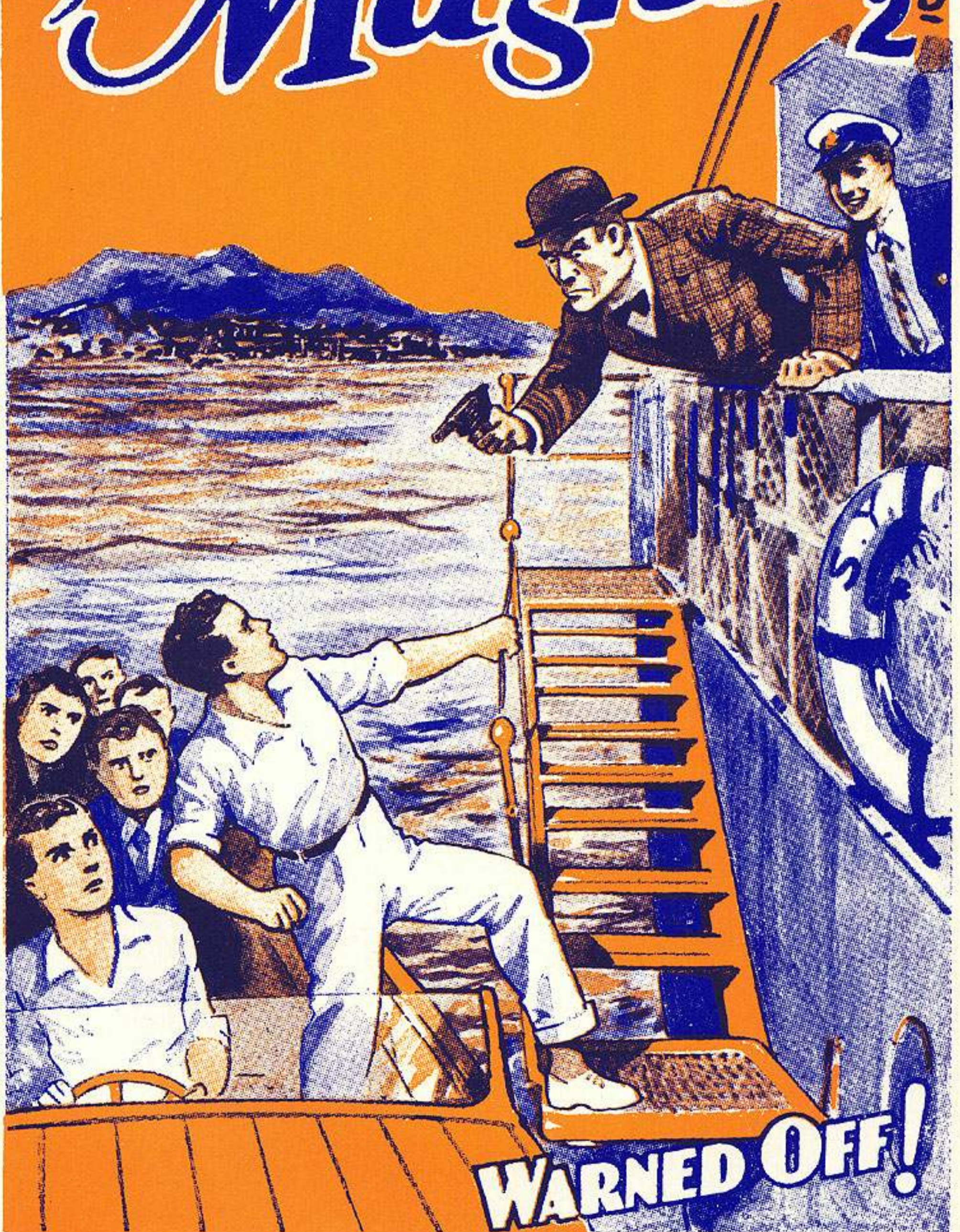


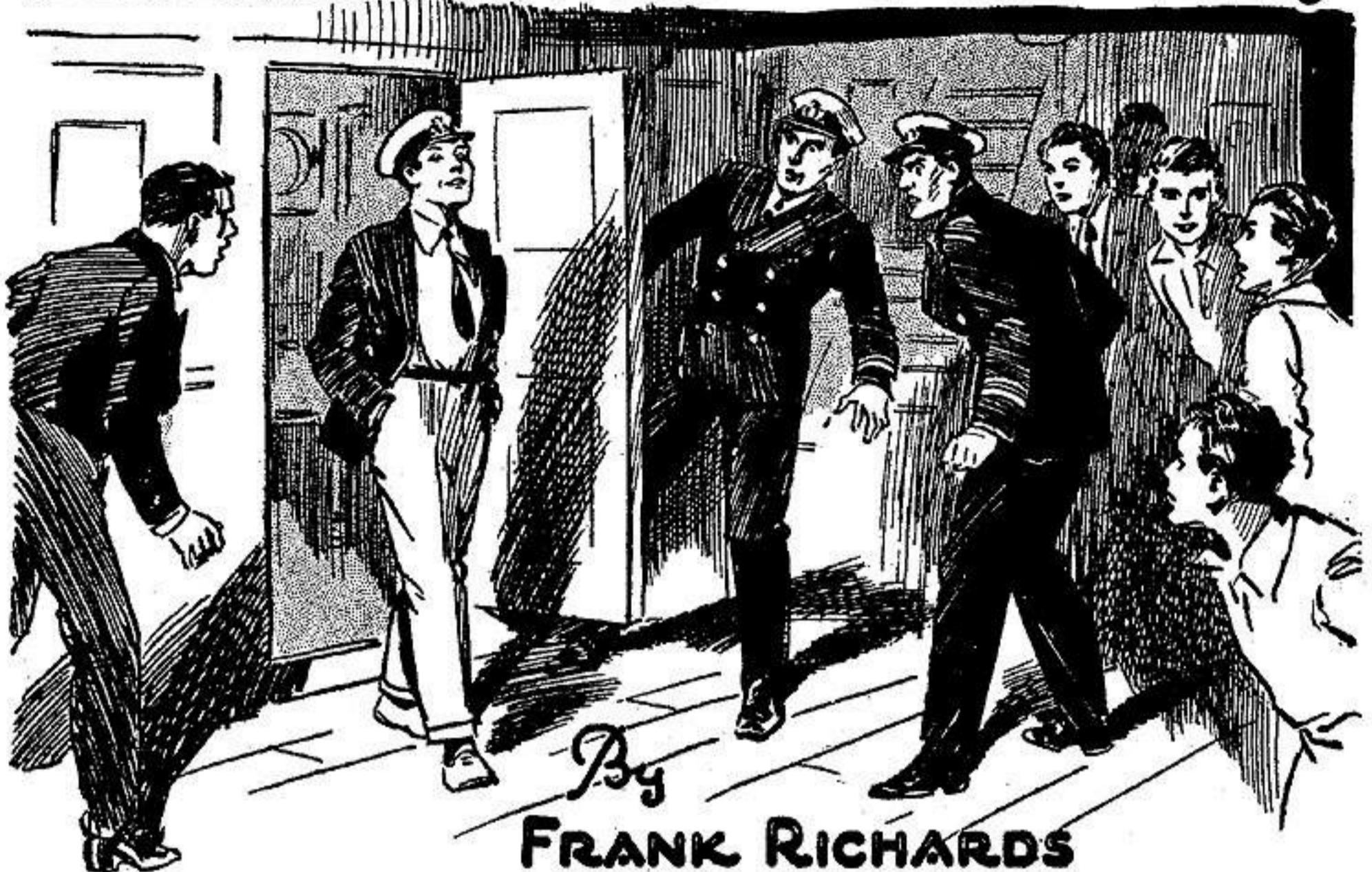
“ THE MILLIONAIRE STOWAWAY ! ” Extra-Special Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars.

The Magnet ^{2^D}



WARNED OFF!

The MILLIONAIRE STOWAWAY!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Bumps!

ROT!" said Billy Bunter. He spoke with emphasis. "Look here, you fat ass—" Harry Wharton & Co. all spoke together, also with emphasis.

"I said rot, and I mean rot!" said Billy Bunter calmly. "And you fellows can jaw till you're black in the face, and it jolly well won't make any difference! I'm here, and I'm sticking here!"

"You're not!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Rot!"

"We're leaving Boa Vista tomorrow!"

"Do!" said Bunter. "I don't mind! Much nicer without you, if you come to that! I'm staying!"

"You can't!" hooted Harry Wharton.

"Can't I?" Bunter grinned. "You'll jolly well see!"

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove glared at Billy Bunter.

Glares had absolutely no effect on the fat junior.

Sprawling in the hammock, under the orange-trees at Boa Vista, Billy Bunter blinked at the exasperated juniors through his big spectacles with a disdainful and derisive blink.

It was a blazing hot day in Brazil.

Generally it was hot, and generally Billy Bunter grumbled at the heat as if Nature did it on purpose to annoy him. Generally, too, he grouched at the flies and the mosquitoes and the dust, and, in fact, nearly everything in South America. All through that holiday in Brazil, Billy Bunter's remarks might have led anyone to suppose that he was fed-up with the country and all that therein was.

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Now, however, when the time had come to go, it seemed that Bunter could stand the heat and the flies and the dust and all the rest. Anything, it seemed, was better than the trip home—which meant Greyfriars again and lessons in the Form-room with Mr. Quelch.

The date of departure was fixed. The Famous Five did not want to go, but they were ready to go. Billy Bunter did not want to go, and wasn't ready to go, and wasn't going, if he could help it. And he fancied that he could.

"Now, look here, Bunter—" said Frank Nugent.

"Jaw if you like!" said Bunter.

"I'm not going!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter—" remonstrated Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"I'm not going!"

"You'll go, if we have to roll you down to the boat like a barrel!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

"Have a little sense, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "Time's up! The Head gave us leave for this holiday, and trusted us not to out-stay our time. He expects to see us on a fixed date."

"Let him expect!" suggested Bunter.

"I'm not going! You can send him a cable, if you like! Tell him you're ill, and can't travel! That'll make him sympathetic, and he won't be shirty!"

"But I'm not ill!" howled Wharton.

"You fat, fibbing fozzler—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"We're starting at dawn, and so are you!"

"Rot!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, don't be such duffers! By sticking it out a bit longer, we can carry on into the Easter holidays, and cut out school altogether for the rest of the term. Think of that!"

"We're expected to keep our word,

you fat villain," said Bob Cherry, "and we're going to keep it!"

"Well, I'm not stopping you!" said Bunter. "I'm staying! If you're keen on Latin grammar with Quelch, cut off as soon as you like! The less I see of Quelch, the better I like him! He, he, he! If you're going back to the house, tell Mr. Valentine I'm staying on. He will be glad to hear it!"

"The gladfulness will not be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "It will probably be a boot on the other leg, my esteemed Bunter!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter—" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, chuck it!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove. "I'm getting fed-up! If you fellows are silly asses enough to go back to school when there's nobody to make you, please yourselves! I'm not! Now shut up, and let a fellow go to sleep!"

"Come in and pack!"

"Rats!"

"We're packing!"

"Pack, and be blowed! I'm sticking in this hammock till supper! If you think I'm going to shift out of this hammock, you're jolly well mistaken!"

And Billy Bunter, leaning back in the hammock, closed his little round eyes behind his big round spectacles as an indication that the discussion was at an end.

The Famous Five glared at him, but their glares produced less effect than ever. Bunter's eyes being closed, he did not see them.

Neither did he see Bob Cherry take out his pocket-knife, open the largest blade, and begin sawing across the cord at the foot of the hammock.

The other fellows did, and they grinned.

Billy Bunter, at present, was taking

his case in an extremely comfortable attitude. He was due for a sudden disturbance when the rope was sawn through.

Strand after strand parted under the sawing blade. But Bob paused, to give the fat Owl another chance.

"Bunter, old fat bean—"

"Shurrup!"

"Are you coming in to pack?"

Snore!

"Look here, Bunter—"

Snore!

Either Bunter was asleep, or was affecting to be asleep. Clearly he did not want any more argument. He snored.

"Well, when a fellow begs for it, why not let him have it?" remarked Bob Cherry; and he recommenced sawing.

"Why not?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The whyfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, do shut up when a fellow's fast asleep!" came a peevish voice from the hammock.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say— Yaroooooh!" roared Billy Bunter, as the rope suddenly parted. "Yoop! Whoop! Whoop!"

The hammock collapsed at one end, and the fat junior shot downwards.

Bump!

Billy Bunter hit the continent of South America with a concussion that might almost have shaken that continent.

He roared.

"Yaroop! I say, you fellows— Help! It's an earthquake— Yaroooh! I say, save me— Ow! Wow! Yaroooh! Oooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"Woo-hoo—ooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat up dizzily. He jammed his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked wildly round.

His first impression was that an earthquake had started. But the orange-trees, the green lawn, the house, and the plantation were still in their usual place; the Rio Rexo flowed on the even tenor of its way. Nothing had crashed but Bunter! He realised that it was not an earthquake!

"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter. He tottered up. "I—I say, what— I say—" Then his eyes and his spectacles fell on the cut cord, and he spluttered with wrath. "Oh! Beasts! Rotters! Letting a chap down! Beasts!"

"Coming in to pack?" asked Bob, with a chuckle.

"Beast!" hooted Bunter.

He rubbed places that had smitten Brazil. Evidently he was not coming in to pack. The Famous Five walked back to the house, and left him still rubbing damaged spots, snorting with wrath, and more firmly resolved than ever that he was not going to start on the homeward journey in the morning.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bob Knows How!

"WHAT the dickens—"

Four members of the famous Co. stared blankly at Bob Cherry.

They were packing in the room they occupied at Boa Vista. Bob, however, had left his friends to it, having apparently some other business on hand at the moment.

Now, as he came in, they stared at the extraordinary articles he brought with him. In one hand he carried an old bicycle tyre. In the other he had a

paintbrush. Under each arm was a can of paint, red and yellow. On his ruddy face he carried a cheery grin.

"I've been making a collection," he remarked. "Jim Valentine's bike has gone west, and he's lent me an old tyre. I bagged the brush and the paint from Mr. Frulo."

"What on earth for?" asked Harry.

"Bunter!"

"Bunter?" repeated the Co.

"Just Bunter! You see," explained Bob, "Bunter's got to start with us to-morrow! Time's up and we've got to go. It would make it jolly awkward for Jim Valentine and his uncle if Bunter tried to stick it out."

"Of course it would!" said Harry. "They can't very well boot a guest out— even a guest like Bunter! But they can't let him stay on when we're due back at school. It will be jolly awkward if that fat ass sticks to it."

"And the stickfulness will be terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh. "The idiotic Bunter means business."

"So do I!" said Bob. "That's why I've borrowed these fixings. Bunter won't do the decent thing—but he can be relied on to do the funky thing— what?"

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Harry. "I suppose it's a jape—"

"What do you think Bunter would do if he found a snake under his bed to-night?" asked Bob.

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"Howl the house down!" said Johnny Bull.

"The howlfulness would be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

"But there aren't any snakes about the house," said Frank Nugent. "Mr. Valentine's had them all rooted off the fazenda years ago—"

"It's always possible for a snake to creep in from the forest," said Bob. "Tons of them all round the plantation. Bunter never steps on a stick without thinking it's a snake. If he found a snake under his bed, my idea is that he would be fed-up with Boa Vista. He would never feel safe again."

"But there isn't a snake!" howled Johnny Bull.

"There's going to be!" answered Bob.

He spread a Rio de Janeiro newspaper on the table and laid the tyre on it. Then he prised off the lids of the paint cans.

The juniors watched him. Dipping the brush in the red paint, he proceeded to draw a circle round the tyre.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I see!"

"Time you did!" agreed Bob, painting away cheerily.

"Oh, my hat!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"A red-and-yellow snake—for Bunter! You can bet he won't look at it too closely!"

"Hardly!" chuckled Nugent.

Harry Wharton, laughing, stepped to the door and closed it. Billy Bunter was not wanted on the scene at present.

Then, leaving the packing unfinished, the juniors gathered round to watch the painting process. It was not, perhaps, very neat or artistic, but it was effective.

Circles of red were painted round the tyre, an inch apart, from end to end.

Then Bob shifted the table to the window for the hot sun to dry the paint before beginning on the yellow.

In the meantime, the juniors finished packing their suitcases. Bunter's remained unpacked—but they considered it quite probable that he would be willing to get on with packing it in the morning. He was prepared to face tropical heat and flies and mosquitoes and dust to keep away from school. But snakes were quite a different proposition.

The red paint was soon dry. Then Bob started with the yellow, putting in circles of yellow between the red circles.

"By Jove!" said Harry Wharton, staring at the tyre when it was finished. "Blessed if I shouldn't take that for a snake in the dusk."

"Bunter's going to meet it by moonlight!" grinned Bob. "But it's all right—it won't bite Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors waited for the yellow paint to dry, which did not take long in the burning sunlight streaming in at the window. Then the "snake" was hidden in a hammock—till wanted.

There was a tap at the door, and Domingo, the black steward of Boa Vista, presented himself.

"O jantar esta prompto!" announced Domingo, which meant that dinner was ready.

The juniors went out into the veranda, where the evening meal was taken. Mr. Valentine, the planter of Boa Vista, was there with his nephew Jim and Billy Bunter.

Bunter gave the Famous Five a disdainful blink through his big spectacles. Mr. Valentine had a slightly perplexed expression on his sunburnt face, and Jim was grinning a little. The chums of the Remove could see that Bunter had announced his intention of staying longer at the fazenda on the Rio Rexo, and it was undoubtedly rather awkward for the planter.

Hospitality was unbounded at Boa Vista. Harry Wharton & Co. had thoroughly enjoyed their stay with Jim Valentine, once their pal in the Remove at Greyfriars. They liked his Uncle Peter—they liked Joao Frulo, the manager of the fazenda—and they deeply regretted that the time had come to part.

Still, it had come, and there was no help for it. Mr. Valentine was to travel with them as far as the railway; Jim all the way to Rio, where he was to see them off in the steamer.

All was definitely fixed—except for Bunter! Bunter wasn't going—if he could help it! Between unbounded hospitality on one hand, and the impossibility of Bunter out-staying his leave on the other, Peter Valentine was in a rather difficult position.

However, the Famous Five had now taken measures to relieve him of that difficulty! They relied on the red-and-yellow snake to make Bunter tired of the fazenda.

"You can grin!" Bunter remarked, disdainfully across the table, as the Famous Five sat down to dinner.

They were already grinning, without waiting for that permission from the Owl of the Remove.

"I'm jolly well not going!" added Bunter. "A fellow's his own master, I suppose."

"A fellow's his own master!" came a cackling voice from the rail of the veranda. It was Bunter's macaw, Bonito. "I say, you fellows, lot of rotters! Lot of beasts! Ha, ha!"

"Catch me seeing old Quelch again!"

before I have to!" said Bunter. "I get quite enough of that old ass Quelch!"

"That old ass Quelch!" chuckled the macaw. He had a remarkable way of repeating Bunter's words. "That old ass Peter Valentine! Ha, ha!"

The planter started. Billy Bunter glared round at the parrot.

"Shut up, you brute!" he snapped.

"Shut up, you brute!" cackled Bonito. "Nuts! I say, you fellows, nuts! I say, I'm not going back! No fear! Ha, ha!" The macaw cackled and screamed and whistled and ran on in a stream of words caught from Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, it's a rotten place! Rotten hole! Old Valentine's a silly ass! Lot of rotters! Rotten hole of a place! I'll jolly well kick that beast Jim Valentine before I go! I say, you fellows, lot of rotters, lot of rotters!"

Billy Bunter's fat face was crimson. Bonito had rather a way of letting out secrets, and now he was letting out a whole lot.

Peter Valentine gave the fat junior one look, and then fixed his eyes on his dinner. So did Jim Valentine. Bunter was their guest—though they were left in no possible doubt as to what that guest thought of them!

"I—I say, that—that beastly parrot makes up all that, you know!" gasped Bunter. "He never heard me say that you were an ass, Mr. Valentine! He wasn't there when I said it!"

Mr. Valentine did not seem to hear. "And I never said I'd kick you before I went, Jim, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "Nothing of the sort! That—that macaw simply imagines it all!"

Jim was as deaf as his uncle. Dinner finished rather uncomfortably.

Fortunately Billy Bunter took a rest in a deep chair in the veranda after the meal, and the Famous Five were able to take a last walk over the fazenda, along the river, and over the coffee-fields, without the fascinating company of the Owl of the Remove, with Jim and Peter.

Under the glorious moon of South America they walked and talked and made all sorts of plans for the future, and it was quite a late hour when they came back to Boa Vista to turn in.

Bunter was already in bed. His deep snore greeted the Famous Five when they arrived in the large, airy room with the mosquito-netted windows where their hammocks were slung.

There was only one bed in the room. Bunter liked a bed—and had a bed! The other fellows had hammocks. The fat Owl of the Remove, with his eyes shut and his mouth open, snored.

He did not awaken when the Famous Five turned in. He snored, while Bob Cherry insinuated the painted tyre under his bed. He snored on; and as the hour grew later, and slumber descended on the household, only that hefty snore disturbed the silence of Boa Vista.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Snakes!

SNORE!
"Wurrgh!"
Snore!
"Gurrgh!"

It was quite an odd musical entertainment.

Something was disturbing Bunter's slumbers; and in the slow process of waking up, his snores mingled and alternated with stertorous gurgles.

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"Oh, listen to the band!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Quiet!" breathed Wharton. It was the captain of the Remove who was helping Bunter to wake. His hammock was nearest Bunter's bed. Reaching out from it, with a long bamboo cane in his hand, he tapped Bunter's little fat nose with the tip of the cane.

Bunter had to wake—but he was not to know that the other fellows were awake. They were wide awake, at midnight's stilly hour—the time fixed for the snake performance. But they were very quiet, watching with grinning faces from their hammocks, as Wharton handled the bamboo.

Brilliant moonlight streamed in at the windows, through the mosquito-netting. It was almost as light as by day.

The netting at the windows kept out mosquitoes—though not all of them; and certainly it would have kept out any gliding snake that had found its way from the forest. Still, snakes had been found and killed in the gardens; and Bunter was very uneasy about snakes, and never went to bed without blinking round the room and under the bed for imaginary serpents. That painted tyre really was a brain-wave!

"Snore! Urrgh! Snore! Wurrgh! Grooogh!"

Bunter awoke at last. He made a dab at his fat little nose, where something had tickled. He grunted.

"Urrgh! I say, you fellows! You awake?"

Silence. "I say, something woke me up!" grunted Bunter.

No reply. "Beasts!"

The fat head was laid on the pillow again, and Bunter closed his eyes and opened his mouth. The snore restarted after a brief interval.

"Go it!" murmured Bob.

Wharton, reached out again. The moonlight fell on the fat face of the Owl of the Remove, revealing the open mouth—capacious in its extent. The tip of the slim bamboo poked into that extensive aperture.

"Gurrgh!" Billy Bunter awoke quite suddenly this time. The bamboo whipped away out of sight; and Bunter sat up, gurgling.

"Urrgh! Grooogh! I say, you fellows, what's that? I say, there's something in the room! It woke me up!"

Only steady breathing from five hammocks answered Bunter. He glared at the hammocks and hooted:

"I say, you fellows! Wake up, you beasts! I say!"

Apparently the Famous Five were deep in sleep. At all events, they did not seem to hear Bunter hoot.

The fat junior groped for his spectacles, set them on his fat little nose, and blinked round for a missile. Something had awakened him—and he was going to know what it was. If those unfeeling beasts wouldn't wake up, Bunter was going to awaken them.

There was a missile at hand on a little table at Bunter's bedside. Bunter seldom went to bed without supplies at hand, in case he might wake up hungry in the night. A large chunk of rapidura, the tough native toffec, lay there; and Bunter grabbed it and pitched it into the nearest hammock.

"Whoop!" came a sudden howl from Wharton.

He was not asleep—but had he been, that chunk of rapidura certainly would have awakened him. It weighed about

a pound, and it dropped on his face, and it was as hard as rock.

He started up, so suddenly that the hammock swung wildly.

"Ow! You silly ass! Wharrer you up to?" gasped Wharton.

"Waking you up, old chap——"

"You blithering owl!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a yawn from Bob Cherry's hammock, as if the voices had awakened him. "Anything up?"

"I say, you fellows, there's something in the room!" Bunter sat up in bed and squeaked. "I say, it was touching my face. I say, you fellows, turn out and look for it!"

"Can't you turn out and look for it yourself?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! If you think I want to tread on snakes with bare feet and get bitten——"

"It doesn't matter if we get bitten, what?" asked Bob sarcastically.

"Beast! If you're going to be a selfish, funky rotter, Bob Cherry——"

"There's no snakes in the room, you fat ass!" came a growl from Johnny Bull's hammock.

"Well, something woke me up!" persisted Bunter. "Something crawling over my face! It felt just like a stick poking at me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "You fellows are safe up in those hammocks, but a snake can crawl on a bed. I'm not going to be bitten by anacondas and boa-constrictors and pythons——"

"The bitfulness of those esteemed serpents is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter," came a chuckle from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It might be a coral snake!" howled Bunter. "There's a red-and-yellow snake that bites the Indians, and it's fearfully dangerous. I say, you fellows, be decent, and turn out and look round the room."

"I tell you there's no snake here, fat-head——"

"Then what woke me up, crawling over my face?" demanded Bunter.

There was no answer to that question. Certainly the Famous Five could have enlightened Bunter on that point, had they chosen so to do.

"Will you lazy beasts get up?" demanded Bunter.

"No fear!"

"Beasts!"

Sitting up in bed, and gathering the bedclothes about him, Billy Bunter peered round on all sides with uneasy eyes through his big spectacles.

That he had been awakened by something touching his fat face as he slept was an absolute certainty. What could it have been but a crawling, gliding snake?

True, no snake had penetrated into the house since the Greyfriars fellows had stayed there. But they had seen plenty in the forest, of all sorts and sizes.

It looked as if one had got in at last. Almost every day there was a case of snake-bite among the barefooted negroes and Indians on the banks of the Rio Rexo. There was no glass in the windows, and the wooden shutters were wide open to admit air. True, the closely woven mosquito netting was a bar to snakes—but careless niggers might leave a tear or rent in the net—and what then? Anyhow, it was certain that something had awakened Bunter by touching his face as he slept!

Harry Wharton & Co., sitting up in their hammocks, watched the fat Owl,

with grinning faces, as he blinked all round the bed.

Bob Cherry gently pulled a string that ran from his hammock. The other end of that string ran under Bunter's bed and was tied to the painted tyre. That string was invisible in the glimmering moonlight.

There was a faint rustling sound under Bunter's bed.

It was made by an ancient bicycle tyre moving, under the pull of the string. Bunter was not likely to guess that.

He gave a startled howl.

"Ow! I say, you fellows——"

"Oh dear! What's the trouble now?" asked Harry.

"There's a snake under my bed!" gasped Bunter.

"That sounds like a snake!" said Harry Wharton. There was no mistake about that: it did sound remarkably like a snake.

"It's stopped now!" said Bob. Which was not surprising, as Bob could not continue hissing while he was speaking.

"I say, you fellows, get out!" shrieked Bunter. "Get a stick, or something, and hook it out and kill it! Help!"

"Don't make that row, you fat ass—you'll wake the house!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Beast!" roared Bunter, "I'm jolly well going to wake the house! Think I'm going to be bitten by poisonous snakes to please you!" Bunter threw back the bedclothes in desperation. "I'm going to cut—I'm going to get out

"Oh, dear! Have you killed it?" gasped Bunter.

"No—I couldn't——"

"Get out and kill it with that stick!"

"I can't, fathead!"

"Don't be funky, you beast! You can kill a snake with a stick!" howled Bunter. "Get out and kill it, you beast!"

The Famous Five gurgled. A snake, certainly, could have been killed with a stick, if a fellow had the nerve to tackle it. Nerve was not wanting, on the present occasion: but killing an old bicycle tyre was another matter!

"If you're afraid, you beasts——" howled Bunter.

"Well, look here," said Harry. "I'm not getting out, but I'll chuck you this



Strand after strand parted under Bob Cherry's sawing blade until at last the hammock collapsed at one end, and Billy Bunter shot downwards. Bump! The fat junior hit the continent of South America, with a concussion that might have almost suaken that continent. "Yarooop!" he roared. "I say, you fellows—help! Wow! Yaroooh! Oooogh!"

"Rot!"

"I can hear it moving!" howled Bunter. "Listen, you beast! Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, listen!"

The Famous Five listened. As Bob gave another jerk to the string there was another rustle of a shifting tyre.

"C-c-c-can't you hear that?" stammered Bunter, through his chattering teeth.

"Blessed if I don't hear something!" said Bob Cherry. "Did you fellows hear anything?"

"There's something under Bunter's bed!" said Johnny Bull. "I don't believe it's a snake, though."

"What else can it be?" shrieked Bunter. "You silly ass, of course it's a snake. Ow! Oh lor'! Help!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob.

There was a hissing sound in the room. It was, as a matter of fact, produced by Bob himself.

It sounded clearly, sibilantly, terrifyingly.

Bunter gave a squeak of horror.

"Ow! I say, you fellows, do you hear that? Ow!"

of this room, before it crawls out from under the bed——"

"Look out!" yelled Bob Cherry.

He gave a sharp jerk on the string. The painted tyre wriggled out from under the bed, just as Bunter was putting out a fat leg.

That fat leg whisked back like lightning.

Billy Bunter fixed his eyes, and his spectacles, on the red-and-yellow wriggling thing, emerging into view. With a gasp of terror, he squatted back in the middle of the bed, as far as possible out of the reach of the bicycle tyre!

"Ow! Keep it off! Wow! Help! Keep it off!" howled the fat Owl. "I say, you fellows! Keep it off! I say, you've got a stick——"

Harry Wharton caught up the bamboo. He reached out, and gave the tyre a poke! It rolled back under the bed, as Bob let the string run.

"Ow! Oh, dear! I say——"

"I hit it!" exclaimed Wharton.

stick, and you can get out and kill it——"

"Beast!"

"Save us, Bunter!" gasped Bob.

"Yah! Rotter! Help!" roared Bunter.

"Stop that row, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Harry. Waking the whole household, and bringing Peter and Jim Valentine, and Domingo and the black servants on the scene was not part of the programme.

"Shan't!" howled Bunter. "Think I'm going to be bitten by snakes! Help! Help!"

"Quiet!" exclaimed Bob. "If that snake's gone to sleep, Bunter, you'd better not wake it up."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "D-d-do you think——"

"Well, it seems jolly quiet—it can't be awake."

Bunter listened, with straining ears. There was no sound from under his bed. The snake was absolutely still and silent!

The fat junior sat with the perspiration running down his fat face, listening. But he drew comfort from the silence and stillness.

"It—it must have gone to sleep!" he gasped, at last.

"I'm jolly certain it's not awake!" said Bob. There could hardly be any doubt about that, considering the nature of that snake.

"Better not make a row, Bunter!" said Nugent.

"But—but I say—"

"Quiet!" said the Famous Five, all together, in a thrilling whisper. And Billy Bunter, palpitating with funk, was quiet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Night of Horror!

"Oh lor'!" breathed Bunter.

"Quiet!"

Ten minutes—ten dreadful minutes, that seemed to Bunter like ten hours at least—had passed. There had been no sound from under the bed.

It seemed as if that fearful reptile had fallen asleep. There was no other reason, so far as Bunter could see, to account for its inactivity.

"I—I say, you fellows!" whispered Bunter, wiping the perspiration from his fat brow. "The beastly thing must be asleep! I say, Wharton, old chap, you're not funky—I never knew a pluckier chap! Get out and whop it with that stick while it's asleep! It can't possibly hurt you—asleep, you know."

"Feel sure of that?" asked Harry.

"Absolutely certain, old chap! Give it a cosh while it's asleep, and that will

do the trick! Safe as houses, old fellow."

"Well, if you think it's safe—"

"Perfectly safe—"

"I'll hand you this stick—"

"Eh?"

"And you can get out and give it a cosh—"

"Beast!" hissed Bunter. Handling the stick—and the snake—was not what Bunter wanted—safe as it was!

"Well, I'm not getting down from this hammock!" said Harry. "If you keep quiet I dare say it won't wake up—"

"I say, Bob, old chap, you're not funky like Wharton—"

"I jolly well am!" contradicted Bob Cherry. "Just!"

"Nugent, old chap—"

"I'm just as scared as anybody else—excepting you, old bean," said Frank.

"Johnny, old chap," pleaded Bunter. "You've got tons of pluck—they're all plucky in Yorkshire, you know—you get out—"

"I'll watch it!" said Johnny Bull.

"Inky, old man—"

"The funkfulness of my esteemed self is preposterous, my esteemed Bunter!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, you rotters!" groaned Bunter. "Look here, if you're afraid of snakes, you funky beasts, I'll jolly well yell for Mr. Valentine—"

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob.

He gave a jerk at the string, and there was a rustle under Bunter's bed. The fat junior gave a yelp of terror.

"Better keep quiet!" said Harry. "It's not safe to disturb snakes, Bunter."

"It's quiet again!" said Bob. There was no further sound—when he ceased to jerk the string.

"Oh lor'!" moaned Bunter.

Sitting hunched in the middle of the

bed, with the blankets huddled round him, the Owl of the Remove perspired with funk.

Evidently, shouting for help was enough to start that snake into motion—it had stirred at the sound of voices! Bunter was silent.

Long minutes crawled by. The silence was broken at last—by a yawn from Johnny Bull.

"I say, if that jolly old snake's gone to sleep, we may as well do the same," he remarked. "I'm jolly sleepy."

"Same here!" agreed Nugent. "And we're starting early in the morning, too. We'd better get some sleep—"

"Yes, that's so!" said Bob Cherry. "It doesn't matter about Bunter, as he's not coming—"

"You beast!" hissed Bunter. "Think you're going to leave me behind, to be bitten by poisonous snakes, you rotters? I'm jolly well going when you do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" gasped Bunter. "What is there to cackle at, you silly idiots? You'll wake up that snake with that silly row."

"Yes—keep quiet, you chaps!" gasped Wharton. "Mustn't wake up that snake! But look here, Bunter, you're staying behind to-morrow—"

"I'm not!" hissed Bunter. "I wish I'd never come to Brazil at all! Oh, dear! If I get out of this alive, I'll jolly well get out of this beastly place."

"But you've told Mr. Valentine you're staying—"

"Blow Mr. Valentine—"

"You've told Jim—"

"Blow Jim!"

"You can't very well back out now!" urged Bob Cherry. "Besides, think of us! After making out that we are going to have the journey home without you, it's a bit thick to change your mind like this—"

"The thickfulness is terrific."

"Beasts! I'm coming! I only wish it was morning now!" groaned Bunter.

"I can't sleep a wink, with that snake under the bed! It may wake up and crawl over me any minute! It must have been crawling over the bed when it woke me up! I felt it touching my face—oh, cackle, you beasts! Cackle!"

The Famous Five suppressed their chuckles with difficulty. Billy Bunter glared at them, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles. There was nothing, so far as Bunter could see, to cackle at. A red-and-yellow snake under the bed was no joke.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter. "I say, Wharton, old chap—"

"Shut up—I'm going to sleep! I've got to travel in the morning."

"So have I!" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, rot!"

"I tell you I'm not going to stay here to be bitten by poisonous snakes! I say, it may wake up and crawl out any minute! I say, I want to go to sleep!" wailed Bunter. "I say, I've got to travel to-morrow, same as you fellows have! I must get some sleep! I say—"

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob. "Give us a rest, old fat bean, and we'll see what can be done. Turn out, you men, and let's mop up that snake! If you give it a good crack with that stick, Wharton, it won't stir again."

"Oh, all right!"

Billy Bunter gasped with relief as the Famous Five tuned out of the hammocks.

As Bunter had thought better of his intention of staying at Boa Vista after the other fellows left, the red-and-yellow serpent had done its work, and was not wanted any longer.

In the bright moonlight streaming in at the windows, the chains of the

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Remove gathered for the snake-hunt, Wharton grasping the stick.

Billy Bunter did not turn out. He preferred to be a "looker on in Vienna," so to speak. Sitting in the middle of his bed, he blinked at the juniors with anxious eyes through his big spectacles.

Wharton thrust under the bed with the bamboo.

"M-m-mind it doesn't get on me when you rout it out!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—oh lor'! There it is! Oh crikey! Keep it off! Whoo-hoop!"

Under the shove from the bamboo, the painted tyre rolled out on the floor. Bunter's eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the sight of it.

Wharton jumped at the snake. Up went the stick. Down it came with a bang!

"Got it!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"D-dead?" stuttered Nugent.

"I don't think it's alive now——"

"Nunno—I—I think not!" gasped Bob Cherry, stooping over the snake. "Dead as a doornail! All right, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Pull that net away, and I'll chuck the—the body out of the window," said Bob, and he grasped the "snake," picked it up, and carried it across to the window.

Billy Bunter blinked at the red-and-yellow wriggling horror in Bob's hands.

"I—I say, sure it's dead?" he gasped.

"No life in it, old man," answered Bob. "Not a breath! Right as rain."

The net was unhooked, a space cleared, and Bob Cherry hurled the body of the bike-tyre out of window. It shot across the veranda, and landed in the shrubbery beyond.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "Thank goodness! I say, you fellows, mind you fasten that net safe again. I say, look round the room, and see if there are any more."

The juniors obligingly searched the room for more—but they did not really expect to find any more painted tyres! None was found, much to the relief of Billy Bunter.

At long last he was able to settle his fat head on the pillow and close his eyes. But the Famous Five were asleep long before Bunter. For quite a long time the fat Owl of the Remove lay awake, listening, to hear a rustling or wriggling or hissing. But he heard no more, and he slept at last and snored—and was still snoring when the chums of the Remove turned out in the sunny morning.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

JIM VALENTINE grinned, and Peter smiled faintly, when Billy Bunter rolled down the path to the river in the morning and bundled on board the bataloa.

The boat, manned by black rowers, with the baggage stacked on board, was ready to take the Greyfriars party down the river.

Billy Bunter had turned out at the first call that morning—quite departing from his usual custom. He had not taken the trouble to tell his host of his change of intention, but he made it clear, by packing his suitcase, to be carried down to the bataloa with the rest.

It might have puzzled the planter and his nephew—but for the circumstance that they had seen the body of the dead snake in the shrubbery that morning and were aware that a painted bicycle tyre had caused the fat junior to change his mind.

Billy Bunter, in fact, was pressing to get away—anxious to be off. That snake was his first snake at Boa Vista, and he wanted it to be his last! He shuddered to think of all the nights he had slept there—in danger of beastly snakes crawling over him, if he had only known it! Bunter was anxious to see the last of Boa Vista, if not of Brazil.

In his eagerness to depart, he forgot all about Bonito. But the macaw did not forget Bunter. There was a flash of blue-and-gold in the air as Bunter sat down in the boat, and Bonito landed on his shoulder, cackling.

"I say, you fellows, I'm not going back!" chuckled Bonito. "I say, nuts! Rotten hole of a place! Lot of rotters! That old ass Peter Valentine——"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Bunter. "You talk too much, you beast!"

"Shut up!" cackled Bonito. "You talk too much, you beast!"

"That bird knows you, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yah!"

"Yah!" said Bonito. "I say, you fellows, yah!"

Mr. Frulo, the manager, came down to the desembarcadouro to see the Greyfriars fellows off. The cheery, copper-complexioned manager of the fazenda was sorry to part with his young friends, as they were to part with him. He shook hands all round with the party, twice over, and then once more.

"I have one considerable sorrow to say a good-bye!" he declared. "I shall remember my young friends for a length of extensive time."

"Same here, sir!" said the juniors.

Bunter grunted. He did not like Mr. Frulo. Dom Joao had smacked his head on one occasion. What astonished the other fellows was that Mr. Frulo had only smacked it once!

"And you also, one good-bye to you!" said Mr. Frulo. "You take home with you one arara, yes—one parrot?"

"Yes," grunted Bunter. "It's mine, ain't it?"

"Certo, certo!" agreed Mr. Frulo. "But I hear that in Inghilterra there is one law that you do not take parrot into a country. Yes?"

Snort from Bunter.

"They're always passing some silly law or other," he grunted. "I shan't take any notice of that."

Whereat the Famous Five grinned. They thought it probable that Bunter would take some notice of that law when he came to deal with the officials in the Custom House.

"One more good-bye, little senhors and——"

"Good-bye, Mr. Frulo!"

"Frulo! Frulo!" cackled the macaw, catching the name. "That coffee-coloured old ass, Frulo! Ha, ha! I say, you fellows, that coffee-coloured old ass, Frulo!"

Mr. Frulo's coppery face coloured. Billy Bunter backed away in a hurry.

It was a remark of his, repeated by Bonito, that had caused the manager to smack his head once before. The expression on Dom Joao's coppery face indicated for a moment that history might repeat itself! Bunter backed away in a hurry.

"Look out!" yelled Jim Valentine.

Bunter backed against a thwart. Really, he could not look out with the back of his head. His fat legs caught on the thwart, and he went over backwards, landing in the bottom of the bataloa with a bump.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Man down!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I say, you fellows—wow!" roared Bunter. "I say—yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Frulo, grinning, shook hands with the Famous Five over again, and then the bataloa pushed off.

Billy Bunter picked himself up and plumped down on a seat, gasping. On the desembarcadouro, Dom Joao stood waving his hat, and the Famous Five waved their hats in return, as the bataloa slid down the current of the Rexo, the blacks pulling at the oars.

The landing stage and the manager and the coffee-fields disappeared. But for some time the juniors watched the white walls of Boa Vista, shining in the tropical sunlight, till the forest intervened, and the fazenda was seen no more.

They had had a great time at the plantation—hardships and perils, too; but it had been a glorious holiday, and they were sorry to be leaving Brazil. Still, they were not the fellows to repine.

Within two weeks they would be back at the old school, in the old studies in the Remove passage—meeting Smithy, and Lord Mauleverer, and Toddy and Redwing and Squiff and the rest, and ragging Coker of the Fifth. There would be Quelch and lessons, too—but that did not dismay the Famous Five so much as it did William George Bunter.

Through the long, sunny day the bataloa rolled on down the winding river, and they stopped for the night at a little "aldeia" on the bank of the Rexo, where the village inn was, as Bunter truly stated, unclean. Before turning in, the fat Owl hunted for snakes in every cranny and corner; but there were no snakes, and Bunter's snore mingled for the last time with the murmur of the flowing Rexo.

A car awaited the juniors in the morning, to carry them on to the railway. They packed in, and rolled away by rugged tracks that bore more and more a resemblance to roads as they neared the railway.

The juniors remembered that there had been a revolution going on when they left Rio for the interior, which had interrupted railroad communications. But matters seemed to have settled down again during their long stay at the fazenda; trains were once more running—more or less to time.

"Thank goodness we're getting back to civilisation!" grunted Bunter, as he plumped down in the train. "I can tell you I'm fed-up!"

"Fed-up!" said Bonito, cackling on a fat shoulder. "I say, you fellows, fed-up! Ha, ha!"

"And I can jolly well say," went on Bunter—"I can jolly well say—Yarooop! What beast is that stamping on my foot! Whooooop!"

"Whoop!" yelled Bonito. "I say, you fellows, whoop!"

Peter Valentine stood at the door saying good-bye to the juniors. Bob Cherry had judiciously stamped on Bunter's foot. And the fat Owl's remarks were confined to "Ow!" and "Wow!" and "Yow!" while the good-byes were said and the train pulled out for Rio.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, the He-Man!

RIO DE JANEIRO blazed under a tropical sun.

It was a startling change from the vast campos and tangled forests of the "sertao," to the great city, with its wide streets,

palatial buildings, swarming population, and whizzing, innumerable motor-cars.

The steamer that was to take the Greyfriars party home was coming up the coast from Buenos Aires; but it was not yet due at Rio, and the juniors had plenty of time for a rest after their journey from the interior, and for a look round Rio with Jim Valentine.

Jim was staying with them till the steamer went, and he knew Rio like a book, and was able to show them all the sights of that famous city. He had shown them a good many when he met them on their arrival in Brazil; but there were plenty more to be seen.

The first morning, as Bunter did not turn out of bed till eleven o'clock, they missed Bunter.

With the selfishness Bunter expected of them, they declined to hang about the Hotel Gloria till Bunter chose to turn out; and they were on a motor-boat, skimming the waters of the harbour, winding about the verdure-clad islands, before the fat junior came down.

So they did not see Bunter till they came in, bright and cheery, to lunch. But Bunter had not been wholly idle that morning, as they were to discover.

Bonito, as usual gave him away—after lunch when the juniors went into the veranda facing the sea, the macaw perched on Bunter's fat shoulder.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"I say, you fellows!" cackled Bonito. "I say, I can't talk your silly language! Isn't there anybody here who speaks English?"

Evidently Bonito had been overhearing something.

"How much for a stay of three weeks?" went on Bonito cheerfully. "Don't put it in milreis—I can't understand your rotten Brazilian currency. Put it in pounds. Ha, ha! I say, you fellows, put it in pounds!"

"Shut up!" hissed Bunter.

"Shut up!" said Bonito, cocking his head. "I say, you fellows, shut up! How much for three weeks? Put it in pounds! Ha ha!"

Jim Valentine grinned, and the Famous Five turned grim looks on the fat face of the Owl.

"What does that mean, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter hastily. "I haven't been talking to the hotel manager, and I haven't been asking the terms for a long stay, or anything."

"You're coming on the Bayford Castle tomorrow," said Harry. "You howling ass, do you think you're going to stick in Rio on your own?"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"I'm going to do what I jolly well like!" he retorted. "There ain't any snakes here—"

"Snakes!" repeated Harry.

"Yes—a fellow can turn in without finding putrid, poisonous reptiles under his bed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I had a jolly narrow escape that last night at Boa Vista—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" snorted Bunter. "But I'm going to do as I jolly well like—see? You can hike back to school, and say 'Please, sir!' and 'Oh, sir!' and 'Yes, sir!' and 'No, sir!' to old Quelch as much as you like! I'm not taking any!"

"You're coming on the steamer tomorrow!" hooted Bob Cherry.

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"Yah!"

"So that's the game!" said Johnny Bull. "We hooked you out of Boa Vista, and you fancy you're going to stick in Rio."

"I fancy I'm going to do exactly as I jolly well choose!" said Billy Bunter independently. "I'm not asking you to pay my bill. I've got enough money to see me through—and can make more, too! Rio's a jolly place! I shall have a ripping time when you fellows are gone. I mayn't even come home for Easter—it depends. If I'm making a lot of money—"

"Have you struck a diamond mine in Rio, as Jim's uncle did at the Montanha Fria?" grinned Bob.

"There's easier ways of making money than digging up diamonds!" said Bunter mysteriously. "I know what I know. I may break the bank—"

"The bank!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I'm not going to tell you anything about it," said Bunter. "You fellows are soft! I dare say you never even heard that they have a casino in Rio."

"A—a—a casino?"

"Roulette, and all that, same as at Monte Carlo! Chap who breaks the bank may make pots of money! Catch me missing that, to go home and grind Latin verbs with old Quelch!" said Bunter derisively.

The juniors glared at the fat Owl. Evidently Bunter had it all cut and dried.

The painted tyre had made him willing to bundle out of Boa Vista. But he was not afraid of snakes in Rio. So he was planning to stay on in that city, after the other fellows had gone off on the steamer. He was going to have a glorious time—breaking roulette banks, rolling in money, and generally painting the southern hemisphere red!

The juniors had, as a matter of fact, heard of the gambling which was one of the relaxations in that hectic city of the South American coast. But they had no desire to see the interior of a casino, or to throw away what was left of their cash on a green table. Neither was Bunter going to do anything of the kind, though, at present, he fancied that he was.

"You howling ass!" said Frank Nugent at last.

"Howling ass!" said Bonito, nodding.

"You blithering fathead!" said Bob.

"Blithering fathead!" cackled the macaw. "Ha, ha!"

"You terrific chump!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, terrific chump!" yelled Bonito. "Fathead! Chump! Lot of rotters! Ha, ha!"

"Look here," said Bunter, "why not stick to me and have a gorgeous time? Don't be soft! You can spin the Head some yarn—I'll think of something to tell him if you haven't brains enough. You can say you were going up the Sugar-Loaf Mountain and the cable broke—everybody damaged! See? That's quite good enough for a schoolmaster—they haven't much sense!"

"Oh crikey!" chuckled the macaw.

"I say, you fellows! Oh crikey!"

"You'd better not play roulette," went on Bunter. "You're no good at a thing that needs a clear, cool intellect, an iron nerve, and lots of pluck and dash! That's me all over—"

"Oh!"

"But you can watch me breaking the bank, and see that I get my winnings away safe, too," said Bunter. "There's a lot of shady characters in Rio, and a

fellow with thousands of pounds in his pockets might get a knife in his ribs!"

"He might!" gasped Wharton. "But I fancy your fat ribs are safe enough, Bunter, if the bad characters wait till you've made thousands of pounds by breaking a roulette bank. Especially as you're not going anywhere near any casino—and if you don't walk on the steamer to-morrow, we shall pull you on board by your ears."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Nature," said Bob Cherry, "is a wise old bird! She's made Bunter's ears big enough for anybody to get a good hold!"

"Oh, shut it!" snapped Bunter. "I'm giving you a chance of a lifetime. Why not play up? Don't be noodles! Don't be nincompoops! Be he-men—like me!"

"He-men!" gasped Wharton, "Like you?"

"Oh dear!" almost sobbed Bob Cherry. "Who wants to be a he-man like Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five were feeling strongly disposed to bump Billy Bunter, hard, in the veranda of the Hotel Gloria. But the idea of Bunter as a he-man quite overcame them; and they dissolved into helpless merriment.

The fat Owl blinked at them disdainfully.

"Cackle!" he snorted. "I'm staying on, all the same! I may come home by the next steamer! Or the next after that! I'm not sure yet! I'm afraid I can't promise to look you up at Wharton Lodge in the Easter holidays, Wharton. I may not be back from South America."

"Bunter the he-man!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "The he-he-he-man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Valentine, laughing, rose to his feet and pointed across the promenade towards a motor-boat chugging on the water. The juniors had arranged for another trip on the wonderful bay of Rio de Janeiro that afternoon. They could have spent whole days, or weeks, with pleasure, gliding among the bright green islands jutting from the glowing blue waters.

"Coming Bunter?" asked Jim.

"Well," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I'd like the trip—but I shall want all the money I've got left for the casino after these fellows are gone. I'm not going to spend any tripping about in a motor-boat."

"The boat's hired for the day," said Jim, grinning. "That's all right, old fat man."

"You won't want me to pay anything?" asked Bunter cautiously. "I'm not mean, you know; but I shall want—"

"Nothing!"

"Right-ho—I'll come!"

Relieved on that important point, Bunter came. He rolled down to the beach with the juniors, Bonito perched on his shoulder. They were soon skimming over the blue waters, under the brilliant sunshine. Breaking the bank at the casino was left till the steamer sailed on the morrow. It was the opinion of the Famous Five that it would be left longer than that—much longer!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Mysterious Yacht!

"THAT'S a ripping boat!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Topping!" agreed Harry.

"The topfulness is terrific!" assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.



The painted tyre wriggled out from under the bed, just as Billy Bunter was putting out a fat leg. "Ow! I say, you fellows, here's a snake!" howled the fat junior. "Keep it off! Wow! Help!"

All the fellows looked with interest at the craft Bob pointed out. Like most British boys, the Famous Five had a keen interest in ships and the sea. The endless shipping in the vast harbour of Rio was a delight to them. The yacht on which their eyes were now turned was worth a second glance, and a third!

It was anchored out in the lagoon, far from the quays. The harbour of Rio was a land-locked lagoon, fifteen miles long, and seven wide at its widest. On its spacious waters, among its innumerable islands, was room enough for the world's shipping. The yacht was anchored a good half-mile from the shining white marble promenade facing the sea.

Jim Valentine spoke a word or two in Portuguese, and the motor-boat glided nearer the anchored yacht. All the juniors were interested in it, for it was a magnificent craft—the last word in expense and luxury.

"Yankee!" remarked Johnny Bull, noting that the yacht showed the American colours.

"Some jolly old millionaire's pleasure tub!" said Bob. "Who wouldn't be a millionaire?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the American yacht through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, I rather think I may buy a yacht like that—later!" he remarked.

"Expecting a postal order?" asked Bob gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "I don't suppose it cost more than twenty thousand pounds or so. A chap might make that in a single evening, breaking the bank at Rio—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The countfulness of the chickens

should not precede the esteemed hatchfulness, as the English proverb remarks!" chuckled Murco Janset Ram Singh.

Bunter was evidently counting his chickens rather early. Already, in his fat mind, he was spending the huge sums he was going to snaffle at the roulette table—perhaps!

"Take us round the world on a trip in your yacht—when you get it, old fat man," gasped Bob.

"Well," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I don't know about that, Cherry! You see, when I sail a yacht like that I shall have rather a distinguished party on board—only the best people!" Bunter shook his head. "I'm afraid I couldn't ask you fellows."

"Oh crikey!"

"Oh crikey!" chortled Bonito. "I say, you fellows, only the best people! Oh crikey!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That sportsman seems as interested in us as we are in his packet!" remarked Bob.

A man on the yacht was staring at the motor-boat over the rail.

Some of the crew—all very nobbily got up in the best yachting style—were to be seen about; but the man at the rail did not look much like a yachtsman.

He had a round, hard, clean-shaven face, which looked rather as if it was carved out of wood. He wore landsman's clothes, and a black bowler hat, which was jammed down on his bullet head as if fixed there permanently and never intended to come off again.

His jaw was square, his mouth a gash, set hard; his nose little more than a pimple; his eyes narrow slits of cold grey steel. Those slits of eyes were fixed on the motor-boat with a stare so penetrating that it seemed almost capable of penetrating solid metal and wood.

Suspicion was written in that hard face and those watchful, steely eyes. Though what the man was suspicious of in a party of holiday schoolboys in a motor-boat was a mystery.

"Is that chap the owner?" said Bob. "Looks as if he thinks we've come along to pinch his yacht. If he's the owner, it looks as if they make a lot of money shooting up guys in Chicago."

The juniors chuckled.

The man staring suspiciously over the yacht's rail looked the "gangster" type to the very life!

On his looks, the juniors would not have been surprised to hear that he had "shot up" guys in Chicago, and taken "rubes" for a "ride," and put any number of "hombres" on the "spot."

Certainly he did not look anything like a millionaire yacht-owner.

"That yacht's the Dollar Duchess," said Jim Valentine. "She's been in Rio some time, I think. I've heard that she belongs to an American millionaire named Van Duck."

"That sportsman looks more like a hawk than a duck," remarked Bob Cherry. "Tell the man to run a bit nearer, Jim. Let him have a good squint at us—he doesn't often see such a nice party."

"Nice party!" chuckled Bonito. "I say, you fellows, such a nice party!"

The motor-boat glided closer to the anchored yacht; and the juniors were amused to see the suspicion deepen and intensify in the hard face over the rail. The brows contracted over the slits of eyes, and the hard set of the thin lips grew harder. The man watched them like a hawk.

In amazement they saw his right hand glide round to his hip-pocket. Blankly

they realised that he was reaching for a gun!

As he made that motion a voice came to their ears from the deck of the yacht, a boyish voice with a nasal intonation.

"Poker, you jay, what's biting you now? You figure you're still in Chicago? You flourish a gun here-away and you'll have a bunch of dagoes jumping on your neck."

There was a growling reply from Poker, if that was his name, which the fellows in the motor-boat did not catch.

Then a boy came to the rail and looked over at them.

He was a fellow of about the juniors' own age, rather slim and wiry and elastic; with a keen but somewhat good-looking face, chiefly remarkable for the fact that the mouth was full of nuts, which he was chewing. He glanced at the motor-boat, and then, to the surprise of the Greyfriars fellows, waved his hand to them as if inviting them to draw nearer.

"Say, Putnam van Duck——" came in a husky growl from the man who looked like a gangster.

"Can it, Poker Pike!" answered the boy over his shoulder.

"I guess——"

"Quit guessing, and pack it up! Pack it up and screw down the lid!"

"I'll say——"

"Say nix!" rapped Putnam van Duck.

In response to the invitation of the waved hand the motor-boat slid nearer, under the yacht's quarter. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite close now, and heard every word of that extraordinary dialogue.

Having silenced the slit-eyed man, Putnam van Duck waved his hand again and grinned at the schoolboys in the boat.

"Say, you guys kinder interested in my boat?" he called out, in a friendly and cheery way.

"Yours!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "Popper's! It cuts no ice! If you'd like to give it the once-over, I guess you can bulge in, and I'll sure tell a guy to let down the ladder."

Which was certainly very kind and polite, from a fellow the schoolboys had never seen before.

But Poker Pike broke in.

"I guess not, Van Duck! You hear me tooting, you Putnam van Duck? No guy ain't stepping on this shebang! No, sir!"

"Ain't I told you to can it, you Poker Pike?" exclaimed the American boy. "Who's king-pin on this outfit, I'm asking you?"

"You are, Mr. van Duck!" retorted the gangster. "But I got it from your popper to see you safe, and I'll tell the world, I'm sure filling the bill. Them guys don't step on this packet! Nope!"

"You pesky piccan!" said the millionaire's son. "You figure that a bunch of rubes rubbering round Rio are looking for a chance to cinch this baby?"

"I ain't taking no chances!" said Poker Pike stubbornly. "I got orders from your popper, and s'long's you're with me, you ain't getting kidnapped. Nope!"

"Kidnapped!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Do we look like kidnappers?" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You so get off!" called the gunman over the rail, addressing the Greyfriars party. "You so ain't wanted around. You get me? I'm mentioning that you want to beat it. Beat it pronto!"

"Will you can it, Poker?" roared Van Duck.

"Nunk!" said Poker. "Not so's you'd notice it! How'd I know that Chick Chew ain't on that boat?"

"Aw, pack it up, I'm telling you! Pack it right up, and squat on it!" hooted the millionaire's son. "You make me tired, Poker. You sure do make me tired a whole lot, and then some. I'm asking the guys to step on board——"

"Forget it!" said Poker.

"Say, you buddies——"

"Thanks very much, Mr. van Duck!" said Harry Wharton, trying to keep grave. "But perhaps we'd better not——"

"I say, you fellows, better not!" cackled Bonito. "Ha, ha! Lot of rotters. I say, you fellows! Nuts! Nuts!"

There was a whiz of blue and gold, and the macaw shot from the boat and landed on the yacht's rail.

Perhaps the fact that the American boy was chewing nuts attracted Bonito.

Since the party had arrived in Rio, Bonito's supply of nuts, unlimited at the fazenda, had run short. Certainly, there were plenty of nuts to be had, if Bunter had taken the trouble; but Bunter was rather liable to forget the rest of creation, in concentrating his fat thoughts on that important person, William George Bunter.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "My parrot——"

"Oh crikey!" cackled Bonito.

He hopped down on the deck, cackling gleefully.

"Nuts! I say, you fellows, nuts! Lot of rotters! Beast! Catch me going back to 'old Quelch! Blow old Quelch! I say, you fellows, nuts!"

"Say, that sure is some bird!" exclaimed the American boy. "Here, cocky, I guess here's some nuts for you!"

He threw nuts to Bonito, who hopped about gobbling and cackling. There was an indignant howl from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows! My parrot! Bonito! Come back, you beast!"

But Bonito was too busy to heed his master's voice. He was gobbling nuts, with his curved beak, at a great rate.

"Gimme my parrot!" yelled Bunter wrathfully. "I say, you, gimme my parrot! Look here, I'm coming to fetch him if you don't gimme my parrot, you beast!"

"I guess I'm no bird-catcher!" grinned Van Duck. "You come and catch him, big boy!"

"Nope!" hooted Poker Pike.

"Yep!" snapped Van Duck.

"I say, you fellows——"

The motor-boat slid under the yacht's quarter. Bob Cherry put out a hand to hold on. The next moment he gave a yell of surprise—as the gunman's hand flashed from his hip-pocket, and a revolver gleamed in the sun. And that revolver was aimed at the fellows in the motor-boat, with a grim and steely eye glinting over it.

"Git!" said Poker Pike.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Loses Bonito!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared blankly at the man leaning over the rail, and at the black muzzle of the automatic in his hand.

Back at the fazenda on the Rio Rexo, on the borders of the wild "sertao" of Brazil, they had grown rather used to the sight of deadly weapons. But in the harbour of Rio de Janeiro, on board a millionaire's yacht, it was quite a different matter. They fairly blinked at the

bowler-hatted man who bore the remarkable name of Poker Pike.

He looked as if he meant it.

His brows were knitted, over his steely slits of eyes, under the clamped-down bowler. The muzzle of the automatic looked the schoolboys in their faces.

"I said git!" remarked Mr. Pike casually.

"You silly ass!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"When I say git," explained Mr. Pike, "what I mean is, beat it! Hit the horizon! Hit it hard! I guess I'm jest going to fan you a few if you ain't out of this picture in two licks of a dorg's tail!"

"I say, you fellows, get on!" squoaked Billy Bunter. "Tell that beast to drive the boat on, Valentino, you fathead! That pistol might go off!"

"Shut up, ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!" yelled Bunter. "I'm not going to be potted by an American lunatic to please you! I tell you that thing might go off!"

"You sure said it!" agreed Mr. Pike. "I'll say it will go off, mighty spry and sudden, if you don't slide out!"

"Poker, you locoed geck!" roared Putnam van Duck. "Put that iron away! Don't I keep on telling you you can't advertise your hardware in this here location?"

"Forget it!" answered Mr. Pike.

"I'll call the captain and tell him to stick you in irons, you gink!" howled Putnam.

"I guess your popper's sure put the old man wise, to skip when this baby says skip!" answered Mr. Pike. "Call him all you want! I'm fanning them guys a few, if they don't quit instanter."

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter yelled with terror, as the gunman flourished the automatic over the boat. "I say——"

"We're not afraid of that potty ass, fathead!" hooted Bob. "And we're not going without the parrot——"

"Blow the parrot!" gasped Bunter. "Valentine, you beast, make that dago get on——"

"Do you want to lose Bonito, you ass?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Blow Bonito! He can fly off if he likes, and if he doesn't, blow him!" snorted Bunter. "Get away, I tell you, you silly asses, before that lunatic lets that gun go off!"

"Poker, you geck, pack that gun!" roared Putnam van Duck.

"Guess agin," retorted Poker Pike.

"I'm telling you——"

"Tell me all you want—but I ain't packing no gun, not till them guys have absquatulated."

"I say, you fellows——" raved Bunter.

"Well, it's your parrot," said Harry. "If you like to lose it——"

"Blow the parrot!" yelled Bunter.

Bonito was hopping and cackling on the yacht, entirely occupied with nuts. Putnam van Duck, in a state of growing excitement and wrath, was arguing fiercely with Poker Pike—who, cool as ice, let him say what he liked, but kept the automatic swaying over the motor-boat.

The motor-boat glided away from the yacht.

Billy Bunter gasped with relief as it went. The other fellows were not sorry to get away from under the black muzzle of the automatic.

They could hardly believe that Mr. Pike would have pulled trigger—but he certainly looked as if he would, and there was no doubt, from his appearance, that in his own happy native city of Chicago, he was very much accustomed to handling a "gun."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter, as the

motor-boat shot on, and a green island intervened between them and the American yacht.

Bunter was not worrying about Bonito. Bonito had deserted him, for the lure of nuts, and he could go and eat nuts, or go and eat coke, or anything he liked, so long as Billy Bunter got safe away from the deadly looking automatic flourished over the yacht's rail.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, as the yacht disappeared. "That beats it!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"A floating lunatic asylum, I should think!" grunted Johnny Bull.

That extraordinary encounter perplexed the Greyfriars fellows considerably.

They could not help wondering about the Dollar Duchess, and Putnam van Duck, son and heir of the American multi-millionaire, Van Duck. Still more they wondered about the startling man with the gun, who was apparently keeping some sort of guard over the gilded youth.

However, as the motor-boat chugged on, they found plenty of other matters to draw their attention, and the mysterious yacht was dismissed from their minds.

The sunset was flaring red behind the mountains that hemmed in Rio on the land side, when they turned back from the trip.

A big steamer was coming in, to berth at the quay at the foot of the Avenida Rio Branco. Bob Cherry pointed it out to his friends.

"That's the jolly old Bayford Castle, coming in from Buenos Aires," he remarked.

The Greyfriars fellows looked at the steamer, on which they were to leave Rio de Janeiro the next day.

Billy Bunter blinked at it through his spectacles.

"That the boat you fellows are going on?" he asked.

"That's it, old fat bean—and the boat that you are going on, too," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I'll watch it!" grunted Bunter.

"So will we," said Bob cheerily.

"The watchfulness will be terrific, my esteemed idiotic Bunter!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

The motor-boat ran in, and the Greyfriars party walked up to the hotel. They were ready for dinner—especially Bunter.

At dinner there was a very thoughtful expression on Billy Bunter's fat face. It was not wholly caused by the excellent provender supplied by the Hotel Gloria. Bunter, for once, was thinking about other matters, apart from what he was eating.

After dinner the juniors strolled into the hotel veranda, overlooking the sea, to take their coffee. Bunter was still looking extremely thoughtful; and Bob, thinking that he guessed the cause, gave him a kindly tap on a fat shoulder. Bob, in the innocence of his heart, supposed that Bunter was thinking about the lost macaw.

"I shouldn't worry, old chap," said Bob. "After all, you couldn't take it home with you, you know."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh—why not?" he asked. "Wharrer you mean? I'm jolly well going to take it home with me, of course. Think I'm going to leave it in South America, you ass? I shall send it home through a bank."

"A—a—a bank?"

"Yes. Safest to send it through a bank," said Bunter.

Bob blinked at him.

"You're going to send a parrot home through a bank!" he ejaculated.

He wondered whether Bunter was wandering in his mind.

"Eh?" Bunter wondered whether Bob was. "Who's talking about a parrot?"

"Aren't you, fathead?"

"No, ass!"

"Then what the dickens—"

"Oh, nothing!"

Bunter rolled into the veranda, and deposited his weight in a cane chair that creaked in protest as it received the same.

Bob gave him a puzzled look.

Bunter, it was clear, was not worrying about Bonito. It was something else that caused that fat wrinkle of thought to corrugate his podgy brow.

What he was going to send home through a bank was rather a mystery. Then suddenly Bob guessed, and he chuckled. It was the enormous sums of money he was going to win at the casino in Rio that Bunter was going to send home through a bank. And it was his scheme of breaking the other bank—that devoted to roulette—that now occupied Bunter's fat thoughts.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, so suddenly that the black waiter, bringing the coffee on a tray, nearly dropped it.

Bunter did not heed. Great thoughts were working under Billy Bunter's podgy brow, as he sat sipping his coffee, and blinking stealthily and surreptitiously at the other fellows through his big spectacles.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Ramble Round Rio!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Jim Valentino was speaking—a circumstance of which Billy Bunter took no heed. The boy planter smiled.

"Go it!" he said.

"I say, what about doing a show the

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last night in Rio?" asked Bunter, blinking round at the Famous Five. "I've been looking out something for you fellows."

"Good man!" said Harry, rather surprised. It was not Billy Bunter's way, as a rule, to look out things for other fellows.

"There's an opera on to-night," said Bunter. "You fellows are fond of music. I don't care for it myself; but, of course, I'm only thinking about you chaps, as usual."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"It's on at the What-do-you-call-it," explained Bunter. "And it's called What's-its-name, or something or other."

"We'd better see that," said Bob Cherry gravely. "We've seen a lot of the sights of Rio, but we haven't seen What's-its-name at the What-do-you-call-it yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe it's good," said Bunter. "You'd better get off pretty soon. I don't care for it myself; but I'll sit up for you."

Which caused six fellows to stare at Billy Bunter very hard. Planning entertainments for other fellows, from which he was to be left out, was really not in Bunter's line, as a rule.

Without being unduly suspicious, the Famous Five could not help thinking that there was a catch in it somewhere.

In fact, it required only a moment's thought to make it clear that Billy Bunter wanted to get rid of them for the evening.

Another moment's thought sufficed to enlighten them as to his reason. He was eager to begin breaking the bank at the casino—an enterprise in which he could expect no help, but only hindrance, from the other fellows.

Bob Cherry winked at his comrades. "We shouldn't enjoy it without you, Bunter," he said gravely.

"Hardly," agreed Wharton.

"Not at all," said Frank Nugent.

"Well, that's all very well," said Bunter peevishly. "But I don't want you to miss it. You fellows go—"

"We'll go if you do," said Johnny Bull.

"The fact is, I'd rather go for a walk," said Bunter. "By the way, Valentino, I suppose you know just where the casino is? You might tell a chap. I'd like just to—to—to look at it. I'm not going in, you know."

"We know," assented Bob.

"The knowfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"Well, look here! If you fellows are going to the opera, I'll tell the waiter to call you a taxi," said Bunter briskly.

"Don't trouble; we're not."

"Not without you, old chap."

"Can't part with you, old bean. You don't know how nice you are."

Billy Bunter breathed hard.

"I'm going for a walk," he said.

"Same here. Lovely night for a walk," said Bob. "A walk's a jolly good idea."

"The walkfulness is the proper paper."

"Come on, Bunter! Here's your hat!"

"Well, look here! If you make a fellow speak out plain, I don't want your company," said Bunter. "If you jolly well won't tell me where the casino is, Valentino, I'll jolly soon find out from somebody else. Not that I'm going there, you know."

"We know," grinned Bob. "In fact, we know better than you do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Valentine laughed, put down his coffee cup, and rose.

"What about a walk to the casino?" he asked. "If Bunter's keen on it, it's not very far off. It's understood that he's not going in."

"Oh, quite!" grinned Bunter.

"You ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If you guide that blithering idiot to the casino, he will dodge away and barge in when we're not looking."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Valentine closed one eye, unseen by Bunter, at the Famous Five.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I don't think Bunter will dodge into the jolly old casino—in fact, I'm sure he won't. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!"

Billy Bunter grinned gleefully. Being his own master, and at liberty to make as big an ass of himself as he liked, Bunter regarded it as sheer cheek on the part of these fellows, to step between him and the enormous fortune he was going to make. He had no scruple whatever about dodging surreptitiously into the gaming establishment, once he was guided to its portals.

"I say, you fellows, come on!" he exclaimed. "Don't slack about, you know! Get a move on!"

For once Bunter was quite brisk. Visions of enormous sums, pushed over the green cloth to him by the croupier's rake, dazzled his fat imagination. He was eager to get going—very eager. Indeed, he had no doubt that the other fellows would be willing to stay on in Rio when he showed them, later, the fabulous sums he had snaffled at the roulette-table.

The juniors left the hotel and walked along the brightly lighted promenade; six of them were smiling—one grinning from ear to ear.

From the sea-front they walked up the Avenida Rio Branco, and from that turned into the Rua Ouvidor. It was a very pleasant walk, under the stars in a deep blue sky, amid the jostling, buzzing crowds of Rio, but Billy Bunter was eager to get to the end of the walk.

"I say, is it much farther?" he gasped several times. "I say, I'm getting rather tired. I say, you said it wasn't far."

"It isn't," smiled Valentine.

Bunter came to a stop in the Rua Ouvidor; his fat little legs were beginning to ache.

"Look here, how far is it now?" he demanded.

"About a mile from here," answered Jim, after reflecting a moment; and the Famous Five grinned.

They could guess that it had been "about a mile" when they started. They had done a couple of miles, and it was still "about a mile." From which they deduced that Jim Valentine was taking them for a walk round about Rio, not getting much farther from the casino, and not getting much nearer.

That did not dawn on Bunter yet.

"About a mile!" he grunted. "I think we'd better take a taxi; I can't walk another mile."

"Let's look for a taxi," said Jim cheerfully. "Come on!"

He turned a corner, and the juniors walked after him. Billy Bunter grunting for breath as he rolled.

If Jim was looking for a taxi, he was not choosing likely spots for finding one. Leaving behind the lighted, frequented streets, he led them by quiet ways, where few cars were to be seen and no taxis at all.

Harry Wharton & Co., enjoying the

walk, swung on cheerily, regardless of the fact that there was a hilly rise in the ground before them, that the hum of the city was growing fainter, and that they were following a lane that led among scattered villas dotting the hillside.

Bunter was not regardless of it.

He grunted and gasped.

"I can't see any heastly taxi!" he groaned at last. "I say, when the dickens are we going to pick up a taxi?"

"The whenfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Look here, Valentine, you ass, we shan't pick up any taxi here!" exclaimed Bunter. "We ought to have kept to the lighted streets for that. Haven't you any sense?"

"Just a little, I hope," said Jim.

"Well, I think you're a fool!" snorted Bunter. "Look here, I'm turning back. We've got to get back into the town to get a car. We've jolly well come more than that mile; I know that."

"It's straight on to the casino," said Jim.

"Sure?" asked Bunter.

"Absolutely certain. If we keep right on we can't miss it."

"Oh, all right!" groaned Bunter.

They kept right on.

The ground grew steeper; the villas more scattered, with patches of wood and jungle. It looked to the Famous Five as if they would have to cross the hills at the back of Rio if they kept on, and would arrive in the interior of the South American continent. However, they said nothing. It was an enjoyable walk, and that was what they wanted; and certainly they did not want to arrive anywhere near a casino.

"Ooogh-oo-oo!" gurgled Bunter, as he dragged his fatigued fat limbs onward. "Oh dear! I'm tired! Oh lor! I don't believe you know the way at all! Oh crikey! You're jolly well gammoning! Oh crumbs!"

He stopped at last; leaned on a garden wall and blinked at Jim Valentine through his spectacles with an almost ferocious blink.

"Look here, you beast, you said it was right on—"

"So it is."

"Well, how far, then?" demanded Bunter.

"Let's see," Jim Valentine pondered.

"I know it's straight on. We can't miss it if we keep right on and take no turnings—"

"How far?" howled Bunter.

"Just under 25,000 miles," answered Jim.

"What?" shrieked Bunter.

"Twenty-five thousand miles," answered Jim. "A bit of a walk even for a hefty hiker like you, Bunter—what? We shall have to get over the Sugar-Loaf Mountain—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Walk across Brazil, Paraguay, the northern Argentine, and Chile—"

"You silly idiot!" gasped Bunter.

"Then swim the Pacific Ocean—"

went on Jim Valentine.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"After that," continued Jim, "we shall have to walk across Australia—"

"You silly chump!"

"Swim the Indian Ocean—"

"Beast!"

"Cross South Africa—"

"Rotter!"

"Swim the Atlantic—"

"Oh, you beast!"

"And land at Rio," concluded Jim; "then it will be about half a mile."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

Evidently, from Jim's description, they had their backs to the casino, and,

although it was certain, if they kept right on, they would reach it, they had the circumference of the globe to cover first. Keeping right on, the casino was 25,000 miles ahead.

Bunter leaned on the wall and groaned; the Famous Five roared. Jim Valentine had been right; Bunter was not going to slip away and dodge into the casino when he reached it. He was not going to reach it! Not unless he walked round the world—altogether too extensive a proposition for Bunter, keen as he was to accumulate fabulous wealth on the green table.

"Owl! Oh dear! Beast!" groaned the fat Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "That beast has been pulling my leg!"

"That's dawned on him!" gasped Bob. "What a brain!"

"The brainfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear! Oh lor! Owl!"

"Come on!" said Jim Valentine briskly. "We've no time to lose, with that walk before us, Bunter."

"Beast!" groaned Bunter. "Look here, you rotter, can we pick up a taxi if we keep on farther?"

"Certainly!"

Bunter detached himself from the wall, but he was getting suspicious now; he blinked searchingly at Jim's smiling face.

"Where can we get a taxi?" he demanded.

"I think Antofagasta is the nearest if we keep on."

"Where's Antofagasta, you beast?"

"In Chile—"

"Chile?" shrieked Bunter.

"Yes. I don't think we shall hit any taxis in the interior of Brazil, or in Paraguay, but on the other side of the continent, at Antofagasta—"

"Beast!" yelled Bunter.

And he rolled round to go back to Rio. He was not prepared to walk across South America to pick up a taxi in a Chilean city.

Chuckling the Famous Five walked back with Bunter.

Bunter did not chuckle; he groaned and gasped and gurgled. His fat legs were almost dropping off. Even the attractions of the casino no longer attracted. What Bunter wanted was to sit down and stay sitting down. All that he asked of Fate was to sit down—just to sit down!

Back in the city a taxi was picked up and Bunter was able to sit down. He plumped down, and did not stir again till he reached the Hotel Gloria, then he went straight to bed. The vast sums he had been going to snaffle at the casino remained there un-snaffled.

Still, it was possible that Bunter never would have snaffled those vast sums; it was possible, on the other hand, that the croupiers would have snaffled all Bunter's available cash—indeed, it was probable. In fact, it was certain, had Bunter only known it! That evening's ramble round Rio had profited Billy Bunter to the exact extent of all the cash he possessed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Going Up the Sugar-Loaf!

"UP the Sugar-Loaf!" said Jim Valentine.

"Yes, rather!"

"Coming, Bunter?"

"I expect you fellows would be funky if I didn't come. I'll come," said Bunter.

Whereat the Famous Five smiled.



Putnam van Duck leaped to his feet, so suddenly that the table rocked, and a cup of tea shot over Jim Valentine's legs. Next moment, the young millionaire was running like a deer. Staring round in amazement, Harry Wharton & Co. saw the cause. It was Putnam's bodyguard, the gunman, who had appeared upon the scene!

It was a glorious day—their last day in Rio. They were keen to pack in all they could before they went on the steamer late in the day; and the ascent of the Sugar-Loaf was one of the great things for visitors to Rio.

Billy Bunter was not in the best of tempers that day. He was still rather feeling the effects of his ramble round Rio of the evening before. No doubt he was thinking, too, of the glorious chance he had missed, of making a gigantic fortune.

But he said nothing more about the casino. He realised that so long as these inconsiderate beasts were with him, he was not going to have any chance of putting his money on the green cloth—and leaving it there! The casino could wait, till they were gone on the steamer—then the fat Owl would be free to play the goat as much as he liked. That very evening, in fact, Bunter was going to spread himself as a he-man.

That was the programme. It was probable that the programme would not be carried out, as the Famous Five had no idea whatever of leaving the fat and fatuous Owl behind in Rio.

Meanwhile, Bunter honoured them with his company, though not in the best of tempers. Everybody went up the Sugar-Loaf, so Bunter was going. The magnificent view from the summit did not interest him very much; but there was also a restaurant at the top, which had an attraction for him.

When they reached the cable railway, however, Bunter blinked at it rather dubiously. The cable stretched over two enormous chasms, before it reached the top of the Pao de Assucar, over a thousand feet up.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Pack in, old bean!" said Bob cheerily. "The car's rather small—but I think you can get in sideways—"

"Beast! I say, suppose that cable broke?" said Bunter.

"It never does!" said Jim Valentine, with a smile.

"Well, suppose it did?" argued Bunter.

There was no doubt that, had the cable broken, there would have been a terrific crash.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Of course, it's never had such a strain before," he remarked. "You ought to have done some slimming, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that's a cinch!" drawled a voice at the juniors' elbows; and they glanced round in surprise.

The young American whom they had seen on the yacht the day before, gave them a nod and a grin.

He was still chewing nuts.

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

"Same to you, big boy!" said Putnam van Duck. He chewed nuts, and grinned affably. "I'll say I'm sure pleased to hit your bunch in this burg packed with pesky dagoes. Yop!"

The Greyfriars fellows smiled.

They rather liked the breezy American, and his way of talking to fellows he had hardly seen, as if he had known them all their lives.

Billy Bunter, however, gave young Van Duck a severe blink through his big spectacles. The sight of the youth from Chicago reminded Bunter of the lost macaw.

"Where's my parrot?" he demanded.

"I'll say that bird's on my yacht," said Van Duck, "and he sure is enjoying life. See that bird eat nuts! He's been in bad company, I guess, that macaw."

"How's that?" asked Harry.

"Well, he talks a lot, and it's all

about beasts, and cads, and a lot of rotters, and old fools, and silly asses!" said Van Duck. "He's got a string of names with compliments attached. One is that stuck-up ass Wharton—"

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"Another is that fathead Cherry—"

"Oh!" said Bob.

"And he talks about a milksop named Nugent—"

"Thanks?" said Frank.

"And a clumsy idiot named Bull—"

Johnny Bull snorted.

"And a cheeky nigger named Inky—and a particular sort of beast called Valentine—"

Jim Valentine laughed.

"I'll say that bird has known a queer bunch!" said Van Duck, nodding.

"We're the bunch!" said Harry Wharton, rather dryly. "And he learned it all from that fat ass! Come on, you men—let's get in!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Say, Fat Jack, you can have your bird when you want him," said Van Duck.

"My name's not Fat Jack!" snapped Bunter. "What the thump do you mean, blow your impudence?"

"Well, I guess I ain't wise to your call-by; and Fat Jack seems to soot," said Van Duck cheerfully. "You want that macaw, you ask for him at the Dollar Duchess—but mind Poker Pike don't shoot the top of your head off while you're asking. I'll mention that that guy is sudden on the shoot."

"You're not going to keep my macaw!" hooted Bunter.

"Surest thing you know!" agreed Van Duck. "I'd have brought him back if I'd known where to get you. How'd I know?"

(Continued on page 16.)

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FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from page 13.)

"You can jolly well go and fetch him!"

Van Duck chuckled.

"Not in your lifetime, big boy! I guess I ain't hitting the Dollar Duchess again any too soon. Nope! I'll tell a man, I'm tired of Poker, and his pesky gun, a whole lot. Say, you want to sell that bird, I'll sure buy him—I'd like to send him as a present to the popper at home! He'd sure make pop's hair curl—what he's got left—the way he puts it across!"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"Are you coming, Bunter?" called out Bob.

"I say, you fellows, can't you wait a minute or two while I'm speaking to a chap?" snapped Bunter. "I say, that's a jolly valuable parrot, Van Duck. Worth lots of money."

The young American's keen eyes scanned Bunter's fat face for a second, giving him the once-over as he would have called it.

"Spill it!" he said briefly.

"Well, I hate to part with him, as I'm so jolly fond of him," said Bunter. "What about five pounds?"

"One for the parrot and four for the fondness?" asked Van Duck.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"It's a trade; I'd sure like to send him to pop!" Putnam van Duck extracted a leather case from his pocket, and, as he opened it, Bunter's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles at the sight of the extensive roll of bills it contained. Clearly, the heir of Van Duck was well provided with cash.

The American boy peeled off three ten-dollar notes and whisked them into Bunter's fat hand.

"It's a cinch!" he said. "I won't say I'm wise to the latest figure of the exchange, but you won't lose on that."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He knew enough about the exchange to know that thirty dollars was nearer six pounds than five.

"Are you coming?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yep!" answered Van Duck, apparently regarding the question as addressed to him, though Bob was calling to Bunter.

He cut after the Greyfriars fellows.

Bunter blinked at the notes in his hand. Then he rolled hurriedly after the American.

"I say, Van Duck!" he howled.

Bunter's experience of Americans was limited; chiefly, to his acquaintance with Fisher T. Fish, at Greyfriars, who was almost too mean to live. This, it was plain, was quite a different variety of American! A fellow who had stacks of money, and parted with it so easily, was an uncommon sort of American, and the sort that Bunter wanted to meet.

"I say—" He grabbed Van Duck by the shoulder. "I say, did I say five pounds?"

"Sure!"

"I—I—I meant ten!" gasped Bunter. Van Duck grinned.

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"I'll say you meant it too late, then!" he drawled. "Guess again, Fat Jack!"

"Look here—"

"Park it!"

The American boy followed the Greyfriars juniors in. Billy Bunter gave a grunt of disgust. Certainly, he had not lost on the transaction, as the macaw had cost him nothing at the fazenda on the Rio Rexo. But he could have kicked himself for not having said ten—or even twenty!

"Look here—" he repeated.

"Are you getting in, you fat ass?" roared Bob Cherry. "We're starting."

Billy Bunter blinked at the car, and blinked at the cable. He had another minute. He occupied that minute by tying his shoe-lace. The more he saw of that cable, the less he liked it.

"Bunter!" called out Harry Wharton.

"Buck up, Bunter—"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

Bunter was still tying his shoe-lace when the car whizzed off. Whether that cable would have stood the strain of Billy Bunter's avoirdupois, was never to be put to the test!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Worries of Wealth!

"SOME swing!" remarked Putnam van Duck.

"Some!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Putnam did not even know the fellows' names—though he seemed to have heard them from Bonito. But he had calmly hooked on to the Greyfriars party, with breezy cheerfulness and confidence.

They did not mind in the least, though it took them a little by surprise.

Putnam glanced down at the tops of tall trees that looked like small shrubs, as he made the remark.

Swinging across that terrific abyss, Harry Wharton & Co. were rather glad that Bunter had stayed behind—to tie his shoe-lace!

The chums of the Remova were not troubled with nerves; but there was no doubt that Bunter would have emitted a series of horrified squeaks, as the car, with its passengers, hurtled over space.

There were other passengers in the cable-car, as well as the Greyfriars party and the American boy, and some of them did not seem easy in their minds.

The trip up the Sugar-Loaf, at Rio, is, in fact, rather a trial to a weak, nervous system. Two vast chasms had to be crossed in the two laps of the journey, and looking down made a fellow feel a little giddy.

One lady passenger was seen to clamp her eyes tight shut; and a stout gentleman took off his hat, and stared carefully into it all the way up. But that swing out over space rather thrilled and delighted the Greyfriars fellows. Putnam seemed to be enjoying it, too.

"I'll say this is a change after the Dollar Duchess!" he remarked.

"Tired of your jolly old yacht?" asked Nugent, with a smile.

"You said it!" agreed Putnam. "Fed-up, and then some! I'm sure goin' to pack it home to the popper, this side up with care."

"I fancy I shouldn't get tired of it soon, if it belonged to my pater," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Your what?" asked Putnam.

"Pater—popper in American!" translated Bob.

"I get you! You English sure do talk a surprising lingo, but I get you!" said Putnam. "Maybe you'd get fed-up

with that packet, big boy, if you had to cruise with Poker Pike, same as I have. I'll mention that that guy, with his gun, does surely get my goat!"

"Can't you boot him?" asked Bob.

"How'd I boot him, when he's carrying out pop's orders?" grunted Putnam. "Ain't he got to see me safe?"

"Aren't you safe on your father's yacht, with a captain and crew, without a gunman looking after you?" asked Harry Wharton, puzzled.

"Not according to pop! I'm telling you, Chick Chew might be around at any spot."

"Chick Chew!" murmured the juniors. They remembered that they had heard Mr. Pike utter that remarkable name.

"That very guy!" said Putnam.

Evidently he supposed that the juniors knew all about Chick Chew, whoever Chick was. No doubt he was a famous man in the United States.

Harry Wharton & Co., however, had never heard of him, and they could only look perplexed.

"Chick Chew?" repeated Bob. "Is that a man, or a breakfast food, or what?"

And the juniors chuckled.

Putnam van Duck stared.

"You don't allow you ain't heard of Chick?" he exclaimed incredulously.

"Never!"

"Well, pack me up in a Saratoga!" said Putnam in astonishment. "Say, do you ever get the noos in England? Ain't they got any noospapers in your island?"

"A few; but I don't seem to have seen Chick Chew in them!" said Harry, laughing. "Who is Chick, and what does he chew?"

"I'll tell you he's in the American noospapers, in letters a foot high," said Putnam. "He's the big noise! The goods! They say he's made a cool million kidnapping."

"Kidnapping?"

"Yep! I guess that guy would kidnap the President of the United States, if he got the idea into his cabeza. When he cinches a galoot he never lets up his grip under a hundred thousand dollars."

"Oh!"

"Popper could drop that, and not miss it—but he ain't going to," explained Putnam. "He's sure an obstinate old mugwump, my pop! Soon's Chick got after me, pop got his back up. Nowhere in the United States, of course, was any good, when Chick got going. So he sent me off in his yacht for a cruise round the world, with Poker to keep tabs on me."

"Oh!"

"You see, Poker's been in the game himself, and knows it from A to izzard. He's a dandy with a gun, and some kidnapper! Pop reckoned he was the guy to see me safe, and I'll say pop hit it plumb centre, if you come to that. There ain't many guys that would have the sand to pull on Chick—but Poker would shoot up Chick, as soon's as he'd shoot up a policeman in Chicago!"

"Oh!" gasped the juniors.

They had heard, of course, of the kidnapping business in the United States—one of the most flourishing industries of that great country. But it was quite interesting and entertaining to hear about it from Putnam van Duck.

Apparently the son of the multi-millionaire had been marked out as a victim of the gangsters, and his popper had sagely engaged a gangster for his defence—setting a thief to catch a thief, as it were.

No doubt it was a more efficacious method, than relying on the forces of law and order in the great American republic.

They began to understand, now, that

extraordinary episode on the harbour of Rio the previous day.

Even a boatload of schoolboys had excited the suspicions of the wary Pike. No doubt he calculated that the redoubtable Chick might have been hidden on board the motor-boat.

"That's the how of it," said Putnam. "Get me? I'll tell you guys, I'm fed-up! Pop can go off on his ear, if he likes—I ain't standing it any more! I've sure beat it out of the yacht—and that's what's the matter with Alice Mary! I guess Poker'll be looking for me, a few!"

He chuckled. "You see, Poker won't let me walk ashore without he walks on the tail of my coat," he explained. "I sure can't move without hitting him with my elbow. I can't chew a nut without hitting him in the eye with the shell. I've had too much Poker on my plate! I'm giving him a miss."

He winked at the astonished juniors. "That's why I was glad to see you mosey along yesterday! I reckoned I'd get you to give me a lift, Poker not looking! I sure do want to miss that guy a whole lot."

"Oh!" said Harry. "But was there a chance?" said Putnam. "There was not! I'll say that man Pike is getting on my nervous system! Chick sure would be better for a change. I got a chance to-day—a boat came along to sell fruit, and I did a ten-foot jump."

"Oh crumbs!" "First time I've hit space without Poker," chuckled Putnam. "I'll say I like it. O.K. Hallo, here we are!" The passengers turned out of the car at Morro da Urea, the half-way station up the mountain.

Putnam went with the Greyfriars fellows to the second car, for the second part of the ascent of the Pao de Assucar. Evidently he was a member of that party now.

Glad as he was to get away from the too-constant and watchful attention of Mr. Pike, he was glad of some company, and he seemed to like that of the Greyfriars juniors.

They noticed that he looked back, rather keenly and anxiously, from the second car. No doubt he guessed that the wary Mr. Pike would have got ashore as fast as possible, to hunt for him.

"I shouldn't be s'prised," said Putnam, "to see that guy at the top when we get there! I'll tell you, he's the man for keeping tabs. Pop's standing him a Cabinet Minister's salary to see me through, and he allows he's going to earn it. He's an honest man, is Poker—he backs up pop, jest like he would Chick, if Chick was paying him."

Luckily, the wary Pike was not sighted at the top of the Pao de Assucar. If he was on Putnam's track, he had not yet tracked him to the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, so far as could be seen.

The juniors had tea at the top of the Sugar-Loaf. Putnam had tea with them—talking most of the time, and they learned quite a great deal about the enterprising Chick and his nationwide kidnapping business in the United States. Putnam seemed rather proud of that famous fellow-citizen of his—though, at the same time, anxious not to fall into his hands. The juniors listened with considerable amusement.

Suddenly Putnam broko off. He leaped to his feet so suddenly that the table rocked, and a cup of tea shot over Jim Valentine's legs.

"Ow!" gasped Jim. "What—" "What the thump—" Putnam was running like a deer. Staring round, in amazement, the

Greyfriars fellows saw the cause. It was in the shape of a wiry, steely eyed man with a black bowler-hat screwed down on his bullet head.

"Pike!" gasped Bob. "Oh crumbs!" The gunman did not heed the school-boys. He cut after the fleeing millionaire's son.

They heard his voice float back as he went.

"Say, you Putnam van Duck! Say, you young geek, I'm sure arter you to tote you home—"

Hunter and hunted vanished. Whether Putnam van Duck was rounded up, and "toted" back to the Dollar Duchess, or whether he made his getaway, the juniors did not know. They saw no more of either the gilt-edged American, or his gangster guardian. They were left grinning.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Disappearance of Billy Bunter!

"BUNTER!" "Where's that fat ass?" "Gone!" "The gonefulness is terrific!" "What the dickens—" exclaimed Jim Valentine.

"Look for him!" said Harry. But it was useless to look for Billy Bunter. Bunter was gone. As he had not chosen to accompany the juniors on the trip up the Sugar-Loaf, they naturally expected to find him waiting for them when they came down.

Bunter, it seemed, had not waited. Even with taking tea at the top, the party had not been gone an hour. But in that space Bunter had had ample time to disappear.

And he had disappeared. "Gone back to the hotel to feed!" suggested Johnny Bull.

It seemed probable! The party boarded the tram for the Rio Branco to return. On the way they kept their eyes open for Billy Bunter; but he was not to be seen in the endless crowds of Rio.

From the tramway they walked to the Hotel Gloria, only to learn that Bunter was not there. But he had been there! For they found that he had left a note for them in the bureau.

They read that note together, with deep feelings. It ran:

"You rotters! "I'm dun with you. I kno jolly well that you fancy yore going to get me on the steamer. Well, you ain't! (Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Good or bad, our clever Greyfriars Rhymester takes 'em all in his stride. This week he tells you in verse a few home truths about STEPHEN PRICE, the Black Sheep of the Fifth.

(1)

Now Stephen Price is full of vice
Which isn't nice, and that's a fact!
He has a craze for rotten ways,
He'll end his days by being sacked!
With drinks and bets and cigarettes,
He'll have regrets for all his past,
For well he knows that when he goes
He'll find his woes come home at last!

(2)

To play the fool like that at school
Is, as a rule, a silly lark,
And many a youth like Price, forsooth,
Has found the truth of this remark.
At all events, if Price has sense
He'll soon dispense with such delights,
Before old Prout casts round about
To find who's out of bounds at nights.

(3)

I put this view to Pricey, who
'Twixt me and you, did not agree!
In fact, he said he'd punch my head,
And thrash instead of thanking me.
This gratitude was rather crude,
And though his rude remarks were meant,
I did not beat a swift retreat,
But took a seat on business bent.

(4)

Said I, "Old bean, it's all serene,
Don't make a scene, or start a fight!
If you've a kink for cards and drink,
No doubt you think it's quite all right!
Of course, a bloke must have his smoke,
It's quite a joke—don't lose your rag!
Be calm!" I cried, but Price replied,
"I'll have your hide, you cheeky jag!"



(5)

The reckless chump then took a stump
Which landed thump upon my nose,
I went down prone without a groan,
I might have known it, I suppose!
Behind a chair in great despair
I crouched, and there I thought I'd stay.
I cried, "You make a great mistake,
For goodness sake hear what I say!"

(6)

"I do not blame your silly game,
But all the same it's rather rot
To go and moon each afternoon
In some saloon or shady spot,
With wine on tap, while playing nap,
It's low, old chap! You know that well!"
His face went blue, it's really true!
"I'll slaughter you!" I heard him yell.



(7)

As he said this with emphasis,
I thought I'd miss the rest, and scoot!
I bounded for the study door,
But with a roar, I got his boot!
Kick followed kick, severe and quick,
That did the trick, I roared and rolled.
I wouldn't go through such a show
Again! No, no—for untold gold!



"I don't chuze to arguo with you about it. I'm staying on hero, and you rotters can go and eat coak!

"As I shan't be cumming back to the hotel, you'd better pay my bill. I can't spair the munny, as I shall knead all my kapital.

"Of course, I shall settle later. I shan't miss a few pownds out of my winnings. I may look in at Wharton Lodge, if I'm back for Eester. I can't be shore.

"Go as soon as you like, and be blode to you! Lot of rotters! Walking a chap off his leggs! I've got plenty of munny to try my luck at the Casino, see? I shan't go there till you are gorn, so it's no good looking for me.

"Yores with kontempt,
"W. G. BUNTER."

"P.S.—Beasts!"

Jim Valentine and the Famous Five looked at one another. They looked at one another very expressively.

"The—the—the—" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh, there ain't a word for him!"

"The blithering idiot!"

"The blinking fathead!"

"The terrific ass!"

"What on earth's going to be done?" exclaimed Jim Valentine blankly. "If he's not coming back to the hotel, how the dickens are we to find him?"

"That's an easy one to answer—we can't!" said Bob.

"Oh, the silly ass!" exclaimed Harry. "We shouldn't have let him out of our sight! I suppose this idiotic idea came into his idiotic head when we left him at the Sugar-Loaf! We can't go on the steamer without him."

"Only—we must!" said Frank. "The passage is booked and paid for—and we're due home—"

"How can we go without Bunter?"

"How can we stay?"

"Oh, if a chap was only near enough to the fat chump to kick him!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "But the findfulness is the sino quanon."

Jim looked at his watch.

"Three hours before you need get on the steamer," he said. "We may find the howling ass by then."

"Better try, I suppose!" said Harry.

And the juniors set out to look for Bunter.

They had little hope of finding him.

Having cleared off from the hotel, taking his suitcase with him, all that Bunter had to do was to keep out of sight.

That was easy enough, in a city with a population of 1,800,000. The fat Owl was lost somewhere among nearly two millions, and looking for him was rather like looking for a needle in a haystack.

But he had to be found.

The Famous Five had to go. They could not miss the steamer. Jim Valentine had to get back to Uncle Peter and the fazenda. But he said that he would manage to hang on in Rio till he found Bunter, and hooked him on to the next steamer, if he was not found now.

That, indeed, was all that could be done, and the idea of leaving Jim with that trouble on his hands was intensely exasperating to the chums of the Remove.

They hunted for Bunter, and certainly, had they found him, Bunter would have had a hectic few minutes when found.

But they did not find him.

He was nowhere near the Hotel
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Gloria. He was not to be seen on the seafront, or in the avenidas.

Possibly he had taken up his quarters at some other hotel. In that case, if he kept indoors, it was futile to hunt for him.

More and more exasperated, the juniors rambled round Rio, looking for a fat face and a pair of big spectacles gleaming in the sun!

Suddenly Wharton, as he was pushing through a crowd in the Avenida Rio Branco, felt a poke in the ribs. He turned, expecting to see Bunter.

"Oh, you dummy!" he exclaimed. "You—" Then he saw that it was not Bunter. It was a wiry, wooden-faced man in a clamped bowler hat.

"Say, I guess I piped you rubbering around, big boy!" said Mr. Pike. "I'll say I'm doing some rubbering, too! You wise to it where that young geck Van Duck has vamoosed to?"

"Van Duck!" repeated Harry. In the worry about Bunter, the juniors had forgotten all about the American.

"Sure! You was with him on the Sugar-Loaf, I reckon," said Mr. Pike, his slits of eyes watching Wharton's face suspiciously. "I guess you'll know."

"Sorry," said Harry. "I haven't the foggiest! I haven't seen him since we were at the top of the Sugar-Loaf."

"Mebbe," said Mr. Pike, "and mebbe not! I'll allow you look on the level, but Chick Chew sure does rope in all sorts of side-kickers to pull off a kidnapping stunt. I'll tell a man."

Harry Wharton stared at the gangster blankly for a moment, and burst into a laugh.

It seemed that Mr. Pike had not recaptured the millionaire's son, and was still looking for him. And he suspected that the Greyfriars fellows knew where Putnam was. Indeed, his suspicions went further than that—he was prepared to suspect them of being hired by the redoubtable Chick to help pull off the kidnapping. Wharton could not help laughing.

But the wooden face of the gangster remained hard and serious. His slits of eyes were full of deep suspicion.

"I guess you'll put me wise, if you eavvy where that young geck is!" he said. "I got a gun around. You get me?"

"I'm not sure I should tell you if I know," answered Harry. "But I don't know. And I've no time to waste, Mr. Pike. I'm looking for a fathead that's lost himself."

"I guess—"

Wharton did not wait to hear what the gangster guessed! He hurried after his friends, and resumed the vain search for the vanished and elusive Owl.

A little later, looking round in search of Bunter, the juniors did not see Bunter. But they saw Mr. Pike.

He was keeping in their wake, following them wherever they went, and "keeping tabs" on them, as Putnam would have expressed it. Clearly, the suspicion was fixed in his mind that they knew something of Putnam.

There was no expression on the face that looked as if it had been carved—rather carelessly—in hickory. But the slits of eyes glinted with suspicious watchfulness.

Half a dozen times in the next hour the juniors sighted the gangster, still on the track, and still watching like a cat—or, rather, like a lynx.

But they gave no heed to Mr. Pike. Billy Bunter filled their thoughts. For once, Billy Bunter was a much-sought-after fellow; for once, he was wanted—and wanted badly! Generally, when he was not wanted, Bunter would turn up

like a bad penny. Now that he was wanted, he did not turn up.

The Greyfriars fellows returned to the Hotel Gloria at last, tired and exasperated and perplexed.

After them walked Mr. Pike, unheeded.

Harry Wharton had a faint hope that Bunter might, after all, have turned up at the hotel again, and might be found there. But that hope proved unfounded. Bunter was not there, and had not been seen there again.

"If a fellow could only land him one jolly good kick!" sighed Bob.

"Bother the silly ass!"

"Blow him!"

"Leave him to me," said Jim Valentine. "I'll hang on, and scout for him. I can let Peter know at the fazenda. It's all right."

There was nothing else to be done. Unless the Famous Five were to be left behind at Rio, they had to get on the steamer. They had fully intended to hook Bunter on to that steamer—by his fat ears, if there was no other way—when the time for departure came. They had not foreseen his disappearance, and they were fairly done. They had to go without him.

Baggage had already been sent on board the Bayford Castle. There was none too much time for the juniors to follow it now, and, making up their minds, they walked down to the quay with Jim.

And the persistent Mr. Pike, who had waited outside the hotel for them, walked down to the quay in their wake.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

It was a shrill squeak.

Six fellows jumped almost clear of the quay.

Passengers were going on the Bayford Castle by the gangways. Most were already on board; but late-comers were still going on, and among the latest were the Famous Five and Jim Valentine. Hurrying through the swarming crowd of all colours and nationalities, the juniors were only thinking of getting on board before the gangways were taken in and the siren sounded its unmelodious note of farewell to Rio. Bunter, at last, had been dismissed from mind.

Just as they reached the gangway that sudden, startling, unexpected squeak came from behind.

They spun round.

"I say, you fellows," yelled Bunter, "stop for me! I say, hold on! I say, make these niggers gerrout of the way! I say—"

"Bunter!" gasped Harry.

"The esteemed idiotic Bunter!"

"Bag him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The juniors turned back. They were in a hurry, but Bunter, evidently, was in a greater hurry. Barging through the crowd, the fat Owl bumped into a black gentleman, who turned on him in wrath. Two or three more black gentlemen joined in, all of them talking to Bunter in gabbling Portuguese, with excited and angry gestures.

"I say, you fellows—" shrieked Bunter.

They ran back. The black gentlemen, evidently, were annoyed by Bunter's barging, and looked like barging him in return. There really was no time for a shindy on the quay. But Jim Valentine spoke hastily to the blacks in the language they understood. Browns departed from black faces, and they moved off, much to Bunter's relief.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter "Oh dear! Cheeky niggers, you know! I say, Valentine, what did you say to them?"

"That's all right," said Jim. "I explained that you weren't quite right in the head—"

"What?" howled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky ass!" hooted Bunter.

"Come on, you blithering idiot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You've turned up only just in time for the steamer!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Where's your suitcase?"

"I haven't got it! You see—"

"Well, there's no time for it now! You've only time to get on the steamer! Come on!"

"Don't be a silly ass!" gasped Bunter. "I'm not coming on the steamer!"

"What!" yelled the Famous Five.

Bunter having turned up on the quay at the last moment, they had supposed, naturally, that he had changed his mind and decided to leave with them. Apparently, however, he hadn't.

"You see, it's like this!" gasped Bunter, while the chums of the Remove looked at him as if they could have eaten him. "I've been robbed! You see, I was going to another hotel, to keep there while you fellows cleared off, and—and a man spoke to me and offered to guide me to an hotel where English was spoken, and—"

"You footling ass!"

"And instead of guiding me to an hotel," gasped Bunter, "what do you think he did? He led me round a corner into an alley and bagged my suitcase, and went through my pockets—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! He took every coin I had," howled Bunter—"all my money to the last penny! Cleared me right out! Then he pitched me over, and by the time I got up he was gone!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You're the sort of chap to be left on his own in Rio—I don't think!"

"And I couldn't find my way again!" gasped Bunter. "I walked and walked and walked for hours and hours, and couldn't find my way—"

"Good old he-man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I was nearly dropping when I got back to the Hotel Gloria at last!" groaned Bunter. "And they told me you were gone! So I came after you here—"

"That chap who snaffled you did you a good turn!" said Jim Valentine. "You're on time, after all! Get a move on!"

"Don't be an ass! I'm not going! I say, you fellows, I can't stay on in Rio without any money! You see that?" gasped Bunter.

"The scuffiness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"That's why I came after you," explained Bunter "I'm not going on the steamer! I want some tin!"

"Oh scissors!" gasped Bob

Bunter had not changed his mind! He was still staying on in Rio—or so he fancied! It was improbable—now that he was within reach of the Famous Five.

He had not followed them to accompany them on the Bayford Castle. He had followed them for a supply of cash—without which, certainly, no fellow could have had a hectic time in Rio and painted South America red. They were his only resource in this extremity. That was why he was there.

"You fellows won't want your tin now you're going home," went on Bunter. "Shell out, old fellows! Keep a little change, if you like! But I want all you can manage. Of course, I shall settle later—pay you twice as much, if you like. I shall be rolling in it soon! But at the present moment—"

"At the present moment you're coming on the steamer!"

"Oh, don't talk rot! Look here, what can you lend me?" exclaimed Bunter impatiently.

"Only a boot!"

"Beast! I say, Valentine, old chap, let those rotters go on the steamer—you stick here with me! You'll lend me some money, won't you?"

"No fear!"

"Why, you beast!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"I'm not coming!" hooted Bunter. "I say, Valentine, you stay on in Rio with me. Never mind that old ass at Boa Vista; you can spin him some yarn. I'll make up something for you to tell him. You stick to me—"

"I'm sticking to you!" grinned Jim Valentine. And he grasped Bunter by a fat arm. "Sticking to you like glue till you're safe on the steamer!"

"Beast! I say—"

"Take his other arm!" said Jim.

"I say, you fellows— Leggo!"

Wharton took Bunter's other arm. Wriggling, with a grip on either arm, the fat Owl was marched on to the gangway. The other fellows followed, grinning.

On the gangway Bunter halted.

"Look here," he hooted, "I'm not going! I tell you I'm not going! I say— Yarooop!"

Bob Cherry's boot landed on the tightest trousers in South America. Bunter roared, and rolled on. There was no arguing with persuasion applied in that manner, and Bunter, though he had stated that he was not going, went. He went quite quickly.

Spluttering with wrath, the fat Owl rolled on the steamer. Safe on board, Wharton and Jim released him, so suddenly, that Bunter sat down on the

deck with a bump that almost shook the Bayford Castle.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Bunter, as he bumped.

But the fat Owl was heeded no more. Only a few minutes remained, and the Famous Five devoted them to Jim Valentine. Good-byes were said, and grips of the hand exchanged; and Jim ran back to the quay as the gangways were drawn in.

Standing on the quay, the boy planter waved his hand, as the Bayford Castle heaved out of her berth.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter.

But Bunter was not heeded. Standing in a row at the rail, the chums of the Remove waved and shouted to their chum on the quay as the steamer moved off.

They had no eyes for a hickory face under a clamped bowler hat, at a little distance from Valentine. Mr. Poker Pike watched them unregarded.

"Good-bye, old man!"

"Best of luck!"

"See you again some time!"

The crowd on the quay grew indistinguishable. But the Famous Five waved their hats back to a waving hat in the crowd. And the Bayford Castle churned on past the Sugar-Loaf, and rolled out to sea.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Stowaway!

"WE had a ripping time!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"And we'll jolly well see old Jim again some time."

"We jolly well will!"

The Bayford Castle was churning the Atlantic, and South America was a blur on the port quarter. Harry Wharton & Co. were looking back at the fascinating land of Brazil, where they had had some happy and exciting weeks. As a matter of fact, they were feeling the parting with Jim Valentine, and were not, at the moment, quite so merry and bright as usual.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter weighed in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Thinking of all those millions and millions of quids you've left behind at Rio?" asked Bob.

"Beast! I can't get into my cabin!" grunted Bunter. "Mine's No. 16 on B deck, ain't it?"

"That's it," said Harry.

"Well, the door's shut."

"Open it!" suggested Bob.

"It won't open!" snorted Bunter.

"Leave it shut, then!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I

(Continued on next page.)

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want to get into my state-room, you fathead! Come and get it open for me!"

"What rot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, come on!" sighed Bob Cherry.

The juniors' baggage had been placed in their state-rooms. Bunter, however, had come on board without any baggage, owing to the elusive individual in Rio who had relieved him of his suitcase. Bunter, during the voyage home, would have to depend on the other fellows for the things he wanted. That, however, was nothing new to Bunter; he generally did, anyhow.

The Famous Five accompanied him to No. 16 on B deck. The door of the state-room was shut and, somewhat to their surprise, it did not move when they tried to open it. They tried in turn, but the state-room remained hermetically sealed.

"I told you so!" yapped Bunter.

"Better call a steward," said Harry. And the steward on duty on B deck was hunted out, and duly called to the spot.

He tried the door in his turn.

"Fastened inside!" he said. "Somebody's got into the wrong cabin!" He thumped on the door. "Here, I say, let me in! You've got the wrong room. Hear me?"

Whoever was in the state-room must certainly have heard. But whoever he was, he did not heed. The door remained fast; the porthole was closed and covered, and no sound came from within.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Ere, you let me in! Steward calling!"

Still no reply.

"I say, you fellows, some beast's bagged my cabin!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "I say, steward, you jolly well turn him out!"

"I'll turn him out fast enough if I get in!" grunted the steward. "I'll call the assistant purser!"

The assistant purser was called. But the unseen and mysterious occupant of No. 16 did not heed the assistant purser.

"Must be deaf," said that gentleman. "Deaf as a post!"

"Somebody's there," said the steward. "What about a stowaway?"

"Call the purser," said the assistant purser curtly.

And the steward went and called the purser.

By this time, the Famous Five were getting keen to see the occupant of No. 16. It was rather a mystery who could have got possession of that state-room.

"Looks like a stowaway," remarked Bob Cherry.

"It does!" agreed Harry.

Indeed, it was hardly possible that it was anything else. A passenger might have mistaken his cabin, and shut himself in it, when the steamer rolled out to sea. But he would hardly have remained silent during the thumping and shouting at the door.

A stowaway, on the other hand, would naturally be unwilling to be hooked out till the latest possible moment—when it would be too late to put him back on shore.

It was too late already, as a matter of fact. Whoever was in No. 16 was booked for the voyage, at least, as far as the Canaries, the first land at which the Bayford Castle was to touch.

"Cheeky beast!" gasped Bunter. "Some rotter without any money in his pockets, pinching a passage!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came suddenly from within the state-room. Bunter's remark had been heard within, and for some reason seemed to excite the merriment of the unseen person who had appropriated Bunter's state-room.

"Why, the rotter's laughing!" hooted Bunter. "You come out of my state-room, you cheeky beast! You jolly well won't laugh when you're kicked out and run in for stealing a passage."

No reply.

"Cheek, to pick my cabin!" said Bunter.

But it was easy to guess why Bunter's cabin had been picked. Some unauthorized person had got on board in the crowd at the quay—perhaps under

the pretence of seeing somebody off. Instead of going ashore when the siren hooted, he had slipped into an unoccupied cabin. Other cabins had baggage in them—Bunter's was empty. No doubt the stowaway supposed, or hoped, that it was a cabin not engaged for the voyage, in which he might have remained stowed away, unseen, for quite a long time.

"It's a bit new for a stowaway to pack into a first-class cabin!" said Bob, with a grin. "Some nerve!"

"Must be a stowaway!" said Frank Nugent.

"Well, what else could the chap be?" said Bob. "A passenger would answer, and open the door."

There could be no doubt about it.

The purser arrived, with a frowning brow. He was a busy man, and seemed annoyed. Steward, and purser, and assistant purser gathered at the door of No. 16, the juniors watching them with great interest. Other passengers, spotting that something was going on, began to gather round.

"Here, you! Let us in!" rapped the purser, tapping on the door at the same time.

No answer.

"If I have to call the captain, you'll be sorry for it!" hooted the purser. "You'll have to go to him, anyhow, you rascal! Open this door at once!"

Silence.

"If we have to force this door—" roared the purser.

"Hold on!" said Bob. "Perhaps he'll open the door, purser, if he knows we're too far out at sea for him to be chucked off!"

"Oh!" said the purser. "Yes! Here, you! You're booked as far as the Canaries now; and I tell you, you'll be shovelling coal till you get there! Now open that door!"

"Say, is that level?" came a voice from within; a voice that made the Greyfriars fellows jump. They knew that voice.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh, my only summer bonnet!" stuttered Bob.

"I say, you fellows, I know that voice!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I've heard it before somewhere. I know that Yankee twang!"

"Van Duck!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Say, you guys," came from the unseen one, "give a guy the straight goods! I guess I know your toot—you're the bunch I went up the Sugar-Loaf with, say. You're on the level! Say, are we too far off Rio for a baby about my size to be toted back to the quay?"

"Much too far off!" called back Harry Wharton. "The skipper wouldn't turn back now for a hundred stowaways!"

"That goes!"

The state-room door opened. Purser, and assistant purser and steward stood ready to grab the stowaway as soon as he appeared. They were ready to walk him off to an incensed captain for judgment. Naturally, they expected to see some shabby individual, who had "pinched" a passage because he could not afford to pay for it.

But they did not grab that stowaway when he emerged. They stared blankly at the well-dressed, obviously wealthy youth who lounged cheerfully out of Room No. 16. Putnam van Duck nodded to them with perfect coolness and self-possession, and smiled cheerily at the Greyfriars fellows.

"Fancy hitting your bunch again!"

"TOM MERRY'S GREAT JAPE!"

When a St. Jim's master found a prehistoric being—the missing link between ape and man—he thought he had made the greatest discovery of modern times. He little knew he was the victim of the biggest jape ever! Read all about it in the ripping story of Tom Merry & Co. which appears in to-day's issue of

The GEM

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he remarked. "I'll mention I'm glad to see you. Who'd have guessed it was Fat Jack's cabin I pinched? I'll tell a man! Say, Mister Purser, I'll walk along and see the captain as soon's you like. Putnam van Duck can pay his passage, and a little over. I guess I was staying doggo to dodgo a guy who was keeping tabs on me more'n I wanted. I'll say that hombre, Pike, is left behind at Rio, still rubbering around for me. What?"

Putnam van Duck walked away with the astonished purser, chewing nuts as he went.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise at Teneriffe!

"THE jolly old Peak!" said Bob Cherry.

Teneriffe was in sight from the homeward-bound steamer. Harry Wharton & Co. had stopped at

Teneriffe and clambered over the celebrated Peak, on their way out to Brazil. But it was new to Putnam van Duck, who gave it the "once-over" with interest as the Bayford Castle rolled on to the port of Santa Cruz.

More than a week had passed since the steamer had pulled out at Rio de Janeiro, and in that time the chums of Greyfriars had seen a great deal of young Van Duck.

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

I HAVE frequently mentioned in these little chats of mine paragraphs concerning the existence of real-life

RIVALS OF BILLY BUNTER.

Now, from the United States, comes a story of a man who threatens to put even the redoubtable William George in the shade! This is the amount of food he consumed in one day: Eight steaks, two plates of stew, twenty-eight slices of bread nine eggs, two dishes of peaches, twelve portions of pie, and a dozen cups of coffee.

And this man weighs only 9 stone 4 lb. after a diet like that! He's in hospital now. No—not as a result of over-feeding, but just because he can't keep pace with his enormous appetite, and he wants the doctors to discover some treatment which will allow him to curb his appetite and keep it within reasonable bounds!

Did you fellows know that

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT ARE HAUNTED?

Here's an unusual ghost story that may interest you. Many years ago the River Police spotted an old and rotten boat being sculled towards the Terrace of the House. The oarsman was hideously deformed, and gave no answer to the hails of the police. The police gave chase, but the phantom boat went straight for the stones of the Terrace, and then—it simply melted away into the stones and vanished! The police boat, hard behind it, crashed into the solid stonework.

What's more, it is claimed that this particular ghost, who has been nicknamed "Big Ben," is still occasionally seen—usually a few minutes before midnight. Several other ghosts are also reputed to haunt the Houses of Parliament.

How would you like to tackle a leopard—with only your bare hands? That's what a native of Assam, India, did when he was

ATTACKED BY A LEOPARD.

The savage beast leapt upon him, and if it had not been for his amazing presence of mind he would doubtless have fallen a victim to the beast. He managed to get a grip on the leopard's tongue, and, despite all its endeavours to get free,

he hung on to it like a bull-dog, yelling for help all the time.

Luckily for the native, his son, who is only eighteen years of age, heard his cries, and ran to his assistance. The son had only a knife, but, as his father continued to keep a grip on the leopard's tongue, the youngster was eventually able to kill the animal.

When the leopard was measured, it was found to be nearly seven feet in length. It's not the kind of brute I'd like to run across on my way home at night!

Here is another tale from Fisher T. Fish's country. The State of Florida is known as

THE LAND OF SUNSHINE,

and the people of Florida are proud of their state's record for sunshine. Twenty-five years ago the proprietor of the "St. Petersburg Independent" made a wager. He said that he would give copies of his paper away free every day the sun did not shine before 3 p.m.

He has just had to give copies of his paper away free for two days running. In the last twenty-five years such a thing has only happened 120 times! This shows what a marvellous record for sunshine Florida must have. Just imagine what would happen if a London newspaper proprietor made the same wager! Our "pea-soup" fogs would soon cost him a very considerable amount of money!

OUR "Mr. X," who occasionally answers readers' queries asking how certain conjuring tricks are done, will have to look out for himself! Professional conjurers are getting annoyed with writers who make a habit of

EXPOSING CONJURING TRICKS!

Most professional conjurers (and a lot of amateurs, too) belong to an organisation known as the Magic Circle. They complain that their best tricks are being "given away" to the public, and they are going to wage war upon those who do it. As a beginning they have expelled Mr. David Devant, one of the oldest and best-known illusionists in this country, who is now 69 years of age. They say

he has been telling the public too much. But this veteran magician doesn't care. He says that the only tricks and illusions he has exposed are those which he invented himself. Furthermore, he considers that he ought to give his secrets to the world before he dies.

"Mr. X." is also unrepentant. He says that if he can "see through" a trick, there is no reason why he shouldn't help any reader who has an ambition to become a conjurer.

Here are two

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to queries which readers have propounded to me:

What is the Largest Motor Vehicle in the World? This has just made its appearance on the streets of Berlin, Germany. It is a laundry van 70 ft. 6 in. in length. It is 7 ft. broad and 11 ft. high, and develops 100 h.p.

How Many Islands are there in the Japanese Empire? There are no less than three thousand separate islands in the Japanese Empire!

From one of my Canadian readers, who lives in Calgary, Alberta, comes an interesting item of news which is well worth passing on to you. It concerns

THE GARDEN OF DINOSAURS,

which is to be established on St. George's Island, near Calgary, shortly. This looks like being a really top-notch place to spend an afternoon. The idea is to transform the garden into a re-creation of what Canada was like fifty million years ago! In those days gigantic monsters roamed the country. Innumerable fossilised remains of them have been discovered in the Red Deer River district, and now these remains are to be placed on St. George's Island, where a prehistoric museum will be established.

In order to show exactly how fearsome these monsters looked, full-sized replicas are to be made. There will be forty of them all told, and they will be placed in surroundings that will be as near natural as possible. Some of these "models" will be a hundred and twenty feet in length!

Before drawing to a close, I must say a word or two about next week's programme.

You all remember Eric Wilmot, who was expelled from his previous school on a charge of theft and came to Greyfriars? Well, once again this junior finds himself in the limelight. What actually happens is told in Frank Richards' best style in:

"HIS RECORD CONDEMNED HIM!"

the grand long yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. Having sampled this treat, you will be able to enjoy further chapters of our adventure-thriller: "The Lost Squadron," following which will be another rib-tickling issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" and more snappy verses by our clever rhymester.

Looking forward to next Saturday's MAGNET, chums? I'll bet you are!

YOUR EDITOR.

They might have seen rather too much of him, in fact, for he made no bones about bestowing his company on them; but they liked the cheery, breezy American, and were glad to find him on board the steamer.

They were interested, too, in his singular stunt for escaping from the over-watchfulness of his gunman-guardian, and wondered how it would turn out.

He explained, with cheery chuckles, how he had got on board the Bayford Castle before she sailed, and ensconced himself in a cabin that he guessed was engaged.

His passports and papers were in the hands of Mr. Pike, under whose care he was travelling, and without them he was not in a position to book a passage on a liner in the ordinary way.

Moreover, as Mr. Pike was hunting him all over Rio, and very likely inquiring at the steamship booking-offices, it was necessary to be very wary.

Stowing himself in that cabin on the Bayford Castle had solved the difficulty.

As he could not be sent ashore, he had to be taken on the trip, and as he was loaded with dollars there was no difficulty about making his peace when he was rooted out.

It was, certainly, the most remarkable stowaway that had ever stowed himself away in a ship! It was, at least, very unusual for a discovered stowaway to book the best cabin on board, which was what Putnam did. And when it became known that he was the son of the American multi-millionaire, Mr. Vanderdecken van Duck, he became an object of general interest, and stewards, purser, and assistant pursers could not do enough for him.

So it was, as he told the Greyfriars fellows, O.K. All the captain could do was to take him in charge, to hand him over to his friends when the steamer reached port.

Meanwhile, Putnam rejoiced in his freedom, and the relief from the guardianship of Mr. Pike, with his eternal watchfulness, and his eternal "gun."

"So that's the pesky Peak, is it?" said Putnam, as the steamer glided on to the capital of the Canaries. "Do we stop there?"

"Yes—a few hours," said Harry. "We had a run ashore there coming out. I suppose we shall get the same going back."

"I guess a few hours will be enough to give that island the once-over," said Putnam. "I sure shall be glad to shake a loose leg without that guy Pike treading on my tail."

"Don't you think he'll get after you?" asked Bob, laughing.

"Surest thing you know! But I guess he won't be wise to it in a hurry where I'm located," chuckled Van Duck.

"He seemed to have an idea that we knew where you were," said Harry. "He was keeping tabs on us, as you call it, the last day in Rio. I shouldn't wonder if he saw us off in the steamer."

"I'll say he never saw me!" grinned Putnam. "I sure was safe out of sight in Fat Jack's cabin—"

"Look here—" snorted Bunter.

"He sure was buffaloed," said Van Duck, unheeding the indignant fat Owl. "I'll say he's still rubbering around Rio, looking for a blue-eyed baby about my size!"

"But won't your father be waxy at your dodging him like this?" asked Harry.

"Oh, pop will sure tear his hair a few, but he always comes round," drawled Van Duck. "He's a good little

man, is pop! I'll donate him a cable from your little island, when I hit it, and put him wise. Mebbe he'll get me on his long-distance, and tell me to hop home."

"And till then?"

"O.K.," said Putnam. "I like you guys a whole lot, and I'm freezing on to you. I'll give you a look-in at that show I've heard you mention, Wharton Lodge"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. "I mean—do!"

"Call it a cinch!"

"We shall all be at Wharton Lodge for the Easter holidays, and jolly glad to see you, if you blow in!" said Harry.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"The gladfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Van Duck!" declared Hurree Janset Ram Singh solemnly.

"But suppose that kidnapping sportsman, Chick Chew—" said Nugent.

"Chick Chew!" said Putnam.

"I mean Chick Chew—suppose he gets after you—"

"I guess I can stand Chick, as a change from Pike!" drawled Van Duck. "I'll tell you, I got tired of Pike."

"Anyhow, he'd hardly dare to try that game in England!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Putnam gave him a pitying look.

"I guess you ain't wise to Chick," he said. "He'd kidnap royalty if he set out to do it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"If he knew I was on this packet," said Van Duck, "he would be waiting for me on the quay! I'm telling you!"

"Then you're taking a lot of risk in dropping Mr. Pike!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Sure thing! But I got tired of that guy."

Whether Putnam's danger from that redoubtable kidnapper, Mr. Chick Chew, was so great as he and his millionaire "popper" believed, the chums of the Remove did not know—though they rather doubted it.

Evidently, however, Putnam believed it was real enough; but, in spite of that fact, he was glad to get away from the grim guardianship of Poker Pike.

He chuckled gleefully at the idea of the gangster "rubbering around" in Rio hunting for him, while every day the swift steamer was carrying him farther and farther away from South America.

The juniors rather wondered whether Mr. Pike was shaken off so successfully as Putnam calculated.

According to what the American boy told them, Mr. Pike was paid a princely salary and allowed unlimited expenses to keep him up to his task of preserving the millionaire's heir from the clutches of the kidnapper.

It was probable, therefore, that Mr. Pike would make every effort to recapture his straying charge, though certainly Putnam's extraordinary device of stowing himself away on the Bayford Castle gave him a difficult problem to solve.

Anyhow, Putnam was in great spirits, and enjoying shaking a loose leg, as he expressed it. When the steamer came to anchor at Santa Cruz, in the Canaries, he prepared to go ashore with the Famous Five and other passengers who were taking the run ashore at Teneriffe.

The launch came alongside to take them off. They packed into it and churned away to the mole.

There was the usual crowd on the mole, watching the incoming steamer. Putnam van Duck gave a cheery chuckle when they landed.

"I'm telling you guys!" he said. "It makes me feel good to take a little

passer without that guy Pike being around! I'll tell a man it makes me feel real good, and then some! I sure have fooled that guy, Pike!"

"Forget it!" said a voice.

Van Duck jumped clear of the mole in his surprise.

The Famous Five spun round, equally astonished.

A hickory-faced man, with a black bowler hat clamped down on his bullet head, detached himself from a stack of packing-cases, against which he had been leaning, watching the launch come in from the steamer.

He dropped a hand like a steel vice on Putnam's shoulder.

"Waiting for you, bo!" he said casually.

"Aw! Carry me home to die!" gasped Putnam van Duck.

He stared at the gunman! It was Poker Pike as large as life—and the heir of the Van Duck millions had not, after all, escaped his gangster guardian!

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Mr. Pike.

They could hardly believe their eyes. The gunman had been left behind at Rio; that was certain. The Bayford Castle was a swift steamer. Yet here he was—waiting on the mole for Putnam when he arrived!

It was quite uncanny!

"Pike!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed and absurd Pike!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"How'd you know, you piecan?" howled Van Duck. "I sure got into a hole on that steamer, and pulled it in after me! How'd you know, you pesky piecan?"

Mr. Pike gave a nod towards the astonished juniors.

"I reckoned them young ginks was wise to your getaway," he remarked. "I sure kept tabs on them back in Rio, and I piped them going on that steamer! I reckoned you wasn't fur off."

"You locoed geck! They wasn't wise to it!" howled Van Duck. "They never knew I was on that packet till they found me stowed away in a cabin."

"Mebbe!" said the gunman laconically. "And mebbe not!" Evidently Mr. Pike's training in Chicago had not taught him to believe everything that was told him.

"We never knew—" exclaimed Wharton.

"Park it!" suggested Mr. Pike. "If you didn't know it was jest luck that I figured that you did! I sure figured that Putnam was making his getaway on that steamer with your bunch, and I'll mention that I've strewed around a good few of his popper's dollars hiring a plane to get in front of you! Yep!"

"Search me!" groaned Putnam.

"This let me out!"

"You said it!" agreed Mr. Pike, unmoved. "I was coming out to the steamer if you hadn't hopped ashore. But I reckon I spotted you on that launch, and waited to give you the glad hand."

Mr. Pike's glad hand was clamped as tight on Putnam's shoulder as the derby hat on Mr. Pike's head.

"You got me, Poker!" said Putnam dismally.

"I got you!" agreed Poker.

He had! There was no doubt of that! He had got him, and he retained possession of him!

When the launch carried the Greyfriars fellows back to the Bayford Castle it did not carry Putnam van Duck.

No longer shaking a loose leg, Putnam stood on the mole and watched them go—with a hickory-faced man at his side,



Putnam van Duck jumped almost clear of the ground in his surprise as his bodyguard detached himself from a stack of packing-cases and dropped a hand like a steel vice on his arm. "Waiting for you, bo!" said the gunman casually. "Aw!" gasped the young millionaire. "Carry me home to die!"

grim and watchful. Whether Putnam van Duck got away again, or whether his gangster guard remained in possession, the Greyfriars fellows did not know. The Bayford Castle churned on its way home, and they saw no more of either of them.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Asks For It!

"I SAY, you fellows——"
"Jolly to be back, after all!" said Bob Cherry.
"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"
"I say, you fellows!" bawled Billy Bunter.

Standing in the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, Billy Bunter blinked into that celebrated apartment through his big spectacles with a wrathful blink.

The five fellows in that study certainly saw Bunter, and certainly heard him. But they did not heed him.

Back at Greyfriars School to wind up the term after their holiday in Brazil, the chums of the Remove were feeling merry and bright.

Grinding Latin with Mr. Quelch in the Form-room was not, perhaps, quite so enjoyable as exploring tropical forests, riding on the green campos, or paddling canoes on the Rio Rexo. But it was all in the day's work, and they were glad to see the old school and old, familiar faces again.

At the present moment they were preparing a spread in Study No. 1—and not merely a common or garden spread, but a feast of the gods. For Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, was coming to tea in the study to hear about their adventures in Brazil and news of his former pupil, Jim Valentine.

At that busy moment Billy Bunter was superfluous. He generally was superfluous, and now more so than ever.

"I say, you fellows!" hooted Bunter for the third time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Bunter?" Bob Cherry looked round at last. "Blow away, bluebottle!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"
"Roll away, barrel!" said Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton glanced at the study clock.

"Getting near time," he said. "Open the jam, Franky! Make that kettle boil, Johnny, old man!"

"I say, you fellows——"
"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I'll buzz off fast enough when you've paid me what you owe me, you beasts!" hooted Bunter.

"What?"

The chums of the Remove were busy. Fellows did not have a Form-master to tea every day, and it was a particular occasion. But busy as they were, they paused in their various occupations to bestow astonished stares on the fat Owl of the Remove.

"What's that, ass?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Wandering in your mind," asked Johnny Bull.

"Who owes you anything, you footling fathead?" asked Frank Nugent.

"You do!" retorted Bunter. "I had some money left at Rio, but I lost it when that beast cleared me out, pretending to guide me, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, cackle!" snorted Bunter. "I can tell you, when I got back to England I hadn't a bean! Not a bean!"

"Then you're not one of the has-beans!" remarked Bob Cherry.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "You fellows owe me money, but I wouldn't dun you for it, only I've been disappointed about a postal order."

"Same old postal order!" chortled

Bob. "I wondered how long we should be back before we heard of that postal order."

"The fact is, I was expecting several!" explained Bunter. "They ought to have come while I was away, you know. But—they haven't!"

"Not really?" grinned Bob. "Mean to say that your titled relations all forgot you while you were away?"

"Beast! There's been some delay in the post, or something," said Bunter. "Anyhow, I haven't had the postal order I expected! I'm hard-up! Actually short of money!" said Bunter impressively.

"Awful!" sighed Bob. "What does it feel like to be short of money for the first time in your life, old fat man?"

"Well, in the circumstances, you will have to square!" said Bunter. "I'm not going to ask you for all you owe me. But a pound on account."

"I suppose nobody here owes Bunter anything?" said the captain of the Remove, glancing round.

"Not guilty!" grinned Bob.

"You jolly well do, and you jolly well know it!" said Bunter scornfully. "You know how much money I should have made at Rio if you hadn't butted in and stopped me!"

"Wha-a-t?"
"Hundreds of pounds——"

"Oh crikey!"
"Thousands, very likely——"

"Help!"

"You did me out of all that!" said Bunter warmly. "Did I ask you to butt in? You jolly well know I didn't! Well, you owe me the money!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the five.

They understood now what they owed Bunter. It was the vast sum he had been going to win at the casino in Rio if he hadn't been taken for a ramble round Rio instead.

"You can cackle!" hooted Bunter. "Thanks—we will! Ha, ha, ha!" "I'm not asking you to settle up the whole amount!" said Bunter considerably. "You couldn't, of course. But—"

"But we could, and we jolly well will!" declared Bob Cherry. "I'll hand you over the precise amount you were

going to win at roulette at Rio, Bunter, if—"

"If what?"

"If you can give me change—two-and-six change out of half-a-crown!" explained Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? Two-and-six

change out of half-a-crown would leave nothing—"

"Yes—that's the exact amount!"

"Beast!"

"Now run away and play," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We're expecting Quelch up to tea—"

"Blow Quelch!"

"If he comes along and hears you blowing him—"

"I say, you fellows, you've got to do the right thing! Never mind Quelch now. You owe me money—"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"You can call a fellow names!" roared Bunter. "Who stopped me from making a lot of money at Rio? Who barged in and kept me away from the casino, where I was going to break the bank? Who took me walking till my legs nearly dropped off, when I wanted to go and play roulette and—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly. He spun round in the doorway of Study No. 1, and stared at an angular gentleman who had just come up the passage from the stairs—and who evidently heard what he was saying. The expression on Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch's speaking countenance was a plain indication that he had heard.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor'!"

"Bunter! I heard you—"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't speaking, sir—I was only saying that—"

"Is it possible, Bunter, that when you were trusted—trusted, sir—on a holiday abroad, it was necessary for these boys to prevent you from indulging in reckless and disgraceful blackguardism?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I meant—"

"Then what did you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I—I mean I—I—I wasn't going to break the bank at Rio, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never heard of a casino at Rio, sir, when I was there! Never dreamed of it! You can ask these fellows, sir! They—they remember that I begged them, with tears in my eyes, sir, not to go near the casino! Not that I'd ever heard of such a place, sir!"

"Bunter—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-e-s, sir! C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"You may follow me to my study, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

"At once!" thundered the Remove master.

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter followed Mr. Quelch down the stairs. He followed him into his study. From that study, a few moments later, was heard the rhythmic swiping of a cane, to an accompaniment of howls and gasps.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack!

"Wow!"

"I think that will do, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, laying down his cane.

Bunter thought so, too! For once he was in complete agreement with his Form-master.

"You may go, Bunter."

Bunter went—wriggling!

He wriggled away like a fat eel. He gasped and groaned as he went. He yelped and he squeaked. Nobody, looking at Billy Bunter just then, would have dreamed for a moment that he was a he-man!

THE END.

(Look out for next week's MAGNET and another ripping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "HIS RECORD CONDEMNED HIM!" It's a great yarn, chums, I'm telling you.—ED.)

WHO TOLD THE TRUTH?

Special Article by HARRY WHARTON, Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."

ONE of the hardest jobs I have as Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald" is that of sorting out the false news from the true.

To give you an idea of the kind of problem I mean, I can't do better than quote the example of the fire report that cropped up on Press Day recently.

I was trying to push three would-be contributors out of the editorial sanctum, when news of the fire arrived. The three would-be contributors were Billy Bunter, Bolsover major, and Hurree Singh, and they were very wrathful to hear that I hadn't an inch of space to spare for any of them.

Just as I was thinking of sending for the Fighting Editor to deal with them, Skinner rushed in with the news that ended the argument.

"Got any space left?" panted Skinner. "There's a fire!"

"A fire!" I gasped. "I can jolly soon make space for a fire, whatever has to go! Where is it?"

"In the Head's house! Can't stop!"

"Half a jiffy, old scout!" I yelled, as Skinner turned to go. "Can't you tell me—"

But Skinner had gone already! I turned to my three budding journalists in a flash.

"You chaps are all anxious to get into print. Well, here's your chance!" I snapped. "I want the best report I can get of this fire, and I want it quickly! Get busy on it at once, and bring me your manuscripts in half an hour."

The three budding journalists raced off—each one apparently quite convinced that nobody but himself stood an earthly.

They kept to the timetable all right, and in slightly under half an hour the amateur reporters slammed their "stories" down on my desk and went—leaving me to read through them in peace.

And that was just where the trouble began for me! The more I read, the more puzzled I grew. There wasn't one point of resemblance between the three reports! It was as though they had been describing three distinct and separate fires!

Here are the three "stories," just as I received them:

1. By BILLY BUNTER.

One of the bravest deeds ever witnessed was performed at to-day's grate fire, when Bunter of the Remove rescued three people who were trapped by the flames. Dr. Locke and Mrs. Locke and Miss Rosie Locke, the three in question, ought to consider themselves jolly lucky that a hero like Bunter was present.

It was their own silly fault they were in danger. Simply because no fire brigade turned up, they insisted on saving as much furniture as possible themselves—with the result that they eventually got trapped in a room upstairs!

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Strong men blanched and weak men fainted when they saw the trio appear at the winder, ringing their hands piteously.

"Who will save them?" was the cry.

"Sorry, but I can't do it myself," said Wingate of the Sixth. "My doctor has given me strikt instructions to keep cool; and it wouldn't be possibul in a temperature of two hundred degrees Farrenhite, would it?"

Others made similar plawsible egg-scuses. Forchunately, just when it seemed that the Locke famby would have to perrish in the flames, Bunter appeared on the scene. Without a thought of the dire peril to which he was eggsposing himself, he fearlessly climbed up the ivy-covered wall to the winder.

"Have no fear!" he cride. "Leave it all to me! You, sir, climb on to my back, and I'll take Mrs. Locke on one shoulder and Miss Rosie on the other!"

And in a brace of shakes the brave lad was descending the ivy-covered wall again, carrying three yewman beings as though they had been three feather-weight ventriloquist's dolls!

If the fire has done no other good, it has, at any rate, shown that British curridge and valler still live—when Bunter of the Remove is about!

2. By BOLSOVER MAJOR.

What an ugly fire! The flames roared and screamed, as they devoured their prey! Shooting out of the windows, they slogged away at every possible target. The roof collapsed under a terrific uppercut. Blow after blow sent the floors crashing earthwards till the entire house took the count! It was a fair knock-out!

3. By HURREE SINGH.

Esteemed Greyfriars volunteers turned out manfully to extinetfully put out the fire in the Head's summer-house. Owing to an honourable and ludicrous failure of the water supply, hoses could not be used, so buckets of sand and esteemed clods of earth were throwfully hurled on to the flames instead. The august and lamentable Head himself orderfully took command, and, under his wise and absurd directions, the blaze was speedily subdued. The damage was slightfully negligible.

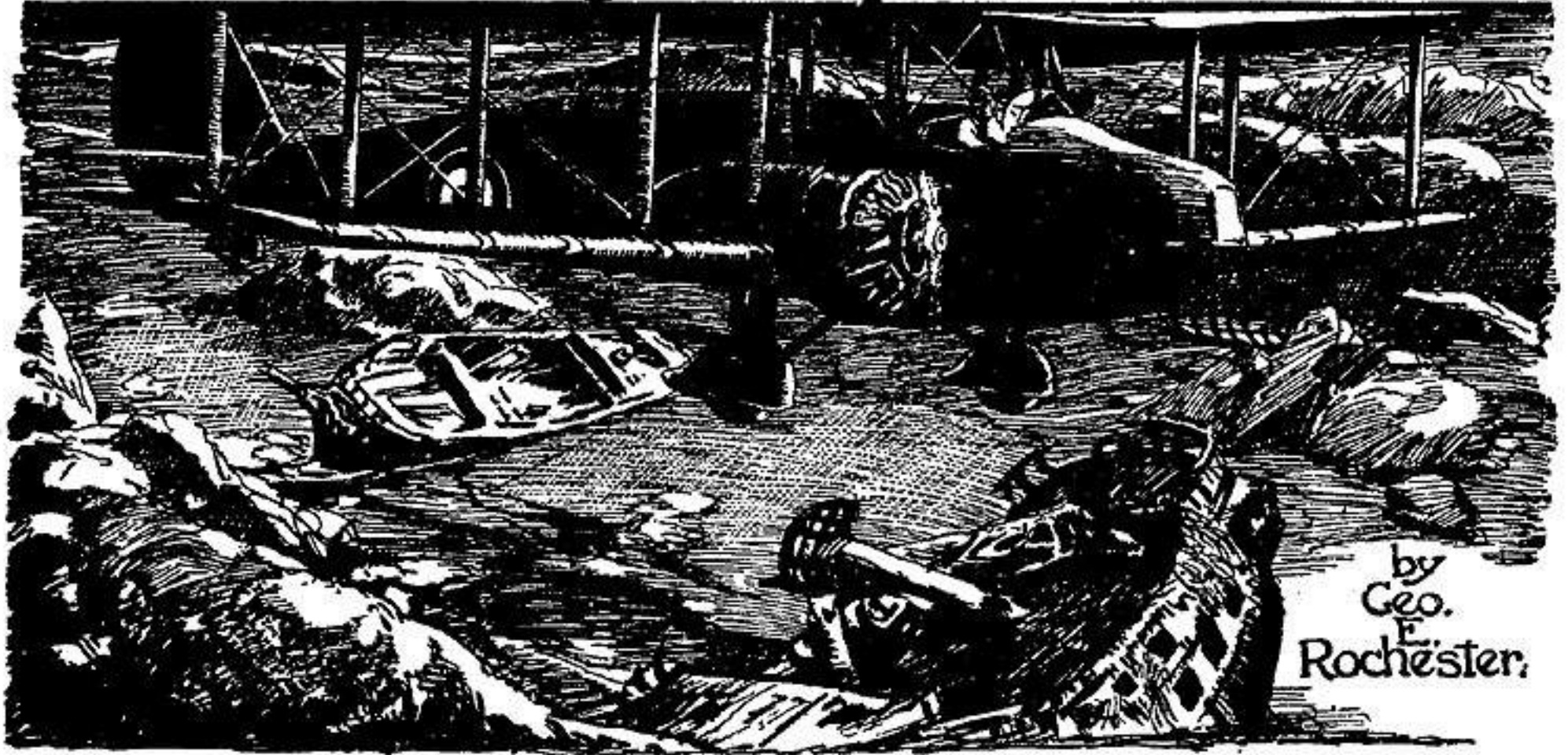
"Ye gods!" was all I could say, as I put down the third and final manuscript.

Who was telling the truth? There was one way of finding out—to go along and see for myself! That was what I finally decided to do.

The result of my investigation was curious. None of my imaginative contributors, it seemed, had had time to go along themselves. If they had, they would soon have found out that the whole thing was only one of Skinner's potty japes.

The "fire" in the Head's house turned out to be merely the fire in the grate!

THE LOST SQUADRON!



A Willing Hand!

CAST away on a desert stretch of land which has risen up from the bed of the English Channel as the result of a huge tidal wave, Squadron-Leader Akers, Flight-Lieutenant Ferris and three more castaways—Sam, Baines, and Crawley—discover that England and Western Europe are submerged beneath the sea.

Reconnoitring, they come upon the age-old ruins of Camelot, where they make their headquarters. Trekking southwards, they meet Captain Anstruther, who together with seven more survivors, has detected a seam of gold in the rocks. Later more castaways drift into the camp, among them Hans Larsen and a gang of toughs, who, together with Baines and Crawley, determine to seize Anstruther's claim.

Boarding a dinghy, Ferris and Sam set off to warn Anstruther. Hoping to enlist the services of a burly artist, Ferris pulls in for the oar.

Reaching it, he left Sam with the boat, and, making his way to the wrecked barge, Elsie Gladys, he found the artist seated on the deck, frying potatoes over a spirit stove.

"Good-morning!" said Ferris cheerfully, swinging himself up on to the deck. "Those potatoes smell good!"

"There's only enough for one!" retorted the other pointedly. "What do you want?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," said Ferris, "in all probability there's going to be a scrap, and I thought you might like to join in."

"No, thanks!" retorted the artist, shaking the sizzling potatoes in the pan. "I'm not interested."

"You will be when you hear about it," replied Ferris confidently, and he thereupon launched into an account of the gold seam and their suspicions concerning Larsen and his men.

"Of course," he concluded, "we may be quite wrong, and Larsen might not be making for the Anstruther camp at all. But if he is there's bound to be a fight, and we'll want every man we can get."

"Why didn't you bring some along with you, then?"

"Because there's not room in the

dinghy for more than three at the most," replied Ferris. "Now, what about it? Will you come?"

"No, I won't," returned the other. "All right," said Ferris shortly. "Stay where you are, then!"

He turned away, then swung suddenly on the artist again.

"I suppose you think it clever," he snapped, "to stay here all by yourself and talk about the sweets of solitude and all that sort of rot. Well, it's not clever, it's just absolute beastly selfishness—"

"Here, steady on!" "Beastly selfishness!" repeated Ferris, unheeding the interruption.

"And you're not a philosopher, either, so you needn't kid yourself you are. You are a lazy slacker, and you try to camouflage your laziness by calling it philosophy—"

"You don't understand—"

"I understand this much," went on Ferris wrathfully. "There's decent and honest fellows running the risk of having their heads smashed in by Larsen and his gang, and when I ask a great hulking bundle of muscle like yourself to come along and lend them a hand in defending themselves, you refuse, because you're either too lazy or too frightened. You're a contemptible ass, and I'm only sorry I went to the trouble of coming ashore to see you."

Taking the frying pan from off the spirit stove, the artist placed it carefully on the deck; then, rising to his feet, he lazily stretched himself and yawned.

"Have you quite finished?" he asked. "Yes, except that I should like to give you a punch on the nose," replied Ferris.

"Why don't you?" "I would if I thought it would knock some sense into you."

The artist laughed, then, stepping quickly forward, he grabbed Ferris by the front of his leather jacket. Next instant he had lifted that thoroughly astonished individual off his feet and was holding him at armslength above his head.

"Now!" he cried, with a great booming laugh. "Overboard and head-first into that pool—what?"

"No!" bawled the futilely struggling

Ferris. "Stop it, man! Put me down, confound you!"

For a few awful moments, however, as he was swung backwards and forwards above the head of the artist, it seemed to Ferris that he really was going to be hurled overboard head-first into the near-by pool.

The strength of the man was amazing, and Ferris was helpless in his grip; then suddenly, with another great laugh, the artist bent his arms and planted the gasping Ferris feet first on the deck.

"Anything more to say?" he demanded.

"Only that I'm dashed sorry you're not coming with Sam and me," replied Ferris lugubriously. "I'd love to see you and Larsen mixing it."

"Larsen's a big fellow?" asked the other, reseating himself and placing the frying pan on the spirit stove.

"Yes, he is," replied Ferris. "Well, I'll push off."

With that he walked to the edge of the deck, and was on the point of jumping down to the rocks below, when the other brought him up short.

"Hang on a minute!" he cried. "I think, after all, I'd rather like to meet this Larsen. Have some lunch, and I'll come along with you."

Ferris accepted the invitation with alacrity; and over the meal of fried potatoes, pickles, and tinned tongue which ensued he learned that the other's name was Peter Alvoy, and that he was an artist, late of Bloomsbury and the Rue de St. Jean, in Montmartre, Paris.

Pressed by Ferris, Peter Alvoy also modestly admitted that he'd done a bit of boxing in his time and had been something of an all-round athlete.

"But I detest it," he frankly admitted. "I want to paint; and this liking of mine to be alone is not a pose, either. Before this upheaval came I'd often seriously thought of buying an island somewhere."

"And keeping people off with a shotgun?" laughed Ferris.

"Yes, absolutely!" assented the other.

The meal concluded and the platters washed, Alvoy accompanied Ferris to the sailing dinghy; and soon, with sail hoisted, the little craft was standing up to the coast, heeling over to the fresh-

ing breeze, the water creaming and bubbling away from her bows.

"By Jove! But this is great!" exclaimed Peter appreciatively, lounging amidships and drawing in great breaths of the ozone.

Both Ferris and Sam fully agreed; for, indeed, it was great to be afloat on such a gloriously fine afternoon after the long and weary days spent amidst the eternal vista of dreary rock and sand.

The sun was sinking red in the west by the time they came opposite the point where Anstruther had established his camp, and, putting over the tiller, Ferris stood in for the beach.

As they neared it, Sam let down the sail with a run, and as the bows grounded he leapt ashore and held the boat whilst Ferris and Peter disembarked; then, exerting all their strength, the trio hauled the dinghy above high-water mark, and, having made everything ship-shape and secure, struck inland towards Anstruther's camp.

The Attack!

THE sun had set, and dusk was creeping in across the drear and silent land, by the time they reached the camp, where they found Anstruther and his men gathered round the camp-fire.

Anstruther was surprised to see them, but he made them very welcome and listened attentively to what Ferris had to tell him.

"And you really think this fellow Larsen and his gang are planning to attack us?" he said, when Ferris had concluded.

"We don't know at all," replied Ferris. "But both Akers and I thought you ought to be warned, in case they are on their way here. Baines and Crawley have joined Larsen, and you will recollect that Baines saw the gold seam."

"Yes," nodded Anstruther. "And he's a fellow I didn't like the look of. I'm very glad you've come along and given us this warning. I'll have a strong guard set at once and take every precaution against attack. Do you happen to know if they're armed?"

"No, I don't know at all," replied Ferris, "but I should say not; whilst they were at Camelot we saw no signs of any weapons in their possession."

"We cannot ignore the possibility of their having arms, though," said Anstruther: and there followed then a discussion as to the best way to repel any attempted attack on the camp.

Including Ferris, Sam, and Peter, the artist, Anstruther's party now numbered eleven, and until dawn eight of them on sentry duty formed a wide cordon round the camp, on the alert for the slightest sound out there in the darkness.

Ferris was strongly of the opinion that no attack would come that night, as he was convinced that it would take Larsen and his men more than a day to reach the camp. However, there was wisdom in the posting of a guard. But dawn came without any sign of Larsen and his gang.

Throughout the day which followed two men, armed with Anstruther's powerful binoculars, were on duty on the highest ground to the south of the camp, and it was towards dusk that one of them came hastening to Anstruther.

"There's a party of men coming this way from the south," he reported;

"they're too far off for us to make out how many of them there are, but we reckon there's about a dozen."

Ferris and Anstruther hurried at once to where the other man was watching the approach of the strangers. Taking the glasses from him, Anstruther handed them to Ferris.

"You know Larsen and his gang," he said. "See if you can recognise them."

Pressing the glasses to his eyes, Ferris studied the approaching party long and earnestly. But they were still far away, little more than dots in the distance. Lowering the glasses, he shook his head.

"I cannot say definitely that it is Larsen," he said. "But there are ten of them, and as Larsen's gang numbers ten, I should imagine that's who they are."

"All right!" exclaimed Anstruther. He turned to the sentry. "Get back to the camp," he ordered, "and warn everybody to stand by."

The man departed, leaving Ferris and Anstruther where they were; and as the minutes passed, the pair continually studied the approaching men through the powerful glasses, until at length Ferris turned to Anstruther.

"It is Larsen," he said, "and I can recognise Baines and Crawley. What's more, the whole bunch of them are armed with cudgels!"

"That seems to wash out any possibility of their having firearms, then," said Anstruther. "Come on, let's get back to the camp!"

Leaving a man on guard, they hastily retraced their steps to the camp-fire, which had that day been built at the end of a narrow gulch, rendered into a cul-de-sac by a solid wall of rock, at the base of which the camp-fire blazed and crackled.

The plan of campaign which had previously been decided upon was quickly run over again by Anstruther. Then, when every man knew exactly what he was to do, the party of ten split up into two squads of four and six.

The four, which included Anstruther and Sam, seated themselves around the camp-fire, the cudgels which they had fashioned during the day close to hand. The other six, led by Ferris, and also armed with cudgels, ensconced themselves behind the rocks which flanked the entrance to the gulch.

Slowly the time passed. Then suddenly through the deepening dusk came running the man who had been left on guard.

"They're coming!" he reported first to Ferris, and then to Anstruther. "They're very close now, and there's no doubt that they're making for this camp."

"All right!" said Anstruther. "Join Mr. Ferris!"

Returning to Ferris, the man went to cover among the rocks beside the others. Another period of waiting followed; then to the ears of Ferris and his companions there came the rumble of voices and the sound of heavily booted feet approaching over rock and loose stones.

At a whispered warning from Ferris every man in his party cowered closer into cover, hidden entirely from view behind the rocks and boulders; and a few moments later from out of the dusk there loomed up the burly and bearded figure of Larsen. He was followed by Baines, Crawley, and the other members of his gang, and, stalking straight past the ambushers, he made towards where the camp-fire glowed at the end of the gulch.

"They look as though they mean business," murmured Peter, who was crouched behind the same boulder as Ferris.

"You bet they do!" returned Ferris grimly. "Larsen's what the Yankees would call real tough!"

Seeing Larsen approaching, Anstruther rose to his feet, and, carrying in the crook of his arm the one rifle the party possessed, he advanced to meet him.

"Who are you, and what do you want here?" he demanded.

Larsen and his men halted, and it was Larsen who spoke.

"Who we are doesn't matter," he growled. "What we want is your gold seam. Hand it over peaceably and we'll let you clear out. Refuse, and we'll bust your heads!"

The three men who had been seated round the camp-fire with Anstruther had by this time risen to their feet and joined their leader.

"I thought you said there was eight in this bunch," growled Larsen suspiciously, turning to Baines.

"So there was eight when we was here last," Baines informed him.

Larsen turned again to Anstruther.

"Where's the rest of your party?" he demanded.

"That's none of your business!" snapped Anstruther. "You clear off out of here!"

Larsen grinned, and took a firmer grip on the cudgel he was carrying.

"Then you're not going to hand over the seam peaceably?" he growled.

"I certainly am not!" retorted Anstruther, taking a quick backward step and raising his rifle. "If you don't clear off at once I'll put a bullet through your head!"

With a muttered word to his companions, Larsen advanced a step.

"Now, see here," he said wheedlingly, "we don't want any trouble. You hand over the gold seam, or—Come on, men!"

With startling abruptness, he shouted the latter order, and, leaping aside from the menace of the rifle barrel, he hurled his cudgel with terrific force straight at Anstruther's head.

It seemed as though Anstruther had sensed what was coming, for as he ducked, his finger tightened on the trigger of his rifle, and with the sharp crack of the exploding cartridge there came a bellow of rage and pain from Larsen, who staggered back, blood oozing through the left shoulder of his shirt. With a menacing roar, Larsen's men had swept forward, and Anstruther had just time to fire again before they were on him, tearing the rifle from his grasp.

This second bullet, fired at such close quarters, tore through the stomach of one of the men, and the fellow went down doubled-up and screaming in agony.

Then the fight began, but certainly not in the way Larsen's gang had anticipated. For, without warning, they found themselves attacked in the rear by Ferris and his companions, who had emerged from cover and silently followed them into the gulch.

Knowing the desperate and lawless character of these ruffians whom Larsen led, the Anstruther party fought with a savage ferocity, grimly determined to gain the upper hand within the first few moments.

And well they succeeded, for the unlooked-for attack in the rear thoroughly

demoralised Larsen's gang. The golden-bearded Peter fought with the strength of a Hercules. Scorning the use of a cudgel, and bellowing encouragement to his companions, he lashed out with massive clenched fists, which smashed sickeningly into the faces of Larsen's followers.

Weakened from the first by their leader being wounded and one of their company being down with a bullet through the stomach, Larsen's gang fought with the desperation of cornered rats. They had one thought and one only, and that was to escape from this trap into which Larsen had led them.

They did escape at length, those of them who were still on their feet, and, reeling and staggering away into the dusk, which by now had almost deepened into night, they lost themselves amongst the shadows and the rocks.

Larsen himself succeeded in escaping, but five of his gang remained, unable even to crawl to cover, so bad were their hurts.

The Anstruther party had, however, not come through scathless. The face of Ferris was bruised and blood-smearred, and his right arm hung limply by his side, broken by a savage cudgel blow which he had attempted to ward off. Another man was down with a split skull which would take many weeks to mend. Yet another had a dislocated shoulder, and Anstruther himself had been so roughly handled that it was a miracle he had escaped without either broken ribs or limbs.

Peter had come through more or less unhurt, and, organising those of the party who were capable of giving assistance, he set about tending the wounded by the light of the camp-fire and that of a hurricane lantern.

There was water to be had in plenty from the pools outside the gulch, and bandages were procured from the tearing up of the clean shirts which Anstruther and his men had brought with them from the Tynemouth.

It was a long job seeing to all the injured. At length, however, it was over, and every man, including those of Larsen's, had been made as comfortable as possible.

"Well, I'm pretty certain we won't have any more trouble from Larsen," said Peter, gratefully gulping down a pannikin of water. "I think we ought to set a guard for the night, though, what?"

Anstruther agreed, and after a meal of tinned meat and biscuits, washed down by steaming coffee, the camp, with the exception of Ferris, Anstruther, and Peter, settled down for the night.

These three sat long discussing what was best to be done, and eventually it was decided that Ferris and Peter should return to Camelot the next morning and dispatch to Anstruther reinforcements from the castaways there in case Larsen should rally the remnants of his followers, and make a further attempt to attack the camp or take possession of the gold seam.

The five wounded men of Larsen's gang were to be kept prisoners until the arrival of the reinforcements. Then those of them who had sufficiently recovered to be able to fend for themselves would be turned loose. There was little point in keeping them prisoners indefinitely, for, with the arrival of the reinforcements, it was extremely improbable that they would have the courage to join Larsen in another attack on the camp.

The following morning, leaving Sam at the camp, Peter and Ferris embarked aboard the sailing dinghy shortly after dawn, to return to Camelot.



"Now," said the artist, holding Ferris at armslength above his head, "overboard and head-first into that pool, what?"

The broken arm of Ferris was in a sling and improvised splints, but Peter had expressed his confidence of being able to handle the dinghy.

And very well he did handle it on the run down the coast to Camelot. The wind was still blowing from the same quarter, making the return trip longer than the previous one up the coast, and it was not until long after darkness had fallen that they raised the camp-fire lights of Camelot and stood in for the beach.

Disembarking, they anchored the dinghy and made their way to Akers' tent.

Akers had already turned in, but on being roused he hastily donned trousers and tunic and joined them outside, where Ferris told him briefly of the fight at the gulch, and of all that had happened.

"And you've got to send reinforcements as soon as possible," concluded Ferris. "It's unlikely that Larsen will attack the camp again, but you never know what a fellow like that will do, particularly now that he bears Anstruther a grudge."

"I'll get reinforcements off within the hour," replied Akers. "We haven't been idle while you've been away, and amongst other things, we've set up a sort of council consisting of myself and three other fellows. We've got the support of almost the whole encampment, which has now grown to over forty, and our chief object is to maintain order and discipline until a rescue ship arrives."

Akers thereupon roused his three

fellow members of the council, whom he introduced to Ferris and Peter as Captain Wilson, Captain Bourne, and Mr. Morrison.

Quickly he acquainted the latter three with what had happened, and it was decided then and there to send four men at once to Anstruther's assistance by means of the sailing dinghy, and to dispatch another four on foot.

Four men aboard the dinghy would mean that the little craft would be uncomfortably overcrowded, but they would have to make the best of it. After a brief discussion as to the most reliable men to send, those selected were awakened, and the position explained to them.

There were arms and ammunition in the camp now, most of which had been brought in by the newcomers, and as these had been commandeered by the council, three of the four men who were to embark aboard the dinghy, were given an automatic apiece and a supply of cartridges.

Waiting until the dinghy had sailed, and the party of four who were to travel overland had set off, Ferris gratefully and wearily sought his blankets, and, almost before his head had touched the pillow, he was asleep.

Old Acquaintances!

FERRIS took things very easily the following day, and found much of interest in wandering around the ruins of Camelot in the midst of which a miscellaneous assortment of old acquaintances was to be seen. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,468.

ment of roughly constructed huts and tents had by now sprung up.

The signal fire on top of the hill was still kept going day and night, being covered with damp seaweed during the daylight hours, making a heavy smoke column which rose high into the air and drifted away on the breeze, signal that there was still life on the drear land of rock and sand.

It was towards evening when Ferris, strolling idly with Peter among the blackened and age-old ruins of the castle, saw three men approaching from the west, and recognised the foremost of them as the giant negro, Jim Crow, late stoker of the Boston. The other two were Coles and Huck.

As they came up, Ferris noted that all three looked particularly bronzed and fit.

"Why, hallo, boss!" cried Jim, his gleaming teeth showing in a wide grin as he advanced on Ferris with outstretched hand. "Fancy meeting you heah! An' you've busted yore arm, hey? Doggone it, but dat's a pity. But, say, what is dis place, anyways?"

"It's a base we've established, Jim," replied Ferris, taking the negro's outstretched hand. "A sort of concentration camp."

"How many folks have you got heah, Mister Ferris?" asked Jim.

"Between thirty and forty," answered Ferris. "But how do you happen to have cast up like this?"

"Guess us has bin trekkin' westwards ever since we quit the Boston," replied Jim, "an' a mighty interestin' journey us have had, boss, what wid wrecks an' stranded ships scattered about 'most all over de place."

"Get any rich pickings?" asked Ferris pointedly, remembering the reason why he, Akers, and Sam had parted company with Jim and his two companions.

"No!" growled Coles. "Aw, shet yore haid, Coles, an' don't be!" said Jim. "You know blamed well us have found more money an'—an' loot than us ever figgered on!"

Ferris laughed. "What have you done with your loot, Jim?" he asked.

"Cached it, boss," answered the negro promptly. "Cached it way back dere where nobody but ourselves can find it."

"You know, Jim," said Ferris, "you'll never be allowed to keep it."

"That's what you said afore," snarled Coles. "Well, we'll see whether we kin keep it or not. By the way, where's pious Sam? Is he still with you?"

"Yes; but he's not here at the moment," replied Ferris. He turned to Jim: "What do you intend to do?" he asked. "Are you continuing your trek, or do you want to stay here? Rescue can only be a matter of days now."

"You've said that afore!" sneered Coles.

"Coles," said Jim patiently, "I'm askin' you for do las' time to shet yore haid. If you don't, I'll land you one, an' it'll be such a sock on de mouth dat you won't be able to talk properly not for some consid-bul time to come!"

He turned to Ferris. "Dis place," he said questioningly, "am a concentration camp where you fellers is waiting for rescue—hey?"

"Yes," nodded Ferris, "it is." "Knowin' the dislawful—or what you call de dislawful—job us has bin on in lootin' wrecks," proceeded Jim, "would us be 'lowed to stay heah?"

"I certainly think so," answered Ferris. "We have a ruling council here, composed of Mr. Akers and three others. It would be a matter for them to decide. But I tell you frankly, Jim, I'm afraid they'll ask you to hand over your loot and specify the derelicts from which you have taken it."

"We won't never hand it over, boss," said Jim firmly; "but if Mister Akers an' dese other three gents ain't got no objections, I guess we'll stay on heah, for, lordy, lordy, I'so mighty tired of trekking!"

"Then you'd better see Mr. Akers now," said Ferris.

And to Akers he piloted Jim, Coles, and Huck.

The meeting between Akers and the big black was quite a friendly one, and Akers readily assented to the three new arrivals staying on at Camelot.

"But you'll have to hand over that loot, Jim," he told him. "If not to us, then to the authorities after we've been rescued. I do wish you'd understand, man, that you'll never be allowed to keep it."

"Dat," returned Jim ponderously, "remains to be seen, Mister Akers."

From then until dusk, he, Coles and Huck busied themselves in erecting a tent of tarpaulins and sails issued to them by Akers from the pile which had been collected.

"Jim's rather a likeable scamp," said Ferris, when he and Peter had resumed their interrupted stroll. "It's Coles who's the bad 'un. It was he who suggested this looting in the first place."

He told Peter then how he and Akers had met Jim, Coles, Huck, and Sam

aboard the Boston, and how the split in the party had eventually come about over this same question of looting.

"Well, it's very certain that they'll never be allowed to keep the stuff," said Peter, when Ferris had concluded. "As you and Akers say they'll be made to hand it over to the authorities."

That Coles was beginning to fear the same thing was made evident that night when in the privacy of the tent which he was sharing with Jim and Huck.

"What'n heck you ever suggested us staying on here for, I don't know!" he growled, addressing Jim. "If a rescue ship comes it won't surprise me any if that guy, Akers, asks the skipper to put the three of us under arrest."

"Yeah?" drawled Jim. "An' whaffor?"

"For looting!" snarled Coles. "Mister Akers ain't that sort," returned Jim confidently.

"You'll see whether ho's that sort or not," grated Coles. "You're too blamed trusting, that's your trouble. What I suggest is that we sling our hook outa here pronto."

"An' go where?" demanded Jim. "I ain't gonna do any more lootin', if dat's what you've got in mind. Us have got enuff stuff now to make us rich for do rest of our lives."

"I ain't meannin' we do any more lootin'!" snapped Coles. "My idea is to go off somewheres on our own until the rescue ships start to come. When they do, it'll be a blamed astonishin' thing to me if we can't find a skipper what'll give us a passage somewhere and no questions asked."

"No," said Jim determinedly, "us is stayin' right here, Coles. I've gotta cravin' for different company to you an' Huck for a while."

Rising from his blankets, he crossed to where Coles was lying.

"An' lemme tell you sumfin', Coles," he said, and although his voice was soft there was a dreadful menace in it. "Don't get no fancy notions into yore haid about going off on your own. Dat stuff what's cached is mine an' Huck's as much as yores."

"I dunno what you mean," said Coles defensively.

"You knows what I mean, all right," nodded Jim. "So remember, Coles!"

With that he turned, and, padding back to his blankets, he lay down and was sound asleep within a minute.

(Look out for more startling situations in next week's thrilling chapters of this great masterpiece by Geo. E. Rochester.)

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NO TRACE of the BOATRACE

Was Left When the Lambs of St. Sam's Got Busy!

Here's another laughable instalment of "The Skoolboy Dictators!"

By DICKY NUGENT

Clatter! Bang! Crash! "What the merry dickens."

Doctor Birchmell, the revered and majestic head-master of St. Sam's, looked up from his commio paper in distonishment, as the clumping of many hob-nailed boots sounded in the passidge outside his study. An eggpression of alarm came into his skollarly fizz at the thought that it mite be a posse of perlice come to arrest him for non-payment of income-tacks.

Then suddenly the door opened—and the Head eggperienced a pang of roleaf on seeing the familiar face of Mr. I. Jolliwel Lickham, of the Fourth. Behind Mr. Lickham came Mr. Justias and Mr. Swish-ingham and a whole crowd of St. Sam's masters. Doctor Birchmell gazed at the invaders in serprize.

"Jentlemen!" he said sternly. "What is the meaning of this here? Why aren't you in your classrooms, a-teaching of your pewpils?"

Mr. Lickham's answer to that question made the Head jump.

"Because, sir," he said, "there arcn't any pewpils for us to teach!"

"Wha-a-at?" "There's not a solitary stowdent in the classrooms, sir! It seems as though they've all gone on strike!"

"Strike mo pink!" eggclaimed the Head. "Where have the yung raskals gone, then?"

"Down to the River Ripple, sir," replied Mr. Lickham. "To-day is Boatrace Satterday, when the annual boatrace between the Fourth and Fifth Forms is rowed. Usually, of course, it is rowed in the afternoon. But this year the boys decided that they'd cut classes and have it in the morning instead!"

"Because why?" "Because now that the Guvverners have ordered the skool to be run without punishments, sir, they think they can do eggactly as they please about every-thing."

Doctor Birchmell breathed hard. A grate noddid vein stood out on his forrid.

"So the yung welps have not yet learned their lesson!" he hissed. "When we formed the secret society known as the Lambs of St.

Sam's and started reeking vengonz on those who flouted orthority, I thought they would all nuckle under in no time—despite the ban on the birch! It seems that I was wrong."

"Looks like it, sir, duzzent it?"

"Jentlemen!" eride the Head, jumping to his feet. "I'm not going to stand for this! Have you all got your society robes ready?"

"Yes, rather!" "Good. Then kindly take them along with you to the Muggleton Boat-house and await me there."

Doctor Birchmell jammed his mortar-board on his head and eyed his brother Lambs with gleeming eyes. "I will go down to the skool boathouse and see if I can bring the yung raskals to heel by fare means—and if I can't, then we shall have to use fowl!"

"Oh, crums!" "Take my robes with you, will you, Lickham?"

"Plezsure, sir!" grinned Mr. Lickham. And got out Doctor Birchmell's robes from the cupboard and tramped off with the rest of the masters, leaving the Head to go down to the skool boathouse on his own.

There was a thunderous frown on the Head's dial as he set forth, and it grew a jolly site more thunderous as he drew nearer to the river. Really, you would have thought the day had been declared a public hollerday! Stately seniors, in addishun to inky fags, were farelly crowding on to the banks of the River Ripple, and rattles and handbells and bugles were making the very dickens of a din. And all this at a time when the yung rips should have been mugging mathy-matticks or grinding away at Greek! The more the Head thought about it, the wilder he grew, and by the time he came in site of the boat-house his blud was simply boiling!

The Fourth Form Eight, led by Jack Jolly, were just carrying their racing skiff out of the boathouse, to the defencing cheers

of the crowd, when Doctor Birchmell came upon the scene. He put on a bust of speed that got him to the landing-stage well in time to plant himself in front of them.

"Boys!" he roared. "Oh, crikey! The Head!"

"Yes, it's me!" said Doctor Birchmell, grimly. "So you've all decided to cut morning lessons without so much as a 'By your leave!' eh?" hooted the Head. "Well, you can take that boat right back to the boathouse, Jolly, because Boatrace Day is off!"

There was a rebellious mcrmer from the crowd. "Don't be a cadd, sir!" "Play the game!"

"Let's row the race first and then have classes afterwards," suggested Jack Jolly. "We'll all go back as soon as it's over, sir—honner bright!"

crowd pushed the skiff forward again and it caught the Head well and trooly in the ribs and sent him shooting into the river like a boolit from a gun! Plop! Swooooosh! "Woooooooop!"

"Man overboard!" roared Frank Fearless, dashing to the lifebelt that was hanging up outside the boathouse.

It didn't take Frank long to throw in the life-bolt, and in a cuple of jiffies Doctor Birchmell was being hawled in, none the worse for his advencer—eggsept, of course, that he was half-drowned.

"Grooooo! I'll make you pay for this here, you yung raskals!" he eride. "Mark my words, if this race is rowed, some of you are going to feel mitey sorry about it before it's over!"

So saying, Doctor Birchmell tramped off, leaving

a trail of muddy water behind him. And as nobody took his misterious threat seriously, the St. Sam's oarsmen proceeded to get ready for the race.

Natcherally it didn't occur to anybody to follow the Head after he left the landing-stage. If it had, there would have made a serprizing discovery.

Instead of returning to St. Sam's, the Head went

straight to the Muggleton Boathouse. There he quickly dried his wet clobber; and then he put on a long, hooded robe of sackcloth, and joined the crowd of similarly dressed jentlemen who had assemblubled at the entrance.

"Ready, brothers?" he asked.

"Ready, I, ready!"

"Then man the motor-launch!"

And the leader of the Lambs of St. Sam's led the way to a wacking grate motor-launch which was moored at the side of the river.

In a brace of shakes the Lambs had all embarked. Then Doctor Birchmell took the steering-wheel and, with a doffening roar, the launch started off on its jorney upstream.

Suddenly there was a shout from Mr. Lickham, who was acting as look-out. "Boatrace ahead! They're just starting!"

"Well, they'll be jolly lucky if they finish!" snorted Doctor Birchmell, as he stepped on the gas. "You have all brought pea-shooters with you, I hoap?"

"I, I, sir!"

"Ripe tomaters too, sir!"

"And plenty of eggs!" "Good egg! Let's hoap they're all bad!" chuckled the Head. "Man the decks, brothers, and as soon as we got near them, let both crews have a broad-side!"

A minnit later the speck-tators who lined the banks of the Ripple saw the most eggstraordinary site ever seen at a boatrace. A big motor-launch, manned by a garstly looking crew who were dressed from head to

foot in sackcloth, tore in between the two racing-skiffs. In another jiffy the crew were firing terrifick broadsides of peas at the oarsmen and pelting them with ancient eggs and juicy tomaters!

"It's the Lambs—the dreaded Lambs of St. Sam's!" gasped the crowd in amazement.

For a few more lengths the rival Eights struggled on—and then came complete disaster. With a tromjonous crash, the skiffs collided—and an instant later they were both sinking, and the crews were swimming back to the shore.

After which, the motor-launch and its garstly crew roared away down the river again and vannedish as quickly as they had appeared!

So the St. Sam's Boatrace ended up in a complete fiasco after all. And as the buzzing crowds returned to St. Sam's, there was but one topic of conversation—the mysterious Lambs of St. Sam's, whose suxcessful campaign was fast striking terror into the harts of the skool-boy dictators!

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Whether this last yarn is true or not, I'm not prepared to say. But I think I've said enough to convince the average chap that April the First somehow needs altering. If you're not an average chap, then you'll have to remain unconvinced, that's all!

CONTRADICTION!

Coker freely admits that he's quite young to be using a razor.

And yet he was awfully wild when we recently addressed him as "young shaver"!

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 182.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

April 4th, 1936.



ALL FOOLS' DAY HAS ITS DRAWBACKS!

Argues DICK RUSSELL

Just when we were starting brekker one day this week, Bunter dashed down from the dorm. yelling "Fire! Fire!" Naturally, you'd think, we all got up and made tracks for the nearest exit. Dead wrong! All we did was to sit tight and grin derisive grins. And it wasn't till the Head trotted in and told us to march out into the quad. that we took it seriously and made a move!

The explanation of this peculiar incident is simple. It was All Fools' Day, you see—and on All Fools' Day nobody believes anything!

Now, when you come to think about it, it's a dashed awkward state of affairs to have a day when you can't afford to risk believing a thing you're told. The fire in the School House was fortunately soon put out—but if it hadn't been, then we might have been seriously "put out" ourselves! Really, when I thought over that fire incident, I couldn't help wondering whether the time hasn't arrived for setting up rules and regs. for April the First japes!

Fishy glared. "Say, you guys can't dodge your obligations like that! I had this fillum rushed down from London at colossal expense this afternoon, an' I oughta know. It ain't last year's boatrace—it's this year's, see?"

"Sure?" smiled Smithy. "Downright certain!" declared Fish—who has a gift for telling barefaced whoppers unequalled at Greyfriars. "That's the authentic fillum taken on the Thames this afternoon!"

"Then in that case, old bean, you've performed a great miracle!" grinned Smithy. "As a matter of fact, you see, you made a mistake over the date. The Boatrace was not rowed this Saturday, as you thought. It won't be rowed until NEXT SATURDAY!"

And then we roared! We'd known it all along, of course. Fishy could have found it out, too, if he'd had time to look at a paper; but he'd been too busy preparing his Boatrace film wangle to do this.

Inquiries I've since made certainly confirm my idea that this reform is badly overdue. All sorts of serious things are taken as japes on April the First, with the most lamentable results.

Just to give you an example, Rake and Wibley were walking across a field on the First last year, when Rake suddenly yelled: "Quick! Mad bull!" and ran for it. Wib. took it for granted it was an All Fools' jape, and just cackled—and, a few minutes later, narrowly missed being tossed over the hedge through failing to take the warning as genuine!

There was another very similar incident elsewhere on the same day. Young Dicky Nugent and his pals were on one side of the river and Coker was on the other, when the fags suddenly started yelling out: "Look up in the air, Coker!" Coker laughed contemptuously and yelled back: "Chuck it, you kids! I'm too old a hand to be caught by April the First stunts!" And a moment later, he got the shock of his life when the parachute-jumper Dicky & Co. had been indicating landed right on top of him and gave him the complete k.o.!

Then there's the other yarn to the effect that Bunter minor told Skinner he was wanted by Mr. Quelch. Skinner, they say, thinking it was just another All Fools' Day wheeze, retorted: "Tell him to go and eat coke!" And Bunter minor, who really had been given the message to deliver, went back and told Quelch—with disastrous after effects for Skinner!

Whether this last yarn is true or not, I'm not prepared to say. But I think I've said enough to convince the average chap that April the First somehow needs altering. If you're not an average chap, then you'll have to remain unconvinced, that's all!

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TOM BROWN Tells How FISH'S BOATRACE FILM BROKE SPEED RECORDS

"Hear me holler, you bozos!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, on Saturday morning, before most of us had got out of bed. "Save up your shillings and, whatever you do, don't miss the fillum show in the Form-room to-night! It's gonna be the slickest an' speediest bit of work you ever noo, I'll tell the world! The film, gents, will be this afternoon's Boatrace—projected in the Remove Form-room less than five hours after the race itself! I'm so confident that you'll like it, that I won't take your money till the show's over! How's that?"

"Fair enough," nodded Smithy.

launch and its garstly crew roared away down the river again and vannedish as quickly as they had appeared!

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The crowd that assembled in the Remove Form Room that evening was of a size to gladden Showman Fish's heart. Every seat was bagged long before the

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



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