

THE JUNGLE RAILWAY!



By
HOWARD
TRACEY

Upon the successful bridging of a jungle river depends the future of the Barongo Railway . . . And success rests with the ability of young Peter Tanner to defeat the scheming of a gun-runner seeking to ruin the railway!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

AT GRIPS WITH A MAN-EATER!

BWANA! Bwana! If the demon lions come again, we will not stop here. They have eaten five of our brothers. Wow! This place is bewitched!"

The angry roars came from the entrance to the thorn-fenced "boma" in the Barongo Railway construction camp, where big Allen Tanner and his young brother Peter faced a terrified gang of Kavirondo "boys."

"They will eat no more, mud-heads!" roared Allen, waving his heavy rifle. "Have I not shot two of the man-eaters? To-night I and the young bwana will sit outside your 'boma' with rifles, and shoot the last one if he dares to come."

The uproar died down.

"But the work on the bridge is too hard, bwana," growled the black head-man, flashing his teeth. "There are not enough of us."

"At dawn to-morrow the construc-

tion train will bring a hundred more 'boys,'" Allen snapped angrily. "Enough! No more talk of desertion, Gobo. I will shoot the last demon."

"Phew! Supper, Peter!" he gasped, swinging round to his young brother. "Then we'll hustle back here and sit up for the man-eater all night, if need be. The 'boys' desertion now would fairly put the lid on the railway and smash the company. We must calm 'em down and keep them together at all costs."

The brothers hurried away from the big "boma," wherein were the thatched huts of the Kavirondo "boys" and Hindu craftsmen, about a hundred in number. Through the deepening dusk they made towards the group of green tents used by themselves and Boss Hanson, guarded at night by armed native sentries.

The swift Congo night was at hand.

All around the large construction camp towered a green wall of jungle, feathery bamboos, queer palms, huge

cedar trees with masses of wild vines and creepers hanging matted from their boughs. Somewhere in the depths of the forest hyenas moaned.

Peter, not long out from school in England, was beginning to grasp the immense difficulties of building a railway in Central Africa. The lad could see the shining metals stretching far away into the gloom between walls of dense jungle. It had taken months to drive that track through from the distant base. Beside it ran the rough road, used at first for motor-lorries.

A glance back showed the part-completed bridge across the Nchanga river, which now lay sunken in its deep bed between high, jungle-clad banks.

The bridge was the main trouble, for it had to be completed in double-quick time. Directly the rains started the river would flood. Then all work on the railway, intended to open up a rich gold region, would be stopped for months.

"It would mean ruin for the company, Peter," Allen, second engineer and gang-boss, said. "The Government contract includes a heavy fine for every day we're overdue completing. The company can't pay it, so it will go bust if the river holds us up. We must bridge it before the rains, which are due in a few days."

Peter mopped his face.

"We'll keep on hustling the boys," the lad said. "It's a thumping good job we've got a hundred more coming up from the base to-morrow."

"It is, old lad," replied Allen. "We've about seven days to finish the bridge. Confound the lions! Boss Hanson is one of the best railway engineers in Africa, but he will be beaten if the 'boys' bolt. They are scared stiff, and would stampede the new lot. But we'll put paid to the last man-eater to-night, by thunder!"

A moment later the brothers

reached the biggest of the three green tents, near which stood a couple of motor-lorries, now little used. They ducked through the doorway and entered. Boss Hanson, the chief engineer, was seated at supper with a gaunt, black-bearded stranger, who wore a khaki shirt and shorts, a revolver in his belt, and who looked like a hunter.

"Hurricane" Hanson—so called because of his driving force—was a broad-shouldered man with a determined jaw. Beside him lay a huge yellow dog the size of a mastiff.

"Hallo, lads! Late for supper," he said in his genial fashion. "This is Mr. Thorp—Sam Thorp, an American hunter. He's camped close here to-night, and just looked in—"

Suddenly Hanson broke off, and his eyes glared as he half rose. Then he crashed forward across the table, scattering crockery and food in all directions.

"What the deuce!" roared Allen, in dismay.

Instantly the brothers sprang towards the stricken man as he rolled to the ground. They lifted him up and placed him on his bed, and Allen was quick to notice that Hanson's face had gone pale and that he breathed stertorously.

"Jungle fever," he said; "or perhaps sunstroke. I never saw anything so rapid before. Quick, Peter, the brandy is in my—"

Peter leaped away, but before he reached the tent door, he stopped with a gasp of horror.

"Look! The dog!"

Allen whirled round. He was in time to see Hanson's great hound, which had just eaten some fallen buck-meat, stagger on its legs. Then abruptly the dog collapsed, quivered, and lay motionless.

"Great guns—poisoned! Hi, hold hard, Mr. Thorp! Not so fast.

"This wants looking into."

With the words the muscular Allen launched himself across the tent, seeing the bearded stranger about to make off. Then things happened like lightning.

Peter saw Sam Thorp duck past Allen, then come for him, tugging at his revolver. Without hesitation the lad dived, collared the man low, and then followed a savage struggle.

"Bully for you, youngster!" cried Allen. "Stick to him!" And he waded in to the help of Peter.

Sam Thorp fought ferociously, with fists and boots. He crashed his knee into Peter's eye, half-blinding him, but not before the lad had wrenched away the man's pistol and sent it flying. Next moment, however, in quick succession, three of Allen's sledge-hammer punches landed on the stranger and stretched him out half-senseless. Allen helped his brother to his feet.

"I'll fix him," Allen said, and snatched up cord from a corner. "See to the boss, Peter. What the deuce is this hunter blackguard's game?"

By his effort to escape, it seemed plain that Sam Thorp had deftly inserted poison into the food on the table. But why? Had he intended to kill both brothers and Boss Hanson? None of them had ever seen the man before, and knew of no enemies. It was a mystery.

Allen lashed the man's ankles and



Peter saw Sam Thorp come for him, tugging at his revolver. Without hesitation the lad dived and collared the man low.

wrists together, and roared for their native cook-boy to come and attend the boss.

"He seems better, old chap," Peter said, holding brandy to Hanson's lips. "He can't have had much of the poison, and he's in no danger."

"Which is lucky for Mr. Thorp," Allen put in grimly. "But this beats me. I'll question the blackguard pretty closely when he comes round."

Allen dragged the half-conscious hunter into a low chair even as the native cook, an old, trusted servant, came running to answer the summons. Then they held a hurried consultation over Hanson, who certainly seemed easier. But the thought that the boss might be unable to continue to direct work on the bridge dismayed both brothers. Every day on the Nchanga river bridge was now vital, with the rainy season at hand.

"That ruffian shall tell us something, anyway," said Allen as he turned towards the captive.

But that moment, from the boys' boma, came a sudden yell :

"Simba ! Simba ! "

The cry rang through the African night, becoming a frantic chorus of howls and screams of terror. High above the pandemonium rose piercing shrieks of agony.

"Great guns ! The man-eater again !" Allen shouted, grabbing up his heavy rifle. "Come on, Peter ! We must get it at all costs. Two rifles are better than one. Never dreamed the brute would show up so soon after dark."

And, ordering the cook-boy to watch the bound prisoner and attend to Hanson, Allen dashed away with Peter at his heels.

The brothers loaded as they ran. Peter thrilled in every nerve as he heard the din from the boma, saw the whole of that thorn-fenced enclosure lit up by torches. The yells of agony told that this was no false alarm. It was evident that the man-eater, the last of a trio that had terrorised the boys for weeks, had actually dared to creep under the bristling fence of thorns to select a victim.

"There he is ! "

It was Allen's voice above the din.

Bang ! Bang !

"Got him ! No ! Look ! "

Peter thrilled with excitement as, in the torch-lit gloom, he glimpsed a writhing black shape, and the bushes thrashing.

Bang ! Bang !

The brothers fired together.

"There—in the shadows ! "

They raced forward, on the alert, seeing a shadowy monster distinctly. Allen had hit the brute once, but it was still intent on removing its victim, gripped between its jaws.

Peter could just make out black trailing limbs, and heard a desperate scream for help as the monster made a bound for the jungle.

"Let him have it !" shouted Allen.

Again their rifles rang out, and whip-like reports awoke the echoes. A deafening roar came from the man-eater, and Peter got a glimpse of the wounded brute dropping its victim—then it charged straight at them !

Like most man-eaters it was mangy, with a thin, scraggy mane, but it was plainly immensely powerful and recklessly bold.

Things happened like lightning. Whipping his rifle to his shoulder, Peter drew trigger, then gasped :

"A misfire ! "

Desperately the lad stood his ground and tore at his rifle-bolt. The brute was almost on him ; he saw its blazing eyes and flashing teeth, and its roars deafened him. Then, just in time, Allen's rifle rang out, and the lion crashed down in a heap, roaring, and clawed the ground for a few moments before lying still.

"Crumbs !" gasped Peter. "That was a narrow shave—"

"Got the last of the brutes !" cried Allen delightedly.

That instant, fresh yells sounded from the boma :

"We go, bwana ! This place is bewitched ! It is full of demons ! "

The brothers spun round as a

mob of furious, terror-stricken boys came swarming out of the boma, waving clubs and tools, their eyes gleaming in their black faces.

"Bewitched nothing!" Allen's deep voice boomed above the din. "Here lies the last of your demons! And we have rescued your comrade."

Glad shouts came from several Kavirondoes as, led by Peter, they ran to pick up the man-eater's victim, who was more scared than hurt. But it took all Allen's mastery over natives to quell the panic.

Native-fashion, the boys fiercely laboured the dead lion with picks and shovels. At last they were persuaded that they had nothing more to fear from lions. They returned to their huts on the brothers' repeated assurance that a large gang of boys would arrive with the construction train at dawn, to help rush the work on the bridge.

Allen and Peter returned hastily to Boss Hanson's tent, to discover that the bound stranger, Sam Thorp, had vanished! So had the long-trusted cook-boy!

"The boy cut the ropes and freed the ruffian!" Allen took in the scene at a glance. "Thorp must have bribed or scared him into doing that."

It looked like bribery, for it seemed that the vanished boy, with still a spark of loyalty for Boss Hanson, had obviously insisted that the sick man should not be further molested. Hanson still lay on his bed, unharmed, but very ill.

The brothers decided that they must somehow complete the bridge without him. They spent the night watching the chief engineer and periodically visiting the boys in the boma to reassure them that the construction train would arrive soon. They wrongly thought they had finished with the hunter, Sam Thorp!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

THE MISSING TRAIN.

"It's long overdue, isn't it, old chap?"

Peter asked the question as he stared down the gleaming railway track.

The sun was high above the jungle, whence sounded the wild chatter of parrots and monkeys. But there was no sign of the construction train, and a deep murmur of discontent and dismay could be heard from the boys' boma.

"It's hours overdue, Peter," Allen replied. "Never late before. This beats me. What can have happened? A train-load of muscular Kavirondoes can't vanish into thin air. There's been an accident somewhere. But, of course, our boys will put this down to demons and witchcraft!"

The boys did.

They swarmed up from the boma in an ugly mood, vowing that the jungle was haunted, and that the missing train had been bewitched. They declared that they would not stop another day, or do any more work on the bridge.

The position seemed desperate, with only about six days left before the annual rains turned the Nchanga river into a raging flood. Even Allen seemed unable to quell the panic this time.

"I'll go down the line in one of the old lorries," Peter said suddenly. "Can you hold these fellows here if I promise to fetch their pals? I'll soon find out what's happened to the train. If it's broken down I'll rush some of the missing gang here in the lorry."

Allen hesitated. He knew the pitfalls and dangers of the African jungle far better than did his young brother. But no other scheme seemed possible, with the Kavirondoes on the point of deserting in a mob.

"All right, Peter; do your best,"

he agreed at last. "I'll talk to these bone-heads. I think I can hold 'em here until dawn to-morrow — no longer."

"Right! I'll be back before to-night, you bet!" Peter exclaimed; and he ran to one of the disused motor-lorries near the tents.

Allen succeeded in quietening the Kavirondoes and Hindu craftsmen, and in coaxing them to continue work on the bridge for one more day, when they learnt the young bwana's intention.

Peter started the largest motor-lorry, and drove off without loss of time. His eyes sparkled as he accelerated, steering the lurching and swaying lorry down the rough track beside the metals, and he thrilled in every nerve as he glimpsed the green wall of jungle swimming past on either hand.

As the lorry thundered along at full speed, he bounced in the driver's seat like a pea on a drum. Beside him lay his rifle, although he did not expect to have to use it.

He stared ahead, his eyes narrowed beneath his sun-helmet. The heat was intense, and a haze shimmered above the lorry's bonnet.

At every bend the lad feared to come on the missing construction train, possibly wrecked. The fierce heat often buckled the metals, and at times elephants and other wild animals interfered with them.

Mile after mile the lorry roared on, Peter looking anxiously ahead all the time, entirely alone in a world of mysterious jungle.

The thought that his brother could only hold the scared Kavirondoes in camp for a limited time made him drive all out. But he was watchful and alert.

And suddenly, as the lorry thundered up a stiff gradient, Peter glimpsed something lying near the

track that brought a gasp of surprise to his lips. It was a water-bottle with a strap, such as are carried by African native labourers.

"I wonder how that got there?" muttered Peter, slowing the lorry and reaching for his brake.

Then he thought better of stopping to examine a stray water-bottle which might have been dropped off a construction train several days since, and made to drive on.

That instant a whistling shriek sounded from the jungle. It was followed by a crashing of undergrowth.

Next, from the corner of his eye, Peter glimpsed a full-grown rhinoceros charging from the jungle at him. The monster burst out on his left, to charge head down across the metals.

"Crumbs! The brute'll wreck me!" gasped Peter, and accelerated quickly.

The lorry gathered speed again, and the screeching rhino almost shaved the tail with its horn as it drummed past.

Glancing back, Peter saw the crazy monster plunge straight across the lorry-road. Like most charging rhinos, the beast thundered on blindly, having missed its quarry, to plunge into the jungle on the farther side.

Peter laughed, driving on; but the next instant his face changed as, from the jungle, there came the sound of a terrific metallic impact.

The rhino had met something made of metal in its wild headlong charge.

There came another whistling screech from the beast, followed by a drumming of feet and a crashing of undergrowth that quickly grew distant and faint. Then once more the jungle was silent.

"Well, I'm hanged!" muttered Peter.

The lad stopped the lorry. He remembered the water-bottle, and wondered what on earth the rhino

could have met to make such a strange crash.

"Worth looking into!" Peter told himself. "It won't take a second, anyway."

Grabbing his rifle, the plucky lad jumped from the driver's seat. The jungle wall loomed up dark and mysterious before him, and there was no knowing what lay behind that leafy screen.

But without hesitation, rifle in hand, Peter ran to the spot where the rhino had vanished. The beast had left no sign of its passage, for the springy shrubs and boughs had whipped back into place behind it.

It was dense jungle through which Peter forced a way into green gloom, straining his eyes.

Suddenly, something loomed up black and mysterious that made his eyes bulge. A moment later the lad was speechless with amazement—for there, in the dim jungle before him, was the missing construction train!

He made out the three wooden trucks, their iron wheels entangled in a riot of weeds, and the little locomotive, its funnel festooned with vines and creepers. A large dent on the side of the engine showed where the rhino's horn had struck.

The missing train was utterly deserted, and there was no track outside the jungle to show how the abandoned train had got here.

"Gosh, this is strange!" muttered Peter. "I wonder how the train got here. And where have all our boys disappeared to?"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

FIGHTING THROUGH!

By pure luck Peter had discovered the missing train, which, but for the rhino, he would have passed by, to drive on in the lorry uselessly.

But he was utterly at a loss to understand what could have happened to the boys on the train and the engine-driver and fireman.

"But I must find 'em somehow, and jolly quick, too," Peter said.

Recollection of Allen anxiously awaiting the missing gang at the bridge-camp, now many miles distant, made him get into action.



Peter, his nerves thrilling, crept silently up behind the squatting sentries who barred the way to the prisoners . . .

He had no time to lose, for he realised that he was up against some strange mystery. Swiftly he searched deeper into the jungle, beyond the stranded train, for tracks.

"Our missing gang didn't fly from here," the lad muttered, forcing his way in the gloom. "Ah, here! Footprints, by gosh!"

The lad had suddenly come across the tracks of many natives leading away into the jungle. He followed them breathlessly, and his heart leaped with excitement when he found that the natives' tracks led into a broad elephant path.

"I can jolly well drive the old bus along that!" Peter told himself excitedly. "I'll track down our vanished gang somehow or other, and then—"

The lad broke off, unable to imagine in what strange circumstances he might find the missing gang. And what could he alone do when he had found them? It must be something very powerful that could spirit away a hundred boys, and shift a train without trace.

But Peter lost no time in getting back to the lorry. He started up the engine again, and jumped into the driver's seat. Then he turned the lorry round, drove back a little way, and turned off the road into the jungle.

The springy screen parted to admit him, closing up behind him again with a swish and crackle, as it did when the rhino plunged into it, leaving no trace behind.

But it took Peter a long time to get the lorry down to the elephant path. Dense weeds got entangled in the wheels, and many times he had to get out and hack them free. The deeper he smashed through, the darker it became, until he could hardly see. Losing his bearings, he crashed into a great baobab tree, but fortunately

no damage was done to the sturdy lorry.

At last, with a sigh of relief, the lad drove into the wide elephant path, after half an hour's struggle.

He sent the lorry on down the trail, pulping weeds under his wheels, with the gloom of the forest making it difficult to keep a straight course.

He was wary, too, of obstacles, and several times in that nightmare journey he barely escaped disaster, and had continually to clear rocks and fallen trees from his way. But each time he had to descend he saw the tracks of natives, which gave him encouragement.

"A mighty lot of tracks," he muttered again and again. "Must be our chaps. - Where the thump were they going?"

At last, Peter saw that it was getting lighter, and before long he reached the jungle edge, where a grassy plain covered with thorn trees met his eyes.

The sun was now setting and the swift African night would soon descend. Peter looked out across the wide expanse of yellow grass, which was tinder-dry and about three feet high, and he gasped at sight of a native kraal.

The lad could just see thatched domed huts above a fence of thorns. He heard cattle lowing, and he saw the smoke of cooking fires curling upwards. The tracks he had followed down the elephant path pointed towards that kraal, where they vanished in the stiff, tall grass.

"Can our missing chaps be there?" muttered Peter.

He dashed back to the lorry, fetched his rifle, then started towards the kraal on his hands and knees.

High grass and bushes gave the lad excellent cover. He had only three hundred yards to go, but it seemed miles. His heart thumped against

his ribs as he heard the harsh voices of natives singing a triumphant war song. He could not imagine what had happened to the vanished gang, nor what to do if he found them.

He got within a few yards of the kraal, and there waited until night shut down completely and stars spangled the sky. He rose to his knees then, but he could see no natives, until with a gasp he spotted two brawny savages armed with spears and shields.

The two ebony warriors sat talking at a gateway of a thorn boma in the middle of the kraal.

"They're not guarding cattle," gritted Peter. "Prisoners? By Jove, I believe all our missing chaps have been kidnapped. They must be inside that boma!"

Peter's nerves thrilled. He realised that discovery would mean death. He was no doubt butting against the schemes of some powerful savage chief.

But he thought of his brother awaiting the boys, so he took the chance and crawled forward.

The kraal entrance was unguarded, showing that no attack from outside was feared. Peter was soon amongst the thatched, circular huts, with the smell of goats, cattle, and wood-smoke in his nostrils, the raucous songs and laughter from the huts in his ears.

Hugging the shadows the lad crawled towards the squatting sentries at the boma entrance, which was closed by a high thorny barrier. Unsuspecting, the two brawny sentries chatted.

Soon Peter was right behind them, rifle in hand.

Nerving himself, the lad leaped and struck.

It was done like lightning. Twice, wielded with all his strength, his rifle barrel cracked down on two woolly

heads, whose owners grunted, half rose, then pitched forward, to lie still. Every nerve a-thrill, the lad jumped for the thorn barrier and opened it quickly. And there, as he expected, he saw the missing gang of boys, with whom were the missing Hindu engine-driver and the black fireman of the stranded train.

Peter entered the boma, and motioning to the startled prisoners for silence, beckoned them to follow him. The prisoners had been cowed by threats of a terrible death if they tried to escape, and they knew that the huts were full of armed warriors.

At sight of the white lad, however, with his rifle, they came surging forward excitedly.

"Follow me," breathed Peter. "That singing will drown our footsteps. Make for the jungle and the railway. I'll pick up all the fellows I can with the lorry yonder."

Leaping out of the enclosure, the lad dashed away with the rescued prisoners swarming silently at his heels. But before he reached the kraal gateway the door of a large hut was abruptly flung open, and out burst a white man.

Peter gasped in surprise, recognising the gaunt, bearded American hunter who had tried to poison Boss Hanson.

"Thorp! It's Sam Thorp!" Recognition was mutual.

"Gosh! Th' railway kid—rescuing th' prisoners!" Thorp roared, and drew out his revolver and yelled an alarm.

"Sahib! That is the white scoundrel who captured us all—and the train," the Hindu driver shouted in Peter's ear.

"Down with him!" Peter yelled. "We must collar him. And he shan't escape again!"

Peter charged forward on the instant, knocking up Thorp's pistol

with his rifle. The lad was followed by his desperate boys, and so quick was the attack that Thorp was stunned and overpowered before the warriors in the huts guessed what was up.

Strong brown hands gripped Thorp and bore him swiftly out of the kraal. A second later, however, scores of savages came bursting from the huts. They saw the two senseless sentries near the boma and the crowd of boys, led by the white lad, speeding away across the dim plain, and dived back to their huts for weapons.

Then with savage yells the black warriors came storming in pursuit.

Quickly Peter realised that, burdened with his captive, he could not escape. But the plucky lad did not mean to lose Sam Thorp again. Ignoring the terrified yells about him, he suddenly stopped, snatched matches from his pocket and swiftly set fire to the tall yellow grass.

In a second the flames rushed away in all directions. With a crackling roar up leaped a wall of fire. It was a flaming barrier between pursuers and pursued which, fanned by the wind, began to rush away towards the kraal.

"Beaten 'em!" whooped Peter as the flames gushed up twenty feet high and smoke billowed to the stars. "Now, come on, lads! And bring that white ruffian along!"

The savage warriors seemed to be beaten. Howling in baffled fury, they began to race back towards their kraal, desperate to burn a "fire-break" to save their huts.

On towards the motor-lorry, with Thorp carried by four lusty boys, ran Peter, leading the gang he had rescued. Behind him half the grassy plain was now burning furiously.

"What happened to the train, Raja?" the lad shouted to the Hindu engine-driver.

"Sahib," was the gasped reply,

"that white man is chief of those black dogs back yonder. He tore up the rails with his warriors, stopped the construction train, and made us descend. He forced us to lay those rails so that the train ran into the jungle and was swallowed up. Then he made us replace the rails, so that nothing would ever be noticed. And then he dragged us all here to become slaves."

"I found the train, though," Peter cried, "and followed your tracks through the jungle. What a cunning dodge of Thorp's. But—slaves! What's his game?"

"The bearded one is a gun-runner and slave-trader, sahib!" panted the Hindu driver. "Having made himself chief of yonder tribe, he did not want the railway completed, knowing that it would put an end to his crimes by bringing many white men up here."

"Crumbs! What a blackguard I!" Peter gasped.

The lad realised now why Thorp, not really a hunter, had tried to poison Boss Hanson, and had no doubt meant to poison both the brothers, too.

Thorp was determined to stop the Barongo Railway. And so he had decided that the bridge across the Nchanga river should not be completed before the rains. He knew that floods would stop the work, and thus put an end to the line; for the brothers' company had not enough money to survive a delay of months, being bound to a time-limit by their contract with the Government.

The lorry was reached and the bound Thorp was thrown into it and many boys leaped in after him.

Peter had the engine started and the lorry, crowded with boys, surged forward. Away dashed the remainder into the jungle, heading for the line.

A few minutes later, Peter discovered that they had not yet escaped.

As Peter reached the elephant path the jungle around suddenly burst into violent life. There sounded roars and howls, and spear-armed savages attacked the lorry from all sides.



Even as the lorry ran into the elephant path, the jungle about it burst into violent life. There sounded roars and howls, and spear-armed savages came leaping at the lorry from all sides.

About fifty warriors had raced full speed round the fire, determined to rescue their white chief.

Of a sudden Peter saw dark forms ahead of him, as well as on both sides. He heard weapons whistle about him, thudding on the lorry's sides.

Full speed Peter sent the heavy lorry crashing at his foes. Vaguely he heard howls of pain, saw dim figures knocked flying by the lorry's bonnet, and hurled aside by the wheels.

But many of the savages leaped aboard the lorry. Then followed a grim hand-to-hand combat. The

rescued boys fought desperately against the attackers.

Peter drove onward, seeing blurred figures leaping at him, to be knocked aside and left behind. The jungle rang to the hideous din of howls of pain and fury, as the lorry swayed and rolled along the elephant path.

Through the last of the savages the lorry charged, hurling black shapes in all directions, while a fight raged at the back. It was touch and go for several seconds, however. But Peter got through with little more than a few bruises and cuts. As the lorry gathered speed the boarding savages were hurled off, and then were quickly dropped behind.

"Beaten 'em at last!" Peter gasped.

Several hours later the blood-grimed lad rolled up triumphantly to the construction-camp at the river. He was just in time. The Kavirondos in camp had given him up for lost, too, and not even Allen could have detained them much longer. Sight of the grinning lad, with his battered lorry, his white prisoner, and the battle-stained boys he had brought along, caused roars of delight and admiration.

Peter's story was soon told.

"You've saved the line, my lad! Go and tell your tale to Boss Hanson, who will be O.K. again in a day or so," Allen shouted gleefully, as Peter ended. "The rest of the missing gang is on the way afoot? Then we'll soon have that train back on the metals, and I bet we get the bridge finished before the rains, after all."

They did, with one day to spare. Peter received the thanks of the company and a substantial reward, while Sam Thorp, who had long terrorised the region and had terrorised the vanished cook-boy into freeing him before, also got his deserts.

THE END

GREYFRIARS RHYMES

JOHNNY BULL

(a member of the Famous Five)



FEW "H.A." heroes are so fine
And strong as stalwart Johnny,
Who in the Famous Five doth shine,
A youngster bright and bonnie.
Like Britain's typical "John Bull,"
He is the soul of honour;
With zealous pride he serves his school.
And brings no shame upon her.

When Wharton leads his merry men
At footer or at cricket,
In raids upon some prefect's den
Or scouting in the thicket,
Our Johnny's always on the scene,
To Wharton strictly loyal;
And foes feel where his fist has been
In many a battle royal!

With Fish the study he must share,
For thus the Head arranges;
The business man from "over there" effects some drastic changes;
The humble room has had to serve
As pawnshop to the pirate;
And Fisher's cool, unbounded nerve
Made all the fellows irate.

The "three brass balls" displayed without
Caused everyone to wonder;
But Bull produced a hammer stout
And smashed them all asunder.
He next pursued the artful Yank,
An explanation needing;
But though the Shylock he did spank,
Fish went his way unheeding.

But soon his schemes were foiled by Fate
And shattered; and the fact is,
That boys of Britain always hate
Suggestions of sharp practice,
But Johnny Bull and Dicky Rake
Were anything but pleasant;
And rudely Fisher did awake
From dreams which once were present.

Fat Bunter follows after frocks
Of damsels by the dozen;
Yet he received the worst of shocks
When courting Johnny's cousin.
The way she put the porpoise down
Was really quite a "thriller,"
And Bunter's lost the rich renown
Of champion lady-killer.

Both Johnny and his cousin boast
The pluck which marks our nation;
A gift which graced the English host
For many a generation.
The noble Wharton must be proud
Of such a staunch assistant,
Whose praise is chanted long and loud
By readers near and distant.