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OUT THIS WEEK: THE NEW HOLIDAY AND HOBBY ANNUALS!

NOT WANTED! Nobody in Vernon-Smith's party exactly pines for the society of William George Bunter on the trip to the South Seas. But shaking off Billy Bunter, fat and fatuous as he is, is about as difficult as parting a hungry dog from a bone!

Bunter, the Stowaway!



A Rousing Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars, dealing with their Holiday Adventures en route for the South Seas. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Bad Beginning!

BOYS will be boys, I suppose." Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith made that remark at the breakfast table on the Golden Arrow yacht.

He did not make it good-humouredly. He looked cross.

Harry Wharton & Co. sat up and took notice, as it were.

As the chums of the Greyfriars Remove were Herbert Vernon-Smith's guests on board the millionaire's yacht they were bound to give Smithy's pater their polite attention, even when he was cross.

Smithy himself was looking rather glum.

Something, apparently, had annoyed the Bounder of Greyfriars, and it was clear that something had annoyed his father.

"Boys," repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith, "will be boys! I suppose you young fellows are accustomed to all sorts of larks at school—what?"

"Well, sometimes, sir," said Harry Wharton, hardly knowing what to say. He was quite in the dark as to the cause of the millionaire's irritation.

"The larkfulness is sometimes terrific in the esteemed Remove passage at our honourable and ridiculous school!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared for a moment.

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He was not so accustomed to Hurree Singh's wonderful variety of the English language as the Greyfriars fellows were.

"Well, there's a limit!" he said, or, rather, snapped.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Tom Redwing, looked at Mr. Vernon-Smith inquiringly. Smithy kept his eyes on his plate, but his brows were knitted, and there was a glint in his eyes.

Something, obviously, was the matter. Six guests at the breakfast-table on the Golden Arrow had not the faintest idea what the trouble was.

So far as they could see, everything was going well.

It was a sunny summer's morning, and the Golden Arrow was gliding swiftly through the Atlantic waters. The sea was as smooth almost as a pond, and all was calm and bright—excepting Mr. Vernon-Smith and his son.

There was an uncomfortable silence at the breakfast-table for some moments.

"Is anything up?" asked Bob Cherry at last.

"Yes."

"Why not give it a name, sir?" asked Bob cheerfully. "Nobody's been larking here that I know of. What's happened?"

"You don't know?" granted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Not a bit."

"The knowfulness is not great, esteemed sahib," said Hurree Singh mildly. "But it is distressing to see the smile of benevolence chased away by the

frown of grousefulness. The explanation of the ludicrous circumstances is the proper caper."

"I know all about ragging at school," grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith; "but at my age ragging is unwelcome. I think any sensible lad might know that. Playing practical jokes in my state-room is over the limit. I don't want to say any more about it, but let there be no more of it!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank Nugent blankly. "You can't suppose that we have been larking in your cabin, sir."

"Certainly we've done nothing of the kind!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I hope we know our manners a little better than that!"

The Bounder looked up from his plate, and spoke for the first time.

"It's too thick!" he said sullenly. "Larks are all very well among ourselves, and you can rag my cabin if you like; but a fellow likes his father to be respected. You jolly well know that larks on my father ought to be barred!"

Harry Wharton's face set.

"We know that as well as you do, Smithy," he said. "If any fellow here has been ragging your father's state-room, it's news to me!"

"And to me!" said Nugent.

"And me!" said Bob.

"The newsfulness is terrific to my esteemed self!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"And I don't care to be accused of

such rotten bad manners and rotten bad taste, either!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I hope I needn't say that I know nothing about it," said Tom Redwing.

"I know that, Reddy," said the Bounder. "But it was somebody, I suppose. The room didn't rag itself."

"Let it drop," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, more placidly. "Boys will be boys, as I've said; and I dare say it was only a little thoughtlessness. But you can't expect a man of my age to like it."

"Certainly not!" said Wharton. "But you must take our word for it, sir, that we have not been inside your cabin since we came on the yacht. No fellow here would dream of playing tricks on you."

"It happened!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith tartly.

"What happened?" demanded Wharton. "You haven't said yet what has happened?"

"The blankets were taken off my bunk, and the bed left in disorder. When I turned in last night I had to get the steward to find fresh blankets and make the bed over again. Somebody must have come out of his cabin and upset my trunk while I was on deck. The blankets are gone. The steward hasn't found them, and it looks as if they must have been dropped out of the port-hole."

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton, in utter astonishment.

The Bounder stared at the juniors. "Mean to say you know nothing about it, you fellows?" he demanded.

"Of course we don't!" exclaimed Wharton sharply. "Do you think we're a mob of hooligans?"

"Then, who did it?"

"That's not for us to say. Certainly it was not one of us!"

"Good gad!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "If I've jumped to a wrong conclusion, I'm sorry. But who did it, I want to know? The bed was made properly—my man must have seen to that." He glanced round. "Soames!"

"Sir!"

Soames, the millionaire's valet, appeared at once with his soft tread and deferential manner.

"You saw to my state-room last night, Soames?"

"Quite so, sir."

"You left it in readiness for me while I was smoking a cigar on deck?"

"I did, sir."

"The bed was in order?"

"Quite in order, sir, when I left it."

"And what was it like when I called you, when I came down to turn in?"

"It was disarranged, sir, and the blankets had been taken away," answered Soames, in his quiet, soft, smooth voice.

"They have not been found since?"

"I have spoken to the steward about it this morning, sir, and nothing has been seen of the blankets," said Soames.

"That settles the matter," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, turning to the juniors again, while Soames noiselessly receded. "Somebody was larking in my state-room. As I said, boys will be boys; but—"

"It was not one of us, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I hope you will accept our word on that."

The millionaire did not reply for a moment.

"Oh, certainly!" he said, at last. "But it's very odd, as none of the crew could have done it, and I suppose the steward is not given to larking. Let the matter drop."

And the matter dropped, and the first breakfast on board the Golden Arrow finished in uncomfortable silence.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

High Words!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. went on deck as soon as they could. Tom Redwing went with them, but Herbert Vernon-Smith remained below.

The Bounder was in one of his irritable tempers; but for once the juniors admitted that Smithy had a right to be annoyed. No fellow could be expected to like disrespect shown towards his father, and ragging the cabin of a ponderous middle-aged gentleman was not a lark; it was simply an act of disrespect. The juniors did not blame the Bounder for being annoyed; but certainly they blamed him for believing that some member of the Co. had been the ragger.

"We're beginning well!" said Bob Cherry rather dismally, as the juniors stood by the polished rail looking out over the sunny Atlantic.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"I wondered how it would turn out, chumming with Smithy for the vac," he said. "I suppose it was a mistake."

BOYS!

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See That You Get It!

"But who could have done it?" said Nugent.

The captain of the Remove shook his head.

"I don't know; but it's not our business to find out. Somebody did it, I suppose, but we did not."

"It's jolly queer," said Johnny Bull.

"Can't imagine the steward, or that man Soames, larking with his governor."

"Not likely."

"Or the captain, or the mate."

"Rot!"

"Well, then, who—"

"It seems to be a giddy mystery," said Wharton. "But we've said that we know nothing of it, and that ought to be enough for Smithy and his pater. I'm sure it wasn't any of you fellows!" he added, glancing round.

"Not little me," said Bob.

"The notfulness is terrific."

Johnny Bull and Nugent shook their heads.

"Certainly not you, Redwing?" added Wharton.

"No," said Tom Redwing, with a troubled look. "You fellows mustn't blame Smithy. He thinks that his father has been treated with disrespect. That's enough to put any fellow's back up."

"Not towards fellows who had nothing to do with it, I suppose," said Wharton rather tartly.

"Well, no," said Tom slowly.

Wharton looked at him fixedly.

"Does that mean, Redwing, that you fancy one of us ragged Smithy's pater? Can't you take our word?"

"I take your word, of course," said Redwing quietly. "If you put it like that, there's nothing more to be said."

"Well, we do put it like that," grunted Johnny Bull.

Redwing was silent. He could not doubt the word of the Famous Five, but he was evidently puzzled and perplexed by the strange occurrence.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the Bounder," murmured Bob.

Vernon-Smith came on deck at last.

He glanced at the group of juniors by the rail, but did not approach them. He walked deliberately to the other side.

The juniors exchanged looks.

Wharton's face was almost pale with anger.

With many doubts in their minds the juniors had accepted Vernon-Smith's invitation to join the cruise to the South Seas. They were keen enough to join Tom Redwing in his quest of the treasure of Caca Island. And the Bounder, until this morning, had been so cordial, so genial, so evidently pleased to have them on the yacht, that their doubts had been set at rest.

Now Smithy's suspicious and sulky temper was in the ascendant again, and he showed no desire whatever to conceal it.

And it was too late for his guests to draw back. Once the Golden Arrow was out at sea they were committed to the voyage; a long, long voyage, which was beginning with bitter blood between them and their host. That situation was absolutely intolerable; and yet there was no remedy, shut up together as they were on the little craft in the midst of the boundless sea.

"We're having this out!" said Wharton, with set lips; and he walked across the deck to the Bounder.

Smithy, leaning on the rail and staring moodily at the distant smoke of a steamer, did not look at him, or seem aware of his approach.

"Smithy!"

Wharton's voice was almost trembling with anger.

"Well?"

The Bounder answered without looking round.

"This won't do, Smithy."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"We're your guests here," said Harry.

"I dare say we were fools to come. But we're your guests now, and it can't be helped. I think you ought to remember that we're not at Greyfriars now, where a fellow can leave you alone when you get into your tantrums."

Vernon-Smith looked round at that. His face was set, and it was clear that he was as angry as Wharton.

"What do you expect?" he sneered.

"If I'm to remember that you're my guests, can't you remember that my father is your host? You can call it a lark if you like; but if I treated Colonel Wharton like that when I came to your house you'd have your back up fast enough."

"If I asked a fellow to Wharton Lodge, and he treated my uncle to silly practical jokes, he would leave at once, and I should never speak to him again," said Harry. "We can't leave you, as we're at sea. Would your father turn back to Southampton if we asked him?"

The Bounder laughed involuntarily.

"My father would not turn the yacht back for any reason whatever," he answered. "His time is of value. This is a yachting trip to us; but it's a business voyage to him."

"Well, then, we must manage to pull together somehow. If you can't take our word, Smithy, you ought never to have asked us here."

"What's the good of chinwag?" exclaimed the Bounder irritably. "My father's a City millionaire. I dare say you look on him as a rank outsider compared with Colonel Wharton and Major Cherry. He's a man who made his own money, instead of a fozzling, bungling military man living on the taxes. No end of a difference in class there! You can think what you like, but he's my father, and I've no civility to waste on fellows who can't treat him with respect."

Wharton's lips were opened for an angry rejoinder, but he did not utter it. He could sympathise with the feelings of a fellow who bitterly and passionately resented a supposed slight to his father.

"You can call it a lark," said the Bounder savagely. "It's not a lark, and you know it! I came to Wharton Lodge once—do you think I'd have dreamed of playing larks on Colonel Wharton? I may be a bounder, as the Greyfriars fellows nicknamed me, but I'm not capable of that. And do you think I'm going to allow my father to be treated as you wouldn't allow your uncle to be treated! Confound your impudence!"

The Bounder's eyes blazed, and he clenched his hands.

"We've all told you that we know nothing whatever about what happened in your father's cabin last night, Smithy."

Smithy laughed scoffingly. "What's the good of telling me that? I dare say you're ashamed of what you've done."

"I!" exclaimed Wharton, his eyes flashing.

"I don't say it was you. It was one of you."

"It was none of us!"

"Then who was it?" growled the Bounder. "Are you telling me that my father's valet ragged his bunk? Don't talk rot! Or was it the steward, or the steward's boy? You know it wasn't!"

"I know that it was none of us."

"Rot!"

"Then you refuse to take our word on it?"

"Of course I do, when what you say is impossible."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We can't go on like this, Smithy. We want to go to the South Seas with Redwing, and help him in searching for

the treasure. But we can't go on like this. You must ask your father to put in somewhere and put us ashore, so that we can get back."

"That's impossible, and you know it. My father's responsible for you to your people, and he could not land you in a foreign country to look after yourselves. You know it well enough."

"Then what's to be done?" exclaimed Wharton hotly.

"Nothing."

"And we're to go on like this?"

"As you've made your bed you'll have to lie on it. Nobody asked you to insult my father."

"You dare to say that I've insulted your father, when I'm his guest!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Either you or one of your friends, or the lot of you."

"It's false."

"It's true, and you know it."

Wharton clenched his hands hard. The Bounder stared at him with sardonic mockery.

"Like to make a scrap of it?" he jeered. "You won't have to ask twice. I'm jolly near knocking you flying across the deck as it is!"

Wharton controlled his temper with a great effort.

"If you've no sense of decency, I hope I have a little," he said. "We're not in the Remove passage now. If we were—" He broke off. "There's nothing more to be said. The first chance that comes along we shall get off this yacht. Until then, I suppose we shall have to put up with matters as they stand."

And with that Wharton turned his back on the Bounder and walked across the deck, followed by a black and unrelenting scowl from Herbert Vernon-Smith.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

AFTER lunch that day, Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a spacious deck-chair, reclined at his ease, with a plump, good-humoured face. The millionaire had recovered from his annoyance of the morning, and had apparently forgotten the episode. Harry Wharton & Co. could not forget it, in view of the attitude the Bounder had taken up. The sea was calm, the sky blue and almost cloudless. The Golden Arrow glided swiftly on her way, churning the waters of the Atlantic, heading for the Bay of Biscay. The handsome, well-equipped yacht was a pleasure to the sight, and the chums of the Remove would have been enjoying their trip to the full, but for the incident that had cast a cloud over the voyage.

The Bounder did not come near the group of deck-chairs where the Famous Five sat. He lounged away by himself, sullen and uncompromising. His father had forgiven the episode, but the Bounder could not forgive it. Redwing was feeling as uncomfortable as any. Certainly the Bounder accepted his word that he had had nothing to do with the ragging of the millionaire's cabin, and was not offended with him. But evidently he expected Tom to take his side in the dispute; while the Famous Five certainly would have been offended had Tom taken the view, as Smithy did, that they had been guilty of bad form and lied about it. Between the two parties Redwing's position was one of great discomfort.

To remain with the Famous Five was to quarrel with the Bounder—to remain

with the Bounder was to give the Co. the impression that he was taking sides with him, which he certainly was not. So Tom kept a good deal to himself, and wished he was anywhere but on board the millionaire's handsome and expensive yacht. He could have found good company forward among the crew; but, as the millionaire's guest, he had to forget that he was a sailorman himself, and to keep in mind that he was a member of the "afterguard," with no business forward.

Vernon-Smith, after staring idly over the rail at the white wake behind the churning yacht for a long time, went down the companion, with the intention of smoking a cigarette in his state-room. The Bounder cared little for appearances, but in his father's presence he could not very well smoke on deck.

But Smithy did not remain below very long.

He came up in a few minutes, his face red with passion, and strode across to the group of juniors.

"So you've been at it again!" he exclaimed.

Wharton gave him a cold, hard look. "What do you mean?" he asked quietly.

"You know what I mean—some of you do, at any rate. Who's been ragging in my state-room?"

The Famous Five stared at him in blank amazement.

That question took them utterly by surprise.

"Somebody's been ragging in your cabin?" asked Bob Cherry at last.

"Yes," said the Bounder between his teeth. "And I want to know which one of you it was."

"Nobody here!" said Wharton curtly.

"That's a lie!"

Wharton compressed his lips. "I can't knock you down on your father's deck, Vernon-Smith," he said. "You'd better say no more."

"The silence is golden, while the speech is the ill-weed that grows apace, my esteemed Smithy," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Which of you was it?" hissed the Bounder.

"I've answered that," said Harry.

Bob Cherry rose from his deck-chair. "Let's go and see the damage," he said. "I can't get on to this. It's beginning to get on my nerves."

The juniors went down to the state-rooms, the angry Bounder following them. Vernon-Smith's state-room was in great disorder. Everything seemed to have been pulled out of its place. His handsome leather suitcase was wide open, the contents jumbled over the floor; and Tom Redwing's possessions—much more simple and much less expensive—had been jumbled about in the same way, mixed with the Bounder's.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared into the room in astonishment.

"Who on earth did that?" exclaimed Nugent.

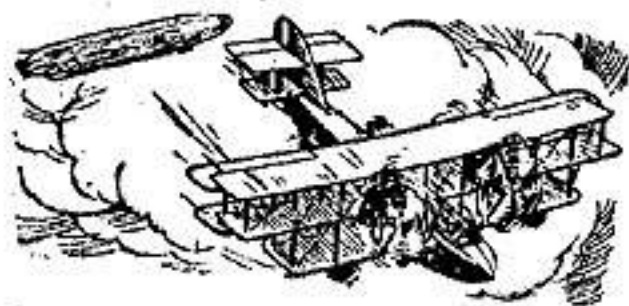
"Not one of you, of course!" said the Bounder, with bitter sarcasm. "You want me to believe that one of the crew sneaked aft without being seen, and ragged the room—what?"

"You can believe what you like," growled Johnny Bull. "None of us had anything to do with it."

"Who did, then?"

"How the thump should I know?"

"Some of my things are gone," snarled the Bounder. "Whoever ragged my cabin must have chucked them out of the porthole. There's a hair-brush; I can't see it anywhere. I know it's



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Tom Redwing looked up from the teak chair suddenly; he had heard no one approach, but he was aware that someone was looking over his shoulder. "Excuse me, sir!" It was the soft, silky voice of Soames, and instinctively Tom Redwing shoved the chart into his pocket. (See Chapter 4.)

swank, in your opinion, to have silver-backed brushes that cost pounds; but it's gone."

"Are you calling your guests thieves now?" said Johnny Bull, in a rumbling voice.

"I don't think the thing has been stolen, but if it hasn't been stolen it's been chucked into the sea. Guests! Is that the way guests behave in the slum you were brought up in?"

"I tell you we know nothing of it," said Harry.

"You can tell me that till you're black in the face, and I shan't believe it. Some of my shirts are gone, and a pair of slippers, and some other things."

"Who on earth can have done it?" said Wharton blankly.

"I say, let's look in our room," said Nugent. "The practical joker may have been there, too."

"That's possible."

"Not likely, I think," sneered the Bounder.

But the Bounder's look changed as Wharton opened the door of the room he shared with Nugent. The state-room had been turned out from end to end, in the same way as Smithy's.

"Oh!" ejaculated the Bounder.

He stared blankly at the havoc.

"So we've been given our turn," said Harry, compressing his lips. "Do you suppose that we did this ourselves, Vernon-Smith?"

"Hardly. That lets out you and Nugent," said Smithy. "One of the other three did it, of course."

"We haven't looked into our rooms yet," said Bob.

The next room belonged to Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry. As the juniors half-expected by this time, it was in a state of utter disorder.

"That lets out you two, I suppose," said Vernon-Smith, and he fixed a grim look on the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"My esteemed Smithy—" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Let's look in your room, Inky," said Bob.

"Certainly."

Hurree Janset Ram Singh was the only one of the party who had a state-room to himself. He opened the door, and, somewhat to the surprise of the juniors, the room was quite in order. The unknown ragger had not been there.

"The esteemed and execrable rotter has left my room alone," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You left it alone yourself, you mean!" snarled the Bounder.

The Co. turned rather startled looks on Hurree Janset Ram Singh. It was odd, to say the least, that the nabob's room was the only one that had been left untouched.

"My esteemed chums," he said gently. "I hopefully think I need not say that I am not the execrable ragger."

"We know that, Inky," said Bob at once. "It's queer that the brute has left your room alone and ragged the others, but we know it's only just as it happened. I dare say he was interrupted before he could rag the lot."

"Yes, that explains it," said Wharton.

"Does it?" sneered the Bounder. "The thing's quite clear to my mind! It was Hurree Singh, of course!"

"I assure you, my esteemed Smithy, that—"

"We can take Inky's word, if you can't, Smithy!" said Bob.

"Doesn't the thing speak for itself?" said the Bounder passionately. "Somebody has ragged the place right and left, and only Hurree Singh's room has been left alone. I thought you were all in it. I admit I was mistaken. It was Hurree Singh first and last!"

"Do you think Inky would rag his own pals and tell lies about it?" demanded Nugent.

"I know he has, because I can believe my own eyes! And it's got to stop!" said the Bounder, with glittering eyes. "You're taking a rotten advantage. Hurree Singh, of being a guest on this yacht! But I tell you plainly that, if there's any more of your tricks, you'll suffer for it! I'm not the fellow to stand it, and I tell you so!"

And the Bounder tramped angrily away to his own room. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another. They were utterly mystified and nonplussed.

"It beats me!" said Bob Cherry. "There's some potty practical joker on this yacht, that's clear! But who the dickens—"

"Goodness knows!"

"We'd better set the rooms to

rights," said Wharton, "and after that, you fellows, we'll find out who has done this, somehow."

"The findfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The juniors proceeded to tidy their state-rooms, and all of them discovered that several articles were missing. Most of them were articles of little value, and it was scarcely possible to suppose that they had been stolen. It seemed fairly clear that the missing things had been dropped out of the portholes by the mysterious ragger; indeed, that appeared to be the only way of accounting for the fact that they were missing. The Co. were in an exasperated frame of mind by the time they returned to the deck.

Inquiry into the mysterious occurrence was futile. The steward and his assistant appeared to know nothing of it, and Soames only raised his eyebrows when he was questioned, and did not take the trouble to conceal his opinion that one or more of the school-boys was guilty of the ragging. It was scarcely possible to suspect the captain or the mate, and it was obviously impossible for any member of the crew to have come aft and gone down the companion without being observed. The matter seemed an absolute mystery, but it was a mystery that the chums of the Remove were determined to solve.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Black Peter's Chart!

TOM REDWING sat on the edge of the cabin skylight with the treasure chart in his hands. Once more the sailorman's son was examining the chart, so strangely sent him by his uncle from the far South Seas, which held the clue to a cache of pearls on Caca Island in the South Pacific.

The sun was setting in the west; a glorious summer's day was drawing to its close. Tom read the chart over, as he had read it many times before; he knew the map by heart now. Yet so far it had not given up its secret to him. The word "cache," in large letters, undoubtedly told of the place where the pearls were buried, but the word sprawled across the map of the island, indicated no particular spot. Over each letter was marked a cross, and Tom guessed that the series of crosses formed a clue to the cache, but what they meant precisely he could not tell. That remained to be discovered when the treasure-seekers reached the island—long thousands of miles distant as yet.

Redwing's sunburnt face was not bright as he scanned the chart of the black-bearded sailorman who had perished in the South Seas. Black Peter had sent him the chart, entrusting it to a shipmate in his last hours, and Ben Dance, the wooden-legged seaman, had fulfilled the trust. Mr. Vernon-Smith, who laughed at the story of a treasure island, had not even had the curiosity to glance at the chart carved on the disc of teak. But Redwing and his friends believed in it; they believed that the treasure was there, to be had for the lifting. They had started on the quest with high hopes and cheery hearts, Tom cheeriest of all, for the discovery of the hidden pearls would mean that he would be able to return to Greyfriars and take his old place in the Remove.

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But the strange happenings on the first day out had clouded the bright prospects of the voyage. Tom wished from the bottom of his heart that he had carried out his first intention of working his way to the South Seas on some trader before the mast.

Yet Smithy's offer had been a magnificent one. It was pleasant to Tom to think of spending the vacation with his chum and with the other fellows he liked. It was pleasant to think of the happy crowd joining in the treasure-hunt together. The cruise had started cheerily enough. Now all was changed. From where he sat on the cabin skylight Tom could see the Famous Five in a group discussing something—apparently the mystery of the ragging. In another direction he could see the Bounder lounging by himself, with a sullen and resentful face. He sighed, and dropped his eyes to the chart again.

But he looked up suddenly.

He had heard no one approach, but he was aware that someone was looking over his shoulder.

Instinctively he shoved the teak-wood chart into his inside pocket as he looked up.

"Excuse me, sir!"

It was the soft, silky voice of Soames, the millionaire's "man."

Redwing frowned.

He did not like Soames, from some instinctive feeling, though certainly the man had never given the least offence. He was as urbanely courteous and respectful to the sailorman's son as to any other member of the party. But to Redwing there seemed something stealthy, something watchful and cat-like about the man. And at the present moment he knew that Soames had been looking at the chart over his shoulder.

The chart was Redwing's secret, confided only to his chums. Certainly it did not seem to matter very much if the sleek manservant should see it. But his peering at it surreptitiously was not agreeable, all the same.

"Well?" said Redwing curtly.

"I hope you will not think I am taking a liberty, sir," said Soames, in his smooth voice. "I have heard you and the other young gentlemen talking of your expedition, sir. I have not intended to listen, of course, but you sometimes talk very freely."

"It doesn't matter," said Tom. "No harm in your hearing that I know of."

"I mentioned the circumstance, sir, as an explanation why I know of the existence of your chart," said Soames. "If I am not mistaken, sir, you were examining it at this moment?"

"Yes."

"That is why I have taken the liberty of addressing you, sir. It may not have occurred to you, but I have some acquaintance with the South Seas."

Tom stared at him.

This sleek manservant, always carefully dressed, always suave and respectful, almost machine-like in his preciseness, was about the last man in the world whom Tom would have associated in his mind with the South Seas. He had not thought about the man at all, but had he thought of him he would have supposed that Soames had spent his whole life in cities.

"You've been to sea?" asked Tom, with some interest.

"In earlier days, sir, before I had the good fortune to enter the service of Mr. Vernon-Smith," said Soames, "I was not always so fortunately placed as at present, sir." He coughed apologetically. "I had many years in the South Seas and among the islands. For

this reason, sir, it has occurred to me that I might be of some service to you."

"I don't see—"

"You and the other young gentlemen have spoken of Caca Island," said Soames. "Many years ago I touched at that island in a vessel on which I was then engaged."

"You've seen the island!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes, sir. I have a great deal of knowledge of those waters from the Solomon Islands to the Marquesas," said Soames, with a deprecating smile.

"If I can be of any assistance to you, sir, in making out the chart, believe me, I should be most happy."

"Thank you," said Tom.

"If you cared to show me the chart, sir, it is very probable that I might be able to make clear anything that may puzzle you," suggested Soames. "I am sure you will not think that I am forgetting my place, sir, in making the suggestion."

"Not at all," said Tom.

But he did not offer to show the chart. Soames waited a few moments.

"If at any time, sir, you should care to show me the chart, any knowledge I possess will be absolutely at your service," he said smoothly, and after lingering another moment or two, he glided away, with his usual noiseless footsteps.

Redwing glanced after him curiously.

The man was courteous, obliging, deferential—too deferential for Redwing's taste. Tom was a kind-hearted fellow, and would not willingly have snubbed any human being. He was the only member of the party who would have submitted cheerfully to Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove, joining the expedition, as the Owl of the Remove had planned. He did not like Soames, but he wondered whether he might not, after all, have shown him the chart, as the man so evidently desired to be obliging.

And yet, somehow, from deep instinct, he was glad that he had not shown Soames the chart.

He rose from the cabin skylight, and strolled along the deck, and joined the Bounder.

"Smithy, old man—"

"Well?"

"Are you keeping this up—not speaking to the other fellows?" asked Tom, in a low voice.

"Yes."

"How can we go on like this, Smithy?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Better ask them! They came on this yacht as guests, and they've behaved like blackguards."

"I can't think so, old chap."

"It was Hurree Singh who played those rotten tricks, and they stand by him, instead of owning up," said the Bounder sullenly. "I shouldn't wonder if they ragged their cabins themselves, to give colour to it. I made a mistake in asking them. I thought that our old troubles at Greyfriars had blown over, and we'd become friends. This shows how much they meant it. They've set out deliberately to show disrespect to my father, and disregard to me and my wishes. A set of rotten cads!"

"It's impossible, Smithy! I can't make it all out, but I know that those chaps are as puzzled as we are by what's happened."

"Rot!"

"This is a rotten state of affairs, Smithy. We're bottled up on the yacht at present, but the party will have to break up at the earliest possible moment if this goes on."

"The sooner the better, as far as I'm concerned!" said the Bounder bitterly. "I don't want them!"

"You're bound to take their word."

"Don't be a silly ass!" snapped the Bounder. "Am I to believe what's impossible, because they tell me so. If they, or one of them, didn't do the rag-gings, you did!"

"I?" exclaimed Redwing.

"Or do you want me to think that the dashed yacht is haunted?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"I can't understand it, Smithy; but I know this much, that those chaps have told the exact truth, and you're to blame for not taking their word."

Vernon-Smith scowled.

"That's enough, Redwing. If you take the side of those cads, let me alone."

"Smithy, old chap—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

The Bounder walked away angrily. That evening the Bounder did not speak to Tom Redwing again, any more than to the Famous Five.

The situation was growing intolerable for all concerned: yet, with the yacht well out in the Atlantic, there was no remedy. It had to continue.

When Redwing went to his state-room to turn in, the Bounder did not come down. He remained in a deck-chair on the deck, under the summer stars, nursing his resentment, and Tom wondered whether it was because Smithy did not mean to share the cabin with him any longer.

It was with a heavy heart that the sailorman's son went to bed, and it was long before he slept. But he slept at last, falling into a deep slumber which was to have a strange awakening.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Stowaway!

BILLY BUNTER groaned dismally. But he did not groan loudly. He dared not.

Any injudicious sound might have given Bunter away. Safely hidden as he was, he was not very far from the Greyfriars fellows; indeed, he often heard footsteps within a dozen feet of him. Bunter was exercising unusual caution.

How long he had been stowed away on board the Golden Arrow, Bunter hardly knew. It seemed like ages—centuries at least.

Certainly it was more than twenty-four hours.

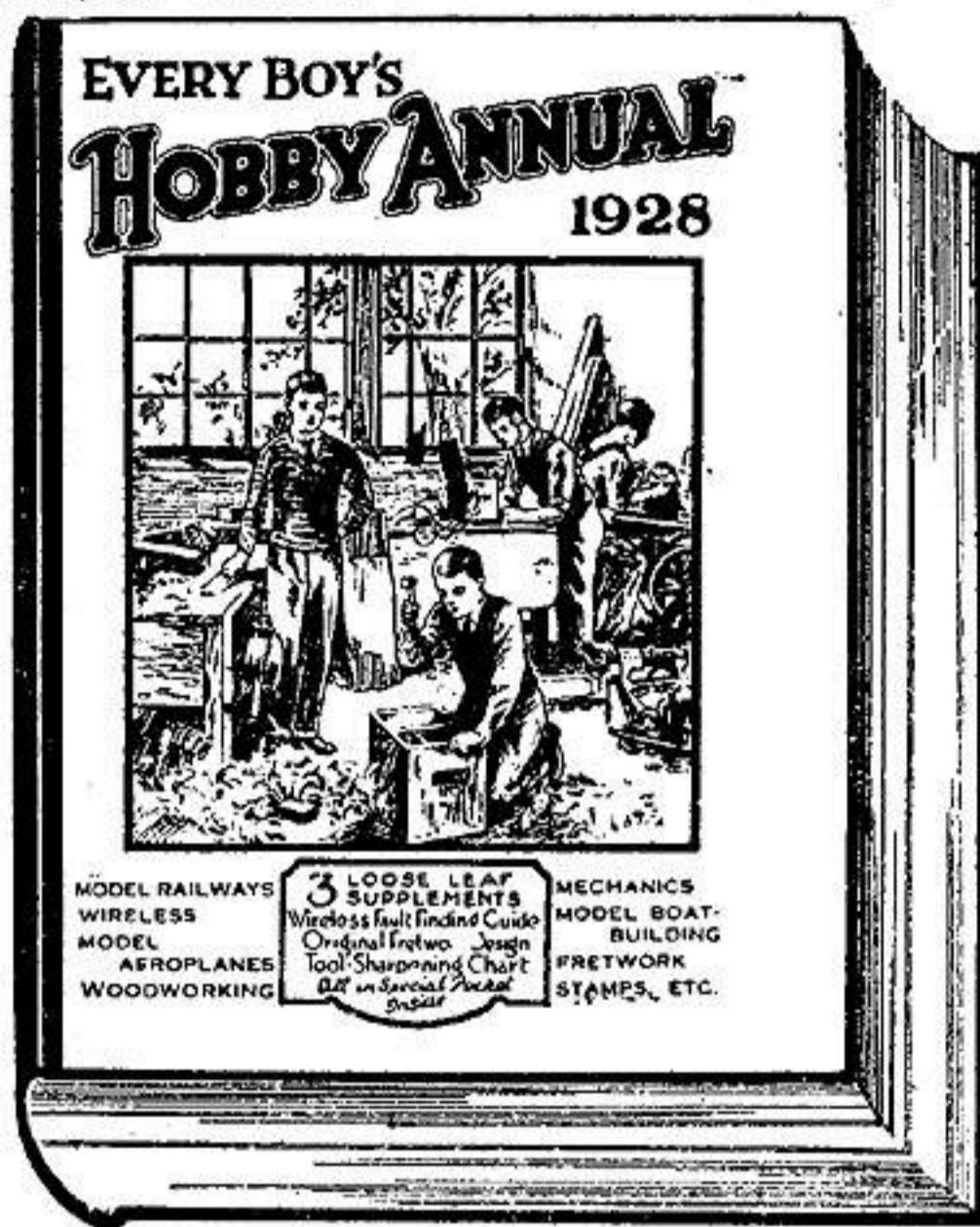
Sleep was his only solace.

Fortunately he slept well. Next to eating and talking, sleeping was his strong point. He could have eaten a pie, or talked about Bunter Court, or slept like a top, during the crack of doom.

Still, a fellow couldn't sleep always, and there was little else for a stowaway to do. Bunter pondered and pondered whether it wouldn't be safe to show up. That depended upon whether the Golden Arrow had proceeded sufficiently far on her voyage to make it impossible for him to be sent back or landed somewhere. More and more his imprisonment in the baggage-room bored and bothered him, still he sagely put it off. He was not taking chances if he could help it.

Stowing himself away on board Mr. Vernon-Smith's yacht was Bunter's last card. If it failed, the cruise to the South Seas was off—quite off. So, dismal as he felt, he endured nobly, and

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when he groaned, he groaned in a low, suppressed key.

Not a soul on board the Golden Arrow dreamed that Bunter was on board.

The Owl of the Remove had surprised the Greyfriars party by coming down to Southampton to see them off. In an apparent hurry to catch his train home, he had asked Redwing to say good-bye to the fellows for him—having chosen a moment when Harry Wharton & Co. were otherwise occupied. He had slipped below to recover a handkerchief he had dropped there—or had not dropped—and Redwing had forgotten him, only remembering him a little later to convey duly his farewells to the party, which Bunter—as it was supposed—had not had time to deliver personally, as he had suddenly remembered his train.

The Owl of the Remove prided himself upon his astuteness in bringing it off.

Certainly it was so astounding a scheme, that no fellow on the yacht was likely to suspect it, or to dream of it. By its very audacity it had succeeded.

The stowaway of the Golden Arrow was safe. He had learned from Wharton that this particular room was used only to store baggage that would not be required till later in the voyage. That made it clear for William George Bunter.

Fortune favoured him in every way. Had the sea been rough, Bunter must

have been driven to betray himself, for he was not a good sailor. But the sea was as smooth as a pond. Even Bunter felt no ill-effects from the change off the land on to the water. No doubt he was helped by the fact that he was on short commons. Had he had the run of the liberal table kept by the millionaire, probably even a calm sea would not have saved him from mal-de-mer.

But Bunter was on very frugal fare now.

He had stuffed his pockets before leaving home, with whatever he could lay his fat hands on. He had bagged sandwiches and a cake, and a bag of toffee belonging to his brother Sammy, and a bag of aniseed balls belonging to his sister Bessie. This light fare had not lasted Bunter long—and he was hungry. Bunter had never been known to bear hunger—greatest of all calamities—patiently. But even hunger he bore now, rather than risk a premature discovery of his presence on-board the Golden Arrow.

For the first few hours, he had lain palpitating behind a collection of trunks, bags, and other lumber, in the baggage-room, fearing every moment that he might be suspected, searched for, or found by accident.

But the yacht had put to sea and he was still safe, and he grew more confident.

At night he had heard the Remove fellows exchanging good-nights at their cabin doors, suppressing his breathing as he stood listening inside his own door.

They had gone to bed without a suspicion that he was on board, and he chuckled silently as he realised it.

Then came the question of his own bed. The room he was in was furnished only with boxes, trunks, and odds and ends of things. There was nothing to be made into a bed.

Sleeping on hard planks did not appeal to Bunter. He had not foreseen that—he never foresaw anything.

At long last, waiting till all was quiet, he had stolen forth in search of blankets. He knew that the juniors were in their bunks, and he could not raid them. He found the cabin deserted, and paid a hurried visit to Mr. Vernon-Smith's room, while that plump gentleman was smoking a cigar on deck with the captain.

Had the juniors known there was a stowaway on board, they would not have been puzzled to guess who was responsible for the ragging of the millionaire's room.

Bunter certainly had not intended to "rag" the room. He had simply pitched things right and left till he found what he wanted, and crept back to his lair with his plunder.

What the fellows would think, what the fellows would do, Bunter never considered at all. He was tired and sleepy, and nothing else mattered. So long as he got comfortably to sleep when he was sleepy, how could anything else matter?

With Mr. Vernon-Smith's blankets and pillow, Bunter passed the first night quite comfortably, in a corner of the room behind the trunks which he had pulled round as a sort of screen.

In the morning he finished his provisions, and by noon he was hungry again, and very thirsty.

Hence his second raid in the afternoon, while all the yacht's company were on deck.

After listening long and anxiously, the Owl of the Remove had ventured out. He found nothing to eat; but in the bath-room he found water to quench his thirst. Then he searched the various state-rooms, and borrowed a hair-brush here, a shirt there, a pair of slippers, and other articles that he considered he needed. Having to work surreptitiously like this annoyed him; and he did not deal gently with the state-rooms. In fact, he found some consolation in flinging the things about, to give those beasts as much trouble as he could. What they would think of the ragging he did not know and did not care. If they suspected one another, and quarrelled about it, so much the better, from Bunter's point of view. It was all their fault that he was cooped up in the baggage-room, in trepidation and concealment, instead of taking an honoured place at the millionaire's festive board. Nothing could be too bad for the beasts who had put William George Bunter to all this trouble.

He found many things that were useful to him; but he found no food, the most serious thing of all.

He was desperately debating whether to risk a further search in the hope of discovering provender, when a footstep sent him scuttling back to his den again.

After that, he lay low for a long time, almost forgetting that he was hungry in his fear of discovery.

But he was not discovered. Amazed as Harry Wharton & Co. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,020.

were by the strange happenings on board the Golden Arrow, it did not even cross their minds that there was an unknown and unseen passenger on the yacht.

Bunter, really, was running very little risk. Unless he was actually seen when he crept out of his quarters, his presence was not likely to be suspected.

When the second night came on, Bunter lay on his improvised bed and tried to suppress his groans.

He was hungry.

He was not merely hungry, but he was ferociously hungry. He began to understand the horrid stories he had read of wretches in open boats at sea. He could have eaten anything; and there was nothing to eat.

Was it safe to show up yet?

Bunter's knowledge of geography was limited to the very minimum which enabled him to escape Mr. Quelch's cane in the Form-room at Greyfriars. Whether the Golden Arrow was yet out of sight of land he did not know. She might be churning through the mighty ocean, or she might be gliding past an English or a French port; Bunter did not know. But what he knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, was that the Bounder would have kicked him ashore, had he found him on the yacht, and had there been a shore to kick him upon. On that point, there was no shadow of doubt.

So Bunter bore even hunger, and resolved to put in at least one more night in his hiding-place.

It was awful to be hungry; but it would be still more awful, if it should turn out that he had gone through so much hunger for nothing!

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter, for the thousandth time.

He snuggled down into his blankets and slept.

But sleep, formerly his safe resource, failed him now. For one thing, he had slept a great deal during the day, and even Bunter could not sleep the clock round. For another, he was ravenously hungry. Close upon midnight he woke, and groaned.

The thing had got beyond endurance now. He had got to get food. All that day he had eaten nothing since noon; and before noon, he had eaten only enough for two or three fellows. It was growing excruciating.

He left his blankets, and moved to the door, groping his way. He listened there, opening the door a few inches.

All was silent and still.

Probably everyone was in bed: it was safe enough to venture out. But if he ventured out, could he find food? That was more doubtful. Bitterly did Bunter repent that he had not paid a little attention, at Greyfriars, to Mr. Quelch's instructions, on the subject of geography at least. If he had only known where the yacht was—if he had only known whether it was, or was not, too late to put him ashore! But he did not know.

At last he resolved to risk it; but even as he was about to step forth, he started back, like a rabbit into a burrow, at the soft sound of a cautious footstep. The cabin was still lighted, and he had an instant's glimpse of the neat, sleek form of Mr. Soames, the millionaire's man. Bunter, trembling in every fat limb, closed his door silently, and crept back to his blankets. One beast, at least, was still up and moving. There was no chance of a search for food without discovery.

Bunter lay and suppressed his groans. He could not sleep again.

He lay in misery, tormented by recollections of the tuck-shop at Greyfriars, of Mrs. Mumble's pies and tarts.

Billy Bunter had succeeded in stowing himself away on the Golden Arrow: he was fairly booked for a voyage now, though he was not yet aware of it. But he was paying dearly for his success, and as he lay hungry and helpless, he wondered dismally whether the game was worth the candle.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Unknown Enemy!

REDWING awoke suddenly. It was pitchy dark in his state-room; not a glimmer came from the port-hole window. So dark, that it was clear that the glass had been covered by the dark curtain within, and Redwing knew that he had not covered it. He had left it uncovered and as wide open as possible for air that warm summer's night.

He lay in the upper bunk, half-asleep, but aware that someone had come into the cabin.

He was not alarmed. He supposed, as a matter of course, that it was Smithy who had come down to bed, though he wondered drowsily why Smithy did not put on a light.

There was a faint stirring near him. Redwing did not speak, but he turned on his side and peered into the impenetrable darkness.

He could see nothing; but he could hear faint, stealthy sounds, and he realised suddenly that it was not Smithy who was in the room. Smithy would not be fumbling about stealthily in the dark.

Somebody—unseen and unknown—was shifting his clothes, which he had left folded up; he knew that. And the thought of the unknown ragger came at once into his mind, startling him into wide wakefulness.

His face set grimly in the darkness. Whoever it was was in his cabin now, within a foot or two of him, almost within his reach.

Tom Redwing resolved that the mystery of the ragger should remain a mystery no longer. He could not see the unknown—not the faintest shadow of him. But he could hear, and the sounds, faint and stealthy as they were, guided him.

He did not stir for some moments, but when he moved he moved suddenly and swiftly.

He threw himself out of the bunk, clutching at the same moment at the spot where the sounds told him the intruder must be.

He was right; in the darkness his grasp closed on an unseen form, and he heard a startled gasp.

The next moment a grasp was laid on him in return; a grasp so strong, so terribly strong and tenacious, that Redwing knew beyond doubt that it was not the grasp of any boy—it was the stern grip of a muscular and powerful man.

He opened his mouth to shout. But no sound came forth, for as if the unknown had divined his intention, one unseen hand gripped his throat, choking him into silence.

In the darkness, in terrible and terrifying silence, there was a desperate struggle.

Tom Redwing was sturdy and strong; but he was no match—nothing like a match—for the unseen man in whose grip he was held. One powerful arm was thrown round him, pinning his arms down, so that he could not strike a blow. The other hand of the unknown gripped his throat, harder and harder, with a strangling grip.



"He's behind the trunks!" said Vernon-Smith. "Smash him if he lifts a finger!" "Ow!" It was a sudden, startled ejaculation behind the trunks in a well-known voice. "Bunter!" said Wharton dazedly. "My hat!" "Bunter!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "I'll smash him!" A fat figure dodged behind Wharton as the Bounder raised his stick. "Yaroooh! Ow! Keep him off!" howled Billy Bunter. (See Chapter 9.)

Fear was but little known to the hardy sailorman's son; young as he was he had faced many a peril on the sea, and had taken his life in his hand, as all men who follow the sea must do. But something very like fear came into his heart then, alone in the darkness and silence, in the strangling grip of an enemy he could not see, whose identity he could not imagine.

With all his strength, he struggled and fought, knowing that it was useless, but resisting fiercely to the last.

His senses were swimming; he knew that he was being choked into insensibility. Lights danced before his dazed eyes, his brain swam, and his lungs seemed bursting with the want of air.

But that terrible grip never relaxed, never eased for a second. And at last Tom Redwing's struggles ceased, as his senses fled, and he lay helpless in the grasp that circled him.

The sailorman's son crumpled up; his struggle was over. In those fearful moments, as his senses fled, he tasted of the bitterness of death.

What followed he did not know.

When consciousness returned it came dimly, painfully. But as his mind cleared he found that he was lying in his bunk, in the darkness, and it seemed to him that it was some fearful nightmare that had oppressed him. The porthole was uncurtained now; the glimmer of the stars came in. Tom Redwing lay half-conscious for a long

time, dizzy, wondering. But he soon knew that it was no dream. His throat was aching from the cruel grip of the relentless fingers that had choked him into insensibility.

He stirred and groaned.

What had happened? What did it all mean? Was there some madman on board the yacht? What sane man could have attacked him so savagely—for no reason? The ragging of the cabins might have been some foolish practical joke—but this was no joke. He had been in murderous hands.

He rolled dizzily from the bunk at last, his brain still swimming, and tottered to the door.

He was so weak from his terrible experience that for some minutes he had to hold on to the doorpost to keep himself from falling. All was silent round him; a subdued light burned in the main cabin, but it was untenanted. He knew that it must be long past midnight. Somewhere, overhead, sounded faintly the tread of the officer on the watch.

Redwing moved at last to the companion, and slowly and feebly mounted to the deck, holding on to the polished rail. Never in his life had he felt so utterly weak and spent.

Harry Wharton & Co. was near at hand, sleeping peacefully; but Redwing was thinking of his chum. It was Smithy he wanted. He reached the deck, and almost pitched over. He

leaned on the glistening cabin skylight to recover himself, and in spite of his self-control, a low, faint moan left his lips.

Dimly he made out the deck-chair in which the Bounder had stretched himself to pass the warm summer's night. He could hear the regular breathing of his chum; the Bounder was fast asleep.

"Smithy!"

Redwing's voice was faint and feeble. Faint as it was, it sufficed to arouse the Bounder. Herbert Vernon-Smith sat suddenly upright.

"What—who—"

"Smithy!"

Tom Redwing reached him and reeled. The Bounder, in utter amazement, caught him as he fell.

"You, Redwing! What—"

Redwing could not reply. His brain was swimming, and he groped blindly for support. The Bounder's strong arm held him. In that moment Vernon-Smith forgot that he was offended, forgot his sulky temper, and his face was pale with anxiety as he looked at Redwing.

"Redwing, in Heaven's name what has happened?"

But Redwing could not speak. Only, with a shaking hand, he pointed to his throat, where the Bounder, in amazement and consternation, saw the marks of the grip of cruel fingers.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Exciting Night for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER gave a sudden start.

He was wide awake; there was no more sleep for the Owl of the Remove that night. The poet tells us that sleep is banished by the pangs of hopeless love; and the pangs of hopeless hunger were still more efficacious. Bunter was wide awake, and bemoaning his fate, when he heard a sound at the door of the baggage-room.

He sat up, his fat heart thumping.

His first thought was that he was discovered. It was long past midnight, and who could be coming to that unused room, at that hour, unless his presence was suspected, and he was being looked for?

But he made no sound.

His first thought was followed by a second one, and proverbially second thoughts are best. The second thought was, that if he was being searched for, the searcher would carry a light. And the opening door had made no difference to the blackness around him. Whoever was coming in, was stepping in stealthily in complete darkness.

Billy Bunter sat tight.

Behind his screens of trunks and lumber he hoped to escape observation, even if a light was burned. In the darkness there was no risk whatever of being seen, unless the newcomer knew he was there.

That the newcomer did not know that he was there was soon apparent. In the dark he could see nothing, but he could hear. Faint as the sounds were, he knew that the unseen man had closed the door, and was standing just within it, listening—Bunter could hear his quick, panting breath, that told of hurry and anxiety.

As he sat still in the shrouding dark-

ness Bunter felt a cold shiver run down his spine, warm as the night was in the stuffy room.

Someone was within a few feet of him—someone unknown, unseen, stealthy as a thief in the night.

Who—what was it?

A feeling of fear, of terrible fear, gripped the fat junior. He felt that there was something terrifying in this strange stealth; his nerves, if not his brain, told him that there was danger near at hand. Not for whole worlds would Bunter have revealed his presence at that moment. The mere thought of being discovered by that strange visitant filled him with sickening apprehension.

The man stirred at last from the door, and Bunter cowered on his blankets in his corner.

He heard a sound of groping—the sound of a man feeling his way in the darkness among impedimenta.

His heart almost died within him as the soft, stealthy sounds came closer to him.

Was the unseen groping towards him? Was his presence, after all, known? If so, what could the unknown's intentions be? Who, on board Mr. Vernon-Smith's yacht, was creeping about in the darkness like an assassin, or like a wild beast? It was all that Bunter could do to keep back a scream of fear.

The soft approach of the unseen stopped.

Bunter suppressed his breathing as he listened, the cold sweat running down his face.

The man had been groping, yet something told Bunter that he was familiar with his surroundings; he groped because it was dark, not because the room was strange to him. Bunter, too, had had time to grow familiar with the room and what it contained, and he knew where the unseen had stopped—in a

corner of the room where a bag of golf-clubs, belonging to the millionaire, hung on a peg. He heard the man fumbling over the bag, and a slight sound as a creak knocked against a driver. Wonder mingled with the fear that oppressed the fat junior. In the name of all that was inexplicable, what could anyone want with the millionaire's golf-clubs in the middle of the night? No one could be supposed to want golf-clubs until the Golden Arrow arrived at Singapore, and then only the millionaire. Bunter wondered almost dazedly what it could all mean.

In the silence he heard a faint, soft chuckle.

Then the stealthy, groping sounds recommenced, and Bunter realised that they were proceeding to the door.

Softly the door opened and closed again.

The unknown was gone.

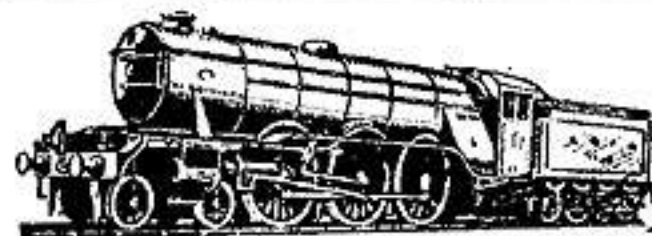
Bunter sat up once more, gasping for breath and in a state of utter amazement.

Who, of all the ship's company, could have crept into the baggage-room thus stealthily, in the dead of night, for no apparent object?

Bunter shivered at the thought that, had he chosen to camp on the corner where the golf bag hung, the unseen man would have fairly trodden on him. As it was, the man had come and gone, without the slightest suspicion that the room was occupied by a stowaway.

What could he have wanted? What had he done? Bunter's fat brain did not work quickly—but it worked. It dawned upon him at last that no one could have come to the room to steal a golf-club, but that the bag was a very safe place of concealment for any article that a thief had taken elsewhere. It was practically certain not to be touched

(Continued on next page.)



Tit-bits of Information concerning
THE "CAERPHILLY CASTLE,"
which forms the subject of this
week's wonderful Free Gift.

THE "Caerphilly Castle," Engine No. 4073, started its working life on August 23rd., 1923, at Paddington Station, as Britain's most powerful express passenger engine. Before it went to work it was placed on show at the Wembley Exhibition, where it was seen by millions, and so is probably the best-known railway engine in the world.

That proud title with which the "Caerphilly Castle" started, however, has since been won from it by the Southern Railway's "Lord Nelson"—though the Great Western, in whose locomotive works at Swindon the "Caerphilly Castle" was built, has now announced the birth of a wonderful new locomotive capable of doing 100 miles per hour! This startling new arrival, christened "King George the Fifth," has gone to U.S.A. "on show."

Driving in Comfort!

The "Caerphilly" has several sisters of almost equal fame, including the champion "Windsor Castle," which was once driven by his Majesty King George, and has covered 77½ miles in 75 minutes (from Swindon to Paddington).
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ton), without a stop. Engines of the "Castle" class are notable in other respects than for speed, however, not the least interesting of which is the provision of tip-up seats for the driver and fireman in the particularly roomy "cab."

These Great Western four-cylinder monsters are as honestly built as they are speedy and powerful, as witness their running performances between visits to the overhaul and repair sheds; 120,000 miles is the average distance the express locomotives cover before they have to be tinkered up in the railway hospital.

A Miracle of Engineering!

Compared with some of the early engines of the Great Western—the old "North Star," for example, which was built by R. Stevenson & Co. in 1837—the "Caerphilly Castle" is a miracle of engineering achievement. As rebuilt seventeen years later, the "North Star's" tractive effort, or "qualification of power," as the railway people have it, and on which the haulage capability of any locomotive depends, was only 3,370 lb.—which is 27,895 lb. less than that of the "Caerphilly Castle" at 85 per cent. boiler pressure.

Its driving wheels were larger than those of the present "Castle" class, but its boiler pressure was only 80 lb. per square inch as against the "Caerphilly's" 225 lb. per square inch.

The weight of Engine No. 4073 and its tender, in working trim, is 120 tons, and the tender carries 3,500 gallons of water. From the front buffer of the locomotive to the rear buffer of the tender the measurement is a little over 65 ft., the engine itself, from front axle to rear axle, measuring 27 ft. 3 ins.

Keen Rivals!

The boiler barrel is 14 ft. 10 ins. long, with outside diameter, at the widest part, of 5 ft. 9 ins. The firebox is 10 ft. long by 6 ft., outside measurement. The six coupled driving wheels—the "Caerphilly Castle" and others of its class are the latest development of the 4-6-0 type—are 6 ft. 8½ ins. across, the four bogie wheels each 3 ft. 2 ins.

With its polished brass cab and tastefully lined-out panels and boiler bands, the "Caerphilly," designed by Mr. C. B. Collett, the Great Western's chief mechanical engineer, is not only considerably more romantic looking than many other express locomotives, but is also splendidly typical of the smart working of the Great Western Railway.

That same clever engineer, by the way, is also the designer of the new 100 miles per hour locomotive which the Swindon loco "shops" have produced as a sort of trump card to beat the Great Western's three big rivals in the keen and never-ending race for the coveted blue ribbon of the British railways.

BUNTER, THE STOWAWAY!*(Continued from previous page.)*

till the yacht came to land, and until then it was as safe a hiding-place for any small article as could have been desired.

As soon as this thought came into Bunter's mind he knew why the stealthy unknown had crept into the room. There was a thief on board the yacht, who, naturally, did not care to keep his plunder on his person or in his own cabin, in case of suspicion and a search. He had required some safe hiding-place for it—and he had found the safest hiding-place possible. Whatever the object was, it was to be left in the golf bag till the matter had blown over, and then it would be easy enough for the thief to recover it when he pleased.

It was clear to Bunter at last, and he grinned in the darkness.

The thief's scheme was as cunning as could have been devised, and would have succeeded perfectly but for the unsuspected presence of a stowaway on board the millionaire's yacht. But, as the matter stood, the stolen article, whatever it was, was at Bunter's mercy.

The Owl of the Remove suppressed a chuckle.

Obviously, the article must be one of value—of great value. Nobody would be taking this risk for a trifle. It might be a wad of banknotes belonging to the millionaire. Bunter had forgotten his terrors now that the danger was gone. His feeling was one of satisfaction. His knowledge of where to find the stolen article was a means of making his peace with the Greyfriars party. If Smithy's father had been robbed, even the Bounder would be glad that Bunter had stowed himself away on the yacht, when the stolen goods were recovered.

Bunter moved at last—as soon as he felt sure that the unknown was gone for good. He was assured that something had been hidden in the golf-bag, and he was intensely curious to know what it was and to get his fat fingers on it.

He crept to the corner where the bag hung on the peg and felt over it. It was stacked with clubs, as he had seen it in the day time. One by one, with great caution, Bunter removed the clubs, and when the bag was empty of them he groped in it eagerly for something more.

Something smooth and polished, a disc about five inches in diameter, met his fat fingers.

Bunter almost uttered an exclamation. At Greyfriars the disc of polished teak, on which the chart of Caca Island was engraved, had been in his hands. Without seeing it, he knew what he had found. It was Tom Redwing's chart!

His amazement was great. It was Redwing's chart, that had been stolen in the night and hidden by the thief at the bottom of the golf-bag!

To make assurance doubly sure, Bunter ventured to strike a match, and in the glimmer he saw what his fat fingers held. Beyond doubt it was the teakwood chart—the clue to the buried pearls, carved by the hand of Black Peter Bruce, sent by him across half the world in the care of the wooden-legged seaman, brought on board the Golden Arrow by Tom Redwing—and now in Bunter's hand!

The match went out. "My only hat!" breathed Bunter. For some minutes he stood undecided. The recovery of the stolen chart was enough, he considered, to make his peace with those beasts. Without it,

how were they going to hunt for the cache of pearls on Caca Island? But—

There was a "but." Bunter could not help feeling that if a chance still remained of putting him ashore, the Bounder would be glad to avail himself of it. The matter did not depend on Tom Redwing, the owner of the chart, or on Harry Wharton & Co. It depended on the Bounder, and the Bounder was a very unreliable fellow—especially in such a matter as this.

Bunter shoved the chart into his inside pocket, and replaced the clubs in the bag. Then he crept back to his corner and his blankets. He was still hungry—more hungry than ever—but he was feeling much more easy now. He was going to remain stowed away till the latest possible moment; and in the meantime the schoolboy treasure-seekers would discover that the chart was lost. The longer they missed it the greater would be the boon when William George



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Bunter restored it. If he was discovered too late to be put ashore, he was safe for the voyage; if not, the restoration of the stolen chart might save his bacon. So, famished as he was, the Owl of the Remove felt much easier in his mind as he stretched his fat person on his blankets once more—so much easier, that as dawn was creeping over the sea he fell asleep at last, to dream ecstatic dreams of rabbit-pies and cakes and doughnuts, while his snore mumbled and rumbled to the throbb of the engines.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.**The Mystery of the Yacht!**

"REDDY, old chap! What's happened?"

The Bounder's voice was husky. Tom Redwing lay a dead weight in his arms, half-fainting, and Vernon-Smith was deeply alarmed. Never had he seen the sturdy sailorman's son like this—utterly spent and at the end of his tether.

"Redwing!"

Redwing tried to speak, but his voice cracked in his throat, and no words would come.

The Bounder was not only amazed and alarmed but conscience-stricken. The marks of a cruel grip were on Redwing's throat, plain enough for him to see. Someone had attacked him with murderous violence. Who could have done so, on board the yacht, far from land—far from any imaginable enemy—was a mystery. But the signs were not to be mistaken; inexplicable as it was, it had happened. And it had happened because Tom had been alone—because his chum, savagely sulking, had spent the night in the deck-chair under the stars, instead of going down to his bunk. Redwing had paid dearly for the Bounder's outbreak of temper.

"Reddy!" whispered Vernon-Smith. "Anything the matter there?"

The skipper of the Golden Arrow came out of the little chart-house, to relieve the mate's watch.

"Yes," said Smithy. "Goodness knows what! Redwing's been attacked by somebody—"

"Attacked! Impossible!"

"Look at his throat!"

"Good heavens!"

Captain Greene stared blankly. He was so astounded that for some moments he could do nothing but stare.

Redwing panted for breath.

"Don't be alarmed, Smithy!" He got out the words at last. "I—I'm all right. I'm not hurt—not much—"

Captain Greene brought him a glass of water. Redwing swallowed it, and felt better. But his face was still white as chalk. Over the shadowed sea the early light of dawn was creeping up now.

"Tell me what has happened!" said the captain tersely.

Redwing told of the terrible incident of the night. Captain Greene and the Bounder listened in amazement and horror.

But for the marks on Redwing's throat they would have supposed that he had been the victim of a fearful nightmare. But there was no doubting the sign of the cruel, strangling fingers.

"But who—?" said the captain blankly. "When did this happen, Master Redwing?"

"I can't say. I'm sure it was long past midnight, but I don't know how long I lay after he left me. I can't imagine who did it; I can't even begin to think who. It was like a horrible dream."

"Sit down, old fellow!" said Smithy softly.

He placed Redwing in the deck-chair, and then hurried below for a coat to wrap round him. Tom was in his pyjamas.

Redwing sat, still dazed, but feeling better every minute, as the fresh sea-breeze played on his face. A little colour returned to his cheeks. He tried to smile as Harry Wharton & Co. came hurrying on deck. The Bounder called them, and briefly told them what had happened, and the Famous Five came up in a state of utter wonder. Herbert Vernon-Smith knocked next at his father's door. There was no answer from the millionaire; Mr. Vernon-Smith was a sound sleeper. But the Bounder knocked again, louder, and a sleepy voice came at last from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Is that you, Soames?"

"No. Wake up, father!"

"Eh, what? What do you mean? It's barely dawn."

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"Something's happened, father!"
"Nonsense!"

"It's serious, father," said the Bounder. "Somebody on board the yacht has attacked Redwing in his cabin—"

"Stuff and nonsense!"

"For goodness' sake, father, turn out!" exclaimed the Bounder. "I tell you it's serious—it was very nearly murder!"

"Tell Soames to come, then!" grunted the millionaire.

Vernon-Smith went along to Soames' door. The valet occupied a small room next to the millionaire's more spacious apartment. There was no answer from Soames until he had knocked loudly three times, and then the voice of the valet came drowsily:

"What is it?"

"My father wants you at once, Soames."

Vernon-Smith heard Soames turning out of his bunk, and then the door opened a few inches, and a surprised face looked at him.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith is not rising so early, surely, sir?" asked Soames.

"Yes. Something's happened!"

The Bounder returned to the deck and joined the juniors, who were gathered round Redwing's chair. The disagreement in the party was forgotten now; all were too deeply concerned for Redwing to think about anything else. The captain and mate were both there, and several seamen were staring curiously aft.

Redwing seemed almost himself again now, but his face was still very pale, and the dark marks of the gripping fingers showed up clearly against the skin of his throat.

So savage and tenacious had been the grip that it had left blue bruises where the fingers had closed.

"This beats it!" Bob Cherry was saying. "None of us heard a sound in the night."

"Not a sound," said Nugent.

"But how was it Smithy heard nothing, when he was in the same room?" asked Johnny Bull.

The Bounder crimsoned.

"I never went down last night," he stammered. "It was a warm night. I stayed up here in a deck-chair."

"Oh!" said Johnny, and he said no more.

He knew well enough what had been the Bounder's chief reason for staying on deck; he did not need telling that.

"That was rather unfortunate, as it turns out," said Wharton.

"Yes," muttered the Bounder. "The villain, whoever he was, couldn't have got at Redwing if I'd been in the next bunk."

"But who——" said Wharton.

"Goodness knows!"

"And why——" said Nugent.

"It beats me!" said the Bounder. "Even if somebody on the yacht is villain enough, why should he hurt Redwing? Why should he want to? It's like the act of a madman!"

"My esteemed chums——" murmured the Bounder.

"What are you thinking of, Inky?" asked Harry Wharton.

He could see that some idea had entered the nabob's quick mind.

"The esteemed Redwing tells us that

he heard the unseen, execrable rascal fumbling with his clothes before he turned out and seized him."

"That's so," said Tom.

"Where was the chart?"

"The—the chart?" Tom Redwing had not thought of the chart.

"The treasure-chart, my esteemed Redwing."

"It's in my jacket pocket," said Tom.

"My hat! You think it was somebody after the chart!" exclaimed Bob Cherry blankly.

"It seems to me that that is the only explanation, my esteemed chums," said the nabob quietly. "It would be wisely judicious to see whether the chart has been taken."

"Phew!"

"But who?" said Redwing. "We know everyone who is on the yacht. No one would want to rob me——"

"Or to attack you, my esteemed Redwing; yet someone has attacked you," said Hurree Singh. "Let us see if the chart is safe."

Redwing half-rose.

"I'll see," said the Bounder. "Keep still, Reddy."

Vernon-Smith hurried down the companion again. He came back in less than a minute with Redwing's jacket. Redwing slipped his hand into the inner pocket where the chart had been kept. His hand came out empty.

"It's gone!"

"The chart's gone?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"That settles it!" said Wharton. "Whoever grabbed you in the night, Redwing, was after the chart. And he's got it!"

"He can't get away with it," said Johnny Bull. "We're hundreds of miles from land now, I believe."

"Certainly, it's still on board the yacht," said the Bounder, "and every man on board can be searched, if necessary."

"The uselessness will be terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "The thief will think of that first of all, my esteemed Smithy, and the hidefulness of the chart will be his first caper."

"But it's on the yacht," said Bob. "That's something! We shall get it back, all right. But who——"

Mr. Vernon-Smith came puffing on deck in a very irritable temper at being roused out of his berth at the first gleam of dawn.

"Now, what is all this nonsense?" he grunted. "Some more practical jokes—what?"

"No, sir," said Redwing. "I'm sorry to cause so much disturbance, Mr. Vernon-Smith. But——"

"Great Scott!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"What——"

"What Mr. Vernon-Smith just said put it into my mind. Those raggings that happened yesterday!" exclaimed Bob excitedly. "Was it the same chap who collared Redwing?"

"Oh!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith testily. "A lot of nonsense! How can Redwing have been attacked on my yacht? Stuff and nonsense!"

"There's no doubt about the attack, sir," said Captain Greene. "Look at the boy's throat."

Mr. Vernon-Smith glanced at the blue bruises on Redwing's throat, and was dumbfounded for some moments. Irritable and sceptical as he was, he could not doubt the evidence of his eyes.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated. "Why, the boy must have been nearly strangled! Good gad! Who has done this?"

"There's only one explanation, sir," said the captain. "I know every man in my crew. Every man has sailed with you before, sir, and has a first-class character. These young gentlemen, of course, are above suspicion, and that leaves only you and your servant. It is plain that there is some other person on board the Golden Arrow whom we have not seen."

"Some other person?" stammered the millionaire. "How——"

"You have heard of stowaways, sir?"

"Stowaways?" ejaculated Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, sir. What has happened proves, to my mind, that there is a stowaway on board this yacht."

"And we never thought of that!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That explains everything that has happened since we started. That's why Mr. Vernon-Smith's blankets were taken, and the other things. The rotter was making himself comfortable."

The Bounder started.

That there was a stowaway on board the Golden Arrow was the most natural explanation of the mysterious happenings on board the yacht. But it had not occurred to anyone before. Captain Greene had had to deal with stowaways more than once in his career on the sea. Indeed, the events of the first day out would have made him suspect the existence of a stowaway had he not taken the millionaire's view that there had been ragging among the schoolboy guests of the Golden Arrow.

The Bounder flushed.

"That's it, of course!" he said. "That's it! I—I might have guessed. I—I ought——"

He stammered and broke off. Once more it was borne in upon Herbert Vernon-Smith's mind that his sullen and suspicious temper had betrayed him. He had quarrelled with Harry Wharton & Co. and refused to accept their word that they knew nothing of the raggings. And now it was clear, even to his suspicious mind, that they were innocent.

"But—but you suppose that a stowaway has dared—actually dared to hide himself on the yacht!" spluttered the millionaire, in great wrath and indignation.

"No other explanation seems possible, sir," said the captain. "No one who is known to be on board can be supposed to be guilty of half murdering this boy in the night."

"Let the ship be searched!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Good gad! If there is a stowaway he shall finish the voyage in irons!"

And the captain gave orders for the search of the Golden Arrow to begin at once.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Stowaway Discovered!

THERE was excitement on the Golden Arrow now from stern to stem. Harry Wharton & Co., after a hurried cup of coffee, began to search in their own quarter of the yacht, and Tom Redwing was by this time quite sufficiently recovered to help. The Bounder was to the fore, with a bitter expression on his face, which boded no good to the stowaway if Smithy found him. Not only the injury to his chum, but the causeless quarrel with his guests, embittered the Bounder.

Once the idea of a stowaway was in his mind he did not need telling the truth of the strange incidents that had caused so much trouble on the yacht the day before. The articles taken from the cabins, indeed, were just the things a

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"Good gad!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "What's the matter with you, Soames?" The millionaire's "man" was staring blankly at Bunter, obviously startled and disturbed. "Who—who—" he stammered. "This is the stowaway—the young rascal who bagged my blankets the other night," explained the millionaire. "Oh!" gasped Soames. (See Chapter 11.)

stowaway would need to make himself comfortable in his hiding-place—blankets, pillows, rugs, shirts, slippers, and so on. The unknown guest of the Golden Arrow had doubtless come on board totally unprovided for the voyage, and had helped himself as opportunity offered. It was clear enough to the Bounder now, and he could almost have bitten out his tongue for the savage and unjust words he had spoken. Redwing had believed the juniors, and the Bounder had not believed—but he was well aware that he ought to have believed.

Inexplicable as the matter had seemed, he had had no right to doubt his guests or to insult them by his doubts. He could scarcely expect them to overlook the matter. The voyage to the South Seas had been spoiled at the very beginning, and it was his fault, and he knew it. But the Bounder had bitterly resolved to make the stowaway—if stowaway there was—pay dearly for all of it.

"May as well get hold of a stick," Bob Cherry remarked. "We may wake up a dangerous customer if we find the giddy stowaway in this part of the ship."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "Captain Greene is right—there is a stowaway," said Harry Wharton, with conviction. "It accounts for a lot. But—"

"But what?" asked Bob. "No doubt about it at all in my mind. Look at the things the fellow took—blankets the first

night, and so on. We ought really to have thought of it before."

"Yes, but I can imagine a stowaway doing all that we took for ragging, but not the attack on Reddy," said Wharton. "That doesn't seem in keeping, somehow. Whoever attacked Redwing in that murderous way was an absolute villain—a hardened criminal, I should say."

"All of that, and a little more," said Bob.

"But a man of that character wouldn't be likely to raid the cabins for blankets and hair brushes, and things," said Harry. "He would think first of keeping himself safely hidden. He wouldn't think very much of making himself comfortable, I should say."

"Only, he did it," said Bob, puzzled. "Unless," he added, with a grin, "you think there's two stowaways, one a soft ass, wanting to make himself comfy, and the other a desperate ruffian."

"Well, no; that's not likely," said Wharton, smiling. "Still, it doesn't seem all to fit together, to my mind. The stealing of the chart, and the way Reddy was handled looks as if that half-caste, Silvio Xero, might have stowed himself away on the yacht. But the rest isn't in keeping with the character of that sort of a man."

"We shall see him when we find him," said Johnny Bull. "Anyhow, he can't keep out of sight when we search. The Golden Arrow isn't so very big—and the crew are searching the hold now. Let's get going."

"Let's!" assented Wharton.

Each of the juniors armed himself with a stick for the search. If the man they were to find was the man who had half-strangled Redwing he was likely to turn out dangerous at close quarters.

"Now, where are we going to begin?" asked Nugent. "There's hardly a spot at this end of the yacht that isn't under somebody's eyes all day long."

"Except the baggage-room," said Harry.

"Yes; there's that. Begin there, then."

"Come on!"

The juniors passed the cabins, the Bounder leading the way, his face hard set and bitter in look.

Smithy opened the door of the baggage-room.

A sound was audible when the door was opened. It was a low rumbling sound, and surprised the juniors, something like the breathing of some huge animal.

"My hat! What on earth's that?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The Bounder set his teeth.

"There's somebody, or something, here," he said.

He stepped into the room, the juniors after him, and they stared round. Nothing but baggage met their eyes.

But the laboured rumbling sound continued.

"My word!" muttered Nugent. "If we were at Greyfriars, in the Remove (Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

dormitory, I should say it was Billy Bunter snoring."

"Blessed if it doesn't sound like it!" said Wharton.

"That's what it is—a snore!" said Vernon-Smith. "The stowaway is here all right, and he's fallen asleep and snoring."

The rumbling sound suddenly ceased. Apparently the entrance of the juniors and their voices had awakened the sleeper, whoever he was.

But they had already discerned the corner from which the snoring had proceeded, and they crossed to it, gripping their sticks in readiness for a rush or an attack.

"He's behind the trunks," said Smithy. "Keep your eyes open, and smash him if he lifts a finger!"

"Ow!"

It was a sudden startled ejaculation behind the trunks.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled Bob Cherry. "I know that voice! It—it—it can't be—"

"Come out!" roared the Bounder furiously.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked a well-known voice.

"Bunter!" said Wharton dazedly.

"Bunter! My hat!"

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!"

"Ow! I'm not here!" squeaked Bunter.

"Bunter!" breathed the Bounder. "I'll smash him! I'll—I'll—"

Vernon-Smith swept up his stick. A fat figure bolted out of the corner round the trunks, and dodged behind Harry Wharton.

"Yaroooh! Ow! Keep him off!"

It was Billy Bunter!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter—or Another!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the staring juniors.

They stared at him as if mesmerised.

Harry Wharton & Co. had not known what they might find; they would hardly have been surprised had the stowaway turned out to be Silvio, the half-caste, who had tracked Ben Dance from the South Seas to rob him of Black Peter's chart. They would hardly have been surprised at anything. But this was—

Not a fellow had dreamed for a single instant that Billy Bunter had stayed on board the Golden Arrow when they had supposed that he had gone ashore—not for a moment had they suspected that the Owl of the Remove, when he came down to Southampton to see them off on the voyage, had planned to stow himself away on the yacht.

In utter, blank amazement they stared at the fat junior.

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"Bunter!" babbled Bob Cherry. "Bunter! That terrific idiot—" "That fat dummy Bunter—" "Oh, really, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "Look here, you keep off! I've had a rotten time here—absolutely rotten! It would serve you right if I insisted upon having the yacht turned back to take me home! I've a jolly good mind to! But if you're decent, I'll keep on with you!"

"I'll smash him!" breathed the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy—" "Then you never went ashore at Southampton!" exclaimed Redwing, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter grinned for a moment. "Not exactly!" he admitted.

"You told me you had to rush off and catch your train—"

"That—that was only a figure of—of speech, you know—"

"You asked me to say good-bye to the fellows for you, because you were pressed for time—"

"He, he, he!"

"I see now!" said Redwing. "You had it all cut and dried, and were pulling my leg, you fat rascal!"

"Oh, really, Redwing, if you can't thank a chap—"

"Thank a chap!" gasped Redwing.

"Yes, thank a chap who's taken all the trouble, and put up with a lot of inconvenience for your sake!" said Bunter warmly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, if you can't thank a chap, you might be civil! I don't expect gratitude from you of course!"

"Oh dear!" said Redwing.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're glad to see me?" said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five.

"Glad!" repeated Wharton.

"After all I've done for you—" "You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—" "The gladfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "Do you know that the esteemed and ridiculous Bounder has got his absurd hair off because you raided the cabins and he quarrelled with his worthy and ridiculous friends, thinking that they were the guilty parties?"

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, that seems funny to you, does it?" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

Bunter chuckled.

"Well, it is funny, isn't it?" he demanded. "Ain't it just like you, Smithy, always picking a quarrel with anybody if you've got half a chance?"

The Bounder winced.

"You raided my father's state-room the first night out?" he asked, with ominous quietness.

"Was it your pater's room?" said Bunter. "I didn't know whose room it was, but there was somebody snoring in all the others. I had to have some blankets, I suppose, and a pillow, too. If you think I'm going to sleep without a pillow on your yacht, Smithy, you're mistaken!"

"It was you raided the other cabins, except Hurree Singh's, yesterday afternoon when we were on deck!" went on the Bounder, taking no heed of Bunter's remarks.

"I had to have some things, hadn't I?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "And I never found so much as a stick of toffee! I'm hungry!"

"And it was you collared Redwing in his cabin last night, and attacked him like a wild beast!" said the Bounder, with glittering eyes.

"Eh?"

"Goodness gracious! That couldn't have been Bunter!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "Impossible!"

"Who else?" snapped the Bounder.

"Oh!"

"Bunter picked Wharton's pocket of the chart at Greyfriars when he was taking care of it for Redwing!" said Smithy.

"I was only going to look at it!" howled Bunter.

"Bunter," exclaimed Wharton, "did you go into Redwing's cabin last night?"

"No, you ass!"

"You did!" snarled the Bounder.

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "I went in yesterday afternoon, and got some things—some of Smithy's, I mean."

"Never mind yesterday afternoon!" said Wharton. "Last night, long past midnight, Redwing was attacked in his cabin—"

"Rot!"

"He was half-choked by somebody, and—"

"Rubbish!"

"That was not Bunter," said Tom Redwing quietly.

"I should jolly well say it wasn't!" exclaimed Bunter. "What the thump should I want to choke Redwing for? Don't be a silly ass, Wharton!"

"It must have been Bunter!" said the Bounder. "It was because that happened that Captain Greene figured it out that there was a stowaway on the yacht. We've found the stowaway, and we've found the scoundrel who attacked Redwing and robbed him!"

"It was not Bunter!" repeated Tom.

"Look here, Redwing—"

"I tell you it was not, because it cannot have been!" said the sailorman's son. "Do you think Bunter could handle me?"

"I jolly well could if I wanted to!" said Bunter. "I could lick you if I liked, Redwing—easy! You needn't be afraid, though. I'm not going to."

Redwing smiled faintly.

"Whoever seized me in the dark last night was a man, not a boy," he said. "I never saw a glimpse of him, but I felt him quite enough in the struggle to know that he was a man—and a very strong man. I was like a child in his hands, and you fellows know I'm not a weakling. I could handle Bunter with one hand without exerting myself much. But the man last night handled me more easily than I could handle Bunter."

"Oh, really, Redwing—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"Look here—"

"Shut up!"

"You fat idiot!" exclaimed Wharton. "Whoever attacked Redwing last night is going to be put in irons when we find him and handed over to the police at the first port."

"Ow!"

"Now, do you understand, you dummy?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't me!" gasped Bunter. "You—you know I couldn't handle Redwing—couldn't to save my life." The Owl of the Remove had changed his opinion on that point with startling suddenness.

The juniors looked at one another.

Bunter's word was worth nothing; but it was impossible to believe that the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove had made a murderous attack upon Redwing or anybody else. And it was a physical impossibility for him to handle the sturdy sailorman's son and overcome his resistance. Redwing was at least equal in strength to any of the Greyfriars party—and any member of the Famous

Five was a match for two or three Bunters. Billy Bunter must be believed innocent, because it was absolutely impossible for him to be guilty.

But that only added to the baffling mystery. The stowaway had been found, and the mystery of the ragging of the cabins was fully explained. But the mystery of the attack on Redwing was deeper and more impenetrable than ever unless there was another stowaway on board the Golden Arrow, which was scarcely credible.

Only the Bounder was obstinate. In a case of baffling doubt it seemed necessary for his suspicious mind to have some definite object for its suspicions to fasten upon. His unjust suspicions of the Famous Five the day before seemed to have given him no lesson.

"It was Bunter, because it must have been," he said savagely.

"It wasn't Bunter, because it couldn't have been," said Bob Cherry.

"That's rot!"

"Thanks!" said Bob dryly.

The Bounder checked the angry words on his lips.

"Look here, you fellows," he said, "I made a fool of myself yesterday, as it turns out. I never dreamed of a stowaway on the yacht; and you must admit that you never did, either."

"That's so," said Wharton.

"I disbelieved you—and I can't see anything else that I was to think," said Vernon-Smith. "But I was wrong, and I apologise. I believed that some of you fellows were insulting my father—"

"You had no right to believe anything of the kind for a single moment," said Wharton icily.

The Bounder's eyes glinted. But he had his temper in control now.

"Perhaps you're right," he said.

"No perhaps about it," said Johnny Bull.

Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

"Well, let it go at that!" he said. "I was wrong—utterly wrong—and I apologise. I can't say more."

"All serene," said Wharton, but he did not speak very cordially. He could not be cordial just then. An apology was all that the Bounder could offer; but his regret for his mistake did not alter the facts—and the fact was that he had a bitter, suspicious temper, and that no fellow could rely upon him or trust him.

"Least said soonest mended," said Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "But don't make the same mistake again, Smithy, anyhow!"

"You're not going to blame me for not taking Bunter's word, I suppose?" sneered the Bounder.

"No; nobody who knows Bunter would take his word. But it's a sheer impossibility that Bunter can have handled Redwing; and that lets Bunter out, so far as that is concerned."

"Then who did it?"

"That was what you asked yesterday when we told you we hadn't ragged your father's cabin," said Wharton tartly. "It's no good propounding conundrums that a fellow can't answer. It was not Bunter that handled Redwing, whoever it may have been."

"Listen to reason, Smithy," said Redwing. "Can you suppose for a moment that I'm such a soft dud as to let a fat duffer like that get the better of me, even if he were brute and villain enough to do what was done—and we know he's not?"

The Bounder set his lips.

"If it wasn't Bunter, then some other stowaway is on board the yacht," he said. "We shall see! Anyhow, that fat rotter has shoved himself in where he was not asked and not wanted—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"That's so," said Wharton. "But if—"

"I say, you fellows, I'm hungry," said Bunter pathetically. "You fellows are like a sheep's head—nearly all jaw, you know! While you're talking I'm starving."

"You can go on starving!" said the Bounder grimly. "You've shoved yourself on this yacht, and you'll have to stay on till we can shove you ashore somewhere; but you can feed yourself or go without. You'll get nothing!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Now come out of this, you fat fool!"

"Wow!"

And the Bounder grasped Bunter by the shoulder and dragged him out of the baggage-room.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Soames!

"GOOD gad!"
Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith stared at Billy Bunter and uttered that ejaculation in great astonishment.



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"Who's this?" he snorted.
"Bunter, sir," said Bob.

"Who's Bunter?"

"A fat idiot who belongs to the Remove at Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton. "He wanted to come on the voyage, and he seems to have settled the matter for himself."

"Good gad!"

"I—I say, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Well, if it's one of your school-fellows, Herbert—" said the millionaire.

"I don't want the fat cad here!" snapped the Bounder. "He's owned up to having ragged our cabins yesterday; yours the night before—"

"I was only getting some things I needed," howled Bunter. "How was a chap to sleep without blankets or a pillow, I'd like to know?"

The millionaire stared at him.

"So it was this—this Bunter?" he ejaculated. "I thought it was some of your friends, Herbert. You thought so, too."

The Bounder flushed.

"That was a mistake, as it turns out, father. It was this fat rascal all the time."

"Well, well! What a trick!" said Mr.

Vernon-Smith. "If this is a school-fellow of yours, that alters the case, Herbert. After all, the young ass wanted some bedclothes, I suppose. We can send him back somehow if you don't want him."

"I certainly don't want him!"

"Oh, really, Smithy, be a pal, you know—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"But this doesn't let in any light on what happened to Redwing," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in perplexity. "It wasn't this—this Bunter who attacked you, I suppose, my boy?"

"Certainly not!" said Redwing.

The Bounder scowled.

"It must have been, if there's no other stowaway on the yacht," he said.

"That's nonsense!" interrupted his father. "This boy seems a fool—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"He seems a fool, but he is incapable of doing what Redwing has described. That is nonsense, Herbert!"

"I say, sir—"

"You need not speak, Punter. Is your name Punter?"

"Bunter, sir."

"Very well, Bunter. You had better say nothing."

"But I'm hungry."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Hungry!" gasped Bunter. "Famished! Starving!"

"Oh!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled slightly.

"Well, if you're hungry, you must be fed," he said good-naturedly. "I had no idea that the stowaway would turn out to be a Greyfriars boy. Of course, that alters the case. If you are hungry—"

"Ravenous!" groaned Bunter.

The millionaire looked round.

"Soames!"

Soames came out of his room.

"Sir."

"Tell the steward— Good gad! What's the matter with you, Soames? Do you think you're seeing a ghost?" exclaimed the millionaire testily.

The man was staring blankly at Bunter, not only astonished, as he might well have been at seeing a stranger on board the yacht so far out at sea, but obviously startled and disturbed also.

"Who—who—" he stammered.

"This is the stowaway—the young rascal who bagged my blankets the other night—"

"Oh!" gasped Soames.

"What's the matter with you, Soames? You knew there was a stowaway on board—at least, you heard Captain Greene say he believed so."

"Yes, sir," gasped Soames. "But—but I was startled. It—it seemed very improbable to me, sir."

"What nonsense! There must be another stowaway as well as this boy, to account for what happened in Master Redwing's cabin. Tell the steward to provide the boy with food at once; he seems hungry."

"Very well, sir," said Soames, once more his calm and deferential self. "Certainly, sir."

"And buck up, for goodness' sake," gasped Bunter. "I'm not merely hungry, I'm famished—ravenous—starving!"

Soames hurried away to the steward's quarters. Billy Bunter gave the Bounder a triumphant blink. His father was more hospitable than the Bounder of Greyfriars himself. At least Bunter was going to have a solid meal, and that was the most important thing in the universe at that moment.

The Bounder scowled at him, but

Bunter did not heed the scowl. His fat mind revelled in the thought of food.

In a very short time an amazed steward brought the meal, and Bunter sat down to it. Bunter needed other things besides food, especially a wash. But he did not worry about that. Washing could wait. Bunter never had been very particular about washing. Eating couldn't wait. On that point William George Bunter was very particular indeed.

The steward was astonished, first of all by the discovery of a stowaway; secondly, by being called upon to provide that stowaway with food in the millionaire's own quarters. But his astonishment was still greater as he saw Bunter dispose of the food. Taking it for granted that a fellow who had been hidden away more than a whole day would be hungry, he had brought enough for two. It vanished like magic, and Bunter had barely started.

"Look here, Mr. Vernon-Smith said I was to have something to eat," said Bunter. "For goodness' sake, hand it out! Can't you see I'm hungry?"

"Oh, yes!" gasped the steward. And more supplies were brought, and they vanished at the same rate, and more were required.

It was an amazed steward—or, rather, a dazed one—who continued to wait on Bunter with supplies of provisions. Where the fat junior put it all was an insoluble mystery. But he must have put it somewhere, for it went. He did not, as the steward half-expected, burst over the floor. Long after he had reached what ought really to have been bursting-point, he was still going strong.

Meanwhile, the chums of the Remove were joining in the search that was going on all over the yacht.

Captain and mate had come down to look at Bunter, and both of them, while surprised to see him, took it for granted at once, as Mr. Vernon-Smith had done, that he was not the guilty party in the attack on Redwing. A look at the Owl of the Remove was enough to show that that was really out of the question. The unknown assailant was still unknown, and the search for him had accidentally revealed Bunter; that was all.

That there could have been two stowaways on board the yacht was almost unthinkable; yet the discovery of Bunter had not helped in the least towards the discovery of Redwing's assailant. So the search went on without pause to discover the other stowaway, if any.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, having breakfasted, sat on deck smoking a big cigar and waiting for news. But everyone else on board the Golden Arrow was joining in the search, excepting Bunter and the steward whom he was keeping busy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We've done that room," Bob Cherry called out, as he saw Soames entering the baggage-room.

Soames looked round. "You have searched among the trunks, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. We found Bunter there."

"You—you found the fat boy in this room, sir?" asked Soames, with a strange expression on his smooth, sleek face.

"Yes; you'll find his camp in a corner," said Bob, laughing. "Blankets and pillows and things, in a corner behind the trunks."

"But the boy was not concealed in this room all the time, surely, sir?"

"Yes; I think he was there from the start."

"Night and day, sir?" exclaimed Soames.

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"Yes; except when he sneaked out to hunt for things he wanted," answered Bob. "So the other giddy stowaway—if there is one—can't be there. Bunter would have seen him, of course."

"Quite so, sir," said Soames. But when Bob Cherry had gone, the valet entered the baggage-room, all the same. Certainly he did not expect to find a stowaway there. He closed the door after him, and crossed to the corner where the millionaire's golf-bag hung.

Now that he was out of view of anyone else on board the yacht Soames' expression had changed.

The sleek, smooth manner was gone. His face was hard set and his narrow eyes glinted; his lips were set in a tight line. Mr. Vernon-Smith would hardly have known his manservant had he seen him at that moment. Certainly he had never seen James Soames look like that.

The man hurriedly cleared the golf clubs from the bag and searched it, and the expression on his face was almost demonic as he found the bag empty.

For some minutes he stood as if transfixed with astonishment and fury.

Then he searched the bag again, though without hope. Had Billy Bunter seen him then he would have been at no loss to guess who had crept into the room in the darkness of the night and hidden the stolen chart.

"Gone!" muttered Soames, between his set lips. "Gone! He was there, and I never knew—never dreamed. He was here, and he knows!" His eyes blazed with fury. "But no, he can have seen nothing in the dark. He knows nothing. But he must have taken the chart. He must have heard, if he did not see!"

The man gritted his teeth. He replaced the golf clubs and left the cabin. Outside the door he was once more the smooth, sleek manservant. He moved away with his soft tread, pausing a moment or two to glance at Bunter, who was still eating. For that moment or two his eyes burned. Then he went on his way, his face expressionless, but his brain busy behind a face that told nothing.

The discovery of a stowaway on board had been an utter surprise to James Soames. He had the best of reasons for knowing that it was no stowaway who had attacked Redwing. And learning that Bunter had been found in the baggage-room had given him a severe jolt. He had hurried there to make sure his prize was safe, only to discover that it was gone.

But he knew in whose possession it was—in whose possession it must be. Bunter had said nothing of it, but only Bunter could have removed it from its hiding-place.

And Soames had not even seen it yet, except for a glimpse of it in Tom Redwing's hand. In the dark he had stolen it—in the dark he had hidden it, not daring to keep it about him, or in his room even, for a few minutes, knowing that there must be a search. Soames was playing a deep and dangerous game, and he was cautious. And now—

"Soames!"

"Sir."

Soames' savage reflections were interrupted by his master's voice. The millionaire was ready to dictate a message to be sent off by the yacht's wireless. Mr. Vernon-Smith was not out of touch with business in the City, while the Golden Arrow glided on the Bay of Biscay. Soames came with his writing-pad, sleek and deferential as ever, and as Mr. Vernon-Smith dictated that message to his broker in Throgmorton Street, Soames seemed to have no thought for anything but his master's

business. Mr. Vernon-Smith would have been very much surprised and disturbed had he known what was seething in the cunning brain behind the smooth, sleek face. But Mr. Vernon-Smith—who prided himself upon being a judge of men—did not know, and was not likely to guess.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Finding the Chart!

THE search ended at last. It ended in no discovery, only the absolute certainty that Billy Bunter was the only stowaway on board the Golden Arrow.

On a vessel of the size of the yacht it was not an extensive matter to explore every corner and recess. Once the presence of a stowaway was suspected, discovery was certain if a stowaway was there. Bunter had been found, but no one else could be found.

It was quite clear that no stranger on board the Golden Arrow had attacked Redwing in the night. If his assailant was not Bunter, that assailant was a member of the ship's company.

No one but the Bounder believed that the assailant was Bunter, and even the obstinate Bounder would not have thought so had there been any other explanation. Improbable as it was, however, it seemed to Smithy more probable than that the assailant was one of the men who had sailed in the yacht. For who could it be?

That was an utter mystery. The bruises on Redwing's throat were a visible proof that the attack had been made. There was no doubt about that. But who had attacked him?

Harry Wharton & Co., while convinced that it was not Bunter, were completely at a loss.

It would not have surprised them to find the cunning half-caste, Silvio Xero, hidden on the yacht. But he was not there; it was certain now that no one was on board the Golden Arrow save the ship's company and Billy Bunter.

Whose hand, then, had gripped Redwing's throat in the darkness of the night—who had taken the treasure chart?

"It beats me hollow," said Bob Cherry. "If it wasn't for the marks on Reddy's neck, and the chart being gone, I should think that Reddy had only had a giddy nightmare. But—"

"But it was somebody," said Nugent.

"Yes. But who?"

"Goodness knows!"

"One of the crew, I suppose," said Harry Wharton. "Captain Greene knows all his men; but there's nothing else to think."

The Bounder sneered.

"Every man on the yacht has been in my father's service a long time; some of them for ten years," he said. "Every man in the crew is above suspicion; even if any of them knew anything about the chart, or would believe it was worth a sixpence if he did know."

"It's a mystery, that's certain," confessed Wharton. "But I suppose we can rule out the captain and the mate—"

"Of course," said Bob; "and I suppose we can rule out ourselves."

"Yes, ass! And Smithy's pater," said Nugent, with a grin; "and Smithy's pater's man."

"Leaving only one fellow," said the Bounder grimly.

"You mean Bunter?"

"I mean Bunter. You know the fat brute got hold of the chart at Greyfriars, and he would have kept it if I hadn't spotted him. Not that it would have been of any use to the fat fool; but

he was keeping it—he had had it for days when I got it away from him.”

“That’s so,” said Harry. “But—”
“And now he’s got it again,” said Vernon-Smith. “That’s all.”

“It’s no good suggesting that Bunter could handle Redwing, even if he was brute enough, Smithy. He couldn’t.”

“Redwing was half asleep, and—I know it sounds thick, but somehow or other the fat rotter did it. He must have, because it’s plain that nobody else did.”

“It was not Bunter,” said Redwing quietly. “I know that it was a man who collared me in my cabin. I struggled with him. I suppose I couldn’t make a mistake and think it was a man if it was a boy. He was a head taller than I am.”

“You didn’t see him,” said Smithy. “I couldn’t in the dark. But I know it was a man. When he gripped me, his shoulder was as high as my head.”

“You were half asleep—”
“Not when I struggled with him.”
The Bounder looked impatient.

“I tell you it was Bunter, because it must have been.”

“You told us it was one of us ragged your father’s cabin, because it must have been,” said Johnny Bull dryly.

“That’s different. We’ve discovered Bunter since then. But we haven’t discovered anybody to account for the attack on Redwing.”

“I know. But it wasn’t Bunter, all the same.”

“If you can suggest anybody else—”
“I can’t! But it wasn’t Bunter.”

“Rubbish!” snapped the Bounder angrily. “I’m jolly well going to search Bunter for the chart.”

And the Bounder tramped below, the juniors following him. All the Greyfriars party were annoyed by the Bounder’s obstinacy, but he was his own master.

Bunter had finished his extensive feed at last.

“I say, you fellows, the grub on this boat isn’t bad,” he said. “Not like what I get at Bunter Court, of course. But not bad.”

“Stand up!” snapped the Bounder. “Oh, really, Smithy—”

“Stand up!”
“If you’re going to be a beast, Smithy— Yaroooh!” roared Bunter, as the Bounder grasped him and jerked him to his feet.

“It’s all right, Bunter,” said Bob Cherry. “Smithy’s got it into his silly head that you handled Redwing last night and bagged the chart.”

“I never touched Redwing!” howled Bunter.

“I know you didn’t, Bunter,” said Redwing. “That’s all right.”

“Well, then, let a chap alone when he’s resting after breakfast,” said Bunter indignantly.

“I’m going through your pockets,” said Vernon-Smith.

“Wha-a-t?”
“You don’t seem to like the idea,” sneered the Bounder.

“I—I—” stammered Bunter.

“Don’t be an ass, Bunter,” said Harry Wharton sharply. “I suppose you haven’t been pinching anything, have you?”

“Oh, really, Wharton—”

“Smithy thinks you’ve got the chart. Let him make sure that you haven’t, for goodness’ sake!” said the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

“I—I— Oh, my hat!” gasped Bunter, as Vernon-Smith, thrusting his

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hand into the fat junior’s inside pocket, drew out the chart.

There was a shout of amazement from the Famous Five.

“The chart!”
“Great pip!”
“Bunter had it—”

Vernon-Smith gave an angry, scornful laugh. He held up the disc of polished teak for all to see.

“What do you say now?” he jeered.

“I—I say, you fellows—” gasped Bunter.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Harry Wharton, utterly aghast. “Is it possible—Bunter—”

“That’s the chart, I think,” sneered Herbert Vernon-Smith, handing it to Redwing.

Redwing took it dazedly.
“That’s it,” he said.

He stood with the disc of teak in his hand, staring at it blankly. It was the chart of Caca Island. It was found again—and in Billy Bunter’s possession! That settled the matter in the Bounder’s mind, if doubts had lingered before. As for the Famous Five, they could only stare at Bunter dumbfounded.

“Bunter had it!” almost babbled Bob Cherry. “Then it was Bunter, after all! Great snakes!”

“It wasn’t me!” yelled Bunter, in alarm.

“You fat villain—”
“I didn’t—I never!” shrieked Bunter.

“You had the chart!” said Wharton.

“I thought Smithy was making one of

his idiotic mistakes—as usual—but you had the chart! It was taken from Redwing last night, and found in your pocket!”

“That settles it!” said Bob.
“The settlefulness is terrific.”

“I never!” yelled Bunter. “I didn’t! I wasn’t! I say, you fellows, I can explain—”

“It was you, you fat rascal!” hooted Johnny Bull

“I tell you it wasn’t!” shrieked Bunter.

Redwing broke in.
“It was not Bunter!”

“Not Bunter!” shouted the Bounder. “I’ve just found the chart in his pocket, and you say that it was not Bunter! Are you mad?”

“It was not Bunter!” repeated Redwing quietly and firmly. “How Bunter got hold of the chart I don’t know, and can’t imagine. But it was not Bunter who handled me in the cabin last night. I know that.”

“I say, you fellows, let a fellow speak, can’t—”

“Speak, then, you fat rotter!” snapped Wharton. “If you did not take the chart from Redwing, how did you get hold of it?”

And Bunter, in great alarm, poured out the tale of the mysterious happening in the baggage-room, the juniors listening in amazement, and the Bounder with a sneering smile on his lips.

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Undiscovered!

BILLY BUNTER paused for breath at last.

His tale was told, and it was a strange enough tale. But he could see, with great relief, that he was believed. Only the Bounder sneered mockingly.

"I say, you fellows, that's exactly what happened!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't going to keep the chart. Of course not!"

"Liar!" said the Bounder tersely.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"You didn't see the man who hid it in the golf-bag?" asked Harry.

"I can't see in the dark!" snorted Bunter. "I heard him all right. I never knew what he had done to Redwing. How was I to know? I just thought he had pinched it and hidden it. I thought you fellows would be grateful to me for getting it back," went on Bunter, in an injured tone. "You'd never have thought of looking there for it, I jolly well know that. I was going to give it back to you——"

"Why didn't you, then?" sneered the Bounder.

"I forgot about it!"

"Forgot?"

"I was hungry!" hooted Bunter.

"Think I was thinking about a rotten chart, when I was famished? You silly ass! I was thinking about getting something to eat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" roared Bunter indignantly. "But if you'd been stowed away without any food——"

"We're as far from the facts as ever," said Wharton. "This doesn't help us to get hold of the man who handled Redwing."

"Bunter had the chart!" jeered the Bounder.

"He's told us how he got hold of it," said Harry.

"He's told us lies!"

"That's all rot, Smithy! I was staggered for a minute when I saw you take it from his pocket. But we know very

well that Bunter couldn't have handled Redwing. That's bosh!"

"I was going to hand it over," protested Bunter almost tearfully. "I thought you fellows would be grateful. I was only going to wait till you'd hunted for it, and couldn't find it."

"You fat rotter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I've found the chart for you, haven't I?" demanded Bunter warmly. "Naturally, I thought you'd be decent enough to ask me to come on the trip to the South Seas, after I'd found the chart for you. A fat lot of treasure you're likely to find, without me to help you!"

"That depends on Smithy, not on us," said Wharton. "But, personally, I must say I think it was jolly lucky that Bunter was stowed away on the yacht. The chart would have been lost otherwise."

"You believe that fat rotter?" sneered the Bounder.

"Every word!"

"Bunter's so truthful, I know!" jeered Smithy.

"Nothing of the sort, only he's telling the truth now and I believe him, because it stands to reason," answered Wharton. "He has explained how he got hold of the chart; and we know that he never handled Redwing, and you'd know it, too, if you chose to see facts."

"I know that that fat rotter is going to be shoved ashore at the first opportunity!" said the Bounder, scowling.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"That's for you to settle!" said Wharton curtly. "Anyhow, the chart is found, and that's the principal thing. You want to take care, Reddy, that the rotter, whoever he is, doesn't get it away from you again!"

"I shall take care," said Redwing.

Mr Vernon-Smith was informed at once of the recovery of the chart, and he raised his eyebrows as he listened. The millionaire attached no value whatever to the treasure-chart, and did not think for a moment of believing in the existence of Black Peter's treasure.

"Well, well, I'm glad you've found it, if you think it is of value," he said. "But what I want to find is the person

who attacked a guest of mine on my yacht."

The sailorman's son was not, in himself, a very important person in Mr. Vernon-Smith's eyes. But as Mr. Vernon-Smith's guest, he had some importance.

"We found the chart on Bunter, father," said the Bounder. "My belief is that it was Bunter who bagged it from Redwing."

"But the boy has explained how he came by it, Herbert. You do not think he made a murderous attack on a school-fellow? Nonsense!"

The Bounder bit his lip.

"Who else, then?" he asked.

"That seems to be a mystery. Captain Greene cannot make any suggestion, and he knows every man on the yacht, and his record. It is a very puzzling matter," said the millionaire. "Certainly it was not that fat lad, Bunter. That is ridiculous!"

Vernon-Smith looked obstinate, but he did not argue the point with his father.

"The man whoever he was, must be found," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Every vigilance must be exercised. Some person who is not quite right in his head, I should think, for the attack seems quite motiveless."

"It was the chart that was wanted, sir," said Wharton. "Redwing woke up and interrupted the man getting hold of it."

"Possibly—possibly! But no one but a romantic schoolboy would believe that there was any value in the chart, I think. However, we cannot come to any conclusion until the man is found. Captain Greene will succeed in picking him out."

On that point the millionaire was mistaken.

Captain Greene, as much puzzled as anyone on board, and very much disturbed by the strange affair, made the completest possible investigation, but it led to nothing.

Amazing as it was, in view of what had occurred, there was not a man on board who did not seem above suspicion.

Certainly Soames, the sleek, silent-footed manservant, was about the last man on the yacht whom anyone would have thought of in connection with such an affair, unless Redwing thought of him.

During the day Redwing glanced at Soames several times, with a lingering, perplexed expression.

It had recurred to him that Soames had asked to see the chart, and that he had not been permitted to see it. And it recurred also to Redwing's mind that Soames had told him that he knew the South Seas—that he had sailed the Pacific in earlier days.

Redwing knew, from Soames himself, that the man was acquainted with Caca Island, and had heard discussions among the schoolboys on the subject of the buried pearls. Undoubtedly the man had taken an interest in the matter, at least. He had offered his help in deciphering the chart—which seemed to indicate that he took the affair of the treasure with some seriousness; and, if so, he was the only man aboard who did. Redwing knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled at the idea, and that the captain and the mate were much entertained by it, and he had caught a grin on the steward's face when the man had heard the juniors talking of it. He had little doubt that the crew had heard of it, and that it was a jest forward. James Soames was the only one outside the circle of the Greyfriars juniors who had taken any serious heed of the treasure story.

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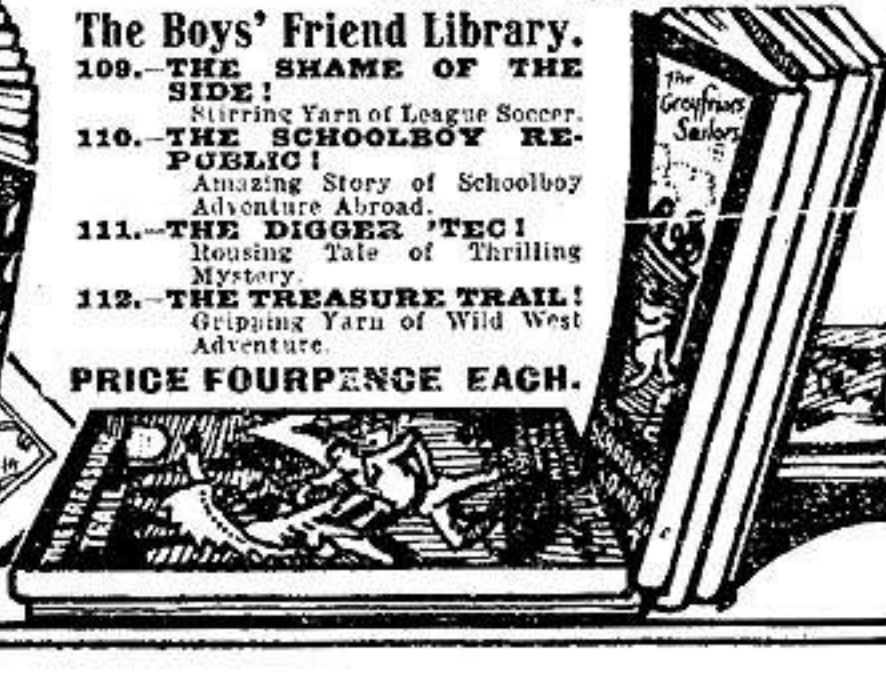
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"Smithy thinks you've got Redwing's chart, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "I—I—oh, my hat!" gasped Bunter, as Vernon-Smith, thrusting his hand into the fat junior's pocket, drew out the chart. There was a shout of amazement from the Famous Five. "The chart!" "Great pip!" "Bunter had it!" Vernon-Smith gave an angry, scornful laugh and held up the disc of polished teak for all to see. "What do you say now?" he jeered. (See Chapter 12.)

But when that thought came, half-consciously, into Tom Redwing's mind, he shook his head.

The quiet, sleek, deferential manservant—it was impossible that he was the desperate scoundrel who had gripped Redwing by the throat that night, and choked him into insensibility.

And yet— He found his mind running many times on the vague, half-formed suspicion. Soames knew Caca Island and the South Seas—it was possible that in his early days on those wild waters he had heard something, seen something, of Black Peter Bruce; that would account for his interest in the chart—for his belief in it.

Vague as the suspicion was, it lingered in Redwing's mind; but it was too vague for him to think of mentioning it to his friends. A few trifling circumstances, a vague feeling of distrust towards the man, were all Redwing had to found his suspicion upon, and he knew that he had no right to give it utterance.

That night, on deck, before turning in, the Bounder spoke abruptly to his chum in a low tone.

"You've got the chart safe, Redwing?"

"Quite."

"Whether it was Bunter or not, the fellow who was after it knows you've got it back."

"He must, of course, as everyone knows."

"Which means that he will be after it again?"

"I shall be on my guard."

"That may not help. Let me take

care of it for you, for a time, until the matter's cleared up. Let nobody know that I have it, and it will be safe."

Redwing smiled.

"That's a good idea, Smithy. Keep it dark from everyone that you have it, and anyone who goes through my pockets again will be welcome to all he can find."

The disc of teak was slipped into the Bounder's pocket. A few minutes later they went below to their bunks; and after they were gone a shadow moved by the corner of the charthouse. Soames, the silent and stealthy, smiled in the glimmer of the stars.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

What Bunter Did Not Foresee!

BILLY BUNTER, during the following days, was the most indignant, as well as the fattest, fellow on board the Golden Arrow, or anywhere else.

Having stowed himself away unsuccessfully on the yacht, having deferred the discovery of his obnoxious presence till it was too late to put him ashore, Bunter had counted on the trip to the South Seas as a certainty.

And having further, over and above, as it were, recovered the chart which had been abstracted by some person unknown, Bunter had considered the thing an absolutely sure thing.

Instead of which, he was suspected by the Bounder, if by nobody else, of

having abstracted the treasure chart himself; and it was upon the Bounder, unfortunately, that his prospects depended.

The millionaire would have permitted him to join the party, not caring a straw whether he joined it or not. Harry Wharton & Co. would have said nothing against it. Tom Redwing would have been very willing to concede the point, realising that it was owing to the stowaway that his uncle's chart was still safe. But it was the Bounder who had to decide the matter, and the Bounder was inexorable.

The yacht touched at no port until the Suez Canal was reached on her long voyage; and at Suez, the first available spot, Smithy was determined that Bunter should go.

Bunter—who never foresaw anything—had not foreseen that. Once booked for the voyage, he had supposed that he was booked for the whole of it. It turned out that he was booked for Suez, which was only a step on the way to the far Pacific.

"You can't put a fellow ashore in a savage, uncivilised country, Smithy," he told the Bounder.

"There's a Cook's Agency at Suez," said Smithy coolly. "You will be handed over to them to be sent back to England."

"If you think I'm going to pay my fare home—"

"I don't! My father will pay it."

"I don't want to put your pater to a lot of expense, Smithy," objected Bunter.

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"Probably not," assented the Bounder. "I shall ask him to write to your father for the amount."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at Smithy in great dismay. He could imagine what Mr. Bunter's feelings would be if that little bill came in.

"I say, Smithy, old chap——"

"That's enough!"

"But I say——"

"Shut up!"

"Beast!"

While the yacht was crossing the Bay of Biscay Billy Bunter did not worry about the matter very much. He had something more serious to worry about. Now that he had a free run of Mr. Vernon-Smith's hospitable board, the Owl of the Remove was making up for his previous enforced abstinence—and a little over. And in the Bay of Biscay the yacht rolled and pitched a good deal; and Bunter was not a good sailor. His meals were enormous, but many times it was a sheer waste of expensive provender.

For some days, after the yacht struck rough waters, Bunter not only ceased to care whether he sailed to the south or not, but longed passionately to be put ashore, anywhere—even on a barren rock—so long as he could get his fat feet on dry land, and no longer feel the universe rocking around him.

Rough weather followed the Golden Arrow from the Bay of Biscay, through the Straits, and into the Mediterranean.

Harry Wharton & Co. were good sailors, and did not worry; while Tom Redwing seemed to enjoy the stress of weather. But Billy Bunter found life not worth living.

But with the return of calm and

sunny weather, the Owl of the Remove was himself again.

As the yacht grew nearer and nearer to the Egyptian shores Bunter's fat mind was exercised on one topic—and he could find no solution. Obviously, he could not stow himself away again. At Suez he was to be handed over to the tourist agency for safe transport back to England. It was useless to appeal to the Bounder; he was adamant. He did not want Bunter, and he was not accustomed to putting up with what he did not want, if he could help it. In this case he could help it; and that settled the matter. The stowaway of the Golden Arrow was to be sent home.

In the meantime, nothing had been found out concerning Redwing's mysterious assailant; and the strange episode had been almost forgotten, for obviously that assailant was still on board the Golden Arrow, and that was a haunting, disagreeable thought. But the Greyfriars juniors had plenty of other matters to think of, as the sunny days passed.

To Bunter the Bounder showed the most unpleasant side of his character, but to the other fellows he made himself as agreeable as he could—and Smithy could be very agreeable when he liked.

He was trying to make up the trouble that had arisen, trying to make his guests forget his extreme unpleasantness at the beginning of the voyage; and the chums of the Remove were not the fellows to keep up a grudge. At first, they had resolved to go ashore at Port Said or Suez, and give up the trip, that being the earliest opportunity of doing so. But the Bounder had succeeded in making his peace, and Redwing helped

to heal the breach; and gradually the quarrel was forgotten. Certainly, Harry Wharton & Co. were very keen to continue the voyage, and join in the search for Black Peter's treasure when they came to the Pacific. So the quarrel, if not quite forgotten, was at least patched up and dismissed from mind. It was Bunter's presence on board that had caused it, in the first place, and that was one of the reasons why the Bounder was determined that he should be cleared out.

Bunter was indignant—almost bursting with indignation. He explained to the Famous Five and Redwing that he had come aboard wholly for their sakes—giving up many pressing invitations for the vac. He urged them to put it to Smithy.

They declined to put it to Smithy; not that that would have been of any use. The Bounder was particularly agreeable and obliging to his guests now, to make up for past shortcomings, but they knew that he would not have listened to any plea on Bunter's behalf.

"I say, you fellows, we shall be at Port Said to-morrow!" said Bunter lugubriously, one sunny afternoon. "That beast Smithy makes out that I'm going ashore there."

"The sorrowfulness of the parting will be terrific, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But we will strive terrifically to bear it."

"You fellows might put in a word for a pal!" said Bunter reproachfully. "After all I've done for you, you know."

"Bow-wow!"

"I gave up a vacation to come along with you," said the Owl of the Remove indignantly. "Lord Mauleverer begged

(Continued on page 23.)

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

THE FOURTH FREE GIFT.

THIS week's handsome metal model of that world renowned flyer of the Great Western Railway, the "Caerphilly Castle," completes the set of amazing Free Gifts which has set the reading world a-talking. And no wonder! Where else but in the MAGNET could you find such unique and lasting novelties as these coloured, stand-up metal models? And apart from these topping gifts, where else could you find such value-for-money, such A1 quality stories as your paper has regularly to offer? The answer is not one that will take you long to decide upon, for there is no other paper that can enter the lists with the MAGNET. It stands apart—all conquering, unconquerable. And each day brings fresh, unsolicited testimony from delighted new readers. That's a fine sign. These new chums wonder how it is that they have given the MAGNET a miss for so long, and each of them is convinced that for the future it will be his paper! Splendid! On my part I will see to it that these new reader chums never have cause to regret their acquaintance with the MAGNET.

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FREE GAME!

As a fitting wind-up to the presentation series of metal engine models, I
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have included a special railway game in next week's bumper issue, entitled: "Rivals of the Iron Road." Readers will find the rules simple to follow, and there's a heap of fun to be had out of this unique railway game. If for no other reason than this, you fellows should make certain of bagging next week's special issue. I have given this game a try-out myself, and, honestly, I found it vastly amusing. Just when I saw myself a winner—the office-boy was filling second place—an unexpected hazard sent me scuttling to the repair sheds, and, according to the rules of this novel game, my efforts had come to an untimely end. I was out of the game. Still, it was great fun, and there were heaps of sensational moves. And—I must do the office-boy justice—he won, two other sub-editors just failing to reach home before he did. So you fellows can look forward to some pleasant hours when you get this topping game. Don't forget—it's to be found in next week's MAGNET!

TWO POPULAR ANNUALS!

Readers will be glad to know that the new "Greyfriars Holiday Annual" and the new "Hobby Annual" are now on sale at all newsagents. Both these books have a world-wide reputation for quality and quantity, and they constitute the best value for money books on the market. In the "Greyfriars Holiday Annual" will be found delightful stories of your old favourites, Harry Wharton and Co., Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co., the cheery chums of Rookwood. In addition, there are heaps of sporting and

adventure stories, coloured plates, interesting articles—in all three hundred and sixty pages of fun and frolic. Now for the chap who's got a hobby—and most of you have—there's the "Hobby Annual"—a real treasure trove of information on practically every hobby under the sun. This work is compiled by experts who have paid attention to the fact that the boy who wants to know doesn't like to run up against technical language that sends a buzz through his head at the mere sight of it. In other words, every boy will be able to follow with interest the splendidly prepared articles, photos, and diagrams. A rare bargain at six shillings, is this "Hobby Annual," and I strongly recommend it.

Next Saturday's Programme.

"IN SOUTHERN SEAS!"

By Frank Richards.

This is the next thrilling yarn in the remarkable series of holiday stories your favourite author has written specially for the occasion. And it's a stunner, chums. Don't miss it on any account!

"GOLD FOR THE GETTING!"

There will be another ripping instalment of this grand serial story, full of thrills and exciting situations. It shows Stauton Hope in good form. By the way, on account of the Railway Game being included in next week's programme, the Dicky Nugent "shocker" will have to stand over for a week. But I know you fellows won't mind that.

Chin, chin, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.

me to go home with him to the Towers. I refused—for your sakes."

"Gammon."
"Oh, really, Bull! And I had a cable from D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, asking me to join him in Canada. He's having a great time in Canada," said Bunter. "But I turned him down."

"Turn him up again," suggested Bob Cherry.

"And there's great doings at Bunter Court, too," said the fat junior. "I've given it all up for you fellows. I don't expect gratitude; but there's a limit, you know."

"Fathead!"
"It makes a chap remember what Shakespeare says—how sharper than a toothless serpent it is—I forget the rest—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And that beast Smithy—"
"Thanks," said the Bounder's voice, behind Bunter, as he came out of the companion and strolled on deck.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, blinking round at Vernon-Smith. "I—I wasn't calling you a beast, old chap. I—I was speaking of another chap named Smith. It's a very common name, you know. Awfully common."

"You fat idiot."
"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"Get out!"

Bunter did not seem to have placated the Bounder by pointing out that his name was awfully common. Smithy up-ended him out of the deck-chair, and he sprawled on the planks with a roar.

"Yaroooh! Beast! If that's the way you treat a guest, you no-class, purse-proud bounder—"

"It isn't," said Vernon-Smith. "It's the way I treat an outsider who shoves himself in unasked."

"Beast!"

Bunter rolled away dismally. The sun was setting, the Mediterranean was a sea of gold. But Bunter had no eye for scenery. That night was to be his last on board the yacht: the next day he was to step ashore to be sent back to England like a parcel of goods not required for the voyage—and that was the disastrous end to the deep scheming of the stowaway of the Golden Arrow. No wonder the Owl of the Remove was dismal and indignant. His blandishments would have overcome the resistance of any other fellow in the party; but the Bounder was too hard a nut for even Bunter to crack.

Wild ideas of stowing himself away in the very bottom of the hold, among the ballast, floated in Bunter's mind. But he knew that it bootcd not—he knew that if he was not on hand when the yacht dropped her anchor at Port Said, the Bounder would have him searched for until he was rooted out. The game was up!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Saves His Bacon!

"**B**EAST!"
Billy Bunter did not utter that word aloud. He said it to himself, under his breath, as the Bounder passed him like a shadow in the gloom.

The night was dark.
A bank of clouds almost hid the stars from sight, and there was no moon. Harry Wharton & Co. had gone to their bunks. Mr. Vernon-Smith, in the saloon, was playing poker with the captain. It was the mate's watch on deck. The engines hummed as the

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE CERTAIN OF BAGGING OUR GRAND FREE RAILWAY GAME, ORDER NEXT WEEK'S "MAGNET" NOW, CHUMS!



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yacht glided on through the night, her headlights streaming out over the shadowed sea.

Bunter was not thinking of sleep. The problem on his fat mind was a pressing one; on the morrow he was to go. He did not want to go—very much he did not want to go. He had stowed himself away for the voyage, and the bare idea that all his trouble, all his privations, should go for nothing, was intensely exasperating. Bunter was generally ready for sleep at bed-time, and at other times, too; but on this particular night, the worry on his fat mind banished sleep. It was past bed-time for the juniors, but Bunter had not gone down. In a shadowy corner under the rail, he was quite comfortable on several cushions and a rug, and there, hidden in the darkness, he was still brooding over his insoluble problem.

The Bounder did not see him.
Vernon-Smith had selected that dark and secluded corner to smoke a cigarette before turning in. He leaned on the rail only a few yards from Bunter, unconscious of the fat junior's presence.

Bunter murmured the word "Beast" to himself, but he made no sound. The Bounder was as likely as not to kick him if he saw him. Smithy's manners, so far as the stowaway was concerned, were

really the limit, in Bunter's opinion at least.

"Beast!" ran Billy Bunter's reflections. "Smoky beast! Blagging just because you're out of reach of Quelchy's cane! Rotten outsider! Beast!"

Unconscious of Bunter and his unspoken comments, the Bounder leaned on the rail and smoked his cigarette.

He was suddenly conscious of a stealthy movement behind him, and he was turning, in surprise but not in alarm, when a grip was laid on him that reduced him to utter helplessness.

A hand gripped over his mouth from behind, an arm was thrown round him, and in a second he was down on the deck, face down, held helpless in a grip of iron, and his attempt at a cry choked back by the savage grasp over his mouth.

Dazed and bewildered, the Bounder lay silent and powerless in that terrible grasp.

But he knew in whose grip he was. Like an illuminating flash, it came into his mind, that he was in the hands of the man who had assailed Redwing in his cabin—the unknown scoundrel who had choked Redwing senseless and stolen the treasure chart, only to lose it again. Until this moment he had believed, or half-believed, that that assailant was
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Bunter. Now that he felt the iron tenacious grip that had been too powerful for Redwing, he knew that it was no schoolboy, but a powerful man—a man of unusual strength. He knew why he was thus seized suddenly in the darkness; he knew that the mysterious assailant, whoever he was, had become aware that Redwing had entrusted him with the chart. In those terrible seconds, as he was crushed half-choking to the deck, all was clear in the Bounder's mind.

He struggled—he attempted to cry out—in vain. One hand grasped his mouth and silenced him—the other was now at his throat, throttling him, and a knee was in the small of his back, pinning him down. The man, whoever he was, was taking desperate chances in thus attacking the Bounder—and he was ruthlessly taking no more chances than he could help. He had chosen a time when the other fellows were in bed, and the Bounder's own carelessness had given him this opportunity.

The Bounder's brain was swimming—he was choking—what Redwing had gone through, he was going through—and when he was senseless the chart would be taken—and he was helpless—helpless—There was no one at hand—

"Help!"

It was not the Bounder who called—he was unable to make a sound. But close at hand that yell rang out wildly.

"Help, help! Murder! Help!"

Bunter was yelling in terror.

For some seconds, Billy Bunter had been absolutely dazed by the sight of that shadowy figure closing in behind the Bounder, grasping him, forcing him silently to the deck. In the gloom he could see what happened only dimly, of Vernon-Smith's assailant, nothing but a dark vague form—and for several moments the fat junior had remained spell-bound, without sound or motion, where he lay sprawling on the rug. Vernon-Smith's assailant had not seen him—doubtless supposed him to be in his bunk like the rest—but it was fortunate for the Bounder that Bunter was there. As soon as the Owl of the Remove found his voice, his wild yelling ran over the deck, heard from end to end of the Golden Arrow.

Vernon-Smith, as his senses swam in the strangling grip, felt himself suddenly released. He lay sprawling, face down, on the deck, choked, gasping, half-senseless, while Bunter yelled and

yelled. The grip on his throat was gone; his assailant was gone. The first yell from Bunter had warned the dastard that he had not a second to lose. There was a tramp of feet as the mate rushed up to the spot, and several seamen came after him. The captain's heavy tread was on the companion ladder. Mr. Vernon-Smith's voice was heard calling, in amazement and alarm. The yacht, a moment before so silent save for the throb of the engines, was buzzing now with life, ringing with startled voices.

The Bounder, breathless, half-senseless, sprawled on the deck. Bunter, not even conscious that the assailant was gone, yelled and yelled, and yelled still louder as the astonished mate grasped him by the shoulder.

"Keep off! Yaroooh! Help!"

"You young swab! What—"

A groan from the Bounder interrupted the mate, and he released Bunter and dropped on one knee beside Vernon-Smith.

"What—what—" he stuttered.

He lifted the Bounder to his feet. Vernon-Smith was only half-conscious, his face white, his eyes dazed and starting from his head. The millionaire put his head out of the companion.

"What is it? What has happened?" he rapped out.

"Something has happened to your son, sir!"

"What—what?"

Portly as he was, Mr. Vernon-Smith bounded on deck. The Bounder staggered towards him, and his father caught him.

"Herbert, what—"

"I've been attacked!" The Bounder's voice was hoarse and broken. "The same man who attacked Redwing! I was being choked! Someone gave the alarm, and the villain let me go! Where is he? Did anyone see him?"

"Good heavens! Captain Greene!" gasped the millionaire, "my son has been attacked!"

"Where is he?" panted the Bounder. "Did no one see him? Somebody frightened him off! I think it was Bunter's voice!"

"Bunter! Where is Bunter?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "Is—he gone? Oh dear!"

"What happened?" demanded the millionaire, supporting Vernon-Smith with his arm and staring at Bunter. "Did you see—"

"I saw it all!" gasped Bunter. "He collared Smithy, and I saw him, and shouted for help!"

"You saw him!" exclaimed the captain. "Then you can tell us who it was?"

"I don't know. It looked like a black shadow to me," said Bunter—"just like a shadow moving! That's all I could see!"

"Why did you not seize him?" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"I—I—I was just going to—"

Harry Wharton & Co. were on deck by this time. They gathered round the Bounder in amazed alarm. Vernon-Smith pulled himself together. The fearful experience of those few moments in that desperate grip had shaken even the Bounder's iron nerve, but he made an effort to regain his composure. He smiled faintly at Redwing's distressed look.

"All serene, old chap!" he muttered huskily. "Bunter scared him off before he had hurt me much!"

"The same villain, of course! But who?" muttered Redwing.

"We'll find out!"

"Captain Greene, that man must be found!" roared the millionaire, in great wrath. "You hear me, sir? He must be found! If he is not put in irons to-night, I shall leave the yacht at Port Said to-morrow! I will not have my son's life risked! Upon my word! My son murderously attacked on board my own yacht! Good gad! Soames, help me to get Master Herbert below! Soames! Where is Soames? Confound the man! Soames!"

"Here, sir!" said the sleek voice.

And Soames glided out of the shadows.

Between the millionaire and the valet Vernon-Smith was taken below. He was placed in his bunk, and Harry Wharton & Co. remained with him. Even the iron-nerved Bounder did not want to be left alone after that terrible experience.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked into the state-room. "I say, feeling better, Smithy, old chap?"

The Bounder gave him a sarcastic smile.

"You've done me a good turn, Bunter! I know what you want, and I'm not the fellow to remain under an obligation! You can stick on for the trip to the South Seas, if you like! That makes us even!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"I mean it!" snapped the Bounder. "If you hadn't been a fat funk, you'd have collared that brute who was handling me! But never mind that. Nobody expects you to have the pluck of a bunny rabbit—"

"Look here—"

"That's enough! You can stick on for the voyage!"

"If you put it like that, Smithy—"

"I do put it like that!"

"All serene, old top! Rely on me not to desert an old pal, especially in a time of danger!" said Bunter affectionately. "I'll come along with you, Smithy! You can depend on me!"

The Bounder's invitation could not be called gracious, but William George Bunter did not worry about that. He was booked for the trip to the South Seas, and that was all that mattered. There was excitement and anger, and disturbance and suspicion, from one end of the Golden Arrow to the other, but one person on board, at least, was in a state of happy, fat contentment, and that one was Bunter the Stowaway.

THE END.

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND STORY!

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THIS STORY
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RICHARDS
AT HIS BEST.

Harry Wharton & Co. are miles away from Greyfriars now, and dangers beset them on every side. But they are still Harry Wharton & Co.—cheery, sturdy sons of the Empire, prepared to meet danger with a smiling face.

FIGHTING FOR A DOG! They wanted to shoot Skookum, the big husky, with a ferocious temper, but Jack took a fancy to this unwanted dog and offered to fight Bull Morgan for it! And Bull Morgan, the bully, thinking he was on an easy job, accepted the offer. But he was booked for a big and nasty surprise!

Gold for the Getting!



By **Stanton Hope**

The Story of a Thrilling Gold Rush to the Land of the Midnight Sun!
(Introduction on page 26.)

Staking on Starvation Creek!

"HAD you boys come up here alone," said Uncle Clem at supper that evening, "you would not have been able to register for a placer-mining claim, for you are both under age."

"We heard that on the boat coming up from Frisco, Uncle Clem," replied Jack, "and we made up our minds to hire ourselves out to other miners until we could get a Government permit in the spring."

"A wise notion, lads," said their elderly partner; "but I will register, and we'll go a third share each on any claim we locate and in the gold we take from it—if we are lucky enough to find any, that is."

"You'll think we're jolly ignorant, Uncle Clem," said Jack, "but neither of us have the foggiest notion of what placer-mining really is."

Uncle Clem scratched his head. "Very roughly speaking," he answered, "placer-mining is getting the metal from earth, sand, or gravel. It refers to the mining of all gold not fixed in the rock, but which can be got at by washing instead of being crushed and broken by milling."

That evening Uncle Clem told them much more about mining and the history of mining, and the boys were all eagerness to stake their claim.

The next morning their old pard paid his miner's registration-fee at the local office. Then, when they had bought some extra gear they would require, they broke camp and hit the trail for the New Bonanza Creek, where Jock McLennan had made the first big strike.

Because this creek had been considered too wide by the old-timers, it had been neglected for years, until, by accident, old Jock had found signs of pay-dirt and had struck it rich. Already claims had been staked for a mile or two below discovery—that is, below the original claim staked by McLennan, the finder. Also claims had been staked as far as the head-waters of the stream.

When Uncle Clem made inquiries as to the prospect of newcomers, he received little enough encouragement. A few miners were panning gold and getting anything from five dollars to thirty

dollars a pan. Some were mining on bed-rock, and had struck rich veins, which also bado fair to make their fortunes.

"It seems to me, youngsters," remarked Uncle Clem that night, "that the country around here is staked to the skyline. Newcomers are hitting it for other parts in the hope of making a strike in virgin soil. That, of course, is a far greater gamble than working a claim in an area which is definitely known to be gold-bearing. But I guess it's about the only thing we can do."

"Others have struck it lucky in the past," cried Jack cheerfully, "and who knows but what we might succeed, too?"

"It's about one chance in a hundred," returned Uncle Clem. "But I'm game to light out for pastures new if you are. At the worst, we can only lose our grub-stake and outfit, and have to offer ourselves for wages to some more successful miners."

"Bedad, we'll take the chance!" piped Terry.

The trio encamped for one night near the scene of the original gold strike on this small tributary of the Stewart River. Next day they tramped the rugged trail again in search of a likely-looking spot where to prospect. Later in the afternoon the three comrades arrived at another tributary of the Stewart River, which bore the uninviting name of Starvation Creek. A few claims had been staked along its banks, but afterwards had been abandoned. Only one man, a Swede named Jan Olsen, was actually panning for gold.

"Any luck, pard?" inquired Uncle Clem.

The Swede pulled a wry face. "Bah, I could more of da dollars make packing on da trail for green-horns!" he announced. "To-morrow I feenish—I quit!"

It was too late for Jack, Terry, and Uncle Clem to go farther, and they were glad to make camp again. Their packs had been increased by the purchases at McLennan Crossing, and had grown mighty heavy. Beside provisions, blankets, a kettle, mugs, and other utensils, they now owned miner's picks, shovels, gold pans, a hammer, some bags of nails, two hand-saws, and an assort-

ment of such things as mosquito-netting, medicines, gum-boots, and a twenty-foot wire measure.

At sunset they had a meal of fried bacon and beans, washed down with a mixture of citric acid, lemon, and water, which they took to prevent scurvy. Once asleep, not one of them stirred until dawn, and when they arose they found that Olsen, the Swede, was already hitting the trail away from this unprofitable creek.

"Where so many have failed, boys," remarked Uncle Clem, "it's hardly likely we shall find traces of gold in any large quantities. Still, gold has been found in many an unlikely spot in the past, when hope had been abandoned, and more than once in the old days a claim has been sold for fifty dollars which afterwards fetched as many thousands. To me it looks likely gold-bearing country, and before we shift, I'd like to take a look round near the head of the creek."

All the morning Jack, Terry, and Uncle Clem prospected near the head of the creek, and spent part of the time washing out some of the dirt from the creek-bed. Each time, on examination of the bottom of the pan, there was nothing but a fine layer of black sand and not a sign of the precious gold-dust their eyes longed to see.

Suddenly, as they clambered about among the rocks and stunted shrubs, Jack gave a cry and began dancing with excitement.

"Come here, Uncle Clem! Here's a vein of gold a foot across in this rock!"

"Arrah!" yelled Terry joyously. "Then 'tis our fortunes we've all made entoirely!"

He was the first on the scene, and Uncle Clem came panting up a few moments later. There, surely enough, in the face of the rock, was a streak of glittering yellow in the rough shape of a great horseshoe.

The two boys could scarcely contain their excitement, but Uncle Clem took one glance at that glistening vein and shook his head.

"No, Jack," he said sadly, "you haven't made a strike this time. There's an old saying that all is not gold that glitters, and as a fact, gold in ite

virgin state does not really glitter at all. There is a quartz vein in that rock, and if we spent a month digging the whole lot out, we shouldn't get more than a couple of dollars for it—even if we could sell it at all."

Jack and Terry regarded one another ruefully.

"It's a pity there isn't some way of being able to tell whether gold is under the ground," mumbled Jack. "It seems to me a fellow might spend months up in this country and never find gold in paying quantities, although it might be down under his very feet."

"Or he might spend years up here, Jack, as many an old-timer has done," returned Uncle Clem, "and never make more than enough to pay his way out for a brief visit home. It's a cruel land, boys, and for one who succeeds in making a fortune, hundreds fail. Still, I've heard of a method of gold discovery which isn't generally used by prospectors, and I've a mind to try it up here."

"Indade!" exclaimed Terry, with interest. "And phwat might that be, Uncle Clem?"

From a pocket Uncle Clem brought out a case, and extracted a contrivance made of aluminium. It looked rather like an ordinary pair of compasses, except that they were turned outwards at the points.

"Whatever is it?" inquired Jack.

"A divining-rod," replied Uncle Clem. "You've heard how certain men can find water by means of a hazel twig carried in their fingers? When they come over water the twig twitches in their hands, and it is said that some people can even tell the depth at which the water is to be found. I've tried that myself, and although I can't be sure that I have any special powers, I must say I've been rather lucky."

"Now, this aluminium divining-rod is supposed to act in the same way as a hazel twig, and indicate the presence of metal beside water. As a matter of interest, I'll just give it a test."

Both Jack and Terry were tremendously interested. For a time Uncle Clem walked about holding his folding pocket divining-rod lightly between the fingers of both hands with the V part downwards. The boys walked on either side of him, watching the little instrument closely, until the V part gave a twitch outwards.

"It moved!" cried Jack.

"Bedad, it did!" yelled Terry.

"It certainly did," agreed Uncle Clem. "though really I'm not sure whether it wasn't a nervous twitch of my fingers which made it do so."

"I'll go and get a shovel," cried Jack, "and we'll see if there's any gold in the soil here."

The ground was fairly soft, and Jack shovelled the earth into one of the big shallow pans. Then Terry washed away the "muck" in the creek, by keeping up a circular movement of the pan, and eagerly looked at the residue. There, as he tilted the pan, was a distinct though tiny crescent of gold!

All three of them raised an exuberant cheer.

"Our first strike!" cried Jack delightedly. "What do you think it's worth, Uncle Clem?"

"About fifty cents," replied their old pardner. "Still, it's certainly a strike, my lads, and I'm all for staking out a claim at the head-waters of this creek. For if we can take out only what in English money would be a florin's worth

of gold to every pan, it would be quite as good as if we worked for wages."

The next job was to stake the claim, and to do this they had to spend a couple of hours cutting down saplings, sharpening them and squaring them into stakes about three feet in length. The first of these stakes Uncle Clem cut with his knife, marked with his name and M. L. No. 1 (Mining location, stake number one). The other three stakes he also marked with his name, and the only difference was in the numbering—2, 3, and 4.

The first stake he drove into the ground at the north-east corner of the claim they selected. Afterwards he measured the distance allowed by law to the other three corners of the desired area of ground, which included a portion of the creek and a good deal of rocky land on the west side of it.

The job was done as the sun sank down behind the rugged mountains to the westward, and Uncle Clem mopped his brow and sighed with relief.

"And now there are only two things to be done," he said. "First, to give our mining claim a name, and then to go back to McLennan Crossing to register it. Which of you youngsters can think of a really lucky name for it?"

"Why not call it the Yellow Horseshoe claim?" exclaimed Jack. "That rock with the quartz in it is plump in the centre of it, and strikes me as a jolly good omen."

"Topping idea!" cried Terry. "Shure, me bhoys, 'tis brains you have inside that skull of yours afther all!"

The Yellow Horseshoe claim! And it was their very own! How would it pan out? Would they work for days at bare wages and then find, as had happened so often in the North, that the gold had petered out entirely? Or would—and the very thought set their veins all a-tingle—would they set the Yukon afire again by another great lucky strike as old Jock McLennan himself had done?

Skookum's Reprieve!

WITHOUT delay, Jack, Terry, and Uncle Clem hit the trail from Starvation Creek to the township. On their way, they saw the Swede, Jan Olsen, making a birch sled on the river bank.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Arriving at San Francisco

JACK ORCHARD is amazed to find that his uncle,

DAVID ORCHARD, is missing, having, apparently absconded with a sack of gold 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 falls foul of

"BULL" MORGAN and his pardner

"LEFTY" SIMONS, two bad characters, who smuggle him, aboard the clipper *China Queen*. Jack, however, soon finds a friend in the clipper's cabin-boy,

TERRY O'HARA, with whom he escapes. Then, joining in the great gold rush up the Yukon River, the two chums join forces with

CLEM HARDY, an old prospector, whom they call Uncle Clem. After a thrilling experience in the Nine-tooth Canyon, in which the trio would have lost their lives but for Jack's promptness and presence of mind, they reach McLennan Crossing, the region of the new gold discovery.

(Now read on.)

"Hallo, Olsen!" exclaimed Uncle Clem. "Have you decided to buy a team of dogs and stay in the Yukon for the winter after all?"

The Swede looked sourly at him.

"Naw," he grunted. "I've just started right in to earn da money so as I can get out of it. You bet dis darn country no good! Plenty greenhorns dis winter go under, for already they ask in Dawson two hundred dollar for one good sled-dog."

They left Olsen working for the man who had been more fortunate than himself, and marched on with their packs towards the straggling township.

A group of roughly dressed old-timers and newcomers were gathered about a quarter of a mile on the outskirts of McLennan Crossing, and there was a good deal of discussion going on. With that curiosity which is such a deeply ingrained trait of human nature, Uncle Clem and the boys steered towards the throng.

"Do you recognise the big fellow with the scrubby beard, Terry?" demanded Jack suddenly. "It's that scoundrel Bull Morgan!"

"And Lefty Simons is with him, me bhoys," returned Terry. "And, bedad, it looks to me as if Morgan—the spalpeen!—has been dragged backward through a bramble-bush."

Doubtless Bull Morgan had been in the wars. As the boys approached closer, they saw that his tough corduroy trousers were badly torn. A piece was missing from the tail of his brown leather coat, and there were even scratches in his tight-laced knee-boots.

"That's the best thing y' can do with him, Jock McLennan," Morgan was saying. "A darn savage wolf-dog like that oughtn't to be at large!"

There were murmurs of approval from Lefty Simons and several other men, and the bearded miner, who was holding a fine-looking husky dog on a stout leathern leash, glared contemptuously about him.

"Waal, I've said I'll shoot him, haven't I?" he snapped. "I'll allow the dog is over-fierce, but some of you checcos are like a lot o' squealing babies, and if you hadn't interfered with the dog," he added, turning to Bull Morgan, "you wouldn't have been savaged by him!"

Jack and Terry hurried ahead of Uncle Clem, and, loaded up with gear though they were, squirmed their way through the crowd. The two rogues, Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, recognised them at once, and bared their teeth in a manner that resembled the expression of the condemned dog. The young comrades took no notice of them, however, but dropped their packs and confronted the far-famed Jock McLennan, whose strike on the New Bonanza Creek had led to this great gold rush to the Stewart River district.

They saw him there, a big raw-boned man, bearded, weather-tanned, and indelibly scarred by the cruel frost of many a Yukon winter.

The dog at the end of the stout leathern leash was a typical husky of a rather lighter grey than the usual malamute of the North. Like all his breed, he had the wolf strain in his veins, and the wolf, too, was discernible in his lean, iron-muscled legs, pointed ears, and long black muzzle. As Jack and Terry saw him, he looked formidable enough.

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Of a sudden the loose earth slipped away beneath Terry's feet and with a yelp of surprise, he shot down about five feet into the ground, the startled Skookum coming on top of him. (An incident from next week's grand instalment of this story, which affects the fortunes of the "partners" in an extraordinary and totally unexpected manner.)

to be behind bars in a zoo. His shaggy coat was a-bristle, a ribbon of mingled blood and saliva streaked his chin from an injured mouth, and his hungry red eyes glinted with hatred.

"You're surely not going to shoot that dog, Mr. McLennan?" exclaimed Jack.

The old-timer looked in surprise at the two boys who had stopped a few feet in front of his husky.

"I guess I am, sonny," he answered, "though I can't see how it's any concern o' yours, anyway. Skookum's a bad dog—a bit too much o' the wolf in him—and last winter he was so darn lazy in the team that I almost had to flay the hide offen him. Shorty," he said to a man standing by, "lend me that there gun o' yours; I'll take the dog down to the river now. For the sake of an ounce o' lead, it ain't worth having so much bad feeling over the animal."

There were murmurs of approval from two or three of the men, and both Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons grinned with satisfaction.

"Say, give the dog another chance, Mr. McLennan!" pleaded Jack. "I know this man Morgan, and he's only a beastly brute himself. If he got bitten, I've no doubt that he kicked the dog or aggravated him in some way."

"Why y' cub," growled Morgan, taking a step toward him, "I'll give you a taste of my boot, too, if you don't keep that tongue of yours tight between y' teeth!"

"Just hark to him, Mither McLennan!" piped Terry. "Shure, 'tis confessing himself he is that he kicked the poor animal! And, anyway, wid a face like he's got, it was only to be expected that the poor baste would fly at him."

"If you don't want the dog," Jack said, "give him to us. We'll look after

him and see that he behaves himself. I expect you've been treating him rough."

At this a great burst of laughter rose from Jock McLennan and all the old-timers gathered there.

"Ho, ho, ho! That's a good 'un, that is!" laughed the wealthy miner. "I guess you ain't been up in this country long enough, lads, to know that there's only one way to treat a husky, and that's to treat him rough. Starvation and the whip—that's the way to keep the mastery. With this type of dog if it ever happens that you fail to keep 'em under, you've jest gotta look-out. Great smoke! Stand back! If that dog gets his fangs into you, he'll tear you to pieces!"

No one with a knowledge of the husky would approach a strange dog of this type, but neither Jack nor Terry understood the breed. In blissful ignorance Jack stepped forward to the condemned animal that McLennan was holding in leash with all the strength of his powerful hands. Even Uncle Clem cried, "Get back, Jack!" But in absolute fearlessness the boy approached the savage wolf-dog and put out his hand.

Bull Morgan chuckled, thinking that the husky's fangs would snap on the lad's fingers like a steel trap. But, to the amazement of him and all the others round, Skookum allowed the kindly hand to rest on his shaggy head, and his intelligent eyes rolled upwards, as though in utter bewilderment.

"By the great mackinaw," exclaimed Jock McLennan, "that's the first time I've ever known Skookum to allow himself to be touched by a stranger!"

"Mebbe he ain't hungry, Jock!" laughed the man known as Shorty.

"Like the Injuns, I always keep my dogs half starved, on principle," returned the bearded miner; "the dog's half starved right now."

"He is starved—starved of affection," said Jack. "You old-timers know a mighty lot, I'll admit, but I dare say you've never got to the rock-bottom of this husky's nature. You've never been understood, have you, Skookum, old fellow? And now they've seen that you can be a gentleman with a stranger, I hope they'll spare you!"

"Gosh, it's got me licked to a frazzle!" admitted McLennan. He looked round the circle of rough prospectors, and faced Bull Morgan, who was scowling again. "I told you as I'd shoot this dog," he said, "and I never yet broke a promise to any man. Speak the word, though, and I'll hand the animal over to this byer boy, who, I guess, will be able to keep control over him better'n I've ever done."

Thus put in the position of judge, Bull Morgan glowered coldly at both Jack and Skookum. Before even he spoke the cruel look in his face showed that there would be no leniency for the already condemned prisoner.

"Shoot the darn dog," he said brutally.

"You rotter!" cried Jack, swinging round toward him. "Mr. McLennan is willing to give me that dog. And, by heck, if he wants your permission, I'll wring it out of your great clumsy carcass with my two hands, if needs be!"

His wild words made some of the roughnecks laugh, and most of all Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons. Uncle Clem grasped the excited boy's arm and whispered something in his ear; but Jack was in no mood to be cautious, and he wrenched himself free. His effort to reach Morgan was frustrated by Terry O'Hara, who leaped between the pair.

"Steady—steady, me bhoys!" he cried, rolling up his sleeves. "Faith, this is a

man's work! Let your old pal have a cut at him first, and afterwards you can take him on yourself?"

"Clear out of my way, Terry!" cried Jack angrily. "I'll jolly well set about you first, if you don't!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared the roughnecks. "Get right goin', boys!"

The idea of a scrap between the two youngsters appealed to most of them as a merry piece of sport. But this anticipation was rudely shattered by Bull Morgan himself gripping Terry by the throat and hurling him a dozen yards backwards to the ground.

"Now, y' young skunk," he said to Jack, "if ye're so badly wanting a thrashing I'll give ye one here and now before the whole bunch!"

Before anyone could prevent him he swung his great, mottled fist at Jack's head, but it met nothing more in the way of resistance than the empty air. Jack had leaped under it in a flash, and both his fists crashed in swift succession against the great bully's concrete jaw.

A roar of approval went up from several of the men. Possibly no one, with the exception of Lefty Simons, wanted to see a mix up between the beefy Bull Morgan and the boy, who was so much shorter and slighter than himself. The only reason that the fight was not interfered with was that, to their amazement, Jack weaved in and hammered his big, muscle-bound opponent almost at will for the first few exciting seconds.

"Good for you, young 'un!"

"Hammer him, kid!"

"Look out for that right o' his, sonny!"

Practically all the yelling was for the English boy, and Jock McLennan, with his anxiety for Jack suddenly swamped in the thrill of this unexpected sport, bellowed:

"The dog's yours if ye down him,

sonny! Gosh, that's the way! Wire into him!"

As though sensing by instinct that this epic scrap was for his life, Skookum, the husky dog, gave tongue tremendously, as if urging on his doughty young champion.

In Jack's mind burned the dual determination to save Skookum from the fate which threatened him and to give Bull Morgan part of the punishment he so richly deserved for his villainous tricks of the past.

The ex-doss-house keeper was big and bulky, but slow as a buffalo compared with a leopard. Years of bad living in 'Frisko had undermined his constitution, and the hardships of the Yukon trail had left him as broken-winded as an old horse. His great muscles were powerful, but slow in action, and Jack, nippy as a chipmunk, and hardened by the rough journey to the goldfields, found the fight more equal than he had dared to expect.

"Smash him, pard!" yelled Simons savagely. "What are you waiting for?"

Urged on by his fellow rogue, Bull Morgan bore down upon Jack, to crush him with his two big fists. Fairy-footed; Jack retreated and side-stepped to avoid the sledge-hammer fists, that would have stretched him senseless in the dust. Morgan's impetus carried him past the boy, who took swift advantage by planting a neat left on his ear, which sent the big fellow staggering into the growing circle of interested spectators.

"Good boy, Jack!" came the voice of Uncle Clem, now charged with hope. "You've got him beat!"

Amid the uproar Bull Morgan came back at the youngster, his eyes flaming with the same red hatred as the husky had shown for him. Heedless of the honourable fighting code of the white man, he flung out his great hands and gripped Jack by the throat, at the same

time trampling over the boy's feet with his great boots.

"Hi, play the game, you spalpeen!" screamed Terry.

"Ay, cut it out!" bellowed Jock McLennan.

The old prospector made a threatening move forward with Skookum, who was now whining with eagerness to get into this fight himself. And Bull Morgan, who already had had one painful experience of the wolf-dog's fangs, hastily released his grip and retreated, deeming fair play the wisest tactics, after all.

"I'll cripple you!" muttered Morgan to Jack, as McLennan dragged back the great dog. "I'll smash you for life!"

Before putting the threat into execution, however, he strove to take a breather, for his breath was coming in distressed gasps, like those of a hunted bear. Jack, bathed in perspiration, but splendidly fresh, saw that he had the big fellow groggy on his pins, and without giving him a chance to take the rest he needed, waded in again with flashing fists.

Once Morgan hurled him back head-long to the ground with a mighty thump to the chest. With the resilience of a rubber ball Jack bounded up again and planted a beautiful right an inch above the other's belt, producing an agonised grunt.

"After him, Jack!" shouted Terry. "Now's your chance, me boy!"

In went Jack with both fists. Again he got in a blow "to the mark," and Morgan's head jerked forward, as though pulled by an invisible string. Promptly Jack crashed both fists upward with all his force to that unshaven jaw, and Bull Morgan crumpled in an ungainly heap in the dirt at his feet.

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The Last of Jerry Birchmell!

PICKY NUGENT.

ANOTHER ROUSING STORY OF ST. SAM'S.

I

GOOD MORNING, Pop!" There was a heavy clump of hobnailed boots in the corridor, and Molly Birchmell came tripping into the Head's study like a fairy.

A charming girl was Miss Molly. She had seen about fourteen winters and one summer. She was a fair brunette with lively spots all over her face—though some of her unkind critics said they were pimples.

"Good morning, Pop!" she repeated, in a voice which sounded like the mellow notes of the rising bell.

Jerry Birchmell, the escaped convict who had kidnapped his brother, the Head, and locked him in the coal-seller's—gave a gasp of alarm. He was standing before a cracked mirror, engaged in shaving his face; and the countenance he turned to Miss Molly was covered with lava.

"Run away, my dear!" he said hastily. "Can't you see I'm busy?" Molly pouted a little.

"But I have brought your morning correspondence, Pop!"

"Drop it into the waist-paper basket and skeddadle!"

And Jerry Birchmell turned back to the mirror and went on slap-dashing his face.

But Miss Molly was not to be got rid of so easily. She threw the morning mail on to the Head's desk, and flung herself into a chair, and hurried a glance of reproach at the man she believed to be her father.

"Pop," said Molly. "I can't think what has come over you just lately. You have been keeping out of my site for some days—deliberately dodging your own daughter! And you are letting the school go to rack and ruin. They tell me that you play leap-frog with the Sixth every morning, instead of teaching them Greek!"

"Leap-frog is a jolly site better than Greek, any day!" said the boggus Head, warmly.

better, and the boys are better for the change."

"But—but this is so sudden, Pop!" said Molly, with a frown. "They say that the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, or the leopard his spots; but you have changed utterly and completely! I don't understand it at all!"

"Don't try to, my dear."

"You are getting slack in your old age, too. Look at your correspondence. You haven't opened a single letter for days; and they still come pouring in!"

"All in good time, my preshus!" murmured the boggus Head. "I can't attend to unpleen things at once. And I do wish you would run away. It is impossible to talk and shave at the same time. I have already punctured myself in half a dozen places!"

Molly Birchmell sat tight, regarding the Head's back view with a puzzled expression.

Suddenly there was a sharp rattle-tat on the door of the study, and Mr. Lickham stamped in, with Tubby Barrell of the Fourth. Tubby's ear was clutched in a vice-like grip between Mr. Lickham's thumb and four-finger, and he was squeaking like a fat rat.

The Head spun round impatiently, with the lava running down his cheeks.

"What is it, Lickham?"

"I have brought this boy to you, sir, on a most serious charge. I caught him, at dead of night, in the act of raiding the school kitchen!"

"Gammom!" said the Head.

"Yes, and not only gammom, but he took a rabbit-pie and plum-cake. These pillerings have been going on for a long time, and Barrell must be severely punished."

away, my dear Lickham, or I shall never get shaved this morning!"

Mr. Lickham stamped out of the study, muttering savage thoughts under his breath. He was just as puzzled as Molly Birchmell to know what had come over the Head of late.

"Really, Pop, you are the limit!" cried Molly, when Mr. Lickham's foot-marks had died away. "You should have given that fat rascal a birching."

"Impossible, my dear. I have scrapped all the birches, and abolished such a brootal and barbarick form of punishment."

The Head went on shaving, and Molly watched him in a puzzled silence. Suddenly he uttered a cry of amazement.

"Why, Pop! There's a mole on the back of your neck!"

The Head jumped so suddenly that he carried off a slice of his chin.

"A—a mole?" he cried in alarm. "A mole crawling on my neck! How on earth did the furry creature get into this study?"

Molly laughed.

"I don't mean that sort of a mole, Pop. I mean there's a mole on your skin—a flesh-mole. And you have never had such a thing in your life. How did it get there?"

"Ask me another, my dear! I suppose it has been growing quietly for years, and has only just come to the surface. Rain and fetch me a yard of sticking-plaster, Mollie. I have gashed my fazz all over!"

Molly hurried away and fetched the sticking-plaster, and the Head proceeded to patch up his damaged fazz.

Soon it was so smothered with sticking-plaster that he looked as if he had just been in a prize-fight. He was still patching himself when there was a knock at the door, and in came Mr. Justiss looking very grave. Behind him came Bounder, of the Sixth, also looking grave, though the Head's face was not a site for gravity.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" demanded the Head. "Am I to get no piece?"

"I will not wait your valuable time, sir," said Mr. Justiss. "I have brought Bounder before you on a very grave charge. Late last night I discovered him in an in—" ekood the bewildered Head.

"In a tavern, if you prefer it that way, sir. In a low tavern, playing poker for penny points, and imbibing strong jingerale. Will you call a General Assembly, and have the wretched boy eggspelled on the spot?"

"Oh, no; I can't be bothered," said the Head, with a yawn. "If the boy must be punished make it a hundred lines."

"What?" shouted Mr. Justiss. "A paltry hundred lines for such an enormous enormity?"

The Head nodded.

"Make him write out a hundred times 'There is a tavern in the town.' That will meet the case. I really can't be bothered with eggspellings just now."

Mr. Justiss scowled fiercely, and Bounder beamed happily, and together they quitted the study.

"Pop," said Molly Birchmell with a gasp, "the only conclusion I can come to is that you are going off your rocker! A week ago you would have eggspelled

Bounder on the spot. And now you let him off with a hundred lines! I really believe your brain has turned!"

And Miss Molly, puckering her brow and pursing her lips, left the study at last, in a state of baffled perplexment.

JACK JOLLY & CO. were punting a perfect's "topper" in the quadrangle when Miss Molly appeared. Her usually sunny face was pail and troubled, and the juniors as once asked her what was wrong.

"It's my father," eggspelled Molly. "He is behaving so strangely lately that I really believe he is going off his onion; or, as the vulgar would put it, insane!"

Matter of fact, Miss Molly, I've been thinking the same thing myself," said Jack Jolly. "Never have I known the Head to behave so queerly. He used to rule us with a rod of iron, and now he luzzent trouble to rule us at all. He's letting St. Sam's go to the giddy bow-wow."

"That's so," agreed Frank Fearless. "Of course, we like the new system much better than the old. It's all play and no work, and the birch has been scrapped, and it's a go-as-you-please, do-as-you-jolly-well-like sort of school. But do you honestly think the Head is going potty, Miss Molly?"

"Indeed I do! There can be no other eggspplanation of his queer conduct of late. I think my father ought to be carefully watched—kept under constant observation—in case he should become dangerous!"

"My hat!"

"Will you help me to watch him?" asked Molly anxiously. "I'm so afraid of what he may do next."

"Count on us, Miss Molly," said Jack Jolly. "We'll dog his footsteps like a pack of bloodhounds!"

"Thank you!" said Molly gratefully. "I knew you would help me. Meet me after morning lessons, and we will start our shadowing. Of course, if father's brain has really turned, as I suspect, he will have to be put away in a reformatory, or a dog's home, or wherever they put people who are mentally efficient."

When lessons were over Jack Jolly & Co. rejoined their girl chum, and the little party proceeded to keep the Head under strict observation. He did not dream that he was being watched, for the watchers were careful not to kick his heels while they dogged him. Nevertheless, his every movement was being duly noted. He was seen to play a game of marbles with Burtleigh of the Sixth; then he indulged in a game of leap-frog with the fags; and after that he had the gloves on with Mr. Lickham in the gym, and they punched each other in friendly fashion until Mr. Lickham retired hurt, with a swollen nose and a couple of black eyes.

So far, the Head's movements had been perfectly normal. None of his recent actions suggested dottiness or potinness.

After the boxing bout he went along to the tuckshop, and was seen to emerge with a tray of tarts and a bottle of jinger-pop.

And now, for the first time, the Head's conduct became suspicious. He

walked stealthily away with the tray, casting nervous glances all around him, as if to make sure he was not being followed. He did not see Miss Molly and the juniors, for they were too close to him, and he was natcherally short-sighted.

Where is he taking that tray, I wonder?" whispered Jack Jolly.

"Let's follow him and see!" breathed Molly.

Tracking the Head with the tenacity of stoops, the little party was astonished to see him go in the direction of the coal-seller. He disappeared down the steps, and they crowded eagerly after him, wondering why on earth he should be taking a tray of tuck to such a queer place.

From the top of the steps they watched the Head unlock the door of the seller. Then they distinctly heard him say:

"Your dinner, Alf!"

"Alf?" ekood Frank Fearless. "Who the merry dickens is Alf? And what's he doing in the coal-seller, anyway?"

"Alf is my father's name!" said Molly, with a start. "And—hark! I can hear my father calling!"

From the dark, cavernous depths of the coal-seller came an awgished voice. "Help! Fire! Murder! Pericked! Reskew, St. Sam's!"

The juniors, with Miss Molly at their heels, wore down the steps in a twinkling. No sooner had they reached the bottom than a wild-eyed figger, black as the ace of spades, rushed out of the seller.

"Save me, my boys!" he panted. "I am Dr. Birchmell, your headmaster! Molly dear, I am your long-lost father!"

So saying, the wild-eyed figger, as black as a nigger, flung out his arms and embraced Miss Molly until she was almost as black as himself.

"Father!" she gasped. "Are you really my father? If you are, what does this mean?"

"It means, my dear," said the Head, "that I have been kidnapped by this black fourfinger at Jerry Birchmell, and that I have been kidnapped by this rascally gobbird brother of mine! For

"Well," cried Jerry Birchmell, in wonder and relief, "this is awfully decent of you fellows."

"Not at all," said Talboy. "You see, you've been awfully decent to us, Jerry, and not half such an old reprobate as your brother."

"Now, off you go, and the best of luck! Mind you go straight in future!" Jerry Birchmell rung the soniors!

And then the "police officers" took off their tunicks and helmets, and stood revealed as Burtleigh and Talboy of the Sixth!

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