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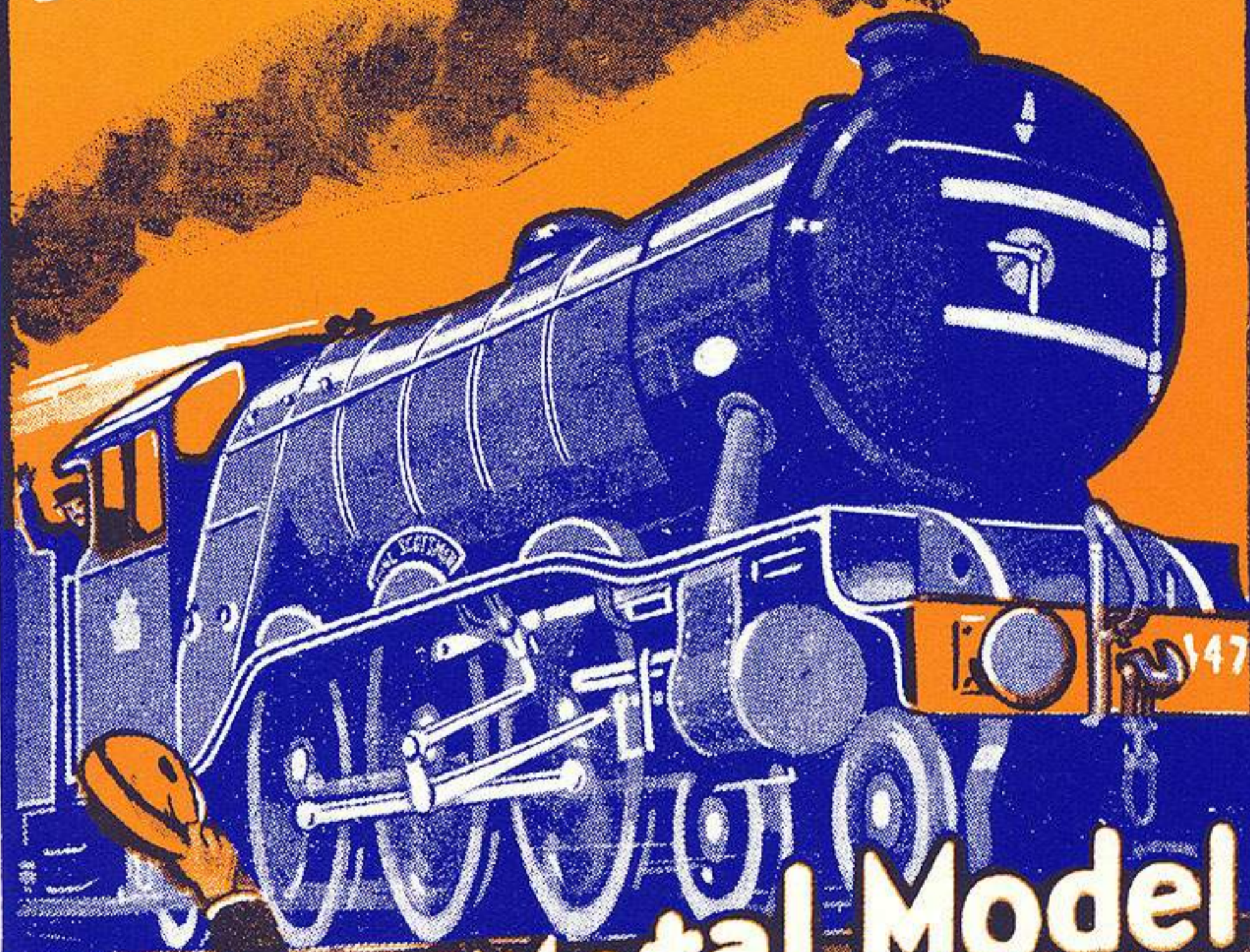
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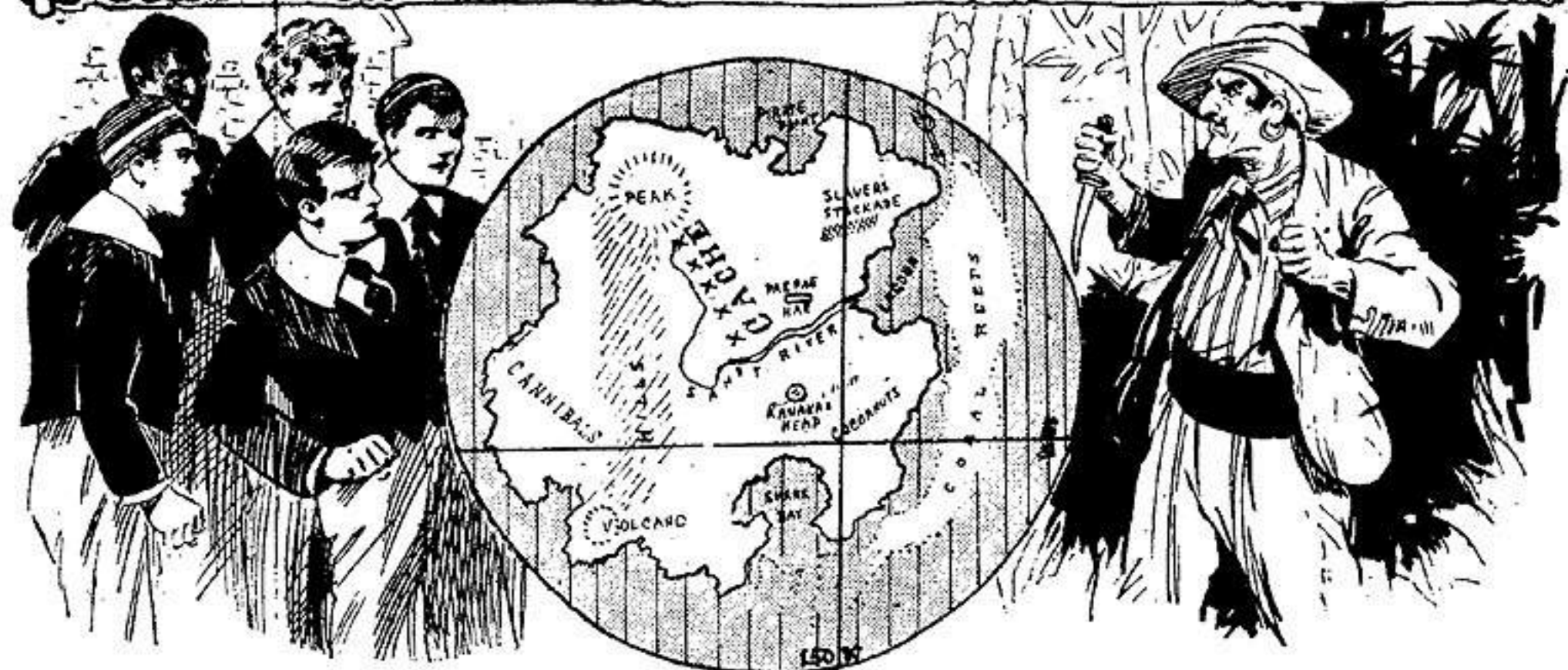
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THE TREASURE CHART!



A Magnificent, New Long Complete Story of the chums of Greyfriars, featuring Herbert Vernon-Smith and his long-absent chum, Tom Redwing. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Islander at Greyfriars!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, uttered that exclamation in tones of utter amazement.

It was Monday morning, and the Greyfriars fellows had come out of the Form-rooms for morning "break."

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, were strolling in the quad, when Bob suddenly halted with that startled ejaculation.

"What——" began Wharton.

"Look!"

Bob pointed in the direction of the gates.

Gosling, the school porter, was standing there, in argument with a man who was evidently demanding admission, and whom Gosling was equally evidently unwilling to admit.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's the half-caste."

The man at the gates was a slim, slight, olive-skinned fellow, dressed as a seaman, with a Panama hat, and gold ear-rings in his ears. Under his hat showed the edge of a bandage, where his head was bound up.

A dozen or more Greyfriars fellows had collected round, to look curiously at the stranger. The man with the ear-rings was a very unusual sort of visitor for Greyfriars School.

"He's come here!" said Johnny Bull, in amazement. "What a neck! What does he want here?"

The Famous Five joined the crowd at the school gates. Gosling held the half-open gate, shaking his head.

"You can't come in 'ere," he said. "Look 'ere, my man, what I says is this ere—you 'ook it!"

The olive-skinned man's black eyes glinted at him.

"This place Greyfriars?" he said.

"Yes."

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"I come in, speak to chief."

"Chief!" said Gosling blankly. "Oh, my eye! Do you mean the 'eadmaster?"

The half-caste nodded quickly.

"Yes, yes, all same."

"You can't see the 'eadmaster," argued Gosling. "Do you think the 'eadmaster of this 'ere school can speak to a blinking foreign sailorman off a blinking foreign ship? You jest 'ook it! You ain't no business 'ere! You jest 'ook it—see?"

"Something belong me here," persisted the half-caste. "I come take it. Must see chief!"

"Ow can there be anything belonging to you 'ere?" demanded Gosling. "You're tipsy, that's what you are! You 'ook it, my man!"

"No savvy ookit," said the half-caste. His knowledge of English was a little limited, and Gosling's variety of that language was too much for him. "I come in speak to chief."

"Rubbish!" snapped Gosling.

Wingate of the Sixth came along. He glanced very curiously at the man with the ear-rings.

"What's the trouble, Gosling?" he asked.

"This 'ere tipsy sailorman wants to see the 'Ead, sir," said Gosling. "Thinks something belonging to 'im is 'ere. Must 'ave been drinking."

"He looks sober enough," said the captain of Greyfriars, eyeing the half-caste. "Tell me what you want, my man."

The half-caste turned his attention from Gosling to the Sixth-Former.

"Something belong me here, taken from me," he said. "I come take it."

"Who are you?" asked Wingate.

"Name Silvio Xero, I come all way from Pacific. Boy take um chart from me; I find out boy belong Greyfriars. I come take um back—savvy?"

"My hat! It's impossible that any

Greyfriars fellow can have taken anything from him," said Wingate. "When did it happen, my man?"

"Two day go."

"I suppose he can see the Head, if he really has a complaint to make," said the captain of Greyfriars. "It's all right, Gosling, you can leave it to me. Follow me, my man!"

Gosling grunted and stood aside, and the half-caste entered. His black eyes flashed round at the gathering of Greyfriars fellows who were looking at him curiously. As his glance fell on the Famous Five he started, and his eyes flashed.

"Find um!" he exclaimed, and he made a quick stride towards Harry Wharton & Co. "You take um chart from me!"

The half-caste looked for the moment as if he would spring at the Remove fellows like a tiger.

Wingate hastily interposed.

"Stand back!" he rapped out. "Wharton, do you know anything of this man?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"You've not taken anything from him, I suppose?"

"Yes. Something that he stole that belongs to Tom Redwing, up at Hawks-cliff," said Harry Wharton, with a contemptuous stare at the man from the South Seas. "He robbed Redwing's cottage, and we got the thing back. I can't understand his cheek in coming here. We told Mr. Quelch about it on Saturday, and he reported it at the police station."

"Oh!" said Wingate.

"Chart belong me," said Silvio Xero. "I come take um. You give chart!"

"Not likely," said Harry.

"You got um?" asked the half-caste, his black eyes snapping at the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, I've got it, and I'm keeping it safe."

"You say the thing, whatever it is, belongs to Redwing, who left Greyfriars last term?" asked Wingate.

"Yes."
"Why haven't you handed it to him, then?"

"I haven't seen him yet. I'm keeping it safe till I see him," explained Wharton.

"I see. The Head had better deal with the matter," said Wingate. "You kids come to the House."

"Right-ho!"
"Follow me, my man!" said Wingate to the half-caste. "If anything here belongs to you, the headmaster will order it to be given you."

Silvio Xero and the chums of the Remove followed Wingate to the house. A crowd of curious fellows followed on.

"You'd better come, Smithy!" called out Frank Nugent to Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove. "You were with us on Saturday."

"No affair of mine!" grunted the Bounder.

Wingate looked round.

"Were you with these fellows when the chart, or whatever it is, was taken from that man, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes. I was there."
"Then come along to the Head. Any other fellows concerned in it, Wharton?"

"No," said Harry. "Only Smithy and us."

The Bounder lounged sulkily after the Famous Five into the House. The whole party proceeded to Dr. Locke's study, leaving a curious and rather excited crowd discussing the strange affair.

"I say, you fellows, I've seen that queer-looking foreigner before," said Billy Bunter. "He's been hanging about the neighbourhood. I saw him yesterday."

"I saw him on Saturday," said Skinner of the Remove. "He stopped me in Friardale Lane to ask the way to Hawkscliff. He said he was looking for a seaman with a wooden leg. I thought he was some potty foreigner. He had a knife."

"Looks as if he might use one, too," remarked Squiff, the Australian junior. "I've seen his sort before, on the other side of the world. He belongs to the Islands."

"Eh! What islands?" asked Billy Bunter.

"The Pacific Islands, fathend! Might be from Taumotus, or the Marquesas," said Squiff. "If he isn't a cannibal, most likely his father was. Don't let him see you, Bunter."

"Eh, why not?" demanded the Owl of the Remove.

"You're so exactly like the little fat pigs they eat in the Islands—"

"What?"
"He might take you for one of them, and—"

"Beast!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pretty thick, though, isn't it, Wharton and his friends pinching something from a foreign sailorman?" remarked Skinner.

Squiff looked at him.

"You heard what Wharton said, Skinner?"

"Oh, yes; but I don't believe all I hear!" sneered Skinner. "The man says Wharton's got something belonging to him, and he's come here to claim it. I think the Head ought to make Wharton give it back to him."

"Yes, rather," said Snoop, with a nod. "It's rather rotten pinching it from the man."

"Horrid rotten," said Skinner. "Don't you think so, Squiff?"

Squiff did not state what he thought.

He made a sudden grasp at Skinner and Snoop, grabbed their collars, and brought their heads together with a resounding concussion.

Crack!
"Ow!"
"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"That's what I think," remarked Squiff, pushing back his cuffs, as Skinner and Snoop glared at him.

"Have some more!"
But Skinner and Snoop only scowled and rubbed their heads, not, apparently, wanting any more.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Knife in Hand!

DR. LOCKE adjusted his glasses and blinked benignantly, but perplexedly, at the Famous Five and Silvio Xero, as Wingate explained what had brought the foreign seaman to Greyfriars School.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"I thought it better to let the man see you, sir," said Wingate. "According to what Wharton says, this man has been reported to the police, and if you think it better, he can be detained here for inquiry."

"Quite so, Wingate. Wharton, you had better explain the matter," said the Head. "What is this article that the man claims from you?"

"A chart, sir, carved on a piece of teak wood," said Harry.

"It is in your possession now?"
"Yes, sir."
"Let me see it."

From an inside pocket Wharton drew a little goatskin bag, to which a thin gold chain was attached. He handed it to the headmaster.

Silvio Xero's eyes snapped at the sight of it, and he made a move forward.

Wingate interposed at once.

"Keep back!" he rapped out.

The half-caste eyed him fiercely; but he stopped. Dr. Locke glanced at the olive-skinned Islander over his glasses.

"If you prove that this article belongs to you, my man, it will be handed to you," he said. "Otherwise, you will not be allowed to take it. You must not think of violence here."

"Mine!" snarled the half-caste. "I take um—if I kill ten—twenty—thirty—"

"Silence!"

Even the savage half-caste seemed a little awed by the dignified headmaster. He relapsed into sullen silence, but his black eyes were glinting, his long sinewy fingers twitching. It was evident that he could scarcely restrain himself from springing forward and clutching at the

prize. But he doubtless realised that violence would not serve him. There were enough fellows round him to handle him with ease, savage as he was.

Dr. Locke opened the goatskin bag and took out a circular piece of polished teak, the surface of which was engraved with strange lines. The wood, the hardest known in the East, was almost like iron. The Head gazed at it curiously. He could see that it was a chart, carefully and patiently carved upon the hard surface of the wooden disc.

After glancing at it, he replaced it in the goatskin bag.

"Tell me how this came into your possession, Wharton."

"It was on Saturday, sir, when we went up to Hawkscliff to see Tom Redwing at his cottage. Redwing, for some reason was absent, and we did not see him. But we found a man named Ben Dance—a seaman with a wooden leg—who told us that he had brought this chart from the South Seas to give Redwing, from Tom's uncle, who had died there. He described it to us, and told us that Silvio Xero had robbed him of it. We got after this man on our bicycles, and got it back from him."

Dr. Locke nodded thoughtfully.

"Earlier in the afternoon, sir, we had seen this man attacking Dance with a knife, and saved the man from him," added Harry. "He was after the chart when he attacked Dance; we heard him demanding it from him. So there was no doubt about it."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"And the brute threw a knife at Smithy when we ran him down," said Bob Cherry. "Smithy's got a cut on his head now."

"A scratch," said the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith might have been killed," said Harry Wharton. "After we got back to Greyfriars, sir, we reported the matter to Mr. Quelch, and he telephoned to the police-station at Courtfield. The police are looking for this man now, sir, and if they knew where to find him he would be taken into custody."

"Bless my soul!"

"No take Silvio Xero!" muttered the half-caste. "Kill ten—twenty—thirty—"

"Silence!" said the Head. "Can this man Dance be found, Wharton?"

"He left the chart with me, sir, for safe keeping," said the captain of the Remove. "He was in fear of his life, and he thought it would be safer with me. Of course, I am keeping it to give to Redwing as soon as I can see him. Dance cleared off as soon as he got rid of it, as he could not find Tom Redwing at Hawkscliff."

"The matter appears quite clear," said the Head.

He fixed his eyes on the half-caste.

"Do you deny that you took this article from the seaman, Dance, by force?" he asked.

"I take um—I follow from the Islands to take um!" snarled the half-caste. "Chart belong him who can take."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

Evidently Silvio Xero was a believer in:

"The good old law, the simple plan. That they should take who have the power. And they should keep who can!"

That, certainly, was the custom of the Islands; but it was not a custom likely

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to recommend itself to the Head of Greyfriars. He fixed a very stern look on the man with the ear-rings.

"Wharton! Take this thing, and give it to Redwing at the first opportunity," he said. "Obviously, it belongs to Redwing. As for this man, I shall detain him here for inquiry."

"No give chart?" asked Silvio Xero. "Certainly not. You have not the slightest title to it, whether it has any value or not."

"Redwing go Caca Island lift um pearls!" said Silvio, his black eyes glittering. "Here you beat me; but in um Islands the pearls go to him who have the longest knife. No finish yet."

He made a step back. "Detain that man, Wingate," said the Head. "These juniors will assist you if necessary."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The assistfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Wingate made a stride towards the half-caste.

There was a snarl from the man with the ear-rings, and his hand flew behind him, and plucked out a long knife from the back of his trousers. It was the Malaita knife which the juniors had taken from him in the struggle on the cliffs, and thrown into a crevice of the rocks. Evidently the half-caste had searched for it and recovered it. The flash of the clear steel startled all in the study.

"Look out!" panted Nugent. "Take care!" exclaimed the Head, rising to his feet. "The man is armed—he is a desperate ruffian—"

Wingate made a plunge towards the fire-grate, and grasped a heavy brass poker. He turned on the half-caste again almost in a twinkling.

But a moment was enough for the man from the South Seas.

For an instant, indeed, he had seemed about to rush on the Greyfriars fellows, knife in hand, and take all risks in a desperate attempt to get at the chart.

But armed as he was, he had no chance, and he knew it. He leaped from the study into the corridor, only barely escaping a blow from the heavy poker in Wingate's hand as he went.

He fled down the corridor like a deer. "After him!" shouted Bob Cherry.

There was a yell of alarm from the fellows who had gathered at the end of the passage as the half-caste, with savage face and glittering eyes, knife in hand, came racing along from the study.

They scattered promptly. Silvio Xero bounded away to the big open door of the House, and in a moment more was in the quadrangle.

From the big doorway, a crowd poured the next moment in pursuit, shouting and whooping.

There was shouting on all sides, as the desperate man raced for the gates.

"Stop him!" Coker, of the Fifth, rushed into the half-caste's way—but he jumped out again very quickly, as the Malaita knife circled in the air.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker. Silvio Xero raced to the gates. Gosling had a chance to stop him; but William Gosling was not looking for chances like that. At the sight of the flashing knife, Gosling bolted into his lodge and slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock.

In the gateway, Silvio Xero stopped for a moment and turned, panting, towards the shouting mob of pursuers. He brandished the knife in the air, flashing in the July sunshine, and shouted something incomprehensible in the dialect of the Islands. Then he raced away up the road and vanished.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Fair Offer From Bunter!

MR. QUELCH found his Form in a rather excited state, when he came into the Remove-room to take them for third lesson.

The visit of the man from the South Seas, and his dramatic exit, had caused something like a sensation in the school.

The half-caste had escaped, and Harry Wharton & Co. were all a little puzzled to understand why he had come to Greyfriars at all. It was hardly likely that he had expected the chart to be handed

over to him; and not at all likely that he had hoped to be able to seize it by force in the crowded school.

After third lesson, Harry Wharton & Co. discussed the matter. The captain of the Remove was anxious to hand over the chart to its rightful owner, Tom Redwing; and he expected to hear from the sailorman's son at Hawkscliff.

"I can't make it out," said Wharton. "It looks as if Redwing is gone for good from Hawkscliff; he wasn't there on Saturday when we went up, and all we could find out was that he had had a telegram before we arrived. We left a note for him in the cottage, and if he came back he was bound to find it, and surely he would have written."

"If he's gone for good, it's odd that he should go without a word, especially without a word to Smithy," said Bob.

"Yes, that's jolly queer, as Smithy was his pal, and it was Smithy who took us along to see him on Saturday. Can't make it out."

"If I may make a suggestive remark—!" murmured the nabob of Bhanipur.

The juniors chuckled. "If you mean a suggestion, go ahead with it, Inky," said Bob Cherry.

"A suggestion which is made remarkably is surely a suggestive remark, my esteemed Cherry."

"Not quite, fathead; they didn't know all there was to be known about the English language in Bhanipur, when you learned it from the giddy old moonshee," chuckled Bob. "But cough it up, anyhow."

"It occurs to me, my esteemed chums, that Redwing may have communicated with the excellent Smithy."

"Smithy would have told us," said Frank Nugent.

The nabob shook his dusky head. "Smithy has his esteemed back up now with the ludicrous Redwing. He was terrifically infuriated at not finding Redwing at home on Saturday, and he regards him as having turned us down-fully. When the esteemed Smithy's ridiculous back is up, one never knows."

Harry Wharton frowned. "It would be rather rotten if Vernon-Smith has taken offence, and left us in the dark because his silly back is up," he exclaimed.

"Easy enough to ask him, anyhow," said Bob.

"I say, you fellows—" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's Smithy, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles.

"Blow Smithy," he answered. "I say, you fellows, I want to see that chart."

"Go on wanting, old fat bean."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What do you know about the chart?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I heard what the cannibal islander said at the gates, and I heard you fellows talking about it," explained Bunter. "Of course, I don't believe that it's a chart to a treasure island—you fellows know that I'm not an inquisitive chap. Still, I'll see it."

"You won't," said Wharton. "It belongs to Redwing, and nobody has a right to see it without his permission."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Roll away, barrel."

"I was going to suggest," said Bunter, with dignity, "that if there's anything in it, I'd take the matter in hand."

"Eh?"

"The summer vacation's just on," said Bunter. "I haven't decided yet what to do in the vac."

"Whom to do, do you mean?" asked Johnny Bull.

BEST BOOKS FOR AUGUST and the HOLIDAYS!

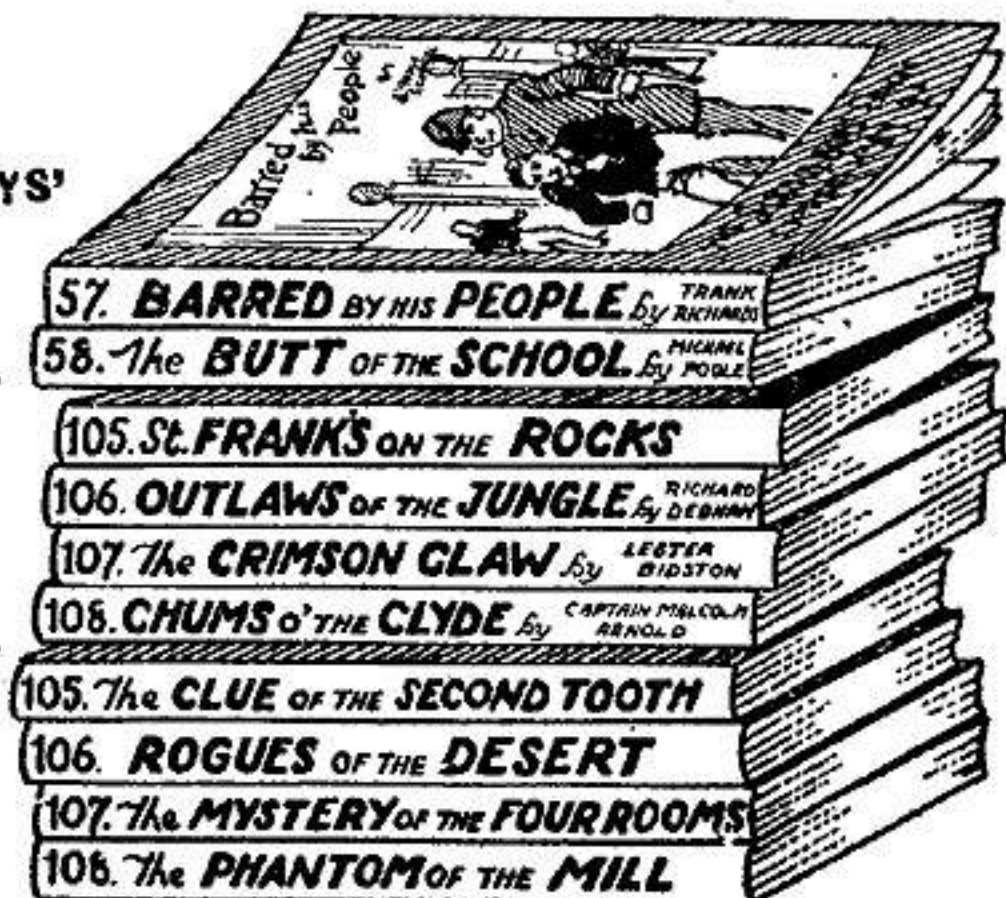
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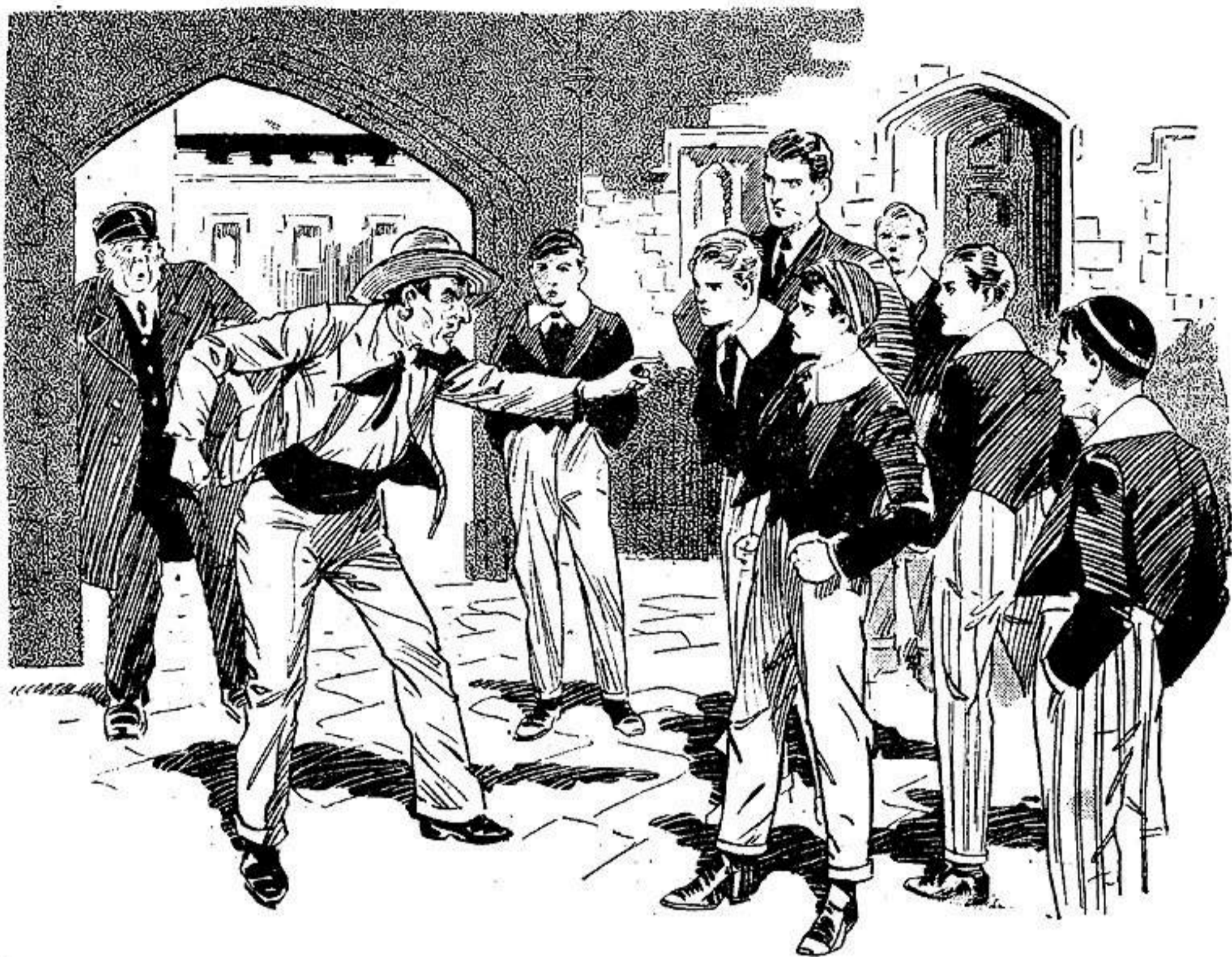
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As the half-caste's glance fell on the Famous Five, he started, and his eyes flashed. "Find 'um!" he exclaimed, and he made a quick stride towards Harry Wharton & Co. "You take 'um chart from me." The half-caste looked, for a moment, as if he would spring at the Remove fellows like a tiger. Wingate, however, hastily interposed. "Stand back!" he rapped out. (See Chapter 1.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull! If I were treated decently," said Bunter, "I should be prepared to ask one of my titled relations to lend us a steam yacht for a cruise in the South Seas——"

"Great pip!"

"See?" said Bunter. "That's the idea. I've no doubt—no doubt at all—that I could get a yacht from one of my wealthy connections, to use for the vac. If it fell through——"

"If!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"If it fell through, then I'd come along with you fellows, instead of you coming along with me," explained Bunter. "Shall we fix it at that? If I can get the yacht, I take you for a cruise—if not, you take me home——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I look on that as a good offer," said Bunter warmly.

"Now Bunter's told us his funny story. Let's go and look for Smithy," suggested Bob Cherry; and the chums of the Remove went.

"I say, you fellows." The Owl of the Remove rolled after them. "I want to see that chart——"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Bow-wow."

And the Famous Five accelerated and left Bunter puffing and blowing. The Owl of the Remove shook a fat fist after them. Bunter had explained that he

was not curious or inquisitive: but undoubtedly he wanted very much to see the mysterious chart. It did not concern him in the very least, but that, perhaps, was why he wanted to butt in.

"Seen Smithy, Skinner?" called out Bob Cherry, after the Famous Five had looked round the quad in vain for the Bounder.

"Yes," answered Skinner.

"Well, where is he?"

"Better look in the Cloisters," said Skinner, and he strolled away.

"Come on, you men," said Bob.

"The more hastefulness, the less speedfulness, my esteemed Cherry," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The stitch in time saves ninepence. The worthy and untruthful Skinner is pulling our esteemed legs."

"Oh!" said Bob, stopping again.

"Anybody seen Smithy?" Harry Wharton called out to half a dozen fellows in the doorway of the House.

"He went up to the studies after third lesson," answered Todd.

"Good!"

The Famous Five went in, and up the Remove staircase. They found the Bounder in Study No. 4 in the Remove. He glanced at them rather surlily.

"Want anything?" he grunted.

"About Redwing——"

"Hang Redwing!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm fed-up with Redwing!" snapped

the Bounder. "Don't talk to me about him! Shut the door after you!"

And the Bounder of Greyfriars turned his back on the Famous Five, and lighted a cigarette, apparently under the impression that the interview was at an end.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Has His Back Up!

HARRY WHARTON knitted his brows. His comrades looked rather grim. They did not leave the study. Bob Cherry kicked the door shut, but the chums of the Remove remained inside the room.

"That won't do," said Bob.

The Bounder did not answer or turn his head. He did not even seem to hear. It was obvious that he was in one of his blackest tempers.

"Look here, Smithy——" began the captain of the Remove.

"Rats!"

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull. "Do you want us to mop up the study with you?"

The Bounder swung round at that.

"You can try it on as soon as you like!" he snapped. "Go and eat coko, the lot of you! Isn't a fellow's study his own?"

"We want this a bit clearer, Smithy," said Wharton, pushing back Johnny

Ball, who was strongly inclined to take the Bounder at his word. "Only last Saturday you took us up to Hawkscliff to see Redwing. So far as I could make out, you'd made up your quarrel with him. If you've turned him down again, it's your own bizney, and I needn't tell you what I think of it. But we're not doing the same, by long chalks."

"You can do as you jolly well like, so long as you leave me out of it!" snarled the Bounder. "As for turning him down, that's all rot, and you know it. He turned me down—and you fellows, too. We fagged on a ten-mile journey to see him on Saturday; he knew we were coming, and he didn't take the trouble to stay in to see us, or even to leave a note for us. He let us fag up to Hawkscliff, wait for him all the afternoon, and then fag back again. If that isn't enough for you fellows, it's enough for me, and I'm fed-up!"

"Redwing may be able to explain why he turned us down," said Nugent.

"What is there to explain?" snarled Vernon-Smith. "We found that he'd had a telegram. If he had to leave in a hurry, couldn't he have left a message? Any Hawkscliff man or woman would have taken the message for us, or he could have left a note. He just turned us down for nothing. And it's plain that he didn't want us. That's that!"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I can't think that," he said.

"Then you're a fool!" growled the Bounder.

"I may be a fool, but I'd rather be a fool than a suspicious, touchy ass always looking for offences," said the captain of the Remove sharply. "You jump to conclusions because you jolly well like to take offence, in my opinion."

"Keep your opinion till a chap asks for it. And leave me alone!"

"I'll leave you alone fast enough!" said Wharton angrily. "You're not a fellow that it's pleasant to speak to. But I want to know whether you've heard from Redwing since Saturday. If he's left Hawkscliff for good, we can't see him for goodness knows how long—anyhow, not till after the holidays. But if he came back to the cottage, he must have found the note I left for him, and as you were his pal here, it's most likely you he'd send word to. Has he?"

The Bounder's face was dark and sullen.

"He rang me up on Quelchy's phone on Saturday night," he grunted.

"You never told us that."

"It wasn't your business, that I know of," sneered the Bounder.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"It was our business, as we visited Redwing and never found him at home," he said. "And you know I've got something that belongs to him. What did he tell you on the phone?"

"Nothing!"

"Oh, rot! He didn't ring you up on a Form master's telephone to tell you nothing!"

"I cut off," said the Bounder coolly. "I told him I was fed-up with him, and cut off. Anything more you want to know?"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him expressively. Well as they knew the Bounder's headstrong, irritable temper, which made it impossible for any fellow to keep friendly with him for long, this was a surprise to them. For the Bounder, if he was capable of friendship at all, certainly was the friend of Tom Redwing.

True, it was owing to Smithy that Tom had had to leave Greysfriars, and go back to the sea. But Smithy had

been delighted when the sailorman's son had returned to Hawkscliff after a coasting-voyage. He had broken detention to go and see him there, and he had been very keen to take the Famous Five to visit him on Saturday. Apparently that revival of the old friendship had been only a flash in the pan. That kind of thing did not appeal to the chums of the Remove in the very least.

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Do you call that decent, Smithy?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Well, I don't! Redwing must have rung you up to explain why he was away on Saturday afternoon."

"I don't choose to hear his explanations," sneered the Bounder. "I've been treated rottenly, and insulted, and that's enough for me. He knew we were coming—all was arranged and fixed, and there was no possibility of any mistake. I was going to ask him to join me for the vacation before he went back to sea. My father's taking me for a cruise in his yacht, and I wanted Redwing to come. And he couldn't stay in to see me, after making the arrangement—couldn't even leave a word. He can go his own way, after that, and I'll go mine!"

The Bounder's face was angry and sulky; but it was clear that he had been deeply wounded as well as offended. Indeed, it was probably his genuine affection for his chum which had made him feel so sore at Redwing's slighting him.

"I admit that it looks queer," said Wharton slowly. "If I thought that Redwing had deliberately gone out and left us to it I should be jolly well offended, too. But I'd rather make sure."

"Well, he did."

"Well, even if he did, I've got this chart that belongs to him, and I shall have to give it to him," said the captain of the Remove. "Do you know whether he is at Hawkscliff now?"

"I know nothing about him, and want to know nothing!"

"You've had no letter? He's had time to write if he wanted to."

The Bounder pointed to a little heap of charred paper in the otherwise empty grate of the study.

"I've had a letter," he answered; "I got it in break this morning. There it is, if you want it."

"You read it before you burned it, I suppose?"

"I didn't open it. I'm done with Redwing."

"You utter ass!"

"Thanks!" sneered the Bounder. "If that's all you've got to say, you can travel."

"You're very likely making some idiotic mistake," snapped the captain of the Remove. "In fact, I'm sure you are! Redwing's not the fellow to slight anybody. He was always a decent chap when he was here. Anyhow, I've got to see him. And your getting a letter shows that he went back to Hawkscliff, anyhow. That's enough."

The Bounder looked at him with smouldering eyes.

"You've no right to keep on with Redwing," he said. "He was my chum here, not yours. If I turn him down, you've no right to take him up. Can't you mind your own business?"

"That's rot, and you know it! Anyhow, you can take what view you like, but I'm going to see Redwing as soon as I possibly can!" snapped Wharton. "If you don't like it, you can lump it!"

"So that's that!" said Bob Cherry.

The study door opened, and Harold

Skinner came in. He gave the Famous Five a sarcastic, sneering glance.

"Hallo! Quite a meeting!" he said in his most pleasant tone. "I didn't know you had company, Smithy. See you later."

"You needn't go; these fellows are going. I never asked them here, and don't want them!" growled the Bounder.

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study, leaving the Bounder scowling and Skinner laughing.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bright Idea.

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH came along the Remove passage after prep and looked in at the door of Study No. 1.

Wharton and Nugent gave the dusky junior a welcoming grin.

"The esteemed prep is completely finished?" asked the nabob.

"Just!" said Wharton. "Trot in!"

Hurree Singh trotted in.

"I have been thoughtfully reflecting, my esteemed chums," he remarked, as he took a seat on the corner of the study table.

"Any results?" asked Nugent, with a smile.

"The resultfulness is terrific. The ridiculous chart belonging to Redwing is in your esteemed possession, Wharton?"

"I've got it in an inside pocket," said Harry, tapping his jacket. "It's safe enough till I see Redwing."

"But whenfully——"

"Wednesday, I hope. I've written to Redwing, at Hawkscliff, to ask him to come here," said Harry. "I don't like trusting the thing to the post, or I could have sent it on. But, according to that wooden-legged johnny, Ben Dance, it's a thing of enormous value, and I promised him to keep it till I could hand it to Redwing. And if Redwing's gone, of course, the packet wouldn't reach him if I sent it."

"It is safer to keep it in your honourable possession and hand it over by word of mouth," agreed the nabob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I have been thoughtfully considering the esteemed and rascally half-caste," went on Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "He butted into the school this morning cheekfully; but I am sure he did not expect that the chart would be handed to him."

"I hardly think so," said Harry.

"Then why do you think he came, my esteemed chum?"

"Blessed if I quite make out! He simply couldn't have expected the chart to be given to him; but, otherwise, he was simply running risks and wasting his time."

"Inky's got an idea in his head," said Nugent. "Cough it up, Inky!"

"It appears to me," said the nabob, "that the esteemed scoundrel had an object in coming here."

"And what was it?"

"He knew that the chart had been taken from him by one of us on Saturday. It is true that you gave it back to Ben Dance, my esteemed Wharton, and that Dance handed it to you afterwards for safe keeping. But the worthy villain Silvio did not know all that. No doubt he supposed that the fellow who took it from him kept it."

"And, as it turned out, I did," said Harry. "But what then, Inky?"

"He has been making esteemed inquiries, and learned that we belonged to Greysfriars," resumed the nabob.

"That was easy enough, of course; he had only to describe us and mention the school colours. He came here, not hoping to recover the chart, but hoping to discover which person held it in his possession."

"Oh!" said Wharton.

"There were half a dozen of us on Saturday, and he could not know which had the chart. He could not be even certain that it had been brought to the school. By his visit here this morning he had found out that it is here, and that it is in your keeping."

"And now——"

"Now that he knows where to look for it, my honourable idea is that he

in making a nocturnal attempt to possess himself of the treasure chart.

"You've hit it, Inky!" said Wharton, with conviction. "The rascal means to get after the chart, and his visit here this morning was simply scouting."

"That's it!" agreed Nugent.

"We shall be on our esteemed guard," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin. "Fore-warned is fore-legged, as the English proverb says."

"Make it fore-armed," chuckled Nugent. "But, I say, that giddy islander wouldn't find it easy to pick out the Remove dormitory in the dark if he came after Wharton at night."

"Jolly difficult!" said Harry.

"He may not expect to find it easy,

"About ten minutes," said Nugent. "Eh? I didn't mean how long, you silly ass."

"I did."

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here, Wharton, you haven't shown me that chart yet," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove.

"Fathead!"

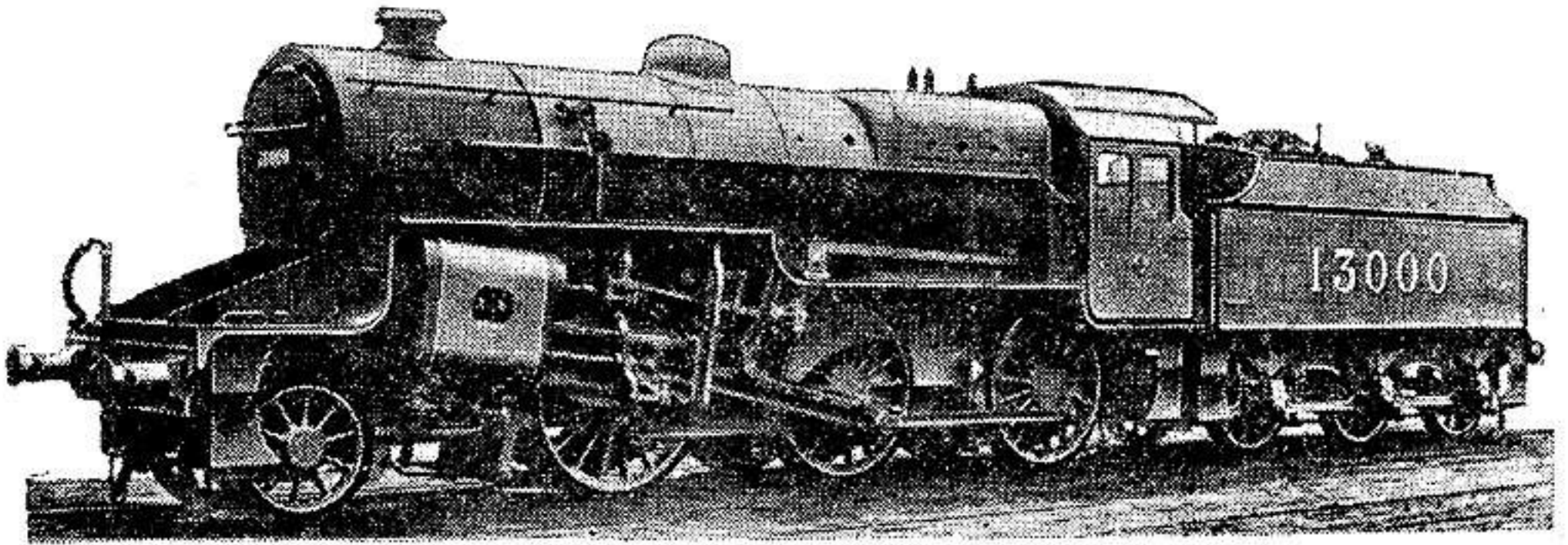
"I think you might trust a pal!" said Bunter reproachfully.

"So I would!" said Wharton.

"If you mean that I'm not a pal, Wharton, I can only say that I'm disgusted at your ingratitude. Who stood by you like a brick when you first came to Greyfriars?" demanded Bunter warmly.

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will look!" said Hurree Singh. "I observably noticed that the rascal looked about him like a cat watching a mouse when he was admitted to the House. He was taking his bearings, as a sailor-man would say. My esteemed belief is that now he knows so much we may expect another visit from him—not in the daylight openly."

Frank Nugent whistled, and the captain of the Remove looked very serious.

Both the juniors realised at once that Hurree Singh was probably right. They had been puzzled by the half-caste's visit to the school, but the nabob had pointed out an excellent reason for it. Silvio Xero knew now that the chart was in Harry Wharton's possession at Greyfriars, and he had gained some knowledge, at least, of the interior of the House, which would be useful to him

my esteemed chums; it cannot have been easy for him to follow Ben Dance from the South Seas. But, easy or not, he will try it on fully, because it is his last chance of getting hold of the chart. He will soon be nabfully nailed by the police if he lingers in this salubrious neighbourhood much longer."

"That's so," said Harry. "More likely than not he will try burgling the House; if he fails he's no worse off, and he has a chance of success. We're jolly well going to be on our guard to-night!"

"I say, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter rolled into the study doorway.

He blinked suspiciously at the three Removites.

"What are you fellows confabbing about?" he inquired.

"Franky, here," answered the captain of the Remove.

"And what about me?" demanded Bunter. "Didn't I stand you a spread before you had been a week in the school?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"And didn't I have to settle for it at the tuckshop?" he asked.

"It's like you to rake up sordid details like that!" said the Owl of the Remove disdainfully. "I've often wondered whether I may not grow sordid myself in such surroundings, you know. But to come down to business—I want to see that chart."

"Keep on wanting, old fat man!"

"I've got a proposition to make," said Bunter. "According to what I've heard you fellows say, that chart shows where
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a lot of pearls are buried on a South Sea Island. Now, pearls are valuable."

"How does Bunter acquire all this abstruse knowledge?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Now, I want to see that chart, and see whether there is anything in it," said Bunter. "You fellows would hardly be able to judge. It needs intelligence and so on. Well, if I decide that there's something in it, we'll make up a party to get hold of those pearls. Smithy's going for a cruise in his father's yacht this vac, and we might make an arrangement to give him a whack in the pearls if he'll take us to the island. See? I should not object to coming, so long as the yacht was comfortable, and you were careful about the grub and all that. If there's any pearls, and if they can be found, I'll find 'em—leave that to me! See?"

"And what about Redwing?" asked Wharton, with a laugh. "You seem to have forgotten that the chart belongs to Tom Redwing."

Bunter paused for a moment. Apparently he had forgotten that little circumstance—or perhaps he regarded it as unimportant.

"Well, that's all rot!" he said. "Never mind Redwing. He's only a common fellow, and scarcely entitled to consideration among gentlemen."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "Do gentlemen steal from common fellows, in the best circles?"

"Ha, na, ha!"

"Well, we could give him a whack in the treasure. I'd be willing to let him have something," said Bunter generously. "It doesn't do to give the lower classes much money; they waste it in reckless extravagance, you know. It's not right to—to corrupt them like that. We could stand Redwing a fiver if we find the treasure—dash it all, a tenner!" said Bunter, in a burst of generosity.

"Redwing's gratitude would be terrific if he were stood a tenner out of his own esteemed money!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, first of all, let me see the chart," said Bunter. "I shall have to judge whether there's anything in it, of course. Hand it over, Wharton!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry

arrived in the doorway with Johnny Bull and Squiff. "Turn out, you slackers! Have you forgotten that we're boxing the Fourth Form chaps in the Rag after prep?"

"Don't interrupt now, Cherry!" said Bunter.

"Do!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"What's on?" asked Squiff.

"Bunter's putting up a proposition that we should steal Redwing's chart, and find the treasure, if any, and give him a tenner for himself out of the loot."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You've got the biggest feet, Bob. It's up to you to kick Bunter."

"What-ho!" said Bob.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as he spun into the study. "Whoop! Keep off, you beast! I was only j-j-joking! Yooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. walked away to the Remove staircase, laughing, leaving William George Bunter glaring after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Prize!

BILLY BUNTER rolled into the Rag a little later, with a frowning and discontented face.

Bunter was annoyed.

Had he seen the South Sea chart, it was probable that his obtuse brain would have failed to understand it in the very least. But that was not his own opinion. He wanted to see it, chiefly because it did not concern him, and he wanted to see it all the more because he was not allowed to do so.

The chart, if of value, was probably of great value. The information it contained was a secret belonging to Redwing alone. No eye but Redwing's had a right to read the secrets it told. That was Harry Wharton's idea, and his chums had agreed with him. Undoubtedly, the Famous Five themselves were very curious indeed about the South Sea chart, but knowing quite well that they had no right to examine it, they refrained from doing so. It was not likely that the captain of the Remove would relax the rule in Bunter's favour and not in his own. That consideration, however, did not appeal to William George Bunter. He wanted to pry into the chart, as he wanted to pry into most things, and he was feeling extremely injured and ill-used.

Nobody heeded Bunter's entrance into the Rag. He came in unregarded, just as if he were a fellow of no importance. There was boxing going on in the Rag. Temple, Dabney, Fry, and Scott of the Fourth had the gloves on with four Remove men—Wharton, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Squiff. The rest of the fellows in the room made a ring round the boxers, and nobody heeded Bunter, except that Bolsover major gave him a jab with his elbow when he shoved forward.

Bunter grunted and backed off again. There was a cunning gleam in his little round eyes behind his spectacles.

The eight juniors who were boxing had, naturally, taken their jackets off. Eight jackets lay sprawling upon the big table in the Rag.

Billy Bunter sat on the table near the discarded jackets.

He knew that Wharton kept the goatskin bag, containing the chart, in an inside pocket of his jacket. It was a

chance for Bunter to gratify his curiosity, a chance that he had not expected.

He blinked cautiously round him.

Eight boxers were going strong, and all the other fellows had their attention concentrated on the boxing.

Bunter grinned.

He spotted Wharton's jacket among the others and slyly slid his fat hand into it, and into the inside pocket.

The goatskin bag met his fat fingers. A moment more, and he had taken it out. Another moment and he had opened it and drawn out the circular disc of teak.

It was the chart, but Bunter could not examine the chart where he was. That was too risky. He slipped it into his pocket.

Then he grinned again. He would have chortled aloud, but for the necessity of escaping attention.

On the table was a large inkstand, which had a circular metal lid, thick and heavy. That lid had originally moved on a hinge, but, like many things in the Rag, it was no longer in the state as supplied by the makers. The hinge had long ago gone "West," and the lid was oftener off the inkpot than on it. The hinge was gone; the little metal handle that had once been screwed into the top of the lid was gone; only the disc of thick metal remained.

Bunter annexed it and slipped it into the goatskin bag, in the place of the wooden chart.

It was almost as large as the chart and quite as heavy. Unless Wharton actually opened the goatskin bag he was not likely to discover the change. And Bunter knew that he was not likely to open the bag, remembering his ridiculous delicacy on the subject of prying into another fellow's business.

Bunter drew the neck of the bag shut and knotted the string that surrounded it, as a further precaution against discovery.

Then he slipped the goatskin bag back into the inside pocket of Wharton's jacket.

The Owl of the Remove was finished now, and he blinked round at the crowd of juniors surrounding the boxers.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

Temple of the Fourth had had to give "best" to the captain of the Remove. Cecil Reginald Temple, with a rather wry face, peeled off the gloves. But the other three pairs were still "going" it.

Bunter rolled off the table, and became interested in the boxing. From his own peculiar point of view, William George Bunter was fully justified in his late proceedings. But he did not expect any other fellow to share his point of view. He was accustomed to being misunderstood and misjudged. He quite realised that it was necessary to be circumspect.

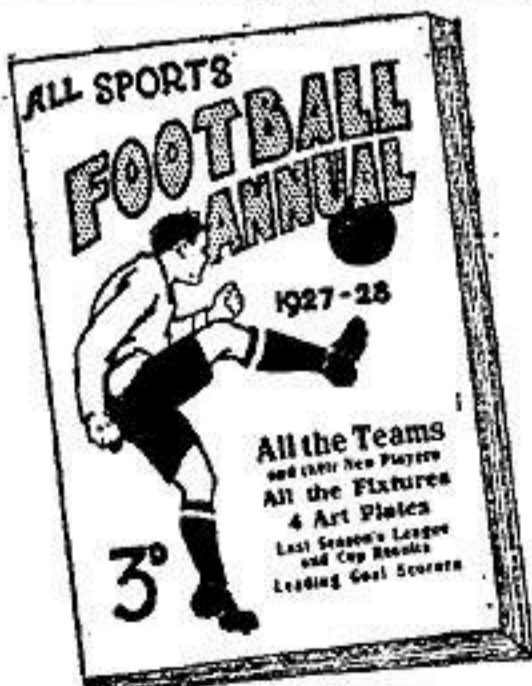
He blinked casually at the boxers, while Wharton and Temple crossed over to the table for their jackets, and put them on.

Out of the corner of his eye Bunter observed the captain of the Remove slip his hand into his inside pocket, evidently to assure himself that the goatskin bag containing the chart was safe.

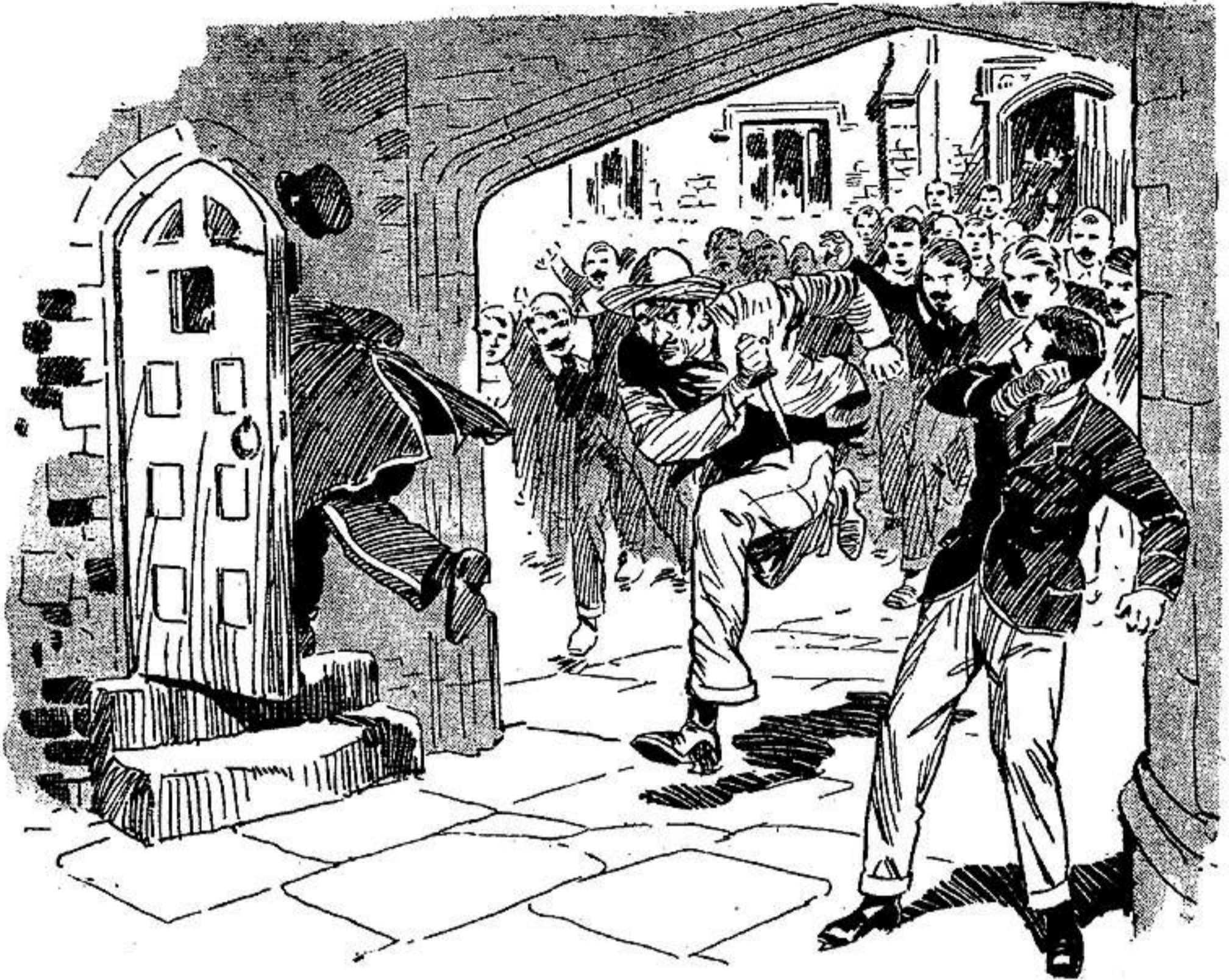
For a moment Bunter felt a twinge of uneasiness. But the captain of the Remove was evidently satisfied. He slipped on his jacket and joined the ring of spectators, to watch the finish of the boxing.

Bunter grinned and rolled out of the Rag.

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Silvio Xero raced on to the gates. Gosling had a chance to stop him, but the school porter was not looking for chances like that. The sight of the flashing knife was enough for him, and he bolted into his lodge! (See Chapter 2.)

The South Sea chart was in his possession now. Wharton was in possession of the metallid of an inkpot, and was not likely to discover what had happened till he came to hand over the chart to Tom Redwing.

Billy Bunter proceeded to his study in the Remove passage to examine his prize. He found his study-mate, Peter Todd, there. Toddy had left his prep rather late and was hurrying to finish it.

"I say, Toddy, when are you going down?" asked Bunter peevishly.

"Soon, I hope—all the sooner if you don't jaw!" answered Toddy, without looking up.

"Oh, really, Toddy, you oughtn't to leave your prep late like this, you know! Quelchy wouldn't like it."

"Dry up!"
"Why not leave it?" asked Bunter.
"Chance it with Quelchy in the morning, old chap."

"Fathead!"
"Oh, really, Toddy——"
"Ring off!"

Bunter grunted and waited. He could not examine his prize in Toddy's presence, that was certain. Toddy would not have understood in the very least that Bunter was fully justified in his peculiar proceedings. He waited impatiently.

"I say, Toddy——"
"Shurrup!"
"I say, how long are you going to be?"
Peter Todd glared at him.

"What the thump does it matter, fatty? What do you want to get me out of the study for?"

"Eh? I—I don't, old chap. Nothing of the kind."

"Have you been raiding some fellow's tuck?" demanded Toddy suspiciously.
"If it's not that, what is it?"

"N-n-nothing, old chap. I—I don't want to get you out of the study. I didn't come up here to look at anything in private, you know, and I shouldn't mind you seeing it, old chap."

"Seeing what?"
"Nothing."

Bunter sidled out of the study hurriedly as he made that answer. Toddy stared after him very suspiciously; but prep claimed his attention, and he dismissed the Owl of the Remove from his mind.

The fat junior rolled away in search of some more solitary spot. He tried Study No. 4, supposing that Smithy and Skinner had gone down to the Rag. But he found the Boulder there, with a scowling face.

"What do you want?" snapped Vernon-Smith, as Bunter blinked in.

"N-n-nothing, old chap."

"Get out!"
Bunter got out, just in time to escape a whizzing Latin grammar. The Boulder did not seem to be in a mood for company—Bunter's company, at all events.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled on to No. 11, remembering that he had seen Snoop and Stott in the Rag, and sure of finding that study untenanted. But he had hardly turned on the light, when there were footsteps outside.

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Bunter.

Snoop and Stott came in and stared at Bunter.

"What are you doing in our study, you fat fraud?" demanded Sidney James Snoop.

"N-n-nothing," stammered Bunter.
"I—I just looked in to speak to you chaps, you know——"

"After our smokes?" said Stott.

"That's it," agreed Snoop. "Kick him out!"

"I say, you fellows—— Yarooooop!"

Billy Bunter travelled out of Study No. 11 much faster than he had entered it. He travelled with a roar.

Really, there seemed no rest for the wicked. Bunter was a gregarious fellow, and seldom desired solitude. Now that he desired it it was not to be had, apparently. He debated in his fat mind whether to go up to one of the box-rooms and examine his prize there, and he was still debating the matter when half-past nine chimed out, and Bunter, with feelings too deep for words, had to join the rest of the Remove and march off to the dormitory—with his prize still unexamined.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Alarm in the Night!

"SMITHY, old bean!"
Lights were out in the Remove dormitory when Bob Cherry called out to the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith did not answer.

His break with Tom Redwing seemed to have determined the Bounder to break with the Famous Five as well. His manner to the chums of the Remove had been the reverse of friendly since the eventful Saturday when the Greyfriars party had gone up to Hawkscliff.

Probably he was irritated by their attitude in the matter.

From Smithy's point of view Redwing had treated him with a slighting neglect which he did well to resent bitterly. No doubt he had expected the Co. to take the same view.

Instead of which, they seemed resolved to look on the best side instead of the worst, and not to take offence until they were sure that offence had been intended.

The Bounder, in his suspicious mind, was sure that offence had been intended, or at the very least that it had been carelessly given. It irritated him that the Famous Five did not concur in that opinion.

"Smithy!" repeated Bob.

No answer.

"Gone to sleep, fathead?" boomed Bob Cherry.

There was an angry exclamation from Vernon-Smith.

"I want to go to sleep! Can't you shut up after lights-out?"

Skinner grinned in the gloom. Matters were going exactly as Harold Skinner, at least, desired them to go.

"Dear man," said Bob, quite unmoved by the Bounder's angry reply, "I'm going to give you a tip."

"Keep it!"

"Too good to keep," answered Bob, with a chuckle. "I was going to mention that if you're thinking of bunking out of bounds on one of your blagging excursions to-night, you'd better think twice."

"No bizney of yours that I know of."

"Not at all. But Gosling has let his mastiff loose to-night, and if you walk into that jolly old how-wow all Greyfriars will know about it. That's all, old bean. Now you can go to sleep."

The Bounder grunted, and made no further answer. But if he had had any scheme for going out of bounds in his mind, he gave it up. Gosling's mastiff was generally kept on the chain, but if the animal was loose breaking bounds was likely to be a matter of unusual difficulty.

"What on earth has Gosling let his mastiff loose for?" asked Tom Brown.

"He always has to keep him chained."

"May be expecting a burglar," said Bob. "Anyhow, he's loose, and he's got a had temper and a good set of teeth. If I had thought of going down to the Cross Keys to-night, I should chuck it. What about you, Smithy?"

"Go and eat coke!"

The Remove fellows settled down to sleep, and Harry Wharton & Co., at least, slept all the sounder for the knowledge that the powerful mastiff was at liberty in the precincts of the school.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh's suggestion concerning the half-caste was the cause. Wharton, after thinking the matter over, had mentioned it to Mr. Quelch before bed-time, and the Remove master had directed Gosling to set the dog at liberty that night. If the half-caste made any attempt to enter the

school under the shadows of night, he was not likely to enter without the alarm being given.

The Remove were fast asleep, and all the lights in the great buildings of Greyfriars had been extinguished, when twelve o'clock chimed out of the tower. Soon after the strokes of midnight had died away Harry Wharton awoke suddenly.

The dormitory windows were open in the warm July night. Through the open windows, from the clear starlight night, came sounds of disturbance.

A loud and furious barking awoke all the echoes of Greyfriars.

Wharton started up in bed.

He knew the powerful notes of the mastiff. Loud and angry sounded the barking, and when it ceased it was followed by deep growling. Then a sharp cry rang out.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry was awake now. "That's the giddy bow-wow!"

"And the half-caste, I fancy!" said Wharton, as he sprang out of bed.

The captain of the Remove ran to the window and clambered up to look out into the quad.

In the clear summer starlight he could see the buildings, and the trees, almost as plainly as by day.

A dark shadow raced past his field of vision, and after it raced another shadow.

Only for a few seconds he saw them, then they vanished in the elms.

A light flashed from the direction of Gosling's lodge.

Vague sounds came to Wharton's ears from the distance, and then the fierce barking of the dog rang and echoed in the night again.

All the Remove were wide awake now. Most of the fellows turned out of bed.

"What on earth is it?" exclaimed Squiff. "A giddy burglar?"

"Sounds like it," said Bob.

"The soundfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton left the dormitory and hurried to the stairs, with a dozen of the juniors after him.

Lights had been turned on below, and the windows of the School House gleamed into the night. The door was open, and two or three masters, half-dressed, and some of the Sixth, were there, staring into the quad. Mr. Prout had a big poker in his hand, and Wingate of the Sixth had a cricket bat. The whole House had been awakened.

"Gosling!"

Mr. Quelch called to the school porter, who appeared at the steps, holding the dog by the collar.

"Yessir, all right, sir; he's gone!" came Gosling's voice.

"There was someone——"

"Some blinking tramp, sir, I think," said Gosling; "or p'r'aps a burglar, sir. My dorg got him!"

"Bless my soul!"

There was a husky chuckle from Gosling.

"The dorg's got a bit of trouser cloth in his teeth, sir. He's had a bite, sir. He's a good dorg, he is."

"Oh, good!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch turned and looked up the staircase, with a frown.

"You boys go back to your dormitory at once. There is no occasion for alarm."

The Removes returned to their quarters. But it was a long time before they settled down to sleep again. The alarming episode kept all Greyfriars awake for some time.

But there was no further alarm.

Harry Wharton & Co. had not the slightest doubt that the nocturnal

visitor had been the half-caste, in desperate search of the South Sea chart. But he was gone now, and he did not venture to return. But the juniors wondered what might have happened had not Hurree Janset Ram Singh divined the rascal's intention, and so caused the mastiff to be loosed for the night. An armed and desperate man would have entered the school, and the outcome might very easily have been tragic.

It was clear that Silvio Xero was still lurking in the vicinity of Greyfriars, in spite of the fact that the police were searching for him. He was gone now, but the Famous Five did not believe that he was gone for good.

Danger had dogged the steps of the wooden-legged seaman Ben Dance across half the world, when he had brought the treasure chart to Hawkscliff, and the same danger now threatened Harry Wharton of the Greyfriars Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter on the Track!

CLANG, clang!

The Remove turned out in the sunny morning at the clang of the rising-bell.

Harry Wharton, when he dressed, slipped his hand under his pillow, where he had placed the goatskin bag for safety during the night.

Billy Bunter's big spectacles turned on him rather anxiously as he did so.

But the captain of the Remove did not think of looking into the goatskin bag. He could feel the circular disc inside it, and it was not likely to occur to his mind that the teak chart had been surreptitiously exchanged for the metal lid of an inkpot.

Bunter grinned as the goatskin bag was slipped into Wharton's inside pocket.

All was safe—for Bunter. The chart was in his own pocket, and now that a new day had come, Bunter was at liberty to examine it. Bunter, for once, was up as early as any fellow in the Remove. He was one of the first down. He rolled out into the sunny quad before breakfast, seeking a secluded spot, where he could examine his prize in safety.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out into the quad at the same time; and Bunter blinked at them, and rolled away. He headed for the Cloisters, where he was likely to find complete solitude at that early hour. Twice he blinked cautiously over his fat shoulder, to make sure that he was not followed. He was so excessively cautious that the Famous Five observed it, and wondered what he was up to. Bob Cherry stared after him as he vanished at last into the cloisters.

"What's that fat duffer up to?" asked Bob. "He can't have been pinching tuck so early in the morning."

"Looks as if he's committed a murder and the body's in the Cloisters," remarked Frank Nugent. "But it can't be that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not quitefully," agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But the upfulness is terrific, and it would be a harmless and necessary jest to follow the esteemed Bunter Chingachgookfully."

The Remove fellows chuckled, and walked after Bunter, tracking him into the Cloisters in the manner of that celebrated Indian hunter Chingachgook. Unaware of that circumstance, William George Bunter stopped among the old

stone pillars and drew the disc from his pocket.

He blinked at it eagerly. What he had expected to see Bunter hardly knew; but what he saw disappointed him considerably.

So far as his owlish eyes could make out from the fine lines marked on the hard, polished surface of teak, the chart represented an island, but the carved lines were so fine that the short-sighted Owl of the Remove found it difficult to trace them. The clearest marking was the word "CACHE," and that word was so much Greek to Bunter. Unless it was a miss-spelling of the more familiar word "catch," Bunter did not know what it was. Had Bunter attended more closely to the instructions of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master of Greyfriars, he might not have been so puzzled. But it was not Bunter's way to attend to anybody's instructions.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sudden roar.

Bunter jumped. He had his back to the juniors who had tracked him into the Cloisters, and the sudden bawl from Bob Cherry took him quite by surprise.

He almost dropped the chart in his alarm; but he contrived to save it, and he jammed it into his pocket instantly.

"Ow!" he gasped, as he spun round. Five grinning faces looked at him. "Well, what's the game?" asked Bob. "Eh?"

"What on earth have you sneaked here for, like a burglar sneaking away to hide the loot?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——" "Possibly the esteemed Bunter was seeking a secluded spot to indulge in the calm and joyful meditation," suggested Hurree Singh.

"That's it!" gasped Bunter. "Just that!"

"Oh, my hat!" "I—I wasn't looking at anything!" gasped Bunter. "If you fellows think I came here to look at anything in private, you're mistaken. Nothing of the sort, you know."

"Isn't it queer how habits grow on a fellow," said Bob. "There's no reason at all why Bunter should tell lies now, so far as I can see. He just does it from force of habit."

"Oh, really, Cherry——" "He isn't eating," said Johnny Bull. "He hasn't bagged a fellow's tuck, and sneaked here to devour it, like a tiger in his den. I suppose he's got hold of some fellow's letter. Is that it, Bunter?"

"Beast!" "He bagged a letter of Smithy's the other day, and made a lot of trouble," said Johnny. "He can't help reading other fellows' letters, any more than he can help listening at keyholes. Let's up-end him, and shake the letter out of him."

"Hear, hear!" Billy Bunter did not stay to be up-ended. He fled back to the quad, leaving the chums of the Remove chuckling.

Certainly, it did not cross their minds what it was that Bunter had retired into the Cloisters to examine. Had they suspected that the treasure-chart was in his possession, the Owl of the Remove would not have escaped. As it was, they dismissed Bunter from their minds, and resumed their stroll till breakfast.

Meanwhile, Bunter had gone back to the House, where he looked for Mark Linley of the Remove. He grabbed the

Lancashire lad by the sleeve when he found him.

"I say, Linley, old chap——" Mark shook off his fat hand; he did not like Bunter at close quarters. But he answered with his usual cheery civility.

"What is it, Bunter?" "You being a rotten swot——" began Bunter.

"Eh?" "I mean, you being a jolly clever chap, you know a lot about silly foreign languages and things."

"A little," said Mark, laughing. "Have you ever heard of a word spelt 'c-a-c-h-e'?" asked Bunter eagerly.

Mark stared at him. "Of course!"

"Oh! You know the word!" exclaimed Bunter breathlessly. "I thought you might, you being a filthy swot—I mean, you being so clever."

"Never mind what you mean, Bunter," said Mark Linley dryly. "It's a simple word enough, and a fellow doesn't need to be a swot to know it!"

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"Is it a South Sea word?"

"Oh, crumbs! Not quite!" gasped Mark. "It's a French word."

"French!" repeated Bunter. "Well, I dare say they might use French words in the South Seas. Think so?"

"Very likely," said Mark. "I believe a mixture of languages is spoken among the South Sea Islands. But the word 'cache' is used in many countries, in America, for instance."

"What does it mean? I suppose it means something?"

"Words generally do, in any language. It means a hiding-place."

"Oh!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Cache, a hiding-place, from the verb cacher, to hide," explained Mark. "If you've got it in an exercise, I'll lend you a hand if you like."

Bunter had certainly not got that word in an exercise. He knew now the meaning of that mysterious word cache, and he had done with Linley. Having done with a fellow, Bunter naturally had no more politeness to waste on him.

"I hardly think you could help me with an exercise, Linley," he answered disdainfully. "I could play your head off at French and chance it. Don't you be cheeky!"

And Bunter rolled away, leaving Mark staring after him blankly.

The fat junior rolled in to breakfast that morning in a cheery mood. Cache meant hiding-place; so the spot on the chart marked cache meant the spot where the pearls were hidden. Bunter felt that he was getting on. He was on the track of the treasure—and he had wholly forgotten by this time that the treasure, if any, belonged to Tom Redwing, of Hawkscliff. Little trivialities like that were not likely to linger long in William George Bunter's mind.

During breakfast he dreamed golden dreams—pearly dreams, to be more exact. But his dreams of treasure did not affect his appetite. And his waistcoat buttons were, as usual, in danger of flying off when he rolled out after the meal.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Diplomatic!

"SMITHY, old chap!" Vernon-Smith did not answer, save with a scowl.

After class that day the Bounder had lounged away into the quiet old Cloisters by himself.

His face was dark and clouded as he tramped along the old stone flags with his hands in his pockets.

His resentment against his one-time chum was as deep as ever, or deeper. On Saturday he had refused to listen to Redwing on the telephone; on Monday he had burned unread the letter that had arrived from the sailorman's son. Had Tom appeared before him now he would have turned on his heel, cutting him dead.

Yet his heart was heavy.

The term was near its end, and soon Greyfriars would be breaking up for the long summer holiday. Smithy had hoped that Redwing would join him for the holidays in a cruise on the millionaire's yacht. He had intended to make the proposition and discuss it that Saturday afternoon when Redwing was so unluckily absent from his cabin at Hawkscliff. The Bounder was bitterly wounded and deeply offended, angry with himself for feeling pain as well as anger; and yet he had to admit that he did feel pain. His arrogant pride would not allow him to recede an inch from a position he had taken up. And yet he knew that his heart was sore. He was thinking about the matter savagely and gloomily, when William George Bunter butted in. Bunter had evidently followed the Bounder to the Cloisters for a chat.

Smithy did not look in a humour for a chat. But that did not worry Bunter. He was, as usual, thinking about himself and his own wishes, and not disposed to waste any consideration on the wishes of others.

He grinned cheerily at the scowling Bounder.

"Looking for you, old bean!" he said.

"Get out!"

"It's about the vacation, old fellow."

"Buzz off, you fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

Vernon-Smith walked angrily on.

But the Owl of the Remove was not to be shaken off. He trotted industriously after the angry Bounder.

"Don't hurry, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "It's rather important, you know. I hear that your pater is taking you on a cruise in his yacht for the vac."

No answer. "Well, I'd like to come," said Bunter. The Bounder gave an impatient laugh. He did not need telling that.

The Owl of the Remove was always busy in such matters at the close of the term. Bunter Court, with all its glories, never attracted Billy Bunter at such a time. Many of the fellows discussed what they were going to do in the vac. Bunter considered whom he was going to do.

"Try Lord Mauleverer!" snapped the Bounder. "Mauly's soft!"

"He's turned me down already—I mean, I've given Mauly a sort of half-promise," said Bunter cautiously. "I may go home to Mauleverer Towers, and I may not."

"With the probability on the not!" snapped Smithy. "Leave me alone, anyhow. You're not lauding yourself on me!"

"My idea is that it may suit both of us, Smithy," said Bunter. "It depends on where you're going for a cruise. If you could get your father to take you on a South Sea cruise, I'd come."

"Not if I knew it!"

"I might make it worth your while, old bean," said Bunter. "I might be able to find something valuable and let you in for a share."

"Fathead!"

"Such things as pearls," said Bunter. "Such a thing as a cache—if you know what a cache is. You're not so well up in French as I am, so I may as well tell you that a cache is a hiding-place."

The Bounder stopped and stared at Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was giving him mysterious hints; but his hints, of course, did not mystify the Bounder. He knew that the idea of a cache of pearls could only have entered Bunter's obtuse mind in reference to what he had heard of the South Sea chart.

"Has Wharton shown you Redwing's chart?" he exclaimed. "He has no right to do anything of the kind!"

"The beast refused to show it to me," said Bunter. "But—"

"But what, ass?"

"Nothing," said Bunter hastily. "What I'm saying hasn't anything to do with that chart, of course. I might have a clue to a cache on a South Sea island—see? Why shouldn't I?"

"Ass!"

"If you can't be civil, Smithy—"

"Fathead!"

Apparently Smithy couldn't be civil. But William George Bunter could put up with a great deal of incivility when he had an object in view.

"I may have a chart and I may not," said Bunter mysteriously. "I may be able to discover a lot of valuable pearls, and I may not. I'm not giving my secrets away. But look here, Smithy! If you like to make it a South Sea cruise in the vac, I'll come with you, and I'll go halves in what we find. What about it?"

"Does that mean that you've pinched the chart from Wharton somehow?" asked the Bounder, in wonder.

Bunter started.

He could see no reason whatever why the Bounder should jump to this conclusion. His view was that he had been exceedingly diplomatic.

"Oh, really, Smithy," he gasped, "of course not! I hope I'm not the fellow to pinch a chart or anything else. I—I was just putting a case, you know."

"You born idiot! If you've pinched that chart from Wharton—"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled hastily away. Even his obtuse brain assimilated the fact that the discussion was growing a little dangerous. Certainly he did not want the Bounder or anyone else to

know that he had obtained surreptitious possession of the treasure chart.

The Bounder stared after him, and shrugged his shoulders, with a sneer. It looked to him as if Bunter had somehow got hold of the chart; but he cared nothing about that. He told himself that it was no business of his. Redwing had slighted his friendship, and Redwing could look out for himself. Wharton was sticking to Redwing, and he could look out for himself, too. It did not matter to the Bounder.

And Herbert Vernon-Smith, dismissing the matter sourly from his mind, continued to pace the Cloisters, in a black and bitter mood, till he tired of solitude and resentful reflections, and went to his study to tea.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

In the Hands of the Half-Caste!

"REDDY'S fist!"

"Good!"

"Now we shall see what we shall see," remarked Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton had come out of the House with a letter in his hand, which had been delivered at Greyfriars in the afternoon.

The handwriting showed that it was from Tom Redwing; and all the members of the Co. were anxious to see what it contained.

Strange enough as Redwing's conduct had been the previous Saturday, the chums of the Remove believed that he would have some explanation to give—which he would have given already to Vernon-Smith had the passionate and headstrong Bounder chosen to listen to it. Wharton had written to him, and he had evidently answered by return of post; which looked as if he did, after all, value the opinion of the Greyfriars fellows.

"Buck up with it, old bean!" said Bob.

Wharton slit open the envelope, and drew out Redwing's letter. His chums stood listening while he read it aloud:

"Dear Wharton.—I've just had your letter. Many thanks. I explained to Smithy in a letter, but I gather that he cannot have told you, for some reason."

"That's the letter Smithy burned without opening it yesterday," interjected Bob Cherry.

"That's it," said Harry; and he read on:

"I shall be very glad to come and see you fellows on Wednesday afternoon, and tea in the study. It will be like old times."

"About Saturday. I was kept away by a rotten trick. I received a telegram signed 'Smithy,' telling me that he couldn't come to Hawkscliff, and asking me to meet him at Lantham at four. That telegram was handed in at Friardale Post Office, and there was nothing about it to show that it was not from Smithy. I took it for granted that it came from him, of course, and went to Lantham. Of course, Smithy was not there."

"If I hadn't found your note left in my cottage, I should not have known that you fellows and Smithy had been up at Hawkscliff at all, and should not have known what to think."

"I am afraid that Smithy fancied that I turned him down on Saturday. I've written to him explaining how it

was, and enclosed the telegram in the letter. So I hope it will be all clear when I come along on Wednesday afternoon."

"Kindest regards,
"TOM REDWING."

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "That beats the band. While we were waiting at Hawkscliff on Saturday afternoon Reddy was waiting at Lantham for Smithy."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"The telegram must have been spoof, of course," he said. "We know that Smithy never sent it, as he went to Hawkscliff with us."

"But who—and why—?" said Nugent.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Some cad butting in and playing a rotten trick," he said. "Skinner or Snoop most likely. They were always up against Redwing when he was here—and I know that Skinner was wild at Smithy taking Redwing up again when he came back from the sea."

"What a dirty trick!" said Johnny Bull. "We ought to find out for certain who sent that spoof telegram to Reddy, and scrag him!"

"We jolly well will!" growled Bob Cherry. "And Smithy's got his back up all this while over absolutely nothing, as we thought."

"Smithy all over!" said Nugent. "If he'd read the letter instead of burning it, he would know how the matter stood. That spoof wire was in it, too—that would have proved it even to Smithy. Now it's burned along with the letter."

"Smithy's a quick-tempered ass," said Wharton. "But I fancy he's really as much hurt as offended, and he will be glad enough to see Reddy to-morrow when he comes. Luckily, Reddy isn't the same kind of suspicious ass looking around for offences, or he would have his back up in the same way about Smithy not meeting him at Lantham. Anybody know where Smithy is now?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Where's Smithy?"

Bunter had been blinking curiously at the juniors, hanging about as near as he could to catch what was read aloud from the letter.

"Blow Smithy!" was his answer.

"Where is he?" demanded Bob. "You know everything that doesn't concern you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The rotter's in the Cloisters, or he was when I saw him last," growled Bunter. "That was half an hour ago. Mooching about scowling."

"I'll give him something to stop all that," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "This letter will do it. You fellows got tea in the study, and I'll bring Smithy in to tea—in a better temper than he's been in for some days, I think."

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton started for the Cloisters, to find Vernon-Smith, while his chums went into the House. As a matter of fact, Herbert Vernon-Smith had already gone in, and was now in his study, only they were not aware of that circumstance.

Wharton hurried to the Cloisters.

According to Bunter, Vernon-Smith was there, and Wharton had not been surprised to hear that he was "mooching about scowling." The Bounder had done little else for some days.

But the captain of the Remove had no doubt that the news from Redwing

would clear the scowl from the Bounder's brow. Obstinate and arrogant as he was, the Bounder could not persist in keeping up a futile grudge when it was demonstrated to him that he was in error.

The silent Cloisters, the most solitary spot within the precincts of Greyfriars, echoed to Wharton's rapid footsteps.

"Smithy!" he called out.

His voice echoed among the old stone pillars and arches. But there was no other answer.

"Smithy! Vernon-Smith!" the captain of the Remove called again.

He heard a movement, and turned.

"Smithy— Oh!"

It was not Smithy! From a shadowy arch a lithe figure leaped, springing on Wharton like a tiger.

It was the half-caste.

He gave a loud cry of triumphant glee as the goatskin bag came out in his grasp.

"I find him! Chart belong me!"

Wharton, half-choked by the fierce grip on his throat, attempted to struggle. The half-caste leaped to his feet.

"Belong me!" he panted. "Pearls on Caca Island belong him who can find. Belong Silvio Xero!"

He bounded away. There was a sound of approaching footsteps. Harry Wharton staggered to his feet.

The half-caste was gone almost in the twinkling of an eye. Two or three Fourth-Formers, who had strolled into the Cloisters, came hurrying up.

"What's the row?" called out Temple of the Fourth.

Wharton panted.

"He's robbed me—after him—"

happened?" he added, as he caught the expression on Wharton's face.

"It's gone!" panted Harry. "The chart—"

"What—"

"The half-caste—he was hiding in the Cloisters—he got it from me—I'm going to Mr. Quelch—"

"Great pip!"

Harry Wharton hurried away to the Remove master's study. And Bob, with a long face, went back to the Remove passage with the news.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Thinks It Funny!

"WHAT rotten luck!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

"It's the giddy limit!"

"The police will get him."

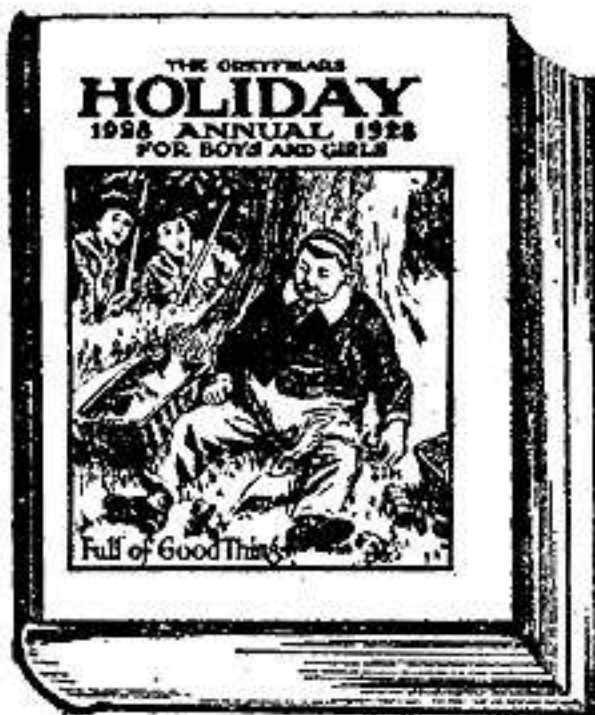
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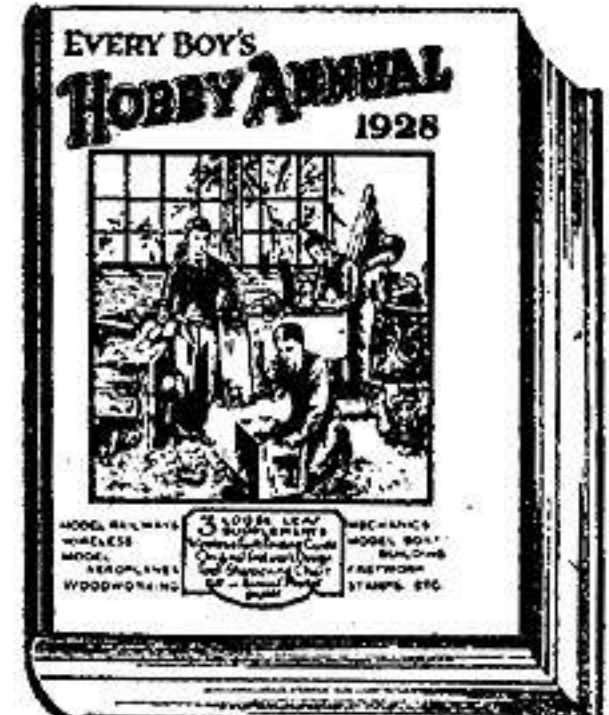


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Wharton had time for only that gasping ejaculation. The next moment he was down on the flagstones, under the grip of the man from the Islands.

A sinewy grip was on his throat, choking back his attempted shout. He stared up in horror at the evil, olive-skinned face over him.

The half-caste—lurking in the daylight within the precincts of the school! Wharton had not even dreamed of such a thing. Obviously, the man was there to watch—in the vague hope of some desperate chance turning up—and fortune had favoured him. Harry Wharton was in his grasp—helpless in his hands, and the half-caste grinned with savage triumph.

The junior struggled, but his strength was as nothing against that of the wiry Islander. Holding him quite easily, choking back his attempted cry for help with one hand, the Islander groped in his pockets with the other.

He rushed after the half-caste, the Fourth-Formers running on his track.

They had a glimpse of the lithe Islander swinging himself over a wall at the end of the Cloisters; and then Silvio Xero was gone.

Wharton clambered desperately to the top of the wall.

Beyond was a fir plantation through which the half-caste had vanished. There was no sign to be seen of him.

The captain of the Remove gritted his teeth.

He had failed in his trust; the chart entrusted to him by Ben Dance for safe keeping, was gone.

Wharton dropped back from the wall. Heedless of the surprised questioning of the Fourth-Formers, he ran back to the House. In the doorway Bob Cherry met him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy's in his study, Wharton. I was coming out to tell you— What on earth's

Harry Wharton sat silent. It was a gloomy party in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The goatskin bag was gone. That it no longer contained what it had contained was, of course, unknown to the chums of the Remove. Wharton's self-reproach was deep; and yet he had in truth little with which to reproach himself. He had taken every care of the trust reposed in him by the wooden-legged seaman. Not to him, or to any one else at Greyfriars, had it occurred for a moment that the desperate half-caste would venture within the precincts of the school during the day. And even so, even with the desperate man lurking in the shadowy Cloisters, only a hapless chance could have taken Wharton there alone. But the chance had occurred; fortune had favoured the man from the South Seas.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,010.

UNLIMITED CHEEK! Not content with kidnapping the Head of St. Sam's, Jerry Birchmall has the brazen ordassity to impersonate him!



In the Kidnapper's Klutches!



An amusing narrative from the pen of the champion laughter merchant of the Second Form at St. Sam's.

I.
"WHO—what—which—where am I? What the merry dickens has happened?"

Doctor Birchmall, the headmaster of St. Sam's, awoke in a pannick, and rubbed his eyes, and gazed wildly about him. There was darkness to right of him, and darkness to left of him, and darkness all around him. He was engulfed, in fact, in a sea of opaque darkness. It was so thick that it could have been cut with a knife.

"Really, this is too thick!" cried the Head. "I remember everything now! I am down in the school coal-seller—a prisoner in this dark and dismal dungeon! I have been here all night, with only the rats for company. That skoundrelly brother of mine has kidnapped me! My hat! Little did I dream that any kidnapper would ever catch this kid napping!"

Faintly from the distance came the muffled, melodious chime of the rising-bell. Bang! Boom! Crash! Clatter!

Doctor Birchmall leapt to his feet. He quite forgot that the sealing of the coal-seller was only a few feet from the floor, but he was reminded of the fact with stunning suddenness, as his bald head smote the sealing with a terrific concussion.

"Yaroooo!" yelled the Head.

And he sat down violently upon a heap of coal-dust, rubbing his injured nutt.

Then the Head started crawling around on the floor of the seller, collecting his scattered wits.

Everything came back to him now with cristal clearness. He had received a visit, overnight, from his brother Jerry, one of the biggest skoundrels that ever skoundrelled. Jerry was, indeed, a villen of the deepest die—scarcely fit to live. Only yesterday he had escaped from a convict prison, where he had been undergoing a life-sentence for his complissity in the Hanky Panky Tin Mines frawds.

Jerry had come to St. Sam's, and appealed to his brother for help and protection, for the slooths and blud-hounds were hot on his track. He had begged for food, and munny, and a change of clothes—for the broad-arrowed convict suit which he wore might have made the perlice a bit suspishus.

But the Head, furious that Jerry had

not brought any swag with him, and still more furious that the fair name of Birchmall had been sullied by such a scamp, had refused point-blank to help him. After a lot of argewment, he had grudgingly agreed to let Jerry pass the night in the coal-seller. But when they reached that gloomy underground spot, Jerry had calmly pushed his brother inside, and slammed and locked the door upon him.

And here was the Head, fuming and fretting in his captivity, and wondering how many weary hours would elapse before he again saw the daylight, and felt the cheerful pitter-patter of the English summer.

Suddenly the sound of footsteps roused him from his roomy-nations. The footprints were descending the seller steps, and the Head's hart beat wildly with hope. The coal-seller was a long way from the mane bilding; but it was just possible that some adventurus junior had strayed in this direckshun.

The Head crawled towards the door, and put his lips to the keyhole.

"Help!" he shouted at the top of his lungs. "Help! Fire! Murder! Reskew!"

The only response was a sinnister, mocking larf—a larf which made the Head crawl back hastily from the door, and set his flesh creeping, too.

Then a key grated in the lock; the door was thrown open; and the cavernus depths of the coal-seller was fludded with light.

The Head shrank back in terror and amaze. Framed in the doorway stood his brother Jerry—a vastly different Jerry from the hounded and hunted convict of the night before. For he was attired in the Headmaster's gown and mortar-board; and what was more, he wore a long, flowing beard which was an eggsact counterpart of the Head's. It was a false beard, which he had found among the props of the St. Sam's Amature Dramatick Society.

Thus attired, Jerry Birchmall was the living image of his brother Alf. He was identicle in every way.

The Head's brain swam dizzily for a moment, as he blinked at the appyrition of himself. It was like gazing in a mirror and seeing his own reflectshun. Even the voice of the introoder was deep and base, like his own.

"Good-morning, coal-black mammic of mine!" was Jerry's greeting. "I trussed you have slept well?"

"You—you impudent blaggard!"

choked the Head. "Not content with kidnapping me, you have had the brazen effrontery to impersonate me!"

Jerry nodded coolly as he set down a tray containing a plate of stale jantarts and a bottle of jinger-pop.

"For the time being," he said, "I have assumed the roll of headmaster of St. Sam's. It should prove rather a novel eggperience. I shall continue in this roll until the hew-and-cry for me has died down. Then you shall have your release, and I shall hop it."

The Head stared blankly at his brother.

"You—you are going to take my place as headmaster?" he gasped.

"Eggsactly!"

"You can't! You shan't! You won't!" The Head's voice was almost historical with rage. "You will find it impossibil to desceve St. Sam's! Your disguise will be pennytrated, and your true eye-dentity discovered, and you will be handed over to justiss!"

Jerry Birchmall larfed.

"I'll risk all that," he said. "Personally, I'm confident I shall carry the desception through without a hitch."

"You skoundrel! You jail-bird! You cheater of the galloes!" spluttered the Head.

Jerry larfed again—that soft, sinnister larf of his.

"Stix and stoncs may brake my bones, but words will never hurt me!" he quoted. "You can storm and rave till you brake a blud-vessel, Alf, but the fact remains that I hold you firmly in my klutches! You are my prisoner!"

Even as Jerry spoke, the Head made a sudden desprit bid for freedom. Lowering his head, he charged at his brother like a mad bull, with the intention of butting him in the waste, and then leaping over his prostrate body to freedom.

But the Head's little scheme came unstuck. Before his head could make contact with Jerry's waste, a grip of iron descended upon his collar, and a birch-rod curled and swished about his sholders.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Yaropski!" howled the Head, dancing with anguish. "Chuckit! Stoppit! Ow-ow-ow!"

"Lie down, you dog!" hissed Jerry. And, with a sweep of his arm, he sent his brother spinning, to alight on a heap of coal-dust. "You can't come those capers with me! You are my prisoner; and any further attempt at escape will rezzult in your rations being taken away! You will be left here to burn to deeth of starvation!"

"Yarooo!" yelled the Head, who couldn't bear the thought of going without his grub. "Not that, Jerry—not that!"

"Behave yourself, then!" said Jerry sternly. "I will now leave you to your brekfast, while I proceed to my new duties as headmaster of St. Sam's."

So saying, Jerry Birchmall slammed the door shut, and turned the key in the lock. And the unhappy Head probed about in the darkness for a coal-hammer, and proceeded to brake his fast.

II.

JERRY BIRCHEMALL stalked majestically across the quad-rangle, on his way to the Head's study.

Jack Jolly & Co., of the Fourth, were playing leap-frog in the morning sunshine, and they did not dream that the majestick figger who stalked past them was any other than Doctor Birchmall, their honnered and respected head-

master. They pawsed in their leap-frogging, and capped him almost reverently.

"Good-morning, sir!" they chanted, in chorus.

"Good-morning, my infants!" was the cheery reply.

And then, to the juniors' astonishment, the Head made a back for them, and took part in their game for a few minnits.

To see the Head flying leaps through the air, like Grandpa Krooshen, was quite a revelation to Jack Jolly & Co. For the Head, although he had often been seen playing leap-frog with some of the masters, had never condescended, until now, to join the merry capers of the Fourth.

With a cheery smile, and inwardly rejoicing to know that his disguise had not been penetrated, Jerry Birchemall passed on to the Head's study.

On reaching that apartment, the smile froze on his lips, and his hart pounded wildly against his ribs. For a private detective and two perlice-officers were waiting for him in the study.

Jerry Birchemall went hot and cold by turns. But he knew how to keep cool in a crysis. Beyond the fact that he blushed as pink as a pony and fell back with a cry of dismay and stood with his knees nocking together, he showed no sign of embarrassment. He was cool and calm and collected.

The private detective rose to his feet and came towards Jerry Birchemall with outstretched hand.

"Doctor Birchemall, I beleeve?"

"That's me!" mermered Jerry, in a weak, faint voice.

"I am Mr. Ferret Slooth, from Scotland Yard," said the detective. "You are aware, I presoom, that your brother Jerry has escaped from the Gardemwell Convict Prison?"

Jerry nodded, licking his dry lips.

"He was seen to be making his way in this direckshun," said Ferret Slooth.

"We have reason to beleeve that he paid you a visit late last night and besought your brotherly aid and protection?"

"That's right," said Jerry.

"Your brother came here, sir?" queried the detective eagerly.

"He did. He said that the slooths were after him, and he threw himself on my brotherly protection. He begged for food and munny and a change of clothes, but there was nothing doing! I had the vile wretch thrown out on his neck! I knew it was against the law to harbor an escaped convict; and, besides, I was furious with him for bringing disgrace upon the fair name of Birchemall, so I gave him the order of the boot. I trussed I did what was right and proper, gentlemen?"

"You should have handed him over to justiss, sir," said Ferret Slooth.

"Oh! I—I didn't think of that!" stammered Jerry.

"He is a very desprit and dangerus skoundrel, this Jerry Birchemall!" said the detective. "I hope you have told me the trooth, sir, and that your brother is not in hiding on these premmises?"

"If you doubt my word," he said, "you can search the school. Search it from end to end; turn it upside-down and shake it! Burrow into every nook and corner! Poke your ferrety nose into every crack and crevvis. You have my fool permishun to do so!"

"Thank you, Doctor Birchemall," said Ferret Slooth grimly. "We will ransack the place at once!"

This rather took the wind out of Jerry Birchemall's sales. He had not eggsppected his challenge to be taken



JERRY BIRCHEMALL

up. And he quaked at the thought of what would happen if the detective and the perlice-officers paid a visit to the coal-seller, as they were almost certain to do. They would find the real Doctor Birchemall there, a helpless prisoner, and then the game would be up!

It was a terrifying prospect for the impostor. But it was too late to stop the search which he himself had invited.

Ferret Slooth and his assistants went about their work with grate thurroughness. They spent the whole of the morning turning St. Sam's inside-out and peering and prying into every place, probable and improbable, where the escaped convict might lie consealed. And Jerry Birchemall, outwardly calm, but inwardly in a state of pannick, accompanied the searchers.

The detective called a halt at last.

"No go!" he said glumly. "Our man isn't here. We've drawn blank everywhere!"

"What about the coal-seller?" said one of the perlice-officers suddenly. And Jerry Birchemall could cheerfully have knocked the fellow down. It was awful luck. Just when the search had looked like fizzling out in a failure, this interfering perliceman had suggested the coal-seller!

"Ha!" cried Ferret Slooth eagerly. "The coal-seller! I never thought of that! It is our last hope! Come, gentlemen!"

With a sinking hart, and feeling very wobbly at the knees, Jerry Birchemall followed the search-party to the coal-seller.

or the consequences will be serious and terrible!"

Jerry Birchemall turned to the startled search-party.

"Come away, gentlemen, if you value your lives!" he said hastily. "That poor creature in the coal-seller is demented—stark, raving mad! He is one of my masters, and he went clean off his head yesterday. He is suffering from the deloosion that he is Doctor Birchemall—myself. I had him locked in the coal-seller, pending the arrival of the ambulanso to take him to the nearest lunatick asylum."

"Good Evans!" gasped Ferret Slooth. "A raving madman, you say?"

"Yes, yes! Just hark at him!"

From the interior of the coal-seller came the most frantick and frenzid shrieks.

"Is—is he armed?" inquired Ferret Slooth.

"Yes, rather! He has a brace of revolvers and a sword and a dagger, and goodness knows what beside! Just hark at his murderus threats!"

"Yarooooo!"

With a yelp of alarm, Ferret Slooth turned and dashed up the steps; and the two perlice-officers, just as pannick-stricken, went pelting after him. Jerry Birchemall ran, too—not bekwaso he was afraid, but just to make his story more convincing.

"Poor fellow!" he panted, when they were safe in the quadrangle. "I hope the ambulanso comes for him soon. It is very distressing to heer the shrieks of a man who is off his nutt. Will you stay and take lunch with me, gentlemen?"

Ferret Slooth shook his head.

"We must be off, sir, on the track of this skoundrelly brother of yours. Already we have waisted much valluable time. Thank you for your courtesy in permitting us to search the school."

"Don't mench!" said Jerry Birchemall, with a grin.

And it was with grate relief that he watched the perlice-officers depart. When they were out of sight he larfed loud and long over the way he had spoofed them.



To Jack Jolly & Co's. astonishment, the Head made a back for them, and took part in their game for a few minnits.

They were descending the spiral stone stairway, when suddenly the most hart-rending shrieks came from the seller.

"Help! Fire! Perlice! Murder! Reskew the perishing!"

The searchers stopped, spellbound.

"Who the—what the—" gasped Ferret Slooth, in astonishment.

"Let me out, whoever you are!" came in a wild cry from the seller. "I am Doctor Birchemall, the headmaster of St. Sam's! Let me out this instant,

Meenwile, Doctor Birchemall continued to ramp and rage in the dark coal-seller—helpless in the Kidnapper's Klutches!

THE END.

(Now look out for: "St. Sam's On The Spruce!" next week's amazing and amusing yarn of Jack Jolly & Co., at St. Sam's. Dicky Nugent has put all he knows into this topping story, and if it fails to raise a laugh from beginning to end—well, you ought to see a doctor!)



(Continued from page 13.)

The Islander had vanished into the woods after escaping from the old school Cloisters: pursuit was hopeless. But Mr. Quelch had telephoned to Inspector Grimes at Courtfield, and the whole countryside would be searched for the lawless ruffian. Already he was being searched for, and now the search would be redoubled in intensity. If he lingered in the neighbourhood, he could not escape. With the chart in his hands, however, he would not linger. His object would now be to escape from the vicinity as speedily as he could—probably to London, where he could take ship back to his native seas.

"It's gone for good!" said Wharton, at last. "How shall I tell Redwing to-morrow!"

He almost groaned aloud.

"Reddy won't blame you," said Bob. "He can't. According to Ben Dance, the half-caste would have got the chart from him for certain, if he'd kept it on him. It was safer with you."

"Not as it turns out," muttered Wharton. "But who'd have thought—who could have thought—"

"Nobody," said Nugent. "You're not to blame, Harry."

"I might have locked it up in my desk," muttered the captain of the Remove miserably.

"It was safer in your pocket—a burglar could get at a desk, but not at a pocket. It's turned out badly, but you did what was best."

"I hope Redwing will think so."

"He's sure to," said Bob comfortingly. "And, after all, he's never seen the chart—never heard of it till you mentioned it in your letter to him. I don't suppose he will think it's a great loss. Ben Dance thought it was awfully valuable, but he may have been mistaken. Sailormen tell all sorts of yarns of treasures in the South Seas, but there can't be anything in them, as a rule."

Wharton smiled faintly.

"The police will nab the villain, very likely," said Nugent. "We may get news of him before Redwing comes here to-morrow."

"I hope so," said Wharton fervently.

"All Smithy's fault," growled Johnny Bull. "If you hadn't gone to the Cloisters looking for that fathead—"

Harry shook his head.

"That reminds me," he said. "I suppose I'd better show Smithy the letter. I'd forgotten that."

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked into the study. "Oh, get out!" snapped Nugent. The juniors were in no mood to be bothered by the Owl of the Remove just then.

"If you call that civil, Nugent—"

"Buzz off, you fat wasp," said Johnny Bull.

"You look a jolly lot," said Bunter, surveying the troubled party through his big spectacles. "Like a set of moulting fowls, if you ask me. What on earth's the matter with you?"

"Find out!" snapped Bob. Even Bob Cherry's sunny temper seemed to be failing him.

"That's why I'm asking," said Bunter

cheerily. "You look as if you were going to your own funeral, Wharton."

"Oh, shut up."

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter independently.

"You fat ass. Don't worry," snapped the captain of the Remove. "Something's been lost, and it's important, so don't bother."

Billy Bunter started.

"Oh! You mean the chart—"

Bunter concluded at once that Wharton had discovered the changing of the contents of the goatskin bag.

"Yes, if you wish to know," snapped Wharton. "Now roll along and don't bother, Bunter."

"I don't know anything about it," exclaimed Bunter hastily. "If you think I know anything about the chart, Wharton, you're mistaken."

The captain of the Remove stared at him.

"I don't think so, ass!"

"Oh! That's all right, then," said Bunter, in great relief. "Just like you to suspect a chap! You're suspicious, you know."

"You frabjous ass, it was that scoundrel Silvio Xero who had it. He bagged it from me in the Cloisters an hour ago."

"Wha-a-a-t?" Bunter fairly jumped. "He—he—he bagged it from you—in the Cloisters—he couldn't have—"

"Well, he did. Now give us a rest."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes opened wide behind his spectacle. He was so amazed by Wharton's statement, that his mouth as well as his eyes opened wide.

"Oh!" he gasped at last. "You mean the man collared you and got hold of the bag—"

"Yes."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat image?" roared Bob Cherry, in great wrath. "Do you think it's a laughing matter?"

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter.

To the Famous Five it was far from being a laughing matter. But to Billy Bunter it seemed inexpressibly comic, that the half-caste had attacked Wharton, and robbed him of the lid of a metal inkpot! For that, as Bunter alone knew, was all that the goatskin bag contained, the chart itself being safe in William George's own pocket.

"He, he, he!"

Bunter chuckled explosively.

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Bob Cherry. "If you want to cackle, you fat villain, I'll give you something else to cackle at." And he jumped up and made a rush at Bunter.

"He, he, he!" Bunter was roaring.

Bang!

The next moment Bunter was roaring in quite a different manner as his bullet head came into violent contact with the study door.

"Yaroooooooh!"

"Now do you think it's funny?" bawled Bob.

"Yooooop! Leggo! Beast!"

Bunter, evidently, no longer thought the matter funny. He jumped into the Remove passage and fled.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner is not so Pleased!

"WHARTON!"

Mr. Quelch called very kindly to the captain of the Remove. It was the following morning, just before class. That day Redwing was to come to the school in the afternoon to see his old friends,

and Wharton, who had been looking forward to the visit, was now almost dreading it. Certainly, he knew that Tom Redwing would take what had happened in the kindest way, and would not be likely to utter, or even think, a word of reproach. But that knowledge only made it more bitter for Wharton to reflect that he had failed in his trust.

Mr. Quelch observed the cloud on the junior's face, and knew the cause. Mr. Quelch, in all probability, attached no value whatever to the missing chart in his own mind, and regarded the story that had been told concerning it as a sailorman's fanciful yarn. But he knew how a fellow of Wharton's character must feel the loss of something, valuable or not, that had been entrusted to his care.

The captain of the Remove came up hopefully. He was anxious to hear that the police had succeeded in tracing the half-caste.

"I think I have good news for you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "Inspector Grimes informs me that the man Silvio Xero was seen last night, at a late hour, by a constable engaged in the search for him. He was seen lurking in the woods not far from the school."

"Then he hasn't gone, sir!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Evidently not."

"I'm glad to hear that, sir. I was afraid he would clear off immediately now that he's got what he wanted."

"He doubtless has some other motive, then, for remaining in this neighbourhood," said Mr. Quelch. "His arrest is practically certain, for his description is widely circulated, and a man of his appearance could hardly escape the most casual eye. He will be charged with the theft when he is taken, and also with attacking Vernon-Smith with a deadly weapon last week, and no doubt he will be sent to prison for a considerable time. The article he took from you will almost certainly be recovered when he is taken. I fully expect to hear to-day that he is arrested, and as soon as the news comes through you shall be informed at once."

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton gratefully.

The captain of the Remove was a good deal relieved in mind when he went into class that morning.

Why the half-caste was lingering in the vicinity, instead of fleeing to safety with his prize, was a mystery to him. Bunter could have explained it. Bunter being aware of the contents of the goatskin bag that the islander had seized in the Cloisters. Wharton was mystified, but he was aware that a man of Silvio's unusual appearance could not skulk in the countryside long without being discovered and taken. And from that he drew hope that Tom Redwing's chart would be recovered, after all, little dreaming where the chart actually was all the time.

In morning break, when Wharton came out with his friends, he was feeling much more cheerful.

Vernon-Smith passed the chums of the Remove in the quad, with a sullen brow. Wharton glanced at him, and made a movement to speak to him, but the Bounder deliberately walked on.

"Sulky ass!" commented Bob Cherry. "He hasn't seen Redwing's letter, Wharton?"

"No."

"He ought to see it," remarked Nugent.

"I spoke to him last evening about it,

and he refused to listen to a word, or to look at the letter."

"He doesn't know—"

"And he doesn't want to know," said Harry. "Let him sulk, and be bothered to him."

"Nevertheless," observed Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh thoughtfully, "the esteemed Redwing will be desolated if Smithy keeps his back up when our inestimable friend comes this afternoon. It would be terrifically better to enlighten the worthy and ridiculous Bounder."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"I'll speak to him again," he said at last. "I'm getting fed-up with Smithy's tantrums, but I suppose one ought to do one's best, for Redwing's sake."

"Yes, rather!"

Wharton had no opportunity of speaking to the Bounder till after dinner that day. Vernon-Smith was avoiding the Famous Five, and gave them only black looks if he came near any of the cheery Co. The breach between them, which had seemed to be healed, was wider than ever now, and Harold Skinner watched it with cynical satisfaction. Skinner was, however, a little alarmed when he heard that Tom Redwing was coming to the school that afternoon. His trick with the false telegram had been successful—more successful than he had ventured to expect. But if once there was an explanation between the estranged friends, Skinner's scheme would come to nothing, and he knew it.

But he need not have been uneasy so far as the Bounder was concerned. Smithy had no intention of meeting Redwing when he came to Greyfriars.

After dinner that day Wharton was looking for the Bounder, when Herbert Vernon-Smith came up to him. The Bounder had his most disagreeable expression on his hard face.

"Just a word with you, Wharton," he said unpleasantly.

"As many as you like," answered Harry, speaking as agreeably as he could, and taking no notice of the Bounder's unpleasant look and tone.

"Redwing's coming here to-day?"

"Yes."

"What time?"

"Early for tea, I suppose."

"When will he go?"

"After tea—before lock-up," said Harry.

"Very well. I shall get out of gates and stay out till call-over," said the Bounder. "I can't prevent you from having him here, but I can keep out of his way. That's all."

He was turning away with that.

"Hold on, Smithy!" called out Wharton.

"That's all!" repeated the Bounder.

"It isn't all. I told you I'd had a letter from Redwing—"

"No bizney of mine."

"He explains how it was—"

"I don't want to hear anything about it."

"I tell you he explains—"

"And I tell you I'm not interested in his explanations. Isn't plain English plain enough for you?" snapped the Bounder.

"Will you look at the letter?" demanded Wharton, suppressing his anger with difficulty.

"No, I won't!"

And Vernon-Smith strode away.

The captain of the Remove strode after him and caught him by the shoulder, and stopped him forcibly.

"Look here, Smithy, don't be such a confounded fool!" he exclaimed hotly. "You've got to listen—"

Vernon-Smith struck Wharton's hand from his shoulder and strode away again. Wharton made a movement after him, his eyes blazing. But he contrived to restrain his anger. He turned away, to meet a grinning look from Skinner. All Skinner's doubts were set at rest now, and he was in a very cheery mood.

"Nothing doing, what?" he asked derisively, as Wharton gave him a fierce look. "You don't seem to shine in the role of peacemaker, old bean."

Wharton fixed his eyes on the cad of the Remove. Ever since he had heard of the false telegram that had caused so much trouble the previous Saturday, a suspicion had been growing in his mind. He came closer to Skinner, with a look on his face that made the cad of the Remove feel a little uneasy.

"Did you send a telegram to Redwing at Hawkscliff last Saturday, Skinner?" he asked very quietly.

Skinner started a little; but he laughed the next moment.

"I should be likely to send a telegram to that longshoreman, shouldn't I?" he said derisively. "What are you getting at?"

"A telegram was sent to Redwing signed with Smithy's name."

"Was it?" yawned Skinner. "Then I suppose Smithy sent it."

"Smithy did not send it," said Wharton. "It was sent to cause trouble—to make Redwing go off on a fool's errand to Lantham, and disappoint us all when we got up to Hawkscliff."

"What rot!" yawned Skinner. "Has Redwing told you that funny story?"

"Yes; and it's true."

"Well, I know nothing about it—even if it's true, which I don't believe," said Skinner carelessly.

"It was sent from Friardale Post Office on Saturday," said Harry. "It's no longer in existence, as that ass Smithy burnt Redwing's letter to him unread, and the telegram was sent in it for him to see."

There was no mistaking the relief that flashed into Skinner's face as he heard that statement. Nothing could have happened better, from Skinner's point of view, and for the instant his looks betrayed him. Wharton's brow grew darker.

"You deny having sent that telegram, Skinner?"

"Of course, if it was sent at all!"

"Will you walk down to Friardale with me?"

"Eh, why?"

"To the post-office," said Harry.

"What on earth for?"

"So that I can ask the postmaster, in your presence, whether you sent a telegram there on Saturday. He may not know your name, but he will remember your face."

Skinner stared blankly at the captain of the Remove. He was so startled that he could not conceal his terror.

"Will you come?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"No"—Skinner recovered himself a little—"certainly I won't! I've no time to waste on any such foolery."

"If you refuse, I shall take it for

(Continued on next page.)

THE "FLYING SCOTSMAN."

Read what Our Expert has to say about this week's HANDSOME FREE GIFT.

OF all the famous passenger trains in the world, the "Flying Scotsman" is perhaps the most notable. It has already travelled a distance which runs well into five figures—and still it is only a baby of four years of age. Its "cradle" was in the London and North-Eastern Railway Company's works at Doncaster, and each morning since it has rushed out of King's Cross Station absolutely to time at ten o'clock, eager to get its 395-mile trip to Edinburgh over and done with.

The "Flying Scotsman," Pacific type engine No. 4472, is one of a type of locomotives which are among the largest and most powerful passenger engines in Great Britain—capable of pulling a 20-carrier train tipping the beam at 610 tons, at an average speed of 52 miles an hour. Average speed only, mark you, for on a clear and fairly level run the Pacific type engines can "whack up" to 70 miles per hour.

From that we can expect the "Flying Scotsman's" engine measurements to be of the out-size order. And they are. From the top of the chimney to the base of the wheels it measures 13 feet 4 inches—more than twice the height of a very tall man, and from front axle to rear axle the locomotive measures three inches short of 36 feet. Include the tender, and the total length—from the engine's buffer to the buffer at the rear of the tender—becomes a few inches over 70 feet!

The "Flying Scotsman's" boiler is 19 feet long, and its greatest diameter is 6 feet 5 inches. The length of the firebox "shell" is 9 feet 5½ inches, and inside, at the bottom, it is just a fraction under 7 feet wide; the actual heating surface is 215 square feet. To keep those two "tummies" well supplied, the tender has to carry 8 tons of coal and 5,000 gallons of water. In working order, the engine and the

loaded tender together weigh 5 hundredweight short of 149 tons. Of that, the engine itself accounts for 92 tons 9 cwt.

These things considered, the "Flying Scotsman" locomotive needs something pretty substantial to run on. Its twelve wheels are giants of their kind. The four front (bogie) wheels are each 38 inches across; but they are midgets compared with the six coupled driving wheels, which are each 6 feet 8 inches in diameter. Then come the two rear wheels—the trailing pair—which are 44 inches across.

George Stevenson himself never dreamed of anything like this "Flying Scotsman." Engine No. 1, christened "Locomotion," which he himself drove, weighed 6½ tons only (nearly 86 tons less than the "Flying Scotsman"!); and the best poor old "Locomotion" could do was to pull a train weighing 80 tons. The outfit ambled out of the station at a gentle jog-trot of 10 miles per hour. But it set up the very first railway speed record when it came to a downward slope, when the speed soared to 15 miles an hour, which was terrifying for folk accustomed to nothing swifter than lumbering stage-coaches!

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granted that you sent that false telegram in Smithy's name."

"Take anything you like for granted, and go and eat coke!" retorted Skinner sullenly, and he lounged away.

"The matter doesn't end here, Skinner," said Wharton quietly.

Skinner walked off without replying; but his happy satisfaction was at an end now. His scheme had been successful—too successful—but the cad of the Remove was beginning to wish now that he had never thought of that wheeze for putting a spoke in Redwing's wheel, as he called it. His only solace was the sight of the Bounder tramping out of gates early in the afternoon, with the evident intention of keeping clear of Greyfriars so long as Redwing was there.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Tom Redwing at Greyfriars!

"REDWING!"

"Hallo hallo, hallo!"

"Jolly glad to see you, old chap!"

Tom Redwing smiled.

The Famous Five were all waiting at the gates, when the sailorman's son came up. His sunburnt face was very bright as he shook hands with the chums of the Remove one after another.

"It's good to see you fellows again," he said cheerily.

"Come in, old bean," said Johnny Bull. "Tea's ready in the study."

"Something like a spread," said Nugent. "It will be like old times, Redwing."

"The old-timefulness will be terrific!" declared Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The joyfulness is great at beholding your esteemed and ludicrous countenance!"

"Same to you, old fellow," said Redwing, with a smile. "I never thought I should see Greyfriars again. I ought really to have gone back to sea to-day, but—"

"Bother the sea!" said Bob Cherry, as the juniors led their honoured guest in at the gates. "I wish you could come back to Greyfriars for good, Reddy."

"I wish I could," assented Redwing. "But it's ripping to butt in just for an hour or so."

He was glancing round as he walked towards the House with the Famous Five. Many fellows came up to greet him; there were few Remove men who were not glad to see the sailorman's son again. Fellows in other Forms, too, gave him cheery nods and welcoming glances. Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth came up specially to shake hands with him. Coker of the Fifth bestowed a lofty nod. Wingate of the Sixth spoke a cheery word of greeting. Redwing's progress to the House was something like a triumphal march.

But it was plain that he missed something, pleased and touched as he was by his kind reception.

His friends knew what he missed—the face of the Bounder.

There was only one thing needed to fill his cup of happiness that afternoon to the brim, and that was a welcome from his own special chum. But that welcome was not to be had.

The juniors arrived in the Remove passage at last, where there were more greetings. Billy Bunter allowed himself the privilege of turning up a fat little nose, which—unfortunately for Bunter—was observed by Johnny Bull. The fat little nose was tweaked the next moment

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between Johnny's finger and thumb, and Bunter, with a howl of anguish, departed from the scene. Redwing was marched into Study No. 1, where the table was laid for a spread of uncommon magnificence.

Redwing's bright face clouded a little, in spite of himself.

It was clear that Vernon-Smith was not coming to the spread.

Redwing knew that the Bounder had had his back up; but he had supposed that his letter to Smithy, enclosing the false telegram, had set matters right.

Evidently matters were not right.

"Smithy's about somewhere, I suppose!" he said at last.

There was an awkward pause for a moment.

"The fact is, he isn't," said Wharton. "He—he's gone out of gates for the afternoon."

"Oh!"

The juniors exchanged uncomfortable glances.

"I suppose he had a letter from me on Monday?" asked Redwing. "I dare say he would mention it to you."

"Yes; he mentioned it," said Harry.

He simply could not tell Redwing that Vernon-Smith had burned his letter unread. At that moment he could have derived great satisfaction from kicking the Bounder from one end of the Remove passage to the other.

Redwing glanced at the faces round him, and dropped the subject at once. Only too well he knew the suspicious, sulky nature of the Bounder, and he realised that Smithy had not chosen to meet him that day. It was a blow to him, and a deep disappointment, but he was too grateful to the Co. for their kind reception of him to allow it to cloud his spirits, so far as appearances went. If his heart was heavy, at least he could keep a cheerful face, and he resolutely put the thought of the Bounder from his mind.

"It's good to be here again, you fellows," he said. "Tea in a Greyfriars study is a bit different from grubbing in the galley of a coaster. It's awfully decent of you chaps to ask me here."

"Bosh, old chap! Take a pew," said Nugent. "This is a celebration, you know. You're the giddy, returned prodigal."

Redwing laughed cheerily.

The juniors sat down to tea. In spite of the thought of his estranged chum, which persisted in lingering at the back of his mind, Redwing was very cheerful, and it was evident that he was glad to find himself back at the old school, though only as a brief visitor.

It was not till tea was over that Wharton came to the subject of the chart.

Redwing had not mentioned it. He did not seem to be thinking of it at all, though Wharton, in his letter, had told him all about the trust reposed in him by the wooden-legged seaman.

"You haven't asked me about the chart," said the captain of the Remove, coming to the subject at last. "I told you about it in my letter, you know."

Redwing smiled.

"I'd heard of it before that," he said. "That half-caste rotter was at my cottage on Saturday."

"You've seen Silvio Xero, then?"

"Yes, I found the rotter on the cliffs, knocked out, and took him to my

cottage," said Redwing. "Then he told me about the chart and attacked me."

"My hat!"

"I got the better of him," said Redwing, with a smile. "It was all right. He got away, and I haven't seen him since. From what he let out, I gathered that my uncle, Peter Bruce, gave a man named Dance the chart to bring to me from the South Seas."

"That's right," said Harry. "And as Dance didn't find you at Hawkscliff, and was in fear of his life from the half-caste, he handed it to me for safe keeping. Unluckily—"

He paused for a moment.

"I don't know how you'll take it, Redwing. You can guess that I feel rotten enough about it. The chart's gone."

"I'm sure that's not your fault," said Redwing quietly.

"The half-caste found out that I had it in my keeping. He tried to get into the school at night, but Gosling's mastiff cleared him off. But—"

Wharton explained what had happened in the Cloisters.

Redwing listened quietly.

"Don't worry about it, old chap," he said. "You couldn't help it. I'm only sorry that any affair of mine should have brought you into danger like that."

"It's jolly decent of you to take it like that," said Harry. "But there's a good chance of getting it back, I think."

"It may not be of value, after all," said Redwing. "I've heard too many yarns of treasure in the South Seas to believe much of them. My uncle must have thought it valuable, and no doubt Ben Dance thought the same; but there may have been nothing in it."

"The half-caste thinks the same or he wouldn't run such risks to get hold of it," said Bob Cherry. "But we may get it back, Reddy."

Redwing shook his head.

"Not likely. Whether it's of any value or not, Silvio Xero will bolt at once now he's got it."

"That's the odd thing," said Harry. "I thought so; but it turns out that he hasn't left the neighbourhood. He's been seen again."

"Late last night," said Nugent. "That must have been at least six or seven hours after he got the chart from Wharton. So he couldn't have cleared off with it immediately."

Redwing smiled.

"That doesn't look as if the chart is a clue to a cache of pearls in the Pacific," he said. "He would hardly be risking staying on about here if he held the clue to a treasure in his hands."

"I can't account for it," confessed Wharton.

"You are sure he got it?" asked Redwing, puzzled.

"Yes, there's no doubt about that. He got the goatskin bag from my pocket with the chart in it."

"But all he wanted was the chart, and if he had it he would clear at once," said Redwing. "You're sure the chart was still in the goatskin bag when he got it?"

"I never took it out of the bag, you see."

"Might it have slipped out?"

Wharton started.

"Well, it might, I suppose," he said slowly. "But in that case it would be in my pocket, and there's nothing in my pocket."

Redwing nodded.

"His hanging on in this neighbourhood looks as if he hasn't got the chart,

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sudden roar. Billy Bunter jumped. He had his back to the juniors who had tracked him into the Cloisters, and the sudden bawl from Bob Cherry took him quite by surprise. He almost dropped the chart, in his alarm; but he contrived to save it, and he jammed it into his pocket instantly. "Ow!" he gasped, as he spun round to find five grinning faces looking at him. (See Chapter 8.)

after all," he said. "I can't account for it, otherwise."

"Neither can I," said Harry. "But he's been seen. It's a mystery to me; but we still hope that he may be taken, and the chart recovered. I shall never forgive myself if you lose it!"

"Put that out of your mind," said Redwing. "You couldn't help it, old chap. I'm not worrying about it, and I don't want you fellows to."

And the subject of the South Seas chart was dropped. A little later Redwing went down to call on Mr. Quelch, to pay his respects to his old Form master.

After that he strolled about Greyfriars for a time with his friends, and they wondered whether he was hoping that the Bounder would come in. The Famous Five had intended to walk part of the way home with Redwing if he left early, but they were more than willing to keep him as long as he liked to stay.

If Tom Redwing was hoping to see the Bounder before he left he was disappointed.

It was close on time for lock-up when he made up his mind at last that Herbert Vernon-Smith was deliberately keeping away, and then he said good-bye to the Famous Five at the gates.

"We shall see you again, old chap!" said Bob Cherry.

"I hope so—some time," said Redwing. "I shall be at sea in a few days now; but next term, perhaps—"

"If we get the chart back—"

"Keep it for me till you see me, in that case," said Redwing, with a smile.

And the sailorman's son took his leave, and Harry Wharton & Co. went in to calling-over. At calling-over Herbert Vernon-Smith did not answer to his name. The Bounder was still out of gates.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Takes a Hand!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stopped suddenly.

Shadows were beginning to lengthen in the deep, scented woods, but it was still hot under the blazing July sunset.

The Bounder had been far that afternoon.

He had not felt in a humour to visit any of the shady resorts where he sometimes went on a half-holiday. Indeed, since he had renewed Tom Redwing's acquaintance that kind of thing seemed to have dropped out of the Bounder's thoughts. Although he was now bitterly offended with his chum, Redwing's influence seemed to be lasting.

It had not been a happy day for the Bounder. Mile after mile he had tramped alone with his own gloomy thoughts.

His implacable nature refused to entertain even the thought of reconciliation with the friend who had, as he believed, slighted his friendship. If a whisper came into his mind that he had

been deceived, that he had deceived himself, he would not listen to it. He was implacable; and he was satisfied with the attitude he had taken up. But there was little happiness in arrogant and unforgiving pride.

He missed Redwing sorely, he missed his friendship, and he despised himself for doing so. But he could not forget that the sailorman's son was the only friend he had ever made in his life.

He was tired now as he tramped along the narrow, grassy footpath through the deep woods, late for call-over at the school. He did not care for that. He had only cared to make sure that Redwing would be gone from Greyfriars before he returned.

And now he stopped suddenly at the sight of a figure coming along the path towards him, but still at a distance.

It was Redwing.

The Bounder stared at him. He had forgotten—though he now remembered—that Redwing would naturally take that path, which was the shortest cut from Greyfriars to the Pegg road, by which lay the path up the Hawkscliff. He had avoided Redwing all the afternoon, only to meet him face to face on his way back to the school.

But he observed at once that Redwing had not seen him. Redwing was walking slowly, his eyes on the ground, his face overcast, as if with saddened thoughts. He did not look up, and for some moments the Bounder watched

him, and then stepped aside among the trees near the footpath.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood behind a mass of hawthorns by the path, silent, waiting for the sailorman's son to pass. In a few minutes Redwing would be gone, and he could resume his way.

Through the openings of the thicket he watched the sailorman's son as he came nearer, invisible himself. Some chord in his hard heart was touched by the saddened shade on Tom's sunburnt face. He wondered of what Redwing was thinking.

Not once did Redwing raise his eyes from the ground as he moved on slowly.

He was almost abreast of the thicket behind which the Bounder had concealed himself, when Vernon-Smith made the discovery that Redwing was not alone on the path.

Farther back, another figure appeared in the Bounder's sight.

Vernon-Smith started and caught his breath.

Well he knew the dusky, olive-skinned face under the Panama hat, the gold ear-rings that glistened in the dusky ears.

It was the half-caste—the man from the South Seas.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

The man was following Redwing, creeping after him with the stealth of a snake, his footsteps making no sound on the grassy path, or scarcely a sound. His black eyes blazed at the unconscious lad before him.

It came into Vernon-Smith's mind that the islander had been watching the school from some safe lurking-place; that he had seen Tom Redwing arrive at Greyfriars, and watched for him to depart. Now he was tracking him through the lonely wood. Why?

It was hardly necessary to ask why. The man's savage, concentrated look showed that he was intending an attack.

Obviously, the islander had no suspicion, any more than Redwing, that anyone was hidden in the thicket beside the path. Even as Vernon-Smith watched him, with beating heart, he quickened his pace to a run, and closed in on the sailor lad.

Some slight sound warned Redwing, and he swung round.

As he turned the half-caste sprang on him, and, with a startled cry, Redwing went down heavily on his back.

The next moment the half-caste's sinewy knee pinned him down.

"You!" panted Redwing.

Silvio Xero's black eyes blazed down at him. The Bounder, watching, stood as if spellbound.

"The chart!" hissed the half-caste.

Redwing stared up at him. He was helplessly at the man's mercy now; this time Silvio had the upper hand. But there was no trace of fear in the sunburnt face of the sailorman's son.

"The chart!" he repeated. "I would not give it to you if I had it. And you know I haven't it."

"Do not fool with me!" snarled the half-caste. "Chart belong me now. You go to school take um from other. I know. Listen! I will spare your life if you give me the chart."

He gritted his white teeth.

"Me take um from other!" he snarled. "Think me take um. Take goatskin bag, no chart. Something else, no chart! Make fool of Silvio! But other give you chart, yes. You hand me chart, or I take um from your body!"

He released one hand and groped at the back of his trousers for his knife.

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Redwing set his teeth for a desperate struggle.

The ruffian had attempted his life before, in the cottage at Hawkscliff, and he knew that he had no mercy to expect. If the chart was on him he was doomed. If it was not the half-caste intended to drag from him the information where to look for it, under the threat of the knife, and to repay the information with a death thrust. It was easy enough to read the savage thoughts of the islander.

"You have chart?" hissed Silvio.

"No."

"Where um then?"

"I do not know," said Redwing steadily, "and I would not tell you if I knew, you scoundrel!"

There was a flash of steel as the Malaita knife came out. It circled in the air over Redwing's steadfast face.

"You tell Silvio!" said the half-caste, between his white teeth. "You tell me, or you die!"

The Bounder had stood without motion till that moment. But at the flash of the deadly steel in the sunrays he woke to life, as it were.

One spring carried the Bounder to the spot, and before either Redwing or the half-caste knew that there was a newcomer on the scene, Herbert Vernon-Smith's clenched fist struck the half-caste behind the ear. The blow landed with all his strength behind it, and it was like the crash of a mallet.

Silvio gave one gasp and rolled over in the grass. Before he could recover, before he could stir, the Bounder was on him like a tiger, smashing fierce blows in his face.

Tom Redwing bounded to his feet.

"Smithy!" he panted.

Silvio Xero, dazed and dizzy under the Bounder's furious blows, rolled away in the grass, and scrambled to his feet, glaring round for the knife he had dropped. Redwing caught up the Malaita knife.

"Come on!" panted the Bounder, and he rushed at the half-caste fiercely, and Redwing followed him fast.

For an instant Silvio glared at them like a wild beast, and then, with their grasp almost upon him, turned and darted into the trees.

"Smithy!"

The half-caste could be heard crashing through the thickets at a distance in flight. But Redwing did not heed him. He pitched the knife into the thick branches of an oak and turned to his chum.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Clouds Roll By!

"SMITHY!"

The Bounder was panting. But he became cool—cool and sardonic as he faced Redwing.

"I had to butt in," he said. "I suppose the brute would have finished you. No bizney of mine, I admit."

"Smithy!"

"Well?"

"You've saved my life!"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Possibly. Nothing to make a song about. Good-night!"

"You're going—without a word?" asked Redwing.

"Is there anything to say?"

"Not if you don't choose, Smithy," said Tom Redwing heavily. "I thought we were friends again."

"I thought so, too, till last Saturday!" sneered the Bounder. "But I'm not exactly the fellow to be picked up and let down at your fancy."

"I explained in my letter——"

"I never read your letter."

"What!"

"I burned it unopened," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

Redwing stared at him blankly.

"Then you don't know the trick that was played on me last Saturday, that I was sent off to Lantham on a fool's errand——"

"I don't know, and don't want to know, anything!" said the Bounder deliberately. "I know you slighted and insulted me, and that's all I want to know. I told you I was fed-up with you when you phoned, and I haven't changed my mind since. Is that plain?"

Redwing breathed hard.

"Quite!" he said. "But you shall hear before we part. I had a telegram on Saturday signed by your name——"

"I sent you no telegram."

"I know that now, but it was signed by your name, and how was I to know it was false?"

The Bounder's look changed.

"You mean to say——"

"The telegram told me that you couldn't come to Hawkscliff, and asked me to meet you at Lantham. I went to Lantham."

"Good heavens!" muttered the Bounder.

He stared at Redwing aghast. Some doubt had gnawed at the back of his mind, though he would not admit it to himself. Now he knew that his hasty, headstrong temper had betrayed him, as it had betrayed him before.

"Is that the truth?" he exclaimed roughly.

Redwing stepped back.

"You ask me that?" he said. "We'd better say no more, Smithy. Goodness knows I wanted to keep friends with you, but——"

"Hold on!" muttered the Bounder huskily. "I believe you, of course. But—but I never dreamed of this. I—I supposed——"

Redwing's lip curled.

"You supposed I'd let you down, neglected you, slighted you, insulted your friendship——"

"Yes," muttered Smithy.

"And what was I to think when you didn't turn up at Lantham?" asked Redwing, with a touch of scorn. "I was disappointed, but do you think I suspected you, and distrusted you, and took offence?"

The Bounder was silent, conscience-stricken. But he found his voice at last.

"I never knew——"

"You'd have known if you'd opened my letter. I put the telegram in it for you to see."

"But who—who could have——" The Bounder broke off. "Redwing, I never knew; I've been a hot-headed fool! I'm sorry! I—I suppose that that was what Wharton was trying to tell me, and I wouldn't listen. I was wild, I was sulky, but—but it hurt me hard when I thought you had turned me down, Reddy."

Redwing's face softened.

"I might have guessed something!" muttered the Bounder remorsefully. "Skinner played a rotten trick to get me detained last Saturday—to prevent me from coming up to Hawkscliff—but Wharton set it right. I know who sent that telegram, Redwing—Skinner, of course! It's just one of his dirty tricks. I might have guessed there was something——"

"You couldn't old man," said Redwing. "But——" He paused. "I'm leaving Hawkscliff to-morrow, Smithy; I shan't see you again. Let's part friends!"

"Friends—with my rotten temper!" said the Bounder. "You can kick me if you like!"

Redwing laughed.

"Let's wash it out, and forget all about it," he said. "But there can't be much friendship without a little trust, Smithy, and you ought to try to remember that. If I'd gone off at the deep end, as you did—"

"Don't rub it in!" said the Bounder. "I know I've been a fool, but this will be a lesson to me. I had my back up, Reddy; but it didn't make me happy. I can tell you! Will you forget all about it?"

"I've forgotten already," said Redwing, smiling. "And now you'll be late for call-over, Smithy."

"Hang call-over! You're not leaving me now," said the Bounder; "I had a lot to tell you last Saturday."

"Like me to walk back to the school with you, then? There's no call-over at Hawkscliff, you know," said Redwing, with a smile.

"Come on!"

The two chums walked along the footpath together towards Friardale Lane. The clouds had rolled by once more. Redwing's face had lost its shadow, and Smithy's eyes were bright.

"What had you to tell me on Saturday?" asked Redwing.

"About the vac. I'm going on a long cruise in my father's yacht, and I want you to come."

"I'm sailing this week, old chap."

"You can put your next trip off till after the vac, and have a holiday with me."

Redwing shook his head; but the Bounder went on eagerly:

"There's more to it than that. There's the chart. You can see that that half-caste believes that it's the genuine goods, as Ben Dance did. Suppose it should mean a fortune, Redwing!"

"Not likely, old chap!"

"There's a chance, at least. Your uncle wouldn't have sent a shipmate half round the world with a chart that had no value. Peter Bruce made his pile in the South Seas, and he's left it to you. Don't you see, Reddy? My father will take me where I like for a holiday cruise. You know that he never says no to me. What about a cruise in the South Seas—looking for the pearls of Caca Island?"

"Smithy!" said Redwing breathlessly.

"Like the idea—what?" grinned the Bounder. "We'll take anybody you like—Wharton and his friends, if they'd care to come. And if you come home a rich man, Redwing—"

"If!" said Tom, laughing.

"If you do, you come back to Greyfriars next term, old bean, at your own expense—what?"

"Oh, Smithy, old man!"

Tom Redwing's eyes danced. He told himself that it was only a dream, but it was a very pleasant dream. Best of all was his chum's eagerness to realise it.

"But the chart's lost!" he said, his face falling. "That half-caste got the goatskin bag away from Wharton."

"You heard what he said—the chart wasn't in it, there was something else. He's not got the chart—that's proved by what's just happened."

"Yes, that's so."

"Somebody had already pinched the chart from Wharton without his knowing," said Vernon-Smith. "I've a pretty clear idea who it was, too. That fat idiot, Bunter, offered to guide me to a treasure island if I'd take him on a cruise in the South Seas. I thought at

the time that he'd bagged the chart, and I know it now!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Redwing.

"We shall have the chart; it's clear, anyhow, that the half-caste hasn't got it. Redwing, old man, you're coming with me for the vac, and we're going to lift your uncle's cache of pearls. You're coming home a rich man, and you're coming back to Greyfriars. Think how Skinner will be pleased!"

Redwing laughed—a happy laugh. It was all improbable enough to the sailor lad's quiet and steady mind. But it was very pleasant to think of.

"There's Greyfriars," he said:

The school was in sight now.

"You're coming in," said Vernon-Smith. "Do you think I'm letting you go back to that lonely cottage at Hawkscliff, with that murderous half-caste after you? You're staying at Greyfriars to-night."

"My dear chap—"

"Mr. Quelch will say the same when I tell him what happened in the wood. Your life wouldn't be safe at Hawkscliff!"

"That's all right—"

"Rot! I can lend you some things. Come on!"

Redwing was still hesitating when Smithy rang a loud peal at the bell,

and Gosling came grunting down to the gates. To Gosling's surprise he had to admit Tom Redwing as well as Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Look 'ere," said the astonished Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Can it!" interrupted the Bounder. And he marched Tom Redwing on to the House and to the Remove master's study.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Settling with Skinner!

SKINNER of the Remove stared blankly.

He could scarcely believe his eyes. Certainly he did not want to believe them.

He was loafing in the Remove passage, trying to make up his idle mind to go into the study for prep, when he sighted the Bounder coming up the Remove staircase. And the Bounder was not alone. With him came Tom Redwing—the two of them obviously on the friendliest of terms.

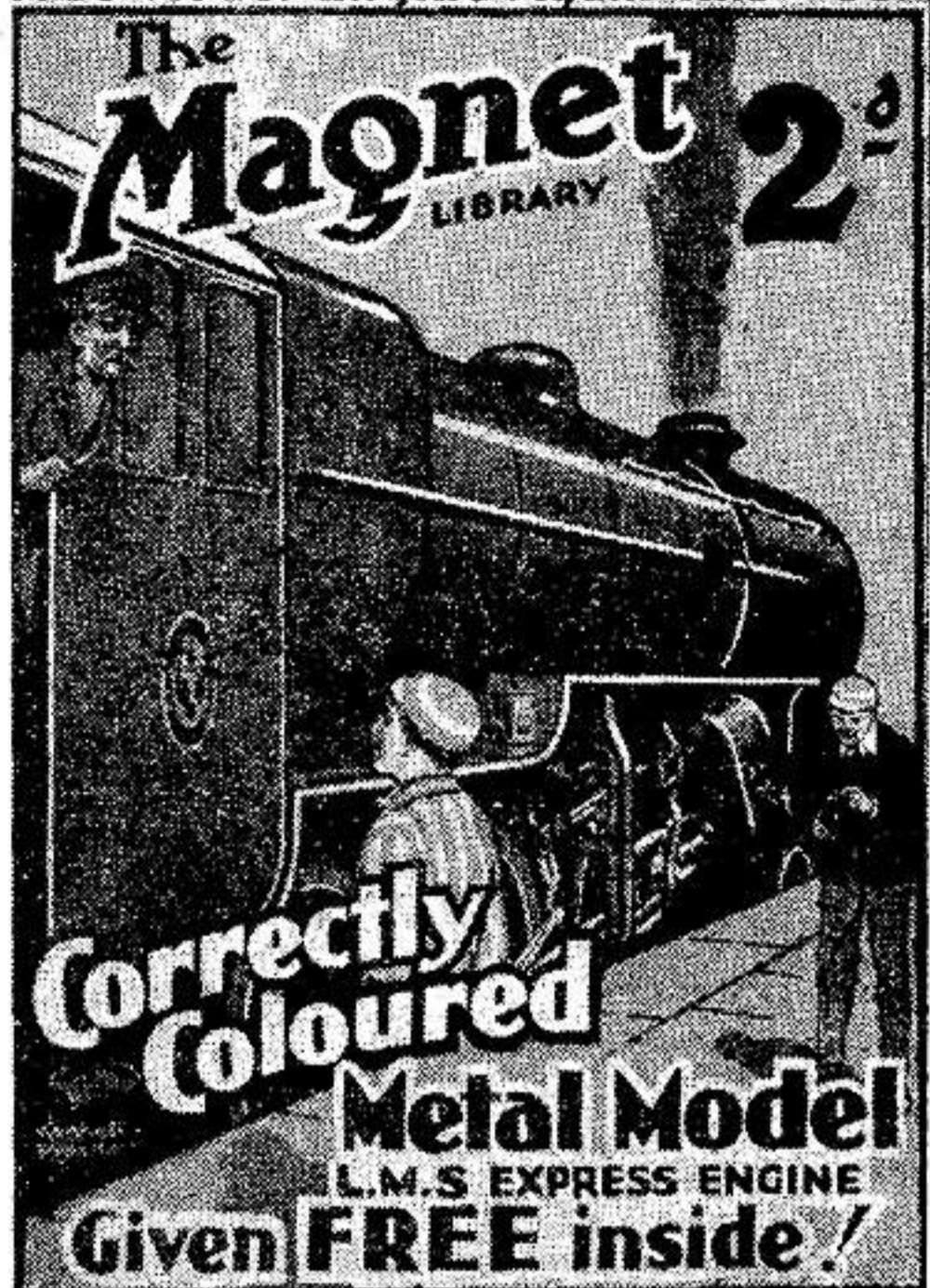
Skinner stared, and his thin lips set in a tight line.

What could it mean? he wondered savagely. He knew that Vernon-Smith

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had stayed late out of gates and cut call-over, deliberately to avoid Redwing. He had watched Tom leave the school, and supposed that he had seen the last of him. Yet here was Redwing, back in the school after lock-up, just as if he were a Greyfriars man again, and he had come in with the Bounder. Whatever it meant, it did not mean well for Skinner.

Vernon-Smith's face had lost the dogged, sulky expression that had haunted it for days. He had made it up with Redwing, and making it up with Redwing, had done him good. Skinner could see that.

The Bounder glanced at the cad of the Remove, and a slightly ironical smile crossed his face as he caught Skinner's expression. But he did not otherwise heed Skinner—yet. He stopped at Study No. 1, knocked at the door, and opened it.

Wharton and Nugent were there, beginning prep. But they suspended prep at the sight of the Bounder, with Tom Redwing's sunburnt face smiling over his shoulder.

"Redwing!" exclaimed Wharton, in surprise.

"Smithy fairly dragged me in, you fellows," said Tom. "You see—"

"More power to his elbow!" said Frank Nugent, laughing. "Does this mean that you've got over your tantrums, Smithy?"

The Bounder flushed. "Yes," he said quietly. "Never mind that. Mr. Quelch is arranging for Redwing to stay at Greyfriars a few days; in fact, until that half-caste villain is arrested."

"Hear, hear!" said the two juniors heartily.

"Smithy saved my life," said Tom Redwing simply. "That villain got me as I was going home, and he took me by surprise. I'm not afraid of the brute, of course, but Smithy wanted me to come—"

"I'm jolly glad!" said Wharton. "It will be like old times having you here, Redwing!"

"I know all about the spoof telegram now," went on the Bounder. "You needn't tell me I was a fool not to know about it sooner—I'm aware of that—and Redwing is ass enough to overlook my tantrums, as Nugent calls it. I want you, Wharton, as captain of the Remove, to be present while I speak to Skinner about it."

"Good!" said Harry.

Harold Skinner retreated into Study No. 4, with a pale and furious face. His heart was beating uncomfortably. Skinner's scheme had been a cunning one, and it had succeeded. But the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley, as the poet has told us. Skinner's scheming, at the finish, had "ganged agley" with a vengeance; and the cad of the Remove realised that the hour of reckoning had come.

Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing came into Study No. 4, and Skinner eyed them with bitter malice mingled with apprehension. The captain of the Remove followed, and Frank Nugent. Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on Skinner, with a glint in them.

"I've got a question to put to you, Skinner," he said quietly.

"Go and eat coke!" said Skinner, between his teeth. "and turn that longshore cad out of this study. If he's butting into Greyfriars, he's not butting into my study, and I can tell him so."

"Did you send a telegram to Redwing last Saturday?" asked the

Bounder, as if he had not heard Skinner.

"No, you fool!"

"In my name?"

"No!" snarled Skinner.

"I think you did."

"Think what you like!" said Skinner sullenly. "I see that you've taken up that longshore cad, Smithy, and I suppose that means that you're turning down your pals. Well, you can't bully me, anyhow; and I won't have that cad in this study!"

"You deny sending the telegram?"

"I've denied it, you rotter!"

"Very well; that settles it for the present. You'll have a chance of denying it to a police officer next."

Skinner's pale face grew quite white.

"A police officer! What do you mean, you fool?" he muttered huskily.

"You don't know that it's against the law to send a telegram in another man's name?" asked the Bounder grimly.

"You don't know that it amounts to forgery to sign another man's name to a telegram? It's time you learned, old bean. A telegram was sent in my name, and I never sent it. I am going to demand an inquiry into the matter at the post office."

"A—a—an inquiry!"

Skinner almost babbled the words.

What the legal penalty of his act might be Skinner hardly knew. But he knew what would be the result when the matter came before his headmaster. He knew that it meant that he would be expelled from Greyfriars.

"You still deny it?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes!" breathed Skinner huskily.

"If you're telling the truth you've nothing to fear. The Friardale postmaster will be able to identify the fellow who sent that telegram—if it was not you, you're safe. I'm going to Mr. Quelch now, to ask him to take the matter in hand to have it cleared up."

The Bounder made a step to the door.

Skinner's terrified eyes followed him.

The Bounder was in grim earnest; he could see that. The shadow of the sack, the shadow of the police, hung over the wretched schemer. He gave a scared cry.

"Smithy, stop!"

"Too late!" said the Bounder, and he

went to the door. "I'm fed up with your trickery, Skinner, and Greyfriars will be all the better without you."

"Hold on, Smithy," said Tom Redwing, with a compassionate look at Skinner's frightened face. "Hold on, old chap!"

"I—I own up!" gasped Skinner. "It—it was only a joke, really. I—I never meant—"

"Hold on, Smithy," said Harry Wharton. "We don't want an expulsion in the Remove. If Skinner owns up, that's enough."

The Bounder turned back. But he turned reluctantly.

"You own up that you put Smithy's name to a telegram, Skinner?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Yes," groaned Skinner.

"You unspeakable cad!" said Nugent, in disgust. "A dirty trick to make trouble between Smithy and Redwing."

Skinner licked his dry lips.

"It was only a joke," he muttered.

"Smithy turned me down, and I put a spoke in his wheel. And it was Smithy's fault it made trouble, as you call it."

"My fault?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Yes, yours," said Skinner savagely.

"Any other fellow would ask a question or two before quarrelling with a pal. But I knew you'd take offence at the first excuse, and go off at the deep end. I knew the kind of suspicious, sneering, distrustful cad you are! You asked for it—and you know you did. You've made it up with Redwing now, but you'll be rowing with him next week, or the week after. You couldn't trust your own brother, if you had one. You can't trust anybody. Nobody could keep friends with you for long—and every fellow that knows you knows that!"

There was bitter malice in every word; but the Bounder, who had clenched his hands fiercely as Skinner began, unclenched them again. There was a rather curious expression on his face.

"I was going to give you the hiding of your life, Skinner," he said quietly.

"But you've made out a case for yourself. I suppose what you say is about right."

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Redwing hotly.

Wharton and Nugent were silent.

"Skinner knows me better than you do, Reddy," said the Bounder, rather bitterly. "He's got me down to a hair. His rotten trick would never have made the trouble it did if I'd been a different sort of chap!"

He paused.

"If you fellows agree, let the matter drop here," he said. "I'll make only one condition, Skinner. You were with Snoop and Stott in Study No. 11 last term. You can go back to them. I won't have you in my study. Agree to that, and the matter's ended. Otherwise, you'll answer for forging my name to a telegram."

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll get out, and be glad!" he sneered. "I'm fed up with you and your purse-proud swank! Glad to see the last of you!"

And Skinner swung out of the study.

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THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

BILLY BUNTER yawned and pushed back his books. He had finished prep. Toddy was still at work; Peter Todd took his work a little more



Redwing was almost abreast of the thicket, when Vernon-Smith made the discovery that he was not alone on the path. Further back, another figure appeared in the Bounder's sight. Vernon-Smith caught his breath, as he recognised the dusky, olive-skinned face under the Panama hat. It was the half-caste, and he was following Redwing, creeping after him, with the stealth of a snake. (See Chapter 14.)

seriously than Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove had finished.

Bunter had more serious things to think about than prep. The chart of the treasure island filled his fat mind.

The fat junior never had had a very clear idea of the distinction between right and wrong, and between "meum and tuum." On the subject of property, Bunter's ideas would not have been unworthy of a Bolshevik. He had almost forgotten, if not quite, that the South Sea chart belonged to Tom Redwing. Had some pickpocket deprived Bunter of the article, he would have been justly indignant. Bunter's ideas on the subject of property seemed to be, that whatever was his, was his, and whatever was anybody else's, was his, too, if he could get his fat fingers upon it. At Moscow, Bunter's ideas would have been quite popular. At Greyfriars they had often landed him in trouble.

Bunter was not worrying about the ownership of the chart. That was a settled matter. What he was worrying about was how he was going to make use of it.

That beast, Smithy, had refused his offer to come on a South Sea cruise in Mr. Vernon-Smith's yacht. According to Bunter, his titled relations were accustomed to spreading themselves, when the spirit moved them, in gorgeous yachts on all the seven seas. But Bunter was not thinking of applying to any of his titled relatives in this emergency.

It was a difficult matter. If the "cacho" really existed, the pearls were only waiting to be lifted; which meant

a prospect of unlimited tuck for William George Bunter. But—

Bunter's cogitations were interrupted by the opening of the study door. It was the Bounder who came in.

Bunter blinked at him. "Smithy, old chap! Glad to see you!" he said cordially. "Take a pew, old fellow. I say, Toddy, you might clear off while I talk to Smithy, will you?"

"Not quite!" said Toddy. "Oh, really, you know—"

"Toddy needn't clear off," said the Bounder, eyeing Bunter grimly. "You asked me the other day, Bunter, about going on a cruise in the South Seas this vac."

"Yes, old chap," said Bunter. "The offer's still open."

"Well, I'm going on a cruise in the South Seas."

"Good!" "Redwing is coming, and a party of fellows—Wharton and his friends," went on the Bounder. "We've fixed it up."

"I don't see that we want Redwing," said Bunter, frowning. "I'm not a snob, I hope, but a fellow has to draw a line. I don't object to Wharton's crowd—but I draw the line at Redwing. I'm bound to say that."

"Don't worry, old fat bean—you're not coming."

"Eh?" "But I want the chart."

"Wha-a-t?" "The chart!" said the Bounder calmly.

Bunter blinked at him blankly. Peter Todd looked up from his prep in surprise. But he made no remark.

"The—the—the chart!" babbled Bunter.

"Yes."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Hand it over."

"I—I say, don't be an ass, you know," gasped Bunter. "That half-caste chap got it off Wharton, you know he did—"

"I know he didn't! He got the goat-skin bag, and there was something else in it—not the chart! He's still hanging about hunting for the chart, which is a pretty conclusive proof that he hadn't got it. You've got it. Hand it over."

"Look here—" stuttered Bunter.

"Somebody got the chart out of the goatskin bag, and shoved in something else to fool Wharton," said the Bounder. "That's certain. I know it was you, because you let it out, like the fat fool you are. Shell out."

"Of course, I know nothing whatever about it," said Bunter. "Wharton refused to show me the chart, and I've never seen it. As for putting something else in the bag, that's all rot. If that half-caste chap found the lid of an ink-pot in the bag, serve him right for being a measly thief."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Redwing can settle the matter with Wharton," said Bunter. "Wharton had it, and he's lost it. It's no bizney of mine. But I'll tell you what I'll do, Smithy. I'll come on a cruise with you, and go halves with the treasure, if we find it. That's a fair offer."

"And how are we to find it?" asked the Bounder.

"The chart, you know—"

"The chart we haven't got?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I—I mean—!" stuttered Bunter.

"Hand it over, you fat idiot."

"I refuse to do anything of the sort. Besides, I haven't got it. Look here, I'll let Redwing come, if you like. Dash it all, I stood the fellow when he was at Greyfriars, and I can stand him in the hols. I'll let him have a whack in the treasure," said Bunter generously. "Enough to get him a new suit of clothes, anyhow: he can do with them—he, he, he! I'll be civil to him—so long as he's respectful, of course."

"You haven't got the chart, but you'll use it to find the treasure if I take you on the cruise?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes, exactly—that is—I mean—"

Bunter stammered.

"That will do," said Vernon-Smith. "Hand it over."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith made a stride at the fat junior and grasped him by the collar. Bunter gave a howl of alarm.

"Yarooogh! Leggo!"

"Come on," said the Bounder grimly. "I'm taking you to the Head."

Bunter gasped.

"The Head? Wha-a-a-t for?"

"To be sacked for stealing."

"Yarooogh! You awful beast!" howled Bunter. "I just took the chart to look at, because that beast Wharton wouldn't show it to me. And that half-caste rotter would have had it if I hadn't taken it. Besides, I never took it. I give you my word."

"You can explain all that to the Head."

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm not going to the Head!" yelled Bunter. "He wouldn't understand!"

"You mean he would understand!" grinned Peter Todd. "Hand over what you've pinched, you fat idiot."

"I never pinched it," gasped Bunter. "I just wanted to look at it. I was really taking care of it, because Wharton was so careless, you know. If this is all the thanks I get—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Come on!" snapped the Bounder.

"You beast, here it is," gasped Bunter. "I don't believe it's worth any thing, and there isn't treasure at all, and I never took it, and I was only minding it, and— Leggo my collar, you rotter! I tell you I'm not going to

the Head. Take the blessed thing and be blown to you!"

Vernon-Smith jerked the disc of teak from the fat junior's hand, as he drew it dismally from his pocket. Then he slung William George Bunter round and planted a boot upon his fat person, and William George fairly flew across the study. There was a roar as Billy Bunter was strewn on the floor of Study No. 7, and the Bounder grinned and strolled away with the treasure chart.

And while Billy Bunter groaned dismally in Study No. 7, in Study No. 1 seven eager faces were gathered round the carved disc of teak that told of a treasure buried afar in a lonely isle of the Pacific.

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss: "Tom Redwing's Quest!" the next yarn in this magnificent series. It shows Frank Richards in tip-top form and will provide you with a record number of thrills! You can only make sure of getting next week's Bumper Free Gift Number of the MAGNET by ordering your copy well in advance!)



OUR UNIQUE FREE GIFT!

Well, chums, the second of our GREAT FREE GIFTS is now in your hands. What do you think of the "Flying Scotsman"?

It is a really fine engineering job, I can hear some of you boys saying; while, judging from the letters I have had about last week's model, my girl readers are equally pleased with this unique model.

You will find many interesting particulars about this famous engine on another page, and I am sure you will agree that the "Lord Nelson" and the "Flying Scotsman" make a very handsome pair.

NOW FOR NEXT WEEK'S GREAT FREE GIFT!

This will be

ANOTHER HANDSOME METAL MODEL

of the very latest L.M.S. Express Engine of the "Mogul" type.

This splendid model is correct in every detail, and is beautifully enamelled in the famous red livery of the L.M.S. Railway, the colour adopted from the old Midland Railway engines.

In many ways this model of one of the giants of the modern iron road will prove the most attractive gift yet, and all my chums, especially those who live in districts served by the great L.M.S. Railway, will, I am sure, appreciate it to the full.

These unique Free Gifts of ours are proving a most amazing draw, and although every effort is being made to cope with the demand, all my chums will be well advised to make quite certain of these Free Gifts by bespeaking a copy of the MAGNET in advance.

A REMINDER!

Of course, you all remember that the MAGNET is now published on a Saturday—Pocket-money Day—so now you will all have something really tip-top to read through the leisure hours of the week-end.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

Every reader of the Companion Papers will be keen to see this magnificent book of stories, pictures, and fascinating articles. The "Holiday Annual" has a deservedly world-wide reputation, for it is the brightest and happiest budget of yarns imaginable. In the new volume there are splendid complete stories of the celebrated schools of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood. We meet again such old favourites as Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry and his chums, also Jimmy Silver, of Rookwood, and his trusty band. There are, in addition, lots of grand features in the way of adventure tales, coloured plates, and humorous sketches. Don't miss the new "Holiday Annual."

"EVERY BOY'S HOBBY ANNUAL!"

It may be said without any gainsaying that there is no finer or more comprehensive book for the hobbyist on the market than "Every Boy's Hobby Annual." It will appeal like anything to all my chums, for it shows a fellow who is keen on engineering or any other subject,

just how he can tackle it in his own workshop, and make things of use and interest without much expenditure of pocket-money. The special idea of the "Hobby Annual" is to give the inventor a lead. This it does in grand style. If you want to know anything about wireless or carpentering or the making of model engines, or if you are in quest of information concerning stamps, aeroplanes, photography, or the printing of an amateur magazine, just consult this first-rate book. Like the "Holiday Annual," the "Hobby Annual" comes out on September 1st. Both these famous Annuals are the same price—viz., six shillings each.

THE ROYAL NAVY!

"Yours to a Wishbone" asks how he is to become a Cadet in the Navy. Even though he is going in for the Oxford Junior Exam, he will find this difficult. The proper course is to write to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Whitehall, London, S.W. He suggests acting without the consent of his parents. This is N.G. His father and mother are the people to consult.

THE PUSH BIKE!

"Chin-Chin" asks what is the record speed for the bicycle. This stands at 75 miles 280 yards in one hour, a performance for which Jean Brunier was responsible at Monthery, November 1st, 1925.

A REAL THIRST FOR INFORMATION!

Of late, I have been snowed under with questions which certainly showed the most amazing variety. They range from such subjects as sports records to quaint old historical queries, the names of musical composers, the number of letters in the Bible, and details concerning railways. Included in the list was a question as to the meaning of tete-a-tete. That is simple, and is revealed in the old rhyme:

There was a young fellow named Tate

Who dined with a friend at 8 8.

There you have the tete-a-tete. But let them all come. Little facts touching the home life of a spider, or the teeth of a fly, or the number of legs sported by a caterpillar, have a special appeal to me.

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

Almost as great an attraction as our wonderful Model Engine will be Frank Richards' next great story of Harry Wharton & Co. on their quest to the South Seas.

The title is

"TOM REDWING'S QUEST!"

By Frank Richards,

and in it the chums of Greyfriars are fairly launched upon that eventful journey which is going to provide you with a record number of thrills for the next few weeks.

No one could possibly read this topping story without being thrilled through and through!

The next instalment of Stanton Hope's great new yarn,

"GOLD FOR THE GETTING!"

is a real winner, and will make you all ask for more of this magnificent adventure tale.

Dicky Nugent wades in as usual with a fearful and wonderful yarn, entitled:

"ST. SAM'S ON THE SPREE!"

in which the most amazing doings take place at Dr. Birchmall's famous Academy for Young Gentlemen!

I think I have said enough to make you all register a vow that, come what may, you will not miss next Saturday's MAGNET—even if it snows!

YOUR EDITOR.

THIS AMAZING NEW "GOLD RUSH" STORY WILL THRILL YOU ALL!

SHANGHAIED! And bound for China, too, would have been the lot of young Jack Orchard, but for the timely intervention of Terry O'Hara, the "China Queen's" cabin-boy!

Gold for the Getting!



By Stanton Hope

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

A Friend in Need!

SCARCE realising what he was doing, Jack Orchard got his hands to the rung of the iron ladder leading to the deck above, when in a flash his mind became crystal clear.

In that poignant moment he realised to the full the dastardly trick which had been played on him. Bull Morgan and his precious crony, Lefty Simons, were nothing but a couple of human sharks who preyed upon sailormen and supplied hands to those skippers of sailing craft who were short of a crew. For in these modern days of steam, hands are not easily to be got at low wages by sailing ships in the Western American ports, and Jack knew he had been drugged and smuggled on board the China Queen for a voyage across the Pacific.

He had been "shanghai'd," as sailormen call this low-down trick of the waterside doss-house keepers, and at the thought of the injustice of it all, the blood fairly boiled in his veins.

"Get up on deck, y' cub!" bellowed the bo'sun of the China Queen, advancing.

Instantly Jack Orchard's left shot out, connecting full with the seaman's mouth, and sending him crashing to the deck.

Unluckily, Jack, in his haste to spring on to the companion-ladder, slipped on the smooth deck, and, before he could recover himself, the bo'sun rose and gripped him by the coat.

"I'll larn ye!" he roared furiously. "I'll take it out of y' hide till ye'll wish ye'd never been born!"

He slung Jack from him, and dived for a heavy piece of rope lying on the deck beneath one of the roughly furled hammocks.

His fighting blood thoroughly roused, Jack waded in and rapped home a couple of snorting hooks to the bo'sun's ribs as the big fellow whipped up the length of rope.

Out flashed the bo'sun's great left hand, and gripped Jack's shoulder as in a vice. But before he could strike a blow with the rope's-end, the China Queen's cabin-boy came bounding down the steel ladder.

"Arrah! Let him alone, y' great, cowardly spalpeen!"

Maddened by the interruption, the

bo'sun aimed a slashing blow with the rope at the plucky Irish lad, but in a trice the youngster was under it, and crashed home a sizzling uppercut to the big fellow's point, which bowled him completely from his pins. As he fell, the bo'sun struck his head against the corner of a sea-chest, and there on the deck he remained, as senseless as a log.

"Thanks, old man," said Jack to his young rescuer. "I don't know who you are, but you've done me a jolly good turn!"

"That's more'n the bo'sun will think when he comes to," grinned the snub-nosed boy with the merry blue eyes. "It will be a good ten minutes before he comes to, as sure as my name's Terry O'Hara!"

"Well, we'd better be beating it out of here!" exclaimed Jack. "When is this old packet due to sail?"

"Sure 'tis after sailing for China now," replied Terry. "Can't you hear the crew working the capstan?"

"My aunt!" cried Jack. "Then

THE FIRST INSTALMENT IN BRIEF.

Keen to take his chance abroad, young JACK ORCHARD "works" his passage to San Francisco in quest of his uncle, Mr. DAVID ORCHARD, a mining-engineer, of whom he has often heard, but never seen.

Having earned a fair measure of kicks and cuffs en route, Jack reaches his destination only to find his uncle missing, having apparently absconded with a small sack of gold nuggets which had been entrusted to him by an old friend named SIMPSON.

Almost down to his last cent, Jack applies for a "job" at the "Red Rat Doss-house," where he meets

"BULL" MORGAN, and his partner, "LEFTY" SIMONS, two sinister-looking characters, and agents of the clipper, "China Queen." (Guessing quickly enough that he is in a "tough den" Jack is about to make his exit when a sand-bag, wielded by Lefty Simons, falls him to the ground. Regaining consciousness, some time later, the youngster is amazed to find himself in the fo'c'ste of the "China Queen." A smashing kick in the ribs from a gorilla-like man in a squat, peaked cap, sends him reeling, and a hoarse voice cries:

"Wake yourself up, me lad! If you're not up on deck in two seconds, I'll give you a taste of the rope's-end!"

(Now Read On.)

there's not a moment to be lost. By hook or by crook I've got to get ashore, Terry. And you'd better come with me, for your life won't be worth living if you stay here after what's occurred to-night."

"Bedad, it won't!" agreed Terry. "The fact is, me bhoy, I've had more than enough of it already, and sure I'm willing to make a break for the shore. Can you swim?"

"Rather!"
"Then 'tis as easy as peeling 'taters!" returned Terry. "We'll nip out of one of the portholes and swim off in the darkness."

With hearts beating fast, they dragged a couple of blankets out of a hammock, tied them together, and paid them through an open port. The rope which the bo'sun had been going to use on Jack's shoulders came in handy for fastening the blankets to a brass port-screw attached to the stout wooden bulk-head, as a wall or inner side of a ship is called.

Hardly were these preparations ready when Jack and Terry heard the scrape of the bo'sun's great boots as the bully began to regain his senses. There came to their ears also the clatter of feet on the steel ladder as a couple of members of the China Queen's crew came below.

"Quick! Out of it, Terry!" muttered Jack. "You go first, old chap!"

Terry wriggled through the port first, slipped down the blankets, and dropped with scarce a splash into the water of San Francisco's harbour. Jack was getting out after him when the voice of the bo'sun rose in a frenzied roar:

"Stop those two young varnints! Bring 'em back!"

The seamen who had come below clattered across the deck beneath the yellow light of the lanterns just in time to see Jack disappear, feet first, through the porthole.

Now that the discovery of their get-away had been made, Jack did not trouble to maintain silence like Terry had done, but dropped into the sea with a splash, and swam with a powerful crawl stroke after the Irish cabin-boy.

At first the reflection of the lights from the China Queen's ports, dancing on the

waters, made the boys easily visible, but after swimming half a cable's length from the ship, the darkness swallowed them from the view of those on board the clipper.

The skipper of a small oyster-fishing boat standing in for the shore, picked them up and showed them a deal of sympathy when they told their story.

"In days gone by there was more of this sort of thing done on the western coast than there is now," he told them. "A son of mine was shanghai'd several years ago from this very port, and I've never seen him from that day to this. Now go below to the cabin, lads, and dry yourselves at the fire."

There was a stove in the poky cabin, and long after the oyster-boat had anchored and the China Queen had stood out through the Golden Gate, Jack and Terry sat in its warmth listening to the yarns of the old skipper.

"The sea has treated me none too kindly, boys," he said, "and now I'm selling up and going on a new lay. If it turns out well, there's a fortune for me. There's gold up North—gold, y' understand?" His eyes glittered with the light of a fanatic. "Away up there in the Yukon a strike's been made which has broken all records. An old fellow called McLennan has struck rich, and there's proof that he's topped the greatest goldfield ever lighted upon in the North. Gold! There's gold for the gettin', boys! Pickin' gold out of a creek is better'n fishing oysters out of the sea, and I'm selling up this ketch and hitting the trail North as soon as I can rake together an outfit."

Stowaways!

A LITTLE later, this skipper, with the gold-fever in his veins, took the boys ashore in a dinghy. There, Jack and Terry, after thanking him, parted company from him, and walked together through the dock district, taking care, however, not to go through Spanish Causeway.

One day Jack intended squaring matters with those rogues, Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, but the immediate need was to find shelter for the night. The next need after that, both for himself and Terry, was to find jobs; and whereas it was Jack's intention to take what means he could to find his uncle, there was little chance of his being able to do anything while penniless.

The down-town district was alive with people, although the hour was so late. Stores, usually shut long before, were open and doing big business.

Time and again Jack and Terry heard the word "gold" bandied from lip to lip among the crowd. Since the great strike of gold by Jock McLennan in the Yukon had been confirmed the Western seaboard of America was aflame with the gold-fever, whose virus sets men's veins on fire and fills their brains with madness.

Gold! Gold!

The fevered topic of the crowd burned into the minds of Jack and Terry until they thrilled to the excitement of the night. Men of all conditions of life were bustling in and out of the stores, securing clothes, tools, and provisions necessary for the journey to the Far North.

For this was the beginning of the great stampede of men to the Stewart River—a gold-rush to be compared only to that to the Klondike years ago.

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"My hat!" exclaimed Jack, his eyes sparkling. "How jolly fine to go with all those fellows! That skipper of the oyster-boat told us that up North there was gold for the getting!"

"Begorra, he did!" agreed Terry. "And phwat's the matter wid going and getting some, Jack me bhoy? Sure, the two of us together could stake a claim and make our fortunes, bedad!"

"Chump!" laughed Jack. "How the dickens do you suppose we can get a passage up to the Yukon with hardly a bean between us?"

"Faith, there's more ways of getting out of a ship than by falling off the bridge, me bhoy," retorted Terry; "and in like manner there's more ways of getting aboard one than by walking up the gangway. 'Tis dead keen I am on going on this gold-hunt, and if you'll come wid me, sure we'll both go down to the docks right now and chance what happens to us later."

Jack gripped his hand.

"I'm game to throw in my lot with you, Terry," he said. "After all, I've nothing to stop in 'Frisco for now that my uncle has gone away. And if I can make a fortune in the North, perhaps I can come back and use some of the money for getting in touch with him."

There was as much bustle at the docks as in the lower part of the town, and already two or three ships had been chartered to take the first batches of gold-seekers to Skagway, in Alaska, whence they would make the remainder of the journey by land to the Stewart River.

Bearded roughnecks and pink-faced 'Varsity boys were among the excited crowd on the wharf, and miners, lumbermen, clerks, and storekeepers, with outfits great or small, jostled one



TERRY O'HARA,
the plucky little Irish cabin-boy of the
clipper, "China Queen."

another, or chatted excitedly in crowds with less fortunate applicants for berths in the ship, or with friends who had come to see them start on the gold-trail.

"There are too many officials down here, Terry," remarked Jack. "We shall never be able to get up one of those gangways and past the ticket-holders without being spotted."

"Sure, leave it to me, me bhoy!" grinned Terry confidently. "'Tis meself will get aboard that ship, if I have to fight ivery nither's son in uniform!"

Terry's self-confidence made Jack laugh, and also it made him feel more hopeful, though his own reason told him

that they had hardly a chance of stowing away.

They stood by one of the chartered ships called the s.s. Chilcoat, by which the main crowd was assembled. This steamer, they discovered, was sailing within two hours for Skagway, though as yet none of the passengers had been allowed on board.

Presently, as Jack and Terry watched, the gangways were got out, and there was a rush of passengers on board, while officials of the steamship company checked the tickets of everyone.

"Now's our chance, Jack!" cried Terry. "This way, me bhoy!"

The youngsters dodged among the throng, whose attention was directed to the teeming gangways. What Terry's plan was Jack did not guess at first; but he became startingly aware of it as the Irish boy clambered like a monkey up one of the great mooring-lines at the bow of the ship on to the deck.

Jack quickly shinned after him, and heard someone shout for him to come back. Of this he took no notice, although two of the Chilcoat's crew came running aft, warned by the shouts ashore. The two boys hurriedly dived down a companion-ladder and hid themselves behind some crates of machinery abaft the chain-locker.

In their hiding-place they heard the tramp of many feet on the decks, and the roar of the winches and derricks as cargo was hoisted aboard. No one came near them, however, and after a long wait the hatches were battened down, and they heard the hoot of the siren and the plash as the mooring-lines were cast off.

Not, however, until the ship had got out to sea, as they could tell by the heavy roll of the deck, did they come out and find their way up for a breath of fresh air.

There were a great crowd of gold-seekers on deck, and no one took any notice of the boys, who stood by the rail and saw the yellow lights of 'Frisco, like ropes of sapphires glistening in the night, receding far astern.

"Hooray!" breathed Jack enthusiastically. "We've done it this time, Terry! And, anyway, no one can send us back!"

His remark ended in a startled gasp as a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder. Swinging round, he saw a giant of a man glaring down at him, and, with widening eyes and sagging jaw, he recognised the owner of that evil, pock-marked countenance. It was Bull Morgan; and his partner of the Red Rat, Lefty Simons, was at his side!

"Y' young cub!" growled Morgan ominously. "I thought I recognised ye. How comes it ye're here, instead o' serving y'ur apprenticeship aboard the China Queen?"

The cool assurance of Bull Morgan took away Jack's breath, but he quickly recovered himself.

"Let me go, you cowardly great rotter!" he cried angrily. "Perhaps when you get back to 'Frisco you'll find the police have put a spike into that rotten business you were running at the Red Rat!"

"The business has been sold," interposed Lefty Simons, with a leer. "Now answer Bull's question, or we'll take you up before the skipper! I don't suppose either you or this other young sweep has paid a passage."

Jack and Terry exchanged quick glances, and in doing so gave themselves away to the cunning scoundrels.



"Arrah! Let him alone, y' great cowardly spalpeen!" cried Terry O'Hara. Maddened at the interruption, the bos'n aimed a smashing blow with the rope at the plucky Irish lad. Terry, however, was too quick for him! (See page 25.)

"Are these friends of yours, Jack?" asked Terry. "For if so, bedad, I don't think much of them. Come on, let's go for'ard."

Guessing that the boys had no real right to be in the ship, Bull Morgan and Simons barred their way, and the ensuing rumpus brought some members of the crew to the scene. The deckhands took charge of Jack and Terry; and Morgan and Simons, who had sold their wretched doss-house business to join in this mad gold-rush to the North, followed hard at their heels.

The skipper of the Chilcoot was a far-seeing man, but, after hearing the story which Jack told of his adventure at the Red Rat and the plausible yarn spun by Bull Morgan, he was at a loss to decide the rights and wrongs of the affair.

Curtly he ordered Morgan and Simons out of his cabin. Then, when they had gone he loosed the thunder of his wrath at the heads of the two boys, informing them in plain, seaman-like language, what were the usual penalties for stowaways.

In the end, having given vent to his righteous wrath, he summoned the chief steward, and told him to set the boys to work peeling potatoes, or on any other odd jobs which needed doing in the galley, and to be sure to "boot both the young rips ashore in Skagway."

And, in spite of the presence of Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons among the gold-seekers in the ship, Jack and Terry were hugging themselves with delight as they followed the steward out of the skipper's cabin. They were on their way to the Golden North, and, by tooth or claw, they would fight their way through to the wealth which lay buried along the reaches of the far Stewart River!

The Jackals of the Camp!

ALREADY the port of Skagway was becoming a hive of industry, just as it became big and populous in the days of '98. Accommodation was hard to get anywhere, and many of the gold-seekers camped out in tents or under the stars, with blankets wrapped about them.

Jack and Terry, instead of being "booted" ashore, were kindly speeded by the skipper and the chief steward with a small present of money each, because they had been good workers on the way up. Also the boys had been able to do many odd jobs and favours for the great crowd of passengers, and so had fairly earned many other dollars. They had kept out of the way of Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, and the two rogues left the lads severely alone on board, knowing that their parts would be taken by many of the other men.

From the time they landed from the Chilcoot, Jack and Terry saw nothing of the ex-partners of the Red Rat, and they early booked their fare on the White Pass and Yukon Railroad to White Horse.

There they went on the trail as packers—that is, helping the well-to-do gold-seekers with a large amount of gear to carry their stuff over the rough pack-trails—for the boys themselves had practically nothing, except the clothes they stood up in.

Their pay as packers was very good, although staggering along with big loads on that rough Yukon trail was terribly hard work. With the money they earned, however, they were able to pay a passage in a stern-wheeler steamer the length of Lake Labarge and part of the way up the Yukon River.

Less hardy and spirited lads would

have thrown up the sponge across the dreaded Bear Pass, where many another gold-seeker dropped by the rocky trail and turned back to go out of this forbidding country.

Their boots were tied on with bits of buckskin and their feet were blistered. But they plodded gamely on, pluckily determined to see this adventure through to the end.

They struck the Stewart River fifty miles above the gold-fields opened by that great strike of the old-timer Jock McLennan.

Quite a camp had formed by the river bank, and already some of the gold-seekers had bought boats from the Indians at big prices. Here, for the first time since entering the country, the boys saw Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, who had bought a big open boat and a couple of pairs of huge oars to make the rest of the journey.

Nothing was said by the rogues to the chums, but if looks could have killed the youngsters would have been "outed" as sure as many of those who had already fallen by the way or been drowned in the rapids along the lower reaches of the Stewart.

By means of propping an old waterproof sheet on a few sticks, Jack and Terry made themselves a rough kind of shelter. Crawling under it, with their stock of provisions by their side, they wrapped themselves in their blankets and chatted about their prospects for a few minutes before settling down to sleep.

"We'll see it through, Terry!" said Jack determinedly. "After all, we've enough provisions to carry us a few more days on the trail, though I vote we don't start too early to-morrow morning."

"Bedad, 'tis slape we need!" agreed

Terry. "Tis a pity, too, we can't get hold of some boots, me bhoys. Sure me boots are little more than laces, bedad, and the only advantage of 'em is that they don't cramp the feet entirely."

"When we've had a few more blisters our feet will get hardened," said Jack cheerily. "Now, good-night, old man; I'm pretty nearly dead beat! Yaw-aw!"

Within five minutes, both the trail-weary chums were sound asleep in that camp by the Stewart River. So sound indeed were their slumbers that they did not hear the stealthy footsteps which approached their little shelter nor the rustle of a lean avaricious haul which crept under the waterproof.

Beside their improvised tent knelt Lefty Simons, while Bull Morgan kept watch some yards distant lest any of the other men of the camp approached.

Time and again the grasping hand of Lefty Simons crept under the waterproof, and on each occasion quietly removed some of the boys' stock of provisions.

Not until the following morning did the boys discover their loss.

"Faith, 'tis Morgan and Simons, for a cert, the spalpeens!" gulped Terry O'Hara. "If I had a gun, me bhoys, I'd go out and—"

"No you wouldn't, Terry," interposed Jack; "and it's no good going and kicking up a shindy with them. It's the sort of rotten thing they would do, but we've got no proof whatever that they were the thieves, and there's more than a chance that it was someone else. It's tough luck, old chap, and I'm afraid it's going to delay our getting to the goldfields."

They drew their belts tighter and went out into the keen morning air.

The camp was a-bustle, and a number of men were interested in a big open boat which was being pushed out on the stream. As though drawn by a magnet, the chums went down to that throng by the river, and saw their enemies, Morgan and Simons, rowing out on to the stream.

There was a fine stock of provisions and other gear in the stern-sheets of the craft, and as Bull Morgan caught sight of the two boys, he kicked a hefty foot among the stuff as though to draw their attention to it.

"So long, y' young rips!" he bel-lowed across the water. "Mebbe we'll see ye later in the goldfields. Mean-time, look after yourselves, and mind ye have a good breakfast!"

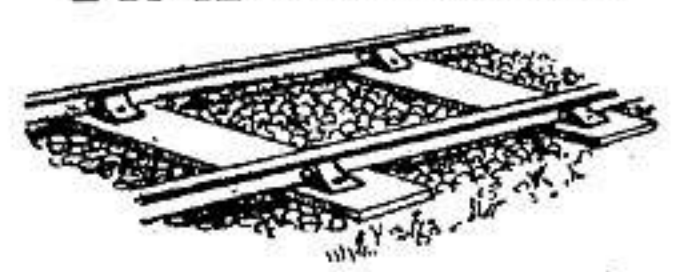
This last remark set both Morgan and Simons chuckling with laughter,

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and convinced the boys that it was these two who had stolen their "grub-stake."

"You rotters!" shouted Jack, to the astonishment of the men on the river-bank. "We'll break level with you for this, you mark my words!"

The remark only made the rogues laugh louder than ever, and a bronzed, bearded man, with kindly grey eyes, asked them what all the trouble was about.

"We had our grub-stake lifted last night," Jack told him, "and it was those two rascals who did it, or I'll eat my boots—if I'd got any!"

"Come along to my tent, sonnics!" he invited. "After all, you can do nothing against those crooks now, for they're well on their way downstream. I guess I've got enough to grub-stake you to the diggings, and, what's more, I've a little canoe which will easily hold three."

"Oh, that's ripping of you, sir!" cried Jack.

"Bedad, 'tis reminding me of the old squire of Ballymaintree, you are, sor!" cried Terry. "'Tis accepting your invitation wid pleasure we'll be if you'll only let us work for you on the way."

"There'll be plenty of work for you to do," smiled the old prospector. "Now, here's my wigwam, and in it a good stock of bacon and beans all ready for frying. Who says grub?"

In reply two voices spoke as one: "Grub! Hurrah!"

(Jack and Terry had at least found a friend in the bearded stranger. But they are destined to hear a lot more of the rascally "Bull" Morgan and his partner, "Lefty" Simons! Whatever you do, don't miss next week's full-of-thrills instalment of this great adventure yarn, chums.)

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