell. "Buck up and shove that up, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's machine has been purchased by private treaty," explained the auctioneer, who had himself given Bunter—or, rather, promised him—five shillings for it. "It will, therefore, not be put up for auction at this sale, gentlemen."

"Who's the philanthropist?" asked Ogilvy. "You, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, I guess I'm here for business, not to hear little jokes," said Fisher T. Fish hurriedly. "Now, I'll ask you to look at Lot 15, hyer. A real dandy photo-frame, fit to hold a

president's likeness, I guess. What offers? Did you say a bob, Skinner?"

Skinner admitted the soft impeachment.

"Any advance on a bob!" bawled the Transatlantic junior. "What? No advance on a bob for this solid silver frame? Jerusalem crickets! Oh, holy smoke! Of all the tight-fisted jays—"

"Knock it down to your pal, Skinner," suggested Bolsover.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Most of the fellows had spotted Skinner's game by this time. But they were in a hilarious mood, and they roared.

"Waal, I swow!" exclaimed Fishy, in deep disgust. "Gentlemen—did you say one-and-threepence, Wibley?"

Wibley hadn't, but he grinned and nodded. After all, the frame looked a jolly good one, and was worth it. He paid his money, and he took the frame. That proved to be the last sale, though it wasn't the last lot. Fishy reached behind to Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove handed up a camera.

"That's the last, Fishy," whispered Bunter, fairly gasping for breath. "Buck up! I'm hungry, and Mrs. Mumble's got some ripping rabbit-pies."

Fishy placed Lot 16—the last of all—on the rostrum. It was really a handsome camera, small, and compact. And a glance showed that it was almost new. As it was placed for all to see, Ogilvy of the Remove gave a gasp. He shoved his way nearer to the rostrum, and then, as he got a nearer view of the "lot," he gave a roar.

"Bunter, you fat rotter!" he bellowed. "That's my camera!"

"Eh? Your—your camera, Ogilvy?" gasped Bunter. "Oh, really, you know, I thought it was Bob Cherry's—I mean," Bunter corrected himself hastily, "I thought it was—was mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter at that. Ogilvy's face flushed, and he shook a fist at Bunter.

"You fat rotter!" he hooted. "I see it now! I lent that camera to Bob Cherry days ago. You must have pinched it from his study, you fat thief!"

"Oh! Oh crikey! Oh, really, Ogilvy, that's rather thick!" said Bunter, recovering himself quickly and drawing himself up with dignity. "I hope you're ashamed of yourself for making such a wicked, unfounded charge against me."

"I guess you're off your cabeza, Ogilvy," said Fisher T. Fish, a trifle uneasily. "If this is your camera, then I guess—"

"Of course it's my camera!" howled Ogilvy. "Russell here knows it well, and several other chaps here, too. I lent it to Bob Cherry—"

"D-dud-did you?" gasped Bunter. "Oh, fancy that rotter Bob Cherry giving me a thing that didn't belong to him! I'm surprised at Bob, I must say! I hope you'll understand that it ain't my fault, though; and that, as it was given to me for my leaving sale, it belongs to me now. Ain't that only fair, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fair! I'll jolly well give you fair, you fat rotter!" yelled Ogilvy. "If you've damaged it I'll jolly well smash you! Hand me my dashed camera, Fishy!"

"I guess not," said Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I reckon this hyer camera was handed me by my client to sell, and I guess I'm going to sell it. I kinder guess and calculate that—Hyar, keep off, you mugwump! Yooooop!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.

Ogilvy had grabbed at his camera—if it really was his—and Fisher T. Fish had unwisely pushed him away. In the scuffle the camera was knocked off the rostrum and crashed to the floor.

That did it. Fisher T. Fish howled fiendishly as Ogilvy's fist took him in the eye. Bunter yelled still more fiendishly as Ogilvy's other fist landed on his podgy little nose.

Bunter took it quietly—at least, he did not hit back. Fishy did; and the next moment the rostrum went crashing over as he and Ogilvy waltzed and danced about, pummelling each other often and hard.

A scene of wild confusion reigned after that. Billy Bunter took advantage of it to cease hugging his nose and to start gathering the money together. Fortunately—for his purpose—Fishy had already put most of it in a cloth bag, in readiness to go, and Bunter soon scooped up the rest. Then, like the Arabs of old, he stole silently away with it.

Several fellows saw him go—quite a number, in fact—but they were too helpless with laughter to attempt to stop him had they wanted to. And scarcely had Bunter taken his stealthy departure, when Wingate and Walker, having heard the rumpus from afar, came hurrying into the Rag.

They asked no questions and passed no remarks. They just set to work with their ashplants. In ten seconds the fight between Fisher T. Fish and Ogilvy was over, and in ten seconds after that the room was empty.

The great and sensational leaving sale was over, and Billy Bunter was already doing his best to relieve himself of the burden of the proceeds in the tuckshop. From his point of view, it had been a great and glorious success. But, though the sale was over, its results certainly weren't—as Billy Bunter was to find out.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Reckoning!

"HURRAH!"

"How many?" bellowed Dick Russell.

"Two—one!"

"For Greyfriars, of course?"

"Yes—we've licked 'em!"

"Hurrah!"

It was a much louder cheer this time, and it did not come from the footballers in the brake that was just drawing up before the gates, but from the crowd of fellows waiting for the return of the Remove team.

"Yes, we've licked 'em!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Jimmy Silver and his men put up a good fight, but—"

"We must have put up a better!" laughed Harry Wharton, his face ruddy and cheery. "It was a jolly good game, anyway!"

"And three more cheers for little us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The footballers dropped from the brake in a laughing, triumphant crowd. They were surrounded by the fellows waiting, and escorted, in the wintry dusk, through the gates and across the Close to the lighted hallway of the School House.

There was always a good reception at Greyfriars for returning footballers—whether they had won or lost. In this case they had won, and there was no mistaking the nature of their reception.

After reporting to Wingate and Mr. Quelch, Harry Wharton & Co. left the rest and went up to Study No. 1. They had already had one tea at Rookwood before leaving, but they were quite ready for another "snack."

And they had one. A fire was quickly made, the kettle put on, and soon they were devouring boiled eggs and bread-and-butter, with jam, and still more bread-and-butter to follow, and a big plum-cake to wind up the meal.

They had just finished, and were feeling happy and satisfied, when Bob Cherry gave a sudden chuckle.

"My hat! I wonder how old Bunter's leaving sale went off?" he remarked. "Let's go down and find out. I bet there was some fun—especially when his bike and gramophone were put up!"

"Blessed if I know what else the fat ass has to sell!" grinned Frank Nugent. "Yes, let's go down, chaps!"

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton.

For some time Harry had been glancing about the room in rather a puzzled manner.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed, still looking round the room. "Haven't you noticed that the study looks queer—bare somehow? What's gone from the mantelpiece?"

"My hat!"

As the other juniors glanced round they also noticed something unusual in the aspect of Study No. 1.

"Phew! You're right, Harry!" said Frank Nugent, looking suddenly serious. "Blessed if it doesn't look as if giddy burglars have been here! Why, where's the giddy study clock?"

"And my photo-frame!" said Harry Wharton suddenly. "I say, this looks queer! Here's the photo I had in it—a silver frame it was—but that's gone!"

"There's more than that gone!" gasped Nugent. "Look at the blessed cupboard, too! Somebody's been in here rummaging!"

"And boning things, too!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "Phew! What a mess!"

The study cupboard was in a mess—the lower cupboard, that is, where the juniors kept various sporting equipment and all kinds of things in everyday use. They were just staring blankly inside, when a knock came to the door and Ogilvy entered. He looked rather queerly at Bob Cherry, and he also looked none too good-tempered.

"Oh, you've got back, then!" he grunted. "You licked 'em, I hear."

"Yes, two—one! A jolly good game!"

"Good! I say, Cherry, my pippin. I've got a bone to pick with you! What about my camera?"

"Eh? What about it? Oh, sorry I didn't bring it back, old bean!" grinned Bob. "It's still on the bookcase in my study. I'll trot along and—"

"It jolly well isn't!" snorted Ogilvy wrathfully. "I suppose it's idiotic to ask you, but—did you give the dashed thing to Bunter?"

"Bunter!" yelled Bob. "Of course not! Why?"

"He says you did—for his rotten leaving sale!" snapped Ogilvy. "It was put up for auction, and when I went for him about it he said you'd given it him!"

"Oh, great pip!"

Bob Cherry glared blankly at Ogilvy. Then he doubled up and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Dear old Bunt! So that's how he's been getting his stuff for his giddy sale!"

"It's nothing to laugh at, you footling owl!" hooted Ogilvy. "Now my camera's smashed—it'll cost ten bob to get it repaired, you cackling idiot!"

"It certainly isn't anything to laugh at," agreed Harry Wharton, eyeing Ogilvy curiously. "But, come to that, Ogilvy, what the thump are you doing wearing my tiepin? I left that tiepin on the mantelpiece here this morning."

It's a tiepin that you don't see every day, and was brought from India by my uncle. And it's pretty valuable, I believe!"

"Wha-what?" gasped Ogilvy, with a jump.

"I suppose Bunter put that up for sale, did he?" said Harry grimly. "Did you buy it at his auction, Ogilvy?"

"Oh, great pip! Yes, I gave a couple of bob for it. I rather liked it. Oh, my hat! And it's worth—"

"Goodness knows what it's worth, but I wouldn't lose it for anything!" said Harry quietly. "I'll give you the two bob back for it."

Ogilvy silently removed the tiepin from his tie, and handed it to Harry.

"You jolly well won't give me the two bob back!" he snorted. "But I'm going to take it out of Bunter's fat hide! I think we'd better go and look for the fat burglar, and— Great pip! That must be why Toddy and Linley were after Bunter's blood a few minutes ago. They were raging!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, suddenly catching sight of a silver pencil case projecting from Ogilvy's pocket. "And did you buy that pencil case at the sale, too, Ogilvy? It belonged to me this morning. Bunter must have boned it from my study."

"Oh crumbs!"

Ogilvy's face was scarlet. With a roar of rage he made a jump for the door. He was swiftly followed by Harry Wharton & Co., who, with the exception of the chuckling Bob Cherry, were breathing hard with wrath.

In the passage they found that the Scottish junior had collided with Squiff of the Remove. Squiff appeared to be in a towering rage—a very unusual thing for him.

"Seen that fat thief Bunter anywhere?" he was roaring. "I'm going to smash him into little pieces. D'you know what he's done? Collared my spare footer boots and sold them by auction at his confounded leaving sale. I found Wibley just trying 'em on!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"It's nothing to laugh at!" roared Squiff. "And that isn't all. The fat rotter's also boned a pair of boxing-gloves of mine—they're missing, anyway. And they're not the only things that have disappeared, either. Oh, the—the—"

"This is getting jolly serious!" said Harry Wharton, frowning. "So this is why Bunter held his leaving sale this afternoon. I thought it rummy at the time. It was so that he could raid our studies while we were away, and bone things for his leaving sale."

"Phew! You—you've hit it!"

"The scheming fat burglar!"

"It's the absolute limit!" gasped Squiff. "I heard Bulstrode yelling about something when I rushed past his study, and I bet he's missed things, too. I believe there were heaps of things sold at the blessed sale—and I bet precious little belonged to Bunter—"

"Yarroooooogh!"

A distant howl interrupted Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. It was in the unmistakable tones of William George Bunter of the Remove.

"That sounds like Bunter now!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Some of the avengers have collared him for a cert. Come on!"

But the rest of the Removites were already rushing in the direction from which that wild yell of woe had come. Rarely, if ever, had such a crowd of juniors been so desperately eager to get within reach of William George Bunter.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

More Trouble for Bunter!

"I FEEL better now!"

Thus Billy Bunter as he slid off the stool in Mrs. Mimble's tuckshop.

Billy had done himself well—very well, indeed. Really the world seemed a kindly place to William George Bunter just then. He had nearly cleared Mrs. Mimble's shop of tarts and cakes, and sausage-rolls and lemonade—all Bunter's favourite delicacies. Moreover, Bunter's pockets were stuffed with toffee and chocolate—and he still had a considerable amount of cash in his pocket.

"Ripping!" murmured Bunter, his fat face very shiny. "Those sausage-rolls were a treat, Mrs. Mimble!"

Mrs. Mimble beamed upon Bunter. She didn't always beam on Bunter—not by a long way. It was a very rare thing indeed for the tuckshop dame to beam on Bunter. Certainly he was her best customer. None the less, Mrs. Mimble always looked upon the Owl of the Remove with a very suspicious eye. And she had always wanted to see his money before she served him!

On this occasion she had seen Bunter's money—plenty of it. That was enough for Mrs. Mimble.

Bunter had kept her very busy indeed. But he was satisfied now—for the time being. Moreover, the dusk was settling thick in the Close outside, and it was very near closing time for the tuckshop.

So Bunter rolled off the stool, breathing rather hard.

He nodded to Mrs. Mimble, and after

Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!

Free Gifts Next Week!

blinking into the misty, dusky Close, he started off for the lighted doorway of the School House. But as he drew nearer and nearer his footsteps slowed down, almost of their own accord.

The fact was that Billy Bunter, now the feast was over—for the time being—was beginning to feel rather uneasy. He wondered if, after all, that feast had been worth the reckoning he ran the risk of having to face.

Bunter grunted, and his footsteps became slower.

It would be a bit too thick, he reflected bitterly, if trouble were to follow that blissful feed in the tuckshop. It seemed scarcely creditable that the fellows might kick up a fuss about a few measly things. Yet they might! What did they care about the feelings of a fellow who, in a few days time, would be shaking the dust of Greyfriars from his feet—would soon be facing death in the deep, dark jungles of West Africa?

Nothing at all, Bunter told himself. He knew them only too well. They even might be jolly glad to be rid of him—they'd said as much more than once during the last few days. Bunter burned inwardly with righteous indignation at the pathetic thought of their heartless disregard of his feelings in the matter. Certainly the fellows had backed him up splendidly at the sale. All the things—excepting that beast Ogilvy's camera—had been sold and paid for. Bunter had now spent most of the money, and his purchases with it were now, at that moment, causing rather a disturbance in his interior. But the fellows had only backed him up for their own ends—

because they knew they were getting real bargains.

What would they care if trouble followed about the few measly things he had "supplied" for his sale? Nothing at all!

And there would be trouble—Bunter had an uneasy, growing certainty on that point.

It was too thick. Yet the only thing was to go indoors and face it if it did come—he couldn't stay out in the Close all night. The footballers had returned—he had heard the cheers while in the tuckshop. They would be excited—too elated at their victory to bother about anything for that evening.

At least, he hoped they would!

Bunter rolled into the lighted Hall and went slowly upstairs. He felt obliged to go slowly chiefly because of the weight he was carrying inside him. Really he wished he had not had those last few sausage-rolls!

All the fellows seemed to be in their studies—they usually were at that hour. Bunter felt thankful for that. He reached Study No. 7 safely and entered cautiously.

It was as well he did so, for as he entered Peter Todd, who happened to be rummaging in the cupboard at the moment, looked round and saw him.

He gave a roar.

"So here you are, you fat burglar!" he roared. "You've come back at last, have you? I've been hunting everywhere for you this last few minutes—so have a good many fellows for that matter."

"Oh dear! I sus-say, Peter—dear old fellow! It's all right! Look here, if it's about my— Ow!"

Bunter turned and bolted for his life. Toddy, with a ferocious gleam in his eyes, had not waited for his explanation—if it was to have been that. He had jumped round the table for Bunter, and not liking the look in his study-mate's eyes, the Owl of the Remove had not waited.

He flew, loaded up to the Plimsoll line as he was. He went along the passage like a champion on the cinder-path, and after him went Peter Todd.

"Come back, Bunter!" roared Peter.

"Yah! Beast!"

Bunter did not come back. He went down the stairs at a surprising speed considering his bulk. Peter went after him, shouting threats and warnings. The only door on the passage downstairs that was open was the Rag, and knowing it was likely to be empty at that hour, Bunter flew inside and banged the door shut.

There was no key in the lock, but the fat junior grabbed a form and fairly rushed it to the closed door. Then he grabbed another, and jammed that against the first one. The next moment Peter Todd reached the door and turned the knob.

"Yarroooooogh!" Bunter yelled in fearful apprehension.

"Come out, you fat frog!" bawled Peter. "Open this dashed door, you fat burglar! I'll teach you to sell my dashed things for your blessed leaving sale! You'll leave Greyfriars on an ambulance when you do go!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter through the keyhole. "I—I sus-say, Peter, old fellow, don't be so mean! Don't—don't forget that I'm leaving Greyfriars soon—that you will never see me any more. I may get devoured by wild beasts, or savage natives, you know. You'd be sorry you'd been unkind to me then! Dear old fellow, remember the good times we've had together!"

"You—you— Open this dashed door, Bunter!" hissed Peter Todd.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,091.

"Ow! I say, I'll make it all right, Peter, old chap! I'll bring you back some lion skins and tiger skins, and some tusks—ivory, you know. It's frightfully expensive, I believe. That'll make it right over your measly old things. Besides, I never took 'em. It must have been that awful rotter, Skinner!"

Bang, bang, bang!

Toddy flung his weight against the door. Evidently Bunter's generous offers did not appeal to him. His measly old things were, possibly, more valuable in his eyes than all the skins and ivory tusks that Bunter was likely ever to get. As he bombarded the door Bulstrode came along.

"Seen that little worm Bunter yet, Toddy?" he snorted ferociously. "He's in there now? Oh, good egg! We'll jolly soon have the fat little beast out of that!"

"Ow! Oh crikey!" sounded through the keyhole.

Crash, crash, crash!

Bulstrode and Peter Todd put their weight against the door, and together they overcame the barricade. The forms were sent spinning away, and a howl arose from Billy Bunter as he went with them. But it was more a howl of dire apprehension than of pain. For the door flew back the next instant, and the two avengers dashed in and grabbed their quarry.

"Yarroooooogh!"

Bunter's yell was enough to awake the celebrated Seven Sleepers, and it was that yell Harry Wharton & Co. heard from the Remove passage, and it very soon brought them rushing to the spot—and other fellows who were in search of Bunter also.

Retribution was at hand. Bunter had boasted and bragged of his remarkable pluck when face to face with savage beasts. It remained now to be seen how he would act when face to face with savage Removites!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only Skinner's Little Joke!

"YARROOOOGH!"

It only needed another wild yell to direct Harry Wharton & Co. to the spot, and they very soon heard it. Indeed they heard a constant succession of yells after that first one.

"In the Rag!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Come on!"

They rushed downstairs—Bob Cherry going by way of the banisters. He reached the Rag first, and he darted in through the open door. Bunter was struggling and yelling in the grasp of Bulstrode and Toddy.

"Yarroooooogh! Help! Murder! It wasn't me! I tell you I never touched your measly stuff! Yow! Yooooop! Ow-ow! It must have been a—yow-ow!—burglar! Besides, I only—yooooop!—borrowed the rotten things! Ow-ow! Leggo! I'll pay 'em all back! Yow! I tell you I haven't spent all the—Yowoooooop!"

"Pinch our things and sell 'em, would you?" roared George Bulstrode. "My hat! Of all the nerve! We'll make a dashed example of the fat frog this time! Hallo, here's some more chaps! The more the merrier! Bump him! Roll him over! Jump on him! Smother the fat rotter in ink! Boil him in oil!"

"Yarroooooogh!"

Bunter's wild wail of woe rang far and wide. It was recognised by many of the fellows who happened to be hunting for the hapless William George just

then, and it soon brought them to the Rag.

It also brought Mr. Quelch.

He was almost running when he came along the corridor and stopped at the open door of the Rag.

He blinked in at the scene, astounded beyond measure at what he saw.

Bunter was quite invisible at the moment. But from somewhere beneath the heaving mass of avengers came his muffled howls.

"Yarroooooogh! Ow-ow! Yooooop! Gerroff! Ow! Help! Police! Murder!"

It was more like a shriek now. Mr. Quelch stood in the doorway almost transfixed. Then he found his voice.

"Boys!"

It was like the deep boom of a big drum.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out! Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch's well-known tones had an immediate effect on the raggers. They scrambled off Bunter. It was just as well for that fat youth's health that they did so. He lay on the dusty floor, his chest heaving, his fat cheeks puffing and blowing. He seemed quite beyond yelling now.

"Boys!" Mr. Quelch's voice now resembled the roll of thunder. "Boys, how—how dare you! Such brazen defiance of law and order—such scandalous, outrageous conduct! Bless my soul! Is that Bunter? Bunter—wretched boy! Can it be—is it possible that you are

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causing trouble again! Is it possible that you are responsible for this—this disgraceful uproar!"

"Ow! Groooooogh! Oh crikey! Ow-ow! Ow-ow-ow! Groooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

"Get up this instant, sir!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You hear me, Bunter?"

Bunter heard, but he did not heed—he couldn't. But Harry Wharton and Peter Todd helped him to stagger to his feet. Peter Todd was looking a trifle remorseful now as he looked at the hapless Owl of the Remove. Certainly Bunter had deserved a record ragging—and more, much more. But—

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I demand to know at once, sir, what this amazing scene means."

"Ow-ow!"

"Wharton, I think you had better explain!" said Mr. Quelch icily.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Harry.

"I am waiting, Wharton!" thundered the Remove master. "What is the meaning of this disgraceful outrage? Why were you all, apparently, attacking Bunter? If you do not explain without further delay I shall take the matter before Dr. Locke for him to deal with. Now!"

Harry looked at his chums, and he looked at Bunter. But there was no help for it—he knew that. Better for Mr. Quelch to deal with it—and Bunter—than the Head. In any case, it was hopeless to think of keeping Bunter's sins secret now. A few minutes' cross-

examination of the fatuous and obtuse Owl of the Remove would soon tell Mr. Quelch all he wanted to know.

Harry met his chums' eyes, and he read approval there. Bunter gave him a desperate blink of warning, but Harry ignored it—for Bunter's own good. The next moment Harry was explaining—dealing as lightly as he could with Bunter's transgressions.

Mr. Quelch stared as he proceeded. As he ended he gave something resembling a snort.

"Nonsense—utter nonsense!" he snapped. "Bless my soul! Bunter!"

"Ow! Yes, sir!"

"You have acted in a most reprehensible manner! I am amazed—scandalised that you can have dared to proceed with such a bare-faced deception! You are perfectly well aware that you are not leaving Greyfriars in order to go abroad. It is all stuff and nonsense! Pah!"

"Oh, really, s-sus-sir!" gasped Bunter. "These fellows will tell you it's true enough. My Uncle Ted's taking me. That's why I wanted to borrow Mr. Prout's rifle last night—to practise shooting for when I get there, sir."

"Bless my soul! Bunter, I really begin to think that you really believe what you state!"

"It—it's true enough, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "At least, we've all seen the letter."

"What letter is this?" demanded Mr. Quelch, his brow grim. "Bunter, I demand to see that letter if you still have it in your possession."

Bunter had, and he produced it, a big slab of sticky toffee adhering to the envelope. But the letter inside was clean enough—or tolerably clean for Bunter. Mr. Quelch read it. Skinner of the Remove shivered a trifle as he saw Mr. Quelch's knitted brow. Skinner had a very wholesome respect for Mr. Quelch's astuteness—if not for Mr. Quelch himself.

But Mr. Quelch looked up after a moment.

"This appears to be all in order, Bunter," he said, in astonished accents. "But—really, this is too much. To my knowledge we have not yet received from your father any official communication regarding the matter. Your father should have acquainted Dr. Locke or myself of his decision in regard to the matter, Bunter."

"Ow! Yes, sir! He—he's a very busy man, sir!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips.

"It is very strange indeed," he said dryly. "You are not at all the sort of person I should imagine a man, going to Africa on such an expedition, would be likely to take with him, Bunter. It is very strange. I will telephone without delay to your father. No boy will leave the room until my return."

Mr. Quelch's steely glance swept the room. No boy was likely to leave the room after that. Mr. Quelch came back five minutes later. The room was in a buzz, but silence fell instantly as he came in. The Remove master's face was very grim—very grim indeed.

He looked at Bunter. Bunter shivered under his steely glare.

"I have spoken to your father, Bunter. He was very amazed and angry indeed when he heard what you have told me. He says, as I expected almost, that it is utter nonsense. He had no intention of allowing you to go abroad, and your uncle has no intention whatever of taking you with him."

"Oh! Oh crikey!"

Bunter almost collapsed.

"He states," resumed Mr. Quelch in terrible tones, "that the letter he sent



"We'll jolly soon have the fat little beast out," said Bolsover. "Put your beef into it, Toddy!" Crash, crash, crash! The door gave way at last under the combined weight of the two juniors, and the forms behind it went crashing up against Bunter, sending him spinning backwards. "Yaroooh!" yelled the fat junior. (See Chapter 13.)

must have been altered in some way. In his letter he referred only to a wolfhound—a dog named Rex that is to accompany your uncle to Africa, with your father's permission. You, Bunter, were not mentioned in connection with the matter at all.

"Ow! Oh dear!"

"Let me see that letter again, Bunter!"

Bunter handed over the letter again, with a deep, deep groan. All his hopes, all his dreams, all his ambitious programmes were falling about his head like a pack of cards.

Harold Skinner saw Mr. Quelch adjust his spectacles, and begin to scan the letter closely—very closely indeed. Harold Skinner started to sidle towards the door—very cautiously.

But Mr. Quelch, as was well known in the Remove, had the eyes of a hawk. His voice rasped out at once.

"Skinner, I said that no boy was to leave the room before my return. That order still holds good. I will ask you presently why you appear to be so anxious to leave the room at this juncture in the proceedings."

"Oh dear!"

Skinner returned. Mr. Quelch looked up from the letter.

"Bunter," he said grimly, "you have been the victim of a somewhat cruel practical joke. Two words have been erased from this letter, and two other words substituted. The sentence which should have read: 'I have agreed to allow him to take Rex with him' has

been altered so that it now reads: 'I have agreed to allow him to take you with him.'"

"Ow! Oh crumbs!"

"Did any other person see this letter before you, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a sharp glance at Harold Skinner.

Bunter told him what had happened to the letter.

"Ah! So Skinner had the letter, and Skinner brought it to your study," said Mr. Quelch, turning all his attention upon that shivering practical joker. "Very good! Very good, indeed! Skinner, I will ask you now why you wished to leave this room a few moments ago. Unless you tell me the truth here and now I shall take you to explain that to Dr. Locke. I am waiting."

Skinner did not keep him waiting long. He knew the game was up.

"It—it was only a joke, sir!" he gasped. "I—I never thought it would make all this commotion, sir! I—I'm sorry, sir!"

"I am very glad to hear that, Skinner. As you have confessed to me, I will deal with the matter myself in my own way. Bunter!"

"Ow! Yes, sir!"

"I shall not punish you further. Possibly, you have been punished enough already. But you will come to my study this evening at six—I wish to speak to you regarding your conduct over that—that absurd auction."

"Ow! Yessir!"

Bunter gasped with deep relief. A

lecture was a mere nothing—he had expected the sack or a licking. But it was Skinner who was to get the licking—that much was certain.

"Boys dismiss!" proceeded Mr. Quelch. "Skinner, come with me!"

And Skinner went. Somehow the joke did not seem such a scream to Harold Skinner just then—far from it!

Skinner got the licking all right—a licking he was not likely to forget for a long time.

Nothing concerning a trip to West Africa, with prospects of big game shooting, was heard after that by the Remove—from Billy Bunter. No more wonderful stories of derring-do in the deep jungle, of terrific combats with mad bulls and mad dogs, of bullseyes shot at incredible distances from his deadly rifle, were heard again after that from the lips of the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove. He seemed to have lost all interest in sporting matters of that nature. But it was a long time before Harry Wharton & Co. forgot the weird and wonderful antics of Billy Bunter, the Big Game Hunter.

THE END.

(There will be another topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET entitled: "FROM SCHOOL TO HOLLYWOOD!" There's bound to be a rush for this BUMPER FREE GIFT NUMBER, so be on the safe side by placing your order RIGHT NOW!)
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CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF THIS POPULAR OLD-TIME ROMANCE!

WOLVES OF THE SPANISH MAIN!

By
**ERNEST
McKEAG**



(Introduction on next page.)

Reward at Last?

WITH a final, mocking laugh, the Chevalier hurled his cutlass straight above the heads of the attackers. It caught One-Eye on the head, sending him staggering to the deck. Then, with a mocking wave of his hand to the mutineers, the Chevalier turned and leaped, rushing through the air to join Roger in the black waters beneath!

The night was like pitch, for drifting clouds had obscured the moon; but Roger, keeping himself afloat as well as he could, was guided to the Chevalier by the splashing sounds in the water.

"Are ye there, monsieur?" he called out, and the well-known voice answered him:

"Ay, lad, and still alive! 'Tis a tough position we are in, lad, but we ha' been in tight corners before."

The Celestine, still driven on by the wind, was rapidly receding from them. The two trod water, and gazed in her direction, marking her by the yellow light that streamed from her stern windows.

"The end o' the Celestine!" muttered Roger softly. "And what, now, is to become of us, lost as we are swimming in strange waters, wi' no hope o' rescue?"

"Be of good cheer, Roger, lad!" said the Chevalier, who had heard Roger's muttered words. "We are well away from that floating bulk o' treachery; and, by my troth, we're still alive! Strike out, lad! Who knows but that fortune will yet smile on us?"

His words were intended to cheer Roger up; but actually the Chevalier himself was feeling anything but optimistic. To be condemned to swim for life in strange waters, where but few keels sailed, was by no means a joyful prospect. Yet in a few minutes came

evidence of the Chevalier's good sense. Roger, who was keeping afloat with long, easy strokes, felt his hand touch something that floated on the waters, and he gave a cry.

"What ha' we here?" he gasped; and then, by the pale starlight, he perceived a floating object. "'Tis the settle!" he cried. "The settle that ye flung through the stern port!"

"Ay, lad!" was the Chevalier's answer. "I had the mind that it might perchance be of some service to us. Grip fast hold o' it, Roger, for 'twill support our weight, I do not doubt."

The two companions took opposite ends of the settle and hung on by their grips. The settle floated low in the water, but it was of sufficient buoyancy to support them, and it relieved them of the necessity of kicking and striking out to keep themselves afloat.

'Twas mightily uncomfortable in the water, but yet it was better than the certain death that would have been their lot had they remained in the Celestine. The water, too, was warm, although, as time grew on, a coldness began to strike through them, and seemed to chill the marrow in their very bones. The night drew on wearily, and it seemed that the morning would never dawn. Together they clung there, not even speaking, for fear of wasting their breath. Never had time seemed to drag so much for Roger, and ever in his brain was the fear that some shark would come nosing around them.

Yet it seemed that Fate was aiding them now, for naught of the kind happened, and, after what seemed centuries of waiting, a faint, pale glimmer in the eastern skies betokened the coming of a new day. Then came the sun, with its gleaming rays, and with great suddenness the veil of night was dispelled, and the two found themselves hanging to

the settle and floating on the calm waters of the ocean.

Hardly a ripple was to be seen. A faint, warm breeze played about them, though, as they turned their heads to sweep the waters around them, not a sight of land nor sail could they see. The Chevalier scrambled higher and higher on the settle to gain a better view, while Roger waited.

Suddenly the Chevalier turned to his young companion.

"Look ye, Roger, lad!" he cried, pointing with outstretched arm. "There is something floating on the water—wreckage of some sort, belike!"

He slipped back into the water, and came nearer to Roger.

"An' we can get the wreckage together, lad," he said, "we might, perchance, be able to make something of a raft from it. 'Tis worth the effort, Roger, and we ha' time an enough to spare."

Roger, who had turned in the direction in which the Chevalier had pointed, wasted no time; but as he caught sight of the tangled mass of wreckage, he swam out vigorously in the direction. He gave a cry of joyful surprise as he saw there a tangled mass of ropes and spars, and then, taking one end of a rope in his hands, he swam back to the settle. Then he and the Chevalier set to work to bring all the wreckage together. Their hopes were increased by the fact that there was a mass of canvas tangled around the wreckage, which the Chevalier announced might, perhaps, be improvised into a sail.

It was toilsome work fastening the wreckage together, for there was much of it, and, handicapped as they were by having to swim in the water while they worked at their task, the time passed slowly. But at last a crude raft had been constructed, with the settle as a foundation, and spars and planks

lending it added buoyancy. One thin spar was hoisted and lashed into position to serve as a mast upon which a sail could be hoisted.

Then the two clambered out of the water and tested the raft. It was slight and frail, but it bore their weight, and, though it was covered by water, and pitched and rolled perilously in the swell, it was better than hanging on by their fingers, with the certain knowledge that should their strength fail them they would slip from the settle into the water.

"'Tis mighty queer that this stuff should ha' been floating so near to us," said the Chevalier. "Furthermore, 'tis not wreckage, as I first supposed, Roger—'tis new stuff, and bears the evidence of having been but a short while in the water. Were I not certain that we had none but enemies aboard the *Celestine* I could almost ha' sworn that someone had thrown it overboard for our especial benefit."

Roger gave a start as a sudden thought struck him.

"The lad Jem!" he cried. "Might it not ha' been he that flung it over? Monsieur, we did not see the lad—and from what I ha' seen o' him he is not one to desert his friends!"

"Heaven help the lad an' Slim or One-Eye find out he has done this!" muttered the Chevalier. "Yet, an' it has been his hand that has helped us, then must we be thankful that he is yet alive; for, sink me, e'en the discovery of the treasure would be naught to me an' I kept not my word to aid the lad and carry him back to England and his rightful inheritance!"

He busied himself with the rigging of a sail, and Roger lent what help he could.

"We ha' no choice of where we will sail, lad," said the Chevalier. "We must trust to the breeze!"

Slight as the breeze was, it filled out the little sail, and the raft began to move unsteadily over the waters. But still no welcome sight of land came to gladden their eyes, and no sail was to be perceived. This was, perhaps, something for which they had cause to be thankful, for the only vessel likely to be sailing in those waters was the *Celestine*, and they had no desire to be thrown again into contact with One-Eye and his fellow-rogues. On the next occasion they might not have been so fortunate to escape the attention of the pirates.

Now, as the sun rose higher in the sky and beat down mercilessly upon them, the pangs and torments of thirst and heat were added to their sufferings. Their lips were cracked, and their throats parched, and they began to fear that the madness that oft assails men set afloat without food or drink would come to them.

For a whole day they suffered, and then night came with its velvet blackness, and all was blotted out save the twinkling stars high up in the heavens.

Cold now began to assail them, for the change from the inferno-like heat of the day to the coldness of night was terrific. Still, they strove not to let each other know the tortures they were undergoing, and assumed a jesting mood which neither of them was feeling.

Utter weariness came to them, and Roger felt that he would have given anything to drop off to sleep. But that, he knew, was dangerous in the extreme, for there was ever present the possibility that he might slip from the raft and be drowned.

Finding that the desire to sleep could

not entirely be shaken off, he lashed himself to the little mast and dropped off into an uneasy slumber.

So passed the night!

The sun was already high in the heavens when he opened his eyes again, and it was to see the Chevalier scrambling to his feet to survey the horizon.

Listlessly Roger waited, and then suddenly a cry from his companion made him fling off the lashings which bound him to the mast, and jump, also, to his feet on the swaying, frail raft.

"Land, Roger, lad!" cried the Chevalier; and his voice croaked in his throat. "See, lad! Our deliverance from our tortures is at hand!"

The breeze had freshened in the night, and the raft was making good headway. On the horizon, looming up hopefully, Roger could see the misty blue outline of an island.

There was a look of triumph on the face of the Chevalier as he turned to Roger, and his hand fumbled inside his shirt for a waterproof package which he had worn around his neck continually. Roger knew that the package contained the papers relative to the treasure—the chart of Black Dog Isle, the letter of Sir Richard Greathorex, and the story of the Irish sailor who had saved the nobleman's son.

The Chevalier's eyes brightened as he consulted the chart.

"Sink me, lad, if I do not believe that the isle that lies before us is the one for which we search!" he cried. "Mark ye, 'tis unlikely that there be many islands in these waters, and we know that when we left the *Celestine* we were close upon the rough position that was scratched on the locket. Roger, lad, Fate is on our side, and we ha' beaten the gallows' scum e'en now! See ye how the high land o' the island corresponds with the chart. Glory be, lad, we ha' triumphed!"

And Roger, as he eyed the misty isle that lay before them, felt a thrill run through his very bones. Was this, indeed, Black Dog Isle—the isle upon which was hidden the long-lost treasure of Blackbeard the pirate?

The Reappearance of the *Celestine*.

"THE wind and current bears us on, lad!" continued the Chevalier. "I can see no sign o' the *Celestine*. Sink me, an' I do not believe that we ha' spotted the island while One-Eye and his rogues still search for't!"

Nearer and nearer the freshening breeze was speeding them to the island. Even as they watched, the land loomed up ever nearer, until at last they could see the stretch of breakers which undoubtedly marked the position of a reef guarding a lagoon. But, even as it seemed that they must be dashed upon the reef, the current swerved and bore them along parallel with the coast of the island.

The Chevalier watched anxiously for

THE STORY SO FAR.

Fired by the spirit of adventure, young Roger Bartlett and his gallant comrade, the Chevalier, sail in the schooner Celestine, for the Spanish Main. In their possession is the chart of Black Dog Island, on which a great treasure lies buried, but they have first to find the gold locket which gives the longitude and latitude of the island. After innumerable perils, the two adventurers capture the locket from Abednigo One-Eye and Slim, two villainous pirates, but the latter turn the tables by stirring up mutiny on board the Celestine. The only way of escape for the Chevalier and Roger out of the cabin in which they are trapped is by leaping into the sea. Roger goes first, while the Chevalier keeps the blood-thirsty attackers at bay.

(Now Read On.)

some time, and then, thrusting back his waterproof package into his shirt, turned to Roger.

"Think ye that ye ha' strength enough to swim to the land, lad?" he asked. "Sink me, but it seems that ye will be borne beyond it otherwise. Yet 'twill be by no means an easy swim."

"I am ready, Monsieur, to run whatever risk faces us," Roger answered. "Aught is better than to remain on this raft without food or water. Perhaps on the island there is water."

"Well said, lad," said the Chevalier. "Come, then, we will abandon this raft and trust to the sea."

Together Roger and the Chevalier plunged into the sea, caring naught for the danger they ran from sharks. To remain on the raft meant nothing but exposure to the broiling rays of the sun, and a horrible death from thirst. To essay the swim that lay before them was to tax their energy to the utmost of its capacity, but it was the lesser evil.

Manfully they struck out, and though it seemed to Roger that the sea was dragging at him and seeking to pull him down to its depths, he battled on. It seemed to him that he swam for hours, but ever the Chevalier's encouraging words were shouted out to him, spurring him on to greater efforts. Then, with a mighty relief, he felt his feet strike the sand, and knew that he had managed to reach the beach.

The silver sand ran down to the water's edge, and stretched, above the high-water mark, to where the waving fronds of tall palm-trees raised themselves up to the skies, swaying in the breeze.

Roger scrambled out of the water and staggered on across the sand, a dizzy feeling in his head, and his senses reeling. Suddenly everything went black about him, and, with a groan, he collapsed helplessly on the sand.

When Roger regained consciousness it was to find himself sheltered by the shade of a palm-tree. His face was wet, and his lips were moist, and he beheld the figure of the Chevalier bending over him. One hand supported Roger's head, the other held half a coconut-shell filled with water.

"Thank Providence ye are well, lad!" said the Chevalier. "Drink! We are lucky, lad, for not far from here a stream runs down from the high land and trickles into the sea. While ye ha' rested I have looked about me, and am firmly convinced that this is indeed Black Dog Isle!"

The water tasted like nectar to Roger's parched throat, and revived him wonderfully. After taking his fill, the young adventurer rose painfully to his feet, and gazed around him.

"So we ha' triumphed?" he said.

"Ay, but only partially," said the Chevalier. "Our quest was to save the lad Jem." His face grew stern and his jaw set firm, like iron. "If aught o' harm has come to him, Roger, I vow that I will not leave the Main till One-Eye and Slim ha' paid the price o' their villainies. But, come, let us find what comfort we can on this isle."

Roger and the Chevalier walked slowly along the beach, for both were wearied with the sufferings they had undergone. They could see the reef stretching far out to sea, and, knowing that it would enclose a lagoon, they made in that direction. Nor were they disappointed, for when they had breasted a rise they beheld before them a peaceful lagoon basking in the sun, its surface almost as calm as a mill-pond, save where it was broken by the

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leap of a flying fish that darted from the water, only to dive back again some little distance farther on.

It was a picture of wondrous peace, and Roger found it hard to believe that such a spot had once been the haunt of pirates as cruel and merciless as ever men could be. In fact, the lagoon that lay so peacefully beneath the burning sun had witnessed deeds of the greatest violence; had seen men done to death most cruelly. The blue waters of the lagoon had been dyed scarlet with the blood of Blackbeard's victims, and dead men lay beneath its calm surface.

"See, monsieur!" said Roger suddenly, catching at the arm of the Chevalier, "there is a hut yonder by the far end of the beach!"

From where the two stood they could just make out the lines of a hut, broken, and falling to pieces, set in a little clearing that stretched between the forest and the beach of the lagoon. No smoke curled upward from its roof, and, indeed, by the creepers that wreathed around its walls they could see that years must have elapsed since it was last inhabited. But Roger and the Chevalier were weary, and needed shelter, and in their present state even a pigsty would have seemed a palace to them.

With renewed hope in their hearts the two trudged on over the soft sand to the hut. 'Twas indeed a ramshackle place, and the logs with which it had been constructed were rotted and broken so that there were great gaps in the walls and the roof.

The door hung brokenly upon rusted hinges, and it needed the combined efforts of Roger and the Chevalier to force it open, so overgrown was it with creepers. But at last it swung back, and the two passed inside. The roof of the hut was broken, and through the great gaps the sunlight poured, lighting up the whole interior.

"Were proof needed that we are treading in the footsteps o' Blackbeard and his men, Roger," said the Chevalier, "we ha' it here. Look, lad!"

Roger looked, and for a moment a thrill of horror ran through his veins as his gaze fell upon a mouldering skeleton lying outstretched on the floor, the bony fingers of which clutched at the rotted flooring. Near one of the hands of the skeleton lay a rusted sheath-knife. And there was something else lying amongst its bones, too!

It was a dagger, a long, curved dagger that was rusted a different colour! Only too well did Roger realise what this meant. The man whose skeleton lay there had been struck from behind by the dagger of a murderer. As Roger raised his eyes, he saw evidence of the work upon which the man had been engaged when his life had been cut short by the assassin's blow.

Words were rudely carved in the wall of the hut—words which seemed to leap into life as Roger gazed at them. For they were words that he would ne'er forget!

**"WHERE THE DEAD MAN LIES,
HIS STARING EYES—"**

The carving tailed off, with a scratch where the falling man had apparently dragged his sheath-knife down with him as he went. Only too well did the scene tell its tale of the tragedy which the hut had witnessed so many years before!

That was as much as the man had carved ere the knife had been plunged into him. Roger could not refrain from repeating the words.

"Ay, lad," said the Chevalier quietly. "The dead man's eyes—the clue to the treasure!"

He fumbled in his shirt, and drew from it a waterproof packet, which he had kept in that safe hiding-place for some considerable time now. Withdrawing the chart of Black Dog Isle from the packet, the Chevalier consulted it.

"Judged by the chart 'tis not far to the place where the treasure is hidden," he said. "'Twill be safer for us to lose no time, Roger, for at any moment One-Eye and Slim may sail the Celestine into the lagoon. Let us find the treasure, lad, and move it to some safer place, where none but we two will know." He looked around the hut, and then gave a cry of triumph. For in one corner of the hut lay two rusted spades that were yet still serviceable. "The spades which buried the treasure!" he cried. "Take one, Roger, for those same spades shall dig it up!"

Roger glad to be away from the gruesome sight of the skeleton, picked up a spade the Chevalier taking the other.

Roger was the first to leave the hut, and as he did so he gave a cry.

"What ails ye, lad?" asked the Chevalier.

"Look, monsieur!" Roger pointed, with a hand that trembled slightly, to the lagoon, into which a vessel was then sailing. "The Celestine! One-Eye, Slim and the rest o' the rogues are here!"

The Dead Men's Eyes!

FOR a moment Roger and the Chevalier stood motionless, watching the Celestine as she sailed gracefully into the lagoon. They heard the rattle of her cable and the splash as her anchor dropped overboard, and then the Chevalier seized Roger by the arm.

"Quick, lad!" he gasped. "We ha' no time to lose! Take to the forest, where we can make our way to where the treasure lies. We ha' not a minute to spare!"

The two wheeled round, still carrying their spades, and plunged into the undergrowth of the forest, judging their direction as best they could.

Suddenly Roger pointed to a tree that was near at hand—a portion of the bark of which had been hacked from it by an axe. Farther ahead he could see another tree similarly treated.

"The trail of the treasure!" he cried. "The trail is blazed! We ha' but to follow it!"

This, indeed, was a discovery that would save much precious time. In the days of Blackbeard there was, no doubt, a track through the forest, but so quickly and so tangled had the undergrowth grown that it would have been obscured had not the pirate taken the additional precaution of blazing the trail.

Hard as the going was, however, and although the undergrowth tore at their legs and ankles, and ripped their clothing, the two comrades plunged on, heeding naught but the necessity of finding the treasure and removing it to some safer hiding-place.

The journey through the forest was like a nightmare to Roger. He knew that it would not be long before One-

Eye and his scoundrels landed on the isle. One-Eye, not possessing the chart, would not be able to make directly for the hiding-place, but he would undoubtedly set his men searching for clues, and they would come upon the blazed trail and follow it! Had the adventurers not removed the treasure by then, One-Eye would not scruple to kill them where they stood!

On—ever on—they stumbled, desperation lending them speed and energy, till at last, when it seemed that they must drop with exhaustion, they suddenly stumbled out of the forest into a rocky clearing. Roger's eyes opened wide with horror as he saw the scene that was spread before him, for half a score of skeletons lay around the clearing, in attitudes that showed death had been sudden and violent.

Almost unconsciously Roger found himself chanting those lines of One-Eye's song:

"Some sent to rot by the pistol shot,
And some by the dagger's blow,
But the dead men's eyes they tell no lies
Of the secret they do know!"

The song was true! The skeletons that lay there had once been men—men who had been sent to rot by pistol shot and dagger blow! Blackbeard had been merciless. All who knew his secret—even the man in the hut—had paid for their knowledge with their lives.

But the "dead men's eyes" which, according to the song, "told no lies"—to what did this refer?

Roger next noticed that every skeleton had been turned on its side, and the whole of them arranged in a rough circle, as if looking inward to the centre of the circle.

"They all point to one spot!" cried Roger. "Monsieur, the dead men's eyes tell the secret!"

"Aye, Roger," was the Chevalier's answer. "And so let's to work!"

Together Roger and the Chevalier drew lines upon the ground with their spades—lines that stretched from one skeleton to another. When they had finished they saw that all the lines met in the centre in a ten-pointed star!

"Dig!" cried the Chevalier.

Instantly the two set to work on the hard soil, and their spades clanged as they wielded them with all their might, fighting against time, for at any moment they feared One-Eye and his rogues would be upon them.

It was hard work, indeed, and the perspiration stood in great beads on their brows ere they had made much impression upon the ground. Yet they would not halt a moment, for the work was urgent. 'Twas no work for weary men, yet did they labour at it, lest the results of their many trials should prove to be like Dead Sea fruit, and the treasure for which they had searched and fought so ardently, should, after all, fall into the hands of One-Eye and Slim.

Deeper and deeper grew the hole, till at last Roger's spade struck something that gave out a metallic clang! The sound was like a tocsin of hope to their ears! Their efforts redoubled, and they plied their spades mightily. Now they could see a great iron-bound chest held firmly by the hardened soil.

Swiftly they dug away the soil, and at last they had cleared it sufficiently to reveal two handles—one at either end of the chest.

Throwing their spades to one side, they seized the handles, and, after much struggling and tugging, pulled the chest clear of the hole they had dug.

There was a light of triumph in their eyes as they set it down in the ring of skeletons. They had forgotten now the nearness of their enemies, and all their thoughts were for the treasure!

Seizing one of the spades, the Chevalier dealt a mighty blow on the lock of the chest. It was old and rusted, and the blow was sufficient to break it. Then, with hands that trembled with excitement, the Chevalier lifted up the lid of the chest.

Roger caught his breath as the sunlight struck upon the treasure now revealed!

There were sword-hilts of beaten gold, studded with jewels that flashed blindingly as they reflected the rays of the sun; there were golden cups and chalices, wrested, no doubt, from the Spaniards; there were rings that had at one time graced the fingers of the passengers of the ships which Blackbeard had looted; and there were doubloons and pieces of eight in mighty profusion—a treasure surpassing even their greatest hopes.

"At last!" gasped Roger. "We ha' gained the treasure, and come to the end o' our quest!"

"Not so, lad!" The Chevalier's voice was low as he spoke. "We ha' gained the treasure—true! But ye must not forget that much o' it belongs to the son of Sir Richard Greator, and that my quest was to find him!"

"I had forgotten," said Roger, a trifle shamefacedly. "The sight o' the treasure was too much for me, and I had thought we were safely away from One-Eye and Slim. But we ha' yet to beat them, and save the lad from their clutches."

"And had ye also forgotten that the Celestine lies i' the lagoon?" continued the Chevalier. "Come, Roger, we must shift this treasure, lest—"

He broke off suddenly, for from the forest beyond had come cries and the sound of feet tramping through the undergrowth.

The Chevalier swung round, and his hand went quickly to his side, seeking to find his rapier. But it was not there. All the weapons which he and Roger had to defend themselves with were the two spades with which they had brought the treasure to light!

"The pirates!" gasped the Chevalier. "One-Eye and his wolves! They are here!"

The End of the Quest!

TOGETHER they stood, ready to face the foe, knowing in their hearts that they had but little chance even of saving their own lives, much less the treasure. The sounds of men pushing their way through the

forest, came nearer now, but still Roger and the Chevalier stood like statues.

"They come, Roger!" said the Chevalier. "Fight to the death!"

"Ay!" answered Roger, through his clenched teeth. "Yet, an' I must go, I vow I will take either One-Eye or Slim wi' me!"

Nearer came the sounds, and tighter did the two clench their inadequate weapons. Then they saw the undergrowth part and several men sweep into the clearing. The time had come!

Roger raised his spade high—and then let it fall from his hands as he heard a cry of amazement come to the lips of the Chevalier.

"Long Tom!" the Chevalier had gasped. "Is it ye indeed?"

The leader of the men paused, rushed forward, and then came to a salute before the Chevalier.

"Can I believe my eyes, cap'n?" he gasped. "Sink me, an' we thought ye an' the boy were food for the fishes long ago."

Roger could hardly believe his eyes. These men who had come so suddenly upon them were none other than the loyal men of the Celestine's crew—the men who One-Eye and Slim had battered below in the fo'c'sle of the vessel. And they were led by Long Tom, the boatswain's mate.

"How come ye here, Long Tom?" cried the Chevalier.

"Ye had better ask this youngster, sir," was the reply. "'Twas he who freed us when the pirate scum had trapped us below."

To the utter amazement of Roger and the Chevalier the man pushed forward the figure of Jem—the powder-monkey—

the son, as they now knew, of Sir Richard Greator!

"Jem!" cried Roger. "Right glad am I to see ye alive! But—but what happened?"

"I was for-ard when the rogues attacked ye in the stern cabin," explained Jem. "So intent were they upon the attack that they overlooked me, and 'twas easy for me to cut along to the fo'c'sle and knock off the fastenings o' the hatch. So great was the scuffle aft that none could hear me at work for-ard. Then we rushed from the fo'c'sle, but by that time ye had gone overboard. Throughout the night we battled, but I had time to cast overboard some planks and spars, thinking that they might be of aid to ye."

"And they were, Jem," said the Chevalier. "For to them we owe our lives."

"At last we vanquished the pirates, sir," said Jem. "Then we searched for this isle, but did not find it until today. We saw the blazed trail, and marked that men had passed along it."

"And now ye ha' come in time to aid us get the treasure aboard," said the Chevalier. "But what o' Slim and One-Eye? Did they fall i' the fight?"

"Nay, sir," said Jem. "We took them alive, and now they languish in chains in the lazaret. But few o' those who had joined them live to tell the tale."

"Lad, ye ha' done wonders!" The Chevalier patted the youngster on the shoulder, and then turned to Long Tom. "And ye and your comrades shall ha' naught to grumble about," he went on, "for there is treasure enough to repay ye all for your loyalty. Take ye the treasure, lads, and let us back to the Celestine. And then—England, lads, wi' glory in our hearts and treasure in our pockets!"

He turned to Roger, and there was a smile wreathing his lips.

"So we ha' triumphed, Roger," he said. "And One-Eye has forfeited the pardon I once gave him. He and Slim shall hang i' Jamaica, while we sail home wi' our quest accomplished. Your hand, Roger, for 'tis to ye that I owe this success. An' ne'er has man had a better comrade with whom to sail the main."

Roger's hand went out, and there, with hands firm gripped, they stood, their work accomplished, the treasure won, yet with a secret longing in their hearts that the adventures they had undergone would not be the last they would face together.

THE END.

(A great story this, chums—what? And you've thoroughly enjoyed every line of it, haven't you? Well, now look out for the grand opening instalment of: "THE BLACK HAWK!" which will appear in next week's BUMPER FREE GIFT NUMBER of the MAGNET.)

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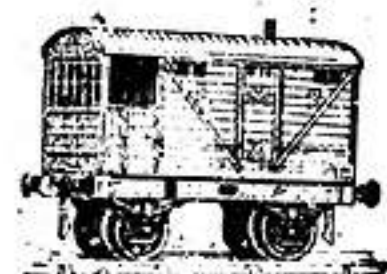
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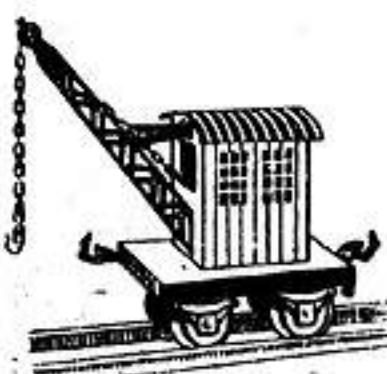
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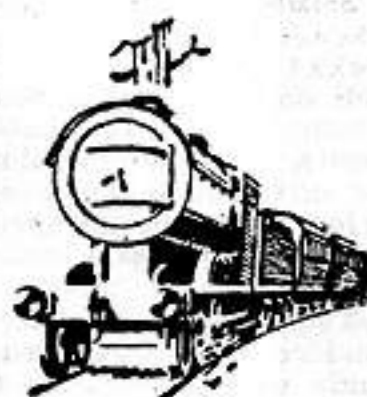
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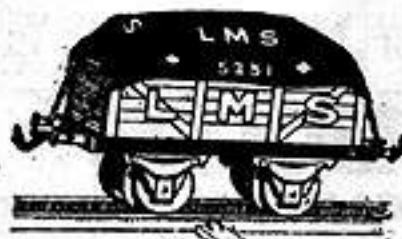
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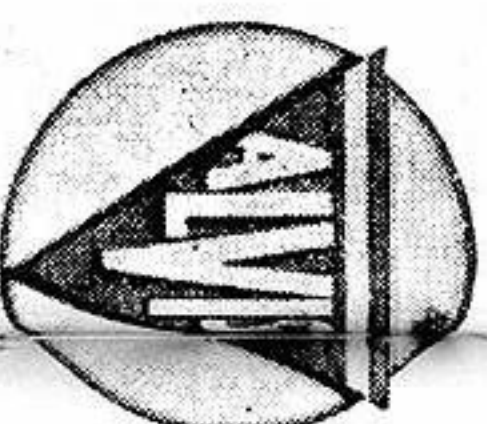
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