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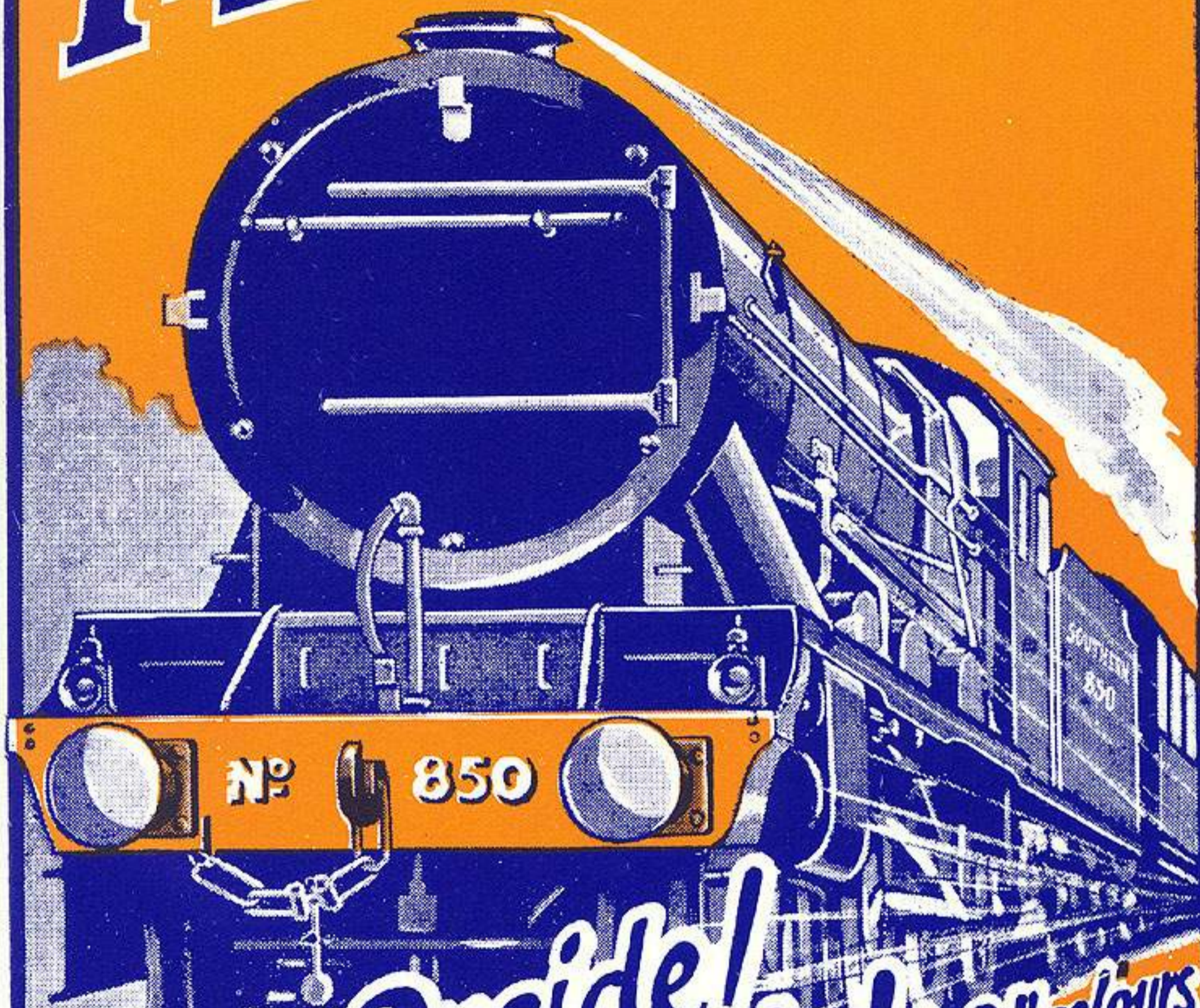
No. 1,017. Vol. XXXII.

Week Ending August 13th, 1927.

The Magnet 2d

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GRAND NEW SERIES OF SCHOOL STORIES STARTS THIS WEEK!

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The Opening Story of a Brilliant New Series dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton and Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Skinner!

HARRY WHARTON came along the Remove passage, and stopped at Study No. 4.

The door was half open, and the captain of the Remove glanced in.

He frowned involuntarily.

Prep was on in the Remove, and Vernon-Smith and Skinner were both in No. 4. They were not at prep, however.

Skinner was sitting on the side of the table, his hands in his pockets, swinging his legs. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, sprawled in the armchair, with a cigarette between his lips.

"Smithy!"

The Bounder started a little, and made a movement as if to remove the cigarette from his mouth and throw it away. But second thoughts came quickly, and instead of doing so, he blew out a cloud of smoke.

Skinner grinned.

"You're shocking Wharton, Smithy," he said. "You're asking for a lecture. Wharton's just going to begin. I know the look in his eye."

"Let him!" said the Bounder indifferently.

"Go it, Wharton!" said Skinner encouragingly. "Let Smithy have it in your well-known seventhly manner. I'm afraid it won't do either of us any good; but it will be entertaining."

"I looked in to speak to you, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove, taking no heed of Skinner.

"Here beginneth the first lesson!" murmured Skinner.

The Bounder laughed.

Harry Wharton coloured with anger. "I suppose I was an ass to come here!" he snapped.

"No supposing about it—you were!"

agreed Skinner. "You've no friends in this study, Wharton, and you know it. Shut the door after you. Who the dickens are you to butt into a man's study and lecture him?"

"Echo answers who?" drawled the Bounder.

Wharton made a movement to go, but he stopped again. He had been trying, of late, to get on better terms with the Bounder, but he knew that he would not succeed if Skinner could help it.

"I wanted to speak to you about Redwing, Smithy," he said.

Vernon-Smith's manner changed at once.

He sat up, and threw the stump of his cigarette into the grate.

"Redwing?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"Sorry, old bean, I thought you'd come to jaw me," said the Bounder. "Trot in. Shut up, Skinner, will you?"

Skinner bit his lip. He had been quite well aware that Wharton had looked in with friendly intentions, and he had charitably desired to nip those friendly intentions in the bud. It was not generally difficult to stir up trouble between a proud nature like Wharton's, and an arrogant one like the Bounder's.

"Come in, Wharton!" Smithy's manner was quite cordial. "Nothing to get your back up about, old chap."

Wharton entered the study. "Look here, Smithy, if you're going to jaw with Wharton, I'd better cut," said Skinner sulkily.

"Quite a good idea," said the Bounder coolly. "Tactful in fact. Cut, by all means!"

Skinner scowled. But he did not cut. He remained where he was, and ostentatiously lighted a cigarette.

"Take a pew, old bean," said the Bounder, pushing a chair towards Wharton with his foot. "Chuck that thing away, Skinner."

"I suppose I can smoke if I like!" snarled Skinner. "If you're afraid of Wharton, I'm not!"

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "Do you think I'm a mug to have my leg pulled as easily as all that? If you're staying, shut up, for goodness' sake! Go ahead, Wharton!"

"About Redwing," said the captain of the Remove. "He was your pal when he was at Greyfriars, Smithy, but most of the fellows were his friends, and we all liked him—"

"I never did!" interjected Skinner.

"You wouldn't!" said Harry. "So far as I ever noticed there was nothing whatever rotten about Redwing, so naturally you wouldn't care for him."

The Bounder chuckled.

"Right on the wicket," he agreed. "You know that Tom Redwing has come back from the sea, Wharton? He's up at Hawkscliff now."

"That's what I wanted to speak to you about," said the captain of the Remove. "Most likely he's not home for long, and we'd like to see him while there's a chance."

"Good man."

"He would be jolly welcome if he gave us a look in at Greyfriars," went on the captain of the Remove. "I dare say he would like to tea in a Greyfriars study again, Smithy. What do you think?"

"Good man again!" said the Bounder. "I've thought of that. I'm going up to Hawkscliff to see him on Saturday afternoon. Like to come?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And your friends?"

"They'd be glad to come, too," said Harry. His face was very cheerful now. "We all liked Redwing, and were sorry when he left. Let's make a party of it for Saturday?"

"Done!"

"I heard that that longshoreman was back at his hovel in Hawkscliff," said

Skinner, with a sneer. "I hardly thought you'd be taking up with him again, Smithy."

"You'd hardly think anything decent of anybody, would you?" said the Bounder agreeably.

Harry Wharton laughed.

Skinner's mischief-making did not seem to be progressing very favourably.

"If you want to know, there was no question of my taking him up again," added the Bounder. "The question was whether he would take me up again after the rotten way I treated him when he was here. But he's a good chap, and he's let bygones be bygones."

"You've seen him, then?" asked Skinner, compressing his thin lips.

"Yes, I've seen him."

"I heard from Bunter that you'd had a letter from him."

"For once, Bunter was telling the truth. I had."

Skinner's lip curled

"And you can't see the fellow's game?" he sneered.

"What game?"

"I don't think it needs much looking for, when a longshoreman, a fellow down on his luck, sucks up to a millionaire's son!" jeered Skinner. "He's jolly well not going to let you go if he can help it. It pays him to keep in with you, of course! I fancy he's got some idea of getting back to Greyfriars, if he can work it. That's what he wants, of course!"

"That's what I want," said the Bounder, "and I'm jolly well going to work it somehow! You're a clever chap, Skinner, perhaps you could help, if you put your mind to it."

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh at the expression on Skinner's face.

Skinner of the Remove was not likely to help Tom Redwing to get back to Greyfriars.

"Why, you—you—you cheeky idiot!" stuttered Skinner. "The fellow ought never to have been let into the school at all. It was a jolly good thing when he went. The son of a common seaman—a rank outsider! His being here at all was a disgrace to Greyfriars. I think that—"

The Bounder's eyes glinted.

"Never mind what you think, Skinner," he interrupted. "I'll tell you what I think. I think you'd better not say anything more against Redwing, or you'll go out of this study so quick you won't know what hit you. Got that?"

"I'll say what I like!" shouted Skinner, too exasperated to remember his usual caution. "That rotten outsider—that tramp—that beggar—"

"I warned you!" said the Bounder grimly, and he jumped up from the arm-chair.

"Hands off, you cad!" yelled Skinner.

Skinner jumped off the table, and made another jump to the door. Vernon-Smith was coming at him with a black brow and gleaming eyes, and his fists clenched hard.

"You cad!" panted Skinner. "You cheeky cad—"

He made a backward jump through the doorway, just in time to escape a blow.

"By gad, I'll—"

Slam!

The door of the study slammed after Skinner, as the Bounder kicked it shut.

Skinner did not reopen it. He did not want to see anything more of his "pal" in his pal's present mood. Vernon-Smith turned back to the captain of the Remove.

"Now let's settle about seeing Redwing on Saturday," he said.

And the two juniors discussed that

arrangement amicably, while Harold Skinner tramped away to Study No. 3, to pour his tale of grievance into the sympathetic ears of Snoop and Stott.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Turned Down!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH looked very cheery when he came into the Remove-room the following morning.

There had been a change in the Bounder during the last few days, and all the Remove had noticed it.

Undoubtedly it had made a difference to him, that his old chum, Tom Redwing, had returned to Hawkscliff from the sea, and had been willing, indeed anxious, to be on the old friendly footing with Smithy.

Vernon-Smith had broken detention, at very considerable risk, to visit his former chum and study-mate at Hawkscliff, ten miles up the coast from Greyfriars. He had found the former Greyfriars' junior as friendly as of old, forgetful of all offences. The Bounder intended to visit Hawkscliff again on Saturday, but this time he meant to be very careful not to be detained. Since his meeting with Tom Redwing, he had dropped a great deal of his rebellious insolence in class, and no longer seemed to be hunting for trouble with his Form master.

But it was only that he wanted to avoid detentions. Redwing had resumed, to some extent, his old influence over the Bounder's wayward spirit, and Smithy was no longer in a trouble-hunting mood. Thinking of his friend instead of himself, had been good for him.

Certainly, Mr. Quelch had no fault to find with him now.

His prep had been carefully done, his construe was the best in the Remove; and there was no "ragging" in Form, for which the Bounder had been distinguished all through the summer term.

The change was due to Tom Redwing, but it came at a fortunate time for Smithy, for the Remove master was assuredly "fed-up" with his rebelliousness and insubordination, and inclined to take very drastic measures with him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were glad enough to see the change in Smithy. It had a different effect on Skinner.

When Redwing had been at Greyfriars, on the scholarship that had been founded by Smithy's father, his influence had kept Smithy almost entirely away from Skinner and his shady set. After Redwing had left, Smithy had gone downhill with dizzy rapidity; he had taken Skinner in to Study No. 4 as his study-mate, and had been the blackest of the black sheep in the Form. That was a state of affairs that suited Skinner

admirably. A wealthy pal with shady proclivities like his own was very useful to Skinner.

Certainly, he had no personal liking for the Bounder, but he resented bitterly the fact that Smithy was ready to throw him aside at any moment, for the sake of his old chum. He had disliked Redwing when the latter was at Greyfriars, and his dislike was as keen as ever now that the sailorman's son seemed to be resuming his old influence over Herbert Vernon-Smith. The change for the better in the Bounder was, in Skinner's eyes, a change very much for the worse.

"That longshore cad is getting Smithy under his thumb again," was the way Skinner expressed it to Snoop.

"Looks like it," agreed Snoop. "But what does it matter? The outsider will be gone to sea again next week."

"Don't you believe it," sneered Skinner. "He won't go back to sea if he can wedge into Greyfriars again. He's trying to work it to get back here somehow on Smithy's money."

"I shouldn't wonder," assented Snoop.

"Smithy's wide enough in dealin' with anybody else, but that longshore cad could always twist him round his finger. He's made Smithy believe in his independence. Lot of independence about a common longshore lout who makes friends with a millionaire's son. Of course, his game is to loot Smithy."

"Well, it would be, I suppose," said Snoop.

"But I'm going to put a spoke in the wheel, somehow," said Skinner, between his teeth. "Smithy can't take a fellow up and turn him down just as he fancies, without smarting for it. I'll jolly well see that that longshore cad doesn't wangle himself back into the school, if I can help it. I'm not the fellow to see a pal bamboozled and done."

Sidney James Snoop chuckled.

"You mean that Smithy's too jolly valuable to lose?" he asked.

"Look at him now!" said Skinner, scowling, and without answering the question.

The Remove had come out after morning class, and Vernon-Smith had joined the Famous Five in the quadrangle.

He was chatting cheerily with Harry Wharton & Co, oblivious of the existence of Skinner.

"Only a few weeks ago he was at daggers drawn with Wharton and his crew," said Skinner, "now look at them."

"You never can rely on a fellow like Smithy," said Snoop.

"It's all Redwing's doing—and I can tell you, Snoop, that if that longshore cad comes back, we shan't see much more of Smithy. He will give us the marble eye, as he did before when Redwing was here. We came jolly near scrapping yesterday, because I told him what I thought of the cad."

"Better not tell him again, old bean," grinned Snoop. "Smithy's got a hefty punch."

Vernon-Smith left the Famous Five, and strolled under the elms with his hands in his pockets. Skinner joined him there.

The Bounder's look was not welcoming, but he gave Skinner a nod.

"What about to-morrow afternoon, Smithy?" asked Skinner, in as amicable a tone as if there had never been a hint of trouble. "We were thinking of a run up to the Three Fishers, you know."

"That's washed out."

"I'd like to go."

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"Well, I shan't stop you," said the Bounder. "I'm going up to Hawkscliff myself, as you know."

"Well, look here, I'll come too," said Skinner. "I'd like to see Redwing again, if you come to that."

The Bounder looked him in the face. "You wouldn't," he answered curtly. "Redwing wouldn't care to see you, either."

"I suppose he'd be civil to a pal of yours?"

"Very likely; but I don't want you to come," said Vernon-Smith bluntly.

"That's plain English, at all events," said Skinner, biting his lip.

"What's the good of beatin' about the bush?" said the Bounder impatiently. "You hate the chap, and you'd make trouble if you could. Do you think I'm a fool? Forget it."

And the Bounder walked on, leaving Skinner with a black look on his face.

When the dinner-bell rang, the Bounder walked into the House with Harry Wharton, evidently on amicable terms with the captain of the Remove. It certainly looked as if the old trouble between Smithy and his Form captain was at an end.

Skinner eyed the Bounder at the dinner-table, but Smithy did not catch his eye. It was only too clear that the comrade of his shady excursions had quite dropped out of the Bounder's thoughts: Skinner was nothing or less than nothing to him. He was, as he bitterly reflected, a fellow to be made use of when Smithy wanted him, and ducked unceremoniously when Smithy did not want him. As Skinner's friendship with the Bounder was founded entirely on the Bounder's usefulness to him, he really had no cause for complaint, but he did not look at it in that light. His grudge was deep and bitter.

After dinner, Skinner loitered about the passages, till he was assured that no eye was upon him, and then he slipped into the Remove Form-room.

He was occupied in that Form-room for about a quarter of an hour, and then he slipped out as quietly as he had entered.

He strolled into the quad, with a disagreeable smile on his face.

When the bell rang for class and the Remove fellows went in Bob Cherry tapped the Bounder on the shoulder in the Form-room passage.

"No larks to-day, Smithy!" he said. "Mind you don't get detention for to-morrow, old bean."

The Bounder smiled.

"No jolly fear!" he said.

"The detainfulness would spoil the intended and excellent excursion to visit the ludicrous Redwing," remarked Hureo Janset Ram Singh. "Remember that the stitch in time saves ninepence, my esteemed Smithy."

Skinner looked after the juniors, with a sour grin, as they went in.

"No detentions!" he murmured to himself. "Perhaps you won't have any choice about that, my dear Smithy."

And Skinner followed the Removites into the Form-room, with pleasant anticipations for the afternoon.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rough on the Bounder!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry under his breath. "Quelch's got 'em again!"

Bob's remark was audible only to the juniors near him. It would not have been judicious to allow Mr. Quelch to hear it.

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"Something's up!" whispered Peter Todd.

"The upfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, somebody's for it!" giggled Billy Bunter. "Has Smithy been up to something again?"

All eyes in the Remove were fixed on Mr. Quelch.

That gentleman had come into the Form-room in quite a good humour. But he did not look good-humoured as he raised the lid of his desk to take out some papers that were needed for the lesson.

A thunderous frown came over Mr. Quelch's countenance, and all the class wondered what was "up." Obviously, Mr. Quelch had seen something in his desk beside the papers he was looking for.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyes to his class, and the glint in them caused the whispering to die away all of a sudden.

The Remove sat on tenterhooks.

"Someone has been to my desk since morning class!" said the Remove master in a deep voice. "The boy who has been to my desk will stand forward at once!"

No one in the Remove stirred.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes surveyed the class. They lingered for a moment or two on the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith breathed rather hard as he observed it. Obviously some trick had been played on the Remove master; equally obviously, Mr. Quelch's suspicions turned on him at once. The Bounder had his own conduct all through the term to thank for that.

"Someone," went on Mr. Quelch, "has placed a paper in my desk with an insulting message written upon it. I order the perpetrator to stand forward at once!"

Mr. Quelch ordered in vain. His expression certainly did not encourage the perpetrator to stand forward.

The Remove master probably did not expect the unknown delinquent to do so. He picked the offending paper from his desk and held it up to the view of his class, his face almost pale with anger.

The Removites gasped as they saw it.

It was a small sheet, evidently a blank leaf torn from a school book. On it was written—or, rather, printed—in large capital letters:

"WHO CARES FOR OLD QUELCH?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Johnny Bull.

The juniors stared blankly at the paper. Whoever had placed it in the Remove master's desk was booked for severe trouble if he was discovered. But the capital letters gave no clue to the hand of the writer.

"Who has written this?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

Dead silence.

"Some member of this class has done this," said the Remove master. "That boy will be severely caned and detained for all half-holidays for the remainder of the term. I order him to stand out of the class!"

There were no takers, so to speak.

The Removites sat as if frozen to their forms.

"There is one boy in this class," resumed the Remove master, "whose conduct all through this term has been marked by insolence and rebelliousness—one boy who, I am assured, is capable of this act of disrespect. Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir?" said Smithy quietly.

"Did you place this paper in my desk?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know anything about it?"

"No, sir."

"Unfortunately, I cannot take your word," said Mr. Quelch. "You have deceived me too often for that. I shall, however, endeavour to be just. If you deny your guilt the matter will be carefully investigated."

"I know nothing whatever about it, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"I trust that that is the case. Have you entered the Form-room at all since classes were dismissed this morning?"

"Not till I came in just now, sir, with the rest of the Form."

"Very well, we shall see. This paper," said the Remove master, holding it up, "is a fly-leaf torn from a school book. There is nothing to indicate from which book it was taken, and the writing on it offers no clue. No doubt the boy who placed it in my desk supposed that it would be impossible for me to trace him by means of this paper."

There was a pause.

So far as the Removites could see, there was no clue to the identity of the "perpetrator." Mr. Quelch, however, evidently thought otherwise.

"For the last time, I call upon the boy to stand forward!" said the Remove master. "I have no doubt whatever of discovering him, but I offer him a last opportunity to confess."

"Bluffing!" whispered Bolsover major.

That was the general impression in the Remove.

Every fellow sat tight. Mr. Quelch paused, like Brutus, for a reply; and, like Brutus, he paused in vain. There was no reply.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch between his tightened lips. "The perpetrator refuses to confess. He is bent upon wasting my time and the time of the class in addition to his offence. This page is torn from one of the books used in third lesson—the English history. Each boy will place his English history on his desk before him."

There was a general movement as the books were sorted out and placed on the desks.

Evidently, from the size and texture of the fly-leaf, Mr. Quelch had discerned from which of the school books it had been torn. That was a beginning.

The Form master came towards his class and proceeded to examine the books. The juniors knew now that he was in quest of a volume from which a fly-leaf had been torn.

Most of them expected him to begin with the Bounder.

But Mr. Quelch, whatever his private opinion, was too just to jump to a conclusion. He started with Wharton, who was head of the Form.

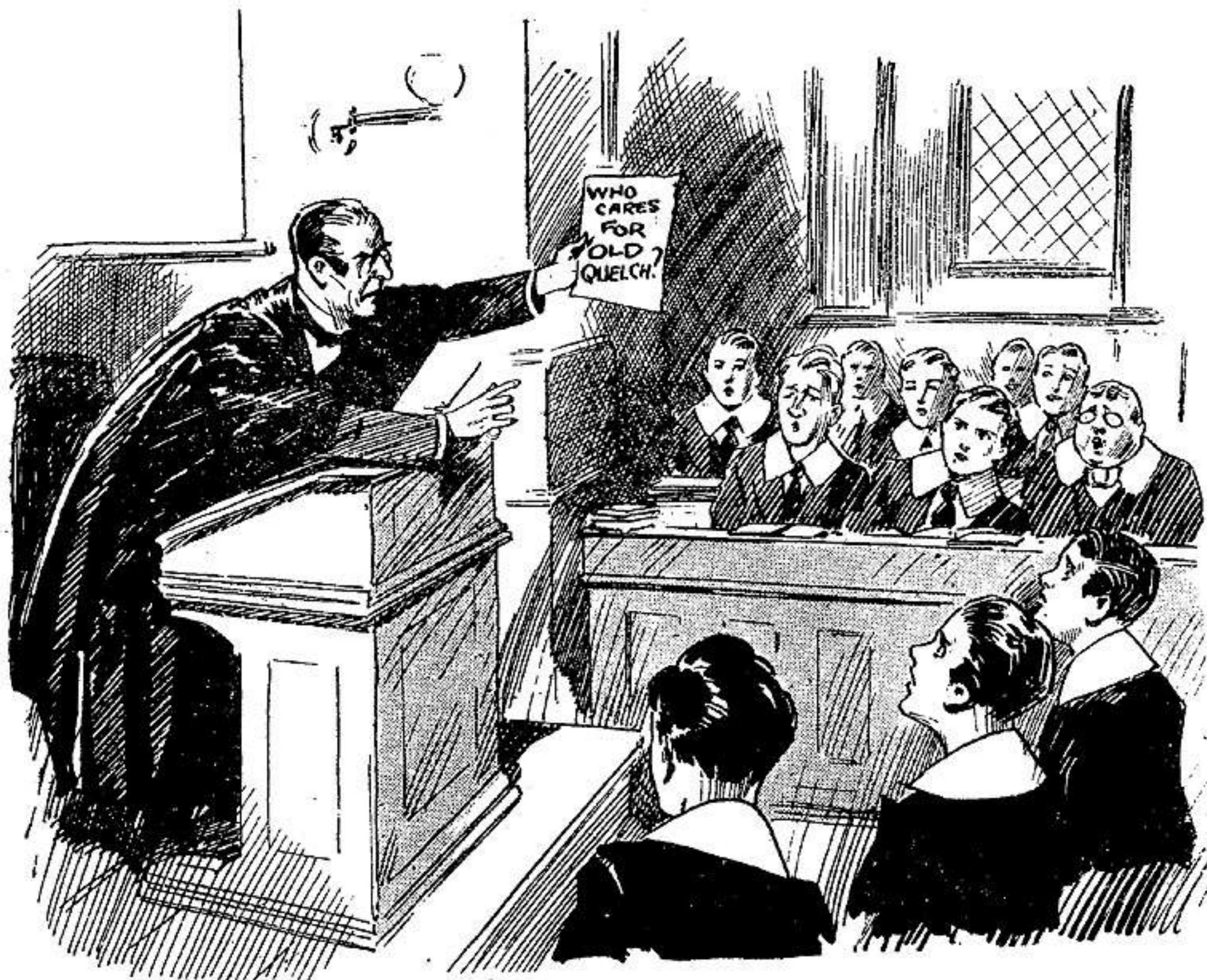
He progressed along the forms, examining book after book, and stopped at Squiff. Sampson Quincy Ifley Field looked startled.

"I—I say, sir, that—that fly-leaf's been missing for weeks!" he stammered. "I—I was short of paper to light the study fire, sir, and—"

"You should not be careless and slovenly with school books, Field. But I can see quite well that the tear is an old one," said Mr. Quelch.

And Squiff breathed more freely as the Form master passed on.

The next stop was at Fisher T. Fish's desk, and the Transatlantic junior almost squirmed with apprehension. There was a fly-leaf missing from his history, and it was not an old tear. Fisher T. Fish had used it only a day or two before for the purpose of making some of his abstruse financial calculations.



Mr. Quelch picked up the offending paper and held it up to the view of his class, his face almost pale with anger. There was a gasp from the Removites as they stared blankly at the paper. "Some member of this class has done this," said the Remove master, "and I order him to stand out at once!" (See Chapter 3.)

"I guess I never did it, sir!" gasped Fish. "I had that leaf out on Wednesday, sir—"

"You need not speak, Fish."

Mr. Quelch compared the torn edge of the fly-leaf in his hand with the ragged edge where Fishy's leaf had been torn out.

The edges were quite different; and he passed on, leaving Fishy in a state of perspiration.

Some of the Removites were grinning. It was probable that a good many fly-leaves were missing among the books in the Remove. Greyfriars fellows were enjoined to be very careful with their books, but there were many—a great many—who passed such injunctions by like the idle wind which they regarded not.

Mr. Quelch stopped again with the Bounder's book in his hand.

He fixed his eyes on Vernon-Smith, with a glint in them.

"There is a fly-leaf missing from your history, Vernon-Smith!" he said.

"I was not aware of it, sir!"

"Indeed! We shall see!"

Mr. Quelch very carefully compared the torn edge of the loose leaf, with the torn edge in the Bounder's book.

The two edges fitted perfectly.

The Bounder, and all the fellows sitting near him, could see that. Smithy drew a deep, hard breath.

The paper that had been found in Mr. Quelch's desk, had been torn from

the Bounder's history. There was no doubt on that point.

As a matter of fact, few of the Remove had doubted all the while that the delinquent was Herbert Vernon-Smith. Now it was proved, to them as well as to the Form-master.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on the Bounder again.

"It was you, Vernon-Smith! I suspected it from the first, but I would not condemn you without investigation. This page was torn from your book. You have denied it, speaking falsely as you have done so often before. Stand out before the class."

"I deny it now, sir," said the Bounder steadily. "I never tore that page from my book. I never wrote on it, and I never placed it in your desk."

Mr. Quelch's lip curled bitterly.

"You do not expect me to believe that statement. I presume, Vernon-Smith?" he said contemptuously.

"It's true, sir!"

"You add to your guilt by such reckless falsehoods, Vernon-Smith. Stand out."

The Bounder stood out, with a black and bitter look on his face. Mr. Quelch picked a cane from his desk.

"Bend over that chair."

"Let me speak, sir," said the Bounder thickly. "I give you my word, sir, that I know nothing about it. Whoever put that paper in your desk took it from my book, to keep himself safe."

"Nonsense!"

"Any fellow could have got at my book—"

"No doubt. But there is not, I believe, any other boy in the Remove so insolent and disrespectful as yourself, Vernon-Smith. This act is of a piece with all your conduct during this term. You did not suppose that I could trace the owner of the fly-leaf—it did not occur to you that I should examine the books and compare the torn edges. Your guilt is perfectly clear, and only your habitual effrontery causes you to deny it."

"I assure you, sir—"

"Bend over that chair!"

The Bounder clenched his hands furiously. Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted at him.

"If you do not obey me immediately, Vernon-Smith, I shall take you to the Head to be flogged."

"I give you my word, sir," panted the Bounder, "I've a right to expect my word to be taken. You'd take Wharton's or Nugent's—"

"That is correct. They are boys I can trust. You are a boy who has lied again and again, to my knowledge, and I cannot trust a word you say. Bend over that chair immediately!"

There was fierce rebellion in the Bounder's look. But he realised that resistance was futile. With a bitter face, he bent over the chair.

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The Removites looked on in silence while the cane rose and fell.

Six cuts were administered, and each one of them was a hefty one. Mr. Quelch evidently did not think that it was a time for sparing the rod.

But not a cry came from the Bounder. Severe as the infliction was, he bore it with his usual hardihood.

Mr. Quelch laid the cane on his desk again.

"Go back to your place, Vernon-Smith. You are detained for all half-holidays for the remainder of the term. Not a word—go!"

And the Bounder went to his place with a brow of thunder.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton Takes a Hand!

"I SAY, you fellows, Smithy's an ass!" That was Billy Bunter's opinion.

Bunter's opinion was shared by most of the fellows.

More or less, the Remove admired the Bounder for the nerve he displayed in defiance to his Form-master, to the Sixth-Form prefects, and authority generally. Even fellows who did not approve by any means, could not help thinking what a "nerve" the Bounder had.

But Smithy's latest was, as Squiff remarked, the limit. Cheeking Mr. Quelch in such a way could not be called a jest; it was sheer impudence. And getting punished on the spot turned the laugh, if any, against the Bounder himself.

The term was drawing near its end; but there were several more half-holidays; and the Bounder had forfeited them all. So the Remove agreed that Smithy was an ass.

After class, the Bounder went to his study with a savage face and a black brow. Skinner did not follow him there. He went to tea with Snoop and Stott in No. 2. Harry Wharton & Co. tea'd in Study No. 1, and they discussed the matter. All arrangements had been made for the Famous Five to accompany Smithy to Hawkscliff on the morrow, to visit Tom Redwing there. Now that the Bounder was detained for all half-holidays, that Saturday afternoon, of course, was included in the rest; the Bounder could not go. The Famous Five had to decide what was to be done.

"We want to see old Redwing," Bob Cherry remarked. "He was our pal as well as Smithy's—though, of course, Smithy's more than ours. I don't see giving it up because Smithy's got himself detained again."

"I think he would like to see us," said Frank Nugent.

"I'm sure of that," assented Wharton.

But he looked dubious.

"After all, he was Smithy's pal chiefly," he said; "I hardly like the idea of going without Smithy. Anyhow I think I'll speak to Smithy about it; if he's got any objection he can say so. He's so jolly touchy."

"The touchfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But I should like to behold once more the esteemed and serene countenance of the ludicrous Redwing."

"Smithy will bolt," grunted Johnny Bull. "He bolted out of detention last Wednesday, and he'll bolt again to-morrow."

"That's his style," said Bob, shaking his head, "to get himself detained for nothing, and run a lot of risk by bolting. Blessed if I ever heard of such a howling ass."

Wharton knitted his brows. Like his comrades, he very much wanted to see again the junior who had had to leave Greyfriars at the end of the previous term. But as captain of the Remove, head boy of the Form, he could scarcely go in company with a fellow who "bolted" out of detention. Neither did he sympathise in the slightest degree with Smithy. A fellow who asked for trouble so insistently ought to put up with it when it came along.

After tea, he went to Study No. 4. The matter was a rather delicate one, as Redwing was, after all, Smithy's pal, and Smithy's temper was suspicious and touchy.

He found the Bounder in his blackest mood.

"Well?" grunted Vernon-Smith, as Wharton came in.

"About to-morrow afternoon, Smithy—"

"Well?" repeated the Bounder.

"You're booked now," said Harry. "We'd like to see Redwing all the same. Any objection to our going on our own?"

"None at all; Redwing would be glad to see you. Besides, I've written that we're coming and he will expect us."

"That's all right, then," said Harry relieved.

"Oh, quite!" The Bounder smiled sarcastically. "I'm going all the same; if that makes any difference to you."

Wharton's face became very grave.

"You had a narrow escape last Wednesday, Smithy—"

"I know that."

"You won't have the same luck twice."

"I'm chancing it!" The Bounder gritted his teeth. "Do you think I'm going to stick in the Form-room for nothing?"

"You asked for it, Smithy. In fact, you begged for it. What the thump did you expect Quelch to do, when you insulted him in such a rotten cheeky way?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove warmly.

"Fool!"

"Why?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Fool!"

Wharton looked at him.

"That will do!" he said curtly. "I didn't come here to row with you, Smithy. That's enough."

He turned to the door.

"Hold on!" exclaimed the Bounder. "I called you a fool, and you are a fool—if you think I played that idiotic trick on Quelch to-day. Can't you give me credit for a little common-sense? I've been mindin' my 'p's' and 'q's' ever since Wednesday, so that Quelch would have no excuse for keepin' me in. Now this happens, and I'm detained. Can't you see that I'm not such a howling ass as to have done it?"

"My hat! You—you deny it?"

"Didn't you hear me deny it to Quelch?" exclaimed the Bounder savagely.

"Hem! Yes! But—"

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"You thought I was lying."

"Well, it's no good mincing matters," said Harry. "You tell Quelch lies often enough, Smithy."

"I told him the truth this afternoon."

Harry Wharton looked long and hard at the Bounder. Smithy's statement took him quite by surprise. He had not the slightest doubt on the subject.

"You—you mean that?" he exclaimed at last.

"Of course I do!" The Bounder scowled angrily. "Some silly ass played that silly trick, and took the leaf out of my book to keep himself safe if Quelch started investigating."

"But who?" exclaimed Wharton.

"How should I know? Some cad—very likely some cad who wanted to land me in trouble. I've got more enemies than friends in the Remove."

"That's so, certainly. But—"

"You don't believe me?" sneered the Bounder.

"Well, you see—" Wharton hesitated.

"Fool, then! I'd fixed it to go to Hawkscliff to-morrow, and do you think I'd get myself detained if I could help it? Not that I'm going to stick in detention. I'm going to Hawkscliff, all the same."

"It may mean the sack."

"Let it."

Wharton looked very thoughtful. He knew very well that the Bounder would have no scruple in telling falsehoods to the Remove master. But it was very unlike the Bounder to tell falsehoods in the Form. He seemed to regard all methods as fair in his warfare against authority. But among the juniors he was considered "square" enough. To his denial in the Form-room Wharton attached no importance whatever; but his present denial was a different matter, and Wharton believed it.

"If it's as you say, Smithy, the fellow was an awful cad not to own up!" he said slowly.

"He didn't want six and a gating!" sneered the Bounder. "It was some cad with a grudge against me, of course. He knew that Quelch would jump on me to begin with, and the leaf belongin' to my book clinched it."

"Smithy, you give me your word, as one fellow to another, that you didn't put that paper in Quelch's desk?"

"Yes."

"That does it, then," said Harry. "I'm going to speak to Mr. Quelch about it. He's bound to give me a hearing, as head of the Form."

"What good will that do?" asked the Bounder.

"Lots, perhaps. The fact is, Smithy, you've got Quelch's back up, and you can't expect him to believe a word you say. But he's just a man—"

"Rubbish!"

"Well, I'm going to see what can be done."

"You needn't! I'm not askin' any favours of Quelch!" said the Bounder savagely. "Let it rest."

Wharton shook his head and left the study. He believed now that the matter was as the Bounder stated, and he was well aware that Mr. Quelch did not desire to be unjust, even to the rebel of the Remove. Without heeding the Bounder's angry injunction, Wharton went down the Remove staircase and headed for the master's passage.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Skinner!

MR. QUELCH glanced up at the captain of the Remove, as Wharton presented himself in the study doorway.

"Come in, Wharton!"

Harry entered the study. Mr. Quelch's manner was quite kind; and he drew encouragement therefrom.

"What is it, my boy?" asked the Form master.

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I'd like to

“I believe him, sir.”

“Nonsense.”

“I’m sure of it, sir, if you’ll allow me to say so,” said Harry diffidently.

“Smithy was very anxious not to be detained to-morrow. Perhaps you did not know, sir, that Redwing is home again—”

“A false statement!” snapped Mr. Quelch.

“I believe him, sir.”

“Nonsense.”

“I’m sure of it, sir, if you’ll allow me to say so,” said Harry diffidently.

“Smithy was very anxious not to be detained to-morrow. Perhaps you did not know, sir, that Redwing is home again—”

to see Redwing to-morrow, and this has knocked it on the head—I mean—”

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

“The leaf was torn from Vernon-Smith’s history book, Wharton.”

“Even that is against it, sir, now I’ve thought it over,” said Harry.

“If Smithy played such a trick he would be more careful. He could have used a sheet of impot paper.”

“Had he foreseen discovery, certainly!” said Mr. Quelch dryly.

“Are you implying, Wharton, that some other boy used that leaf from Vernon-Smith’s book in order to divert suspicion from himself?”

“It looks like it to me, sir,” said Harry.

“I can’t mention names, of course; but I know there are some fellows who are annoyed at Smithy

“And Vernon-Smith was to go with you?”

“Yes, sir. He will go as it is, if you permit him.”

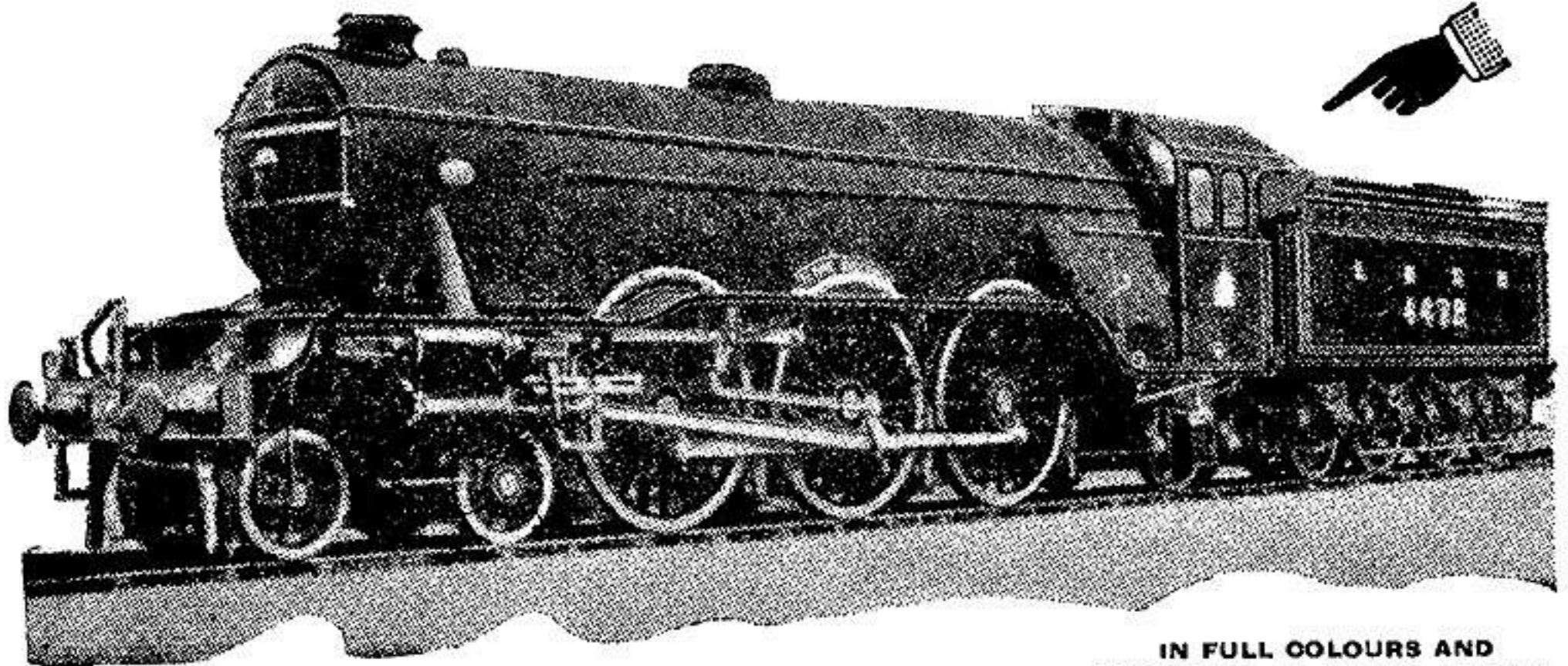
There was another long pause.

“Well,” said Mr. Quelch at last, “I am not convinced, Wharton; but I will give Vernon-Smith the benefit of the doubt, on your assurance. I quite approve of his friendship with Redwing—a boy of very upright character, whose influence can only be for his good. Vernon-Smith has only himself to thank for my very bad opinion of him; but I should be sorry to be unjust. You may tell him, Wharton, that his sentence of detention is rescinded, on your assurance that he is going to Hawkscliff to-morrow to visit Redwing.”

“Thank you, sir!”

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“Redwing! The boy who left last term?”

“Yes, sir. He is back at Hawkscliff now, and you may remember that he was Vernon-Smith’s friend when he was here.”

“Certainly. A very good boy—a fine character,” said Mr. Quelch. “I was very sorry when he left. But what has he to do with this matter?”

“Smithy had arranged to see him to-morrow, sir; and I’m certain he never would have done anything that would stop it,” said Harry.

“We all knew that he was being very careful not to give any offence, sir, so as not to risk being kept in to-morrow. I’m not defending Smithy’s doings all through this term; but I’m sure that he never did what was done to-day in the Form-room. He was very anxious

sticking to Redwing as he does, and they might chip in to keep them apart. Redwing will be gone to sea again soon, and if Smithy doesn’t see him to-morrow, he may miss him altogether.”

Mr. Quelch was silent.

Wharton waited. He had been quite aware that Tom Redwing’s name would have an effect on the Remove master; Mr. Quelch had had a very high opinion of the sailorman’s son.

“You are sure, Wharton, that Vernon-Smith had planned to see Redwing to-morrow?”

“Quite, sir.”

“He may have deceived you.”

“Not in this case, sir, as we—my friends and I—had arranged to go with him. I was going to ask leave from you, sir, to ride up to Hawkscliff to-morrow to call at Redwing’s cottage.”

“You and your friends have leave to go out of school bounds for that purpose. You may go, Wharton!”

Harry Wharton left the study, feeling considerably “bucked.” He went up to the Remove passage at once.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” Bob Cherry met him on the Remove landing. “Where have you been—and wherefore that jolly old grin?”

Harry Wharton laughed. “I’ve had a heart-to-heart talk with Quelch, and got Smithy off,” he answered.

“Good man! Let’s go and tell him the glad news.”

The two juniors went along to Study No. 4. Harold Skinner was there now, listening to a tirade from the Bouncer, with a lurking grin on his face. Smithy was speaking of Mr. Quelch in terms

which would certainly have earned him a flogging had the Remove master heard him.

He scowled at Wharton and Bob Cherry as they appeared in the doorway. The Bounder's temper was at its worst now.

"Seen the old blighter?" he asked. "I've seen Mr. Quelch, if that's what you mean," answered the captain of the Remove quietly.

"Like your cheek to butt in, I think," said Skinner. "Smithy never asked you to beg favours for him, I know that."

The Bounder's eyes glittered. Skinner's words were like fuel on the flame.

"I never asked Wharton to butt in, and never wanted him to," he snapped. "Not that it was any good, anyhow. Hang Quelch!"

"I've spoken to Mr. Quelch," said Harry, "and—"

"Hang him, I tell you! I don't want to hear anything about it!"

"You asked him to let Smithy off?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha! I can see him doing it!" roared Skinner.

"Exactly what you will see!" assented the captain of the Remove.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Smithy's let off."

"Let off!" stammered Skinner. He ceased to laugh very suddenly.

"Just that!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You don't look very pleased."

"It's gammon!" exclaimed Skinner furiously. "Quelch would never let him off—I know he wouldn't—"

"Would you mind shutting up a minute while I speak to Smithy?" asked Wharton politely.

The Bounder was staring blankly at Wharton.

"Mean to say——" he exclaimed.

"Mr. Quelch says he's giving you the benefit of the doubt. You're let off detentions on the understanding that you really go up to Hawkscliff to-morrow to see Redwing."

"Well, my hat!"

Skinner's face was a study.

"Quelch thinks a lot of old Redwing," said Wharton, with an amused glance at Skinner's infuriated face. "I

believe he's glad to hear that you're still pally with him, Smithy. You're free as the giddy air to-morrow."

The Bounder's face had cleared.

"After all he's not a bad old bird," he said. "I can't blame him for being down on me, considering."

"I should jolly well think not," grinned Bob Cherry. "Don't get into any more trouble before to-morrow, Smithy."

"I never got into trouble this time—it was some cad landed it on me," answered Vernon-Smith. "I'm jolly well going to find out who it was, too!"

Wharton looked hard at Skinner.

"Then you'd better keep an eye on fellows who would like to keep you from seeing old Redwing again, Smithy," he said.

"What?"

"That's a tip!" chuckled Bob. And Wharton and Bob Cherry left the study.

Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on Skinner. There was an expression in them that rather alarmed the cad of the Remove.

"Was it you, Skinner?" asked the Bounder, very quietly.

"What do you mean? Was what me, you dummy?" snapped Skinner.

"You know very well what I mean," said the Bounder in the same quiet tone. "Did you sneak into the Form-room before class and put that paper in Quelch's desk to get me detained to-morrow?"

"You know I didn't!" snarled Skinner.

"I know nothing of the kind. It seems to me jolly probable that you did," said the Bounder. "And if I felt certain, I'd——" He rose to his feet, his hands clenched, and his eyes glittering.

Skinner left the study rather hastily. The Bounder was getting a little too near the facts for Skinner to wish to prolong the interview. His face was almost pale with rage as he went. His trick had failed, owing to the captain of the Remove taking a hand in the matter. But Skinner was not at the end of his resources yet.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Strange Man from the Sea!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came cheerily out of the Form-room after class the next morning.

That morning, Smithy had been a model pupil in the Remove-room; he was running no more risks. Mr. Quelch apparently convinced at last that the rebel of the Form was on his best behaviour, had had no fault to find with him. Morning classes ended without trouble; rather to the relief of the Famous Five. It was "all clear" now, as Bob Cherry expressed it, and there was nothing to prevent the juniors from starting for Hawkscliff on their bicycles after dinner.

The chums of the Remove gave no thought to Skinner, and the Bounder, certainly, was not thinking of him. But Skinner was thinking of the Bounder. Immediately he was free of the Form-room, Skinner slipped out of gates and started for Friardale. There was one more shot in Skinner's locker, so to speak. He could do nothing more to prevent the visit to Hawkscliff. But he could intervene very effectively, all the same, to make the visit a "frost." If Tom Redwing was not there when the party arrived—if they found the cabin locked up, and Redwing gone——

Skinner chuckled at that thought. Harry Wharton & Co. would hardly know what to think of such a reception; but they were likely enough to take a charitable view. It was not so with the Bounder. It was very probable that his irritable and touchy temper would be roused at once by such a slight, and that he would take bitter offence. The Bounder prided himself on his keenness, but, as a matter of fact, his readiness to take offence made him an easy prey to a mischief-maker.

Half-way from the school to the village, Skinner drew a paper from his pocket and looked at it, after a glance round. He would not have liked any Greyfriars fellow to see that paper. He stepped aside from the lane, under the trees of Friardale Wood, to read it over.

It was a telegraph form, and the message on it was:

"REDWING, HAWKSCLIFF. SORRY UNABLE TO COME TO HAWKSCLIFF BUT MUST SEE YOU. MEET ME AT LANTHAM STATION FOUR O'CLOCK.—SMITHY."

Skinner grinned over that message. Tom Redwing would receive that telegram early in the afternoon. He would naturally have not the slightest doubt that it came from Smithy. He would go to Lantham to meet his friend, and would arrive at Lantham about the time that Harry Wharton & Co. arrived at Hawkscliff.

If Redwing heeded that telegram—as was fairly certain—he could not possibly meet the Greyfriars party that day. He would not find Smithy at Lantham—he would suppose that Smithy had turned him down in the most cynical way. Smithy would not find Redwing at Hawkscliff, and would suppose that he had been deliberately slighted and neglected. There would be nobody at the Redwing cabin to explain; Skinner knew that Tom's father was away on a deep-sea voyage.

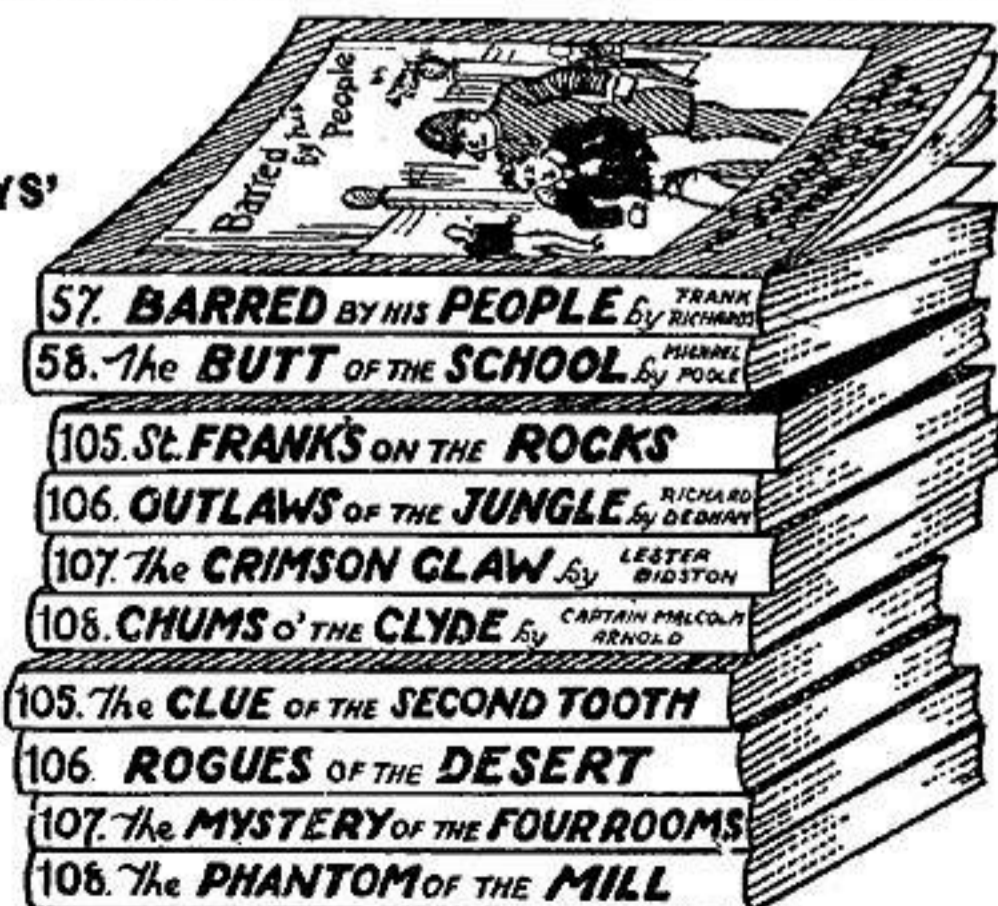
In a few more days, Tom would be gone to sea himself. It was unlikely that there would be another meeting and an explanation between the friends. Skinner felt that this was a master-stroke. He had always disliked Redwing, and Smithy had turned him down,

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"Yah! Beasts!" roared Bunter. "Redwing's a rank outsider!" Vernon-Smith turned to Wharton. "Hold my bike a minute," he said. "Certainly!" The Bounder ran quickly back to the bike-shed. Bunter, as he saw him coming, cut short suddenly the flow of his eloquence and jumped to flee. The Bounder's foot landed behind him, however, as he fled!
(See Chapter 7.)

and now he was killing two birds with one stone. He did not see much risk in the transaction. Who was to know or guess, that he had sent the telegram, even if the Bounder ever heard that a telegram had been sent? Skinner chuckled aloud as he read over his precious message.

A rustle in the trees startled him, and he hastily thrust the paper into his pocket and looked round hurriedly and guiltily.

A man came through the trees towards him—a man of so unusual an aspect in that neighbourhood that Skinner stared at him in surprise.

He was a slightly-built man, with a deep olive complexion, and black eyes as keen as a hawk's. His clothes were those of a seaman, but he wore a Panama hat, and in his brown ears were a pair of gold ear-rings.

Skinner stared at him, wondering who and what he was. He concluded that he was a foreign seaman off some vessel that had put in at Pegg, a few miles from Greyfriars, and who had wandered inland. Obviously he was not English, and his complexion showed that the blood of some darker race flowed in his veins.

He looked as if he had been running. He breathed in short, quick gasps as he came through the trees to the roadside. Passing Skinner, he went quickly out into the middle of the lane, staring first in the direction of Friardale, and then

towards the school. Then he turned back to the Greyfriars junior.

"You see him pass?" he asked, in a low voice, soft and musical though breathless.

"Him? Who?" asked Skinner.

"Man with a wooden leg."

"No."

"He come this way?"

"I haven't seen any johnny with a wooden leg," said Skinner carelessly. "Haven't seen anybody but you about at all."

The half-caste's keen black eyes searched his face.

Again he looked up and down the road; and Skinner made a movement to go on his way.

The man made a quick gesture to him.

"You stop."

"Eh?"

"Stop."

"I'm going to Friardale," said Skinner, puzzled and annoyed. "Why the dickens should I stop?"

"I tell you to stop."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Skinner, puzzled and annoyed. "Why the dickens should I stop?"

"I tell you to stop."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Skinner in amazement. "Catch me taking orders from a deck-hand of some dashed foreign craft! Are you crazy?"

And Skinner tramped into the lane

from the trees, regardless of the foreign seaman.

The next moment he jumped back again with a yell of alarm.

The olive-skinned seaman had plucked a long, thin-bladed knife from the back of his trousers, and the sight of the glittering steel almost scared Skinner out of his wits.

The man's face was dark and evil as he looked at the Greyfriars junior; his brown, sinewy fingers fastened round the handle of the knife, with the grip of a man accustomed to handling such weapons.

"You stop!" he snarled.

Skinner staggered against a tree, his face white. A more courageous fellow than Skinner might have been scared by that long, thin blade, and the evil, dark face of the half-caste.

"I—I—I'll stop if you like!" stammered Skinner. "Keep—keep that away! What do you want?"

The half-caste gave another searching glance round him, and then came closer to Skinner. The knife disappeared again into its hiding-place; but it had had its effect on Skinner.

"You say you not see him?"

"I've seen nobody."

"Who are you—what you do here?" The half-caste was evidently suspicious.

"I'm a schoolboy—I belong to Greyfriars—I'm going to the post-office!" stammered Skinner. "I haven't seen the

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man you're looking for—I give you my word! I'd tell you if I'd seen him. Why shouldn't I?"

"Your name Redwing?"

Skinner jumped.

The effect of the question obviously roused the half-caste's suspicions again. His hand went to his knife.

"Tell me the truth," he said, showing white teeth in a snarl like a wild animal. "What you think your life is worth? In the islands there are ten—twenty—thirty who have fallen under my knife! Tell me truth!"

"My name's Skinner—it's the truth! I—I—" stuttered the scared junior.

"You know name Redwing?"

"Yes, I know a fellow of that name—he was at my school once. That's all. On my word—"

"Where is he?"

"Hawkscliff—that's up the coast, nearly ten miles from here."

The man's hawkish eyes searched his face. Obviously, had the junior been named Redwing, the half-caste would have supposed that he knew something of the wooden-legged man—why, Skinner could not even begin to guess. What connection there could be between Tom Redwing and this half-savage from the South Seas was a mystery to Skinner.

"Hawkscliff!" repeated the half-caste, as if memorising the word. "You sure Redwing at Hawkscliff?"

"Yes, yes!" panted Skinner.

"His house—what name?"

"It's a cabin—the first in the village street when you get there from this side."

"You tell me way."

Skinner hurriedly explained the way up to Hawkscliff from Pegg. That this strange man was no friend of Redwing's was pretty clear, and it was probable that he was a dangerous visitor to send to the sailorman's cottage. But Skinner did not give a thought to that. He was only too desperately anxious to send the man on his way, and see the last of him. The half-caste listened, his eyes on Skinner's face. The wretched fellow's terror was plain enough, and probably convinced the man from the South Seas that he was speaking the truth.

"Good!" said the half-caste at last. "But hear—if I find you lie I come back, and I cut you to ribbons—twenty, thirty pieces—you savvy?"

He made a gesture towards the knife tucked away at the back of his trousers. Skinner felt almost sick with fear.

"I've told you the truth—you can ask anyone in Pegg the way up to Hawkscliff by the cliffs—and lots of people know where Redwing's cottage is—"

The half-caste nodded and vanished into the trees again.

Skinner heard him brushing the foliage as he ran swiftly in the direction of Pegg and the sea.

"Oh!" gasped Skinner.

He started for Friardale at a rapid run, anxious to place a safe distance between himself and the strange man from the sea.

Not till he was in the village did Skinner feel quite safe.

The strange affair amazed him. The half-caste was in search of a man with a wooden leg, and apparently expected to find him if he found Redwing. It was puzzling enough to Skinner. But now that he was safe, and his terror had passed, he wondered whether the man was, after all, some half-crazy foreigner, and not to be heeded seriously.

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It seemed likely enough. But Skinner did not feel wholly at ease in his mind about his action in giving the man aid to find Redwing's cottage. Still, the half-caste could have obtained the information easily enough at the Anchor at Pegg. And Skinner remembered, too, that his telegram would take Redwing away from Hawkscliff, for the afternoon; he would not be there if the foreign seaman reached the place. It was not one of Skinner's customs to think much about others; and he dismissed the matter from his mind as he went to the village post-office, where the telegram was duly dispatched.

Skinner walked back to Greyfriars, keeping a keen eye open for the man with the gold ear-rings.

But there was no sign to be seen of him; and Skinner dismissed the affair from his mind once more as he reached the school.

He was in time for dinner with the Remove, and he went in with a smiling face. After dinner the Famous Five and Vernon-Smith went for their

Cliff House with Hazeldene, and Hazel had laughed as if at a good joke. He had been prepared to join Skinner & Co. on a shady excursion to some forbidden haunt; and Skinner & Co., instead of displaying a proper appreciation of the honour, had up-ended him in the quad, and left him to sort himself out.

Having found his fascinating society at a discount in other directions, Bunter had decided upon the Famous Five. Hence his appearance in the bike-shed when the juniors were preparing their machines for the ride.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that a blue-bottle?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh! It's Bunter!"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, you're going to see old Redwing, what? Splendid chap!"

"Eh?"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. They were all of opinion that Tom Redwing was a splendid chap. But Bunter had never expressed that opinion before. Bunter had always taken the view that the sailorman's son was a rank outsider. He was poor—which was a perfectly disgraceful thing in Bunter's eyes. He worked for his daily bread—which was even more shocking, if possible. Such a character was really scarcely worthy for Bunter to wipe his aristocratic boots on. A kick from Bunter would have been an honour to him; a punch on the nose from the Owl of the Remove would have been a distinction. Certainly Bunter had never ventured to honour and distinguish Tom Redwing in that manner when he was at Greyfriars. Still, that was his opinion, and he made no secret of it.

So his sudden conversion to a better view was quite a surprise.

"Fine fellow, what?" said Bunter.

"The linefulness of the esteemed fellow is terrific," said Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. "But the worthy and snobbish Bunter has never seen it before."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"What are you getting at, you fat fool?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Shut up, anyhow, and clear!" said the Bounder.

"I don't think you ought to slang a chap because he thinks a lot of old Redwing," said Bunter, blinking at the Bounder. "Who cares for his being a common fellow? I don't. I'm no snob! I took notice of him sometimes when he was at Greyfriars. I'm ready to take notice of him again."

"He would be no end bucked if he heard that," said Frank Nugent gravely.

"The buckfulness would be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

"Say what you like, he's a splendid chap," said Bunter. "I always liked him and—and admired him."

"Well, my hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Do you want us to give him your kind regards, Bunter, and tell him that you're trying not to be such a silly, snobbish worm as you were when he was here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull! You fellows are going to see him this afternoon," said Bunter. "I suppose you'll have tea up at Hawkscliff?"

"The supposefulness is correct."

"He's poor, of course," said Bunter. "But I suppose he earned something when he went to sea. I suppose he will be able to stand you something decent for tea, what?"

"If you're worrying about our tea,

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bicycles, and Skinner grinned as he watched them go. His first scheme had failed; but his second was certain to be successful; and he wished them joy of a ten-mile ride for nothing.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER rolled into the doorway of the bike-shed, and turned his big spectacles on the six juniors who were taking down their machines. Six fellows were going up to Hawkscliff; but William George Bunter's idea was that the number should be seven.

Bunter was at a loose end that afternoon. Being a gregarious youth, he was dissatisfied with his own company—as most other fellows were, as a matter of fact. But quite a lot of Remove fellows that afternoon had shown a strong disinclination to be the victims of Bunter's gregariousness.

Lord Mauleverer had locked his study door at the sound of Bunter's fairy footsteps. He had offered to go over to

fatty, you can chuck it," said Bob. "It's no business of yours, for one thing."

"The fact is, I want to see old Redwing again," said Bunter. "Being one of his friends and—and admirers, I'm very keen on seeing him, and—and giving him the right hand of fellowship and—and all that, you know. As for the trouble of getting up to Hawkscliff, that's nothing. I'm prepared to stand a taxi, for the sake of seeing old Redwing and cheering him up. You know how it bucks the lower classes to be taken notice of by a gentleman."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Look here, I'll come!" said Bunter. "I'll go in now and telephone for a taxi and foot the bill myself. I really want to see old Redwing again, and expense is no object."

"You fat idiot!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Ready, you fellows?" said Bob. "Get out of the way, Bunter, or there will be a collision between a bike and a porpoise."

"Look here, you fellows don't want to fag ten miles on bikes. Come with me in my taxi—"

"And pay the taxi-man when we get to Hawkscliff, what?" chuckled Bob. "We know how you stand a taxi, Bunter. We've been there before."

"We have—we has!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Shift!" said Vernon-Smith, wheeling his bike to the doorway.

Bunter did not shift, apparently not being finished yet. But the front wheel of Smithy's bike shifted him, and he sat down with a roar.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ta-ta, old fat bean!" said Bob, as he wheeled his machine out after the Bounder. "Come up to Hawkscliff in a taxi in solitary state, and we'll be glad to see you."

"The gladfulness will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

The six juniors wheeled their machines away, and Billy Bunter sat and blinked after them in great wrath and indignation. His sudden conversion to the view that Redwing was a splendid fellow was quite explained; he was thinking of a spread at Redwing's cabin. No doubt the sailorman's son would do the best he could for his guests; and it was quite likely to be a good feed, in Bunter's opinion—and he was perfectly prepared to take the lion's share of it. But it was quite certain that Bunter would not stand himself a taxi to go to Hawkscliff. Bunter never stood a taxi without at least one fellow-passenger who could be left to deal with the taxi-man after the drive.

"Yah! Beasts!" roared Bunter, as the Removites departed. "Rotters! Tell that cad Redwing he's a rank outsider! Tell him that from me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll get a measly tea, anyhow, in that hovel!" yelled Bunter. "Yah! Public School chaps, going to tea with a longshoreman! You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourselves! Yah!"

"Hold my bike a minute, Wharton," said the Bounder.

"Certainly!"

Vernon-Smith ran quickly back to the bike shed. Bunter, as he saw him coming, cut short suddenly the flow of his eloquence. He jumped up to flee, and the Bounder's foot landed behind him as he fled.

There was a terrific roar from Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was strewn on the cold, unsympathetic earth, roar-

ing. Leaving him roaring, the chums of the Remove mounted their machines and rode away cheerily for Hawkscliff.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Tricked!

TOM REDWING glanced round the little living-room in his cottage. There were signs of preparation for company in the little room.

Tom's sunburnt face was bright and cheery. That afternoon he was to see Smithy again, the old pal from whom he had been estranged; and with Smithy were coming the fellows he had liked best when he had been at Greyfriars.

It was a long ride up to Hawkscliff, and it was certain that the Removites would be ready for doing justice to a substantial tea, and Tom had done his best. Quite early in the afternoon all was ready. The little cabin consisted only of one living-room downstairs, with a tiny kitchen attached, and two bedrooms, up a narrow, dark staircase. Such as it was, it was tidy and scrupulously clean. It had been deserted for months while Tom was away at sea with his father, but immediately on his return he had set to work to clear it of dust and cobwebs, and the place was spick and span now.

For some days Redwing had been living alone at the cabin, fending for himself. His father was gone to sea again, on a deep-sea voyage, and Tom did not expect to see him again for the best part of a year. In his last coasting trip Tom had earned enough to save for a week or two of rest before he sailed again, and he was glad to put in a few days at his old home, among the rough and friendly associates of his boyhood, and, above all, within touch of Greyfriars. Now that he had found that Smithy was eager to renew the old friendship, Redwing had nothing more to ask.

What he would have liked—to return to Greyfriars School himself—was impossible, if he did not choose to accept charity from Mr. Samuel Vernon Smith. Tom had put that quite out of his mind, in spite of the urging of the Bounder. But next best, was to see Smithy again, and find him a faithful friend. And next best to that was to see the friendly faces and hear the cheery voices of Harry Wharton & Co.

Redwing looked round the little room and smiled. It would be a good deal like tea in a Greyfriars study, and he had walked three miles that morning to lay in supplies of a kind

that could not be got in the little straggling fishing village on the cliffs.

He strolled out of the doorway into the bright August sunshine and looked down the irregular street dotted with cabins, many of them with nets hanging out to dry. It was two o'clock, and he knew that the Greyfriars fellows could not reach Hawkscliff for a couple of hours yet. But his glance dwelt on the rugged road by which they would come.

A cyclist came in sight, pushing his bike up a steep section of the road—a man in uniform.

Redwing glanced at him rather curiously.

It was the postman who brought letters once a day—in the morning. In the afternoon his coming could only mean a telegram for some inhabitant of Hawkscliff.

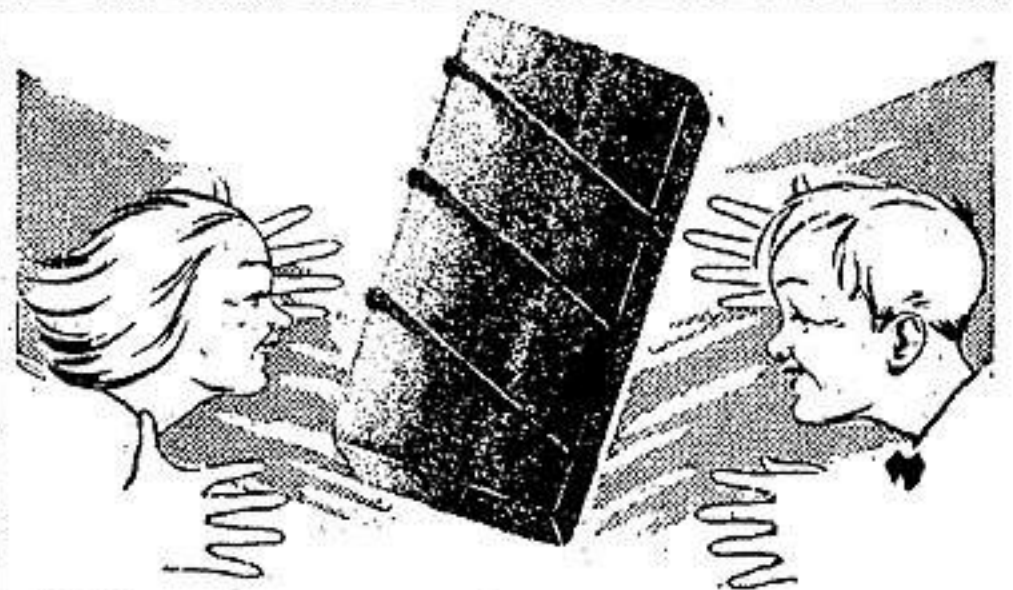
Telegrams at Hawkscliff were few and far between; indeed, letters were somewhat rare. Tom wondered whether the man was bringing a telegram for him, in which case it could only be from Smithy.

Tom's cheery face clouded a little. If Smithy could not come, if the little party was off, it was a deep disappointment for the sailorman's son. He could not remain idly at Hawkscliff for many days. Wednesday was the next half-holiday at Greyfriars, and before Wednesday he had intended to be on the water again.

The postman remounted his machine in the village street and came pedalling on.

Redwing hoped to see him pass. But he did not pass; he jumped off the bicycle opposite the cabin.

(Continued on next page.)



They can't resist it!

No children can. Why even Aunties and Uncles are tempted and fall sometimes. It's every child's favourite, as toothsome and as popular as ever. It's made in bigger pieces now and of course it's the most wholesome sweetmeat imaginable.

Cadbury's

2d. Turkish Delight 2d.

Try 2d. Marshmallows too

See the name 'Cadbury' on every piece of chocolate.

"Something for me?" asked Redwing.

"It's a telegram, Tom."

"Oh!"

Redwing slit open the buff envelope.

His face clouded more deeply as he read. Not for an instant did it cross his mind that the telegram was a trick; how could it? He had almost forgotten the existence of Skinner and the enmity of the cad of the *Remove*. Even if he had remembered him he would not have thought of him now.

Smithy could not come.

There was no mention of his friends, but evidently they were not coming as Smithy was not, since Smithy asked him to go over to Lantham to meet him there.

It was a deep disappointment, but not so deep as it might have been. He was going to see Smithy, after all.

"Any answer, Tom?"

"No," said Redwing.

And the postman pedalled away again and disappeared.

Redwing glanced at the telegram again. Smithy wanted to see him at Lantham Station at four. There was nothing odd about that. Redwing remembered that Smithy's father sometimes came down to Lantham, and that the *Bounder* had gone over to the market town to meet him there on half-holidays. Probably that had happened to-day; and if it was so, the *Bounder* could not have refused his father, and certainly Tom would not have desired him to do so. Having to go to Lantham, Smithy wanted Redwing to meet him there. It was natural enough.

It was a long distance from Hawkscliff to Lantham, and Tom had to go on foot. There was no time for him to lose if he was not to be late for the appointment.

He sighed a little, but he did not allow his mind to dwell on his disappointment. He was going to see Smithy, anyhow, and that was the chief thing.

He went in for his cap and then left the cottage, closing the door after him on the latch. Doors were seldom locked in Hawkscliff; indeed, Redwing's cottage door had no lock that could be locked from outside, though there was a bolt on the inside that was seldom or never used. Tramps and vagrants never came so far off the beaten track, and probably no theft had occurred at Hawkscliff in a hundred years. There was, indeed, little in any of the rugged cabins to tempt a thief.

Redwing walked away down the rugged street. For half a mile his way took him in the direction of Pegg, and there he had to branch off on a path over the cliffs to reach the Lantham road.

He climbed the rough path steadily, without fatigue, and paused at a height—not to rest, but to look back at the sea. Wide and blue it rolled as far as the eye could reach, with the smoke of a steamer far out, two or three white sails glancing nearer at hand, and closer inshore half a dozen brown fishing-boats belonging to Hawkscliff.

Tap, tap, tap!

Redwing started a little at that unusual and unexpected sound in the silence of the cliffs.

Tap, tap!

Below him was a rugged path along the cliffs. It was twenty yards down in actual distance, but half a mile away for all that, for it could only be reached by following the higher path for a distance to a spot where a descent was practicable. On the lower path a man with a wooden leg was tap-tapping along. His face, darkened by sun and

wind almost to the colour of mahogany, was bedewed with perspiration, and as Redwing looked down at him the wooden-legged seaman stopped and mopped his brow with a red bandanna handkerchief.

"Ahoy, matey!"

He waved a brown hand to Redwing and hailed him, staring up over the rugged cliffs at the lad above.

"Ahoy!" called back Redwing, with a smile.

"Can you give a sailorman his bearings, somy? Will I fetch Hawkscliff on this course?"

"Right on," called back Redwing. "Keep on till that path ends on the beach, and then you'll see Hawkscliff to starboard."

"Thanky, mate!"

Redwing waved his hand and resumed his way. As he passed over the higher cliffs he heard for some time the tip-tapping of the mahogany-faced man's wooden leg tapping along the rocky path to Hawkscliff. But the sound died away, and Redwing forgot the incident as he tramped on for the Lantham road. He little dreamed at that moment of the strange influence the coming of the wooden-legged man to Hawkscliff was to have on his life.

It was a long and hard tramp, in the blazing sun, to Lantham. But Redwing reached the market town at last as four o'clock was chiming.

He hurried through the streets to the railway station.

It was only a few minutes past four when he reached the station and looked about the entrance. The *Bounder* was not there. The sailorman's son settled down cheerfully to wait. If Smithy was with his father, as seemed probable, it was likely enough that the millionaire would keep him late for the appointment.

Half an hour passed, and Redwing's cheery face clouded. An hour—an hour and a half—and still Smithy did not come.

People hurried in and out of the station, and Redwing scanned every youthful face that came near him, but the face of the *Bounder* of Greyfriars never met his eyes.

Redwing's disappointment was bitter.

He was not angry; he knew that Smithy would never willingly have turned him down. Something had happened to prevent Smithy keeping the appointment; something, Redwing was sure, beyond the *Bounder's* own control. But there it was—obviously the *Bounder* was not coming.

With a lingering hope Tom Redwing remained at the station until six o'clock. But the *Bounder* did not come, and at last he turned his steps in the direction of home, his brow clouded, and all the bright cheerfulness gone from his face.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Encounter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were wheeling their bikes up a steep acclivity, less than a mile from their destination, when Bob Cherry made that ejaculation.

The juniors were following a path across the chalk cliffs, which cut off a considerable distance of the road, but the way was too rugged and steep for riding. It was a lonely spot, high over the sea, and they did not expect to meet any living thing on their way but the whirling seagulls. But from among the chalk rocks a man came suddenly into view, tap-tapping with a wooden leg.

He stopped in the path of the juniors, and as the path was narrow, with the Greyfriars fellows in single file, they had to halt. Bob Cherry, who was in the lead, hailed the newcomer genially.

The man stopped and wiped his mahogany face with a red handkerchief. He looked hot from exertion, but more uneasy than fatigued. Even as he faced the Greyfriars cyclists he was looking to right and left with quick, furtive glances, almost as if he expected to see some grisly phantom start out of the recesses of the rocks into the blazing August sunshine.

"Ahoy, mateys!" he sang out, in a deep, throaty voice.

"Ahoy, old bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Shiver my timbers, mess-mate!"

The wooden-legged man stared at him, and then grinned.

"You're a 'carty young swab, you are," he said. "You'll 'ave your little joke with an old sailorman."

He wiped his perspiring brow again.

"The fact is, old scout, you're blocking up the path," said Bob. "There's hardly room to go round you. Do you want anything?"

"Aye, aye! Jest that!"

"Give it a name!"

"You young swabs have come up here over the cliffs, ain't you?"

"We young swabs have done just that," agreed Bob.

"Have you seen a covey with a face like coffee, and gold ear-rings in his ears, anywheres in the offing?"

"No," said Bob. "We've seen nobody since we left the road half a mile back?"

"Sure you ain't seen him?" asked the wooden-legged sailorman anxiously. "You'd know the cut of his jib, if you clapped your headlights on him, I reckon. A half-caste from the islands, he is, with gold ear-rings in his ears, and a Malaita knife in the back of his trousers. Name of Silvio."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Haven't seen the chap. You fellows haven't, of course?" he added, glancing round.

The juniors shook their heads.

The wooden-legged man was still looking about him unquietly, and over his shoulder, as if he feared to see the man he described start up behind him. It was easy to perceive that the man with the gold ear-rings was no friend of his, and that the wooden-legged man feared him.

"I seen him, sneaking on the cliffs," went on the sailorman. "I seen him, but I reckon he never seed me. Jest arter I met a young bloke who gave me my bearings for Hawkscliff. I seen him—and you can lay that I tacked off my course, young gentleman, to give him a wide berth. 'Cause why, I ain't looking for to get a Malaita knife in my ribs."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"And now I reckon I've lost my bearings agin, 'cause why, I'm a stranger here," said the wooden-legged man. "Mebbe you'll tell me whether I can fetch Hawkscliff on this tack?"

"We're going to Hawkscliff now," said Harry Wharton. "Follow on and we'll guide you there, if you like."

"Thanks kindly, sir," said the wooden-legged man, touching his old hat. "If you young gentlemen don't object to an honest sailorman in tow."

"Glad to show you the way," said Harry, with a smile.

"Let's get on," said the *Bounder* abruptly. "We're rather in a burry, my man!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"



Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed, as he stooped, and took aim with the missile. At every second the juniors expected to see the long knife descend upon the helpless sailorman, and it was no time to stand on ceremony. Whizz! "Oh, good shot!" panted Wharton. The jagged piece of rock struck the half-caste on the side of the head, with a fearful crash!
(See Chapter 10.)

The wooden-legged man hopped aside from the path, to allow the juniors to pass. Then he hopped down to the path again, and followed on behind the file of fellows wheeling their machines.

Tap, tap, tap, sounded his wooden leg on the rocky path, as he followed on.

The juniors glanced back at him several times, in some surprise and curiosity. They saw his uneasy glances searching every opening of the cliffs near the path, and every now and then he shoved his hand into a pocket, as if to assure himself that something was there—and once they saw him draw out a huge clasp knife. Obviously, he was in fear of the half-caste named Silvio.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

Ahead of the juniors, a man leaped into the path from the rocks, with the agility of a mountain goat.

The juniors stared at him, recognising at once the description the wooden-legged man had given.

The newcomer was a lithe, active fellow, with a face of deep olive, and gold ear-rings in his ears.

He paid no heed to the Greyfriars juniors.

His hawkish, black eyes gleamed past them, at the wooden-legged man who was following in their wake.

"Ben Dance!" he shouted.

The tapping of the wooden leg

stopped. There was a gasp of alarm from the wooden-legged man as he halted.

"I have found you!"

The half-caste came racing along the path.

With a cry of terror, Ben Dance quitted the path, and went clambering away desperately over the rugged cliff towards the sea.

"Here, look out!" shouted Bob Cherry angrily, as the half-caste rushed by.

The man Silvio did not heed him.

He shoved roughly by, and Bob staggered with his machine, and Silvio brushed by and shoved savagely past the other juniors.

So sudden and fierce was his rush, that the Greyfriars fellows were hurled right and left among their clattering machines, and in a few seconds the half-caste was past them, and clambering up the cliff after the wooden-legged man.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

"The cheeky cad!" roared the Bounder furiously. "Get after him and collar him!"

"The terrific ruffian!" stuttered Hurree Janset Ram Singh, picking himself and his bicycle up.

Harry Wharton put his machine against a rock and stood looking after the half-caste. His brow was darkly-knitted. Ben Dance had vanished

among the chalk cliffs, and the half-caste was disappearing in savage pursuit of him.

"We'd better chip in here, you fellows," said the captain of the Remove quietly. "That foreign fellow looks as if he means murder! Let's get after them—leave the bikes here."

"Come on," said Johnny Bull.

And the six juniors, leaving their machines on the path, started at a run in pursuit of the half-caste.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Handling the Half-Caste!

"GREAT pip—look!" Wharton panted out the words.

For a considerable distance, the juniors had scrambled and clambered over the rugged cliffs, catching glimpses every few moments of the half-caste tearing ahead.

The man with the gold ear-rings did not cast a single backward glance. Either he did not know that he was followed, or he did not care. His attention was concentrated on the man he had called Ben Dance.

In spite of the wooden leg, Dance was fleeing at a great speed, leaping and hopping among the rocks with
(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

wonderful agility. But the lithe half-caste had run him down at last; and the juniors came in sight of both of them, as Silvio leaped on the wooden-legged man and bore him to the ground with a crash.

A hoarse cry of terror escaped Ben Dance as he went down, and he struggled wildly. The half-caste planted a knee on his brawny chest, and there was a flash like lightning, as his long Malaita knife came out and circled in the air over the sailor's terrified face.

"Good heavens!" gasped Bob.

For one sickening moment, the juniors believed that murder was about to be done, and they were too far off to intervene. But the flashing knife did not descend.

"The chart!" Silvio's voice came to their ears, as he shouted fiercely at the struggling man under him. "The chart!"

The sailorman still struggled.

"Fool! The chart—give me the chart!" hissed the half-caste. "You want me take it from your dead body? That, if you do not give it! The Caca chart—or you are dead!"

The knife flashed before the wooden-legged man's eyes.

The juniors were still at a distance; too far to intervene. But Bob Cherry scooped and grasped a loose piece of rock.

His eyes gleamed, as he stopped, and took aim with the missile. At every second the juniors expected to see the long knife descend upon the helpless man, and it was no time to stand on ceremony.

Whiz!

"Oh, good shot!" panted Wharton.

The jagged piece of rock struck the half-caste on the side of the head, with a fearful crash.

A yell like that of a wild animal broke from the half-caste as he reeled over and fell on the ground beside his victim.

He was not stunned, but he lay dazed for several seconds—and one second would have been enough for the wooden-legged man. Ben Dance was up in a twinkling and fleeing for his life, his wooden leg tap-tapping on the rocks as he went.

"Collar the brute!" panted Nugent.

The juniors came on with a rush.

The half-caste sat up dazedly. The knife was still in his long, sinewy fingers, but the Remove fellows gave him no chance to handle it. Bob Cherry was the first to reach him, and he kicked fiercely at the brown hand, and the knife went spinning away from the numbed fingers, clattering down at a distance.

The half-caste gave a cry and sprang to his feet. But he was hardly on his feet when Harry Wharton's fist landed full in his face with all the strength of the captain of the Remove behind the

blow. The man from the islands went down like a log.

"Good man!" grinned Bob breathlessly.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "Collar the beast! Give him beans!"

The six juniors grasped the sprawling half-caste together. The man from the islands struggled wildly and savagely, tearing and clutching like a wildcat.

He was a slightly-built man, but there was great strength in his lithe limbs. For some minutes the Remove fellows had their hands full with him.

They did not handle him gently. As a savage hand tore the Bounder like a claw Smithy hit out hard and his fist crashed with stunning force in the olive face.

The half-caste went down again, and he was not given another chance to rise.

The juniors piled on him and pinned him down.

Still wriggling and struggling, the man with the ear-rings was pinned to the ground, bruised and breathless.

His face was convulsed with rage, and his black eyes gleamed like those of a wild animal. Had a deadly weapon been in his hand there was no doubt that he would have used it. But he was disarmed and powerless now.

He panted out words in an unknown tongue—words that were utterly unintelligible to the Greyfriars fellows, but which they very easily guessed were curses in some South Seas' dialect.

"Chuck it, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "We've got you safe now! What you want is a thumping good hiding, you murderous rascal!"

"Pick up the knife, one of you chaps," said Wharton. "Put it where it will be safe!"

"You bet!" said Nugent.

He left his comrades to hold the half-caste and picked up the fallen knife. He looked round and flung it into a crevice, from which it was very unlikely that the weapon would ever be recovered.

"Let me go!" The half-caste was speaking in English again now. "This is no affair belong you! Leave me!"

"It's anybody's affair to keep you from committing murder, you wild beast!" said Harry Wharton.

The half-caste's black eyes blazed at him.

"No affair belong you!" he snarled. "I follow him from Apia, and here find him. I find him again. You leave me alone. No affair belong you!"

Then a sudden suspicion seemed to flash into his mind.

"You Redwing?" he exclaimed.

Wharton started.

"What? Redwing? What the thump do—"

"You Redwing, that why you save him, savvy now!" panted the half-caste. "He come here find you, but you never find Caca treasure. I, Silvio Xero, kill you—kill ten—twenty—thirty—"

"My hat! This chap is a wholesale merchant," said Bob Cherry. "Must be a jolly part of the world where he comes from!"

"What on earth does he mean about Redwing?" asked Frank Nugent, in wonder. "He can't know old Redwing."

"It's not a common name," said Harry. "He must mean Redwing of Hawkscliff; that wooden-legged johnnie was going there. I suppose he's some sailorman who knows Redwing, and this brute has heard the name."

The half-caste stared from one face to another, and then fixed his black, glittering eyes upon Wharton again.

"You no Redwing?" he asked.

"No, you rotter; but Redwing is a friend of ours, if you mean the same chap—and I suppose you do."

"You know about Caca chart belong Redwing?" snarled the half-caste.

"I heard him asking that wooden-legged johnnie for a chart," said Bob. "Must be something the man is taking to old Redwing, and this rotter is after it."

"You not know?" exclaimed Silvio.

"Not till you told us, old brown bean!" grinned Bob.

Harry Wharton looked round.

The wooden-legged sailorman had long since vanished, and was undoubtedly at a distance by that time.

"I suppose that man Dance is safe enough now," said the captain of the Remove.

"Very likely at Hawkscliff by this time," said the Bounder. "Look here, we shall be jolly late! Let's get off."

"I don't like letting this brute go!"

"We can't carry him along with us, I suppose. If that wooden-legged chap is in danger he can go to the police," said the Bounder impatiently. "We're wasting time."

Wharton nodded.

A good deal of time had been lost, and it was a long walk back to the spot where the bicycles had been left.

"Let him go!" said Harry.

The juniors released the half-caste. He sprang away from them immediately with the activity of a cat. In a moment, giving no further heed to the Greyfriars fellows, he was clambering away among the cliffs, and in a minute or less he had vanished from sight.

"Come on!" said Vernon-Smith.

"It's a jolly queer business," said Bob Cherry, as the juniors started to return to their machines. "Reddy will be interested to hear about this. What on earth is the Caca chart that that putty-coloured johnnie was burbling about, you fellows?"

"I give that up," said Wharton. "Redwing may know. It's plain enough that it's something that belongs to Redwing, and the man Dance was taking it to him. I dare say he's at Redwing's cottage by this time, and he will see Reddy before we do."

The juniors reached their bicycles at last and wheeled on to Hawkscliff, considerably puzzled by the strange affair. Much later than they had anticipated, they arrived at the little fishing village under the chalk cliffs.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hand to Hand!

"A HOY, shipmate!"

The deep, powerful voice boomed through the little cottage, awakening every echo.

But only the echoes answered.

"Ahoy! Aho-o-o-y! Show a leg, there!" boomed the mahogany-faced seaman, as he stood in the doorway of Redwing's cabin.

Ben Dance, the wooden-legged man, had reached Hawkscliff, thanks to the intervention of the Greyfriars juniors, safe and sound. Harry Wharton & Co. were still far away when Ben Dance opened the cottage door and his deep voice boomed in. An ancient mariner leaning on a post at the street's end had pointed out Redwing's cottage to him, Dance being a stranger at Hawkscliff. His powerful voice echoed and re-echoed through the little building, and he stumped in at last on his wooden leg, realising that nobody was at home.

"Shiver me!" he grunted, as he dropped into a chair and mopped his face with the red handkerchief. "Port at last, and nobody here! Shiver me!"

For some time the wooden-legged man sat resting and mopping his damp brow and grumbling to himself. The long tramp on the cliffs and his dodging and twisting to escape the half-caste had tired him. Apparently he had counted on finding one of the Redwings at home, at least, either the father or the son. John Redwing was many a long hundred miles away on the wide ocean; but Tom Redwing would have been at home but for Skinner's miserable trickery.

As it was, there was no one to greet the wooden-legged man, who had travelled from the Southern hemisphere on a strange mission.

He looked round the little room, and noted the signs of recent occupation. The table was set for tea, just as Redwing had left it when he received the telegram and started for Lantham. The wooden-legged seaman drew comfort from that circumstance. Evidently the cottage was tenanted, and he had only to wait for the tenant to return. But he was plainly uneasy; and he stepped to the doorway, and keeping back out of sight, peered into the rugged street. The thought of the half-caste was in his uneasy mind. What had happened after he had fled, leaving Silvio in the grasp of the schoolboys, he did not know; but he feared further pursuit. Well he knew the savage tenacity of the man from the islands.

He shut the door at last, groped for the bolt, and found it, and shot it into the socket. He stumped into the little kitchen at the back, and found the door to the latch, and bolted that door also. Then he seemed more easy in his mind.

But he was still grumbling audibly to himself. He muttered; disconnected sentences indicated that he was anxious to hand over what he carried, to the rightful owner, and to go his way. His fear of the man who had dogged him across half the world was deep-seated.

He peered again and again from the little diamond-paned window that looked on the street, the sea and the beach. And suddenly he trembled, and

panted hoarsely, as a slim, lithe figure appeared among the cabins.

"That sea-lawyer!" he muttered huskily.

It was the half-caste.

Silvio Xero was looking about him with sharp, flashing eyes, as he came up the rugged street of Hawkscliff.

With thumping heart, hardly breathing, the wooden-legged sailorman watched him from the window.

Silvio evidently did not know which was Redwing's cottage—possibly did not know even that he was in Hawkscliff at all. It was possible that he might pass on.

Ben Dance groaned as he saw the half-caste stop and speak with the old longshoreman who leaned, smoking his pipe, on a post in the distance. He saw the longshoreman pointing with his pipe, and he was pointing at the cottage from the little window of which the wooden-legged man stared with haggard eyes. The half-caste came on at a run.

"Shiver me!" groaned Ben Dance.

Knock!

It seemed hardly a moment before the half-caste reached the cottage door, and knocked.

Dance made no movement or sound.

Knock!

Would the man from the South Seas suppose that the cottage was untenanted, and go? It was a bare chance.

The door-handle turned; the door shook, and shook again. Then—knock, knock, knock!

A shadow crossed the sunny window. Instantly Dance ducked down, realising that the half-caste was about to stare in at the little panes.

A face was pressed to the glass; a sharp nose was flattened there, and two fierce, black eyes scanned the interior of the room.

Ben Dance crouched low, motionless, silent. He was out of the range of vision of the face pressed to the glass.

A minute later the face was withdrawn.

The wooden-legged seaman breathed gaspingly, and wiped the sweat from his forehead. Would the man go?

But a few moments later he heard a sound as of a wild animal prowling round the little building. The back

door was tried, shaken, and shaken again. The bolt held it fast. Then suddenly there came a crash, and a clatter of flying fragments of glass. The little kitchen window had been smashed in by a fragment of rock grasped in the hands of the half-caste. There was a struggling, scraping sound of a man forcing himself through a narrow aperture.

Shaking from head to foot, Dance rose to his feet, and dragged the big clasp-knife from his pocket, and opened it with his teeth. The seaman was no coward, but only too plainly he feared the savage half-caste; and doubtless he knew, too, that he was no match for the Islander in a life-or-death struggle. But desperation seemed to nerve him, and he tramped into the little kitchen, the clasp-knife gripped in his hand, nerving himself to resist the entrance of the pursuer who sought him.

With panther-like agility, Silvio Xero plunged through the broken window, and landed on his feet, dodging the desperate blow that the wooden-legged seaman aimed at him. He sprang away from the seaman, through the doorway into the living-room of the cottage, and Ben Dance, in desperation, rushed after him to slash again before the half-caste could draw his knife. He did not know or guess that the ruffian had been disarmed. Silvio dodged round the table, and for a moment or two it seemed that the position of the two had been reversed, and that the half-caste was now the fugitive, and Dance the pursuer. But it was only for a few moments. Silvio caught up a chair and turned on the wooden-legged man as he came after him, and hurled it at the sailorman's legs. Ben Dance stumbled over, and though he did not fall, the half-caste was upon him before he could recover, with the spring of a tiger.

Crash!

Ben Dance went down heavily in the half-caste's grasp, and the next moment the clasp-knife was torn from his hand and flashed over his head.

The hapless man closed his eyes involuntarily, expecting the instant slash of the steel.

(Continued on next page.)

ALL ABOUT THIS WEEK'S HANDSOME FREE GIFT, "THE LORD NELSON." By A Railway Expert.

FIVE hundred and twenty-one tons of metal, wood, and passengers, hurtling along the permanent-way at 83 miles per hour. Such is the load and speed of the Lord Nelson, the new Southern Railway locomotive which has the proud distinction of being the most powerful express passenger engine at present running in Britain.

It is No. 1 of a brand-new type of locomotive, and all of its kind yet to be built will have the honour of being known as members of the Nelson class. As the ever-increasing weight of the fast passenger traffic on the Southern Railway system demands it, so will more engines of this supremely hefty class be turned out.

The Lord Nelson is the product of the clever brain of the S.R. Company's chief mechanical engineer, Mr. R. E. L. Maunsell, whose confidence in his creation, built at the company's Eastleigh works, was fully justified on the

engine's initial trip. Without trying to break records, the Lord Nelson came through its final test with flying colours.

With its 521-ton load—a record weight on those steep gradients, the Lord Nelson steamed out of Waterloo Station at eleven o'clock, and steamed into Salisbury an hour and a half later, with a half-minute of the scheduled time to spare, pulling 161 tons more than the King Arthur class of locomotives, which normally hauled the same Atlantic Coast Express, was ever expected to attempt.

That run is done in two stages—Waterloo to Salisbury (83½ miles) in 90 minutes normal time; from Salisbury to Exeter (88 miles), including some very severe climbing, in 103 minutes normal time. Of course, the tremendous speed of 83 miles per hour, which the Lord Nelson attained at various points of the journey could not possibly be maintained over the entire stretch, for portions of the track are

very bumpy, to say the least. The Lord Nelson's ordinary load will be a train weighing 500 tons, the Southern Railway's heaviest train at present falling short of that by 50 tons, and the average speed expected of that class will be 55 miles an hour.

The engine's dimensions are such that any of the Nelson class will be able to run over any main line of the company. The working pressure of the boiler is 220 lb. per square inch, as against the 180 lb. of the Flying Scotsman. With only 85 per cent of that boiler pressure in action, the Lord Nelson's tractive effort is now the highest in the country—1,496 tons—beating the King Arthur class of the same railway by 365 tons and the previous British record-holder for tractive effort—the Castle class engines of the Great Western Railway—by 84 tons.

It has two wheels less than the Flying Scotsman, the trailing wheels being absent. That is, it has four leading, or bogie, wheels and six driving wheels. The six coupled driving wheels are 6 feet 7 inches in diameter. The weight of the engine is 83½ tons (not quite 9 tons less than the Flying Scotsman), engine and tender together weighing 140 tons 4 cwt.

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A savage, taunting laugh rang from the half-caste.

"I find you, Ben Dance! You die under knife belong you!"

"Avast there!" panted the seaman. "Avast, you wildcat! You ain't in the South Seas now, you scum—you're in England, Silvio Xero, where they hang your sort for using a knife!"

The half-caste laughed again.

"What do I fear? I have killed ten—twenty—thirty— They know Silvio Xero from Valparaiso to the Solomon Islands. I kill you same as dog if you do not give the chart."

"It ain't mine to give," muttered Ben Dance hoarsely. "A shipmate handed that chart to me, to give to his nevy. That chart belongs to young Redwing."

His mahogany face went almost grey as the knife touched his throat.

"Caca chart belong me when you killed, Ben Dance!"

Still the half-caste did not strike.

In his own particular quarter of the world, among the coral isles of the Pacific, undoubtedly the savage half-caste would have struck without mercy, without a second thought. But savage and untamed as he was, Silvio Xero, with the blood of five or six races mixed in his veins, was keen and intelligent; cunning as a serpent. He was well aware that he was now in a land where a stern retribution was exacted for the shedding of blood, well aware that if he left a dead man lying in the cottage when he fled, his track would be followed hard and fast, and that it was doubtful whether he would escape to reach the South Seas again. And for that reason he checked the savago impulse.

The desire to kill gleamed in his fierce eyes, but he did not use the knife. He placed it between his sharp, white teeth, ready for instant use if he was driven to it. Then he grasped the seaman's hands and drew them together. Muscular as Ben Dance was, the sinewy grip of the Islander was too powerful for him. His rough, hairy wrists were gripped together, his own red bandanna twisted round them and knotted with cruel tightness. Then the Islander, laughing softly, knelt beside him, and began to grope through his pockets.

With his hands bound, the seaman was unable to resist further. The nimble thievish fingers searched him, and the Islander gave a cry of triumph as he drew a narrow gold chain from under the rough shirt. The chain was hung round the seaman's neck, and it held a little bag of goatskin. Easily enough the Islander guessed what that goatskin bag contained.

He opened it quickly, and drew out a thin, polished sheet of teak, the smooth surface of which was carved with curious markings.

"The chart!"

Ben Dance gave a groan.

"The chart! The Caca treasure belong one who find him!" The Islander laughed gleefully.

The bound man shouted desperately.

"Help, help!"

The knife glittered before his eyes.

"You silent."

Silvio Xero stood for a moment or two listening, his head bent. The bound man uttered no further cry. Well, he knew that it was only fear of the white man's law that kept the knife from his heart—and that was but a frail reed to lean upon. At any moment the savage nature of the half-caste might take the upper hand of his caution.

The seaman's shout had not been heard. The Redwing cottage was isolated, like most of the cabins dotted irregularly along the rugged, hilly street of Hawkscliff.

The half-caste bent over the seaman, and drove into his mouth a gag torn from the window curtain. Then he bound his legs with a boat-rope.

With a savage, triumphant grin, he held up the chart before the eyes of the wooden-legged seaman.

"Belong me now!" he chuckled.

He thrust it back into the goatskin bag, passed the chain round his own neck, and slipped the little bag out of sight under his shirt. Then he unbolted the front door of the cottage, stepped out, and closed the door after him.

On the floor the bound man lay, helpless, mumbling through the gag, while the half-caste fled swiftly with the mysterious chart for which he had circled half the world.



FOR NEXT WEEK'S STUNNING FREE GIFT OF ANOTHER METAL MODEL EXPRESS ENGINE, BOYS!

This time it's

"The Flying Scotsman," the famous Express Engine of the L.N.E.R.

No boy or girl should miss this splendid opportunity of collecting a handsome, representative set of Britain's most famous Railway Expresses. An order to your newsagent TO-DAY will do the trick!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Hot Chase!

"MY hat!"

"There he is again!"

Six schoolboys, riding into the rugged street of Hawkscliff on their bicycles, exclaimed in chorus, as they came on the half-caste. Harry Wharton & Co. entered the street from the cliff path, just as Silvio was leaving it, and for a moment they were face to face.

The man with the ear-rings gave them a startled, savage look, broke into a run, and passed them.

"The giddy South Sea Islander!" said Bob Cherry. "He got to Hawkscliff before us. I wonder what he wanted here."

"Looking for the wooden-legged johnny, most likely," said Vernon-Smith, staring round after the running half-caste. "He looks in a hurry now."

"Let him rip!" said Bob.

And the juniors rode on to Redwing's cottage and dismounted outside.

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

He thumped on the door.

The juniors had rather expected Tom Redwing to be outside the cottage looking for their arrival. He was not there; and there was no answer to the knock on the door, or to Bob's exuberant hail.

Bang! Thump!

"Redwing doesn't seem to be at home," said Bob, puzzled. "He was expecting us, wasn't he, Smithy?"

"Yes, rather. He must be somewhere about."

The Bounder opened the door and stepped into the cottage.

The next moment he uttered an exclamation of amazement.

Tom Redwing was not to be seen; but on the floor lay the wooden-legged seaman gagged and bound.

Vernon-Smith stared at him blankly.

"What the merry thump—" he exclaimed.

Ben Dance was biting savagely at the gag in his mouth. His mahogany face brightened wonderfully at the unexpected sight of the schoolboys.

"It's the wooden-legged johnny!" exclaimed Bob, in wonder. "Who on earth can have done this—in Redwing's cottage?"

"Goodness knows!"

The juniors gathered round the bound man at once, and very speedily released him. Ben Dance sat up, gasping.

"You seen him?" he panted.

"Seen whom?"

"Silvio—that demon of a half-caste!" panted Dance. "He got the better of me, and he's got the chart."

"We saw him leaving the village as we came up," said Harry Wharton. "Where is Redwing?"

"I ain't seen him—there was nobody here when I come," said Dance. "That born demon followed me here, and he beat me in a tussle, and he's got the chart. I can't git arter him with this leg. The game's up."

He gave a groan.

"I've brought that chart all the way from Taumotu," he muttered. "'Arf round the world, and now that demon's got it. I done my best for my old shipmate. He's beat me at the finish—beat me, right here in harbour."

Wharton looked at him curiously.

"What is the chart?" he asked. "Is it something of value?"

"It's the chart to the treasure on Caca Island, and it belongs to Tom Redwing, 'cause why, my old shipmate handed it to me to bring to his nephew," said Dance. "It's the chart to the pearls on Caca Island—and now it's gone. That fiend will be the richest half-caste in the Pacific when he's lifted the pearls!"

He gave another groan.

"I've done my best; I've had a knife at my throat a dozen times, 'tween Taumotu and here. If Redwing had been here I could have handed it over and done with it. But he's beat me and got it!"

"You haven't seen Redwing here?" exclaimed the Bounder. "He was to be here to meet us this afternoon."

"Nobody was here."

"I can't understand it," said Vernon-Smith.

"Never mind that now," said Wharton quickly. "From what this man says that half-caste has robbed him of something that belongs to Redwing. We're not letting him get away with it."

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry.

"We can beat him on the bikes, though he's got a start," said Harry. "Let's get after him at once."

He ran out of the cottage again. His



A shadow crossed the sunny window, and then a face was pressed to the glass; a sharp nose was flattened there, and two fierce black eyes scanned the interior of the room. Ben Dance crouched low, motionless, silent. He was out of the range of vision of the cruel face pressed to the glass. (See Chapter 11.)

comrades followed him, and drew their bicycles from the wall.

"What's the thing like, Dance, when we see it?" called out Wharton. "How shall we know it?"

Dance stumped out after them, his eyes blazing with excitement.

"Look out for his knife—the demon's got my claspknife—"

"Never mind his knife. The chart—"

"He's got it in a little goatskin bag, slung on a gold chain round his neck, same as I carried it all the way from the South Seas. It's a chart cut in with a knife on a bit of teakwood, six inches round."

"Good! We'll have it off the rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific. Put it on, my esteemed chums."

"You wait here, Dance, and explain to Redwing if he comes back!" called out Harry Wharton.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The wooden-legged man, standing in the doorway of the cottage, watched the bunch of cyclists as they swept down the rugged street and disappeared.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rather fatigued with the long pull up to Hawksliff. But they did not look fatigued now.

They rode out on the rugged cliff path as if they were riding for their lives.

So far as they could gather, the chart had been sent to Tom Redwing by a relative who had died in the South

Seas, and it was—or, at least, Dance believed that it was—a clue to a treasure of pearls on some remote island in the Pacific Ocean. That alone was enough to fire the imaginations of the juniors and render them keen. But whether the chart was of value or not, it belonged to Tom Redwing; and they were determined not to let the half-caste get away with it.

In a few moments they were out of Hawksliff, riding on the path that they had seen the half-caste follow.

The way was mostly downhill, and the machines fairly flew.

In five minutes they sighted the man they sought, who was obviously not expecting pursuit just then.

Silvio Xero was tramping along the road, swiftly, but without hurrying. But as his sharp ears caught the whirr of the bicycles he looked round, and his brows blackened at the sight of the Greyfriars juniors.

He had known, of course, nothing of the fact that the schoolboys were going to Hawksliff to visit Redwing's cottage. He had supposed that Ben Dance would lie for hours, perhaps longer, in the isolated cottage before he was found and released. Half an hour would have been enough for the half-caste.

Even now, as he saw the juniors sweeping after him, he did not know that they had seen Dance, and were following him for the stolen chart.

But he could see that it was pursuit, though he did not guess the reason.

He stopped and turned, staring for a

moment at the oncoming cyclists, and then, leaving the path, sprang away up the steep cliffs.

A few seconds more, and the juniors were on the spot he had left, jamming on their brakes.

"There he is!" panted Bob. "After him!"

The bikes went whirling anywhere, as the Greyfriars fellows jumped down and rushed after the escaping half-caste.

"Stop!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Stop, you scoundrel!"

"Stop thief!"

"After him!" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

The half-caste clambered on fiercely, with the activity of a wildcat. But the chums of the Remove were active and agile, and they clambered after him at quite as good a speed.

Bob Cherry gave a breathless chuckle.

"We've got him! You can't get over the cliffs from here. He's bound to stop at Hawk's Head!"

"Good!" panted Wharton.

The half-caste, of course, was a total stranger to the country he was in, and knew nothing of the lie of the land. But the Remove fellows knew. In Tom Redwing's days at Greyfriars the chums of the Remove had often come up to Hawksliff with the sailorman's son, and climbed the great chalk cliffs over the fishing village.

From the path the half-caste had left it was possible to climb the cliffs for a distance, in the direction of the Hawk's Head, a towering cliff of solid chalk

that looked far out over the North Sea. But beyond a certain point, the Hawk's Head rose almost as abruptly as the wall of a house, and a cat could have found no footing on its precipitous sides.

Sure of their quarry now, the juniors slackened their efforts a little, only keeping the fugitive in sight.

But the half-caste, as yet ignorant that he was heading into a trap, clambered on at desperate speed.

He stopped at last.

The juniors saw him trying to right and to left in search of a further footing, and trying in vain.

He glared back at them, his black eyes scintillating with rage. They came on and up steadily.

The desperate man clambered away to the left at last, his way barred by the rising rocks, but now it was only a matter of moments. The half-caste realised that there was no escape for him, and he stopped, and turned, his lips drawn back from his white, gleaming teeth, in a snarl like a wild beast.

"We've got him!"

"Look out!"

The seaman's clasp-knife was in the dusky hand now. The juniors, not a dozen paces distant, halted.

Whiz!

The Bounder gave a cry, and fell on the rocks.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Disc of Teak!

"COLLAR him!"

"The villain!"

"Smash him!"

The Famous Five rushed fiercely at the half-caste.

His action had taken them by surprise; they had supposed that he had seized the knife to use in struggling with them, knowing nothing of the South Sea Islanders' trick of throwing the knife. The Bounder was down, and there was blood on his face, and the sight roused the juniors to the fiercest wrath.

They rushed on the Islander, and in a moment more he was struggling in their grasp.

Crash!

Resisting like a tiger, the half-caste was brought down on the rocks, and his head struck the ground with terrific force.

He lay still.

The concussion with the rock had stunned him; indeed, for the moment the juniors thought that the injury was more serious than that. But the sight of Smithy sprawling, with the blood on his face, made them, for the moment at least, utterly careless of the half-caste's fate. They left him lying where he was, and ran back to Vernon-Smith.

"Smithy—"

"Old chap—"

The Bounder sat up dazedly.

"I—I'm all right, I—I think!" he gasped. "I'm cut; but not much hurt, I think." He put his hand to his head, and his fingers came away crimson. "He meant it to kill me, the savage beast. But I'm all right."

"Thank Heaven for that!" panted Wharton.

They helped the Bounder to his feet. There was a cut on his hand, from which the blood flowed freely. It was painful enough; but the juniors could see that it was not dangerous. The clasp-knife lay on the rocks, with a stained blade. The juniors did not realise it, but the Bounder owed his

life to the fact that Silvio Xero had been deprived of his Malaita knife, and that it was the heavy, clumsy clasp-knife that he had thrown. His own Malaita knife, to which his hand was accustomed, and which was designed as much for throwing as for any other use, would have flown like an arrow to the target, and the Bounder of Greyfriars would have fallen dead under the blow. But the cumbrous clasp-knife had not been true to the thrower's hand, and it had almost missed.

"I'm all right." The Bounder was cool and calm. "Look after that scoundrel before he gets goin' again!"

The juniors hurried back to the half-caste, while Smithy proceeded to bind up his injury with his handkerchief.

Silvio Xero had not stirred.

Now that their anxiety for the Bounder was relieved, the juniors felt something like anxiety for the ruffian who lay so still on the rocks.

Savage and tigerish as he was, they would not have cared to be responsible for his death.

But they soon ascertained that he was only stunned, though he showed no sign of coming to.

"The chart!" said Nugent.

Wharton knelt by the senseless man's side, and groped for the chain of which Dance had spoken.

He quickly found it, and drew it out from under the half-caste's shirt, and after it the goatskin bag.

"Here it is!"

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton hesitated a moment.

"It's Redwing's," he said. "We don't want to look at it, but we'd better make sure of it."

He opened the goatskin bag, and took out the disc of teak.

"That's the goods!" said Bob.

"That's it!"

And Wharton enclosed the teakwood disc in the goatskin bag again, and thrust it, with the chain, into an inside pocket.

"That's the thing, right enough," he said. "We've got it safe for Redwing now—when we see him. How do you feel, Smithy?"

"Right as rain; a scratch doesn't hurt me!" said the Bounder carelessly. "Let's get back!"

"What about that brute?" asked Johnny Bull, with a glance at the senseless half-caste.

"Let him lie where he is," answered Smithy.

"This ought to be reported at the police station at Friardale when we go back to Greyfriars," said Wharton. "The police will find the brute easily enough, if they want him. A man of his description will be noticed anywhere."

"Come on, then."

And the juniors, taking no further heed of the half-caste, returned to the path at the foot of the cliff, and pedalled back to Hawkscliff.

They had been long out of sight when the half-caste stirred.

He stirred, and moaned, and sat up dizzily. As his senses returned his hand went at once to his dusky neck to feel for the chain. He discovered at once that the chain and the goatskin bag were gone. As if the discovery electrified him, he leaped to his feet.

There was a great black bruise under the thick hair of the half-caste, and his head was dizzy. But he seemed to give it no heed. He scrambled away desperately down the cliff to the path and stood there staring about him, with dazed eyes, in search of the juniors. He knew by whose hands the chart must

have been taken. But of who they were and whither they had gone he knew nothing.

He started at last in the direction of Hawkscliff. Doubtless some desperate thought was working in his dizzy brain of recovering the chart which had so narrowly escaped his thievish hands. But as he moved along the rough path he tottered and reeled like a drunken man, a mist swimming before his eyes. Once he fell, but scrambled up again, and kept on, not even perceiving, in his dizzy, bemused state, that he had missed the path till he found himself wandering in a wilderness of chalk and grass. Strong and wiry as the islander was, he had taxed himself even beyond his savage strength, and he sank down at last, half insensible, and lay like an exhausted animal, with the blaze of the setting August sun upon his brown, haggard face.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Trust!

"WHERE on earth's Redwing?" "Oh where and oh where can he be?" sang Bob Cherry.

"The wherefulness is terrific," remarked Hurrec-Jamset Ram Singh. "It is a puzzle transcending the puzzleness of the esteemed cross-words."

Certainly, it was a puzzle. Harry Wharton & Co. did not in the least know what to make of it.

They had returned to Redwing's cottage after the chase of the half-caste and the recovery of the chart. They found Ben Dance, the wooden-legged seaman, there. But Tom Redwing was not there, and Dance had seen nothing of him.

Two or three of the juniors went along to the other cottages to inquire if anything was known of Redwing. They could only learn that nothing was known of his whereabouts. Most of the Hawkscliff men were out at sea in the boats, but the ancient mariner who adorned the post at the end of the street had seen the messenger deliver a telegram at the cottage, and, later, had seen Tom Redwing leave hurriedly.

That was all the juniors could learn.

The telegram, no doubt, explained his sudden departure. But it did not explain anything else. Knowing that Smithy and the juniors were coming up to see him, why had he left no message for them, either with some Hawkscliff inhabitant, or by a note pinned on the door, or left on the table? Scribbling a brief message would not have delayed him long, howsoever great his haste. It was inexplicable that he had not done so.

"Blessed if I can make it out," said Johnny Bull. "He knew we were coming, all right, and he knew we had to come a jolly long way."

"The knowfulness was certain."

"It's rather thick, clearing off like this and leaving us to make the best of it—if he could help it," grunted Johnny.

"He couldn't," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Redwing's not the sort to let fellows down like that. I can't make it out, but—what do you think, Smithy?"

The Bounder's face was dark. Skinner had known him well when he had calculated on Vernon-Smith's readiness to take offence.

Smithy had supposed at first that Redwing had gone along the village for something, and would soon be back. Then he had reflected that the sailor-man's son might have been called away for some reason, and would return before very long. But the juniors had

waited a long time now, and Smithy could see no reason why his chum should not have come back, or, at the very least, have left a message for them.

He was deeply chagrined, and his anger was roused.

He had come eagerly to see his chum, and this was how his chum had treated him. He had brought the Famous Five with him, specially to see Tom, and Tom Redwing had turned them down like this! Unless there was some unsuspected explanation of Redwing's conduct he was treating the Greyfriars party very badly, and Smithy could think of no explanation.

"I can't make it out," he snapped. "I know that unless he can jolly well explain I shan't trouble him with another visit. I'm getting fed-up with hanging about here."

"What about tea?" said Bob. "Reddy wouldn't mind our helping ourselves, in the giddy circumstances."

All the juniors were hungry by this time, and more than ready for a meal. They had noted that Ben Dance had explored the larder and helped himself to a substantial meal, which showed that the cottage was supplied with food. But Cherry had surmised that the telegram Redwing had received must have contained an order to join a ship, thus explaining his sudden departure, though not his failure to leave a message. But if the sailorman's son had gone without intending to return he would scarcely have left perishable food in the cottage, and the table set for tea, and the kettle of water on the grate, with sticks under it, all ready for lighting. There was every sign that he intended to return.

"Let's have tea—if any!" said Nugent. "Reddy would want us to if he's been kept away somehow."

"Let's!" agreed Bob.

It was soon found that there were ample supplies for tea. Cakes, and buns, and other good things revealed the fact that Redwing had made preparations for the expected little party. Certainly he never had such luxuries in the cottage larder for his own consumption.

"Can't do better than tuck in, you men," said Bob. "I only hope Redwing will turn up before we have to get back to Greyfriars."

And the juniors sat down to tea, while Ben Dance sat and smoked a black pipe on the bench outside the cottage. The teak chart in the goatskin bag was in the wooden-legged seaman's possession again, though he had seemed rather unwilling to take it from Wharton. Evidently the seaman was anxious to be rid of his charge, though he had faithfully travelled round half the globe to deliver it to its rightful owner.

"Tea, Smithy!" called out Bob to the Bounder, who was lounging in the doorway with a face growing darker and darker.

The Bounder hesitated, as if in his growing resentment he was disinclined to accept the hospitality of the chum who had not taken the trouble to be present. But he nodded and sat down with the rest, though he ate little.

Tea over, the juniors carefully washed up in the little kitchen and made the place tidy. It was drawing near time now for the party to start on their return, unless they were to be late for calling over at the school. Bob Cherry, who rather fancied himself as a handy man, sorted out some tools and began to repair the kitchen window, where the half-caste had forced an entrance.

Leaving Bob hammering away cheerfully, the other fellows sauntered out into the sunny street, looking about in the hope of seeing Redwing at last.

AND HERE'S THE COVER TO LOOK FOR NEXT WEEK, CHUMS!



MAKE TRACKS FOR YOUR NEWSAGENT AT ONCE, OR THE OTHER CHAP MAY BAG YOUR FREE GIFT!

But he did not come.

The chums of the Remove were deeply perplexed, and certainly, but for their trust in Redwing's good faith, they would have been angry. The Bounder's trust seemed weaker than theirs, for undoubtedly he was angry, and growing angrier with every passing minute.

"Nothing could have happened to Reddy, surely," said Frank Nugent, at last.

"What could have happened?" granted Johnny Bull.

"He might have gone, intending to be back in a few minutes and had an accident, or something."

"Rot!" said the Bounder.

"Well, Redwing isn't exactly the fellow to butt into an accident," said Harry Wharton. "The telegram he had must have had something to do with his going, but that's all I can make out."

The Bounder set his teeth.

"He's let us down, with or without a reason," he said bitterly. "I'm sorry I brought you fellows up here on a fool's errand. I never looked for anything of this kind, of course!"

"Better not go off at the deep end, old bean, until you're sure about it," said Nugent mildly. "Redwing may be able to explain."

"He will have to," growled the Bounder.

Wharton looked at his watch.

"Six!" he said. "It will be a close thing if we get back to Greyfriars in time for call-over now. It doesn't seem any good hanging on here any longer. Redwing mayn't be coming back to-night at all, for all we know. No need to bag a row with Quelchey for nothing."

"It is time to proceed-bikefully," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The worthy Quelchey will be otherwise infuriated."

The juniors looked at one another dubiously. They were loth to leave Hawkseliff without having seen Redwing, but it seemed that there was nothing else to be done.

"Better go!" growled the Bounder.

"We can leave a message for him," said Harry.

"Why, when he didn't trouble to leave a message for us?" said the Bounder sulkily.

"We don't know what may have happened," said the captain of the Remove. "No need to get our rag out for nothing. I suppose Danco will be staying here, and he can take a message—"

Ben Dance hurriedly detached himself

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from the bench outside the cabin, with alarm in his mahogany face.

"I ain't staying at anchor here alone," he said emphatically. "Why, that murdering half-caste will be 'ere agin arter dark, you can lay to that! I wouldn't stay 'ere with that chart on me for all the pearls in the South Seas, with all the mother-o'-pearl thrown in."

"Leave a note pinned to the table," said Nugent; "that's the best we can do."

It was all that could be done, and Harry Wharton scribbled a few lines and pinned the paper on the table. Then the juniors left the cottage, closing the door after them.

Ben Dance was stumping to and fro, evidently in a perturbed frame of mind. The juniors had told him how the half-caste had been left, and that they intended to set the police on his track. But that had not lessened the wooden-legged seaman's fear of the islander. The sun was sinking now towards the rolling downs in a blaze of purple and gold, and it was only too plain that the seaman looked forward to nightfall with haunting uneasiness.

"I ain't anchoring 'ere," he said. "I tell you I ain't. I've done what I promised my dead shipmate. I've brought that there chart 'arf across the world. Now that Silvio's run me down, it's his for the taking. I tell you, with that chart on me, my number's up!"

He tapped Wharton on the shoulder with a horny hand.

"You're young Redwing's mate," he said. "I can trust you. You had the chart in your 'ands and you give it back to me fair and square. I can trust you, sir!"

"I hope so," said Harry, with a smile. "And you being no sailorman, but a kid at school, you couldn't make no use of it, howsundever," added Ben Dance. "You'd keep it safe and 'and it to young Redwing, on your solemn word you would."

"Certainly, if you'd like me to take it," said the captain of the Remove. "It would be safe with me at Greyfriars. The half-caste would not be likely to come there."

Ben Dance detached the chain from his brawny neck.

"You keep it safe and give it to young Redwing on your honourable word, sir," he muttered. "You tell him it's a chart to the pearls on Caca, what's worth thousands to the man what can lift them, if so be he keeps clear of Silvio's knife. You tell him it's from his uncle, Peter Bruce, what was killed in the South Seas, and handed that there chart to me, him a dying man, to bring to his nevy. You tell him that. You tell him he's a rich man if he lifts the Caca pearls. But you tell him to watch out for that half-caste and his knife if he goes sailing to Caca. Silvio Xero's knifed more men than he's got fingers and toes, and he won't make much trouble about one more. You tell young Redwing that, fair and square."

"I'll tell him," said Harry, as he placed the goatskin bag once more in an inside pocket. "But you—what are you going to do?"

Ben Dance breathed more freely when the chart was out of sight. Parting with it seemed to have lifted a heavy weight from his mind.

"It's plain sailing for me now, sir," he said. "I've done my dooty to my old shipmate, Peter Bruce, cause why, that there chart is safer with you than with me, and I ain't sailed the seas for forty year without knowing a face I can trust, and you can lay to that. I'm for London now and Wapping—and I've

got some pals in Wapping who'll 'andle that half-caste fast enough if he showed up there. He'll find 'em rough, and he'll find 'em ready. That's the harbour I'm lying up in till I go to sea agin, sir. But you keep that chart safe, and you watch out for the half-caste. Now if you'll put me on my course for a railway station, sir, I'll be moving."

And a few minutes later Ben Dance was stumping away, peering uneasily to right and to left as he went.

Harry Wharton & Co. mounted their machines and rode away for Greyfriars. And the Bounder's face was black as midnight as he rode.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Helping a Viper!

TOM REDWING tramped steadily if a little wearily by a scarcely-marked path across the chalky downs towards the sea.

His sunburnt face was deeply clouded. It was unusual for the cheery sailor-man's son to allow despondency to get the better of him. There had been troubles enough in his young life, but he had faced them with quiet fortitude. He was accustomed to taking the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune as they came and keeping a stiff upper-lip. But on the present occasion he could not help feeling heavy-hearted.

He had looked forward so keenly to seeing Smithy and his other friends at Greyfriars again. It was unlikely that another opportunity would occur. The sea claimed him; the stern necessity of earning his daily bread with his own hands gave him little leisure. His next voyage might be a long one, and so his next meeting with his chum was postponed into the distant and uncertain future. The thought of that clouded his usually cheery and contented face.



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WHY, GIVE AN ORDER FOR NEXT
WEEK'S "MAGNET"

Had he shared the sulky, suspicious position of the Bounder, he would have been feeling resentment also. But that did not occur to his candid and honest nature. He did not think for one moment that Smithy had let him down. He took it for granted, without question, that the Bounder had been prevented from keeping the appointment by some unknown circumstances outside his own control.

It was only disappointment that he felt, but his disappointment was keen and deep.

He was tired now, too; for it was a long and dusty tramp to Lantham and back to Hawkscliff. The sun was sinking behind the downs; the blaze of the summer day was over. Dark shadows were lengthening about him, and it was likely to be after dark when he should arrive at his cottage. He tramped on steadily, but more and more slowly, his eyes downcast and heavy thoughts in his mind.

The sea came into sight at last far away, glimmering in the last rays of the sun. Tom's face unconsciously brightened as he saw it. All his life had been passed by the sea, or on the waters; even at Greyfriars, as a schoolboy, he had not been out of sight and sound of the sea. The sea was as the breath of life to him, and when he saw it, he felt like the weary Greeks of old, when they sighted the blue waters after their long retreat and cried "Thalassa!" Unconsciously, his step quickened, and he breathed more deeply and freely.

From the grassy downs he came out on the cliffs at last in deepening dusk. The ways were dangerous in the shadows to a stranger, but Tom Redwing knew the ground from childhood; every foot of it was familiar to him from of old. He swung on his way without a pause; but suddenly he halted as a faint sound came to his ears. It was a moan.

On the rough chalk a man lay, and Tom Redwing reached his side in a moment. The aspect of the half-caste was not so strange to him as it had been to the Greyfriars juniors; he had met many strange characters on the sea from many far lands. He could see that the man was a seaman of some sort, and his olive skin, his black, glinting eyes, the gold ear-rings in his ears told that he came from some far-off foreign clime. But that mattered nothing to Redwing; at the sight of a seaman in distress his only thought was to help him.

He dropped on his knees beside the half-caste. He could see that there was a great bruise on the man's head, where he had received some terrible blow. Little did he dream how and why the man with the ear-rings had received his injury. Even Redwing's kind heart would scarcely have caused him to help the savage islander had he known that the ruffian's hand had been raised against the life of his chum.

But Redwing knew nothing of that. He could only suppose that the half-caste was a foreign seaman off some ship that had put in at Pegg who had met mischance ashore.

The half-caste seemed only half-conscious. But his black eyes glinted strangely at Redwing in the dusk.

"You're hurt," said Tom. "Thank goodness I came this way! Let me help you. You've had a knock!"

Silvio nodded.

"Lose way belong me," he said thickly. "Head bad—turn round when walk. You help me, plenty money pay."

Redwing smiled.

"Keep your money, shipmate," he

said. "I'll help you all I can, and if you're far from home I can give you a bunk for the night in my cottage. I'm alone there while my father's at sea, and there's a bed for you, if you like."

He helped the half-caste to rise, and Silvio stood unsteadily with Redwing's aid. His senses were still dizzy and whirling from the effects of the stunning concussion on the rock. He leaned heavily on Redwing.

"You can walk, if I help you?" asked Tom.

"Walk all same you."

"Come on, then."

The man leaned heavily on Tom as they went, and his weight was considerable, slight as he was. But Tom Redwing was sturdy and strong and he hardly seemed to feel the burden.

He tramped on, accommodating his pace to the weary limp of the half-caste.

Not a word was spoken further as they went. Tom needed all his breath, and the half-caste was in no state for talk. They tramped on till, under the stars that were coming out in a velvety sky, they reached the village of Hawkscliff.

Something familiar in the irregular street of cottages and cabins struck the half-caste, even in the dusk. He started and seemed to pull himself together.

"Hawkscliff!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Tom.

"House belong you here?"

"Yes; only a little farther on."

The half-caste's black eyes gleamed strangely on him. Perhaps at that moment a suspicion of Tom's identity came into his mind. He said nothing, and Redwing led him on to the cottage.

"Belong you?" asked Silvio.

"Yes."

"You Redwing?"

"That's my name," said Tom, in surprise. The man was an utter stranger to him, and it was surprising enough to hear his name on the lips of the olive-skinned islander.

Silvio laughed—a strange laugh that had a horrible ring in it. Tom instinctively moved a little away from him.

"You know this place and you know my name?" he asked.

"Know plenty."

"Sit on this bench while I get a light."

Silvio sank down on the bench and Tom went into the cottage. He was busy for a few minutes with matches and a lamp. Then a light glimmered from the little window. It glimmered on the half-caste's face, and showed it keen, alert, watchful, and terrible. The man was still weak, but his savage brain seemed to have cleared suddenly under the influence of the discovery he had made.

"Come in, now," said Tom, and he came out to the half-caste and helped him into the cottage.

Silvio stood in the room where, half a dozen hours before, he had struck down the wooden-legged seaman and robbed him of the teak chart. He stood facing Redwing, his eyes gleaming and glinting in the light.

"You Redwing?" he repeated.

"Yes," said Tom, more and more surprised.

"You had one uncle, Peter Bruce?"

"Yes, though I haven't seen him since I was a little kid," said Tom. "I hardly remember him. You've met him?"

"He dead in Pacific."

"Oh!" said Tom. "I've often wondered whether he still lived—we've not

heard from him for years and years. How did he die?"

The half-caste grinned.

"Malaita knife," he said.

Tom shuddered.

"He send his shipmate, Ben Dance, find you," said Silvio. "You seen Ben Dance? Him sailorman with wooden leg."

Redwing shook his head.

"No, I've not seen him. I've never heard the name even."

"He come here to find you."

"Here?" repeated Tom. "To the cottage?"

Silvio nodded, with glinting eyes. He could see that Tom Redwing knew nothing of the wooden-legged man or the chart to Caca.

"Him here," he said, his wild, dark eyes wandering round the little room. "Him left here, bound. Now him gone. You no savvy?"

"I know nothing about it," said Tom in astonishment. "Why did my uncle send his shipmate to find me?"

Silvio grinned.

"Him bring chart," he said. "Chart belong island of pearls. I follow him and take chart."

"What?" exclaimed Tom.

"Schoolboy take it from me. I find him, kill him—kill ten—twenty—thirty! In all the islands they know Silvio Xero and fear him. You Redwing, pearls belong you, if you live."

Tom stared at him, wondering if the man's injury had affected his brain. All that the half-caste uttered seemed to him like the wanderings of a disordered mind.

Silvio, with the stealthy tread of a cat, came closer to him.

"Treasure belong you, if you live!" he said. "They take away Silvio's knife, but leave Silvio's hands."

And, with the spring of a tiger, the half-caste hurled himself at Tom Redwing!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Last Word!

REDWING staggered back.

The sudden spring of the half-caste took him by surprise. The sinewy fingers of the islander gripped his throat and bore him backwards. With a crash the sailorman's son went to the floor the half-caste over him, still clutching his throat in a choking grip.

But it was only for a moment that Redwing yielded to the savage attack. The next he was struggling fiercely.

The man he had helped, to whom he had given aid and shelter, had turned on him like a wild beast. Probably the ruthless ruffian did not suppose that he would have much trouble with a mere boy. But in that Silvio Xero was very much mistaken.

His black eyes blazed down on Redwing, his fingers clutched the throat of the sailorman's son and Redwing gasped and panted for breath. There was a deadly purpose in the savage face glaring down upon him, and Tom knew that he had to fight for his life. But he was strong and resolute, and his courage was unbounded.

He gave grip for grip, and, by sheer strength, rolled the half-caste off him, and gained his knees.

Silvio was still gripping his throat; but Tom Redwing's clenched fist, hard as iron, crashed into the evil, dusky face, and the grip relaxed as the half-caste fell backwards.

Tom tore himself free and staggered to his feet.

The next second the islander was at him again, clutching like a wild-cat. His weakness seemed to have passed, banished by his ferocity and his savage purpose. But Redwing met him grimly. Twice his fists crashed with stunning force into the evil face, and then he closed with the man, and the half-caste, dazed and bewildered, was borne to the floor with a crash.

Redwing's sturdy knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down.

"Now, you scoundrel!" panted the sailorman's son.

The half-caste struggled furiously. But the brief energy of ferocity passed, and Tom saw the savage eyes glaze, and Silvio Xero collapsed in his grasp, and rolled helplessly on the floor.

Tom sprang to his feet.

"You scoundrel!" he said, panting for breath. "I don't know who you are, or why you are my enemy, but you would have murdered me. You dog!"

The half-caste sat up, panting, his hand to his dizzy head.

"If I had knife belong me!" he muttered.

He staggered up, clutching at the table for support. It was at that moment that Tom Redwing's eyes fell upon a paper pinned to the table, and he recognised Harry Wharton's handwriting. It was his first intimation that the Greyfriars fellows had been at Hawkscliff that day. In his amazement, he caught up the letter, heedless for the moment of the half-caste. Silvio, his evil eyes watching the sailorman's son, backed unsteadily to the door, his only thought now of escape.

Tom Redwing did not heed his going.

His eyes were glued to Wharton's note in utter amazement and consternation, and he read:

"Dear Redwing,—We came up here with Smithy, as arranged, but found nobody at home. Let us have a word from you.

"Yours always,

"HARRY WHARTON."

Redwing stared dazedly at the letter. The chums of the Remove had been there, then, and they had come with Smithy! What, then, did the telegram mean? He drew the crumpled telegram from his pocket, and read it through. There was no mistaking its meaning. Clearly enough, Smithy had told him to meet him at Lantham at four. Yet he had come to Hawkscliff with Harry Wharton & Co., obviously in the expectation of finding Redwing there. What did it all mean?

It could only mean that the telegram was a mistake, or a trick; and it came back into Tom's mind that he had old enemies at Greyfriars, who had bitterly resented his friendship with the millionaire's son. There was no mistaking Harry Wharton's handwriting, but a telegram might be signed by anyone. The telegram was a trick. He had been tricked into going on a fool's errand to Lantham, leaving the fellows who had made the long journey to Hawkscliff to think—what?

Wharton and his friends, probably, would think the best they could—indeed, Wharton's friendly note showed as much. But the Bounder? Only too well Tom knew his chum's suspicious, irritable, touchy temper his quick resentment and readiness to take offence.

(Continued on page 26.)

OPENING CHAPTERS OF AN AMAZING NEW "GOLD RUSH" STORY!

How would you like to be stranded in San Francisco without a pal in the world to give you a hand? How would you earn your bread and keep? Start this fine yarn, boys, and see how Jack Orchard gets down to it!

Gold for the Getting!



By Stanton Hope

The Story of a Thrilling Gold Rush to the Land of the Midnight Sun!

Alone in 'Frisco!

"**F**ARE y' well, sonny! Give my best respects to your Uncle Dave when you meet him."

The big brown hand of Captain Tupper, of the four-masted barque, Flying Scud, gave young Jack Orchard a grip which brought water into the boy's eyes.

"Good-bye, Cap'n Tupper!" responded Jack. "And I hope that uncle and I will see you in 'Frisco."

"You won't do that, boy, I'm afraid," replied the tough old sea-dog, "for I've received a message from our agents ashore that I've got to weigh for Seattle instead of unloading here. Mebbe we'll meet again somewheres. I'd like to know how you get on in America, for you've been a good lad on the voyage, and if the bo'sun handed you a fair measure of kicks and cuffs they were all for your own good."

Jack smiled.

"That's what the bo'sun himself told me scores of times, sir," he said cheerfully. "However, I've got to San Francisco, in spite of 'em, which is more than I thought I should coming round Cape Horn. I'll never forget, though, your kindness in giving me a passage from England, and I hope one day I shall be able to repay you for it."

"Brumph! Nonsense, sonny!" grunted the skipper of the Flying Scud. "You fairly worked your way out here, and I hope now you've come West you'll make your fortune. The best o' luck, and don't forget to give my best respects to your Uncle Dave."

Descending the gangway, Jack settled himself and his kit-bag in a dinghy, and was rowed across the blue waters of San Francisco's harbour to one of the numerous landing stages.

For days and days he had looked forward to this sight of the skyscrapers of the Californian capital, as the old barque, battered and sea-weary, had crept northward from the Horn. His heart beat quicker at the thought of meeting his father's brother, David Orchard, the mining engineer, whom he had often heard of but never seen.

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Since Jack's father had died, Uncle David was his only living relative. After the sad event which had left him an orphan, Jack had stayed in England until his dad's affairs had been settled and he had learnt that the repayment of several big debts from the estate had left him penniless. Keen to take a fresh chance in life abroad, Jack had persuaded that rough diamond, Captain Tupper, who was an old friend of his father, to let him work his way to 'Frisco.

Long ago Jack had written to his uncle of his intention to try his luck in California, and although he had not heard from his uncle at any point of call during the voyage, he had his private address and the name of his bank.

On landing in San Francisco, Jack had to pass the Customs and go through the usual formalities with the Immigration Office. All this done with, he paid for a ride in a trolley-car—or tram—out of the two or three dollars which Captain Tupper had given him, and alighted at Fifty-Sixth Street. A short walk down this well-kept thoroughfare brought him to the address of his uncle which he had received while in England.

His veins tingled with eagerness as he pressed the electric bell button and waited until the door was opened by a white-clad Japanese servant.

"Does Mr. Orchard live here, please?" Jack asked rather breathlessly. The Jap shook his head.

"No here," he replied shortly.

Jack felt a slight chill creep into his blood.

"B-but this is the address I had given me," he said.

"Me no savvy," was the curt reply. "No Orchard gen'leman stay here."

As he spoke a light step sounded in the hall and a smartly-dressed woman appeared.

"I'm looking for my uncle, Mr. David Orchard, ma'am," explained Jack. "He's a mining engineer in this city."

The lady puckered her brow.

"I don't know the name at all," she said. "You see, I've only been in 'Frisco for a couple of months."

There seemed nothing more to be learnt there, and, after thanking her, Jack walked down the street again, his heart bitter with disappointment. Suddenly he looked up to see the burly, blue-clad form of a patrolman, or police-officer, approaching and swinging a big truncheon by a cord from his wrist.

"Excuse me, sir," spoke up Jack politely; "but do you happen to know anyone of the name of Mr. David Orchard—the mining engineer?"

The big patrolman looked down at the youngster through narrowed eyes.

"The thief you mean, heh?" he demanded.

Startled at the policeman's manner, Jack stepped back a pace.

"It's my uncle I'm looking for," he explained. "I've only just arrived from England, and—"

"Ho! Your uncle is he?" broke in the man in blue. "Waal, believe me, kiddy, you ain't the only one who wants to find him, let me tell. There's a good many, including meself, as would like to lay hands on Mister David Orchard—and the reward, too. Five hundred dollars is worth picking up, I reckon."

"Reward!" stammered Jack, alarmed. "Why, what has my uncle done?"

Again the patrolman looked him up and down in that quizzical fashion.

"Say, youngster," he remarked, "jest exactly how long is it since you arrived in town?"

Jack told him he had only just landed and had come from home for the purpose of joining his uncle. His frank reply caused the police-officer to soften a little, and he condescended to give what news he could.

"Waal, sonny," he said, "I'd better put you wise to the fact that your precious uncle is a wanted man. Some months ago a friend of his named Simpson entrusted him with a small sack o' gold nuggets which he'd brought from the Klondike, thinking that Mister Orchard was an honest man.

"Later on, when Simpson, who had to go to Los Angeles on business, came back to town here, he found that both his gold and your uncle had gone. So if you happen to meet this uncle of

yours, kiddy, jest mail a postcard to Patrolman Murphy, of the 'Frisco force, letting me know where I can find him. Five hundred dollars would be a god-send to me and Mrs. Murphy—ay, it would that!"

And, with a cheery nod to the dumb-founded boy, the burly police-officer resumed his beat.

Turning the tidings he had heard over in his mind, Jack decided that the best thing for him to do was to go to the address of his uncle's bankers. Here, at the worst, he would but receive a confirmation of the patrolman's strange story.

With but little difficulty, he found the bank, and although his rough-and-ready clothes and his kit-bag made the smartly-dressed clerks smile broadly, he was given an interview by the manager.

To this kindly gentleman, whose name was Mr. Welbeck, Jack explained his mission and received a sympathetic hearing.

"I'm afraid, my boy," Mr. Welbeck said, "that the patrolman told you what was only too true—your uncle is a wanted man. A man called Simpson, who had done well out of a gold claim in the North, brought into the city a bag of nuggets, including one of the biggest mined for a very long while—a nugget known as the Bear's Claw, on account of its curiously carved shape. Simpson, like many other simple miners of the northlands, lived in dread of hold-up men and thieves, and had an old-fashioned distrust of banks. When he went away he left the gold with your uncle, and on his return both your uncle and the nuggets had disappeared.

"That's exactly what the policeman said, sir," answered Jack. "But wouldn't it have been possible for my uncle to have met with foul play?"

"In actual fact, your uncle left a note behind to that effect, my boy," said the bank manager. "In this message, which was addressed to Simpson, he stated that he had been attacked and robbed, and that he was going away to try and earn enough money to make good the loss. Needless to say, that story was not believed by the authorities, and so the police are still trying to find a clue to his whereabouts."

Jack rose to his feet, his face pale and set.

"Well, I believe in him, sir," he said staunchly. "My own dad was one of the best, and from what I've heard him say about Uncle Dave I'm sure he wasn't a rotter!"

The bank manager laid a kindly hand on Jack's shoulder.

"I hope for your sake, sonny, that your uncle was innocent," he said. "Shortly before he disappeared I saw him, and he did not mention anything of your coming here. Presumably, any letter you may have sent did not reach him until after his—er—departure. Now, should you need a friend while you are here, come and see me. If I can do anything for you I will, and—ahem—perhaps you could do with a little—ahem—loan, here and now?"

"No, thanks, sir," Jack answered. "I have one or two dollars, and I can eke them out for a day or two. I'll find a cheap boarding-house for the time being, and try to get some sort of a job to earn my keep."

Leaving Mr. Welbeck, the kindly banker, Jack went down Market Street, and, after making inquiries, found his way to a rooming-house, where he booked a bed for fifty cents (about two shillings) for the night.

The matter of his sleeping quarters

settled, he strolled to the waterfront and gazed over San Francisco's harbour towards the Golden Gate; but his heart was sad that the old "windjammer" in which he had sailed round the Horn had put to sea again.

Turning, he walked back up-town, and as he came into Market Street again saw some loud-voiced American newsboys dash out of a big building with great piles of pink newspapers in their hands.

"Speshul! Speshul! Reported big strike o' gold on the Stewart River!"

"Speshul! Great Yukon gold discovery!"

The word "gold," as it was hurled on to the evening air by the lusty voices of the newsboys, was like electricity. Even Jack was galvanised into buying a paper, for there was something big and adventurous in the sound of that gold strike in the far White North.

Alas, there was little enough about it in the paper—just the bare news of a reputed big strike of gold near the Stewart River by an old-timer named Jock McLennan. Not a moment did Jack dream of what a tremendous adventure that discovery a thousand miles to the northward would so shortly bring into his own life!

The Secret of the Red Hat!

STRONG lad wanted for healthy, open-air job. Good money, with free roof and cats.—Apply 113A, Spanish Causeway."

This was the advertisement Jack saw in the "San Francisco Examiner" a few days after his arrival in the coast city.

Although the wording was as vague as it was strange, Jack decided to apply, for free board and food was an attraction, since he had come to almost his last cent. Moreover, work was slack in San Francisco in this, the autumn of the year, and, in spite of his efforts, he had not yet been able to find anything to do.

A patrolman on point duty told him how to reach Spanish Causeway, but looked at him curiously as though wondering why he wanted to go there. At the time Jack wondered what the policeman's look meant, and he understood in a degree when he found the place to be in the docks area, one of the worst parts of the city.

A narrow, dirty street, wherein stores which sold ropes and tackle, second-hand clothes for sailors, and cheap eating-houses, huddled together with many old shuttered buildings of mysterious and sinister aspect—such was Spanish Causeway.



JACK ORCHARD.

Several loungers, chewing gum, looked at Jack wonderingly as the boy picked his way through this foul thoroughfare of the waterside. It did not seem the sort of place for a strong lad who wanted a "healthy, open-air job," and almost he was inclined to turn back. Curiosity, more than any other reason, prevailed on him to carry on and locate No. 113A, which he did after considerable difficulty.

The place was called "The Red Rat Dosshouse," and also it was what is known in the United States as a "blind pig"—that is, premises where drinks may be obtained and the Prohibition Law defied. Jack, of course, knew nothing of this second business of the place, but he was an astute boy, and guessed quickly enough that it was a "tough den." More than ever he was curious to find out what sort of "healthy, open-air job" was being offered here.

He pushed open the door and entered a narrow corridor. There was a door leading off on the right, and Jack could hear gruff voices in snatches of song, and got a pungent whiff of rank tobacco smoke.

As he was about to enter, however, he heard heavy footsteps on a rickety stairway at the far end of the passage, and, descending, there came into view a pair of the biggest boots and legs he had ever seen. A massive body and head appeared in the gloom as the owner of the boots came lower on the stairway. It was "Bull" Morgan, one of the most notorious characters who had ever infested the 'Frisco waterside, but the cruelty in his coarse face was masked by a smile as he saw Jack in the passage.

"Hallo, kid!" he said. "Kin I do anythin' for ye?"

For a moment or two Jack stood gazing at the man, awed by his formidable appearance now that the light from the open door illuminated him. For Morgan was six-feet-two in height and broad in proportion. His face was pock-marked and scarred, and his heavy, shaven jaw, almost purple in hue.

"I—I came to find out about this job that's being offered in the 'Examiner,'" stammered Jack. "Can you tell me anything about it, sir?"

"Sure thing!" boomed the deep voice of Bull Morgan. "Step right upstairs, son."

He turned and crashed his way up the rickety stairs, and despite a strong inclination to dash out into the street and be clear of this sinister place, Jack followed him.

At the top of the stairs Morgan turned into an open door, and Jack heard someone address him by name in a wheezy voice and ask what he had come back for.

Standing aside, Morgan beckoned Jack to enter the room and the boy did so to see a lean, greasy-looking man practising false shuffles with a dirty pack of cards at a deal table.

"This is my pardner 'Lefty' Simons," remarked Morgan, by way of introduction.

The other man raised his lean form out of the chair and stood looking like a hungry wolf at the visitor.

"English by the cut of him," he wheezed. "He doesn't look over tough to me. Are you strong, my lad?"

Jack smiled and said "he thought so."

"Waal, grip my mitt and see if ye kin hurt me," invited Bull Morgan. To show his mettle, Jack gripped the huge fist of the pock-marked giant and

squeezed with all his might, an effort which made Morgan chuckle immensely.

Then suddenly Jack felt Morgan's huge mottled fist tighten on his own hand—tighter, tighter like a steel vice, until Jack paled and bit hard into his lips to prevent a cry escaping him.

Both Morgan and Simons watched the youngster's face and the beads of perspiration bursting from it, as though gloating over his intense pain.

"Waal, does that hurt ye?"

The leering eyes of Bull Morgan gazed full into Jack's as the bully asked the question. Twice the boy made vain attempts to reply; then at last a wild cry left his lips.

"No!"

The grip of the big "Red Rat" partner relaxed, and Jack staggered back, feeling as though every bone in his right hand had been broken.

"I guess you'll do anyway, boy," remarked Bull Morgan, gesturing Jack into a seat. "You seem to be a real plucked 'un and jest the sort o' lad who'd hold down the job that's going. Now I'll jest give ye a letter and y' kin take it right along to the skipper o' the China Queen, the clipper that's lying out in the harbour and he'll fix ye up with a good berth as an ordinary seaman. And seeing that ye've got plenty of grit and I've taken a fancy to ye, I'll only charge y' ten dollars for acting as agent."

Jack rose from his chair.

"I've just done a voyage in a wind-jammer as ship's boy," he said, "and I've had all I want of the sea for the time being."

Bull Morgan lifted his bushy eyebrows.

"Oh, oh! So yuo've been to sea afore!" he rumbled. "Our client, the skipper o' the China Queen, will be mighty relieved to hear that, 'cause ye're surely not going to turn down a good job like this when tungs aren't booming in 'Frisco and you might find yourself on rock bottom afore long."

"I'll risk that!" Jack retorted. "You see, I've only been in 'Frisco a few days, and now I've got here I'm going to stay awhile and chance my luck."

"O' course, I don't want to persuade ye against your will," said the agent, "though if ye take my advice, ye'll bag this berth while it's going. Howsomever, jest write down your name and address, and if I hear of anything else I'll let ye know."

Rather unwillingly, Jack accepted a stub of pencil and put down his name and the address of the cheap rooming-house where he was staying on a grubby piece of paper.

Bull Morgan reached out a leg-of-mutton fist, picked up the paper and glanced at it. Immediately a strange expression came into his coarse face and his cunning eyes roved with more interest to the boy.

"So ye're called Orchard, are ye?" he said. "Any relation to the thief o' that name?"

The colour mounted hot into Jack's cheeks, for now both Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons were regarding him with peculiar interest.

"My—my uncle is supposed to have committed a robbery of some gold," he admitted, and hastily added: "Though from what I've always heard about Uncle David in the past, I'm sure he's the last man who'd have done anything of the sort."

"That's kind of interesting, ain't it

now, Lefty?" murmured Morgan, winking at his precious partner. To Jack, he said: "Waal, I hope for your sake, boy, the cops don't get him. It's kinder unpleasant to have a member of the family taking a stretch in the penitentiary."

While Morgan was talking, Lefty Simons tossed down the cards, rose wearily from the table and sauntered past Jack to the door. There he paused, his hand in the pocket of his loose coat, and a sudden sense of impending evil flashed into Jack's mind.

Before, however, he could turn away from Morgan and face the human jackal who had positioned himself between him and the door something struck him with stunning force behind the ear.

Shanghaied!

WITHIN a few minutes of his being knocked out, Jack slowly regained his senses to find himself propped up in a chair and a mug pressed roughly between his teeth. Mechanically, he drank from the mug, and the liquid, though bitter, was cool and refreshing to his parched throat.

As in a dream, he saw Bull Morgan set the mug on the table to make some joking remark to the jackal Lefty Simons, who was standing nearby swinging a small sand-bag in his right hand.

It dawned on Jack that he had been sand-bagged in "The Red Rat" by Simons, but for what purpose he could not reason. The mere effort to think caused his head to throb as though a diminutive steam-hammer were at work inside his skull, and anyway, instead of feeling more inclined for effort, an increasing drowsiness was stealing upon him.

With the taste of that bitter drink still on his lips, a red mist seemed to steal over his vision, slowly engulfing the evil faces of Morgan and Simons and the few appointments of this back room of the disreputable doss-house.

How long Jack slept as a result of the drug given to him by Bull Morgan he never knew, but his second awakening was as rude as it was sudden. Someone was liberally douching him with buckets of cold sea water.

"Feelin' fit now, y' young cub?" growled a rough voice.

Although his head was still throbbing, Jack staggered to his feet and shook himself like a dog after a bath. To his amazement he was no longer at "the Red Rat," but in a place which was illuminated by two or three lanterns suspended from heavy beams of wood, from which also several seamen's hammocks were slung.

A smashing kick in the ribs from a gorilla-like man in a squat peaked cap, sent him reeling.

"Wake yourself up, me lad! You're in the fo'c'sle o' the China Queen, if that's what you're wondering, and I happen to be the bos'n of her. And tar me, if you're not up on deck in two seconds, I'll give ye a taste of the rope's-end! See?"

(Slowly, but surely, Jack realised that he had been "shanghaied," and at the thought of such an injustice, his blood boiled! Whatever you do, chums, don't miss next week's thrilling instalment of this magnificent adventure serial!)

"THE MAN FROM THE SOUTH SEAS!"

(Continued from page 23.)

Why had not Smithy left a note for him? Wharton was his friend, but Smithy was his chum—his bosom pal. Yet Wharton had taken the trouble to leave those friendly lines—and Smithy had left no word!

Tom could guess only too well the reason, and he sighed. But he told himself that Smithy had cause to be offended—knowing nothing of the trick that had been played. At all events, he would not leave Smithy in doubt a moment longer than was unavoidable. There was ample time yet to get to the telephone, at the railway station a mile away, and get a word with Smithy before bed-time at Greyfriars.

The half-caste was gone; but Tom, thinking of his friend, and of the new cloud that threatened his friendship, hardly remembered him. He left the cottage hurriedly, forgetful of the half-caste, forgetful of fatigue, and tramped away through the summer night. He reached the railway station at last, and rang up in the telephone-box, asking for Mr. Quelch's number at Greyfriars School.

Very soon the sharp voice of the Remove master came through.

"Redwing speaking, sir," said Tom.

"Redwing! Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, in tones of astonishment.

"I hope you'll excuse my disturbing you, sir," faltered Tom. "I was to have seen Smithy—I mean, Vernon-Smith, this afternoon; but owing to a—a misunderstanding, I wasn't home when he came. Would you be so kind, sir, as to allow me a word with Vernon-Smith?"

"Certainly, my boy!"

"Thank you very much, sir!" said Tom gratefully.

"I will send for Vernon-Smith at once."

Tom waited.

The Bounder's voice came through at last. Even in the one word he uttered there was a mocking sardonic note, that made Redwing's heart sink.

"Hallo!"

"That you, Smithy?"

"Yes. That's Redwing, I'm told. Don't trouble to jaw I'm fed-up with you!"

"Smithy—!" exclaimed Tom, his voice full of pain.

But there was no answer. He spoke again, and again, but the silence told him that the Bounder had rung off. Tom Redwing put the receiver back at last and left the telephone-box, his heart heavy as lead.

It was over, then—the friendship that had been reborn after estrangement—it was over and dead! Tom Redwing went out into the night again, but the dark sky was not so dark as the thoughts and the troubled face of the sailorman's son, as he tramped home wearily to Hawkscliff.

(The next story in this splendid series: "THE TREASURE CHART!" will hold your interest from beginning to end, chums. You can only make sure of next week's BUMPER FREE GIFT Number of the MAGNET by ordering your copy well in advance!)

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

FREE GIFT NUMBER ONE!

Now you fellows are feeling mighty pleased with yourselves, I know. You've got your first Free Gift, and it's surprised you. Isn't it just topping? Aren't you glad that you're a reader of the MAGNET? Of course you are! By the way, there's a natty little history of the Lord Nelson on page 17, and it's well worth reading. And in our next issue, remember, there's another superb metal model of an express given Free with your copy of the MAGNET. Most of you have heard about the famous L.N.E.R. crack, the Flying Scotsman, although there must be thousands of you who have never seen it at close quarters. Next week's miniature of this crack express is even better than the one you were presented with this week. Now don't leave your order for the MAGNET too late, or you will miss

FREE GIFT NUMBER TWO!

and that would never do. And while we are about it, let me remind you that your next MAGNET will be on sale at all newsagents Saturday, August 13th. That advance date gives you fellows an extra chance of bagging this handsome souvenir before the newsagent sells out—and sell out he will, believe me!

"THE TREASURE CHART!"

By Frank Richards.

That's the title of the next story in the brilliant new series Mr. Frank Richards has written specially for this auspicious occasion. And it's a topper, chums. Tom Redwing comes into the story and once again he meets the Bounder, the fellow who, with all his arrogance and overbearing pride, has a soft spot for the ex-scholarship junior. Without spoiling the story in advance, I can say, too, that that wily scoundrel, Silvio Xero, pops up again, but he finds Harry Wharton & Co. doughty opponents. You'll enjoy this yarn no end, chums. Don't miss it on any account.

"GOLD FOR THE GETTING!"

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By Dicky Nugent.

Next week's shocker is distinctly good. Young Dicky Nugent seems to have caught the spirit of the occasion, and he has given us of his best. After all, there's nothing like a good laugh, and one simply has to laugh when Dicky Nugent tries his hand at story-writing. Get ready, then, for next Saturday's tonic laugh. Order your Free Gift Number well in advance. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.



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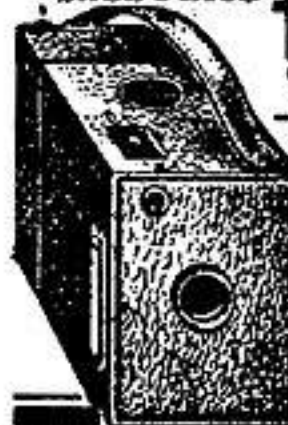
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