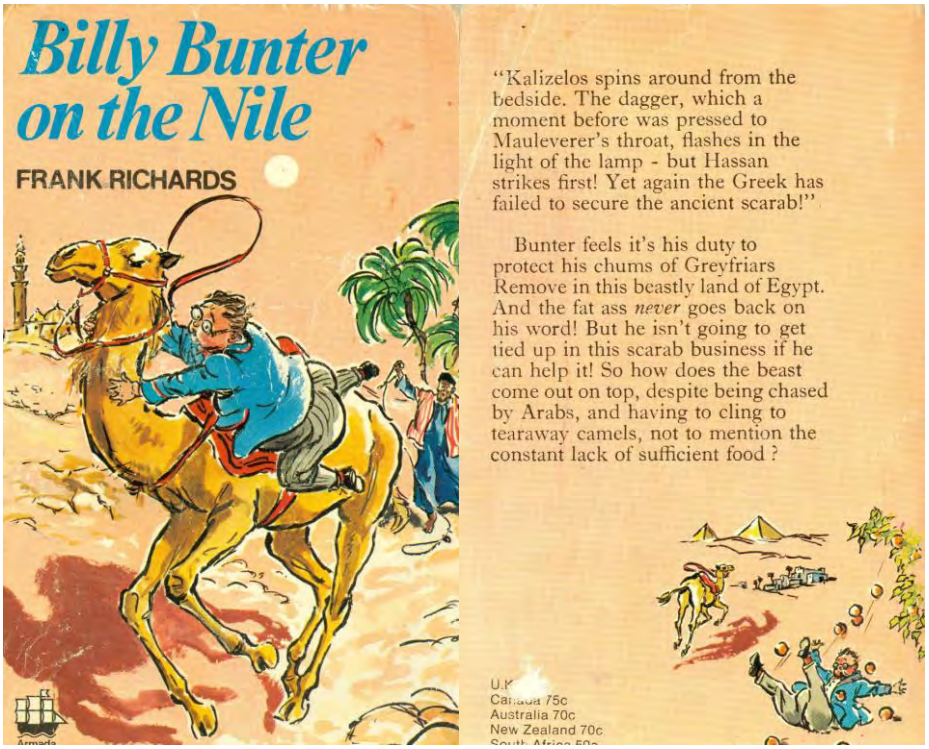


Billy Bunter
On the Nile

FRANK RICHARDS

Armada

CHAPTER ONE

BUNTER'S TREAT!

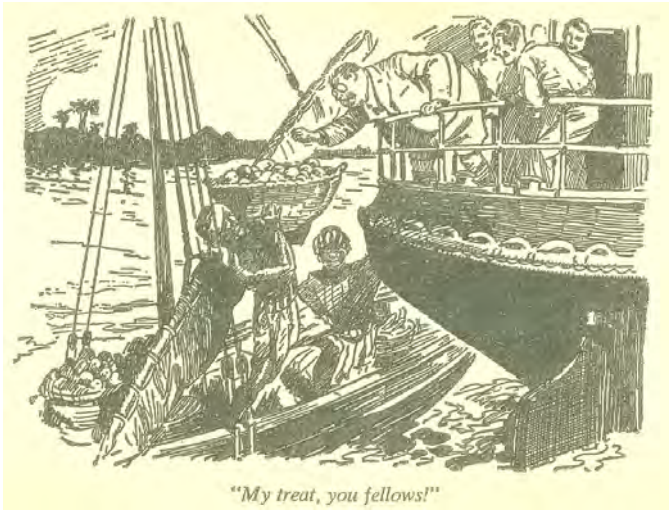
BILLY BUNTER sat up and took notice.
It was hot on the Nile.
Under a sky of cloudless blue the dahabiyeh floated slowly up the great river of Egypt, a light wind from the north rustling the huge sail.
But the wind was very light, and the dahabiyeh moved very slowly. Some of the Nubian sailors were poling to help it along. The reis stood like a bronze statue at the tall helm.
Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove sat under the awning in the balcony that surrounded the stem of the dahabiyeh. They were taking it easy, and watching lazily the gliding banks, and the craft on the river as they floated slowly onward to the south. Lord Mauleverer had nodded off to sleep.
Billy Bunter, sprawled in a big basket-chair, mopped the perspiration from his plump forehead, and dabbed at flies. There was a mosquito-net over the fat Owl as he sprawled, but the flies seemed to creep under it somehow. They seemed to like Bunter. Ever since he had been in Egypt the flies had shown a partiality for Bunter. One of the celebrated plagues of Egypt was a plague of flies, and Bunter's impression was that it was still going strong.
Bunter had requested the Famous Five, one after another, to fan the flies off him while he napped. One after another they had declined, with the selfishness Bunter was sadly accustomed to. Then he had told Hassan, the dragoman, to fan off the flies. Hassan had disappeared. Bunter had to smack at the flies himself, or leave them unsmacked. He smacked and smacked, and, like Samson of olden times, slew his thousands and tens of thousands. Every time he smacked, he shifted the mosquito-net, and the flies of Egypt seemed like those stout-hearted Scottish spearmen at the battle of Flodden:

> "Each stopping where his comrade stood
> The instant that he fell."

Bunter was tired of flies; but the flies were not tired of Bunter. Probably they were the only living creatures on board the dahabiyeh who were not tired of Bunter. With the Greyfriars fellows, with the dragoman, with the black servants and the Nubian sailors Bunter was not popular. But with the flies his popularity was unbounded. Bunter himself, perhaps, was not very attractive. But the traces of his last two or three snacks, smeared over his fat face, attracted winged things from near and far. Bunter liked sticky things, so did the flies.
But Billy Bunter forgot for a moment that plague of Egypt, and sat up and took notice as a native felucca glided behind the crawling dahabiyeh. The felucca's big lateen sail was down, and it was rowed by a couple of brown men. In the felucca was a huge stack of ripe, golden oranges. It was a fruit boat taking fruit to Luxor. But at the sight of the foreign faces on the dahabiyeh the boatmen pulled round the stern, and a brown man in a dusty djubbah, who was sitting beside the mountain of oranges, rose to his feet, salaamed, and called out in Arabic. What he said in that strange' tongue was a sealed mystery to the Greyfriars fellows. But they understood his signs. He pointed to the oranges and waved his brown hands, and grinned, with a flash of white teeth. He had oranges to sell, and the sight of English faces inspired him with a hope of selling them at ten times the price they would have fetched at Luxor.

"I say, you fellows, those oranges look good!" said Billy Bunter. "You fellows like some oranges'?" He threw aside the mosquito-net, smacked several flies, and rose to his feet. "My treat, you chaps!"
"Who's going to lend Bunter some piastres to stand treat?" yawned Johnny Bull.
"Oh, really, Bull--"
"Wake up, Mauly!" grinned Frank Nugent.
"Bunter's going to stand treat! Cough up some cash!"
"Yaw-aw-aw!" came sleepily from Lord Mauleverer.
"Oh, really, Nugent--"
"Might as well have some of these jolly oranges, as the man wants to sell," said Bob Cherry. "I think I've got some piastres."
"I've said that it's my treat, Cherry," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "Leave this to me!"
"Yes, I know your treats, old fat bean!" assented Bob, with a cheery grin. "You'll order twice as much as we want to pay for, and then remember that you've forgotten where you left your money."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"If that's what you call gratitude when a fellow's standing treat--"
"You see, we know you, old fat man," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But if you mean business for once, go ahead."
"Yah!" answered Bunter. "Look here, you beast!"
There was a golden glimmer as the fat Owl of the Remove drew a coin from his pocket.
"That's an Egyptian pound," said Bunter. "It's worth a hundred piastres. I got it when I changed some paper money at Beni Suef. You don't often see gold about. They call it a gineih in the silly language they speak here. But it's a pound."
Bunter waved a fat hand, with the gold coin between a fat finger and thumb, to the native in the boat.
The brown orange merchant salaamed and salaamed again. Gold was not often seen on the Nile, and the sight of a hundred-piastre piece evidently impressed the fruit seller.
The felucca hooked on to the dahabiyeh, the two oarsmen holding on to the stern. The fruit seller continued to salaam to Bunter, or to the golden coin, which probably impressed him more than Bunter did. Then he filled a large wicker basket with golden oranges, and lifted it.
Bunter leaned over the stern, blinking into the felucca through his big spectacles.
Harry Wharton & Co. watched him curiously.
Bunter was surprising them.
For Billy Bunter to stand treat, without borrowing the necessary cash from some other fellow, was rather a record.
But the fat Owl was evidently in earnest.
"How much?" asked Bunter, pointing to the basket of oranges.
"Feefty piastre, sar!"
"Shove it here, and give me change!" said Bunter.
"Yes, sar." The brown man salaamed again.
"Speak English, sar! Me Mustapha, sar, very honest merchant, sar! All English lord say Mustapha very honest man, sar."
He heaved up the basket of oranges, and it was landed over the stern of the dahabiyeh, with help from Bob Cherry above.
There was a grunt from Johnny Bull.
"Oranges are cheap here," he said. "That lot's not worth more than twenty piastres, Bunter. You're being done."
"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter. "I believe in being generous to natives, you know."
"Oh, my hat!"

If Billy Bunter had surprised the chums of the Remove before, he astonished them now. Not only was Bunter standing treat with his own cash, which was unusual, but he was allowing himself to be recklessly overcharged, which was unprecedented. Really, the Greyfriars fellows could hardly believe their ears.
But evidently the fat Owl meant business. He tossed the gold piece down to Mustapha, and that honest merchant tossed up the change-fifty piastres. Then the felucca shoved off, and the two craft parted company.
"I say, you fellows!" Bunter selected a ripe, fat orange, and pushed his fat face into it, which was Bunter's elegant way of eating an orange. "I say, this is good! Have some? Help yourselves, old chaps! After this, I hope you won't make out that I never stand treat. Nothing mean about me, I hope."
"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "Some ass said the age of miracles was past!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, really, Cherry--"
"Wake up, Mauly, and have an orange," said Bob.
"Yaw-aw-aw!" came from his sleepy lordship.
"It's Bunter's treat, old bean," urged Bob.
"An occasion worth waking up for. Are you going to eat this orange, or shall I squeeze it down the back of your neck?"
"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. He woke up quite suddenly.
"Like 'em, you fellows?" beamed Bunter.
"Fine!"



"My treat, you fellows!"

"The finefulness is terrific!"
As the dahabiyeh glided on the juniors sat under the stern awning and ate oranges. They were ripe and good, and very welcome on a hot day. There was general satisfaction. The Famous Five liked the oranges, and had an impression that Bunter was improving, so they were satisfied. Mustapha, the honest merchant, had sold his oranges for twice their value, so he was satisfied. And Billy Bunter had got rid of the bad gold piece that had been passed on him at Beni Suef, and received in exchange a basket of oranges and fifty good piastres, so Bunter was satisfied. So there was, for the present, at least, satisfaction all round.

CHAPTER TWO

WRATHY!

"LORDLY gentlemen!" It was the voice of Hassan, the dragoman.
Looking like a tropical beetle in his gold-braided jacket, sky-blue trousers, yellow shoes, and crimson sash, the dragoman came along the upper deck, the gold tassel on his tarboosh dancing and glancing in the sun.
He pulled aside the awning over the stern balcony to address the Greyfriars fellows below.
Hassan's dusky face was beaming. Hassan enjoyed showing the sights of Egypt to the Greyfriars tourists, and he never let them off a single sight if he could help it.
Harry Wharton & Co. had been a good many days coming up the Nile. Progress in a dahabiyeh was slow. Now, however, they were drawing near to Luxor, where they were to stop for a time.
Luxor was a place that could not possibly be missed. Indeed, had the juniors thought of missing Karnak and Luxor, they would hardly have dared to tell Hassan so. The dragoman would have received too great a shock.
"Noble and gentlemanly lords," said Hassan, through the awning, "here you rise up on feet and look, for celebrated Temple of Karnak now bobs up on bank on Nile, and this is sight for sore eyes, as you say in your magnificent language."
The juniors smiled. Hassan was what he himself called a "speak-English dragoman." The juniors found his English quite as entertaining as what he told them in that language.
"Come on, you slackers!" said Bob Cherry. "Mustn't miss the jolly old sights! Wake up, Mauly, and get a move on! "
Lord Mauleverer yawned deeply. He was disinclined to move.
"You fellows tell me about it afterwards!" he suggested.
"Fathead! Come on!" said Harry Wharton.
"Look here, this isn't cricket!" said Mauleverer plaintively. "Hassan isn't playin' the game!
We've got to do Karnak when we land at Luxor.
What's the good of doin' it from the river as well? If we begin doin' things twice over, you fellows, we shall never get through."
"Oh, my noble lord," exclaimed Hassan, "view of Karnak from river is enormously imposing, and of gigantic interest! Also there is opportunity to meditate on fallen greatness of ancient kings, such meditation being easier in comfortable chair on dahabiyeh than on donkey back while visiting ruins."
"Oh gad!" said Mauleverer. "Well, look here, you men go up and do the viewing, and I'll sit here and meditate. That's whackin' it out fairly."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Poor old Mauly's too tired to move," said Bob. "But you fellows just watch him, and see him jump when I squeeze this orange down his neck. Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's up already!"
"Keep off, you dangerous ass!" gasped Mauleverer.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
The juniors went through one of the doorways, into the saloon, and through that apartment to the lower deck, whence there were steps to the upper deck. Billy Bunter rolled after them with an orange in each hand, and a considerable amount of orange-juice over his fat face. His escort of flies accompanied him. The flies of the Nile seemed to like orange-juice.
They mounted to the upper deck where Hassan, with his stick, pointed out the "view."
Really it was worth looking at. Great limestone rocks and cliffs loomed against the blue sky on the western bank of the Nile. On the eastern bank the hills retreated, leaving a plain by the river.

Through masses of palm-trees the great pylons of the Temple of Karnak loomed into view. And as the dahabiyeh floated on there was a glimpse of Luxor in the distance.
But the attention of the Greyfriars fellows turned, all of a sudden, from the obelisks and pylons of Karnak to a felucca which was coming down the stream, with two brown men pulling at the huge oars, and a third brown man standing by a mountain of oranges.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's the jolly old orange merchant coming back!" said Bob Cherry. "He seems to be excited about something."
Mustapha, the honest orange merchant, undoubtedly looked excited.
His brown face was infuriated, his black eyes glittered, and his brown hands sawed the air in wild gesticulations.
The juniors stared at him in astonishment.
The felucca had left the slow-moving dahabiyeh far behind, going on to Luxor, and they had not expected to see it again. But it was coming back, and it was clear that something was amiss.
Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on the gesticulating Mustapha with an alarmed blink.
"I say, you fellows, is that the chap who sold me the oranges?" he exclaimed.
"That's the chap," said Johnny Bull. "What on earth's the matter with the man? What is he saying, Hassan?"
The felucca was still at a distance; but Mustapha's voice, shouting in Arabic, could be heard.
Hassan gave a cough.
"My lordly master, I think I better not tell you what Mustapha he say," answered the dragoman. "Also it would be difficult hard for me, because I--"
"Because what?"
"Because, although I speak the noble English language like one native of your magnificent country, I have not learned the naughty words in that beautiful language."
"Wha-a-at?"
"To tell you what Mustapha he say, I must learn the naughty words in English," explained Hassan. "These words I do not know, sar."
"Oh, my hat!"
"Some very strong words I know, which I have heard English military gentlemen speak to soldiers," said Hassan. "These words I will tell you-"
"You needn't trouble," said Harry Wharton hastily.
"Oh gad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But what on earth's the matter with the man?"
"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter seemed uneasy, not merely surprised like the other fellows at Mustapha's antics. "I-I say, if-if that man's swearing, you know, I-I-I don't want to have anything to do with him. He's a bad character. Mauly's uncle told us to be careful not to get into bad company when he let us come up the Nile on our own. I-I think it's due to Sir Reginald Brooke to-to be rather careful, you know. Tell the sailors to keep that boat off with their poles."
"On my head be it!" said Hassan. "The son of several dogs and pigs is speaking words of the naughty kind, of which there are many very strong in the Arabic tongue. Very strong indeed, sars! I will tell the Nubians to drive him off."
The Nubian crew of the dahabiyeh were all staring at the boat, and even the grave reis at the tiller gave Mustapha curious looks. Some of the Nubians were handling poles to help the dahabiyeh through the shallows, and it would have been easy for them to keep the felucca off. But Harry Wharton stopped the dragomanas he was about to call out an order to the crew.

"Hold on!" he said. "Something's wrong, though I can't imagine what it is. Let him come nearer, and ask him what's the trouble."
"To hear is to obey, my noble gentleman!" answered Hassan.
"I say, you fellows--"
"Shut up, Bunter!"
"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "If you fellows want to listen to a blackguard, I jolly well don't, and I can tell you so! Make the sailors keep that brute off! I'm surprised at you, Wharton. In fact, I'm shocked."
"You silly ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "There's something the matter!"
"Rot! I expect the man's tipsy," said Bunter.
"Well, if you're going to let him come alongside and use bad language, I'm going below. I'm a bit more particular than you are in such things."
"You howling ass!"
"Yah!"
Billy Bunter rolled down the steps from the upper deck, and went into the doorway from the lower deck to the cabins of the dahabiyeh.
The juniors heard a slam below as he closed the door of his room.
They stared after him, and then looked at one another. Mustapha was surprising them, but Bunter surprised them still more. He was displaying a delicacy of which he had never been suspected before.
Mustapha's voice came more loudly as the felucca approached more closely to the dahabiyeh. The fury in his brown face was not to be mistaken. He shouted and raged. A torrent of Arabic poured and streamed from him, and both his brown hands waved in wild gesticulation.
The juniors saw a startled expression come over Hassan's face; and they discerned that the Nubian sailors were grinning. The natives, of course, understood the spate of Arabic, of which not a single syllable was comprehensible to the Greyfriars fellows. To the further surprise of the juniors, Mustapha held up a gold coin between a brown finger and thumb as his boat came alongside, and waved it in the air furiously.
Apparently it was the Egyptian pound that Bunter had paid him for the oranges.
"Bismillah!" murmured Hassan.
"What's the matter with the man?" asked Harry. "Is it sunstroke?"
"My magnificent gentleman, he say--"
At this point, the orange-merchant broke into English. Brandishing the gold coin, and spitting with fury, he yelled up at the staring juniors.
"Bad! Naughty! This very naughty piece! Yes, sar! Too naughty! Bad! Faringhee teef! Yes, sar! Teef! Naughty gold!"
"Naughty!" repeated Wharton. "Is the man mad! What does he mean by saying that the quid is naughty?"
Hassan grinned.
"This common person, sar, speak not pure and fine perfect English language like Hassan," he explained. "He mean to say gold piece not good."
"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. "A bad sovereign --counterfeit! Is that it?"
"Yes, sar!"
"Oh, my hat! " gasped Bob Cherry.
The felucca bumped on the dahabiyeh. The two rowers held on, while Mustapha made a jump on board. He flourished the gold piece under the noses of the juniors and roared and spat.
"Bad! Naughty! Yes, sar, he naughty!" A torrent of Arabic followed, as Mustapha's English failed him.
Hassan volleyed back in the same language.
"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.
There was no reply from William George Bunter. The juniors understood now why the fat Owl had been so unwilling to meet Mustapha a second time. Evidently a counterfeit coin had been passed on Bunter, and he had passed

it on to Mustapha. Bunter's treat was explained now. No doubt the fat Owl had been waiting for an opportunity to get rid of that "quid"; and the orange-boat on the Nile had given him his opportunity.
"The fat villain!" exclaimed Wharton, crimson with anger and vexation. "Bring him up here by his ears, Bob."
"You bet!" answered Bob.
He rushed down to the cabins.
Thump! Thump! Thump! There was a sound of energetic thumping at a door. Evidently the door was locked. The fat squeak of Billy Bunter was heard.
"Go away! Don't disturb me, you beast! I'm asleep!"
"Come on deck, you fat scoundrel!"
"Shan't!"
Arabic was volleying to and fro between Mustapha and Hassan. Mustapha was getting into a frenzy. Lord Mauleverer tapped the dragoman on his gold-braided arm, as Mustapha, with a furious gesture, hurled the gold piece on the deck.
"Is that quid really bad, Hassan?" he asked.
"Yes, sar," said Hassan, picking it up, and testing it with his teeth. "Plenty bad money in Egypt, sar."
"Give the man his hundred piastres, then."
"Yes, lordly sar."
Mustapha calmed down a little as he received a hundred piastres. But he did not seem satisfied.
"Backsheesh!" he howled.
All the juniors knew that word, at least! Nobody could travel in the East, even for a few days, without becoming acquainted with "backsheesh."
"Give him some backsheesh, Hassan," yawned Lord Mauleverer, "After all, he's had the trouble of coming back for his money. Give him fifty piastres."
"Yes, my gentlemanly lord."
Fifty more piastres were handed to the orange-merchant. Then Mustapha went back to his felucca, and the rowers pushed off. The felucca pulled away for Luxor once more, Mustapha standing up, staring back at the dahabiyeh, and making disrespectful and derisive gestures as he departed. But he was gone at last; and Harry Wharton & Co., with grim expressions on their faces, went below to talk to Bunter. And the faithful Hassan, with a cheery grin, slipped the counterfeit "quid" into his pocket, with the honest intention of passing it, in his turn, on some unwary tourist-all being grist that came to Hassan's mill.

CHAPTER THREE

BEASTLY FOR BUNTER!

THUMP! Thump!
Bob Cherry banged on Bunter's door. Johnny Bull kicked at it. Frank Nugent shouted through the keyhole.
"I say, you fellows!" came a fat squeak from within the locked cabin. "I-I say, is he gone?"
"Open this door!" roared Bob.
"I-I've lost the key, old chap! Otherwise I'd let you in at once, with pleasure! I say, is that beastly Arab gone?"
"You fat rascal--"
"Oh, really, Wharton--"
"You've passed bad money on a native!" roared the captain of the Remove. "We're going to squash you as flat as a pancake!"

"How was I to know that it was bad?" demanded Bunter. "Of course, I never knew anything of the kind."
"What did you dodge below for, then, and lock yourself in?" roared Johnny Bull. "You podgy pirate, you knew you were swindling the man."
"Oh, really, Bull! What about the chap who passed it on me, at Beni Suef, days and days ago?" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Think I've come to Egypt to collect bad money?"
"Then you did know it was bad?"
"No; I didn't! Hadn't the faintest idea there was anything the matter with it!" answered Bunter, through the door. "I hope I'm not the sort of fellow to pass bad money! I think that shows a rotten suspicious mind, Bull! That's you all over."
"You fat idiot, you've just said it was passed on you at Beni Suef--" roared Johnny Bull.
"So it was," retorted Bunter. "A beastly native changed a note for me and gave me that spoof quid among the other money. Of course, I was going to pass it on! I can't afford to lose a hundred piastres! I mean, I can afford to, but I'm jolly well not going to, see? I'm jolly well not going to be done by natives! Let 'em learn to be honest!"
"By gad! They won't learn that from you, Bunter!?' ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.
"I say, you fellows, is that man gone? I want to have nothing to do with him-nothing whatever! He's not honest."
"Open this door, you fat scoundrel!"
"Shan't! Not till that man's gone. I say, you fellows, I don't think you ought to kick at the door like that! You're damaging Mr. Maroudi's property! Old Maroudi lent us this dahabiyeh, expecting us to take care of it. You fellows ought to remember that you're not in the Remove passage at Greyfriars now."
"Will you come out and be scragged?" roared Bob Cherry.
"Yah!"
"Lucky for you Mustapha didn't bring a bobby back with him. You might have been run in for passing bad money."
"Oh, really, Cherry! I keep on telling you it was a good quid-perfectly good! Besides, they wouldn't take a native's word against mine, I suppose? All you fellows are witnesses, too!"
"Wha-a-t?"
"Of course, I should expect you to stand by a pal," said Bunter. "If you all gave evidence that I never gave the beast that quid it would be all right! I'll do as much for you another time, of course."
"Ye gods!" gasped Bob Cherry.
"The real trouble is, that these men are not honest," said Bunter. "I can tell you, I'm fed-up with their dishonesty. It doesn't seem to shock you fellows as it does me! You're not so particular."
"I'm going to spiflicate him!" gasped Bob.
"Bunter, you fat villain, open this door or we'll jolly well burst it in."
"If that's the way you're going to take care of the houseboat Mr. Maroudi lent us, Cherry, I can only say you're an ungrateful beast! I think you ought to be a bit decent when you're travelling with me. Your bad manners let a fellow down, you know."
"Will you open this door?" roared Bob.
"No, I jolly well won't!"
Bob Cherry bestowed a final thump on the door. But bursting it in was not to be thought of.
The dahabiyeh belonged to Mr. Maroudi, the Egyptian gentleman of Cairo. With great kindness Mr. Maroudi had lent it to the Greyfriars party for the trip up the Nile. On board Mr. Maroudi's palatial houseboat manners

and customs could not be so free-and-easy as in the old Remove passage at Greyfriars School. The door was not a stout one, and Bob Cherry could have driven it in with his shoulder. But the fat Owl was quite aware that he was safe from such drastic measures.
So long as Bunter kept the door locked there was nothing doing. But the Famous Five were determined that the fat Owl was going to have the lesson he so badly needed.
It was exasperating, no doubt, to receive bad money, but that was no excuse for passing it on to an innocent party. To Billy Bunter's fat mind, the fact that a native had "diddled" him at Beni Suef was a sufficient reason for "diddling" a native at Luxor. That sort of morality was not good enough for white men in an African country. Moreover, Bunter had run a serious risk of being tapped on the shoulder by an Egyptian policeman and taken before a native magistrate to explain himself-which was not the sort of thing the juniors wanted to happen on their trip up the Nile. Bunter had to be kicked-and kicked hard!
"You fat villain!" roared Bob. "We're going to kick you all round the dahabiyeh! Will you come out and be kicked?"
"Beast!"
"Well, it will keep! Come on, you men, let's go up."
The juniors returned to the upper deck. There they "viewed" Luxor in the distance as the dahabiyeh crawled slowly on up the golden Nile.
Billy Bunter remained in his cabin, snorting with indignation.
But it was hot in the cabin, and there were more flies there than on deck. The fat Owl could hear the footsteps of the juniors overhead. A blink from the window assured him that the orange-boat and the obnoxious Mustapha were gone. He ventured at last out of the cabin and went along the lower deck and blinked up at the juniors.
What the beasts were so waxy about was rather a mystery to Bunter. He had explained that he had only passed on a bad coin that had been passed on him-with the further explanation that the coin was not bad at all, but a perfectly good one. This double-barrelled explanation ought to have satisfied any reasonable fellow, in Bunter's opinion, but he realised that these beasts were not reasonable. So he was ready to bolt as he hailed the juniors on the upper deck.
"I say, you fellows!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" roared Bob Cherry. "First kick to me!"
There was a thud as Bob jumped down from the upper deck.
But, quick as he was, he was not so quick as Billy Bunter.
Bunter fairly flew.
Slam! Click!
The fat Owl was locked in his cabin again.
"Come out, you fat snail!" roared Bob, thumping on the door.
"Yah!"
Bob Cherry grinned and returned to the deck.
Billy Bunter was welcome to remain locked in his cabin as long as he liked. It was rather like an oven on a hot Egyptian afternoon.
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.
He sat down on the bed, mopped his perspiring brow, and swatted flies. He did not venture to leave the cabin again. Often as Bunter had been kicked, he hated the process-and the prospect of being kicked all round the dahabiyeh had no appeal for him at all.
He crawled on the bed at last, arranged the mosquito-net, and went to sleep. Fortunately for Bunter, he could always sleep. The dahabiyeh rolled on, to an accompaniment of deep, and steady snoring.
It was dark in the cabin when Bunter awoke.
Night had fallen on the Nile.

Through the latticed window came a glimmer of the bright stars of Egypt. The dahabiyeh was still in motion; it had not tied up at Luxor yet. He could hear the Nubian sailors singing in their native tongue as they poled the heavy vessel slowly onward. From the dining-saloon along the passage under the upper deck came a cheery sound of voices, and a sound of knives and forks and plates. Billy Bunter snorted with indignation. The beasts had come down to supper and never even called him.

He unlocked the door and peered out into the passage through his big spectacles. The mushrabeyeh screens at the doorway of the dining-saloon were open, and he could see the Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer at supper in the lamp-light.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter!"

Bob Cherry laid down knife and fork and rushed into the passage. Like a fat rabbit dodging into its burrow, Billy Bunter popped back into his cabin and slammed and locked the door.

He was only just in time.

Thump!

The door rattled under Bob Cherry's smite.

"Come out, Bunter!" roared Bob.

"I-I-I say, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I say, are you going to make it pax, old fellow?"

"I'm going to kick you from one end of the dahabiyeh to the other! Come out and be kicked!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Look here, I want my supper! I'm hungry!"

"Well, come out to supper," said Bob. "What's stopping you?"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

Bob Cherry went back to the dining-room.

Billy Bunter remained in his cabin. He wanted his supper-and with every passing minute he wanted it more and more. But he did not want to be kicked. And it was evident that the kicking was going to precede the supper.

Harry Wharton & Co. finished their supper and went back to the deck. Bob Cherry tapped on Bunter's door as he passed.

"Still there, fatty?"

"Beast!"

"May as well come out and get it over!"

"Yah!"

Bunter did not come out. On the deck the chums of the Remove chatted as the dahabiyeh glided on to Luxor under the starlight, and the song of the Nubian sailors echoed on the shadowy river, and Hassan's tireless tongue ran on and on with a description of the wonders of Karnak and Luxor, both of which places had that irresistible attraction of "innumerable dead persons."

Twice Billy Bunter unlocked his door-and each time he heard Bob's heavy tread and locked it again.

By that time Billy Bunter was in a state of famine, but he dared not venture forth in quest of provender. The fat Owl was suffering for his sins-which, in the opinion of the Famous Five, was just and proper.

Bunter's door was still locked when there was a tramp of feet announcing that the Greyfriars fellows were coming down to turn in. There was a thump at the fat Owl's door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come out, Bunter! You've got to be kicked before we turn in!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

And the juniors chuckled and went to their rooms.

Billy Bunter groaned. He was not merely hungry now, not merely famished-but ravenous!

But he had to wait till the beasts were asleep before he turned out to search for grub.
Long, long minutes crawled by on leaden wings.
He heard a tramping of the Nubian sailors on deck, a calling of voices from the shore, and there was a bump of the dahabiyeh.
Luxor was reached at last, and the dahabiyeh was tying up at the bank.
Bunter waited till the noises had quieted down, and then cautiously opened his door.
All was dark!
On board the Cleopatra only one light burned-a lantern slung to the tall mast. Below the deck, where the juniors had their quarters, all were asleep, excepting Billy Bunter, and no light burned.
Bunter stepped out stealthily into the passage.
There was no sound from the adjoining cabins; the beasts were safe asleep at last. Bunter groped in his pockets for matches, and made the interesting discovery that he hadn't any. There were plenty of native servants on board in their rooms between the schoolboys' quarters and the sailors' deck, but Bunter did not think of calling any of them. He was painfully aware of what would happen if he woke Bob Cherry.
"Beasts!" he murmured under his breath.
And he groped his way along in the darkness.
He knew where to find matches in the dining-saloon, and he knew where to find provender-if only those beasts did not wake up. A professional burglar could not have been more cautious and stealthy than Billy Bunter as he crept and groped along the passage.
In the dining-room there was the faintest glimmer of starlight from a window that had been left uncurtained. The fat Owl blinked round him, and was about to grope across the room, when suddenly he stopped dead, his fat heart thumping.
In the darkness and silence there was a faint sound-the soft sound of a stealthy footstep entering the room from the other side.
Bunter stood quite still.
Someone, unseen in the darkness, was entering the room from the stern saloon. It could not be one of the juniors, who were all in bed; it could hardly be one of the servants creeping about in the dark at night. That stealthy tread in the deep gloom struck a thrill of terror to Bunter's fat heart. Someone-some native-some Arab thief-had climbed the balcony at the stern of the dahabiyeh, from the river, and gained an entrance! That flashed into Bunter's fat mind at once. He could see nothing, hear nothing, but the faintest of stealthy sounds. But his terrified mind pictured a desperado, knife in hand, and he stood where he was, chained to the floor by terror, scarcely breathing; and as he stood he felt the wind of a garment that almost brushed him as an unseen figure passed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ENEMY IN THE NIGHT

KAUZELOS, the Greek, stood in the shadow of the temple colonnade, by the landing-place at Luxor, on the Nile. His eyes were fixed on a light that burned from the mast of a dahabiyeh.
Other vessels were tied up; two or three smaller dahabiyehs and a steamer and a crowd of feluccas. But it was on the riding-light of the Cleopatra that the Greek's eyes were fixed.
There were many dahabiyehs on the Nile, but the magnificent houseboat that belonged to Mr. Hilmi Maroudi, of Cairo, was not to be mistaken; it

was as well known as the Egyptian millionaire himself, from the Delta to the Cataracts.
The jetty-black eyes of the Greek glittered as he stared at the masthead light, and the shadowy shape of the dahabiyeh beneath it.
During the long sunny days and starry nights that they had journeyed up the Nile, Harry Wharton & Co. had given no thought to their enemy, and had, indeed, almost forgotten his existence.
They knew that Kalizelos had been taken by the police in Cairo to stand his trial for attempting the life of Mr. Maroudi; and they took it for granted that they were done with him. But for that, in fact, Sir Reginald Brooke would never have allowed his schoolboy charges out of his sight.
But the Cairo prison had not held the cunning Greek. Backsheesh works wonders in all Eastern lands; and the Greek had plenty of money, though his desperate quest of the Golden Scarab had made him a fugitive. No doubt liberal backsheesh had helped to open the prison doors for Kalizelos, and, after many days, he was once more on the track of Lord Mauleverer and the scarab that had belonged, in ancient days, to A-Menah, the Egyptian soldier of the, reign of Rameses the Second.
No one looking at the Greek now would have known him. The handsome olive face was darkened to the brown of a desert Arab, and he wore the djubbah and turban of a native, and moustache and beard. His djubbah was dingy, his turban dingier, his shoes tattered. Anyone looking at him would never have dreamed that he was the handsome, prosperous Greek of Cairo; he looked like anyone of the thousand native touts and hangers-on of the show-places on the Nile.
Long the Greek stood there, in the thickening shadows of the Egyptian night, staring at the dahabiyeh. On board that craft were the schoolboys from Greyfriars in far-off England, among them Lord Mauleverer, the possessor of the golden beetle-the mysterious Scarabeus of A-Menah.
Not for a moment did Mauly believe the strange old tale that the Golden Scarab could guide its possessor to the long-lost treasure of the reign of Rameses-the wonderful diamond called the Eye of Osiris, which A-Menah had brought home from Syria three thousand years ago.
But the Greek believed it.
If the mysterious scarab possessed such magical powers, certainly it had not exercised them while in Mauly's possession.
Many and many a time had Mauly and his friends examined the golden beetle, which, except that it appeared to be made of solid gold, was like thousands of other scarabs that had been picked up in the dead cities of Egypt. The inscription on it, in the ancient picture-writing, told that it had belonged to A-Menah, the soldier of Rameses, but it told nothing more.
The juniors knew that Kalizelos had read the secret of the scarab in an ancient papyrus that had come into his hands in his business as a curio dealer in Cairo. What the secret was, they could not begin to imagine, but, whatever it was, the Greek knew it, and it had caused him to risk liberty and life in seeking to lay hands on the scarab.
Kalizelos moved away from the colonnade at last, and went down to the bank of the river in the deep shadows. Under the bank lay a small boat, with two Arabs in it, evidently waiting for him. Had the juniors seen them, they would have recognised Yussef, the hawk-faced Arab, and Hamza, the man with the scarred face. Kalizelos muttered a word or two in Arabic, and stepped into the boat, and the two Arabs pushed off into the shadowy Nile.
Hardly a sound, was made as they tooled the small, light skiff under the stern of the Cleopatra.
Yussef silently laid down his oar, and held on to the dahabiyeh.
Kalizelos rose to his feet and looked up.

There were no lights to be seen. The balcony was deserted, dark under its awning, and there was no one on the upper deck. The Nubian sailors were forward on the lower deck, which at night was closed in by awnings.
Kalizelos whispered in Arabic; and while Yussef held on, Hamza, the scarred man, gave the Greek a helping hand up.
Agile as a cat, the Greek climbed, with the help of the scarred Arab, from below.
In a few moments he disappeared over the stern of the dahabiyeh, and the Arabs waited in silence.
Standing on the balcony, the Greek bent his head and listened for a few moments. All was silent and still.
He stepped across the balcony to one of the doorways that gave access to the saloon of the dahabiyeh.
The doorway was closed by a latticed shutter, which was fastened, but it did not stop the Greek for long. In a couple of minutes the shutter was open, and the Greek stepped silently into the saloon.
Kalizelos knew the interior of the Cleopatra.
Many times he had come aboard that dahabiyeh in former days to bring curios and antiquities for the inspection of Mr. Hilmi Maroudi, who had once been one of his best customers. With hardly a pause, the Greek groped his way across the saloon to the open doorway beyond, where a short passage led into the dining-room, beyond which were the sleeping-rooms.
Softly, stealthily, he stepped into the dining-room, and groped his way across it.
He paused suddenly.
There was only the palest glimmer of starlight, from one window where the shutter had not been closed. He could see nothing. But it seemed to him that he had caught a breath in the silence.
He listened intently.
But there was no sound, and he groped on-little dreaming that his dingy djubbah's loose folds almost brushed against a figure that stood rooted with terror in the darkness.
If the Greek had thought of Billy Bunter at all, he would have supposed that the fat schoolboy was fast asleep like the others.
But he was not thinking of Billy Bunter. He was thinking of Lord Mauleverer, and the Golden Scarab.
Softly and stealthily, he passed out into the passage beyond the dining-saloon, where the darkness was intense.
There he paused once more to listen.
No sound broke the stillness.
On the forward deck, the crew were sleeping under their awning; the servants were in their rooms asleep; the schoolboys slumbered. The Greek's eyes glittered in the dark like a cat's. He had failed many times-at Greyfriars School far away, at Naples, at Alexandria, at Cairo, at the Pyramids-again and again he, who alone knew the secret of the scarab, had failed to seize it-but this time he would not fail. Success, at last, was within his grasp.
He moved again, softly, stealthily as a cat.
He opened a door, and peered in. The steady breathing of a sleeper reached his ears. A tiny electric torch glimmered out from his hand, but it did not turn on the sleeper. It glimmered on a suitcase that bore the initials "H.W." That was enough for him. He shut off the light, stepped back from the room, and closed the door as soundlessly as he had opened it.
Another door was softly opened; again he heard the steady breathing of a sleeper; again the tiny beam of light showed him that it was not Lord Mauleverer's room, and he closed the door without a sound.

A third door was opened, and the beam of light told a different tale. On the dressing-table a silver-backed brush glimmered in the beam, and showed the letter "M."
Kalizelos stepped into the room, and closed the door behind him. He stepped to the bedside.
The tiny gleam of light showed a sleeping face, that of Lord Mauleverer, fast asleep.
The Greek's black eyes glittered down at him.
Mauleverer slept soundly.
For several seconds the Greek stood watching him. Perhaps it was fortunate for Mauleverer that he slept soundly, and showed no sign of waking. The Greek, satisfied at last, turned away from him. Mauly's clothes lay where he had tossed them carelessly on a chair and a divan. At home, at Mauleverer Towers, Mauly's clothes were looked after by Mauly's "man," but on the trip to Egypt Mauly was travelling without his man, and his lordship was rather careless with his expensive garments. With the tiny torch glimmering in his hand, Kalizelos proceeded to search the pockets of Mauleverer's clothes-casting every now and then a cat-like glance of vigilance at the sleeping schoolboy.
But he did not find the Golden Scarab.
He had no doubt that it was in Lord Mauleverer's room on board the dahabiyeh. It was not likely that it had been left behind in Cairo. But after his several narrow escapes of losing the ancient amulet of A-Menah, no doubt Mauleverer had ceased to carry it in his pockets. Kalizelos threw the clothes aside at last, and began to search the cabin, his stealthy glances turning from moment to moment on the sleeper's calm and untroubled face.
The Greek's teeth set savagely.
There was a great deal of baggage in the cabin.
Lord Mauleverer did not travel light. It was a long task to search the various bags and suitcases, and all the time the scarab might be under Mauleverer's pillow, or perhaps in the care of some other member of the party. Kalizelos knew that it had been in Wharton's keeping on the steamer, though Mauleverer had taken charge of it again after the attack on Wharton, which had almost cost him his life. He ceased the vain search at last, and stood beside the schoolboy earl's bed, and looked down at him with gleaming eyes. From under his dingy djubbah he drew a dagger and set the tiny electric torch on the dressing-table, placed for its beam to fall on the sleeper's face.
Then he touched the sleeping junior.
Lord Mauleverer awakened.
"Silence, my lord!" With a start of amazement, Mauleverer recognised the Greek's soft, musical voice in the darkness, and at the same moment he felt the keen point of the dagger at his throat. "Silence, Lord Mauleverer!"
"Oh gad!" breathed Mauleverer.
The beam of light on his face showed it startled and dismayed. But it showed no trace of fear there. After the first moment of amazement Mauleverer was calm, and cool as ice. But he made no movement. The point of the dagger almost pierced his skin, and he knew that there was a desperate hand behind it. He peered in the darkness at the shadowy figure of the Greek.
"I seem to know your voice." His tones were quite placid. "You're Kalizelos, I fancy. What?"
"You know me!" breathed the Greek. "Not a word above a whisper, my lord!"
"Oh, quite! What are you doin' out of chokey?" asked Mauleverer.
"Where is the scarab, Lord Mauleverer?"

The dagger-point pressed a little harder. "The scarab-or death! This time you will not escape me. Your life is in my hands! Give me the scarab -or die!"
From the darkness the Greek's voice came like the hiss of a snake. Lord Mauleverer drew a long, deep breath, but he did not speak.

CHAPTER FIVE

BUNTER DOES ms BEST!

BILLY BUNTER forgot that he was hungry.
He stood rooted to the floor in the dining-saloon, his fat heart almost dying within him as the garments of the unseen intruder brushed by.
The unseen man might have touched him by stretching out a hand.
But he had passed on in stealthy silence, without knowing that the fat schoolboy was there.
Bunter did not stir.
He feared to make the slightest sound.
The unseen intruder had gone along to the sleeping-rooms, and Bunter dared not make a movement that might draw him back.
Minute followed minute. Cold perspiration trickled down Billy Bunter's podgy back. But the silence reassured him at last.
Who was it that had passed him in the darkness? Some Arab thief, in quest of loot on the millionaire's dahabiyeh? But the man had passed through the stern saloon, where there were many objects of great value, and had not stopped there.
He had gone on to the bed-rooms, where there was risk of a sleeper awakening, and little in the way of loot. The fat Owl realised that it was not some thief of Luxor who had stolen on board the dahabiyeh.
It was the Golden Scarab that the unseen man was seeking. Kalizelos, the Greek, was in prison at Cairo when the Greyfriars party started on their voyage up the Nile. But he had many agents, and it was one of them who was now on board the Cleopatra. Or-the further thought flashed into Bunter's scared mind-perhaps the Greek was free again and it was Konstantinos Kalizelos himself who had brushed by in the darkness. That thought made Bunter shudder with dread, so deep was his terror of the Greek.
For the Golden Scarab, Bunter did not care two straws. Indeed, more than once he had advised Mauly to let the Greek have it at the price he had offered. That, in Bunter's opinion, was the sensible thing to do.
Certainly Bunter would not have run the slightest risk to save the Scarab of A-Menah from the hands of the man who sought it so desperately. But he was well aware that Mauly took a different view. As he stood there, shivering with funk, Bunter knew, as plainly as if he had seen him, that the stealthy intruder was seeking Lord Mauleverer's room, that sooner or later he would pick it out, and then--
Billy Bunter moved at last.
Death hung over Mauleverer in the darkness and silence, and he knew it. Even Billy Bunter could not leave it at that!
But what was he to do?
He dared not call out. If it was the Greek, or if it was Yussef or Hamza, whoever it was, the wretch would rate Billy Bunter's life no higher than a mosquito's. To call for help and draw the man's attention to himself was impossible-to Bunter, at least.
He thought of getting out on the stern balcony and climbing thence to the upper deck. But it immediately occurred to his fat mind that the intruder

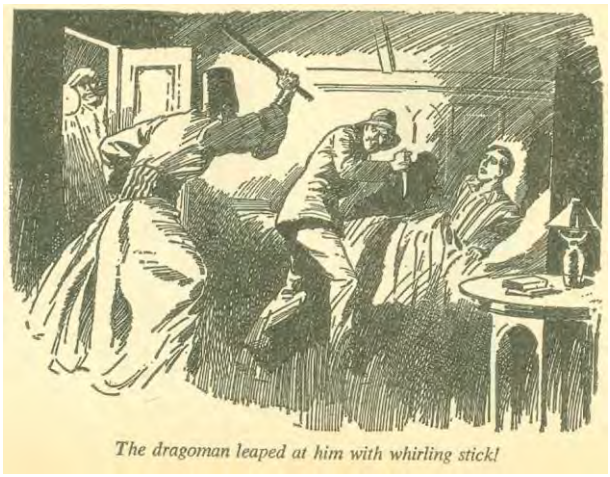
could hardly have come alone. He must have had assistance to clamber up over the stern.
In that case his confederates were in a boat under the balcony; perhaps on the balcony itself.
Bunter dared not take a step in that direction.
But the only other way to help lay by the passage-the way the unseen man had gone. Bunter dragged himself to the doorway and peered down the midway passage of the dahabiyeh.
It was dark, but there was a faint glimmer of stars from the open doorway at the other end, which opened on the lower deck. Bunter's eyes were accustomed to the dark by this time, and he could make out that the passage was empty. The stealthy intruder had gone into one of the rooms.
Bunter did not need telling which! In those very moments Lord Mauleverer's life hung by a thread.
That thought spurred on the shuddering fat Owl. He took his courage in both hands, as it were, and tiptoed into the passage. With a thumping heart, but without a sound, he crept along, and as he came by the door of Lord Mauleverer's room he heard the faintest of sounds from within. Mauleverer, evidently, was still asleep, but someone was moving in the room.
Bunter's heart gave a jump, and he tiptoed on.
His first thought had been to enter one of the rooms and wake Wharton or Bob Cherry.
But he was too terrified to risk alarming the midnight intruder by making a sound.
He crept on to the end of the passage.
There he tiptoed up the three shallow steps to the sailors' deck.
That deck was closed in by a canvas awning at night. Bunter pulled aside the canvas and peered in the darkness.
"Hassan!" he gasped.
Hassan, the dragoman, had his quarters on the sailors' deck. There was a murmur as Bunter gasped-or, rather, croaked. His voice came husky from his dry throat.
He heard a stirring of the sailors.
A faint light glimmered. Brown, startled faces peered at Bunter from the shadows-dark, grave faces of Nubians.
"Hassan!"
"Noble gentleman!" came the voice of the dragoman. Hassan came out of the shadows, staring at the fat schoolboy.
Bunter caught his arm.
The terror in his face made Hassan stare blankly.
"Mauleverer!" groaned Bunter. "Go and help him! Kalizelos-"
Hassan started.
"My lordly gentleman, that son of pigs is at Cairo, in the prison," he said. "Yes, sar. He is exceedingly safe in a prison!"
"There's somebody-in Mauleverer's room. Kalizelos, or one of his gang! Quick!" breathed Bunter.
"On my head be it, sar!" said Hassan.
He picked up his stick and went down the steps into the passage. At a murmured word in Arabic one of the Nubians followed him with the glimmering lamp.
Billy Bunter stood in the doorway, following them with his eyes-not with his fat person!
Whether the man in Mauleverer's cabin was the Greek, or one of his gang, Bunter did not want to get to close quarters with him. That was up to Hassan, the son of Suleiman.
Hassan, the son of Suleiman, was a good deal of a rogue, but he was no coward. And Hassan had very particular reasons for seeing his noble

master safe on the journey up the Nile. Although the juniors were not aware of it, Mr. Maroudi had taken measures to ensure Hassan's good faith. There was a great reward awaiting Hassan if he watched faithfully over the safety of the Greyfriars party, and grim vengeance if he failed in his trust.
The dragoman trod softly along the passage, the stick grasped in his hand. Behind him followed the silent-footed Nubian with the lamp.
Billy Bunter watched them, with a face like chalk.
Hassan reached Lord Mauleverer's door, and there paused to listen. Possibly he doubted whether Bunter might not have been the victim of a nightmare.
But as he listened his brown face hardened, and his eyes gleamed, and his sinewy fingers tightened on the heavy stick.
From within the cabin came a faint murmur of a voice-so low that even the dragoman's keen ears could not catch the words. But the tones of that voice were familiar to him, and he knew that it was the soft, musical voice of the Greek of Cairo.
"Bismillah!" breathed Hassan.
Kalizelos was in Lord Mauleverer's room. It was no surprise to Hassan to learn that the Greek was free again; he knew the power of "backsheesh."
Hassan's left hand turned silently the handle of the door. The Nubian held up the lamp behind him as he hurled the door suddenly open and leaped into the room.

CHAPTER SIX

MAULY MEANS BUSINESS!

KALIZELOS spun round from the bedside.
The dagger, which a moment before had been pressed to Mauleverer's throat, flashed in the light of the lamp held by the Nubian outside the doorway.
"Oh gad!" murmured Mauleverer.
A snarl broke from the Greek-a snarl of savage rage, as the dragoman leaped at him with whirling stick.
With a sudden spring he escaped the blow, which barely missed him. Then, with another spring as swift, he hurled himself at Hassan, the dagger flashing aloft.
An upward sweep of the stick caught the Greek's arm as the blow descended, and the dagger shot from his hand and clattered on the floor.
In a fraction of a second Hassan struck again with the stick, and this time it crashed on the head of Kalizelos.
The Greek staggered and fell.



The dragoman leaped at him with whirling stick!

Hassan leaped at the fallen man. Another moment, and the heavy stick would have crashed down on the fallen man's head-probably cracking his skull.

But Lord Mauleverer, plunging out of bed, grasped the dragoman's arm in time, and turned
the blow aside. The stick crashed on the parquet of the floor, a foot from the Greek.

"Draw it mild, old bean!" yawned Mauleverer.

The Greek, dazed and half-stunned, struggled to rise. Hassan jammed a foot on him and crushed him to the floor again.

"My noble gentleman, permit me that I give him exceedingly hard knock," said Hassan. "I will bash him, as you say in your beautiful language; I will give him what the English lords call kybosh. Yes!"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"Mustn't crack his coconut, old bean," he said.

"Collar the brute; I'll lend you a hand!"

"As my lord wills," said Hassan.

The Greek made another attempt to struggle up, his black eyes glittering like a wild beast's.

Hassan and Mauleverer grasped him together, and he sprawled on the floor, struggling desperately.

"Come and lend a hand, you men!" shouted Mauleverer.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came the voice of Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five had already been awakened by the crash of the Greek's fall. They crowded out of their rooms in startled amazement.

The Nubian with the lamp stood aside for them to pass, and they crowded into Mauleverer's room. They did not stop to ask questions.

Five pairs of hands were laid on the struggling rascal, and he was quickly reduced to helplessness.

"Got him, whoever he is!" gasped Wharton.

"But what-who-"

"It's jolly old Kalizelos!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"What?"

The juniors stared at the panting prisoner. They had taken him for an Arab. But now that they looked at him closely in the light they could make out the handsome, clear-cut features of the Greek under the brown stain.

"Kalizelos!" exclaimed Nugent blankly.

"Yaas!"

"Then he's out of chokey again!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Looks like it, old bean!"

"Well, we've got him!"

"The gotfulness is terrific!"
Harry Wharton picked up the dagger. He looked at it, looked at the writhing Greek, and at Lord Mauleverer.
Mauly was cool and collected, but the juniors knew now the fearful danger that had threatened him.
"The awful scoundrel!" muttered Bob Cherry.
"The esteemed and ridiculous rascal!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
"Mauly, old man-"
"All serene, old tops!" said Lord Mauleverer.
"It was gettin' quite unpleasant, though, when Hassan butted in. I believe I've got a scratch on the neck. I can tell you fellows that that man Kalizelos is a sticker. He wants that jolly old scarab, and he won't be happy till he gets it.
Hassan, old bean, I'm frightfully obliged to you; but how the merry thump did you know that the sportsman had called on business at this time of night?"
"The small fat lord called me, sar-"
"Bunter!" gasped Mauleverer.
"Yes, sar! And I came at once to save my lordly gentleman!" said Hassan. "With your noble permission, I will just give him what you English lords call a cosh, and the son of fifty thousand jackals may then be dropped overboard into the Nile, my estimable gentleman."
"Life's cheap in Egypt!" grinned Bob Cherry.
"I think we'll tie him up, instead," said Lord Mauleverer. "Find a rope somewhere, Hassan. We're goin' to make him safe this time."
"Yes, sar!"
Hassan called one of the Nubians, and a rope was brought. With scientific thoroughness, the dragoman proceeded to bind the writhing Greek hand and foot.
"It was Bunter who called Hassan!" said Bob Cherry, in amazement. "But what on earth was Bunter doing awake at this time of night?"
"Goodness knows!"
"It must be nearly midnight," said Harry. "How the thump did that fat duffer happen to be awake?"
"Oh, really, Wharton--"
Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway through his big spectacles. His first blink was at the Greek.
"Got him safe?" he asked.
"Safe as houses, old fat bean!" said Bob. "But what the merry thump are you doing out of bed?"
"I'm hungry--- "
"Wha-a-at?"
"I never had any supper, had I?" hooted Bunter.
"Oh, my hat!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lord Mauleverer.
"Bunter was up and rooting after grub-that's how it was."
"Oh, really, Mauly!" Bunter gave the infuriated Greek another blink. "Sure you've got him safe? Put in a few more knots, Hassan! You can't be too careful with a beast like that! I say, you fellows, is it Kalizelos? He looks like a native."
"It's Kalizelos," said Harry. "He must have got on board somehow without giving the alarm--"
"Lucky I was on the watch!" snorted Bunter.
"On the watch for grub, do you mean?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"No, I don't!" roared Bunter. "On the watch, looking after you fellows-saving Mauly and protecting him, which is all I joined this party for, as

you know. And all you fellows can do is to keep a fellow without his supper and keep him frightfully hungry, because a native makes out that I gave him a bad quid! As if I'd give a native a bad quid! Besides, it was passed on me at Beni Suef, as you know perfectly well."
"That reminds me," said Bob. "We haven't kicked Bunter yet--"
"Why you-you beast!" gasped Bunter, with a backward jump through the doorway. "You-you-you--"
"You're not goin' to be kicked, old fat man," said Lord Mauleverer. "You're goin' to have some supper. Hassan, if you've made that sportsman safe, will you be kind enough to see that Bunter has some supper? Wake up the cook-he won't mind, if you give him some backsheesh."
"On my head be it, noble lordship!" answered Hassan.
"Better look round the boat," said Harry.
"That rascal may not have come alone! Tell the sailors to search the dahabiyeh, Hassan."
"Yes, sar."
The search was prompt; but it did not reveal the Greek's confederates. At the first sound of alarm Yussef and Hamza had pushed off from the dahabiyeh, and the shadows of the Nile had swallowed them.
Lights gleamed on board the Cleopatra now.
In the dining-saloon Billy Bunter sat at the table with a cheery grin on his fat face, and well-filled dishes within his reach. Now that the scare was over, Bunter remembered that he was hungry.
The fat Owl had been frightened out of his fat wits; but his courage revived at a bound when there was no longer any danger. And Billy Bunter was quite pleased with the happenings of that wild night. He had escaped the kicking he deserved, and he was enjoying his supper all the more because of the delay. He tucked into the provender with immense satisfaction, and kept the cook busy for quite a long time.
Harry Wharton & Co. gathered again in Mauleverer's cabin where the Greek lay on the floor, bound hand and foot, and glaring up with eyes like a caged tiger.
"I suppose we'd better send Hassan ashore to call the police," said Harry. "Kalizelos will have to be handed over to them."
Lord Mauleverer shook his head.
His lordship had been doing some thinking, and he proceeded to astonish his friends with the result of it.
"Not at all," said Mauly. "The police have had him once, and let him slip. I don't know how it strikes you fellows, but I think this man Kalizelos is a jolly dangerous customer. Wakin' a fellow up at midnight, you know, with a jolly old dagger in his fist, like a johnny on the films!
There's altogether too much of the film bizney about this man Kalizelos. I'm goin' to keep an eye on him."
"But you can't keep him here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
Lord Mauleverer raised his eyebrows.
"Why not?" he asked.
"Oh, my hat!"
"The whyfulness is terrific," chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.
"But--" exclaimed Harry Wharton.
"My dear men, I've thought it out," explained Lord Mauleverer. "This sportsman came aboard our craft without bein' asked. He can't possibly have fancied that we wanted him. Well, now he's here, I'm keepin' him. So long as he's after that scarab, he won't give a fellow any rest.
And a fellow hates bein' woke up in the middle of the night, especially with a dagger pokin' at his neck. It's liable to get on a fellow's nerves in the long run. "
"But what--" exclaimed Nugent.

"I've thought it all out," said Mauleverer cheerfully. "That sportsman is after the scarab, because he knows its secret, whatever it is. He hasn't the least respect for the right of property. Well, he's goin' to tell me the jolly old secret. What's sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander. He's asked for this, and now he's gettin' it."
Mauleverer turned to the Greek.
"You catch on, old bean?" he asked. "I'm not lettin' you have the scarab. But there's another way of drawin' your teeth. Instead of you gettin' the scarab, I get the secret. What is it? Cough it up!"
Kalizelos glared at him savagely.
"Fool!" he snarled. "Do you dream that I will tell you a secret worth a quarter of a million English pounds?"
"Yaas."
"Fool!" snarled the Greek.
"Take your time," said Mauleverer placidly. "You've shoved yourself in here where you're not wanted, and now you're stayin'. I'm sorry I shall have to keep you tied up; you're a bit too dangerous to leave around loose, and I'm afraid I couldn't trust your parole Hassan!"
"Yes, sar!"
"Bring some rugs and blankets for that johnny, and make him as comfortable as you can. Must be as considerate as possible."
"Oh, sar!" gasped the dragoman.
"But, Mauly, old man--" exclaimed Wharton.
"My dear chap, leave this to me!"
"You're not going to sleep with that villain in your room!" roared Bob.
"Why not? He's tied up safe enough, isn't he, Hassan?"
"Yes, sar. Very exceeding and extremely safe," grinned the dragoman. "He is safe as a house, as you say in English."
"That's all right, then. Good-night, you men!"
"Oh, my hat! " said Bob.
Lord Mauleverer went back to bed. The juniors stared at him. His eyes closed peacefully.
"After all, the man's safe," said Nugent, with a laugh.
And, having examined the Greek's bonds themselves, and made quite sure that there was no possibility of his getting loose, the chums of the Remove went back to bed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRISONER OF THE DAHABIYEH!

"JOLLY old Thebes!" said Bob Cherry.
The Nile glimmered in the morning sunshine.
The Greyfriars fellows were breakfasting, waited on by assiduous Nubians. Hassan hovered round like a highly coloured butterfly.
Bright and golden, the Nile flowed past the moored dahabiyeh. And on either side of the river of marvels, wide fertile lands stretched away to ranges of hills, crowned by peaks. Luxor, with its temples and tall palms, glimmered in the sunshine from an unclouded sky of blue-the sky of Egypt-on the eastern bank.
Beyond the Nile on the western bank was the Necropolis of Thebes-tombs and tombs and tombs- "innumerable dead persons," as Hassan enthusiastically told his lordly gentlemen.
Among which lay the tomb of Tutanhkamen, discovered so comparatively recently as 1922, by English explorers, though it had been discovered and plundered by earlier explorers a thousand years before the beginning of the Christian era.

But it was towards Luxor that the juniors were glancing as they breakfasted under the awning on the balcony. Billy Bunter did not deign to give that ancient city a glance-his attention was wholly concentrated on his breakfast. But he blinked up through his big spectacles as Bob Cherry made his remark.
"Thebes!" repeated Bunter, blinking.
"Jolly old Thebes!" said Bob.
"You silly ass! " said Bunter witheringly, "Lot you know about geography! Thebes is in Greece! "
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.
And the Co. chortled.
"I say, you fellows, you are a lot of ignoramuses!" said Bunter scornfully. "Don't you know that Thebes is in Greece? Haven't you had it with old Que1ch in class? Haven't you heard of Epaminondas, and the rest of the tosh? Fancy that silly ass thinking that Thebes is in Egypt!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snorted Bunter. "The best thing you fellows can do is to listen to me and get some instruction, or you'll be as ignorant when you go back as when you started."
"You silly owl!" roared Bob. "That's Thebes!"
"Fathead!" said Bunter. "Here, Hassan!"
"Magnificent, sar!" answered the dragoman, salaaming.
Bunter jerked a fat thumb towards the city on the Nile bank.
"What's that show, Hassan?"
"Luxor, sar. Wonderful and atrociously interesting City of Luxor," answered Hassan. "On northern side adjacent is Karnak. Still more fearfully interesting."
"I told you so, Cherry. Now shut up, and don't display your ignorance!" said Bunter, with withering scorn.
"You howling ass!" said Bob. "Luxor's built on the site of ancient Thebes."
"Thebes is in Greece, you dummy!"
"There were two Thebes!" roared Bob. "This was the Egyptian Thebes."
"Rot!" said Bunter.
"I tell you, you fat chump--"
"No good telling me rot like that," said Bunter, shaking his head. "Think I don't know that Thebes was in Greece? Yah!"
"That was the other Thebes," said Harry Wharton, laughing.
"Bosh!" said Bunter.
"Much and enormous ruins of ancient Thebes remain here to be seen by an eye," said Hassan.
"City was called Thebes by Grecian persons--"
"Rats!" said Bunter. "You can't gammon me that Thebes was in Egypt."
"My noble sar--"
"Bosh!"
Hassan gave it up. Billy Bunter snorted, and continued his breakfast. He was not to be convinced that the ruins of Thebes were to be found on the banks of the Nile.
However, there they were, and that morning the Greyfriars fellows were going to explore them.
The Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer finished breakfast, leaving Billy Bunter still going strong. What had happened in the night had made Bunter's peace; but perhaps he feared that there might be another period of famine, for he packed away the foodstuffs at a rate that made Mr. Maroudi's Nubian servants roll their eyes in wonder. Even some of the sailors made pretexts to come along the deck and look at the small fat lord, who was apparently trying to create another famine in Egypt.

Even Moussa, the reis, who was a grave man, with a face as expressionless as that of a bronze image, turned his dark eyes on the small fat lord in grave wonder. Perhaps the natives expected to see Bunter wind up by bursting on the balcony like a bomb.
The juniors went in from the balcony, the sound of the steady champing of Billy Bunter's jaws following them. Lord Mauleverer strolled along to his room. On the divan in that room sat Kalizelos, the Greek, bound hand and foot. Lord Mauleverer regarded him thoughtfully, and the Famous Five smiled. Mauly's wheeze of giving the scheming Greek "tit for tat" had surprised them, and it rather amused them. They were not disposed to raise objections. Besides, the easy-going Mauly could be obstinate when he liked, and it was clear that he had made up his noble mind on this subject.
Kalizelos looked at the juniors, his black eyes burning like coals of fire. But his murderous fury did not affect their cheery spirits in any way.
The rascal's teeth were drawn now.
"Good-mornin', old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer politely. "I've called to hear that jolly old secret."
"Fool!" snarled Kalizelos.
"Now, be reasonable," urged his lordship amiably. "I never started this trouble. You'll admit that, Mr. Kalizelos?"
"Fool!"
"I can't say I like your manners," remarked Lord Mauleverer, while the chums of the Remove chuckled. "You're really not the sort of chap we want on board this boat, either. Let's come to business. You shut me up in a beastly old tomb, tryin' to get that scarab off me. One good turn deserves another. Accordin' to your own story, you've found out the secret of the scarab, and you won't be happy till you get it. Well, hand over the secret my good man. If that jolly old scarab really can lead the way to the Eye of Osiris, as you seem to believe, cough it up! You can see for yourself that that's the only way of getting shut of you."
"Fool!"
"You're repeating yourself, Mr. Kalizelos," said Lord Mauleverer gently. "If we're to continue this conversation, I suggest that you put on a new record."
"Fool!"
"This gentleman's vocabulary seems to be limited," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "But gather from his answers that he's not goin' to cough up that secret. Is that your impression, you fellows?"
"Sort of!" chuckled Bob Cherry.
"Well, we're goin' to give him time-all the time he wants," said Lord Mauleverer. "A judge ought to have given him time really--"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But here he is, on our hands, and we can't let him loose, so we'll give him time to think it over. Hassan!"
"Noble lord--"
"Is there a room on the boat where this fellow can be locked in safely?" asked Mauleverer.
"Can't keep him tied up like this-it's cruelty to animals-and one must be kind even to wild animals."
"Perhaps better call policemans, sar--" suggested Hassan dubiously.
"Perhaps better do as you're told!" said Mauleverer gently.
"Oh! Yes, sar! To hear is to obey!" said Hassan, at once. "Here you are, lord, sar, by order of - the great Maroudi! You give order, sar, and I execute him with the promptness of a dispatch, as you say in English, sar."
"Get on with it, then."

Hassan untied the Greek's legs and jerked him to his feet. He led the prisoner from the room, Kalizelos gritting his teeth with rage. The Greek had counted on possible failure, possible arrest, when he crept on board the dahabiyeh in the night. But he had not counted on this.
Handed over to the police, he had little doubt that backsheesh would see him through again.
'But it was very doubtful whether backsheesh would help him on board the Cleopatra, where all were devoted to the Greyfriars party, by the order of Mr. Hilmi Maroudi.
Hassan, the dragoman, had once taken his bribes, to betray his "lordly gentlemen"; but that was before Hassan was aware that they were under the protection of Maroudi. Since he had been warned by the Egyptian millionaire, the "faithful Hassan" had become faithful indeed.
The juniors were aware that they were under many obligations to Mr. Maroudi-but they never dreamed of the extent of the Egyptian millionaire's power, or of how much they owed to it.
Hassan led the prisoner to a small room farther along the passage. With a rough shove, he sent him tottering in, and the Greek tripped and fell on the floor, panting with rage.
"Gently does it, Hassan!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Untie his hands."
"Yes, sar."
The Greek was released from his bonds. He turned towards the juniors with clenched hands, his eyes blazing. Hassan swished his stick in the air, and the Greek jumped back from it.
"Better take it quietly, Mr. Kalizelos," drawled Lord Mauleverer. "This isn't a luxurious cabin, but it's better than the tomb you shut me up in, by Jove! Lock the shutter over the window, Hassan-can't have him yowling to his friends on the Nile. Tell the Nubians to bring him some food. The door's to be kept locked, and a man set to watch it. Get that?"
"On my head be it!" said Hassan.
The Greek panted.
"You will not keep me here-you dare not keep me a prisoner on this dahabiyeh--"
Lord Mauleverer raised his eyebrows.
"Why not?" he asked.
"My magnificent lord do as want," grinned Hassan. "Be silent, son of ten thousand pigs! Sar, all shall be as your greatness say! Ahmed shall watch this son of jackals, and he shall not escape! Never, sar! Here he is safe as Tutankhamen in his tomb!"
When the juniors prepared to go ashore, the Greek was safely locked in the prison-room, and Ahmed, a black Nubian, squatted on a mat outside the door to keep watch and ward.
Konstantinos Kalizelos was left pacing his confined quarters like a tiger in a cage. Whether Lord Mauleverer's method of dealing with the scoundrel was strictly in accordance with the law was rather doubtful; but undoubtedly it was the only way of keeping the schoolboys' enemy out of mischief. And as Mauly was impervious to argument on the subject, the Famous Five had to leave it at that.
They went ashore in Luxor in cheery spirits, and soon forgot all about the prisoner of the dahabiyeh.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN ASS AND A CAMEL!

"WHAT about a car?"
"Nothing about a car."

"I'm not riding a donkey!"
Bunter spoke firmly. He felt that it was time to be firm. "I've had enough of these beastly Egyptian donkeys! The fact is, I don't like donkeys!"
"Let brotherly love continue, old chap!" urged Bob Cherry.
"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I tell you, I won't ride a donkey, and that's flat! So there!"
"Fine and most excellent donkey, sar," said Hassan.
"You shut up!" snorted Bunter.
"Look here, you duffer--" said Harry Wharton.
"I hate donkeys!" roared Bunter.
Billy Bunter had reason to dislike that mode of conveyance, so general in the land of Egypt.
He could hardly have counted the donkeys he had fallen off on the banks of the Nile.
"Oh dear!" said Bob. "This isn't the time to tell us about your family troubles, old fat man!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I'll ride a camel if you like! I won't ride a donkey! You see," explained Bunter, "I'm a riding man! You fellows can't ride! You stick on those donkeys like so many sacks of coke. And, I can tell you, you look a dashed Bank Holiday crowd on your dashed donkeys! Get me a camel, Hassan."
"You'll fall off a camel, same as off a donkey-and it's farther to fall!" Harry Wharton pointed out.
"Yah!"
"Estimable lordly sar--" urged Hassan.
"Get me a camel!"
"Oh, get him a camel," said Lord Mauleverer.
"Any old thing for a quiet life. We shall never get to Karnak at this rate."
It was easy enough to engage a camel. There were plenty of camels at Luxor. Hassan called in Arabic to an acquaintance-Hassan seemed acquainted with everybody along the Nile-and a camel was led up for Bunter.
Harry Wharton & Co. mounted on donkeys, like most tourists who rode out from Luxor to the ruins of Karnak. They were quite satisfied with donkeys. No doubt that was due to the fact that they could ride them; whereas Bunter was likely to pitch over the head or the tail at a moment's notice.
The Egyptian donkey is a patient animal, and a long-suffering animal; but even the most patient of asses seemed rather worried when Bunter got on his back. Bunter was a rather uncommon weight, and when he was mounted his mount always seemed rather keen to drop him by the wayside at the first opportunity.
But even Billy Bunter's weight was nothing to a camel. And Bunter had no doubt that he could ride a camel. He never had any doubt that he could do anything, until he came to do it.
"Most good camel, sar," said a grinning fat Arab, leading up his tall, long-legged beast, in answer to the dragoman's call. "Oh, yes, sar! Me Ibrahim, sar, owner of finest trotting camel in Egypt, sar."
Bunter looked at the camel. The camel looked at Bunter, with a sneering expression. Really, it might have been supposed that that camel knew the kind of rider Bunter was, and was expressing his contempt in advance.
But that curious, sneering look was the habitual expression of a camel. The camel's sneer is well known in the East, where it has an explanation which seems extraordinary enough to the West. Hassan had explained it to his lordly gentlemen, in simple good faith. Allah, he had told them, has

a hundred names, of which only ninety-nine are known to men. The camel, in his wisdom, has found out the hundredth name, unknown to humans. Hence the scornful sneer of superiority with which the camel regards the human race.
This particular camel looked more sneering and scornful than most camels, and the Famous Five had an impression that he was rather a cross-tempered beast. Still, he was tall and strong, and equal to Bunter's uncommon avoir-dupois, and really it was cruelty to animals to land Bunter on a small Egyptian donkey. So the fat Owl was allowed to have his own way.
At a word from Ibrahim, the camel knelt to receive his burden. Ibrahim and Hassan between them hoisted Bunter into the high saddle. The fat Owl settled down there quite comfortably.
He grinned at the donkey-riders.
"I say, you fellows, this is all right!" he declared. "You're welcome to your mokes! He, he, he!"
"This will make history in Egypt!" said Bob Cherry gravely. "First time it's happened, I fancy."
"Eh? Lots of people ride camels here," said Bunter.
"I mean it's the first time a donkey has been seen riding a camel," explained Bob.
"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Here, Hassan, make this beast get up! I suppose he's not going to stay kneeling all the morning."
Ibrahim grunted to the camel and flicked him with the camel-stick. The quadruped reared up, and there was a roar from Bunter.
"Ow! Help! Stop him! Yaroooh!"
"Hold on!" yelled Bob.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Billy Bunter flew backwards as the camel rose, and he held on for his life. Once the camel had started to rise it seemed to Bunter that he would never stop. He rose and rose and rose, with the fat junior clinging wildly to his hump.
"Oh crikey! Oh crumbs! Hold me!" howled Bunter. "I'm falling off-oh lor'! Oh, my hat! Whoooooop!"
"Ha, ha, ha! Stick to him, old bean!"
"Yaroooh!"
The camel, on all four feet at last, twisted round his long neck and stared at Bunter. His sneer was more pronounced than ever.
Ibrahim gave a jerk at the rope, and the camel ceased to stare at Bunter, and started. Billy Bunter swung to port, and swung to starboard, and swung fore and swung aft. He blinked with terror at the distance to the ground. At that moment he wished that he had been satisfied with the patient ass; it was a shorter fall if he tumbled off. But he was for it now, and he clung on with both hands, gasped and spluttered, and hoped for the best.
Rather to his surprise, he found that he did not roll off and hit Egypt. The camel's motion was decidedly jerky; and Bunter seemed to be playing at cup-and-ball in the saddle. But he remained in the saddle, at least; and there was no doubt that he was better mounted than the other fellows, so far as speed went. The Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer had to go all out to keep up with the trotting camel.
The donkey-boys ran behind, whacking with their sticks and howling to the donkeys. With a clatter of hoofs, the Greyfriars party went swinging down the road to Karnak.
Billy Bunter was ahead, with Ibrahim running and holding the camel-rope. Bunter's first thought had been to tell the camel-driver to sheer off and leave him to ride on his own. But now that he was aboard the camel, he decided to let Ibrahim go on leading him. Second thoughts were best.
Perched high on the camel's hump, Bunter realised that he could no more

control his mount than he could have controlled a runaway motor-car. But for Ibrahim's grip on the leading-rope, that camel might have carried Bunter off to the Red Sea or to the Arabian Desert, had the spirit moved him so to do.
Once settled in the saddle, however, and with Ibrahim leading, Bunter began to regain his confidence. Ibrahim was fat, and he panted and gasped as he ran, his brown face streaming with perspiration in the hot sun of Egypt. That, however, did not matter to Bunter. Consideration for others, or a concern for their troubles, had never been one of Bunter's weaknesses.
He blinked round at the donkey-riders behind.
"I say, you fellows! Buck up!" he called out. "I shall be leaving you behind on those mokes! He, he, he!"
Crack! Crack! Crack! rang the donkey-boys' sticks. In a merry bunch the Greyfriars fellows clattered on behind the tall camel.
"I'll wait for you at Karnak!" yelled Bunter.
"He, he, he!"
"Don't get out of sight!" shouted Wharton.
"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "Can't hang about waiting for those mokes! He, he, he!"
Bunter was growing more and more confident.
The motion of the camel rather resembled that of a Channel steamer in a rough sea. But Bunter found that he could stick on. The camel looked rather a supercilious beast; but he was giving no trouble, except that he seemed to want to go faster than Ibrahim. Bunter fancied himself as a rider-and his experiences with the Egyptian donkeys had not cured him of that fancy! It was Bunter's way to jump, at a bound, into overconfidence. On second thoughts he had allowed Ibrahim to lead the camel. On third thoughts he decided that he was not going to be led along like a fellow who couldn't ride!
He blinked down at the panting fat Arab.
"You can let go!" he called out.
Ibrahim looked up at him.
"Let go!" rapped Bunter.
"Sar, me let go rope, camel he go fast--" gasped Ibrahim.
"That's what I want!" answered Hunter. "You can tell those fellows, when they come up, if they ever do-he, he, he-tell them I'll wait for them at Karnak. Let go my camel."
"Yes, sar!" gasped Ibrahim, relieved, but doubtful.
He let go the rope.
The camel's head shot up, and he looked round at his rider. Really, the camel did not seem to be able to believe in his own good luck!
"Gee up!" snapped Bunter.
The camel "gee'd" up! Once he was released by his master, the camel knew perfectly well that he had nothing to fear from the rider on his hump. Camels are sage animals; and that camel had taken Bunter's measure.
He shot into dizzy speed.
"Oh lor'! " gasped Bunter.
He clung to the high saddle, which rocked on the camel's hump with a horrible feeling of insecurity.
Bunter had intended to handle that camel in a masterly way. He intended to show Ibrahim, and the Greyfriars fellows, and all Luxor for that matter, that he could ride a camel! But a single second was all that was required, once the camel was released, for Bunter to realise that he couldn't!
"Help!" roared Bunter, after the lapse of that single second. "Gerrold of him! Hold him back! Stop him! Whooop!"

But Ibrahim hardly heard him-he was far behind. Anyhow, he could not have helped. The camel was going strong.
Ibrahim, mopping his perspiring brow with a fold of his dingy djubbah, gasped to a halt. The road to Karnak was once lined on both sides with hundreds of sphinxes, most of which have disappeared in the course of the centuries. But here and there a sphinx still crops up by the side of the ancient road.
Ibrahim gasped his way to the nearest, and sat on it and mopped his brow with the tail of his djubbah and blinked after Bunter. Ibrahim was well aware that that camel was an obstinate and bad-tempered camel; but it would have behaved itself so long as its master's hand was on the head-rope. But the master's hand was gone now, and the camel was left free to act according to the inwardness of its own nature. Its heels could hardly be seen for dust as it went up the road. Ibrahim sat on the sphinx and watched it disappear.
Bunter would have given much to do the same.
But Bunter was on the camel; and everywhere that camel went, Bunter was sure to go! He rocked to and fro at a terrifying height from the ground, holding on for his fat life and yelling for help. Other passengers on the road stared at him.
Arabs gave him grave stares; some even cackled with laughter. An American tourist hurriedly snapshotted him with a camera. Bunter hardly saw them as he raced by.
"Oh lor'! Help! Yarooop!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows-whooop!"
But Harry Wharton & Co. were out of sight behind. A motor-car whizzed by, with a loud honking, and the camel swerved and reared and snorted. He did not seem to like cars. Bunter swung to, and he swung fro; and nearly pitched off. Somehow he clung on, sprawling over the high saddle and clutching wildly at the camel's hairy neck.

"Help! Yaroop! Stop, you beast!" roared Bunter. The camel heeded him not.

A Good Samaritan on the road jumped at the camel to stop him. The camel swerved away and thundered into a dusty track that led away from the right of the road. Bunter had told the other fellows that he would wait for them at Karnak.
But he was not heading for Karnak now. He was heading for the Red Sea-if he had only known it. Still, as the Red Sea was about seventy miles distant, it was to be hoped that Bunter would not arrive there.
Thud! Thud! Thud!
The camel's hoofs beat an incessant tattoo on the dusty road. Once off the main road, there was little traffic, and no help for Bunter.
"Stop, you beast!" shrieked Bunter.
The camel showed no sign of stopping.

Egyptian fellaheen, working in the fields, looked up at Billy Bunter, and stared after him as he flew past. Peasants carrying burdens on the road dodged out of the way of the camel, and turned to stare till it vanished. A village appeared in view, and dark-skinned children, ducks and geese and fowls scattered frantically out of Bunter's way. Brown men stared at him; brown women peered at him over their yashmaks.
Bunter flew on. He flew through the village, and thundered on past an orange plantation.
Red, ripe oranges glistened in the sun on the trees, without getting a glance from Bunter. Even eatables had no appeal for him now. He rocked on along the rows of orange-trees. An Arab appeared in the road ahead, and shouted and brandished a stick at the camel. The camel did not stop. He swerved suddenly in a new direction.
That sudden swerve did it!
Bunter flew!
The camel, still going strong, thundered on without a rider. Billy Bunter crashed!
Branches broke his fall-and his fall broke the branches. He found himself sitting on the earth, with oranges showering down on him.
And the roar he gave as he landed might have been heard almost from the Nile to the Red Sea.
"Yaroooooooh!"

CHAPTER NINE

WHERE IS BUNTER?

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"That's Bunter's keeper!"
"But where's Bunter?"
"And the jolly old camel?"
Harry Wharton & Co. reined in the donkeys.
Sitting by the roadside, dusty and dismal, squatting on a damaged sphinx, was Ibrahim, the camel-owner. With the tail of his djubbah he was still mopping his dusty brow, wiping away great drops of perspiration, as the chums of Greyfriars came trotting up. The juniors, finding the camel-man there, looked round for the camel and its rider, but nothing was to be seen of either.
They had doubted whether Bunter would have good luck on that camel. Now they no longer doubted.
Ibrahim crawled off the roadside sphinx and salaamed to the donkey-riders as they halted in a bunch. Hassan spoke to him in Arabic, and Ibrahim answered in that tongue at great length and with considerable emphasis. The camel-man was obviously excited about something.
"Gentlemanly lords," said the dragoman, "him say small, fat, lordly gentleman ride away on a camel at gigantic speed, and is seen no more."
"He must have gone on to Karnak," said Harry.
"Ibrahim think him lose," answered Hassan cheerfully. "Think him run away from a road and never come back at any time whatever. Think small, fat lord fall off a camel and break a neck. Yes, sar! Ibrahim want pay for a camel."
"Oh, my hat!"
The juniors stared up the road towards Karnak. A tall column showed against the sky, and round it masses of ruins, like a dismantled city of the dead. There were several passengers to be seen on the road, going to the ruins or coming away from them. But among them there was no Bunter.

But at the speed at which Bunter had been going he could easily have reached Karnak long since, and the Removites hoped that he had done so.
Ibrahim waved excited hands, and talked Arabic. Evidently he was very anxious about his camel. Translated by Hassan, he explained, with voluble earnestness, that that camel was a very precious camel. Such a camel was not to be equalled among all the camels from the Red Sea to Morocco. It was his means of livelihood, his favourite and his pet, his father and his mother and, sister and brother; in fact, all his family. It was a camel that he would not have lost for uncounted piastres. But now it was lost, and only backsheesh on a liberal scale could set the matter right. Ten thousand piastres was, according to Ibrahim, a low estimate of the value of that precious camel, but being a particularly honest man, and an example to all camel-drivers in that respect, he would only ask the English lords for that sum. This would reimburse him for the material loss, but leave his grief at the loss of the camel unassuaged. But his grief, it seemed, could be had free of charge.
Hassan translated all this, and more.
Obviously, Ibrahim's' concern was wholly for the camel. He was not thinking of Bunter.
"Ten thousand piastres is a hundred pounds," said Wharton. "Tell him to go to sleep and dream again, Hassan."
"Sar!" roared Ibrahim. "You pay for a camel! Yes! Fat person, sar, he tell me let go a camel. He take away a camel. I lose a camel. I am a ruin! Yes, sar, I am a ruin! You pay for one camel!"
"Tell him he's got to find Bunter, Hassan, and never mind about the camel!" said Bob Cherry.
Hassan put this into Arabic, and the effect on the camel-driver was quite startling. He waved his hands, he shouted, he danced. The donkey-boys screeched with laughter.
"Ten to one Bunter's at Karnak," said Frank Nugent. "We've got to look for him, anyhow. Come on!"
Whack, whack, whack! went the donkey-sticks, and the party trotted on. After them whisked Ibrahim, still waving his hands and roaring. Whether that honest man really believed that his camel was lost the juniors did not know, but they thought it improbable. It was much more probable that he had scented wealth in the party, and wanted to annex some of it. Anyhow, the matter of the camel could be dealt with later. At present they were anxious about Bunter.
Shrieks in Arabic followed them from Ibrahim.
"What is he saying now, Hassan?" asked Harry.
Hassan grinned.
"He say he take five thousand piastres for that most excellent camel, sar, which is lose."
"The price is coming down," grinned Bob Cherry. "Let him rip! By the time we get to Karnak it may be quite a cheap camel."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
The juniors trotted on cheerfully. Falling into the distance behind them, Ibrahim followed on, evidently determined not to lose sight of them.
The juniors arrived at the ruins of Karnak, and halted near the Temple of Khons. Nothing was to be seen of Bunter.
"Now, where's that fat frump?" asked Johnny Bull.
"Goodness knows!"
"Must be somewhere about," said Bob. "It would be like Bunter to sit down in the shade somewhere and leave us to hunt for him."
"Just like him," grunted Johnny Bull. "He would think it funny to let us spend the morning rooting about after him while he was scoffing cakes and sherbet in some shady corner."

"Great and enormous Temple of Khons--" began Hassan. The dragoman was getting down to business. His lordly gentlemen had ridden out to Karnak to see the sights, not to discuss what had become of Bunter.
"Blessed if I know what to do," said Harry. "Ten to one he's somewhere about, and if he isn't, we don't know where to look for him. I think we'd better get on with it and give him a chance to turn up."
"Yaas," assented Lord Mauleverer.
"What do you think, Hassan?" asked Harry.
"Me, sar, me think him little fat gentleman fall off a camel, sar,' said the dragoman. "Him walk to Karnak afterwards. Yes!"
"That's about it," said Harry.
And the juniors started to explore Karnak.
They had no doubt that the camel had dropped Bunter somewhere between Luxor and the ruins, and that he would come rolling in on foot sooner or later. They decided to give him till lunch, anyhow. If Bunter did not turn up for lunch, certainly there would be grounds for alarm. Only something of a serious nature could possibly keep the Owl of the Remove away from a meal.
There was plenty to be seen at Karnak, and Hassan's sing-song voice never ceased as he pointed out its wonders: The great Temple of Khons, the Temple of Epet, the hippopotamus goddess; the vast Temple of Amun, in which Hassan pointed out a gigantic relief of the Battle of Kedesh. This rather interested the juniors, as Lord Mauleverer's scarab had once been an amulet worn by the warrior A-Menah at that ancient battle in Syria. Then they visited the Temple of Ptah, and more temples and pylons than they could have counted, and by lunchtime, as Bob Cherry remarked, they had done a good morning's work.
But Bunter had not turned up!
If the camel had dropped him anywhere near Karnak, Bunter had had time to arrive, even at his usual snail's pace. And the juniors began to wonder whether, after all, there had been an accident.
At the same time they knew it was quite likely that Bunter had stopped somewhere to feed, especially as he had borrowed a handful of piastres from Lord Mauleverer that morning.
If he had stopped to feed, it was highly probable that he had stopped to nap after the feed.
And they knew their Bunter too well to suppose that he would care two straws whether they were alarmed or not.
In these circumstances they did not feel disposed to be unduly alarmed. Lunch had been brought in a basket, and they sat down under a shady acacia-tree to dispose of it. Ibrahim hovered on the horizon; but whenever he came near, Hassan volleyed Arabic at him and drove him off again. Every now and then a shout from him reached the juniors.
"Pay for a camel! Yes, oh, yes! Pay for a camel! You pay 2,000 piastres for a camel that is lose!"
"Getting cheaper," grinned Bob Cherry. "We shall get that jolly old camel at a bargain in the long run."
The juniors lunched, and rested in the fiercest heat of the Egyptian day. When it was time to move again Hassan was keen to recommence on the wonders of Karnak, of which his lordly gentlemen had by no means seen all. But the juniors were getting worried about Bunter now.
"Better give Karnak a miss, and look for him," said Harry. "If the fat chump's got lost he's got to be found. Hassan can inquire along the road; lots of natives about, and anyone who has seen Bunter will remember him-"
"You bet!" grinned Bob. "They don't often see a circumference like Bunter's. Let's get after the howling ass!"
And the juniors, remounting the donkeys, rode back on the road towards Luxor, Hassan inquiring of innumerable natives for news of a small, fat

Faringhee on a runaway camel-and very soon picking up news. Plenty of people had seen Bunter on his wild career-indeed, he seemed to have astonished all the natives between Luxor and Karnak.
Behind the juniors, as they trotted away, trotted Ibrahim, evidently determined not to lose sight of them. His voice formed a sort of accompaniment to the thudding of the donkeys' hoofs.
"You pay for a camel! Yes, sar! Oh, yes! Pay for one camel which is lose! Wahyat-en-nabi! Shall you not pay for a camel? You pay 1,000 piastres for a camel! "
"Cheaper and cheaper!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Price still coming down, you fellows. He'll be giving us that camel at the finish!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
The juniors had little doubt that the camel, after getting shot of its rider, would go home.
Indeed, the fact that Ibrahim had brought the indemnity down to 1,000 piastres-which was only ten pounds-rather indicated that he did not really expect to lose that valuable camel.
Anyhow, they were not bothering about the camel now; Bunter was enough to bother about.
They trotted on, with Ibrahim trotting and perspiring behind, his voice coming plaintively every few minutes:
"You pay for a camel! O protectors of the poor, I think you pay for a camel! By the beard of the Prophet, you pay for a camel!"

CHAPTER TEN

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSSOR!

PLOP, plop, plop, plop!
"Oooooogh!"
Billy Bunter liked oranges. But he liked them taken internally; now he was taking them externally, in a shower.
Bunter hardly knew what had happened. His parting with the runaway camel had been sudden and surprising. He found himself sitting on the earth, with broken branches of orange-trees trailing round him, and dislodged oranges falling on his head. He roared, he spluttered, and he gasped.
His first impression was that he had been smashed into several pieces. That impression proved to be unfounded. It dawned upon him that he was still in one piece, and that nothing had happened to him except a bump and a shaking. Slowly his breath came back, and he blinked round him, wondering dismally where he was.
Obviously he was nowhere near Karnak; the camel had covered a considerable distance since leaving the road, following the dusty track that led away among maize-fields and plantations and irrigating canals.
The camel was gone; there was no chance of remounting his fiery, untamed steed-not that Bunter would have re-mounted him at any price. Bunter did not like walking, but he would have walked miles and miles rather than have perched himself on that camel's hump again.
"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.
He sat and gasped for breath for quite a long time. Oranges ceased to plop on him. They lay thickly around him on the earth. They were ripe, red oranges, and as soon as he realised that he was not hurt, and had recovered his wind, Bunter helped himself to the juicy fruit. The camel had hurled him into the orange plantation-and he might really have landed in less attractive quarters. There was solace in scoffing the oranges, and Billy Bunter was soon surrounded by pips and peel. He had to find his

way back somehow. But there was plenty of time for that; he wanted a rest first. And the oranges were good.
Bunter was on his tenth orange, when a figure in turban and djubbah appeared in the plantation, coming along through the rows of orange-trees.
Bunter blinked at the newcomer.
It was a native-no doubt he worked on the plantation, or perhaps it was the proprietor.
Bunter hoped that he would be able to speak English, and tell him where he was and how to get away.
The native spotted him under the trees and came quickly towards him. As he approached, something familiar in his aspect struck Bunter.
He had seen that dark-skinned man before somewhere.
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as he recognised him.
It was the orange merchant of the Nile, to whom Bunter had handed that bad Egyptian "quid." Bunter had landed in the orange plantation belonging to Mustapha!
Mustapha stared down at him, evidently recognising the fat Faringhee with whom he had done business on the dahabiyeh. The expression that came over his dark face made Bunter shudder.
"You-teef! " said Mustapha, pointing a brown and somewhat dirty forefinger at the fat Owl. "You steal oranges! Yes!"
"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.
He had "scoffed" the oranges that lay thick about him without giving a single thought to the fact that they were obviously private property. Mustapha really was not in the orange business for the purpose of supplying a fat Faringhee with oranges for nothing.
"Teef!" roared Mustapha.
Bunter scrambled up.
"I-I-I say--"
"You steal oranges!" roared Mustapha. "Yes! You give bad, naughty pound for oranges, and you come steal! Yes! Teef!"
"Oh, draw it mild!" gasped Bunter. "I'll pay for the blessed oranges! I say, I never came here; I fell off a camel--"
"You pay!" said Mustapha grimly. "Yes! I think! You pay backsheesh! Oh! Yes! By the beard of the Prophet, yes! I think!"
He turned his head and shouted to someone as yet unseen in the plantation. Bunter did not understand Arabic, but he fancied that he caught the word "kourbash." He was aware that kourbash implied a stick. Evidently it was time for Bunter to go!
He made a strategic movement to depart while Mustapha's head was turned. But the orange-grower seemed to have eyes in the back of his head. He spun round, jumped at Bunter, and grasped him by the shoulder. The fat Owl gave a yell of terror.
"Ow! Leggo! I-I wasn't going to--"
"You stay on the spot!" grinned Mustapha. "Yes! You pay backsheesh, and you take stick! Oh! Yes!"
A dark-skinned "fellah" came through the trees with a stick in his hand. He handed the stick to Mustapha. Billy Bunter eyed it, with deep apprehension.
"I-I-I say--" he gasped.
"You pay backsheesh!"
Bunter fumbled in his pockets. Fortunately, he had borrowed a lot of piastres from the long-suffering Mauly that morning. He was able to pay-and oranges were cheap on the Nile. A few piastres ought to have settled the matter. Bunter held out a fat hand with a dozen piastres in it.
"There you are!" he gasped.

Mustapha accepted the piastres, stared at them, sniffed contemptuously, and slipped them into some recess of his djubbah.
"More backsheesh!" he snapped.
"Look here, I've jolly well paid you!" howled Bunter indignantly. "I'm not going to pay you any more! See? Here, I say, keep that stick away, you cheeky devil!" yelled Bunter.
"You pay more backsheesh!"
Billy Bunter fished out a dozen more piastres.
They followed the others into the dingy djubbah, and the brown hand was held out for more.
"Look here--" gasped Bunter, in dismay.
"You pay more backsheesh!" roared Mustapha. "You steal oranges! Yes! You teef! You pay backsheesh!"
Mustapha held out his left hand for the backsheesh. He flourished the stick in his right.
"Oh lor'! " gasped Bunter.
There was no help for it. Evidently Mustapha had a very bitter recollection of that deal in oranges on the Nile. In any case, Mustapha would doubtless have extracted the uttermost backsheesh from any Faringhee whom he had discovered trespassing in his plantation and pinching the oranges. But in Bunter's case, he had an impression that he was dealing with an even bigger rogue than himself. Bunter had "done" him on the Nile-and Mustapha was accustomed to "doing" Faringhees, not to being done by them. This unexpected meeting was a sheer satisfaction to Mustapha. The satisfaction was all on his side!
Bunter handed over more piastres. The flourishing stick was not to be argued with.
"More backsheesh!" rapped Mustapha.
"Oh, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "Oranges ain't worth much here-"
"More backsheesh!" roared Mustapha.
"I've given you three hundred piastres, you awful beast!" yelled Bunter.
"More backsheesh!"
"Look here-Yaroooooh!"
The stick cracked on Bunter's fat shoulders.
"You give more backsheesh!" shouted Mustapha. "Yes! You teef! Yes!"
"Oh lor'! " groaned Bunter.
More piastres were handed over. It dawned on Bunter that the Arab merchant intended to take all he had about him. It was sheer robbery; but the hapless fat Owl had placed himself in the wrong. A fellow who passed bad money and was caught "pinching" oranges in a plantation had little sympathy to expect from the law if he laid a complaint at Luxor.
Bunter did not know how the law would regard the transaction; but he felt that he would be misunderstood, as usual. Anyhow, there was no law on the spot. Mustapha was on the spot with a big stick in his hand!
"More backsheesh!" hooted Mustapha.
Bunter groaned and went through his pockets.
He had "touched" Mauly for a thousand piastres that morning. Exactly a thousand piastres passed over to Mustapha. Still he was not satisfied.
"More backsheesh!" he howled threateningly.
"Oh crikey! I haven't any more!" wailed Bunter. "I've given you all I have, you beast!"
Mustapha scanned him keenly. He flourished the stick. He realised that he had taken all the fat Faringhee had.
As there was no more backsheesh to come, it was time for the stick to be featured in the programme.
Whack, whack!
"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "Oh crikey! Keep off, you beast! You beast! -- Whoop!"

Whack, whack, whack!
"You teef!" grinned Mustapha. "You give naughty money-you steal oranges! I, Mustapha, beat a teef with stick! Yes!"
Whack, whack, whack! Billy Bunter ran for his life.
After him plunged Mustapha, with the stick still whacking. Mustapha seemed to be quite enjoying himself.
Whack, whack!
"Yaroooooooop!"
Bunter burst out of the plantation into the dusty lane. Mustapha followed on. Bunter ran-and Mustapha ran! The stick whacked and whacked!
Mustapha seemed to fancy Bunter a donkey and himself a donkey-boy! Bunter put on a burst of speed, panting and perspiring as he flew. Whack, whack, whack, whack, came the stick behind as he raced.
"Teef! Yes! I beat a teef!" chanted Mustapha, as he whacked. "Very naughty teef! I beat a teef with stick! Yes!"
Whack, whack, whack!
"Oh crikey! Oh lor'! Help! Whoooooop!"
The hapless Owl of the Remove was suffering for his sins. The way of the transgressor was hard! A licking from Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars was nothing to this!
Whack, whack, whack!
"Yow-ow-ow! Stoppit! Yooooop!"
Mustapha stopped at last. Probably it was only because he was out of breath. He grinned, tucked the stick under his arm, and walked back to his oranges.
Billy Bunter plugged desperately on, still yelling. But he realised at last that he was no longer pursued, and he threw himself down in the shade of a group of date-trees by the wayside, and gasped and groaned and groaned and gasped, as if he would never leave off gasping and groaning.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LOST!

"OH lor'!" groaned Billy Bunter.
He wiped the streaming perspiration from his face and swatted his millionth fly.
He wondered dismally where he was.
He was somewhere in Egypt! He knew that!
But that was about all he knew.
After resting under the date-trees for an hour or so the fat Owl had started on his homeward way-or, at least, what he hoped was his homeward way. Karnak was somewhere, and Luxor was somewhere else, and so was the Nile! The sight of any of the three would have been welcome to Bunter. But he did not see any of them.
He had a horrid misgiving that perhaps he was wandering away from them. Tramping along a narrow dusty track, he did not know where it led, but he was fairly certain that it was not the same track by which Ibrahim's camel had carried him that morning.
Fields of maize, plantations of oranges, and other fruits, endless tiny canals, date-palms, and bunches of acacias, met his view as he plugged on; but Bunter had no use for them. From the bottom of his fat heart he repented him of having mounted that detestable camel to Luxor. But repentance, as is usually the case, came too late!
Bunter was lost-hopelessly lost-and it was frightfully hot, and the flies were innumerable.
He streamed with perspiration as he plugged dismally on.

It was useless to question the natives he spotted in his wanderings. They did not speak a word of English; and he did not speak a word of Arabic. He longed for the sight of a white face, but though there were plenty of tourists at Luxor and Karnak, they were apparently keeping to the beaten tracks, in the way of tourists; Bunter did not see any of them.
Matters would have been better if he had had money in his pockets. By holding up a handful of piastres and saying "Luxor," he might have found a guide. But the iniquitous Mustapha had taken care of that! Bunter had not a single piastre in his possession.
He had tried to ask his way once or twice, and one good-natured "fellah," comprehending that he wanted to get to Luxor, had pointed across the fields-which was not of much use to Bunter. A handful of piastres might have induced the man to leave his work and guide the fat Owl; but once more Bunter found himself up against the selfishness of human nature. The Egyptian fellaheen seemed to have business of their own to attend to, and no time to attend to Bunter's.
It was getting too hot for further exertions.
Bunter was hungry by this time; but even the hope of lunch could not keep him going in the tropical heat of midday.
He blinked round through his big spectacles for a shelter from the sun, to take a rest.
At the corner of a field of waving dhurra, close by a wide-spreading acacia, he spotted a shed.
It had a doorway, but no door, and Bunter limped into it, gasping with relief as he got out of the glare of the sun.
Big wicker baskets were stacked up one side of the shed. No doubt they were used for the packing of agricultural products; but they were empty now. Bunter blinked dismally round the shed. It was a shelter from the sun, but that was all. Had there been anything of an edible nature in the baskets Bunter would have been comforted. But they were empty.
"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.
He blinked out of the open doorway. There was no one in sight. A dusty donkey-track ran from the shed, past the acacias and the maize fields, probably in the direction of a road. But no one was to be seen.
There was cultivation-the close, rich cultivation of Egypt-all round Bunter; but he might as well have been in the desert, so far as human beings were concerned. Had there been a native at hand, Bunter could have announced that he was hungry by the language of signs. But there was no one at hand to whom he could make that important and pressing announcement.
Still, it was something to be out of the fierce glare of the sun. The fat Owl stretched himself on the earthen floor, pillowed his head on a fat arm, and went to sleep.
Bunter did not think much of Egypt and its customs; but there was one Eastern custom that appealed to him-the midday snooze! That custom struck Bunter as solid horse-sense!
He slept and snored.
Had any Egyptian fellaheen come near the shed they might have been surprised to hear a sound resembling the rumble of distant thunder, and might have fancied that a storm was brewing on the banks of the Nile. But the spot remained deserted, and Bunter snored unheard.
He might have snored on till sunset; but it was the inner Bunter that woke him. There was an aching void in Bunter. Since breakfast he had had nothing but Mustapha's oranges. The heat of the day was over when he awoke, and he awoke frightfully hungry!
He sat up, rubbed his sleepy eyes, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, swatted flies, and groaned.
"Oh lor'!" said Bunter.

He rose wearily to his feet. He was hungry-famished-ravenous! It was like his awful experience on the dahabiyeh over again! He rolled to the open doorway and blinked out.
"Beasts!" groaned Bunter.
The Greyfriars fellows, of course, were mooning about Karnak with the dragoman, staring at idiotic temples and tombs, instead of looking for Bunter as they ought to have been. Or if they were looking for him, they hadn't found him, which was just as bad. Not even a beastly native was to be seen.
That shed, no doubt, was used for something or other; but nobody seemed to be using it now!
Nothing met Bunter's view but a dusty track, scattered acacias, and endless, moving maize.
The fierce heat of the day was over; but it was still hot-very hot! Bunter was extremely unwilling to recommence his wanderings, with yawning emptiness in his fat inside. But he had to get something to eat!
If only some beastly native would have turned up-- Bunter felt that even a bunch of dates would save his life!
"Oh, good!" he ejaculated suddenly.
A dingy turban showed over the waving maize.
It was coming in the direction of the shed.
Bunter blinked at it eagerly. It was a "beastly native" at last. The man in the turban came in sight-and Bunter gave a convulsive jump, and backed farther into the shed. It was not one of the "fellaheen" who worked in the fields. It was an Arab who was coming towards the shed. It was an Arab that Bunter knew. Well he remembered that hard, hawkish face-the face of Yussef, the Arab desperado, in the service of Kalizelos, the Greek. Any other Arab-excepting Hamza-would have been welcome to Bunter's eyes. But the sight of the hawk-faced ruffian almost froze him with terror.
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.
He fairly bounded away from the door. The ruffian had not seen him-and Bunter did not mean to be seen, if he could help it. This was the ruffian who had attacked Lord Mauleverer in the hotel at Cairo, weeks ago, and whom Bunter had smitten on the head with a stool. He did not expect Yussef to have forgotten that incident.
The thought of being cornered by the ferocious rascal almost curdled his blood.
The man was coming to the shed! Bunter could hear his footsteps now. No doubt Yussef had been with Kalizelos when he crept on the dahabiyeh the previous night, and was hanging about the vicinity, probably wondering what had become of his master-perhaps spying on the Greyfriars party. If he entered the shed and found Bunter there-- Bunter remembered the dagger hidden under the ruffian's galabieh, and shuddered.
He backed out of sight behind the stack of baskets against the wall. There was plenty of cover. Certainly, Yussef was not likely to suspect that he was there if he did not see him.
Bunter palpitated and waited and listened.
The footsteps came nearer.
If they passed the shed--
But they did not pass the shed. They came in at the open doorway.
Billy Bunter suppressed his breathing.
Only the stack of wicker baskets stood between him and the savage Arab-a desperate outcast, to whom his life would have been no more than a mosquito's.
What did the beast want there? What could be his business in that lonely shed, far from all habitations? Evidently he had some business there, for he did not go.

Bunter heard him sit down, leaning back against the pile of baskets. The wicker baskets creaked as he leaned on them, and Bunter barely suppressed a gasp. A scent of smoke came to him.
The Arab was smoking cigarettes. From where he sat he faced the open doorway. It dawned on Bunter, at last, that the lonely shed was a place of appointment-that Yussef was waiting for someone to join him there-as likely as not the scarred ruffian Hamza. Perhaps the outcasts were camping in that shed, while they waited for news of their missing master. Bunter could have groaned at the thought. But he did not dare to groan. He crouched in the shadowy recess behind the baskets, and stilled his breathing, while the hawk-faced Arab, little dreaming that he was there, sat and smoked and watched the sunny, dusty track winding away among the maize fields.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HUNTING BUNTER!

"LORDLY sars, here we go turning on!" said Hassan, probably meaning "turning off."
The Greyfriars fellows had reached the spot where Bunter's camel had turned off the road that morning. Three or four dark-skinned fellaheen, working in the fields, answered Hassan's inquiries, bawled in Arabic. It had not been at all difficult to pick up news of Bunter, so far.
Billy Bunter rather prided himself on his distinguished appearance, and flattered himself that he was worth a second glance anywhere. Undoubtedly he was distinguished enough to draw a second, and even a third and fourth glance; but the other fellows believed that it was his width that did it! Anyhow, the juniors found that quite a lot of people had seen a fat Faringhee careering on a runaway camel.
Hassan pointed along the dusty way with his stick. The juniors looked along the narrow route among the maize fields.
"Him fat lord go this way on a camel!" said Hassan.
"What the thump did he turn off the road for?" grunted Johnny Bull. "What the dickens did even that fat ass want to do that for?"
"Him no want, sar; him camel want," said Hassan.
The juniors grinned. They had no doubt that it was the camel, not Bunter, that had decided to leave the road.
"Well, if the howling ass went that way, that's our way!" said Bob. "Come on. If Bunter hasn't snaffled any lunch, matters will be getting serious. Instead of seeing the ruins of Karnak, we shall see the ruins of Bunter!"
The donkey-riders turned off the road, and the hoofs knocked up dust on the track through the fields. Behind them Ibrahim came puffing and panting, his dusty djubbah blowing out behind him. His voice came plaintively from afar.
"You pay for a camel! O noble gentlemens, you pay for one lost camel! You pay five hundred piastres for one camel which is lose!"
The price of the lost camel was still coming down. Perhaps, now that the juniors were on Bunter's trail, Ibrahim feared that they might sight the lost camel. He was anxious to bag his backsheesh before such a disaster could happen.
But the juniors gave no heed to the voice behind.
Again and again Hassan questioned natives in the fields, in incomprehensible Arabic. Sometimes they grinned as they answered-from which the juniors guessed that they had seen Bunter, and remembered him. Never had there been so many clues to a lost article. The party kept on the trot, assured that they were drawing nearer to Bunter-feeling

strongly inclined to kick him if he had had no serious accident, while prepared to sympathise if he had-which was rather a mixed state of feeling.
They passed through a village, where there was plenty of news of Bunter. The Egyptian villagers had not forgotten how he had scattered infants and ducks and fowls in his wild career.
They passed through the village, and trotted on beyond. They did not expect to find Bunter still on the camel, after all these hours; but evidently he must have stuck on for a considerable time before falling off. Where had he fallen off?-was the question.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly.
"What--"
"The jolly old camel!" roared Bob.
"Oh, my hat!"
"Him camel!" grinned Hassan. "Him lose small fat gentleman! Yes, sar!"
Under an acacia by the wayside sprawled an ungainly form, which the juniors knew at once.
It was the supercilious camel that had sneered at Bunter that morning. It sprawled on its stomach, its long neck extended, taking a rest in the shade of the acacia. No doubt it was waiting for the cool of the evening before it trotted home to Luxor.
"You pay for a camel!" Ibrahim was chanting in the rear, when he broke off suddenly at the sight of the animal under the tree, and ejaculated:
"Bismillah!"
Ibrahim's jaw dropped.
His misgivings had been well-founded! Here was the camel; and Ibrahim's hopes of an indemnity for a lost camel vanished on the spot. It was quite a dismaying encounter for the honest man.
The camel raised his head, and sneered at the donkey-riders. No doubt he recognised the party again; and perhaps he thought that his fat burden was to be landed on him once more.
He dragged himself on his long, ungainly legs, sneering more than ever, and looked inclined to take to his heels. Ibrahim came to a halt, at a distance behind. No doubt he considered that if the camel escaped, he might still claim to be indemnified for a lost camel.
"Catch him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Spread out and surround the brute. We shall want him to stick Bunter on when we pick him up."
"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.
"Catch his rope, somebody."
The head-rope was trailing from the camel.
The donkey-riders spread out to cut off the camel's escape, and Hassan approached him with soothing gestures, to seize the trailing rope.
But the camel declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. He backed, snorting, to the wayside, turned, and plunged into a field of tall, waving maize.
"After him!" shouted Wharton.
The donkey-riders plunged into the maize, leaving the donkey-boys on the road. The camel streaked across the maize field, but on the farther side was a canal, and he stopped and swung round. He rushed back towards the road again, snorting and squealing, with the juniors round him, and Hassan making frantic clutches at the trailing, whisking rope.
"Stop him!" roared Wharton to the donkey-boys.
Hassan yelled in Arabic.
The camel ran out into the road again and one of the Luxor donkey-boys grabbed the head-rope and swung him to a halt. A moment later, Hassan came panting up and grasped the rope, and his stick cracked on the camel, warning him that it was time to cease his antics. The camel evidently understood, for he was submissive at once.

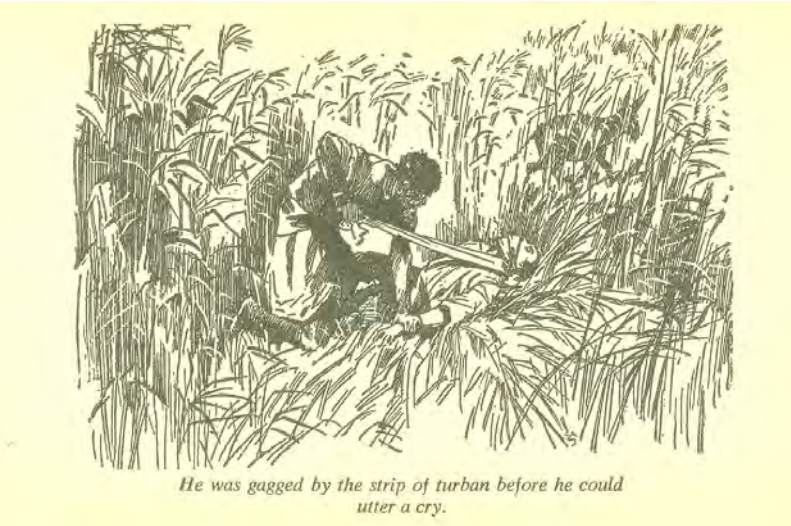
"Got him!" gasped Bob.
"The gotfulness is terrific!"
"Keep him safe, Hassan!"
"Him safe, sar!" panted the dragoman. "Him camel safe as one house, as you say in English."
"You'd better ride him, till we find Bunter," said Wharton. "Come on! Where's Mauly? Mauly!"
"Mauly, you slacker!" roared Bob.
In the excitement of chasing the camel, the juniors had not missed Lord Mauleverer till that moment. Now they observed that his lordship was no longer with them. They stared round in surprise.
The maize was high; but it was not high enough to hide a rider. But there was nothing to be seen of Mauleverer.
"Has the duffer tumbled off his donkey?" exclaimed Nugent.
"Looks like it! Mauly!" roared Bob. "Mauly, you ass!"
"Mauly, Mauleverer! Mauly!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes the moke!"
The donkey-boy to whom Lord Mauleverer's mount belonged was calling and whistling. A riderless donkey dashed out of the waving dhurra, and the donkey-boy caught him by the rein.
"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "Mauly's the best rider of the lot of us, but he's let the donkey throw him off."
"Mauly!" roared Bob.
There was no answer from Lord Mauleverer.
The juniors stared round them in astonishment.
Even if Mauly had been thrown by the donkey, it was hardly to be supposed that he was injured-too severely injured to answer to his friends.
Why he did not answer was a mystery.
"Him noble lord do not come!" said Hassan, puzzled. "Why do not a noble lord come? Mashallah! This I do not understand."
"My hat!" Wharton caught his breath. "If that villain Kalizelos was not a prisoner on the dahabiyeh, I should think--"
"Thank goodness Mauly left him safe on the boat," said Bob. "It can't be that! But what the thump's become of him?"
Harry Wharton set his lips hard. With the scheming Greek a safe prisoner on the dahabiyeh, the juniors had not dreamed of danger. But it was possible, at least, that the Greek's confederates had been watching them. What had happened to Mauleverer in the waving maize field?
"We've got to find him-and at once," said Wharton. "Bunter will have to wait! Hassan, we've got to find Mauleverer."
"Yes, sar! We find a noble lord!" said Hassan. "Oh, yes, sar! Hassan is your dragoman-you trust Hassan!"
Leaving the camel and the donkeys in charge of the donkey-boys, Hassan and the Famous Five plunged into the maize again to seek Lord Mauleverer. But they did not find him-and no answer came to their anxious calling.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HELD BY THE ENEMY!

HAMZA, the scarred Arab, grinned savagely.
Crouching in the tall, thick maize, his knee was on the chest of the schoolboy earl, and he was winding a rag from his turban round and round Mauleverer's head, over his mouth. Lord Mauleverer blinked up at him with dazed eyes.
For some moments Mauly hardly knew what had happened. He had been riding through the maize, not three or four yards from the nearest of his

friends, when a crouching figure leapt at him and dragged him suddenly from the donkey's back-grasping his leg and unhorsing him before he knew that he was being attacked.
The donkey ran on with empty saddle, and Lord Mauleverer sprawled in crushed maize, the scarred Arab kneeling on him, gagging him with the strip of turban before he could utter a cry.
Half-choked by the gag, only able to breathe through his nose, Mauleverer stared dizzily at the savage, scarred face above him.
He could hear the movements of his friends; he heard them go chasing back to the road after the camel. They had not missed him yet. He struggled to throw off the Arab; but the muscular ruffian pinned him down helplessly. In the grip of sinewy hands, his wrists were dragged together and tied fast with another strip of dingy turban.
Bound and gagged, he was powerless in the hands of the scarred ruffian; and he could only wonder what the scoundrel intended. The man could not rise to his feet without revealing his presence in the maize field; yet the fact that he had made Mauly a prisoner showed that it was his object to get him away, if he could.
Hamza lost no time. He was taking a desperate chance, and he had not a second to spare. Once Mauleverer was safely bound and silenced, the Arab moved away on his hands and knees through the maize, dragging the schoolboy earl after him by the collar.



He was gagged by the strip of turban before he could utter a cry.

It was hard going through the rugged maize roots; but the sinewy ruffian never paused a moment, and evidently he cared nothing for the bumping and bruising of the dragging prisoner.
From the direction of the road, shouting voices came to Lord Mauleverer's ears; his friends were calling to him. Even yet he was not fifty yards from them; but he could make no sound or sign in answer. But they would be searching for him through the field in a few minutes at the most-surely he could not be spirited away under the very eyes of his friends.
There was a glistening of water through the maize. It was one of the narrow irrigating canals that cover the cultivated land in Egypt like a network. Mauleverer felt himself pushed over the bank of brown earth, and for a moment he fancied that the scarred ruffian was dropping him into the water. But it was on timber that he fell; and he found himself sprawling in a small boat-a khiassa, as it was called. The scarred Arab plunged in after him, still keeping his head low, and kneeling in the khiassa, he seized a pole and drove it into the shallow water.
The khiassa shot away.

Mauleverer understood now. Either the Arab had the khiassa in readiness, or he knew where to find the boat belonging to the maize farmer.
With swift, strong arms he poled the khiassa away, and it shot past the border of the maize field, into another canal that ran by the edge of a grove of date-palms. Swiftly, silently, the scarred Arab poled on, following canal after canal, Lord Mauleverer watching him helplessly. He had no hope that his friends would find him now. If they were still calling to him, their voices had died away far behind.
Several times from the high paths along the canals brown faces glanced down at the khiassa.
The banks of the canals are the usual paths in the cultivated fields of Egypt; and Lord Mauleverer sighted more than a dozen fellaheen, as the khiassa was poled rapidly on. But he could not call out to them; and they gave him no heed. The khiassa passed them so swiftly that they probably did not observe that the Faringhee was a prisoner in the boat; and in any case, the timid Egyptian fellaheen would have been very unlikely to look for trouble with the black-browed, savage-looking Arab, with his harsh face disfigured by a knife-cut.
The canal narrowed and shallowed, and there was no further way for the khiassa. Hamza leaped ashore at a point where a path opened in a field of date-trees, and dragged Lord Mauleverer after him.
Out of sight of the canal he threw his prisoner to the ground among the trees. He grinned down at him.
Still he did not speak. But kneeling beside the bound schoolboy, he began to search him.
He grinned with satisfaction as he took possession of a purse which was well supplied with money. But it was evidently not money of which he was in search, though he was glad to get his thievish fingers on it.
Mauleverer knew that it was the scarab he was seeking; and he was glad that he had allowed his friends to persuade him not to carry it about with him. Since the day when the Greek had so nearly seized it in Cairo, the Famous Five had promised Mauly the ragging of his life if he carried it in his pocket again; and Mauly was glad now that he had yielded to that gentle persuasion.
It did not take the scarred man long to ascertain that the Golden Scarab was not to be found.
He spoke at last, in English.
"Unbelieving son of a dog, where is the scarab?"
Mauleverer could not have answered if he had wished to. Hamza rose to his feet, stared round him, and listened for several minutes. Then he knelt by the schoolboy earl again, and unwound the rag from his mouth, at the same time pressing the edge of a knife to his throat as a warning.
"A curse on all unbelievers!" said Hamza. "Speak low, son of fifteen thousand dogs! One cry, and with this knife I will send you to Shaitan, who waits for all infidels! Where is the scarab?"
"Where you won't find it, you thief!" answered Lord Mauleverer, gasping.
"Listen, unbeliever! The Greek will give twenty thousand piastres for the Scarab of A-Menah! Is the life of a Faringhee worth half so much? Speak!"
The harsh, brown, disfigured face blazed with ferocity. But there was only cool scorn in Mauleverer's answering look.
"Did you leave the scarab on the dahabiyeh? Speak!"
"Yaas."
"Dog of an unbeliever!" The scarred ruffian was evidently savagely disappointed. "To me it is worth twenty thousand piastres, and with such a sum I could make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Son of dogs and pigs!" The ruffian broke into Arabic, and, without understanding what he said, Mauleverer could not fail to be aware that he was cursing in that language so fluent in curses.

But he spoke again in English at last. "But you, at least, are in my hands, and the Greek will pay well for you, for it is his plan to ransom you with the scarab. You, dog of a kafir, will remain in a safe place till Kalizelos comes."
With the words he wound the strip of turban again over Mauleverer's mouth, gagging him. He dragged the schoolboy earl to his feet, and signed to him to walk.
Mauleverer hesitated a moment. A savage blow that made him reel put an end to his hesitation.
"Dog of a kafir, go! " snarled the scarred Arab.
Mauleverer's eyes glinted. But he was helpless, and he moved on, with the Arab's grip on his shoulder.
They wound a way among the date-palms, the Arab's eyes glancing to and fro, watchful as a cat's. It was evident that he knew the country well, and was avoiding roads and paths. Twice, at the sound of footsteps, he dragged Mauleverer into cover, and held him in a savage grip till the footsteps died away.
It was clear that he was heading for some definite object-some den, Mauleverer guessed, where the prisoner would be concealed in safety till he could be handed over to the Greek. It was a comfort to Mauly to reflect that the Greek was a prisoner on board the dahabiyeh, and was not likely to rejoin his confederates. If the scarred man intended to wait till Kalizelos came, he had a long wait ahead of him.
Hamza stopped at last under a shady acacia, and peered out at a path beyond the trees.
The sun was sinking over the Nile, and the gorgeous colours of the Egyptian sunset glowed over the fields. For several minutes the scarred Arab watched the path, then, satisfied at last that the coast was clear, he left the acacias, and dragged his prisoner along the dusty track.
Near the trees was a shed, with an open doorway, at the corner of a field, and Mauleverer could see dimly the shape of a man in a dingy galabieh squatting inside.
"Faster!" snarled Hamza, dragging at him savagely.
He was anxious to get his prisoner out of the open.
Lord Mauleverer stumbled into the shed, dragged by the Arab's rough hand. The man who was leaning on the pile of baskets, smoking, sprang to his feet with an exclamation, staring at Mauleverer in astonishment.
Mauleverer's heart sank as he recognised Yussef, the hawk-faced Arab who had attacked him in the Cairo hotel, and who had kept him a prisoner in the lost tomb at the Pyramids. Yussef stared at him, evidently surprised to see him in the hands of his confederate.
The two Arabs spoke together rapidly in their own tongue. Yussef was grinning with satisfaction. Hamza's arrival with the prisoner had been a surprise, and evidently a pleasant surprise to him. Lord Mauleverer sat down on the earthen floor, and leaned back wearily against the baskets.
The Arabs continued to talk in animated tones, and several times Mauly caught the name of Kalizelos. He could make a guess at what they were discussing. Now that the owner of the Golden Scarab was a prisoner in their hands they were anxious to see their master, and receive their reward from him.
But it was fairly clear that they were in total ignorance of what had happened to the Greek.
They had seen and heard nothing of him since they had pushed off from the dahabiyeh at the sound of alarm in the night. They could have ascertained easily enough that he had not been handed over to the police at Luxor; but they were not likely to guess that Mauleverer had taken the law into his own hands, and locked the rascal in a room on the dahabiyeh. There was little doubt that they supposed that the Greek had escaped from the

dahabiyeh after the alarm, and that they were expecting to get into touch with him again.
The talk was long, incomprehensible to Mauleverer, though he thought he could guess its purport from the expressions on the Arabs' faces, and the frequent repetition of the name of Kalizelos. Many times the two brown-skinned rascals looked out of the shed as if half-expecting to see the Greek coming, at which Mauleverer smiled inwardly. The clatter of Arabic ceased at last, and Yussef left the shed, and Mauleverer watched him disappear in the distance along the dusty track in the sunset.
Hamza turned to him.
With a length of cord he bound the schoolboy's ankles. He grinned down at him savagely as he knotted the cord.
"Here you wait!" he grunted. "Yussef will find the Greek-he will find him at Luxor-and he will come. Here you wait for Kalizelos."
And Lord Mauleverer, from the bottom of his heart, was thankful that Konstantinos Kalizelos was a safe prisoner on board the dahabiyeh, under lock and key, and watch and ward.

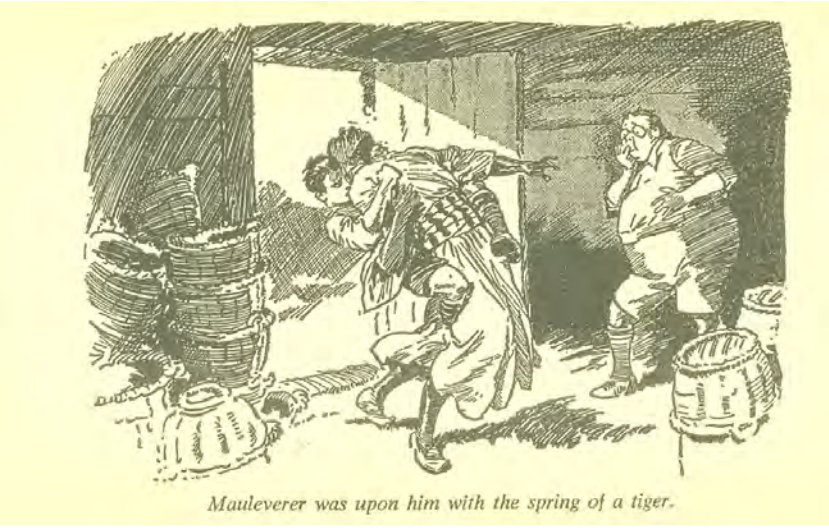
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

BUNTER ON THE SPOT!

BILLY BUNTER squatted in his shadowy recess between the stacked wicker-baskets and the wall, breathing with care, and hardly daring to squash the enterprising flies that had followed him into his nook.
It seemed to William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove that this was the limit-the very outside edge. He was hungry-fearfully hungry-but he had almost forgotten it in his terror for his fat skin. It was hot and stuffy behind the baskets, and he hardly dared to stir as insects crawled over him. But heat and flies and beetles, even the aching void in his capacious inside mattered nothing in comparison with the danger from the Arabs.
Bunter had hoped that Yussef would go. Instead of that the scarred Arab had come. Bunter listened in terror to the voices in growling Arabic. He had an impression that there was a third party in the lonely shed; but he heard only two voices.
At last, to his intense relief, he heard Yussef depart, and hoped to hear the other beast follow. Once the coast was clear the fat Owl would not have lingered. But the other beast did not follow. Bunter heard a rustling, fumbling sound, but he did not know that the scarred Arab was binding a prisoner's feet. But he heard Hamza's words to Lord Mauleverer, and knew that there was a prisoner in the shed. It was a comfort to Bunter, as well as to Lord Mauleverer, to remember that Kalizelos was safe, and that Yussef, who had gone to seek him at Luxor, would certainly not find him there. There was no danger of the Greek arriving.
That was a comfort; but the scarred Arab obviously intended to remain and wait for Kalizelos with his prisoner. Yussef was gone, but the other beast was in his place, and Bunter groaned silently-he dared not groan aloud.
He guessed that the prisoner was Mauleverer, and no doubt he would have felt rather concerned about him had not all his concern been required for his own fat self. How was he going to get out of this? That was the pressing question that filled Bunter's fat thoughts.
Fortunately the Arabs had not suspected for a moment that anyone was hidden in the shed.

Evidently it was their meeting-place, at a safe distance from the town-perhaps belonging to one of them, or hired from its owner for a few piastres.
It was not likely to occur to them that a fat and fatuous fellow who had lost his way had taken shelter there, and dodged out of sight behind the baskets. That was fortunate for Bunter, for a single glance behind the stack of wicker baskets would have revealed him.
Hamza had sat down, cross-legged, on the floor, and was waiting with the impassive patience of an Oriental for the return of his confederate. It was only a few miles to Luxor; but Bunter knew, if Hamza did not, that the hawk-faced Arab was not likely to return soon.
The sun was setting; crimson and gold streamed in at the open doorway. It looked as if Bunter was booked for the night-if he was not discovered sooner. Every now and then there was a creaking of the baskets as Lord Mauleverer, leaning wearily on them, stirred. Every creak sent a thrill of terror to Bunter's fat heart. If the baskets toppled over and revealed him--
Billy Bunter heard a movement from the Arab at last. Hamza rose from his crossed legs, and stepped out of the shed, and stood looking along the dusty track by the acacias. Billy Bunter's fat heart beat. If the beast was gone--
Bunter was getting desperate now. He stirred at last and shifted his position so that he could look from behind the piled baskets. If the Arab was gone, it was an opportunity not to be lost.
He put his head round the stack of baskets as cautiously as a tortoise poking its head from its shell, and blinked across the shed.
"Oh lor'!" breathed Bunter, in despair.
The scarred Arab was standing outside the doorway, fortunately with his back to the shed.
He was watching for his confederate to return from Luxor, little dreaming of the eyes, and the spectacles, that were fastened on the back of his dusty djubbah.
Bunter's head popped back again like a tortoise's.
He suppressed a groan.
The beast was not gone. He did not intend to go. He was only watching for the other beast.
There was a sound of footsteps-receding!
Bunter hoped again! Again he peered out from cover.
Hamza was walking slowly down the dusty track, towards the road which it joined at a distance. Apparently, he was going to look up the road to see whether Yussef and the Greek were coming.
Bunter's heart thumped.
It was a chance-if only he could dodge out of the shed, and escape before the ruffian turned back.
Farther and farther went Hamza; without looking back once; there was nothing to look back for-so far as Hamza knew.
Billy Bunter took his courage in both hands-such as it was-and made up his fat mind. He had only to get to the doorway, dodge round the shed, and he would be out of sight, if the Arab did look back. A few moments--!
In his deep concern for himself, the fat Owl had quite forgotten, for the moment, that there was a prisoner in the shed, and that it was most likely Mauleverer. He tiptoed from his hiding-place.
Lord Mauleverer, leaning on the baskets, heard a sound behind him, but did not heed it.
But, as a fat figure stole out into his line of vision, Mauleverer stared at it with eyes opening wide.

Of all the dwellers in the land of Egypt, Billy Bunter was the last he would have expected to see at that moment. The sight of Mark Antony or Cleopatra could hardly have astonished him more.
He hardly believed his eyes as they fell on the well-known fat figure and podgy face and shining spectacles of the Owl of the Remove.
Bunter, his eyes fixed on the doorway and the Arab beyond, did not look round. Mauleverer could not speak. But he gave a convulsive wriggle to attract the fat Owl's attention, and the baskets creaked and swayed.
Billy Bunter, startled, uttered a fat squeak of alarm, and blinked round.
"Oh!" he gasped. "Mauly!"
The gag silenced Mauleverer, but his look was eloquent. How Bunter was there, was an utter mystery; but he was there, and even Bunter-now that he was reminded of Mauly's unimportant existence-could hardly have scuttled off and left him to it. For a second he blinked at Mauleverer in dismay and doubt; and then he rolled to him. Where Mauly sat was out of sight of the open doorway, so Bunter was now out of view of the Arab if he looked back at the shed.
Billy Bunter was trembling from head to foot.
Every moment he dreaded to hear the returning footsteps of the Arab. But he saw that Mauleverer could not stir, and he fumbled for his pocket-knife. He fumbled in the wrong pockets first, as a matter of course, but he found the knife at last, and opened it. It was blunt-that was a matter of course, also. But he sawed desperately at Mauly's bonds with the blunt blade.
Mauly's hands came free, and he tore the gagging strip of turban from his mouth, and gasped in breath. He jerked the knife from Bunter, and cut his feet loose.
"By gad!" breathed Mauly.
"C-c-come on!" stuttered Bunter. "C-c-come on, q-q-quick! That b-b-beast may come back any minute."
Mauly rose to his feet, stretching his cramped limbs. Bunter clutched him frantically by the arm.
"C-c-come on!" he gasped.
"Keep cool, old fat bean," said Mauleverer.
"There's two of us now, even if the brute comes back."
"You silly idiot! I'm going!"


Mauleverer was upon him with the spring of a tiger.

Bunter rolled to the doorway, while Mauleverer stood rubbing his limbs where the bonds had been knotted. The fat Owl peered out cautiously, and popped back, almost fainting with terror.
"He--he--he's coming!"

"Yaas?" yawned Mauleverer.
"We--we're done! Oh lor'! Oh crikey! It's too late-"
"Keep cool!"
Hamza's footsteps could be heard on the dusty, sandy track. He had looked along the road, and failed to see a sign of Yussef returning, and he was coming back to the shed. Billy Bunter groaned in despair. By staying to help Mauleverer he had lost his chance of dodging out of sight. Emerging from the shed now meant stepping into full view of the returning Arab.
"Keep cool, old bean," whispered Mauleverer. "We'll snaffle him as he comes in."
"Oh lor'!"
"Back up, Bunter! We've got to scrap now, to save our bacon!"
"Oooooogh!"
Bunter did not look much like scrapping.
Mauleverer, cool as ice, stepped to the side of the open doorway. Bunter rolled behind him.
The Arab was coming back, without the remotest suspicion that his prisoner was loose--never dreaming of an attack. Mauleverer's teeth were set, his eyes glinting. There was a chance of dealing with the ruffian, taken utterly by surprise as he would be. And the cool determination of the schoolboy earl helped the hapless Owl to screw up his courage.
The footsteps came closer; the shadow of the Arab fell into the doorway. The next moment he stepped in-and, as he came, Mauleverer was upon him with the spring of a tiger.
One startled howl broke from Hamza as he went over, crashing on the earthen floor.
Mauleverer was upon him.
"Back up, Bunter!" he roared.
"Oh, crikey!"
Hamza, after the first shock of utter surprise, struggled like a wild beast. He had gone down on his back, and Mauly, grasping him fiercely, desperately crashed his head on the hard earth.
The back of Hamza's head hit the earth hard, and the crash dazed him, but he struggled furiously.
"Bunter--" panted Mauleverer.
Crash!
A fat knee, with all Bunter's weight on it, landed on the stomach of the sprawling Arab.
Hamza's struggles ceased on the instant.
He gave one horrible, gasping groan, and lay writhing, with every ounce of wind knocked out of his carcass. His jaw dropped, his eyes bulged, and he gurgled hideously.
Mauleverer panted. '
"Oh, good man! Hook it, old fat bean."
He grasped Bunter by a fat arm, and they dashed out from the shed. Behind them, groans and gasps and gurgles were all that came from Hamza, as he writhed on the floor in anguish.
The scarred ruffian was "hors de combat".
"Buck up, Bunter!"
Bunter did not need bidding. His fat little legs fairly flashed as he flew. Even the slim Mauly had to put it on to keep pace with the terrified Owl. In a couple of minutes they reached the end of the track where it joined the road. Lord Mauleverer gave one glance round him. The setting sun showed him the direction of the Nile-and in that direction lay Luxor-somewhere. He turned into the road, and ran on, with Bunter spluttering at his side. The crimson glare of the sunset was giving place to mauve twilight; and under the gathering shadows they ran and ran and ran.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

UNEXPECTED!

"LORDLY gentlemen, it is a game which is up, as you say in your noble language," said Hassan, the dragoman, somewhat dismally.
The Famous Five were reluctant to admit it, but it was evident that the dragoman was right.
Darkness was falling on the valley of the Nile.
Not a sign had been found of Lord Mauleverer.
For weary hour after hour the juniors and the dragoman had searched by fields and paths and canal banks, but it was in vain. The schoolboy earl had vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up, and there could no longer be any doubt that he had fallen into the hands of a lurking, watching enemy.
It was futile to continue the search after dark, and the Greyfriars fellows gathered in the road again in a dismal group, where the donkey-boys were waiting with the donkeys, and Ibrahim with the camel.
"I-I suppose there's nothing more doing," said Harry Wharton, clenching his hands.
"They've got poor old Mauly--"
"We can't go back to Luxor without him," said Bob.
"My noble sars, we go back to Luxor and utter information to policemans," said Hassan.
"Policemans find rascally persons who lay hands on noble lordship. Yes, sar! Egyptian policemans very good and top-hole policemans."
"We're not going," said Harry. "But I think we'd better send word to Luxor, and get the police on to it. Hassan can go--"
"Me go, sar, on a camel with a prompt dispatch," said the dragoman. "But you, sar, you come also on donkey, sar. What you do here in a dark?"
It was useless to linger, but the chums of the Remove could not make up their minds to return to the dahabiyeh without Mauleverer. They consulted in low tones while the dragoman and the donkey-boys waited. The shadows were falling more thickly, and stars coming out in a sky of dark velvet.
Through the thickening shadows came a sound of footsteps on the road.
Many natives had passed, and Hassan questioned them in the native tongue, but without learning anything of Mauleverer. As for Bunter, the juniors had almost forgotten the lost Owl in their anxiety for Mauly.
Bob Cherry peered along the shadowy road in the direction of the approaching footsteps.
"Here comes somebody," he said. "Hassan may as well ask them. They may have seen something--"
Two shadowy figures loomed up in the gloom.
Bob Cherry's voice evidently reached them.
There was a fat, startled squeak.
"I say, you fellows--"
"Bismillah!" gasped Hassan. "It is the small fat lord!"
"Bunter!" yelled Johnny Bull.
"Thank goodness he's turned up!" said Harry.
"But poor old Mauly-- Why, what-what-what-- Mauly! Is-is-is it you, Mauly?"
There was a chuckle.
"Yaas!"
"I say, you fellows--"
"Mauly!" roared the Famous Five, in utter wonder. They almost fancied that they must be dreaming.
"O day worthy to be marked with a white stone!" ejaculated Hassan. "We find him noble lordship! Yes! Him noble and magnificent lordship is of a

return to sorrowing friends! Inshallah! Wahyat-en-nabi! Him lordship here!"
"Mauly!" gasped Wharton. "Is it you or your ghost, old man?"
Lord Mauleverer chuckled.
"Little me. And jolly glad to see you fellows," he said. "I fancied we were on the right road, and here we are. Sorry you've been bothered, as they say on the telephone. Not my fault, really."
"I say, you fellows--"
"But what-how-- Thank goodness you've turned up. But how--" gasped Nugent.
"I say, you fellows--" .
"Mauly, old bean, we'll keep you on a chain after this!" exclaimed Bob.
"But how the thump---"
"I say, you fellows--"
"Shut up, Bunter!"
"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I'm hungry!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm famished-ravenous! I've had nothing to eat all day!" gasped Bunter. "Is this a time for jaw? Have you got any grub with you? Look here, let's get back to Luxor. Look here, I-I tell you, after I've shaved Mauly's wife-I mean, saved his life--"
"What?" yelled the juniors.
"Great Scott! Did Bunter--"
"Yaas," grinned Lord Mauleverer. "Bunter turned up-goodness knows how-always turnin' up, like a bad penny--"
"Oh, really, Mauly--"
"Let's get goin', dear men. Here's your camel, Bunter. Here's your jolly old camel and your jolly old camel-man--"
"I'm not going to ride that camel again!" roared Bunter. "Keep the beast away! I say, you fellows--"
"Well, this is luck!" said Bob Cherry. "Stick Bunter on my donkey, Hassan. I'll ride the camel. Sure you won't have him, Bunter?"
"Beast!"
It was a joyous party, after all, that rode back under the stars to Luxor.

* * * * *

Kalizelos, the Greek, like a caged tiger in his locked cabin, heard the tramping of feet and the ringing of cheery voices as the Greyfriars party came on board the dahabiyeh. But Bunter's voice was not heard. Billy Bunter had scoffed the remains of the lunch on his way back to Luxor, but he was still ravenous when he arrived on the dahabiyeh, and Bunter made a beeline for the supper table, and his podgy jaws were too busy for speech. For a solid hour Billy Bunter sat and ate and ate and ate, and kept the Nubians busy.
Then he leaned back and smiled. Once more William George Bunter found life worth living.

THE END