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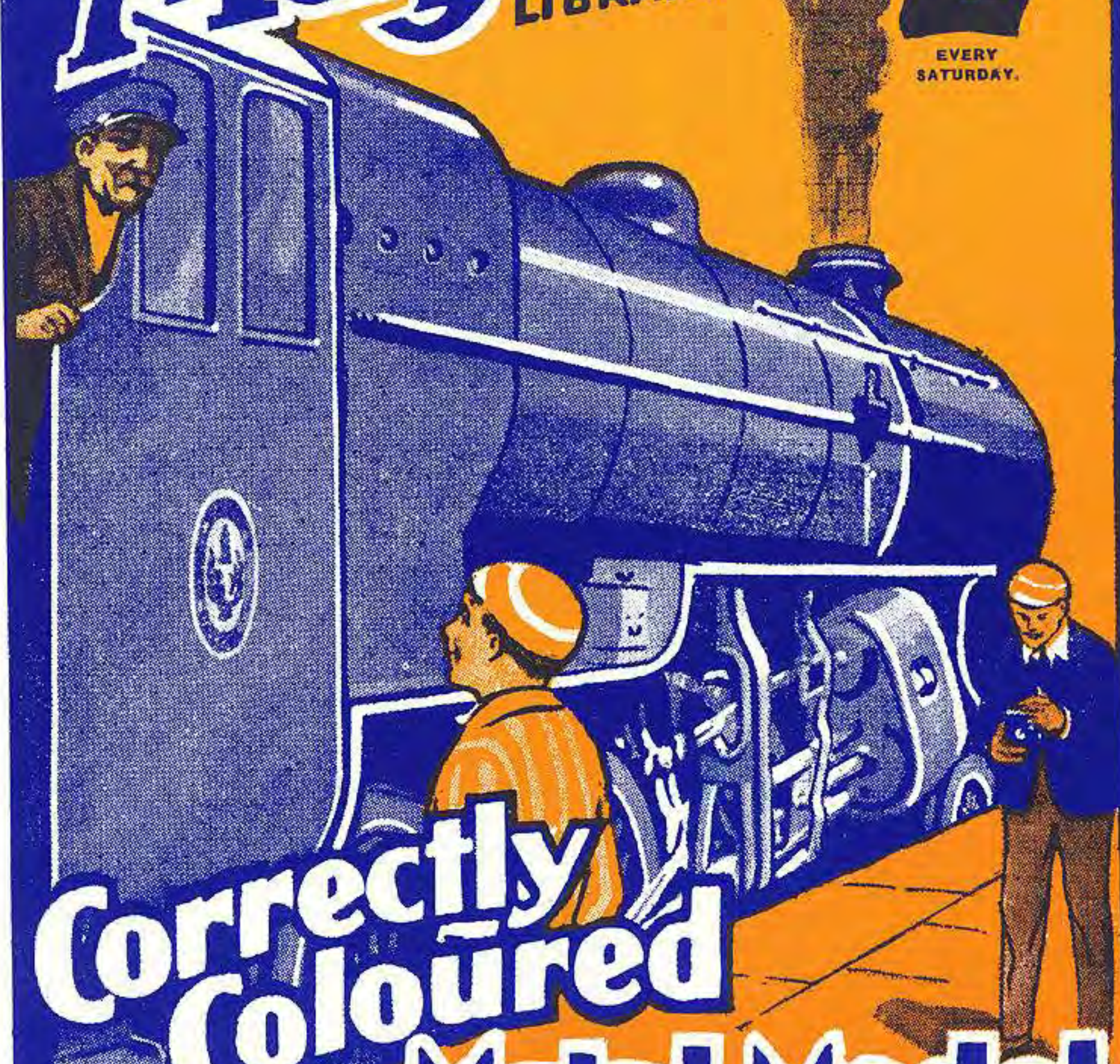
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A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Tom Redwing and the chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Something Up!

"OH!" Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, uttered that ejaculation suddenly.

His face was dismayed as he stared at the letter in his hand.

Evidently the contents of that letter had given the Bounder a surprise, and not a pleasant surprise.

Some of the Remove fellows glanced at Smithy curiously. Several fellows had noticed that letter in the rack addressed to the Bounder in the thick, strongly-marked handwriting of his father, Mr. Samuel Vernon Smith. Smith's letters from home were generally very welcome. Often they contained very handsome tips. This particular letter, however, was extremely unwelcome, to judge by the Bounder's expression.

The surprise in his face very quickly changed to anger. His brow darkened, and he crumpled the letter in his hand. Under his bent brows his eyes glinted.

"Bad news, old scout?" asked Bob Cherry.

The Bounder did not answer. He did not seem to hear. With the letter crushed in his hand, he went out into the quadrangle, his hard face showing only too plainly the signs of anger and resentment. Bob Cherry stared after him.

There was a fat giggle from Billy Bunter.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, Smithy's pater has forgotten to shove in a tip! He's waxy! He, he, he!"

"Fathead!" said Bob.

"Something about the hols, I fancy!" said Skinner, with a grin. "Smithy's been tellin' the giddy universe about a yachtin' trip for the vacation. No end

of a gorgeous cruise! Something's happened to knock it on the head! Perhaps old Smith's been found out."

"Found out?" repeated Bob.

"Well, you know what these big financiers are!" said Skinner argumentatively. "They mostly end up in chokey sooner or later!"

Some of the juniors laughed.

"Rot!" said Bob. "Smithy's pater is a millionaire two or three times over!"

"I'm sure you think so, old bean!" said Skinner genially. "I've noticed that you've been getting quite friendly with him lately!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

Bob Cherry made a movement towards Skinner, and that too-humorous youth backed away very quickly. Bob went out into the quadrangle with a rather thoughtful expression on his face.

He sighted Vernon-Smith there, standing under the elms, with his letter in his hand. He was reading it over again, and his brow was darker than before. It was very clear that that letter contained some news very disturbing to the Bounder. If Skinner's conjecture was well founded, and something had happened to "dish" the Bounder's plans for the summer vacation, the matter was rather awkward for Bob and his friends. For the Famous Five of the Remove had accepted Smithy's invitation to join him in the summer cruise, and Greyfriars was close on breaking-up now, and it was very late in the day for new arrangements to be made.

Smithy's eyes were on his letter, but out of the corner of his eye he must have seen Bob coming along, for he thrust the letter into his pocket and walked away.

His desire to avoid Bob was quite clear, and Bob Cherry paused, frowning a little.

It was with rather doubtful minds that Harry Wharton & Co. had made friends with the Bounder, and in a still

more doubtful frame of mind they had arranged to spend the vacation with him on his father's yacht.

The Bounder was not a very reliable fellow at the best of times, and his temper was generally extremely unreliable.

Bob had wondered once or twice whether he and his friends had done wisely, and he now doubted more than ever.

He glanced after the Bounder, who had deliberately turned his back on him, and then proceeded to look for his friends, with a cloud on his usually sunny brow. He found the Co. in the quad, Wharton and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh listening to a letter Frank Nugent was reading out. Nugent was looking very bright.

"It's all serene!" he said, as Bob came up. "Letter from the pater! I've got permission to join Smithy in his cruise in the jolly old South Seas!"

"Oh!" said Bob.

"You've heard from your pater?" asked Frank.

"Yes; that's all right."

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull.

"And here!" said Wharton, with a smile. "My uncle said 'Yes' at once. And it's all right about Inky."

"The rightfulness is terrific!" assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My esteemed and venerable guardian being at home in Bhanipur, I am under the ridiculous charge of our inestimable headmaster, who has answered in the confirmative."

"Which possibly means affirmative?" remarked Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed Johnny—"

"Anything up, Bob?" asked Wharton, noticing the lack of enthusiasm on Bob's part.

"I don't quite know," said Bob slowly.

"The smile of contentment has been

banished by the frown of grousefulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What is the excellent and ludicrous matter?"

Bob gave a grunt.

"I'm not sure about Smithy! He's just had a letter from home, and looked as if he'd like to bite somebody!"

"Smithy often looks like that!" said Nugent, laughing.

"Skinner's got an idea that his father is letting him down over the yachting trip."

"Oh!"

"Skinner knows nothing about it!" said Harry. "He's not friends with Smithy now, and he's as malicious as a fox! Bother Skinner!"

"Yes; but I was going to speak to Smithy, and he turned his back on me and bunked," said Bob.

"Oh!"

"The manners of the esteemed Smithy are not always first-class and Al at Lloyds," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "That is nothing new."

"Well, if there's any doubt about the thing we ought to know," said Bob. "Greyfriars is breaking-up in a couple of days, and we don't want to be left stranded."

"That's easily settled," said the captain of the Remove. "I'll speak to Smithy at once and get it plain. Where is he?"

"Over yonder under the elms. You'll find him in his worst temper, I fancy!" grunted Bob.

"Well, his temper won't matter to me. I'll keep mine, at least," said Harry.

And he left his chums and looked for the Bounder under the trees.

He found Vernon-Smith sitting on one of the old oak benches, with his brows knitted. At a glance he could see that Smithy was, as Bob had warned him, in one of his worst tempers. He stared at Wharton as the latter came up with a grim, uncompromising stare, which had a rather irritating effect on the captain of the Remove. Obviously, Smithy did not want to speak to him—which was odd enough, as they had arranged to spend the vacation together.

But Wharton repressed the feeling of annoyance that rose in his breast.

"Smithy, old scout—" he began amicably.

"Give us a rest!"

"What!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I don't want to talk! I've got something to think about!" growled the Bounder.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"A word or two will be enough!" he said curtly. "About the vac—"

"Bother the vac!"

"We break up in a couple of days."

"I know that."

"If anything's happened to alter your plans, Smithy, you'd better tell us at once," said Harry.

"What should have happened?"

"Oh, that's all right, then, if nothing has," said the captain of the Remove. "I know it depends on your father, but—"

"But what?" snapped the Bounder.

"Well, you told us that your father had promised to take you on a Mediterranean cruise," said Harry. "You believed that he would take you to the South Seas instead if you asked him. I know he's very indulgent to you, and you ought to know best, I suppose; but if it turns out that Mr. Vernon-Smith can't do as you've asked—"

"I haven't asked."

"You haven't?"

"I was going to ask him when he came down here on the last day," snapped Vernon-Smith. "It's better by

word of mouth than by letter. My father's never refused anything I asked yet."

"Well, I think I'd have written," said Harry. "But if you felt sure about it, I suppose you know best. Only, as half a dozen fellows' plans depend on yours—"

He paused.

"You think I may let you down?" asked the Bounder, in his most disagreeable tone.

Wharton coloured.

"I shouldn't put it like that. It depends on your father, and, really, Smithy, we want to know what we're doing in the vac."

"If you want to call it off you're welcome," said the Bounder. "I'm not begging you to come with me for the hols."

The captain of the Remove drew a deep breath.

He was strongly inclined to take the Bounder at his word. Already in his heart he regretted that he had ever made any arrangements with him. He had known well enough that the Bounder of Greyfriars was not a fellow he could pull with for any length of time. Yet, since the return of Tom Redwing, Smithy had seemed so much better in every way, so much more open, and cordial, and frank, that Wharton had somehow come to trust him.

Clang!

The bell for third lesson rang out before Wharton could decide what to say. Vernon-Smith jumped up from the bench at once and walked towards the House. He was glad of the interruption.

"Well?" asked the four members of the Co., as Harry Wharton rejoined his comrades on the way to the Remove-room.

Wharton shook his head.

"I can't quite make Smithy out. Whether something's gone wrong, or whether he's just ratty at it being supposed that something may have gone wrong, goodness knows. But—well, if he doesn't speak out plain to-day we'd better wash it out, I think."

And the matter dropped as the chums of the Remove went into the Form-room for third lesson with Mr. Quelch.

In class the Bounder did not once glance towards the Famous Five. When third lesson was over he disappeared at once.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Thorny Friendship!

TOM REDWING sat at the table in Study No. 4 in the Greyfriars Remove.

There was a very cheery expression on Tom's sunburnt face.

In the days when he had been a Greyfriars fellow he had shared that study

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with Smithy, and there was a peculiar pleasure in finding himself within its old familiar walls again.

Since he had left the school Tom Redwing had been at sea, roughing it for his daily bread in a way of which Greyfriars fellows knew little. Now he was back from the sea, and his next voyage was to be a very different one. Instead of the stuffy fore-castle of a coasting tramp, he was to share the luxurious quarters on a millionaire's yacht as the comrade of Herbert Vernon-Smith on his holiday cruise. Tom was not thinking much of the ease and comfort, however. He was delighted to be with his old chum again, glad to know that they would spend many weeks together.

As he sat at Smithy's study table he was looking at a chart engraved upon a circular piece of polished teak. It was the chart of Caca Island, in the far-off Pacific.

From his sailorman uncle, Peter Bruce, that chart had come to Tom Redwing, and the treasure of which it told was his property—if he could find it.

His uncle, whom he had not seen since he was a little infant, had never written home to his brother-in-law or to his nephew. But in his last hours he had remembered them, and had sent that chart to his sister's son, his only relative in the wide world. Tom had a faint recollection of a tall, rugged, black-bearded man, with a grim, frowning brow—a man of rough look and rough nature, whose forbidding features had almost scared him as a child. Yet the grim, hard man had remembered him when he lay dying under a far-off southern sun, and Tom thought of him kindly and with gratitude. He thought gratefully, too, of Ben Dance, the wooden-legged seaman, who had crossed half the world to bring him the treasure chart, risking his life to save it from Silvio, the half-caste. He had resolved that, if the hidden pearls of Caca ever should be successfully lifted, Ben Dance should have his share. He had not seen Dance; the seaman had vanished after entrusting Harry Wharton with the chart for Redwing. From that hour he had not been heard of.

Whether he was at sea again, or whether he had fallen a victim to the vengeance of the half-caste, no one could know.

Both the Head and Mr. Quelch had been very willing that Redwing should take up his quarters at his old school until the end of the term. His father was away at sea, on a long voyage, and it was plain that Tom was not safe from the half-caste at the lonely cottage at Hawkscliff.

The danger would have troubled the sailorman's son little, but he was very glad to spend a week or two at his old school, among his old friends, and, above all, with his reconciled chum, Smithy.

His face was happy now, as he studied the chart.

In Smithy's company, and with Harry Wharton and his friends, he was to sail for the south when the school broke up for the holidays, seeking the cache on Caca Island.

If the tale of the treasure was well-founded—if it was true—Tom's face was bright when he thought of that. It was not his way to give much thought to money; but if he found a fortune it meant that he would be able to rejoin Greyfriars.

To return to the school at Mr. Vernon-Smith's expense, as the Bounder had urged him, was impossible. The sailorman's son could not eat the bread of

charity while he had youth and strength, and could work. But even a few hundred pounds of his own would make all the difference. And from what Ben Dance had told the juniors, the cache on the lonely isle was worth many thousands.

It was his—if he could find it. His uncle had left it to him, sending him the only clue that existed to the hiding-place. That chart, cut with a knife on the polished surface on the disc of teak, was in effect the last will and testament of grim old Peter Bruce—"Black Peter," as he had been called.

And the quest was to be undertaken under propitious circumstances. A magnificent steam yacht, belonging to a millionaire, was going to carry Tom and his friends to the South Seas, as the Bounder had arranged it.

Once he had received the chart, Redwing would have made an attempt to seek the treasure on his own resources if he had had no others. He would have shipped on a voyage to the south, working his way before the mast, and trusting to fortune to find his way to the lone isle where his uncle had buried the pearls. But Smithy's friendship had made his task much easier than that.

While the Greyfriars fellows were in the Form-rooms at third lesson, Tom Redwing studied the chart in No. 4. He had conned it over so assiduously for days that he could have drawn it from memory without a mistake. Tom did not allow himself to believe and hope too much. But his thoughts dwelt very pleasantly on the possibilities.

There was a step in the Remove passage, and Redwing looked up with a bright smile as Vernon-Smith appeared in the study doorway. Third lesson was over.

But his smile faded as he read the expression on the Bounder's face.

Since Tom had been a guest at Greyfriars the Bounder had been hardly recognisable as his old self. He had been good-tempered, genial, pleasant to all—excepting Skinner & Co., the black sheep of the Remove. Smithy seemed to have done with the black sheep now. Fellows who had always regarded the Bounder as a sardonic, sneering fellow

with a very uncertain temper had begun to think that they had misjudged him.

All this was gone now. The Bounder's look showed that his temper, so long kept in hand, was roused again. All the bitterness and sullenness of his nature seemed to be in the ascendant.

Tom's bright face clouded. "Anything up, Smithy?" he asked quietly.

"Yes." The Bounder grunted out the word and threw himself into a chair. He sat staring moodily before him.

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Yes."

Tom was silent. It was like the Bounder to snap at friend as well as foe when matters went wrong. Much patience and forbearance were needed by any fellow who wished to keep on friendly terms with Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Is it a row?" asked Tom at last.

The Bounder sneered.

"I'm the fellow for rows, aren't I?" he said.

"Not Wharton and his friends, I hope?"

"Hang Wharton and his friends!"

Redwing compressed his lips.

"It would be very awkward, as we've arranged to have the vacation together," he said quietly.

"I haven't rowed with that crowd!" snapped the Bounder.

"Oh, that's good!"

"Though I feel thumping like a row with somebody," said Smithy between his teeth.

"But what—"

"The pater's let me down!" snarled the Bounder. "I suppose you've got to know. I've got to tell those fellows; I'd rather row with them and let them draw off of their own accord. But I suppose I can't row with you, Redwing; you won't row with a chap."

"You can't row with a fellow who is here as your guest, I hope, Smithy," said Tom Redwing very quietly.

"Why not?" sneered Vernon-Smith. "Didn't the fellows nickname me the Bounder because I'm capable of just that sort of thing?"

Redwing sighed. He could not help it. He was deeply attached to his chum, but there were more thorns than roses in the path of his friendship.

The Bounder's expression changed.

"You can't blame me for feeling wild, Redwing. I'm let down; I've asked those fellows to join me in this cruise. I've been depending on it to help you get hold of what's described on that chart; now it's all knocked on the head because my father's changed his mind." Smithy gritted his teeth. "It's rotten of him—rotten—"

"Smithy!"

"Oh, I forgot!" jeered the Bounder. "A fellow mustn't speak disrespectfully of his father in your presence."

"I can't listen to it, at any rate," said Redwing, rising from the table. "I think I'll get out for a bit, Smithy—"

"Oh, chuck it! Look at that!" snarled the Bounder, and he threw a letter on the table.

Redwing hesitated.

"You want me to read it?"

"Haven't I said so?" growled Vernon-Smith.

Tom Redwing picked up the letter. It was a brief note in the heavy handwriting of the millionaire.

"Dear Herbert,—Circumstances have caused me to change my intentions for your vacation. The Mediterranean cruise cannot take place now. I think you will like the change I am contemplating in my plans; but I will tell you about it when I come down to Greyfriars.

"Your affectionate father,
"SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Parting of the Ways!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH watched Redwing, with a gloomy, savage brow, as he read the letter and laid it on the table again.

The Bounder did not stretch out his hand for the letter. He left it contemptuously lying where Redwing laid it down.

"So that's that!" he snarled.

"It's hard lines on you, Smithy," said Tom.

"You ass!"

"Smithy—"

"Do you think I care a twopenny swear whether I go on a cruise or not?" exclaimed the Bounder. "It's the trip to the South Seas I'm thinking of—the search for your uncle's pearls. You know that."

Redwing smiled faintly.

"Then you're ragging me out of concern for me?" he asked.

The Bounder stared at him and broke into a laugh.

"I suppose it amounts to that," he said. "I feel like ragging the whole universe just now. Isn't it sickening? That yachting cruise in the vacation has been fixed a term ago. It was all cut and dried. Now the pater coolly calls it off without consulting me."

"He must have some good reason—most likely a business reason," said Tom thoughtfully. "Your father's not a man to change his plans lightly. If it's a matter of necessity it's up to you to take it cheerfully."

"You would, of course!" sneered Vernon-Smith.

"I hope so. A fellow's bound to respect his father, I suppose," said Tom rather tartly.

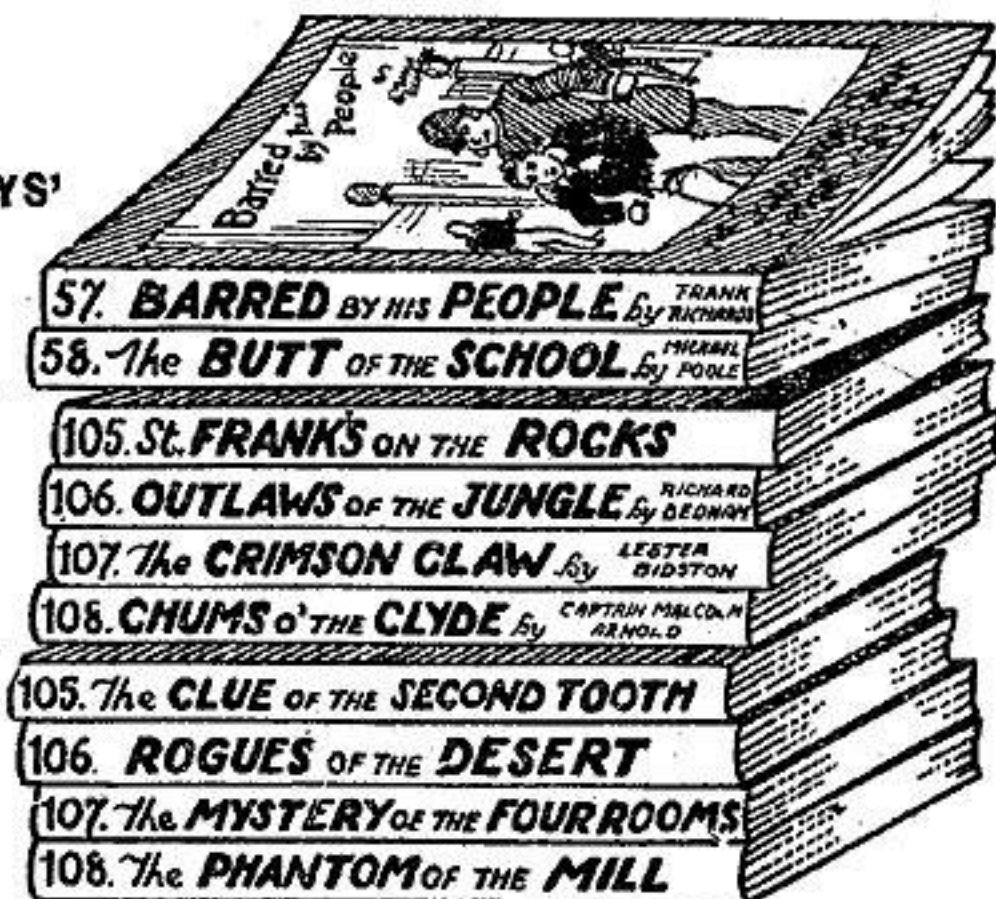
The Bounder laughed scoffingly. There was little respect for anything or

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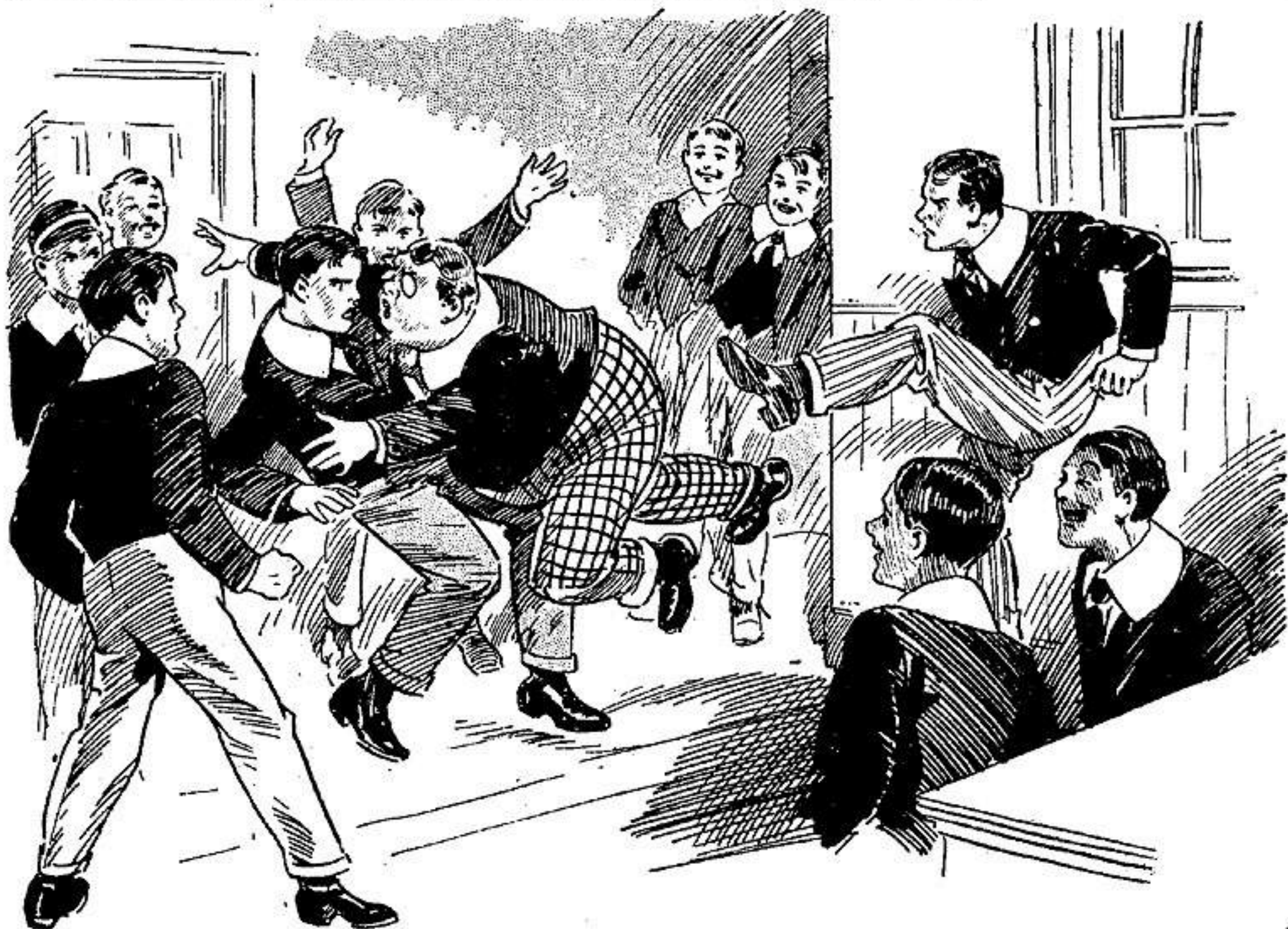
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Vernon-Smith made a rapid stride, and landed out with his boot. Billy Bunter was fairly lifted, and he flew headlong, pitching into the Famous Five. Crash! Bump! "Ow! Wow!" He threw his arms round Nugent to save himself, and there was a howl from Frank as he was dragged over. (See Chapter 5.)

anybody in Herbert Vernon-Smith's arrogant nature.

"Your father speaks of a Mediterranean cruise here," said Tom. "But—but—"

"I was going to ask him to make it the South Seas instead."

"Oh!"

"That's nothing; he would have done that if he went at all," said the Bounder impatiently. "He didn't care where the dashed yacht went; he only intended to go on the cruise at all for my sake. I know he would have agreed to that if I asked him—if he hadn't changed his plans altogether, as he tells me now. He had no right to change them. I'm jolly well going to tell him what I think of it!"

"Better not, old chap!" urged Redwing. "A fellow can't slang his own father."

"Can't he? You'll see."

"Anyhow, it's settled, and slanging won't make any difference," said Redwing. "He must have made up his mind before he wrote. He won't change it."

"I know that. But I shall jolly well let him know what I think of him for letting me down, all the same. What am I to say to Wharton's mob?" snarled the Bounder. "They've asked leave from their people; they've fixed it all up; they're relying on me."

"You must tell them this—"

"No fear!" said the Bounder emphatically. "I've told you in confidence. You're to keep it to yourself."

"I shan't speak of it, of course. But they'll have to know; the school breaks up the day after to-morrow—"

"They're not going to know!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'm not going to be made to look such a fool, I know that! I shall see that they draw out of their own accord."

"They won't do that unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless you hunt for trouble with them."

"That's the only way."

Redwing drew a deep breath.

"You can't do it, Smithy. It's a dirty trick," he said. "Tell them frankly how the matter stands."

"I can't—and won't! They'll row soon enough if I give them an opening," said the Bounder cynically. "Wharton's beginning to get his back up already. I don't care two straws whether it's a dirty trick or not; I'm not goin' to be made to look a fool—a silly ass swankin' about takin' fellows on a big cruise, and then lettin' them down! Better have a row and let them call it off of their own accord."

He stared aggressively at Redwing, as if waiting to be contradicted.

Redwing said nothing.

"But I'm going, all the same, and you're going with me," added the Bounder. "Whatever it is the pater has fixed up for me instead of a yachtin' cruise; he can wash it out again. I've got money in the bank, and I can pay my fare on a liner to the South, and hire some sort of craft there. And I'm goin' to do it! And you're comin' with me!"

"Not without your father's consent, Smithy."

"I shan't ask it!"

"Then you must leave me out of it,"

said Tom Redwing quietly. "You can't expect any decent fellow to be a party to your defying your father."

"I expected a sermon, from you," said the Bounder bitterly. "Are you prepared to give up hunting for the pearls, because my father has let us down?"

Redwing shook his head.

"What will you do, then?"

"What I should have done, Smithy, if you hadn't offered me the cruise. I can work my way to the Pacific before the mast."

"With that half-caste on your track, looking for a chance to stick a knife in your ribs."

"I'm not afraid of the half-caste, Smithy, and I think I can take care of myself. Besides, Silvio Xero has gone—he hasn't been seen about here for more than a week—he's running from the police. I don't suppose he will ever fall in with me again!"

"He's gone from here," said Vernon-Smith. "But, of course, he's gone back to the South Seas. He knows where Caca Island is—he's seen that chart. He had it in his hands for a short time before we got it back—and he must have looked at it. He knows enough, at any rate, to take him to the island. If you got there, you'd find him there, waiting for you—waiting to knife you and get hold of the chart."

"I'm not there yet," said Redwing with a smile. "Seamen working before the mast don't travel like millionaires, Smithy. It may very likely take me a year or more to work my way as far as the Marquesas. After that it might

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be a jolly long time before I had a chance of looking for Caca Island."

"You're comin' with me."

"You can't go, Smithy—it stands to reason that your father would never consent to let you go roaming about the world like that—you a schoolboy."

"If you can go—"

"I'm not a millionaire's son," smiled Redwing. "It will come in the way of work to me—I may as well sail south as in any other direction. Look here, old chap, it's a disappointment, but it can't be helped. I've been looking forward to the holiday with you, old fellow—I can hardly tell you how much. But it can't be helped—take it calmly."

The Bounder moved to a chair at the table, and drew pen and ink towards him, with a black and bitter brow.

"I'm goin' to write to my father now," he said, "I'm going to tell him just what I think—and after he reads my letter, I fancy he won't come down here for Speech day. More likely to leave me at the school for the vacation, as he did last Easter when he had his back up."

"Don't do it, Smithy," urged Redwing earnestly.

"Mind your own business!"

Redwing gave him one look, and then slipped the chart into his pocket and left the study.

The Bounder scowled after him.

Then he began to write—bitter, reproachful, disrespectful words—words such as no son could ever have a right to utter to his father—words which even the arrogant Bounder would not have dreamed of using, but for the ungovernable rage and resentment that mastered him.

The letter was finished in a very few minutes; the Bounder wrote rapidly, passionately.

He sealed it up in an envelope, addressed it to his father, and left the study with it, and crossed the quad towards the school letter-box.

He found Tom Redwing there.

The sailorman's son was leaning against the slit in the stone wall, where letters were dropped into the box, to be collected by the postman outside when he came along from Friardale.

"Shift, please!" said the Bounder curtly.

Redwing gave him an appealing look.

"That's to your father—"

"Yes."

"Smithy! Won't you take a pal's advice, and leave it till you're cooler?" urged Redwing, in deep distress.

"No, I won't."

"Old chap—"

"I've asked you once to mind your own business."

Redwing bit his lip.

"Now I've asked you twice."

"Very well," said Redwing, with a deep breath. "You won't have to ask me for a third time, Smithy. I suppose I was a fool to think that we could ever be friends again—it's over now, anyhow. Good-bye!" Redwing moved away from the letter-box.

"What the thump do you mean?" snarled the Bounder uneasily.

"I mean that I'm leaving the school now, and going back to Hawkscliff, and that I shall never speak to you again if you post that letter!" answered Tom Redwing steadily.

The Bounder's face blazed with anger, and he raised his hand to drop the letter in the box. Redwing's face was hard now. He meant every word he had uttered, and the Bounder knew it. Perhaps, at that moment, some recollection came into the Bounder's

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mind, of his last quarrel with his chum; when his headstrong temper had led him to throw aside the friendship he valued more than anything on earth. Then, Redwing had been prepared to forget and forgive. Now, it was easy to read in the sailorman's son's resolute face that if there was a break, it would be for ever. And some saving grace of common-sense, some stirring of his better nature, came to the Bounder's rescue, and checked him.

His hand was slowly lowered.

The letter did not drop in the box. Instead, the Bounder quietly tore it into four pieces.

Redwing's face brightened.

"Smithy, old fellow, I'm glad—"

"That's enough!"

The Bounder had yielded, but he could not forgive his defeat. He turned his back on Tom Redwing and walked away.

— — —

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants to Know!

BILLY BUNTER was worried.

To the rest of the Remove, and Greyfriars generally, that was a matter of small import, or of no import at all.

To Bunter, it was quite serious.

He was worried. Deep lines of thought creased his fat brow.

He was not worried about the examinations. Bunter did not worry about such trifles light as air. He was not worried about what he would say when he received a prize on speech day. He was not going to receive any prize. He was fully persuaded that he was entitled, on his merits, to sweep the whole list. Nevertheless, he did not expect to bag anything. So that did not worry him.

It was the doubt in his fat mind concerning Smith's cruise in the summer vacation that worried him.

As Smithy had had no intention whatever of taking Bunter with him on that cruise, and had told him so in the plainest of plain English with some injurious expressions added for additional emphasis, Bunter really need not have worried.

But he did worry. Bunter never took "no" for an answer when he had set his fat mind on anything. Bunter was prepared to inflict his fascinating society on any fellow who was too polite to object. If a fellow objected, Bunter regarded his objection simply as a joke in bad taste.

So Bunter had settled it in his own mind that he was going on that cruise. That was a fixed and unalterable decision, like the laws of the Medes and Persians.

Now, however, the bottom had fallen out of his arrangements, as it were.

The Bounder's refusal counted for nothing; Bunter was accustomed to refusals, and to disregarding them. Somehow or other he was going to wangle it, even if he had to stow himself away on the millionaire's yacht and not reveal his fat presence until the party were out at sea.

But even Bunter's intellect could realise that he could not possibly join up for a cruise that did not take place at all.

If there was no cruise, Bunter couldn't join it. That fact was clear even to William George Bunter.

So he was worried.

Skinner's surmise started that worry in Bunter's mind. The Bounder's proceedings since seemed to confirm

Skinner's surmise. Smithy was obviously bad-tempered and out of sorts since he had received his father's letter, and extremely stand-offish with the Famous Five, who were to accompany him if the cruise took place. That looked as if the arrangement was falling through.

If there was to be no cruise, Bunter knew what his line of action was to be. He would turn up his little fat nose at the idea, and tell the fellows that he—William George Bunter—had known that it was only the Bounder's swank all along; that he—William George—had never been taken in for one, and that he wouldn't have gone anyway, having much better things in hand for the vacation.

There would be some satisfaction in taking this line—if Bunter was quite, quite sure that the cruise was "off."

Obviously, however, it would not do to take that line if the cruise was to take place, after all. Getting the Bounder's "rag" out was not the way to secure a berth on the yacht.

In such a matter a fellow wanted to know. Bunter wanted to know—and he did not know. It was exasperating.

It was quite useless to speak to Smithy about it. Smithy was still taking the view that Bunter wasn't coming anyhow, and that it was no concern of his whether the cruise took place or not. And his looks were so savage and sulky that Bunter did not feel like venturing to ask him questions. The beast looked more like kicking a fellow than answering him civilly.

For once, after class, Bunter was not thinking wholly about the approaching hour of dinner.

He rolled up to the Famous Five at last, seeing them in discussion. But they were discussing the Old Boys' cricket match, much to his disgust. Bunter did not want to listen to that.

"I say, you fellows—" he interjected.

"Blow away!" said Johnny Bull.

"About the vac—"

"Nothing about it! Blow off!"

"I want to know!" snorted Bunter.

"Skinner and some fellows are saying that there isn't going to be a yachting cruise at all!"

"Buzz!" said Nugent.

"Do you fellows know?" demanded Bunter. "If it's not coming off, a fellow will have to make other arrangements. My pal, D'Arcy of St. Jim's, wants me to go to Eastwood House with him for the vac!"

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

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! You fellows needn't be jealous because a lord's son has asked me home for the vac! I've got D'Arcy's letter in my pocket!"

"Read it out, old fat bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It's bound to be interesting!"

"I mean, I've left it in my study! I suppose you don't doubt my word?" said Bunter loftily.

"Well, just a few!" grinned Bob. "You see, D'Arcy wrote to Wharton that he was going to Canada for his vacation this summer!"

"Eh?"

"So I don't quite see how he could have you at Eastwood House, old fat bean, unless he can be in two places at once!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean—" stammered Bunter. "I didn't mean D'Arcy! I wonder what made me say D'Arcy! I mean Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Tom Merry's off to Canada, too! Sure you don't mean somebody else?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, don't keep on cackling when a fellow's speaking to you! About this cruise—is it coming off?"

"Better ask Smithy!"

"You fellows know, as you're going," urged Bunter. "I've given up a lot of engagements to join in this cruise—not because I care for it particularly, you know; I'm rather bored with expensive yachts and that sort of thing! I've done so much of it, you know! But I was going to help Redwing look

friends with him—man must draw a line somewhere! But I intended to help him and be generous to him. But if the cruise isn't coming off—"

"It comes to the same thing!" said Johnny Bull. "Smithy would never let you stick on to him, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The stickfulness would not be terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

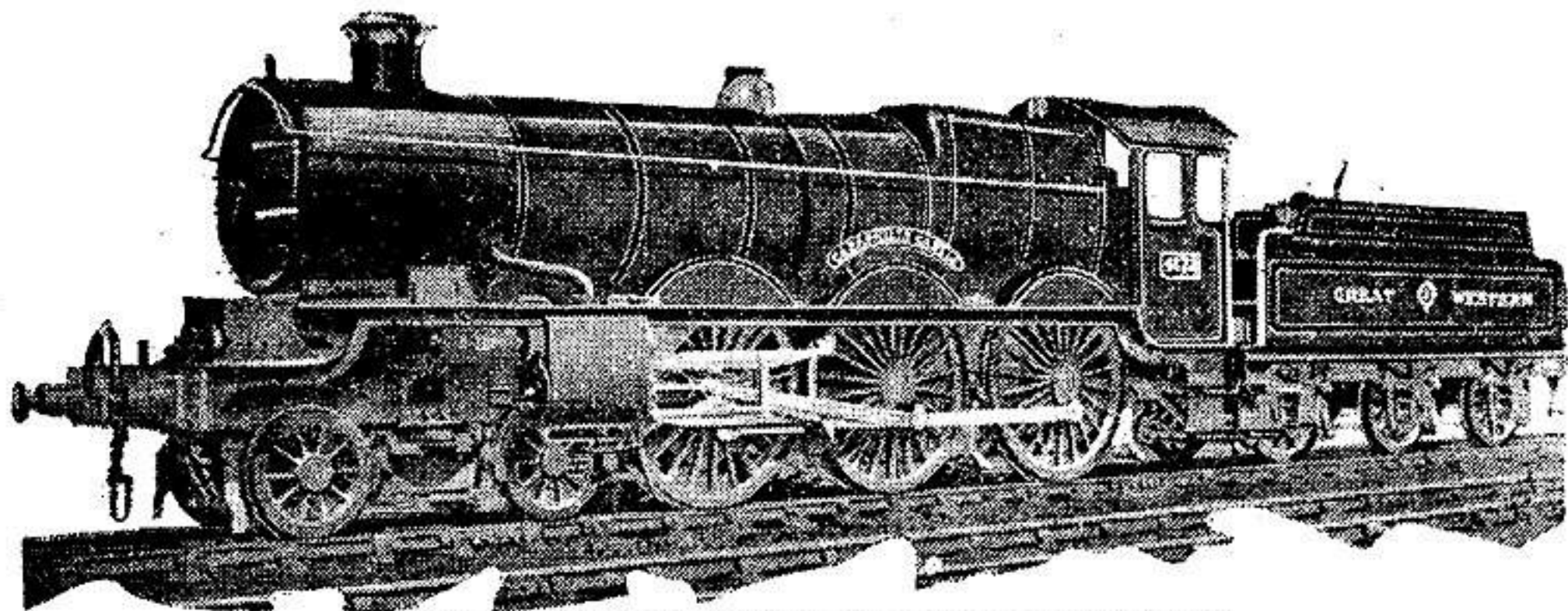
"Look here," roared Bunter, "is there going to be a cruise, or isn't there going to be a cruise?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Bob. "The answer is a lemon!"

Famous Five, and he decided on trying Tom Redwing next. That rank outsider had butted into Greyfriars as a sort of guest—that was how Bunter considered it—and was hanging about the Remove quarters just as if he belonged to the school, using Smithy's study like a Greyfriars man when he was really only a common longshoreman with no business in the place at all. Still, it was convenient that the rotter was there, if he was able to give Bunter information and relieve his state of anxious worry. So Bunter rolled up to the Remove passage to see if the sailorman's son was in Study No. 4.

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for that treasure on the island. It's not an easy job, and a fellow with a little intellect will be needed."

"That's you all over!" said Bob.

"Glad you can see it!" sniffed Bunter.

"My dear chap, all Greyfriars knows that you are a fellow with a little intellect—a very little!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! As I was saying, I'd decided to see Redwing through in this matter. Of course, he's a low fellow, quite common—"

"What!"

"But I believe in a gentleman being kind to the lower classes, you know!" said Bunter, blinking seriously at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "I couldn't exactly take him up and be

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want an answer!" howled Bunter.

"I've given you an answer. But if you want another, here it is—because one rode a horse, and the other rhododendron!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared at the juniors with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

He wanted to know, and it was extremely irritating to have his serious questions treated as a series of conundrums.

Harry Wharton & Co. settled the matter by walking away, leaving Bunter still glaring.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

And he rolled away wrathfully. There was nothing to be learned from the

Study No. 4 was vacant, however.

Bunter blinked round the room, with a discontented grunt. The beast was almost always there, and now that Bunter wanted him there he was not there. It was just what a gentleman might have expected from the lower classes, Bunter considered. But he started a little, and grinned with satisfaction as he spotted a letter lying on the table. He knew the "fist" of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. The Boulder had gone out, leaving his father's letter on the table!

In a moment more, that letter was in Bunter's fat fingers.

Possibly he forgot for the moment that he was a gentleman, or perhaps he

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019

considered it gentlemanlike to read another fellow's letter.

At all events, he lost no time in reading it.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

He was in possession of the facts now. Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith's letter settled it beyond the shadow of a doubt. The cruise was off—quite off!

Bunter knew what to do now. He was prepared to take up a lofty, disdainful, ironical attitude towards the cruise that was not to come off. Unfortunately for Bunter, Herbert Vernon-Smith came back to the study just then, in a savage temper after his scene with Redwing at the school letter-box. The Bounder stared in at the doorway at Bunter reading his father's letter, and his face flushed crimson with rage. He made a jump at a cricket stump that stood in a corner, and a jump at Bunter.

Bunter at the same moment made a jump for the door. But he was not half so swift as the Bounder.

Whack!

"Yaroooh!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yooooooooooooooooop!"

Billy Bunter went down the Remove passage like lightning. Bunter was heavily handicapped for a footrace. How he carried his weight at such a speed was a mystery. Perhaps, as a novelist would put it, fear lent him wings. He fairly flew.

Vernon-Smith pursued him as far as the Remove staircase, still swiping with the stump. Bunter vanished down the stairs, roaring. Then the Bounder walked back to his study, feeling a little better.

Bunter was not feeling better. To judge by the unmelodious sounds with which he made the staircase echo, he was feeling very bad indeed.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Turned Down!

"COUNT me out!"

Billy Bunter made that remark in the Rag just before bed-time. He made it to Harry Wharton & Co.

The chums of the Remove were chatting before bed, with Tom Redwing, who had strolled into the Rag. Vernon-

Smith was not there. Since speaking to Wharton in the quad that morning, the Bounder had not exchanged a word with him or any of his friends. They did not seek him out, and so they did not come in contact, the avoidance on the Bounder's side being obvious.

It was an odd enough position, when all the Form knew that the Famous Five had fixed up a vacation with the Bounder. Skinner and his comrades found some entertainment in observing it.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not at their ease. In the peculiar circumstances they could not very well be. Tom Redwing was still more uneasy.

Knowing what he did, and being under promise to say nothing of it, his position was very disagreeable.

He could not break the Bounder's confidence; but he knew very well that the chums of the Remove had a right to be told how matters stood, so that they could make fresh arrangements before the school broke up. The Bounder considered that that would make him look an ass, and doubtless he was right. That was the result to be expected by any fellow who promised more than he could perform. But the Bounder did not or would not see it, and apparently he intended to leave the Co. in the dark till the latest moment; and then, if they questioned him, take offence, and turn the matter into a quarrel, putting the onus of breaking the arrangement on the Famous Five instead of taking it upon himself.

Redwing blushed for his chum when he thought of it. It was awkward for him to meet the Co. and talk to them, as matters stood; but avoiding them would look as if he was backing up Smithy in his new and inexplicable attitude, and he could not have that. But Redwing was wishing now that he had never allowed Smithy to persuade him to spend the last days of the term at Greyfriars. He reflected, with a sigh, that he might have known that, when ever the Bounder was concerned, there would be difficulties and bitter blood.

The six juniors were talking over various matters, the school sports, the coming prizes, the term reports—all sorts of things except the vacation. That thorny topic they avoided by tacit consent. Then Bunter butted in and told them to count him out.

The juniors did not know what Bunter was driving at. But they did not want to know, so that did not matter. Johnny Bull waved him away as if he were an obstreperous bluebottle, and no other heed was taken of the fellow who was, in his own estimation, the most important person in Greyfriars School, if not in the whole wide universe.

"I say, you fellows"—Bunter was not to be waved away like a bluebottle—"you hear what I say? Count me out."

"Right-ho! Buzz off," said Bob Cherry.

"You know what I'm speaking of, I suppose?" persisted Bunter.

"No. Roll away!"

"That cruise," jeered Bunter. "I want to make it understood that I'm not coming."

"We know that. Smithy wouldn't have you at any price."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Roll away, Bunter. You're superfluous!"

"The superfluity of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," urged Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The two-muchfulness outweighs the pleasuredfulness. The departfulness is the proper caper."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Let the seal of silence be placed on

the channel of gasfulness," urged the nabob.

"I want this plain," said Bunter, in a voice that all the Rag could hear. "Smithy's been swanking a lot about this holiday cruise, and I half-promised to come. On second thoughts, I've decided not. You're to count me out. To put it plain, I refuse to come."

"Fathead!"

"Smithy's a bit too much of a purse-proud swanker to suit me," said Bunter. "I don't care who hears me say so."

Just then the Bounder strolled into the Rag.

Every fellow looked at him as he came in, in time to hear Bunter's remarks. The Bounder stopped and stared at the back of Bunter's head, the Owl's back being towards him.

In happy ignorance of Smithy's arrival, Bunter rattled on cheerfully.

"I can't stand Smithy! I really never could. I refuse absolutely to join in this cruise. Got that?"

"Better tell Smithy," chuckled Bob. "It's Smithy's business, not ours, old fat frump!"

"Blow Smithy! I'm telling you. Besides, Smithy being a swanking bounder, I can't stand his friends. Redwing, for example."

"Thank you," said Redwing.

"Of course, I don't want to hurt your feelings, and all that, Redwing," said Bunter, blinking at him. "But you can see for yourself that it would not do for me to travel with a chap like you."

"Quite," agreed Tom.

"Fellow must think of his position to some extent. I'm not a snob, I hope. But I couldn't very well be classed with a chap like you."

"I hope not," said Redwing. "If I resembled you in any respect whatever, Bunter, I should feel rather uncomfortable about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh? I suppose that's meant for cheek," said Bunter. "Blessed if I know what the lower classes are coming to these days! But I say, you fellows, it's not only Redwing; it's you fellows, too."

"Poor little us?" sighed Bob.

"Yes, you fellows. I can't stand you, Wharton, with your uppish ways and your air of being a bit too good for everything."

Some of the juniors laughed, most of the fellows in the Rag having given Bunter their attention by this time. They found him rather entertaining, all the more because he was rattling on in blissful ignorance of the fact that the Bounder was standing a little way off behind him. Vernon-Smith's expression hinted that something was going to happen to Bunter. The Rag waited, smiling, for it to happen.

"And you, Bob Cherry," pursued Bunter. "A clumsy, noisy hooligan of a chap, if you don't mind my putting it plain?"

"Not at all," gasped Bob. "Don't mind me."

"And you, Nugent, a soft milk-sop—"

"Thanks!" said Frank.

"And you, Bull—"

"What about me?" asked Johnny Bull, in a deep, growling tone, not unlike the accents of the great huge bear.

"Well, I can't stand you, that's all," said Bunter, without going into particulars. Johnny's look was not encouraging. "And last, but not least, there's you, Hurree Singh. I know I had one vac with you—coming along to look after you in my kind-hearted way. But I could not help feeling afterwards that

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Vernon-Smith's anger blazed into fury, and he shoved his bicycle violently at the sailorman's son. Redwing caught it with a grasp of iron, and sent it whirling away, to crash on the ground half-a-dozen yards off. "By gad!" panted the Bounder. "I—I'll smash you! I'll—" He came at Redwing with clenched fists and blazing eyes. (See Chapter 6.)

it was a mistake. Going about with a nigger is the limit!"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter——"

"That's enough." Bunter waved a fat hand loftily. "I hope I've made it clear. I've turned you all down, you fellows, and Redwing, and that swanking, purse-proud cad Smithy. Yarooop!"

At that moment Bunter received what was coming to him.

Vernon-Smith made a rapid stride and landed out with his boot. That was the first hint Bunter received that the Bounder was present.

It was a strong hint, and left no possible room for a mistake.

Bunter was fairly lifted, and he flew headlong, pitching into the Famous Five.

Crash! Bump!

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

"Ow! Wow!" roared Bunter.

He threw his arms round Nugent to save himself. There was a howl from Frank as he was dragged over.

Bunter's weight was a little too much for him. Nugent went to the floor with the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, my hat! Leggo!" gasped Frank.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared all the Rag.

Nugent shook himself loose and jumped up. Billy Bunter sprawled on the floor and roared. Herbert Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on Harry Wharton & Co. with a bitter, taunting look.

"So that's how you discuss me with that fat cad!" he said, with a sneer.

"You might wait till I'm present, at least!"

Wharton flushed angrily.

"Don't be a fool!" he snapped.

"What?"

"Bunter was talking of you, not we—and you were present, too; you heard all he said. I repeat, don't be a fool!" said the captain of the Remove unceremoniously.

"Look here——"

"Oh, cut it short!" exclaimed Harry Wharton contemptuously. "If you're hunting for trouble say so plainly. Don't beat about the bush and pretend to have a grievance. Come out into the open."

The Bounder's face set hard. In Wharton's clear, scornful glance he seemed to read that the captain of the Remove had guessed his secret object—to force a quarrel as a preliminary to breaking off the arrangements made for the vacation.

Before he could speak Tom Redwing interposed. Redwing's face was red with shame and mortification; never had he felt so thoroughly ashamed of his friend.

"Chuck that, Smithy!" he rapped out. "That's enough—more than enough. If you can't do the decent thing, at least, hold your tongue!"

The Bounder stared at him, almost in stupefaction. Never before had Redwing taken that tone with him.

"What?" he almost stammered. "What? What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean well enough," said Tom Redwing. "You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, and you know it!"

At that moment Wingate of the Sixth put his head in at the door.

"Dorm!" he said laconically.

The interruption relieved the tension. Vernon-Smith's hands were clenched, but he unclenched them again and turned away in silence. The Remove marched off to their dormitory, and no more words were exchanged between the two strangely-assorted friends, whose friendship seemed more in danger than ever of coming to a sudden and violent end.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Tom Redwing Puts His Foot Down!

THE next morning Harry Wharton & Co. were in a rather thoughtful frame of mind. Tom Redwing was still more thoughtful, and a good deal troubled. The scene in the Rag had been interrupted; but after what had been said the Famous Five felt that they could scarcely let the arrangement with Smithy stand—even if he wanted it to stand, which seemed dubious. Redwing's position was still more uncomfortable. He was, in point of fact, the Head's guest during the few days he was staying at the school; but it was, of course, Vernon-Smith who had brought him there, and it was upon Smithy's account that he had come. He was practically Smithy's guest, and to remain the guest of a fellow he was almost quarrelling openly with was out of the question. It seemed to Tom, too, that if his friendship with Smithy was

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not to end the present situation must be ended; and after breakfast he decided to excuse himself to the Head and return to his cottage at Hawksliff.

Probably the Bounder followed his train of thought easily enough. He looked for Redwing after breakfast, and, to Tom's surprise, met him without a trace of resentment or anger.

There was, indeed, a lurking smile on his face as he greeted the sailorman's son with a cheery nod.

"Feeling better?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"For getting it off your chest in the Rag last night, I mean."

Tom stared at him.

"I haven't come along to row with you," chuckled the Bounder.

"I'm glad of that, at all events," said Tom.

"Good! I've given up that wheeze, too. As you told me, it would be a dirty trick; I'm not going to row with Wharton's mob."

"I'm glad, Smithy."

"I shall tell them plainly how the matter stands, and they can like it or lump it," said Vernon-Smith. "Thank you for the tip."

Redwing could only stare at him in astonishment. It was not like the Bounder to take opposition or good advice in this way.

Vernon-Smith laughed at his evident astonishment.

"You're rather an ass, Reddy," he said. "If you'd given me more plain talk, straight from the shoulder, when you used to be at Greyfriars, we should never have rowed so much. You've taken a new line now, and it's done me good. I've been thinking a bit. You don't want to row with me, do you?"

"Goodness knows I don't," said Tom.

"And I don't want to row with you," said Smithy. "But if you're too jolly patient and long-suffering you tempt a fellow to let himself go—a fellow like me, at any rate. I'm going to act on your advice. Anyhow, the fellows must know pretty well that the cruise is off after what Bunter said to them. He nosed it out, of course! But I'm keeping to it, Reddy, that you're coming with me for the vac."

"If it could be fixed, Smithy, with your father's consent—"

"I shan't ask that." The Bounder's old dogged, sullen look returned. "The pater's let me down, and that ends it."

"You'll see him when he comes to-day—"

"I shan't see him. I'm goin' out of gates to keep clear of him."

"You can't, Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing, aghast.

"I can, and I shall!"

"He will be angry—"

"Let him. I'm angry, if you come to that."

"He's your father—"

"I'm his son," said the Bounder mockingly. "Let him consider me, if I'm to consider him."

And he walked away before Redwing could reply. Harry Wharton & Co. were in the quad, and the Bounder half-turned towards them. But he changed his mind and walked on.

To confess to the juniors that his plans had been knocked into a cocked hat, that he could not fulfil what he had promised, was too bitter a pill for the Bounder to swallow, if he could help it.

It had to be done, now that he had decided to act on Redwing's advice and do the decent thing.

But he told himself that there was no hurry. The evil hour could be put off.

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It was no light matter for the Bounder to humble his arrogant pride to the dust.

It was against his father that his resentment was most keen. The millionaire had encouraged him in every way to count upon almost unlimited indulgence. Now he had let him down—suddenly, completely, as the Bounder regarded it. Smithy was deeply attached to his father—the only being in the world he cared about at all, excepting Redwing. But he seemed to have forgotten that now, as well as the common respect due to a parent. His breast was full of angry bitterness as he reflected upon the position the millionaire had carelessly placed him in.

For once, too, the Bounder was not thinking as much of himself as of another. On that South Sea cruise depended the discovery of Black Peter's treasure, and upon that discovery depended Tom Redwing's return to Greyfriars. It was on Redwing's account that Smithy had made the arrangement,

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and it was upon Redwing's account that he was bitterly disappointed. The humiliation of his pride was bitter enough, but the Bounder felt still more keenly the disappointment of his chum's hopes.

He was going to make his resentment plain enough by deliberately avoiding his father that afternoon. Such an act of disrespect—indeed, of insult—was certain to rouse the millionaire's deepest ire, and for that the Bounder, in his present mood, cared nothing.

After dinner, he went down to the bike-shed. Bob Cherry met him on his way, as he was wheeling the machine out.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Going out, Smithy?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Isn't your pater coming after all?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Bob blankly.

"You can give him a message for me, if you like," said the Bounder satirically.

"Certainly—what's the message?"

"Tell him I've gone out because I'm fed up with him."

Bob jumped.

"Wha-a-at?" he ejaculated.

"You won't forget?"

"I certainly wouldn't give a message like that from any chap to his father," said Bob sharply. "Are you out of your senses, Smithy? The trouble with you, I think, is that your father hasn't licked you enough."

"Very likely!" assented the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders. "That's the message, if you care to give it."

"Well, I won't."

"Don't then; and go and eat coke!"

With that, the Bounder wheeled his machine down the path, leaving Bob Cherry breathing very hard.

Bob walked away towards the House, and met Redwing coming along. The sailorman's son was evidently troubled and anxious.

"Seen Smithy?" he exclaimed hastily.

"He's wheeling out his bike."

"Oh!"

Bob walked on, and Redwing hurried after Vernon-Smith. The Bounder, as he swung his machine on towards the gate, was suddenly stopped by a grasp on his shoulder. He turned his head to see Tom Redwing.

"You're not going out, Smithy?" exclaimed Tom breathlessly.

"I've told you I am."

"And I tell you you're not," said Redwing.

"Do you want me to tell you to mind your own business again?" asked the Bounder bitterly.

"You can tell me what you like; but you're not going to insult your father if I can stop you," said Redwing determinedly.

"You can't stop me, you see!"

"I shall try!"

"Wha-a-at?"

Redwing placed himself in front of the Bounder and his bicycle. Herbert Vernon-Smith stared at him as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Get aside!" he roared.

Redwing did not stir.

"You—you think you can stop me doin' what I choose." The Bounder was even more amazed than angry. He hardly seemed to know Redwing, whose inexhaustible patience with the vagaries of his temper had often surprised him, but had come to be taken by him as a matter of course. There was a determination in Redwing's character which was stronger, when it came to the test, than the arrogant obstinacy of the Bounder.

"I shall stop you," said Redwing quietly. "You'll be sorry and ashamed of this afterwards, Smithy; and it's up to me to prevent you from acting like a cad."

"Get aside, or I'll shove you over!" Redwing stood like a rock.

The Bounder's anger blazed into fury. He shoved the bicycle violently at the sailorman's son.

Redwing caught it, with a grasp of iron, and sent it whirling away, to crash on the ground half a dozen yards off.

"By gad!" the Bounder panted. "I'll—I'll smash you! I'll—" He came at Redwing with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

Still Redwing did not step aside.

"You can scrap with me, if you choose, Smithy," he said, in the same quiet tone. "But so long as I can stop you, you shan't act like a blackguard."

Vernon-Smith's clenched fist was raised. Redwing eyed him steadily and grimly. The Bounder's hand fell slowly to his side again.

There was a long, long pause. Then the Bounder, without another word, walked back to the House.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Millionaire at Greyfriars!

MR. SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH, millionaire, financier, company-promoter, and many other things, lay back comfortably in the arm-chair in Study No. 4 in the Remove, and fanned his warm, damp face.

It was hot weather; and Mr. Vernon-Smith, who had a superabundant and unnecessary allowance of flesh, felt the heat somewhat.

There was a trickle of perspiration on his bald forehead, where the scanty hair was carefully brushed across, to conceal the widening patch of baldness—without succeeding in the least in concealing it.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was warm, but he seemed very cheery and contented. He was in a very good temper—in that respect, offering a contrast to his son, who stood with a sullen, sulky face.

The millionaire did not seem to notice Herbert Vernon-Smith's sulky looks. Or perhaps he was too accustomed to the vagaries of the Bounder's temper, to take any special notice of its signs.

Certainly, it never crossed his mind that he had narrowly missed not seeing his son at all that day. He had come to Greyfriars specially to see Herbert; and had the junior gone out deliberately to avoid him, the millionaire's wrath would undoubtedly have been great.

Fortunately, owing to Redwing's intervention, that had not happened. The Bounder was there to meet his father, if not to greet him.

Why he had allowed Redwing to over-rule him, Smithy hardly knew. He was not customarily a fellow to be over-ruled. Most of that term, he had been in trouble with his Form-master, because his arrogant nature would not bow to authority. Had Mr. Quelch ordered him to keep within gates, the Bounder would probably have taken a special pleasure in disobeying the order, regardless of consequences.

Yet he had yielded to Redwing.

It was possible that Tom Redwing's inexhaustible patience and tolerance had added some slight tincture of contempt to the Bounder's friendship for him, unconsciously. Now that he had taken a stronger line, there was little doubt that the Bounder respected him more, whether he realised it or not. At all events, he had given in—and instead of resentment, which anyone might have expected of him, he only felt amused by the incident.

He had risked his friendship with Redwing often enough, and always

Tom had been ready to forgive. Now it was Redwing who was prepared to risk it, and the Bounder found the change an entertaining novelty.

"Well, Herbert!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in his fat voice.

"Well?" said the Bounder curtly.

"I shan't be able to spare you much time, my boy—but I wouldn't miss coming down, as you expected me."

Smithy felt a slight twinge of conscience. He was glad just then that Redwing had stopped that act of disrespect and defiance.

"Your Form-master has not spoken of you very highly, Herbert."

"No?" said the Bounder indifferently.

"You seem to have given him a great deal of trouble this term."

"Very likely!"

"But Mr. Quelch says that you have greatly improved during the last week or two."

"I wasn't aware of it."

"Well, well, Herbert, you must remember that you are at Greyfriars as a preparation for a big career some day," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You must take care. I was never at a public school, and I made one of the largest fortunes in the City. But your case is different—you will find the fortune ready-made, my boy. Your education here would handicap you, if you had

(Continued on next page.)



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OUR Wonderful Free Gifts have made what is undoubtedly the hit of the season—and no wonder! On all sides it is conceded that such gifts as these have never before been given away upon such a generous scale, while the gifts themselves are universally admired for their faithful and detailed representation and magnificent colouring and general finish. Great express engines have a fascination for all the world, and the idea of presenting every reader with these splendid souvenir models of the most notable engines of the four great railway groups was a particularly happy one.

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YOUR EDITOR.

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me; you can be sure of an answer in return.

"TOM REDWING'S QUEST!"*(Continued from previous page.)*

to fight your way as your ~~father~~ did. But you will only have to spend money—which is quite a different proposition. You must pull up, Herbert, and do better next term."

The Bounder did not answer.

"Now about the vacation," went on Mr. Vernon-Smith, "circumstances have washed out what I intended to do—I cannot take a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean as I arranged. You know, Herbert, that a man in my position is bound to place business before pleasure."

"A man is bound to keep his word," said Smithy.

"Eh, what?" Mr. Vernon-Smith sat up and stared at his son. "What? What? What do you mean, Herbert?"

"Didn't I speak plainly, father?"

"You spoke impudently," snorted the millionaire. "What is the matter with you, Herbert?"

"Nothin'! I've asked half a dozen fellows to join me in the cruise," said the Bounder bitterly. "That's nothin', of course. I shall look like a swankin' ass, and the fellows will make a standin' joke of it. But of course, that's nothin'."

"I never knew you had asked anybody—"

"Don't I always have friends with me for the hols? Haven't you always given me carte blanche?"

"That's true. But—" The millionaire paused. "There's no reason why your friends shouldn't have the holiday with you just the same, Herbert."

"It's not the same."

"Listen to me, my boy!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "When I arranged the Mediterranean trip I thought I should be able to get a month or two away from business—or as far away as I ever can get. Of course, I should have kept in touch with the City on the wireless from the yacht in the Mediterranean. But circumstances have changed. I can't spare the time. You would not want me to throw aside an affair involving hundreds of thousands of pounds, Herbert?"

"If I hadn't asked the fellows—" muttered the Bounder.

"I quite see that. But you can offer them something just as good, if not better."

"It's not the same!" said the Bounder again.

"I don't see that."

Vernon-Smith remained silent.

"I will explain how the matter stands," went on Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You know, Herbert, that I have a big interest in rubber, and a big interest in the copra trade in the East?"

Smithy nodded.

"As the matter stands, my presence is required on the spot," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "It's absolutely unavoidable. I've made every arrangement for getting away from the City, thinking I should be taking you on a cruise in the Mediterranean. So it's an opportunity for me to get to the spot where I am wanted. Herbert, I simply must get out to Singapore."

The Bounder started.

"Singapore!"

"Yes. And after that the Marquesas Islands."

"What!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith stared blankly at his father.

He was too astounded to speak. It was dawning on his mind now what the millionaire's change of plans meant.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019.

"You're only a schoolboy, Herbert," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, "but you've got an old head on young shoulders. You understand business, and I want you to know all you can of the affairs you will have to handle some day. You've heard of the Rubber Restriction Scheme?"

Smith nodded again.

"Too much rubber's been grown, and the Government have restricted its export from the East. The planters throw it on the market, if they're allowed, as fast as they grow it, pushing the price down to nothing and ruining themselves. They are infants in business matters; they can grow rubber, but don't know how to sell it. Most of the rubber is taken by America, and the people there, who can't grow rubber, know how to buy it."

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled.

"You see, they work together in a pool, as it's called, and keep off the market, or come into the market, in a bunch, and practically dictate the price to the planter. Rubber is a great British industry; but it was being run wholly for the benefit of speculators in New York till the Government stepped in and put on restriction of export. Now the planter can earn a little butter for his bread; but the Americans, of course, want all the butter, and as much of the bread as they can grab. So there's a big movement in the United States to smash up the restriction scheme."

"I suppose so," assented Smithy.

He was keenly enough interested in what his father was telling him.

"Now," went on Mr. Vernon-Smith, "when an American speculator wants something he grabs it if he can, and lets the weakest go to the wall. But if he can't grab it, as in this case, he sets up a howl and talks about the higher morality and idealism, and that kind of stuff. In the United States they're restricting the output of cotton to keep up the price—you see, they grow cotton themselves. But they put on an air of being shocked at the restriction of rubber output as interfering with free trade, and the laws of supply and demand, and so on and so forth."

Mr. Vernon-Smith paused for breath.

"Of course, they chuckle at this stuff among themselves, but it is good enough for the public. So there's a huge publicity campaign going on; articles denouncing rubber restriction are shoved into newspapers all over the world, paid for at advertisement rates, of course."

"What a game!" said the Bounder. "And the public swallow it! Is there anythin' they won't swallow?"

"Precious little!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "But, you see, the speculators have a strong hold in putting in on moral grounds, for the public are moral if the speculators are not. They don't mention that they're after the profits of rubber-growing instead of leaving a whack to the planter."

"But what—" asked the Bounder.

"That's why I'm going East!"

"East?" said the Bounder.

"Yes. In Singapore, Penang, and other places the New York combine are making a deadlift effort to cry down restriction and to get it abolished. If they can work up a sufficient force of public opinion there may be real trouble, and if they succeed it means handing over a big British industry bound hand and foot to the Americans. A man who has a cool million invested in rubber shares doesn't want that to happen."

"By gad, I should say not!"

"So I'm going out to the spot to put a spoke in their wheel," said Mr.

Vernon-Smith. "At the same time, I shall survey some rubber and coconut estates that it may be worth my while to buy up lock, stock, and barrel. That's my business out in the East Indies. Then I've got to go right on into the South Seas."

"The South Seas!" said the Bounder, with a deep breath.

"Yes; it can't be avoided, Herbert. I've got a deep stake in the copra business, and, being as far as Singapore, it would be absurd not to go on and see to the rest. I shall go as far as the Marquesas Islands."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now," went on Mr. Vernon-Smith, "I can understand that you're disappointed, Herbert."

"Disappointed?"

"Yes, at having to chuck the Mediterranean cruise. But surely you'd like a cruise to the South Sea Islands quite as well, and your friends, too?"

The Bounder looked at his father.

"Dad," he exclaimed, "do you really mean to say that you've chucked the Mediterranean cruise, intending to go on a cruise in the South Seas instead?"

"That's it!"

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath.

"I'd better tell you something," he said. "I was disappointed when you told me you had changed your plans because—"

"Yes?"

"Because I was going to ask you to take me to the South Seas instead of the Mediterranean, and I supposed you'd given up the idea of a cruise in the Golden Arrow at all."

"Eh—what?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at his son. Then he burst into a laugh.

"Oh, gad! Then you weren't keen on the Mediterranean?"

"Not in the least."

"You wanted to go to the South Seas?"

"Just that."

The millionaire rubbed his fat hands.

"Then nothing could be better, for that's where we're going!" he exclaimed. "Business and pleasure combined. I dare say your friends will like the South Seas just as well—what?"

"Better, by long chalks!" said Smithy. "You see, I'd asked them for a South Sea cruise, dependin' on you playin' up, dad."

The millionaire laughed again.

"If I'd had any idea of that, I'd have been more explicit in my letter," he said. "But what put the idea of a South Sea cruise in your mind, Herbert? It's a bit unusual, and I may have to ask the Head for an extension of your vacation. It's not a short trip."

"My friend Redwing—"

"Eh—who?"

"You remember that chap Redwing who used to be at Greyfriars?"

"Oh, yes; he gave up his scholarship and left, for some reason. Didn't you tell me he had gone back to the sea?"

"Yes; but he's home again now, and staying at Greyfriars as a visitor. He's got a chart—"

"A—a what?"

"A chart to a treasure island in the South Seas—"

"Oh, gad!"

"I want him to come with me, and Wharton and his friends, and we're going to look for the treasure—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder stopped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Vernon-Smith wiped his eyes. "A treasure chart! A treasure island! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It looks promising, at least—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The millionaire was evidently greatly entertained. "My dear boy, treasure islands aren't scarce—I've had such propositions put up to me—documents and maps and the rest of it. It's one of the oldest stunts for catching mugs."

"But this isn't a stunt," said the Bounder. "I'll tell you about it if you like, dad—"

Mr. Vernon-Smith looked at his watch. "Never mind," he said, "I dare say it will amuse you on the trip, though, of course, there's nothing in it. I shall have to stay at the Marquesas some time—look here, while I'm there with the yacht, I'll charter a local craft for you and your friends to run about looking for your treasure island, if it keeps you amused. Like the idea?"

Smithy's face—an expression of unusually deep thought.

Redwing looked at him, colouring a little.

He had not spoken to the Bounder since he had prevented him from going out to avoid his father.

Whether they were still friends, or whether it was a break for good, Tom hardly knew.

But he knew that his tolerance was reaching a limit.

He was in effect Smithy's guest in the school—he used Smithy's study as if it was his own. On jarring terms with Smithy, he could not possibly let that continue, even for a few hours. Vernon-Smith, when his back was up, seemed to forget what was due to a guest, as he forgot every other consideration. But it

thanks—no need of jaw between us. But I shan't forget what you've done for me to-day."

"What have I done?" asked Tom smiling.

"But for you, I should have treated my father like an ungrateful and disrespectful rotter," said the Bounder quietly. "I should have been sorry for that, and ashamed of it, as you told me at the time—but that isn't all. I should have mucked up everything if I hadn't seen my pater to-day."

"I'm glad it's turned out all right; though I don't see—"

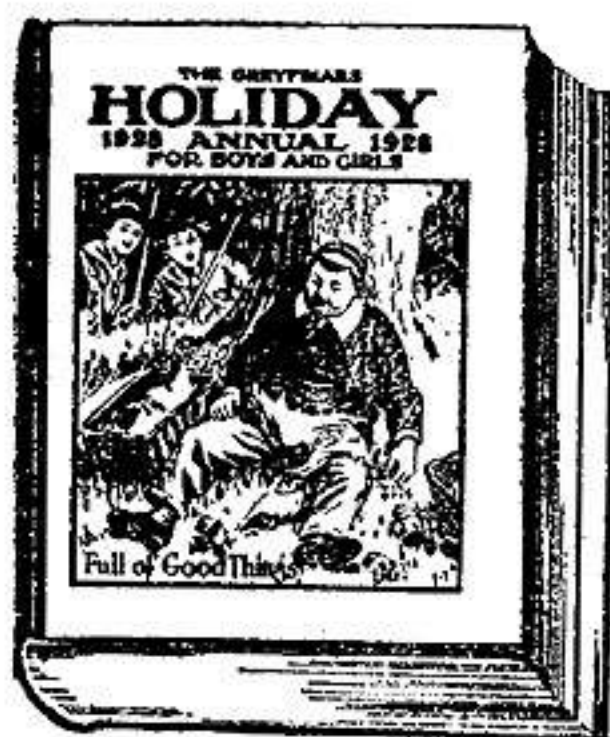
"It's as right as rain now."

"I'm jolly glad, Smithy. You—you're glad you didn't post that letter yesterday, then?"

Vernon-Smith shivered.

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The Bounder's face beamed.
"Dad, you're a real brick."

"Consider it done," said the millionaire, rising from the chair. "Now I shall have to get off, Herbert. I'm glad we've been able to fix things so comfortably. Come down to the car with me."

The Bounder of Greyfriars seemed to be walking on air as he left the study with his father.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Good Angel!

TOM REDWING stopped in the doorway of Study No. 4 a little later, hesitating to enter. The Bounder was there, seated in the arm-chair lately occupied by the portly form of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. There was a thoughtful expression on

could not go on; and Tom had come to the study now to have the matter put plain. He was ready to go, and had almost made up his mind to go. But deep in his heart was a longing to keep friendly with the Bounder if he could.

Smithy looked up, and his thoughtful face broke into a smile.

"Come in, old chap," he said, in a gentler voice than Redwing had ever heard him use before.

Tom, surprised and relieved, entered the study.

"I've seen my father, kid."

"Yes—I saw you saying good-bye to him at the car," answered Redwing.

"I—I hope—"

"You hope I remembered my manners?" grinned the Bounder.

"Well, yes."

"Reddy, old chap, you don't know how much I'm obliged to you," said Vernon-Smith. "I won't hand out any

"If I'd have posted it—Oh, my hat! Thank goodness you were there to stop me, Reddy."

"Then you're not ratty about it?"

"I shouldn't be ratty if you'd punched my head as well," said the Bounder. "You've weighed in as my good angel, old bean, though I didn't realise it. The pater has played up like a brick; and I was going to act like a thankless brute. Thank goodness you stopped me."

"That's good," said Tom. "You see, old man, your father must have had some good reason for changing his plans—"

The Bounder laughed.

"I've got to tell you about that. Can you guess why he's chucked up the Mediterranean trip?"

"No," said Redwing.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019.



(Continued from page 13.)

"Because he's got business in another part of the world, and he's taking me there with him instead. The South Seas!" said the Bounder.

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom.

"Exactly where we want to go," said Smithy. "The pater's got business at Singapore, and at the Marquesas Islands."

"Well, my hat! We should have to get to the Marquesas to start for Caca Island," said Redwing.

"Just so. And I never guessed—and if I'd ragged the pater, as I intended, it would all have been knocked on the head." The Bounder drew a deep breath. "If I'd cut my pater to-day, Reddy, the South Sea trip would be right off. Now it's on."

"That's jolly good luck, Smithy."

"So everything in the garden is lovely. We get as far as the Marquesas in the pater's yacht; and there he is going to charter a steamer for us—we're going to roam around just where we please while he's attending to his business there. Of course, rooting about the islands wouldn't be in the pater's line."

"I suppose not," smiled Redwing.

"So it's all plain sailing now," said Vernon-Smith, "and it's all due to you, Reddy, if that's any satisfaction to you." Redwing's face was very bright.

"I'm jolly glad," he said. "Thank goodness you didn't row with Wharton and his friends, after all."

The Bounder started.

"My hat! I'd forgotten that! You've saved me from making a confounded fool of myself all the along the line, Reddy. I think I'll go and speak to those fellows now."

Smithy left the study, and Redwing sat down and took the chart from his pocket. His face was very bright as he scanned it once more. The clouds had rolled by, and the prospect before the sailorman's son was a very happy one.

In the Remove passage, Herbert Vernon-Smith passed Bunter. The Owl of the Remove gave him a fat, jeering grin.

"I say, Smithy——"

"Well, fathead?" said the Bounder politely.

"Old man gone bankrupt, what?" asked Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Skinner says he thinks so, and it looks jolly likely to me," grinned Bunter. "These City millionaires, you know—here to-day and gone to-morrow—one day spreading themselves all over the West End, and the next day bolting for the Argentine. He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith looked at him.

"Sorry for you, old bean," went on Bunter. "Hard lines on you, after all your swank. Have the bailiffs taken the yacht?"

"No," said the Bounder, very quietly. "The bailiffs haven't taken the yacht, Bunter."

"You'll have to put up with Southend or Margate for the vac?" chuckled Bunter. "Bit of a come-down, what?"

THE MACNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019.

He, he, he! But, of course, I never believed that ripping cruise was coming off."

"I suppose it's not worth the trouble of kicking you," said the Bounder thoughtfully.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Roll away while you're safe. You talk too much, old fat bean! A little of you goes a long way," said Vernon-Smith.

"Is it going to be Southend or Margate this vac?" grinned Bunter. "Or won't it run to either?"

The Bounder laughed involuntarily.

"Neither!" he said. "It's going to be the South Seas."

Bunter gave a fat wink.

"Gammon!" he said.

"I've said that you're not worth the trouble of kicking," the Bounder remarked in the same thoughtful way; "but on second thoughts I think you are. Turn round!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Are you goin' to turn round?"

"You cheeky beast—— Here, hands off! Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder grasped him and turned him round. "If you kick me, you cheeky cad, I'll jolly well—— Yooooop!"

The Bounder passed on, leaving William George Bunter roaring with anguish. Bunter, apparently, had not expected his pleasant and genial remarks to earn him a kicking. But Bunter often received what he did not expect. Heedless of William George, and deaf to his sounds of woe, the Bounder walked on cheerfully to Study No. 1.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

"BETTER have it out."

That was Bob Cherry's opinion.

And the Co. nodded assent.

It was a meeting of the Famous Five in Study No. 1. They had met to discuss the matter of the summer vacation—a matter which evidently had to be settled one way or the other.

The chums of the Remove had come to the conclusion that the projected cruise in the South Seas was, judging by the looks and general proceedings of the Bounder, "off."

Whether it was off or not, the juniors were strongly inclined to call it off and settle the matter.

Fellows like Skinner and Snoop had no objection to submitting to the Bounder's airs and graces, smiling when he smiled, and observing a judicious silence when he frowned. The crumbs from the rich man's table were their reward.

Harry Wharton & Co., however, were not precisely of the same calibre as Skinner and his set. They regretted by this time having made any arrangements with Herbert Vernon-Smith at all, and they supposed that the Bounder felt the same regret. The only thing to be done was to call it off.

"Well, if you fellows think so, I must say I think so," said Harry Wharton, looking round. "It's agreed, then?"

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Smithy can't call it letting him down," said Bob Cherry. "He's shown pretty plainly that he doesn't want us."

"Unless it's only his usual ratty temper," remarked Nugent.

Bob knitted his brows.

"If it's that, that's worse! I suppose we're not the fellows to put up with his temper."

"No jolly fear!" said Johnny Bull emphatically.

"Then we'd better see Smithy——" began the captain of the Remove.

There was a step in the doorway.

"Who's takin' my name in vain?" asked the Bounder genially, looking into the study, with a smile.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy!" said Bob. "We were just going to look for you, Smithy."

"Well, here I am." Probably the Bounder guessed what the Famous Five had been discussing, and very probably he was aware of the decision at which they had arrived. If so, however, his face gave no sign of it. Never had his manner been so cordial and genial.

"About the vac——" said Wharton.

"That's settled, isn't it?" said the Bounder innocently.

"Well, we thought so, but——" Wharton hesitated. Smithy's manner put him rather at a loss.

"You don't mean to say you've changed your minds and don't want to come on the South Seas trip?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, with an air of surprise.

The Famous Five stared at him without replying. They were quite taken aback.

"Of course, you can please yourselves," said Smithy. "But it's rather late in the day to change your minds, isn't it?"

"We rather thought you'd changed yours," said the captain of the Remove uncomfortably.

"What rot!"

"Then you haven't?" asked Bob Cherry, in perplexity.

"Not the least little bit! Aren't you keen on helping Redwing to hunt for his giddy treasure?"

"Very keen indeed. But——"

"Redwing will be a good deal disappointed if you fellows don't come," said the Bounder gravely. "Is anythin' the matter?"

"Well, you—you see——" said Wharton haltingly.

"Somethin' more attractive turned up and you want to throw me over?"

"Nothing of the sort. But——"

"Have I been wantin' in politeness in any way?" queried the Bounder. "Have I forgotten to put the usual polish on my manners? If so, I'm sorry, and I can't say more than that."

The juniors could only look at him. The Bounder had taken all the wind out of their sails, so to speak.

"Blessed if I can quite make you out, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove at last. "Look here—is the cruise coming off at all?"

"Certainly!"

"And you want us to come?"

"Of course—shouldn't have asked you otherwise."

"Well, you've been giving us a rather different impression lately, that's all," said Wharton, hardly knowing what to say.

"I'm sorry for that. I shall be really disappointed if you fellows don't come," said Vernon-Smith. "To be frank, I know I've been rather ratty the last day or two, and I'm sorry. Isn't that good enough?"

"Oh, quite!" said Harry. "We certainly don't want to take offence if none was meant."

"Let it go at that, then," said the Bounder. "I've fixed it all up with the pater. He's got business in the South

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Seas, and we're going on the yacht as far as the Marquesas. That's within a few hundred miles of the treasure island, I think, as Reddy has worked it out on the map. We get a steamer of our own to root about among the islands—the pater will pick out some reliable skipper to go in charge. I don't think we shall have a bad time sailing among the Pacific Islands."

"My hat! A jolly good time, I think!" said Bob Cherry. "Only giddy millionaires can do these things."

"Then it's all settled," said Vernon-Smith. "You fellows and Redwing and little me—that's a party of seven. I suppose you don't want Bunter? I don't think I could stand him."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—" Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway. Evidently he had followed the Bounder to Study No. 1 to see—and hear—what was on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Talk of pigs and you hear them grunt!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"I—I hope you fellows don't mind my little joke in the Rag?" said Billy Bunter anxiously. "Of course, I never meant to turn you down."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Only my little joke. He, he, he!"

The juniors stared at Bunter and burst into a roar of laughter. Evidently the Owl of the Remove had heard the talk in the study, and comprehended at last that there really was going to be a South Seas' cruise, after all.

"I wouldn't desert my old pals for the vacation," said Bunter affectionately. "I'll come!"

"Will you?" said the Bounder grimly.

"Yes, old chap. You fellows remember how I went to India with Inky once to protect him. Well, I'll do the same for you this trip; you needn't be afraid of cannibals and head-hunters and half-castes and things with me along with you. I'll see you through all right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Count on me, Smithy. I don't

really mind you being a purse-proud swanker, you know!"

"Oh, my hat! Don't you?" gasped the Bounder.

"No, old fellow. I've put up with worse fellows than you," said Bunter fatuously. "Same with Redwing. I'll put up with that low longshoreman out of friendship for you, Smithy."

"Obliging chap, Bunter," remarked Bob Cherry. "So you find you can put up with the whole crowd, Bunter?"

"Yes, old man."

"The trouble is, that the whole crowd can't put up with you," remarked Bob. "We're not so accommodating."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, the question before the meeting is, who's going to kick Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry.

"All together," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Good egg! Collar him, Smithy!"

William George Bunter did not wait to be collared.

Greyfriars, during the last day or two, was crowded with bright and anticipating faces, and some of the brightest belonged to the fellows who were going for a summer cruise among the enchanted isles of the Pacific. But there was one long and dismal face. It was the face of William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

Whether Bunter would ever have succeeded in wedging himself into the South Sea party was problematic. But that he would never wedge in now was absolutely certain. He had "turned down" the South Seas' trip in the belief that it was not coming off. He was quite unable to turn it up again, so to speak, now that he learned—too late—that it was a certainty. Bunter often had occasion to be sorry that he talked so much; but never had he regretted it so deeply as now. It was useless to speak to the Bounder—he could not even go near Smithy without danger of being kicked. It was useless to argue with the Famous Five. They had no power to

invite him on Smithy's father's yacht, if they had wanted to—and most distinctly they did not want to. Bunter realised that there was nothing doing, and deep and dismal was his dole.

When Greyfriars School broke up, and the various members thereof went their various ways for the summer holidays, Bunter's way led him homeward. And although it is said that there is no place like home, Billy Bunter's fat face was extremely lugubrious as he started thitherward. Even the fascinating society of his minor, Sammy, and his sister Bessie did not seem to comfort him—possibly, indeed, made matters worse. William George Bunter, like Rachel of old, mourned for that which he had lost, and could not be comforted.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Billy Bunter at Home!

"CAT!"

"Brute!"

"Look here, Bessie—"

"Look here, Billy—"

"Cat!"

"Beast!"

The Bunter family were enjoying the summer holidays. The vacation was only two or three days old; but already the three hopeful members of the younger generation in the Bunter clan had grown fed-up with one another.

According to the tales told by William George Bunter at Greyfriars, Bunter Court was a great and glorious place. It was always to be observed, however, that, attractive as that magnificent domain was, it never seemed to attract William George Bunter very strongly.

The poet has told us that 'tis distance lends enchantment to the view. Certainly that was the case with Bunter Court.

Generally, a building seems small in the distance, and grows larger and larger the nearer one approaches to it.

In the case of Bunter Court this well-known natural law was reversed.

(Continued on next page.)

READ WHAT OUR RAILWAY EXPERT HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE "MOGUL" CLASS ENGINE—the subject of this week's Dandy Free Gift.

L.M.S. Locomotive No. 13,000.

SPECIALLY designed for handling fast and heavy excursion and goods traffic, the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company's Locomotive No. 13,000 is the forerunner of a new type of engine, of which seventy are now being built at the Crewe Works and thirty at the Norwich Works of the Company.

These "mixed traffic" locomotives belong to the 2-6-0 class—that is, they have two leading wheels and six coupled driving wheels, whose respective diameters are 3 ft. 6½ ins. and 5 ft. 6 ins. Those leading or "idle" wheels, you will notice, are mounted beneath a swivelling truck or "bogie," the object being to enable the locomotive to skim smoothly around curves in the line. There are no trailing wheels under the cab, hence the "O" in the three-figure classification.

Engine and tender together weigh, in working order, 108 tons 4 cwt., the engine alone 66 tons. By way of "provisions" for the journey, the tender carries 5 tons of coal loaded on top of

the fore-end of the tank which, occupying the whole length of the tender, holds 3,500 gallons of water. In event of the water running short, more can be taken aboard, whilst travelling at full speed, by means of the water pick-up apparatus with which the tender is fitted.

The total heating surface of the boiler, whose working pressure is 180 lb. per square inch, is 1,521 square ft., and the area of the firebox grate (of the Belpaire pattern) is 27½ square ft. So you see where all that coal and water goes! Two Ross safety valves are mounted immediately over the firebox, on the top of the locomotive. This type of valve is nicknamed the "Pop," descriptive of the noise which the paired valves make when, the valve-chamber being filled with steam, the spring which allows the steam to escape is automatically lifted—a very different sound from the deafening roar made by the older types of safety valve.

These valves are now considered of such great importance, and their mechanism has reached such a pitch of perfection, that we can scarcely credit

such a report as was once made—that "the makers had forgotten to fix a safety valve to the boiler, so the engine blew up and was totally destroyed!"

The safety valves are not a strikingly prominent feature of the railway engines to-day, but when next you glance at a pair, such as those on Engine No. 13,000, you might think of those alarming old days, little more than a century ago, when the first passenger locomotive in the world—it was named "Locomotion"—started to run. The driver perched himself on top of the boiler, whence he certainly had a good look-out, though his seat must have been more exciting than comfortable. Apart from stray cattle loafing on the track, all he had to look out for was the candle in the station-master's window. Lighted, it meant the line was blocked; if the candle was "out," the driver knew there was nothing particular in his way. No one ever dreamed then of the modern "posh" tail lamps. The best they could do in that direction was to hitch a bucket of lighted coke to the engine's tail!

Engine No. 13,000 stands 12 ft. 9½ ins. high, with a wheelbase—the distance between front and rear axles—of 25 ft. 6 ins.; its total length is 37 ft. 5½ ins. The overall length of engine and tender, from nose of front buffer to tail of rear buffer, is a few inches short of 60 ft.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,010.

"TOM REDWING'S QUEST!"

(Continued from previous page.)

Bunter Court loomed as a large and imposing mansion from the distance of Greyfriars. Close at hand, it diminished remarkably into the moderate dimensions of a villa in Surrey.

At Greyfriars, in Bunter's fertile imagination, it reared its imposing facade, extensive and many-windowed, over miles of park-land and woodland. But when Bunter got home, he found that it was what the estate agents call a desirable residence, with room for a garage. So completely was Bunter the slave of his wonderful imagination, that when he was far from Bunter Court, he really believed, more or less, in his own magnificent description of that abode. Except when he was addressing letters home, he really forgot that the place was not named Bunter Court at all.

That Surrey villa of Mr. Bunter, the stockbroker, grew larger and larger, in Bunter's happy fancy, the further he travelled from it. It diminished in proportion when he returned to the paternal roof.

Five or six Rolls-Royce cars woke the echoes of the wide domain of the Bunters when Billy was at Greyfriars. When he was at home, a single Ford spread its scent of petrol over the whole place, and did not have to spread it very far.

Bunter was bored with expensive automobiles—at Greyfriars. At home, it was only on special occasions that he could get a run in the Ford.

Dukes and princes thronged the noble halls of Bunter Court—when Billy was telling the tale in the Remove. On the spot, the dukes and princes boiled down, as it were, into two or three podgy City gentlemen who drank Mr. Bunter's second-rate port and smoked his third-rate cigars.

The glories of Bunter Court, therefore, palled on William George at a very early date.

He was discontented.

He might have found some solace in telling, at home of the magnificent invitations he had turned down for the vacation—how Lord Mauleverer had begged him to go home with him to the Towers—how D'Arcy of St. Jim's had entreated him to put in at least a week at Eastwood House—how De Courcy of Highcliffe had implored him, almost with tears in his eyes, to spare him a day or two—how Herbert Vernon-Smith had almost gone to the length of kidnapping him for a cruise in the South Seas. But there was Sammy, his minor, to discount such tales on the spot. Bunter felt bitterly that it was unfair to have his minor at the same school. Sammy, indeed, seemed to take a fiendish delight in giving away Billy's swank, whenever the Owl of the Remove strove to spread himself.

There was trouble at home for William George, too. He owed Bessie five shillings. Five shillings was not a large sum; but if it had been five hundred thousand pounds, Bessie Bunter could scarcely have dwelt on the subject with more eloquence. In season and out of season, Elizabeth Bunter dwelt on that topic tirelessly. Bessie was, in Billy's opinion, a cat. Bessie's opinion of Billy could not be expressed so laconically. Her vocabulary on the subject was very extensive indeed. Only on one subject could Billy and Bessie agree. That was the subject of Sammy. They heartily agreed that Sammy was a little beast.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019.

On this especial morning Billy Bunter was feeling fed-up to his fat chin. His thoughts dwelt on the South Sea cruise he had missed; his thoughts had dwelt on it long. He knew that Harry Wharton & Co. were to have nearly a week at their various homes before they joined Smithy at Southampton on the yacht. Long and anxiously had Bunter pondered whether it would be any use dropping in on one of the fellows and urging his claims to be taken along.

The prospect seemed doubtful. But what was not doubtful was the fact that railway-fares were expensive, and that all Bunter's available cash resources were expended as fast as they came along, on the refreshment of the inner Bunter. He had never been able to raise the necessary amount, for this reason, to settle that old outstanding account with Bessie.

There were difficulties even in the way of telephoning. Mr. Bunter objected to his telephone being used for trunk calls—he disliked seeing such

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for the Great Western Railway Flyer, The
"CAERPHILLY CASTLE"—
Next Week's Magnificent FREE METAL
MODEL.

You will feel like kicking yourself if you
get left—and you will get left if you fail
to place an order with your newsagent
AT ONCE!

items in his bills when they came in. Still, Bunter would have risked that; he would probably be off the scene when the bill came in. But what was the use of wasting a trunk call on a fellow who would very likely cut off as soon as he heard the old familiar voice?

But Bunter had resolved that, by hook or by crook, he was going to be on board the Golden Arrow when the yacht steamed out of Southampton.

Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and the Owl of the Remove was prepared to take desperate measures.

He was not quite clear yet what those measures were going to be; but his fat mind was made up.

But cash was required. Bunter always required cash; and now he required it more than ever.

And when he approached Elizabeth Bunter on the subject, instead of replying with the sisterly fondness that such a brother deserved, Bessie merely raised that old, worrying, distasteful question of the five shillings.

Bunter had forgotten it. He had a

good memory for some things, but not for trifles like that. Bessie had not forgotten it; and she revived it in Bunter's mind with painful clearness. Instead of the loan that Bunter needed the conversation ended in an exchange of compliments, such as were customary in the happy circle of the Bunter clan. And William George rolled away down the garden, leaving Bessie still eloquent. Bunter wanted a new loan, not a reminder of the old loan; but he reflected bitterly that it was no use expecting a girl to keep to the point.

In a secluded corner of the garden he found Sammy. Sammy was negotiating a pie, for which, in all probability, the cook would, later on, be making excited and exasperated inquiries.

Bunter's minor had nearly finished the pie, and he fairly bolted what remained as he saw William George in the offing. By the time his elder brother reached him it was too late for Billy to say "Halves!" Sammy seemed on the verge of choking. But the pie was safe.

"Sammy, old chap!" said Bunter.

"Grooogh!"

"What's the matter?"

"Ooooooh!"

"Greedy little beast!" said Bunter.

"Yurrrrrgggggh!"

"I mean, take your time, old fellow. I want to speak to you."

Sammy, with a crimson face and tears in his eyes, took his time; fortunately, the last big chunk of pie went down to the place Nature intended for it. Sammy ceased to gurgle and gasp.

"I'm going to see Wharton," remarked Bunter, when Sammy was once more in a state to give him attention. "I'm staying a few days with him."

Sammy chuckled.

"Does he know?" he inquired.

Bunter resisted the natural impulse to kick Sammy.

"It's a question of the railway fare," he remarked casually. "See?"

"I see!" assented Sammy.

"I'd have asked the pater, only—"

"Only you knew he wouldn't part."

"The fact is, Sammy, if you could lend me a pound—"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you little beast?" snapped Bunter. "I—I mean, it's a rather special occasion, Sammy. I really must get to Wharton's place. It's important. Can you manage ten bob? Look here, the pater's taking me in the Ford next Sunday. If I'm away you can go instead."

"You had ten bob from Uncle Joseph the other day," said Sammy.

"Well, that went, you know," said Bunter. "I had some ices, and some tarts, and— Look here, you had ten bob, too."

Sammy nodded.

"Well, then, don't be mean," urged Bunter. "Lend me ten bob, old chap, and I'll do all the letters home next term at school. There!"

Sammy grinned.

"I had some ices," he said.

"Eh?"

"And some tarts—"

Bunter breathed hard.

"Mean to say you blued all that tip in guzzling?" he demanded in indignant disgust.

"Well, what did you do with yours?" demanded Sammy.

Billy Bunter did not answer that question. Obviously, if Uncle Joseph's tip was gone Sammy could not lend it to him. Sammy was useless. Further conversation was a waste of breath.

So Billy grabbed his minor by the collar and found a little solace in banging his head on the fence.



"Billy! I say, Billy! Stop!" Billy Bunter stopped, and looked round. Bessie Bunter was coming after him at a run, red with haste and excitement. "You're going away?" asked Bessie. "Yes." "Well, then, what about that five shillings—" "Wha-a-at?" "That five shillings you owe me!" gasped Bessie Bunter. (See Chapter 13.)

Leaving Sammy roaring, he rolled away to the house, to telephone. He would ring up Wharton and tell him he was coming. That would give the captain of the Remove time to get used to the idea by the time Bunter arrived. The railway fare still stood like a lion in his path. But there were other ways. For instance, a fellow could take a taxi; it would be frightfully expensive, but that would not be a really serious aspect of the matter if he could leave it to Wharton, or Wharton's uncle. Bunter was accustomed to taking chances of this sort.

In a hopeful frame of mind, the Owl of the Remove rang up the exchange and asked for a trunk call, and gave Colonel Wharton's number at Wharton Lodge.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ring Off!

"HARRY!"

"You're wanted on the phone."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"Some school friend of yours, I think," said Colonel Wharton. "I seemed to know the voice."

"Smithy, very likely," said Harry. "I expect him to ring me up some time. Inky, old bean, you'd better come along and hear what Smithy has to say."

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific!" said the nabob of Bhanipur. And he followed the captain of the Remove.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was the only member of the Greyfriars Co. with Wharton at present. Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent were at home with their people till the time came to meet at Southampton and go on board the Golden Arrow. But in vacation time Wharton Lodge was generally the home of the nabob of Bhanipur, whose palace under the shadow of the Himalayas was rather too far off for a visit in the holidays.

Wharton took up the receiver. A fat voice was coming through as he put it to his ear.

"I shall have to pay for another call if you keep me hanging on like this. My hat! Aren't you there? Blow you! Wasting my time talking to a silly fat-head, and he's not there! Why the thump can't that blinking idiot come to the phone? Of all the silly chumps!"

Wharton grinned.

He knew Bunter's voice, and he realised that the Owl of the Remove was

tired of waiting for him to take the call. He was about to speak into the transmitter when Hurree Singh gently tapped his shoulder. The nabob had caught Bunter's dulcet tones.

"It is the esteemed fat Bunter?" asked Hurree Singh, placing a dusky hand over the transmitter to keep his voice from reaching the Owl of the Remove.

"Yes, that fat villain," said Harry. "I thought we had finished with Bunter till next term. I wonder what he wants?"

Hurree Singh grinned. The dusky junior had no doubt whatever what Bunter wanted.

"I thinkfully opine that he wants a cruise in the esteemed Smithy's yacht," he answered. "and the probability is great that he is coming to see you about it, old man."

"Bother him!" said Wharton.

"Give me the giddy phone, my esteemed chum."

"Tell him I'm dead and buried," suggested Wharton, laughing, as he handed the receiver to Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

The nabob put it to his dusky ear.

Bunter's voice was coming through, in tones of wrath and exasperation.

"You footling idiot! Haven't you got to the telephone yet? Do you think trunk calls last for ever, you burbling champ? I've had to tell them to give me another three minutes; and that means another bill for my pater, and he kicks up a fuss about a penny local call. You blinking, burbling, blithering—"

"My esteemed Bunter!"

"Oh! Is that Inky?" Bunter broke off his exasperated tirade. "Is that you, Inky, old chap?"

"Yes, my worthy and excellent Bunter. It is a terrific pleasure to hear your esteemed and execrable voice."

"I want to speak to Wharton. It's rather important. Can't he come to the phone?"

"It is impossible for a sick man to leave his esteemed bed and come to the phone, my excellent Bunter."

"Oh, my hat! Is the silly fool ill?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled a dusky smile.

Certainly he had not said that Wharton was ill.

He had said that it was impossible for a sick man to leave his bed and come to the phone, which undoubtedly was the truth. If Bunter chose to conclude from that observation that Wharton was ill that was Bunter's business. He could draw any conclusions he liked.

"Just like that fathead to get laid up!" grunted Bunter. "Still, that needn't make any difference. I'll come all the same."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the nabob.

"Oh! You like the idea?" asked Bunter, rather surprised. He had not expected anybody at Wharton Lodge to "enthuse."

"It is noble of you, my esteemed Bunter—it is brave and noble and generous," said Hurree Singh.

"Eh?"

"Many fellows would hesitate to visit a chap who was laid on his esteemed back with diphtheria—"

"What?"

"But, after all, the risk is little," said the nabob. "I think most likely you would not catch it, my excellent Bunter."

"Good lord! Has Wharton got diphtheria?" gasped Bunter. "Why, that's jolly dangerous, and awfully catching."

"The danger is nothing to a brave and devoted friend."

"Yah!"

"Come as quickly as you can, my esteemed Bunter—"

"Rats!"

"I will meet you at the station—"

"You silly, piffing nigger, do you think I'm coming to a house where there's diphtheria?" hooted Bunter. "Haven't you got the sense of a bunny rabbit?"

"My excellent Bunter—"

"Catch me!" snorted the Owl of the Remove. "You won't catch me within a hundred miles, and you can bet your hat on that, you fatheaded nigger!"

There was a whirr on the line as Bunter rang off with emphasis. Mr. Bunter was going to have the pleasure of paying for two trunk calls; but the juniors at Wharton Lodge were not, evidently, going to have the pleasure of seeing Billy Bunter.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh put up the receiver, and bestowed a dusky smile on Harry Wharton, who was almost convulsed with laughter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,019.

"We shall lose the esteemed and disgusting society of Bunter after all," remarked the nabob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"Do you think that the worthy Bunter supposed, from my ludicrous remarks, that you were ill with diphtheria, my esteemed Wharton?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy he would have got some such idea. Of course, you did not say so. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was impossible to say so, since the truthfulness is golden," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his head. "But if Bunter fancies so, it seems improbable that he will arrive here. He does not seem keen on running the risk—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As the excellent English proverb declares, the stitch in time saves ninepence," said Hurree Singh. "We shall not have the terrific pleasure of Bunter's society before we leave for Southampton."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was right.

Bunter had obviously drawn the conclusion, from the nabob's remarks, that Wharton Lodge just then was a place only fit for a particularly courageous and devoted friend to visit. Obviously, therefore, it was no place for Billy Bunter. No unpaid taxi was likely to bring William George Bunter anywhere near the Lodge; indeed, wild horses would not have dragged him thither.

When the time came for Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh to join their friends at Southampton, they had seen nothing of Bunter. They supposed that they were done with Bunter till next term at Greyfriars.

But William George Bunter was not done with them. The Owl of the Remove had yet a last card to play.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Telegram from Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Here we are again!"

Five juniors met on the platform at Southampton. The Famous Five were together once more, and all of them looked pleased with themselves and one another.

"Where is he?" asked Bob Cherry, looking round.

"Who—Smithy?" asked Harry.

"No; Bunter."

"Bunter—goodness knows!"

"You didn't expect to see Bunter?" asked Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I jolly well did!" he answered. "I fancied that he would stick on to you, somehow, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I couldn't have brought him to Smithy's yacht, without Smithy's leave," he remarked.

"That wouldn't worry Bunter. I'll bet ten to one in doughnuts that we see him before we sail," said Bob. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's the jolly old Bounder!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith came up to greet the Famous Five, with Tom Redwing. The Bounder was looking very cheery and genial; indeed, he was so agreeable, that the last remembrance of his unpleasantness at Greyfriars was banished from the minds of the chums of the Remove. The Famous Five shook hands with the Bounder and Redwing.

"Jolly glad to see you chaps," said Vernon-Smith. "We stay ashore to-night, but your baggage can go straight

on the Golden Arrow. I've got a car outside. The pater's at the hotel. Seen anything of Bunter?"

"Not since Greyfriars broke up," said Harry, with a smile.

The suspicion that had occurred to Bob Cherry had apparently occurred to the Bounder also.

"I've had some letters from him," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't know what he said in them, though."

"Eh! How's that?"

"They weren't stamped," explained the Bounder. "There must have been a shortage of stamps at Bunter Court. So, as I recognised his fist, I handed them back to the postman. I rather fancied that he might have come along with one of you chaps. I was prepared to pitch him neck and crop into the next train for anywhere. Come on."

The Bounder led the way to the millionaire's car that waited outside the station.

Probably it was fortunate for Bunter that he had not arrived with Wharton, as he had planned in his fat mind. The Bounder of Greyfriars was not the fellow to stand on ceremony with an uninvited guest.

"Got the chart safe, Reddy?" asked Bob Cherry, as the juniors packed themselves into the big car.

Redwing nodded and smiled.

"Quite! I know it by heart now, too, if anything should happen to it."

"You haven't seen anything of that half-caste chap, Silvio?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No; it's pretty clear that he cleared out of the country," said Redwing. "Most likely he's gone as a seaman on some ship. Smithy thinks we shall see him again in the South Seas."

"Not at all unlikely," said Wharton. "Remember, he's seen the chart, and knows where to look for the island."

"He doesn't know where to look for the cache, though," remarked Frank Nugent. "I can't make that out, from the chart. The word 'cach' seems to be sprawled across the map, with a cross over each letter. Do you know what it means, Reddy?"

Redwing shook his head.

"Not yet. I fancy the crosses are some kind of clue which we shall find when we get to the island. It's ripping to be starting to-morrow, isn't it?"

"Topping!" said Bob.

"The topfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and when the esteemed voyage is over, the worthy and ridiculous Reddy will return rolling in unlimited and disgusted wealth."

Tom Redwing laughed.

"I hope so," he said. "If the treasure turns up, I shall be a Greyfriars man again next term, I hope."

"Hear, hear!"

"We're going to find the treasure," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "If we can't do it in the time, the pater will cable to the Head asking for an extension of the vac. He won't be able to refuse when we're in the South Seas, more than ten thousand miles off."

"Your pater is a man with jolly good ideas sometimes," said Bob. "I must say that I like South Sea islands more than Latin and maths. In the Form-room. Of course, Queeky is really nicer than a cannibal—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But anything for a change. And Redwing can stand Bunter a terrific feed next term, out of the treasure, as a consolation prize."

"We haven't got the treasure yet," smiled Redwing.

"We're going to, old bean!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith greeted the juniors

with plump politeness when they arrived at the hotel. The juniors noticed that he was very civil to Tom Redwing. Certainly, the millionaire would not have chosen a sailorman's son for his son's best friend; but even the rather hard and worldly Mr. Vernon-Smith recognised Redwing's sterling character, and he could not help being pleased by Tom's obvious affection and admiration for his magnificent chum. Tom, as a matter of fact, was a little overwhelmed by the expensive magnificence that was customary with the Vernon-Smiths; but it increased his regard for the Bounder, who had chosen as a chum a fellow who had little or nothing, and who worked in a fore-castle for his daily bread. Certainly, with all his faults, the Bounder was free from the mean fault of snobbery. If there was a certain unconscious swank about the Bounder, Tom was not disposed to find fault with that, or even to see it. Smithy, after all, was a splendid fellow.

Harry Wharton & Co. were lunching with the millionaire and his son, when a waiter brought a telegram to the Bounder.

Smithy slit open the buff envelope, and glanced at the scrawled slip within. Then he chuckled.

"Bunter!" he said.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter been blowing his tin on a farewell telegram," exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Listen!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith read out the telegram. The length of it indicated that Billy Bunter had been expending pennies on words at an unusually reckless rate.

"Coming down to Southampton to see you fellows off. Sorry I shan't be able to join you—quite impossible! But will see you start,

"BUNTER."

The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter isn't such a bad old bean. I must say I never suspected he was so fond of us."

"The fondfulness must be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder seemed a little puzzled.

"He says it's impossible to join us," he observed. "I suppose he's landed himself on somebody for the vac—poor old Mauly, perhaps. But why does he want to see us off?"

"And who is he sticking for the railway fare?" grunted Johnny Bull.

The Bounder crumpled the telegram into his pocket.

"Well, he can see us off!" he remarked. "No harm in that. But that's the limit!"

The juniors smiled. It was probable that William George Bunter still nourished hopes. But if he expected a last-minute invitation from the Bounder, he was doomed to disappointment. Many fellows, at many times, had allowed themselves to be inflicted with Bunter; but the Bounder of Greyfriars was not that sort of fellow.

After a little reflection, the Bounder concluded that that was Bunter's idea; and he smiled grimly. Bunter could come to the yacht to see the party off, too, before they started. He was quite prepared, if necessary, to kick the Owl of the Remove over the side of the Golden Arrow into Southampton Water. Billy Bunter had turned down the South Sea cruise at Greyfriars, and he had turned it down not wisely but too well!

THE COVER WHICH WILL STAND OUT ON ALL THE BOOKSTALLS NEXT WEEK!

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Don't line up at the end of the queue, but be one of the first to get your copy of next week's "MAGNET"!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business!

"DAD!"

Mr. William Samuel Bunter looked suspiciously at his elder son.

It was seldom that William George Bunter addressed his respected parent as "dad," especially in such affectionate tones.

When he did, it meant that he wanted something. Mr. Bunter was well aware of that, from experience.

"Well?"

Mr. Bunter grunted monosyllabically.

It was not an encouraging reply, to an affectionate son who addressed him as "dad" in honeyed tones. But Billy Bunter went on:

"My friends are starting to-morrow on a cruise, dad!"

"Well?"

"I'm going with them."

"Indeed!"

"But I'm a bit worried, dad!"

"Well?"

Mr. Bunter seemed to be under-studying the ancient Spartans, in the brevity of his remarks. Possibly he was more interested in his paper than in William George's conversation.

"I'm afraid you'll miss me a lot, dad, if I'm away practically the whole of the vacation."

"Why should you suppose so?" asked Mr. Bunter, in surprise.

"Oh!"

"You need be afraid of nothing of the sort."

"Ah!"

"If your friends have invited you to join them, you are at full liberty to do so," said Mr. Bunter.

"Hem!"

And the worthy stockbroker returned to his paper, under the impression that the conversation was at an end. But it wasn't.

"There's my fare to Southampton, dad!" murmured Bunter.

Grunt!

"I'm quite stony, dad!" said Bunter.

Grunt!

"I had to send a telegram to Smithy to-day—"

Grunt!

"I couldn't have sent it if I hadn't found some stamps—" said Bunter, in a pained tone.

Mr. Bunter looked up from his financial paper.

"Where did you find stamps?"

"In your desk, dad. Wasn't it lucky?"

Mr. Bunter's expression, as he gazed at William George over his paper, did not seem to indicate that he regarded it as lucky.

"You young rascal!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, dad—"

"The amount will be stopped out of your allowance next term."

"I don't mind that, dad," said Bunter, with dignity. Bunter never did mind anything that was to happen in the future; he was not the fellow to meet troubles half-way. Indeed, he never met them at all if he could help it. "Of course, stop it out of my allowance. That's all right. But about the railway fare to Southampton—"

Grunt!

"After all, you'll save a good bit on having me away for the holidays, father," Bunter ventured to remind his parent.

"Undoubtedly!" agreed Mr. Bunter, seeming to cheer up a little at that. "That is the case, William; is the matter definitely settled?"

Bunter paused a moment.

The matter was definitely settled in his own fat mind. But in the mind of Herbert Vernon-Smith, it was most indefinitely unsettled.

But it was useless to confide that to Mr. Bunter. It was useless even to ask him for the return fare to Southampton, in case Bunter's little scheme did not come off.

"Oh, quite," said Bunter, "I hadn't decided about it at Greyfriars—in fact, I turned it down. But thinking it over, I've decided to go. I've settled that quite definitely."

"Very well. You may ask me for your fare to Southampton in the morning," said Mr. Bunter. "You had better pack to-night!"

"Pack?" repeated Bunter.

"I presume you will be packing some baggage to take with you on a distant voyage."

"Oh, yes! Of—of course."

Bunter could not help wondering what the effect would be on the Golden Arrow yacht, if he arrived there with baggage. Certainly, the Greyfriars fellows were not likely, in that case, to credit that he had simply come to see them off. And for the success of the wonderful scheme that had come into Bunter's fat brain, it was necessary that they should take him on trust to that extent.

"I—I think perhaps I'd better do some shopping in Southampton, dad," he stammered. "Things for a voyage, you know."

"Quite a good idea."

"Twenty pounds would see me through," said Bunter hopefully.

"Very good. If you possess such a sum, there is no objection to your expending it on an outfit."

"Oh!"

"Now, please, do not interrupt me further."

Bunter gave it up.

The next morning William George did not forget to ask his parent for his fare to Southampton. Mr. Bunter calculated the amount of the third-class fare, and handed his son the precise sum. Bunter wondered how he was to explain the absence of baggage, if his father offered to drive him to the station. But he need not have worried. Mr. Bunter didn't.

After the fat gentleman had started for the City, Billy Bunter prepared for his own departure.

"Going out?" asked Sammy, meeting him on his way to the gate.

Bunter blinked at him loftily.

"I'm going to join my friends," he answered. "We're starting to-day on a voyage to the South Seas."

Sammy winked.

"You're going with Wharton's crowd?"

"Certainly."

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"Look out for Smithy's boot," advised Sammy. "Better put some exercise books in your bags, same as if you were going to get six from a Form master. That's a tip."

"You cheeky little fat worm—"

"Fat? Well, I like that!" said Sammy derisively. "Anyhow, I wish you luck, Billy."

"It will be a ripping trip," said Bunter. "Sorry I can't take you; but, of course, I couldn't inflict a cheeky fat bag on my friends."

"Don't worry about me," said Sammy cheerfully. "I wouldn't chance Smithy's boot, anyway. I wish you luck. It will be ripping not to see you again till next term at Greyfriars. That's where I come in."

Billy Bunter rolled on disdainfully, leaving Sammy Bunter chuckling. He was rolling down the road when he heard Bessie Bunter's voice calling after him excitedly.

"Billy! I say, Billy! Stop!"

Bunter stopped and looked round.

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WELL ON YOUR GUARD!

Bessie Bunter was coming after him at a run, red with haste and excitement.

Bunter smiled. At the moment of parting Elizabeth Bunter seemed to realise what a nice brother he was, and wanted to say good-bye—perhaps to hand him a cake or a packet of toffee for the train. Bunter's fat face was quite genial as Bessie rolled up.

"You're going away?" gasped Bessie.

"Yes."

"Not coming back?"

"N-n-no!"

"Well, then, that five shillings—"

"Wh-a-at?"

"That five shillings—" gasped Bessie Bunter.

William George Bunter stared at her. His geniality vanished. It was not to say an affectionate good-bye that Bessie had hastened after him—it was not to give him a packet of toffee to eat in the train. It was to raise, once more, that old, distasteful question of the five shillings.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bunter.

Without staying to express his feelings further, William George Bunter rolled on his way.

"Look here, Billy—"

Bunter hurried on.

"Beast!" called out Miss Bunter.

"Cat!" retorted Bunter over his fat shoulder.

And he was gone.

Ten minutes later the express was bearing him away to Southampton in a hopeful, but doubtful, frame of mind. He was getting to Southampton, that was certain; but how he was to get away again, if he did not sail on the Golden Arrow, was a problem too deep for Bunter to begin to solve it.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, the Stowaway!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bunter!"

"Yes, old chap."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How do you do, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter smiled genially at the Greyfriars fellows on the deck of the Golden Arrow. Harry Wharton & Co. were not, perhaps, exactly bucked by the sight of William George Bunter. The gladfulness, as Hurree Singh would have said, was not terrific. But they were very cheery and genial, much more so than Bunter had ventured to expect. Even the Bounder—though he did not take the trouble to shake hands with Bunter—gave him a good-tempered nod.

Bunter was at no loss to know the reason. The fellows were cheery and kind because he wasn't coming! It was, he reflected, just like the beasts.

If he had stated that he had come for good their genial manners would have changed at once from "set fair" to "stormy," so to speak.

The Bounder especially, instead of giving him that pleasant nod, would have given him at least a scowl, and probably a kick.

Bunter was aware of all that.

He had arrived at Southampton, and he had come to the Golden Arrow, and he had come to stay. But his little game was to keep it up—for the present—that he had come to see the fellows off. In the back of his fat mind was a deep scheme of which the Greyfriars juniors certainly had not the slightest suspicion. Much depended on the success of that scheme, and Billy Bunter was very careful not to give it away.

"Nice to see you chaps again," said Bunter. "You're looking jolly well, Smithy."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder dryly.

And he strolled away.

"You're looking in the pink, Redwing, old chap," said Bunter affably. "Been having a good time with Smithy—what?"

"Yes, quite," said Redwing pleasantly.

"I suppose it would be no end of a catch for you," remarked Bunter. "About the first time you've ever found yourself in decent surroundings, isn't it, except the time when you were at Greyfriars?"

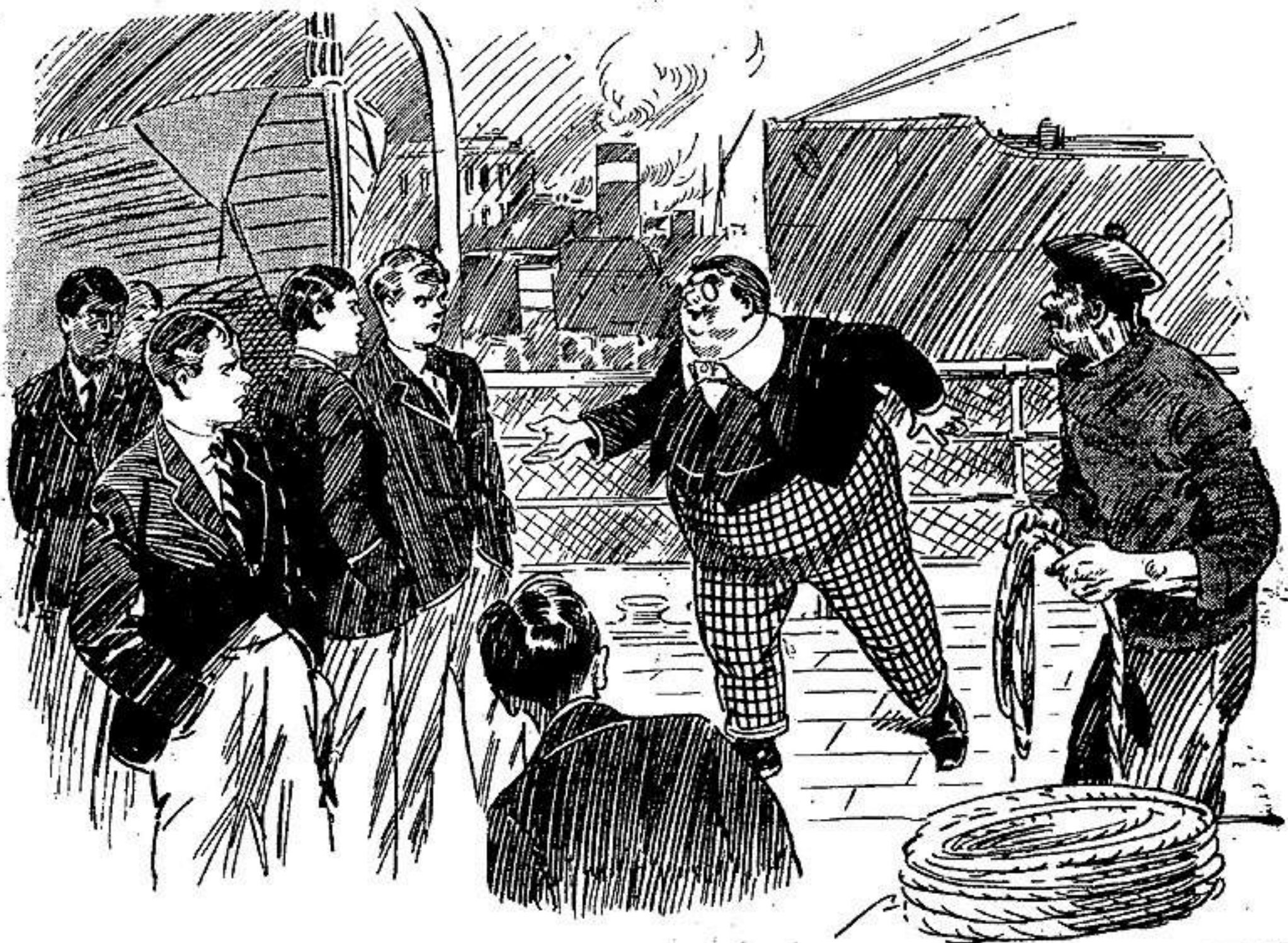
Redwing looked at him.

Bunter was beaming with fat affability, and evidently intended to make himself agreeable. He had his own ways of doing that, not always very successfully.

"Don't walk away while I'm talking to you, old fellow," said Bunter; but Tom Redwing seemed deaf, and he did walk away.

Bunter bestowed his attention on Harry Wharton & Co.

"Bit of an outsider—what?" he said agreeably. "Queer, isn't it, Smithy taking up a rank outsider like that? Bit rough on you fellows to have to put up with him."



"Hallo, hallo hallo!" cried Bob Cherry cheerfully. "How do you do, Bunter?" The Owl of the Remove smiled genially at the Greyfriars fellows on the deck of the Golden Arrow. "I've come to see you off," he said. "Sorry I can't come with you. The fact is, I've got something rather better on for the vac, and Smithy can't really expect me to cut it, to come with him, can he?" (See Chapter 14.)

Fathead!"

Oh, really, Cherry—"Ass!"

Bob Cherry had been feeling a little compunction on the score of Bunter. It was quite banished by Bunter's remarks. Already he was feeling disposed to kick Bunter, just the same as at Greyfriars.

"So you came to see us off, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, feeling called upon to take some heed of the Owl of the Remove.

"That's it, old chap. Sorry I can't come with you, but it's quite out of the question," said Bunter. "The fact is I've got something rather better on for the vac, and Smithy can't really expect me to cut it to come with him, can he?"

"He doesn't seem to," grinned Johnny Bull.

"I told him at Greyfriars that I couldn't come, and I can't," said Bunter, shaking his head. "I say, this isn't a bad little yacht. Not like my uncle's yacht, of course, but quite decent. I say, is that old Smith?"

Bunter blinked at Mr. Vernon-Smith, who had just come on board. The portly millionaire gave Harry Wharton & Co. a genial nod, and glanced at Bunter as if surprised to see him there.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him and raised his hat.

"You remember me, Mr. Vernon-Smith—what?"

"Can't say I do," answered Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I'm Bunter!"

"Oh, you're Bunter?"

"Yes. I've come to see my friends

off," said the fat junior. "I suppose you're starting pretty soon, sir?"

"Oh, you've time for a chat with your friends!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "We get steam up in about an hour from now."

Mr. Vernon-Smith went down the companion, not seeming to desire any more of Bunter's conversation.

"Fat old bird—what?" said Bunter to the Famous Five. "These new-rich bounders are all the same—oozing money, and no class—no class whatever! Although I'm sorry not to be sailing with you fellows, I must say I could hardly stand such company! Fellow has to think of his position, and all that, you know! There's a limit!"

"Oh, shut it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Eh?"

"If you want to talk of Smithy's pater like that, get off his yacht before you do it, you fat oyster!"

"If that's what you call civil, Bull, when I've taken the trouble to come here to see you off—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Johnny Bull granted again, and walked away. He really wanted to be civil to Bunter in the circumstances. But how was a fellow to be civil to Bunter? That was a puzzle to which Johnny did not know the answer.

"I say, Bob, old chap—"

"Coming, Smithy!" called out Bob Cherry.

And he departed in answer to an imaginary call from the Bounder.

Wharton and Nugent and Hurree

Singh lingered. As a matter of fact, they would have preferred to explore their quarters on the yacht, and see to many things that had to be seen to. But it was a case of "noblesse oblige." Bunter had taken a lot of trouble and a long journey to see them off on the voyage, and really he was entitled to some polite attention.

"I expect you'll enjoy this trip, Inky," remarked Bunter.

"The hopefulness of the same is terrific!" assented the nabob.

"You see, it will be hot in the South Seas, and niggers like the heat, I've always heard," said Bunter chattily.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh drew a deep breath and walked off. He had now had enough of Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove blinked after him.

"Anything up with Inky?" he asked.

"Seems to have his back up. You never can tell with niggers, can you? Queer beggars! I say, where are you going, Nugent?"

Without stating where he was going, Nugent went.

"Like to see the cabins, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, with another effort of politeness.

"Yes, old chap!"

"This way, then!"

Wharton conducted the fat junior down the companion. There was quite a handsome cabin, with state-rooms opening off it, and off an adjoining alley-way. For its size, the Golden

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Arrow was a commodious vessel, but Bunter blinked round with a disparaging eye.

"Poky!" he remarked.

"Think so?"

"You should see my uncle's yacht!" said Bunter.

"Hem!"

"Lot of gilt about!" said Bunter. "That's what one would expect of these upstarts! Don't you think so?"

Wharton breathed hard.

"What about your train, Bunter?" he asked.

"My train?"

"Yes. It—it's awfully kind of you to come and see us off, but you mustn't lose your train home."

"Oh, that's all right! If I lose my train I shall take a car home. A few pounds make no difference to me when it's a question of saying good-bye to my old pals!"

"Oh!"

"Let's see your cabins, old chap."

Wharton showed the state-rooms assigned to the Famous Five.

"Two bunks in each!" said Bunter.

"Stuffy—what?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, you wouldn't!" agreed Bunter. "But a fellow accustomed to doing these things in style notices it at once, you know!"

"Oh!"

"Not much room for your baggage!" said Bunter. "Is that bag all you're taking on the trip?"

"We've a trunk each," said Harry.

"But we shan't want the things till we get into the South. They're put in the baggage-room."

"Where's that?" asked Bunter.

"At the end of the passage."

"Let's see it."

Wharton led the fat junior along the alley-way. Why Bunter should want to see a room that was only used for baggage was a mystery to him, but he was willing to show the fat junior all that he liked to see. It was up to somebody to do the honours, and Herbert Vernon-Smith evidently did not intend to waste any time on Bunter.

Bunter blinked into the end state-room, which, not being required for a passenger, was used for extra baggage. There were a number of cabin trunks in the room, and other articles had been placed there out of the way.

The Owl of the Remove blinked round the room with a peculiar glimmer in his round eyes behind his spectacles.

"I suppose that's the best you can do!" he remarked. "You can't have a large state-room with room for your things on a yacht this size! After all, you expect to rough it a bit!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We don't call this roughing it, Bunter. Anything else you'd like to see?"

"Not much to see here, except that the place is poky. Still, you'll get used to that. Let's get on deck. I want to speak to Smithy."

They returned to the deck.

"There's Smithy," said Wharton, and he left Bunter to his own devices, feeling that he had done as much as could reasonably be expected of him.

Vernon-Smith was speaking to the yacht's captain on deck, when Bunter rolled up.

"Good-bye, Smithy! I shall have to be off," said Bunter.

"Good-bye!" said the Bounder indifferently.

"Bon voyage, and all that!" said Bunter.

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The Bounder grinned.

"Thanks!"

"See you again at Greyfriars, old bean."

"I'm afraid so."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

The Golden Arrow skipper looked rather curiously at Bunter and moved away. The Bounder went with him, taking no further heed of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter blinked round him, and caught Tom Redwing's eye.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not at hand—doubtless being satiated with the delights of Bunter's company.

"Well, I'm off, Redwing," said Bunter. "I've got a train to catch, you know. Sorry I can't stay longer."

"Good-bye, then!" said Redwing.

"You might say good-bye to the other fellows for me," said Bunter. "I find I'm in rather a hurry."

"Certainly."

"Now, where on earth did I drop my hanky?" said Bunter, blinking round him. "Must have dropped it below. Dash it all, I shall lose my train at this rate! I'd better cut down for it, I suppose."

Bunter rolled down the companion. Tom Redwing smiled, and turned away, dismissing the Owl of the Remove from his mind. Steam was getting up on the Golden Arrow now, and the pilot had come on board. Nobody was likely to remember Bunter's existence just then, unless he made himself remembered—which he did not, for excellent reasons.

It was, in fact, more than an hour later, when the Golden Arrow was gliding through the curling waters, that Bob Cherry suddenly remembered the Owl of the Remove.

"That ass Bunter—"

"He asked me to say good-bye to you fellows for him," said Redwing. "He had to catch his train."

ST. SAM'S ON THE SPREE!

(Continued from page 15.)

"Unhand me, sir!" gasped the startled Mr. Lickham. "You must be mad—

clean off your rocker—to permit such goings-on in lesson-time! Unhand me, I say!"

But not until the Head was eggshattered did he let Mr. Lickham go. The Form master reeled dizzily from him and sat down violently on the floor of the Form-room.

"Yarooooop!"

"Sir!" he eggshattered. "Such conduct on the part of a headmaster is utterly without parallel and president! How do you suppose we can conduct our respective classes with such a few-roar going on?"

The Head grinned. He gave Mr. Justiss a harty thump on the back, which nearly dumbled him up.

"Never mind about classes to-day," he said. "Dismiss 'em—dismiss the lot! Tell them, with my compliments, that they can have a day's holiday!"

Like a man in a dream, Mr. Justiss tottered from the Sixth Form-room. He conveyed the Head's message to all the classes; and, needless to say, there was tremendous rejoicing. Seniors and juniors and fags went scampering out into the sunshine, wondering by what miracle the Head had been changed from a stern old tyrant into a sporty old boy.

THE END.

(Note the title of next week's rollicking fine story of St. Sam's: "The Last of Jerry Birchmall." It's a rib-tickler!)

"Blessed if I hadn't forgotten there was such a fellow in the wide world," said Nugent, laughing. "Still, it was rather decent of Bunter to come and see us off."

"Which of you fellows did he stick for his railway fare home?" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I know why he came," said the Bounder. "I expected him to try to land himself here for the trip; but he never mentioned it. Certainly I didn't give him much chance. Thank goodness we shan't see him again till next term. Reddy, old man, we're really off at last, and you're coming home a rich man."

"I hope so," said Redwing, with a smile.

"The hopefulness is terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Rely upon it, my esteemed and ridiculous Redwing, that we shall unearth the treasure, and next term you will be once more an esteemed and ludicrous Greyfriars chap."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. Tom Redwing's eyes shone at the thought. It was his dearest wish, but he did not allow himself to count too much upon its realisation.

"We're going into dangerous seas," he remarked. "According to my uncle's chart, there are cannibals on Caca Island. And—and I've been thinking of the half-caste, too. I rather agree with Smithy's idea that we shall see him again in the South Seas. But we can take care of ourselves."

"We're the fellows for that," said Bob Cherry. "I can answer for it that the cannibals will find me tough."

"The toughfulness will be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

The juniors were in a cheerful but rather thoughtful mood as the yacht's prow cut the curling waters of the Channel under the stars. They were starting on a long voyage into strange seas and lands, among cannibals and savage head-hunters, and all the perils of the Pacific. Many dangers undoubtedly awaited them under the Southern Cross.

To Mr. Vernon-Smith it was a yachting trip, and he smiled at the idea of a treasure-hunt among the Pacific Islands. But the Greyfriars juniors took a very different view. Their business in the South Seas was to hunt for Black Peter's buried cache of pearls on the lonely isle in the midst of the waste of waters. And they remembered the sinister, threatening face of the half-caste, and felt that before they unearthed Black Peter's treasure they would have to reckon with Silvio Xero. There was a rival in the quest, and a dangerous and terrible rival.

"We're going to win!" said Bob Cherry. "Ten to one in doughnuts on Greyfriars!"

And Bob's chums fully agreed.

The treasure-seekers, when they turned in that night, had completely and utterly forgotten the existence of William George Bunter. But in the dead of night, while the yacht glided on and they slept in their bunks, anyone who had chanced to step into the baggage-room might have heard a sound that was familiar in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. It was the snore of the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was not far away.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next yarn in this magnificent series, chums: "Bunter, The Stowaway!" You will enjoy every line of it.)

THIS THRILLING "GOLD RUSH" STORY WILL HOLD YOU ENTHRALLED FROM BEGINNING TO END!

IN THE GRIP OF THE RAPIDS! No sooner do Jack and Terry get over one "snag" when they come up against another! But they are prepared for all eventualities!

GOLD FOR THE GETTING!



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

(Introduction on page 26).

The Death Trap!

OVER the sizzling bacon the bearded stranger told the two chums that his name was Clem Hardy, and that he had made the voyage north in a ship from Vancouver, the chief port of British Columbia.

There was a sad, faraway look in Jack's eyes as Clem Hardy asked him how he had come to hit the rough gold trail northward.

"I came out from England to California to see my Uncle Dave," said Jack.

The old gold-seeker looked up from the frying-pan with mild interest.

"Ah!" he murmured. "I know two or three men down the western coast whose name is Dave. What is your uncle's other name?"

"His name is Orchard, same as mine," replied Jack. "He was a mining engineer, and I had intended to join him, but—but he had left 'Frisco before I arrived."

"Dave Orchard!" muttered old Hardy, looking fixedly at him. "Wasn't he the man wanted by the United States police?"

"Yes," answered Jack. "I have in my pocket the police description of him, and from it I can imagine him just the same stocky, clean-shaven, splendid type of man my own father was. I can't believe he ever did the rotten thing he is accused of, and one day, when Terry and I have made our fortunes in the goldfields, I'm going to spend some of my money in trying to find him and clear his name."

The old prospector set down the frying-pan by the side of the little cooker and laid a friendly hand on the boy's shoulder.

"I should reckon, sonny," he said, "that your uncle would be very proud

of having such a nephew as you if he could hear you. You and your young pard have come on a tremendous adventure, and I hope you'll pull through. I've got no pard myself, and, if you will, I'd like you to join forces with me."

"Ripping!" cried Jack, seeking the old man's hand.

"Sure 'tis right ginerous of you, sor!" cried Terry. "Faith, Jack and I would like nothing better in the world!"

"And I wonder, boys," said the old-timer, smiling, "if ye'll both call me 'Uncle Clem'? It would kind of sound more matey, don't you think?"

"Why, of course we will, Uncle Clem!" said Jack heartily.

They finished their meal, and afterwards helped "Uncle" Clem Hardy to break camp and load the little canoe he had bought from some Indians. Then away they started downstream, with Uncle Clem using the only paddle on the last long stretch to the diggings.

Although he would not admit it, Uncle Clem had suffered terribly on the arduous trail from Skagway, and as he was by no means so young as Jack and Terry, roughing it had affected him more. He paddled gamely for a while until the canoe began to gather way in a part of the river where the stream was flowing fast. Some prospectors, toiling along the banks carrying their bags, shouted to them.

"Hi, ye'd better carry that craft round, pards! There's the Nine-Tooth Rapids ahead!"

"Pon my word, I hadn't guessed we'd come so far, lads!" muttered Uncle Clem. "There are the walls of the canyon right ahead of us, and we'd better get to the shore before we get into the rapids."

Boats which were much bigger would have to go through and take their chance in that death-trap of the Stewart River, but there was no need for Uncle Clem and the two boys to risk their lives in this frail canoe of lath and birchbark.

Wielding the paddle with all his might, Uncle Clem nosed the canoe in towards the bank, when suddenly he stumbled forward with a gurgling cry in his throat.

In the nick of time Jack snatched up the paddle to prevent it from going overboard, and thrust Uncle Clem back into the stern of the little craft.

The exertions of the old prospector had been too much for him and he lay back, pale of face, unable to perform any further violent effort.

"Beach her, Jack—beach her!" he muttered weakly. "For heaven's sake keep her out of the canyon!"

This was easier said than done, for the fierce stream had fairly caught the canoe and swept her out among the violent currents in its middle. Jack paddled with all his might, but it was quickly apparent that he could never get the loaded canoe to the bank in the water which was rushing faster and faster into the bottle-neck between the towering black rocks ahead.

"Begorra, we're for it!" muttered Terry. "Steer her wid the paddle, me bhoys, and here's hoping you can keep her off the rocks, for 'tis not afther wanting a bath to-day I am!"

Faster and faster rushed the canoe downstream between the great rocky walls of the canyon. And there, dotting the tortuous, boiling river ahead were the nine jagged, foam-washed rocks which gave the dreaded rapids their name.

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Through the Nine Tooth Canyon!

THROUGH the white mist of spray Jack saw the first of the deadly rocks rushing, as it were, towards the frail canoe. Instinctively he gave the boiling water a flick with his paddle, and, like a spirited broncho to the touch of a rein, the canoe swerved violently, and the grim black rock slid swiftly by.

"Phew!" breathed Terry.

Uncle Clem said nothing, but gazed with set, unseeing eyes ahead. It was as though the horizon of his vision was far beyond the boiling cauldron of the Nine Tooth Canyon—some poignant scene, perhaps, of the distant past, or the unlined future from which the veil of time had been torn aside.

Heedless of the risk to himself, Terry secured a sack of flour from among the provisions in the canoe and went forward with it to the bow.

"Be careful, you young idiot!" howled Jack from the stern. "Whooh, you were almost overboard then!"

As quickly as possible Terry bent over the side, but although he was thrown off his balance, the weight of the sack kept him from shooting out. And there he knelt, right in the bows, with the spray whipping his face and the sack of flour all ready to use as a fender to place between the canoe's bows and any of the rocks to deaden the force of a collision.

When Jack realised the object of his chum he said nothing more to him. Indeed, it would have been difficult now to make Terry hear against the roar of the water. Moreover, Jack had all his work cut out without taking further notice of his other two companions in the boat.

Two great black rocks loomed swiftly and threateningly, like thunderclouds, through the mists of spray. And Jack's heart leaped into his mouth as, after giving a violent thrust of the paddle, a terrific whirlpool caught the bow of the tiny craft and shot it towards one of these rocks.

There came a dull thud, and momentarily Jack closed his eyes, thinking all was over. For one moment the canoe gave a sickening lurch, then instantly righted itself and rushed on again. Terry's "fender" had done its job, saving the birchbark canoe from being completely stove in, and now the flour from the slit and crushed sack was mingled with the wake of foam astern.

Madly they rushed past another of those black fangs frothing with the river foam, and swept round a bend in the canyon.

"Look, bedad!" yelled Terry, half raising himself. "There are some fellows in trouble ahead of us!"

The eyes of Uncle Clem were not too good at any time, and the spray made it even more difficult for him to see. But Jack could clearly obtain a glimpse of a big open boat, swirling madly round in the grip of a great whirlpool a couple of hundred yards ahead of them.

"Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons!" he cried.

The two rogues were kneeling in abject fear in their craft and clinging desperately on to the sides. They had tried to keep the boat's head downstream with the oars, but these had been wrenched from their hands by the water-fenids of the canyon, and were drifting like matchsticks away below the whirlpool.

An experienced "sourdough," or old-timer, could have told them that to

bring a heavily-laden boat like that among these rapids was suicidal. And now it seemed as though they and the boat would be sucked into oblivion, as many better men and better boats had been before in this dangerous river reach.

Even as Jack and Terry thought that they had gone—for a burst of spray from the whirlpool eclipsed the big boat for a moment—the whirlpool shot them contemptuously from its mouth.

It all happened with such suddenness that the boys in the following canoe could scarce realise what had happened. All they saw was the big boat go hurtling down-stream bottom upwards, and a number of wooden fittings and various provisions which were floatable scattered about in the boiling stream. Two dark objects, like balls, bobbed absurdly in the foam for a brief second or two, and the boys knew them to be the heads of Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, which was all that could be seen of the discomfited grub-thieves.

Another two or three deft—and rather lucky—flicks of the paddle, and Jack had piloted the canoe past the last of the voracious rocks. Again he and his pals saw Morgan and Simons, who, fortunately for themselves, had been cast up by the flow of the stream on a sand-bank near the right bank of the river at the foot of the rapids.

"We're through! We're through!" exclaimed Terry joyfully. "Faith, if anyone had asked me when I first saw those nine rocks I should have said that we had less chance of coming out alive than if a tame fox cub strayed into a hound's kennel in mistake for a chicken run, entirely!"

By dint of great exertion Jack brought the canoe safely alongside the left river bank and called to Terry to leap out and make it fast to a tree-stump.

They all disembarked, and for a few moments nothing was said, for now that the deadly peril was over they realised how nearly their gold trail had ended near Nine Tooth Canyon.

It was Uncle Clem, who had remained so calm and impassive in the canoe, who broke the silence. In turn he gripped both Jack and Terry by the hand.

"Thanks, pard!" he said quietly. "I'm proud of you both, for to your own promptness and presence of mind we owe our lives."

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Keen to take his chance abroad

JACK ORCHARD "works" his passage to San Francisco in search of his uncle

DAVID ORCHARD, a mining engineer, of whom he has often heard, but never seen. Reaching his destination, Jack is amazed to find his uncle missing, having apparently absconded with a sack of gold which had been entrusted to him by an old friend named

SIMPSON. Almost down to his last cent, Jack applies for a "job" at the "Red Rat Doss-house," where he falls foul of

"**BULL**" **MORGAN**, and his partner, "**LEFTY**" **SIMONS**, two sinister-looking characters, who drug and smuggle him aboard the clipper, "*China Queen*." Regaining consciousness, Jack finds a friend in

TERRY O'HARA, the "*China Queen's*" cabin-boy, with whom he escapes and joins in a great gold rush up the Yukon River. All is not well for the chums, however, for Morgan and Simons pop up again in unexpected fashion and raid their provisions. Jack and Terry are in a quandary when they happen upon a bearded stranger who offers them food and shelter.

(Now read on.)

"Shure, 'twas Jack who did ut all!" exclaimed Terry, flushing.

"Ass!" retorted Jack.

Like many another healthy boy of his age, he could not tolerate praise from a chum.

"We should have hit that rock for a cert if you hadn't got that brainy notion of using a sack of flour for fending off the canoe."

"A touch of the genius that makes a real pioneer," chuckled Uncle Clem. "We've lost the flour which we could ill afford, but I'm glad to say there's a chance of getting plenty more provisions in its place."

"Why, what do you mean, Uncle Clem?" exclaimed Jack. "There are no stores around these parts, surely?"

Smilingly Uncle Clem pointed farther down the river to another wide bank of sand along which already was strewed some of the wreckage from the lost boat of Morgan and Simons.

"Arrah, 'tis a great idea!" cried Terry. "Shure, if we steal Morgan's provisions, 'tis not thieves at all we'll be, for, after all, they belonged to us all the time they belonged to them."

They all laughed at Terry's Irish "bulls," and, embarking in the canoe again, paddled swiftly down to the sand-bank. There they made a goodly haul of some cases of biscuits, sacks of dried beans, and a big wooden case containing an assortment of cocoa, buckwheat, sago, and sugar—the whole of the value of the provisions which had been stolen by Morgan and Simons.

Some other prospectors who had been hitting the rough land-trail round the rocks, came plodding across the sand towards them. These rough gold-seekers had seen the last gallant phase of their fight with the rapids, and they heartily congratulated the trio on their escape. Then, as they were talking, Jack noticed two other figures approaching from some higher ground back toward the canyon.

"Here they come—Morgan and Simons!" exclaimed Jack. "There'll be fresh trouble when they find we've bagged our provisions back."

As the two wet and bedraggled figures of the rogues came plunging towards them, Uncle Clem took the opportunity of explaining to the rough band of gold-seekers how Morgan and Simons had robbed the two boys in camp and made off with their grub—one of the most serious offences in the rough-and-ready code of these rough-and-ready men of the Northland.

In his usual unceremonious way, Bull Morgan thrust his way through the group of men and confronted Jack and Terry, who were standing by the side of Uncle Clem.

"Now, y' young cubs," he growled, "jest hoist all that grub of ours right out o' your boat before I hammer flat the pair o' ye!"

The fists of Jack and Terry went up immediately in a manner which conveyed as plainly as words that they were quite prepared to be "hammered flat" before Bull Morgan should rob them a second time.

A raw-boned "checcaco," or new-comer to the North, who was among the party, laughed.

"Ay, you've no call to be skeared, kids," he said. "We'll deal with him and his pard for y'."

Before there could be any other active interference among the sympathetic group, however, Uncle Clem thrust himself between the boys and their burly foe.

Morgan, though his giant frame was

half-frozen from his immersion, boiled inwardly with fury. He glared like a bear at the rather broad-built, bearded man who had pushed his way forward with an almost meek apology to the two youngsters for doing so.

"Stand out of the way, old fool," rumbled Bull Morgan, "or I'll break y' with these two hands o' mine as though y' were old cordwood!"

His gnarled and mottled hands rose to a level with Uncle Clem's neck, and hovered there like great claws ready to fasten themselves upon their prey.

"Put 'em a little higher, please," remarked Uncle Clem quietly.

And the leering grin froze on Bull Morgan's face as he found himself looking into the black, sinister muzzle of a gun, which, by a lightning manipulation, had suddenly leaped from the old gold-seeker's pocket.

Both Jack and Terry drew sharp breaths of surprise. Somehow, their quiet-spoken companion of the river trail had never appeared the type of man who went about "heeled" and ready to draw a gun with lightning precision in an emergency.

But if Jack, Terry, and the other prospectors were surprised, Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons appeared petrified with funk.

"Listen here, you pair o' skunks," rumbled Uncle Clem. "If ever you endanger the lives of my young pards by lifting their grub-stakes, or any other similar way, I'll deal with you as men deal with skunks and jackals in this

country." He gave the gun an almost imperceptible flick. "Now hit the trail," he commanded.

Lefty Simons needed no second hint; but Bull Morgan hesitated a brief space, with a queer expression on his face. It was as though he were trying to recall in what remote corner of his unhallowed past he had seen that bearded face before and heard that deep-toned voice. Completely baffled, he turned, and, with a wolf-like growl, moved off among the throng of men which opened to let him pass.

Slowly a smile crept into Uncle Clem's weather-tanned face as he restored his gun to his pocket.

"I reckon, though, sonnies," he said, turning to Jack and Terry, "that we haven't seen the last of that bright nair. If I know anything of their type, they'll watch like the jackals they are for the chance to get back at us. Still, they can think themselves lucky that we've only taken back a fair share of provisions and left a deal more for them to collect as they can."

The other gold-seekers, who were anxious to make the foot of a mountain to the south-east to camp at nightfall, exchanged a few more cheery words with Uncle Clem and the boys, and again followed the rough trail.

"It all seems just like something I've read of the Wild North in the old days," remarked Jack, as they embarked in their canoe again. "Somehow, Uncle Clem, I never expected you to be packing a gun."

"Indade, 'twas a fair treat to see you get a drop on thim rascals," chuckled Terry. "Just loike a conjuring trick, or as if you practised hopping a gun out of your pocket every day of your life!"

Uncle Clem smiled. "I do," he said quietly. "For do you know, boys, a gun is still as powerful an argument here to-day as it was when Soapy Smith and his bandits infested the northern trails in the days of 'ninety-eight."

For days Uncle Clem and the boys endured the hardships of the Yukon trail. A great deal of the journey they were able to make in their boat between river banks of forbidding aspect, devoid of timber except for a stunted growth of willow-brush, alder, and cottonwood.

At Uncle Clem's suggestion they rigged a blanket as a sail and made good progress on the water. The chief delays occurred when they had to hump their heavy craft round rapids too dangerous to shoot. Almost they were eaten alive with mosquitoes, which were especially troublesome at sundown.

At last, almost worn out with their exertions in the boat and on the trail, they reached McLennan Crossing. This was a rough town of canvas and log huts which had sprung up in the region of the new gold discovery.

(For the continuation of this great adventure serial see next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET.)

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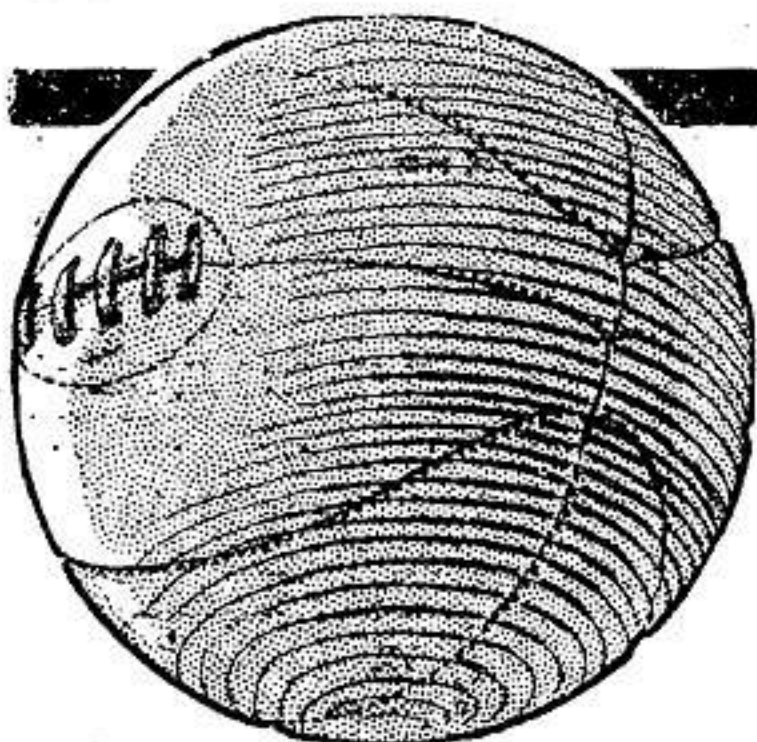
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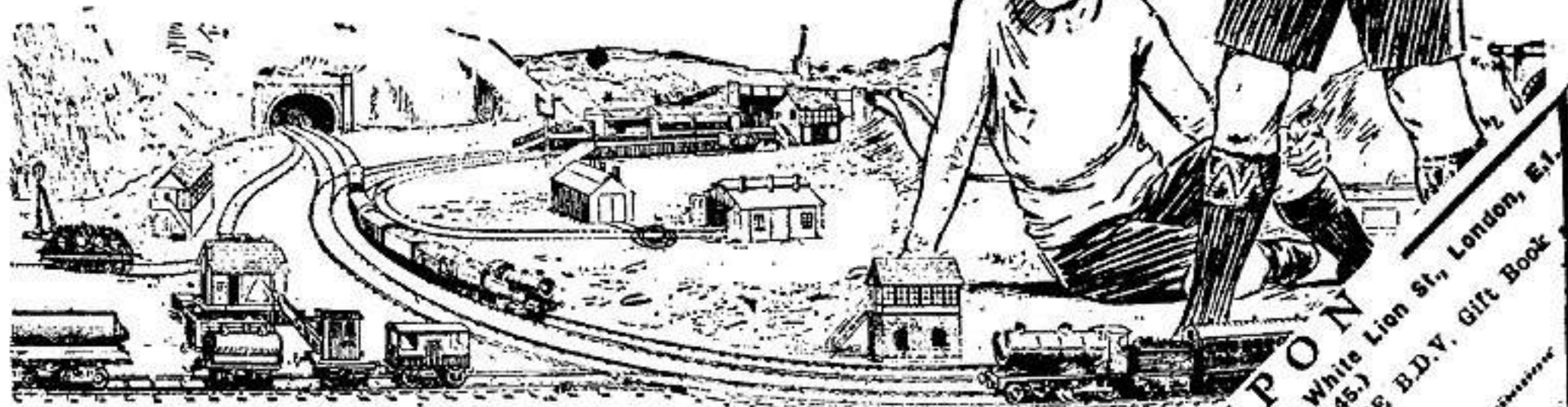
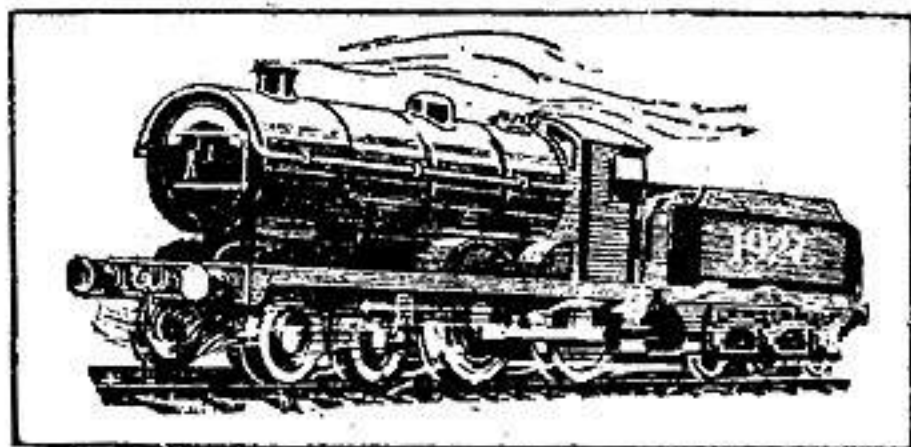
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HIGH JINKS! Jack Jolly & Co. marvel at the amazing change which comes over their Head, little dreaming that he is an impostor—an escaped convict, and as double-died a villain as ever lived!



An amusing yarn of Jack Jolly & Co., the cheery chums of St. Sam's.

Picky Noddy.

"Surely, sir, you are not so sleepy as to be unaware of my eye-dentifying?" he

eggsalmoned. "I am Mr. Lickham!" "Oh—ah—yes!" Lickham, of course! And what, my dear Lickham, is the meaning of this introduction?"

The master of the Fourth indicated Jack Jolly & Co. with a polite jerk of his thumb.

"I have brought these young rascals to you, sir, for condone punishment!" he said feebly.

"Ask me another!" said the boggus Head.

"They have been indulging in a glut-ternus orgy, sir, in the middle of the night!" shouted Mr. Lickham. "I paid a stryptisious visit to their dormitory, and caught them red-handed! In fact, the red-current jam is still on their fingers. The whole of the Fourth Form took part in this disgusting affair, but these four boys are the ringleaders. They smuggled a hamper into the dormitory—a hamper containing jooey jam-tarts, and delicious do-nuts, and succulent mince-pies, and—"

"Enuff!" cried Jerry Birchmell, his mouth watering. He had not yet broken fast, and he could not bare to hear all this glorious grub described in detail.

"You need say no more, Lickham!"

Jerry Birchmell then turned to the four juniors, who coward before his gaze, and gave another comprehensive glance at the cane on the Head's desk.

"You have heard the charge against you, my boys," said Jerry. "Do you plead guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty, sir!" murmured Jack Jolly, hanging his head. "Very guilty, sir!" muttered Merry.

"Awfully, fearfully guilty, sir!" groaned Bright.

"And now I suppose you'll come us without mercy, sir?" faltered Frank Fearless.

Jerry Birchmell grinned—much to the surprise of the quaking juniors.

"Bless your hearts!" he said kindly. "I don't blame you for holding a midnight feast! I did the same sort of thing myself when I was a boy seventy years ago! Boys will be boys! I have only one fault to find, and that is that

you did not invite me to the spread!" Jack Jolly & Co. gasped. As for Mr. Lickham, he fairly exploded.

"Sir," he cried, turning to Jerry Birchmell, "do my ears deceive me? Are you condoning the conduct of these wretched boys?"

"Pray be calm, my dear Lickham!" "Calm!" hooted the angry Form master. "I will not be calm, sir, until I have seen justice done—until these young rascals have been caned severely!"

Jerry Birchmell picked up the cane and cold shivers chased each other down the spines of the juniors. They felt that their hour had come. But the next minute they had the surprise of their lives. For the Head snatched the instrument of torcher across his knee, and proceeded to brake it into little bits, which he tossed into the fireplace.

"Lickham," he said, addressing the open-mouthed Form master, "I have come to the conclusion that caning is cruel and inhuman! I am through with it! How would you like to have to bend over a chair, and be caned until you squealed for mercy?"

"I shouldn't like it at all, sir," confessed Mr. Lickham. "But—what ever has come over you, sir? You have always been an awful tyrant and a bully! The birch has hardly ever been out of your hand! You have birched boys black and blue on the slightest provocation! And now you declare that caning is cruel and inhuman—that you are through with it!"

Jerry Birchmell nodded.

"The fact is, Lickham, my conscience has been pricking me. I realise, to my shame, what a beastly brood and bully I've been, and I'm going to turn over a new leaf! The cane is abolished forthwith! Hitherto I have ruled by kindness!"

And Jerry Birchmell beamed at Jack Jolly & Co., who beamed at him in return.

"Well, this beats the band!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "I can only conclude, sir, that you have suddenly gone mad—well, not suddenly, for I have seen it coming for a long time!"

"Really, Lickham—"

"If you are not going to birch these boys, I presume you will punish them in some other way, such as gating them

for a year or giving them a million lines apiece?"

Jerry Birchmell smiled, and shook his head.

"Nothing of the sort, my dear Lickham! I shall not punish them in any way! In fact, I offer them my sincerest apologies for having been such a brood to them in the past! Will you forgive me, my boys?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" cried the delighted juniors.

And then, to their agreeable surprise, and to the unbounded disgust of Mr. Lickham, the Head pulled out a handful of silver from his pocket, and handed the juniors a shilling each.

"Go and get yourselves some sweets at the tuckshop, my dear boys!" he said kindly.

Jack Jolly & Co. nearly fell down. Never had they known the Head to do a generous action. He had always been the sole of meanness—so mean, in fact, that he had never been known to entertain anything but a suspicion. And now—wonder of wonders!—the Head was handing out bobs with the air of a philanthropist.

Jerry Birchmell waved his hand to the door, and the juniors staggered out of the study like fellows in a dream.

As for Mr. Lickham, he gave one fierce snort of disapproval, and stamped out, slamming the door behind him with a crash that might have been heard all over St. Sam's!

II.

"CAVE, you fellows! Here comes the Head!"

Burleigh shouted the words in a warning whisper.

The Sixth were in their Form-room, waiting for the Head to come and take mourning lessons. And when his familiar cane, which was usually perched to the prefects and seniors scanned to their seats and looked as solum as boiled ovis.

There was a breathless hush as the door opened, and the Head stalked in. He carried a pointer in one hand, and a ponderous tome in the other, and a fountain-pen in his car. But the familiar cane, which was usually tucked under his arm, was missing.

Usually when the Head arrived for mourning lessons he looked black. But

on this occasion he fairly beamed upon the Sixth.

"Top of the mourning, my boys!" he said cheerily, as he seated himself at the desk. "Now, let me see—what is the first lesson? I am rather absent-minded this morning."

"Arithmetic is the first lesson, sir," said Burleigh.

"Ah, yes! Arithmetic. Be good enough to repeat your twice times table."

"Twice one are two—"

"Twice two are four—"

"Twice three are more—"

"And twice more are galore!" "Splendid!" said the Head, beaming. "I've never heard the twice times table said so quickly. But arithmetic's an awful bore, isn't it? Let's chuck it! Who's for a game of leap-frog?"

The Sixth blinked at the Head in blank amazement. They could scarcely believe their ears. Never before had the majestic and dignified Head proposed a game of leap-frog—or any other diversion, for that matter—in the Form-room!

"Come along!" said the Head briskly. "Let's have a rare old romp! Let us cast aside our scholastic ramp for once in a while and frisk around like two-year-olds!"

So saying, the Head bent down and made a back for the seniors to leap over him.

Then, realising that the Head was in earnest, they bounded from their seats, and were soon engaged in taking flying leaps over the Head's back.

"What larks!" chorried Burleigh. "This is grand fun, you fellows!" "Yes, rather!" chuckled Tallooy. "The Head's a jolly old sport to suggest this!"

The game of leap-frog proceeded merrily. So eager were the seniors to take their jumps that they all tumbled over each other, and their combined weight was more than the Head's back could bare. He collapsed to the floor like a punctured balloon, with a dozen seniors sprawling on top of him. But, although he was badly squashed, and very nearly suffocated, he took it all in good part.

Burleigh and Tallooy helped the Head to his feet. He dusted himself down, and grinned at them with a grimy face.

"I always seem to be getting squashed by people," he said. "Mr. Lickham snubbed me only this morning. But I never mind! Now, suppose we have a little music, my boys, just to make our miserable lives happy!"

"Jolly good wheeze, sir!" said Burleigh. "I've got a gramophone."

"Bring it along!" "And I've got a saxophone, sir!" chimed in Tallooy.

"And I've got a cornet!" said somebody else.

The Head rubbed his hands with glee.

"Bring them all along!" he eggsalmoned. "The more we are together, the merrier we'll be!"

The seniors hurried away to their studies, marveling greatly at the amazing change which had come over the Head. Little did they dream that he was not the Head at



"Lickham," said the Head, snatching the cane across his knee. "I have come to the conclusion that caning is cruel and inhuman! I'm through with it!"

but that didn't matter. Noise beats melody any day, and the Sixth Form at St. Sam's had the good sense to realise the fact.

Certainly there was no lack of noise. The din was truly deafening, and it boomed from one end of St. Sam's to the other. Every fellow seemed to be trying to make more noise than his nearest neighbor, and the rezzle was pandymonium.

Boom! Crash! Boom! Zzoomp! Ta-ra-ra-pom!

The cornets blared, and the saxophones wailed, and the mouth-organs squeaked, and the tin-whistles screeched; and poor old Burleigh's gramophone could not make itself heard amid the hubbub.

The music had a remarkable effect on the Head. He seemed to be quite touched. Flinging his arms around Burleigh's neck, he proceeded to waltz with him round the Form-room. And they were still waltzing, in a wild and whirlwind fashion, when the door opened, and in rushed Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, and Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth.

The two masters pawed on the threshold, stopping their ears to shut out the terrific uproar, and staring at the waltzing Head with eyes which fairly started from their sockets.

"Sir!" cried Mr. Lickham, against. "What is the meaning of this hullabaloo? Have you and your pupils become suddenly demented?"

The Form master's voice was drowned by the din; but the Head, in the act of reversing, suddenly caught sight of him. Releasing the breathless Burleigh, he shuffled across to Mr. Lickham and clasped him affectionately round the neck, and started to waltz him, willy-nilly, round the Form-room.

(Continued on page 24.)

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