

Grand Christmas Week Number!

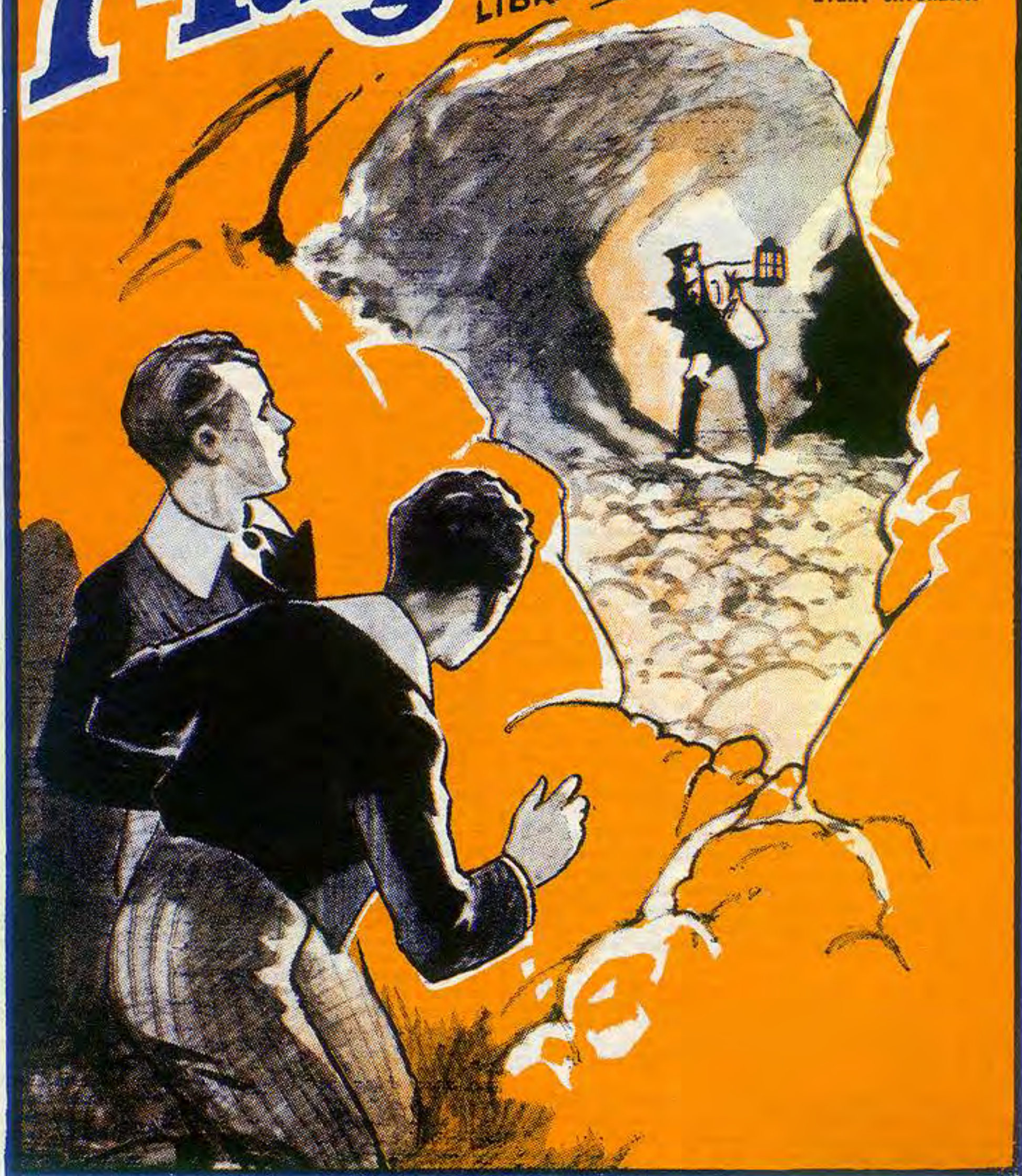
No. 1,089. Vol. XXXIV. Week Ending December 29th, 1928.

The Magnet

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EVERY SATURDAY.



HUNTED DOWN!

(A breathless incident from the grand school and adventure story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greysfriars.)



THE THIRD ARTICLE IN THIS INTERESTING SERIES TELLS YOU HOW THE ACTUAL PAPER UPON WHICH YOUR MAGNET IS PRINTED IS MADE.

LAST week we had arrived—in this story of the “miracle” which enables you to buy the MAGNET for twopence only—at the stage where the wood-pulp, made from giant trees cut down in the Canadian forests, had been flattened by machinery into cardboard-like sheets, bundled into huge bales, and shipped to the vast paper mills in Kent.

Now all that coarse pulp is stored at the mills, which cover acres of ground. It is a long way yet from being paper fit for printing MAGNET stories on. It has all got to be broken up again and put through cleansing and other processes, at the end of which it will be ready for our use.

From the big stacks at the mill the bales of pulp are hauled by great cranes to where they are wanted. To make transport from one part of the paper-mill to another easy, something like three miles of private railway-lines have been laid down, with fireless, high-pressure steam locomotives to draw the trucks without endangering all that valuable material with the possibility of stray sparks starting a devastating fire!

Two Thousand Tons of Paper Per Week!

Bales of pulp, taken from the stacks, are beaten and broken up by machinery, the shreds then going into vast tanks filled with water. All the impurities have to be washed out, and eventually they disappear with the dirty water as this is drained away.

Now the cleaned wood-pulp is looking rather like porridge—like anything on earth but paper. But it is not going to remain like that for long. Into other great tanks it goes, for bleaching, chemicals quickly turning it white.

A monster machine now waits to receive it—two hundred feet of machine which finally converts all this troublesome pulp into printing paper, making a ton of paper every hour! Several of these machines are at work, so you can see how it is possible for those mills in Kent to turn out about two thousand tons of finished paper every week of the year.

Into the machine the material goes, thin and watery. To keep the pulp quite moist, so that it flows easily through, water is sprayed on to it. The stream of water carries all the cleaned fibres through a series of most intricate operations, the material at last being drained of all its water and the fibres so matted together as to form a continuous and tight-knit network of real paper.

Now comes the “mangling.” That new paper is seized between immense rollers, and is pressed and dried and finished. There will be about five miles of paper in that roll when the machine has done with it, and it is then ready for use—except for being cut up into handy widths.

That also is done by wizard-like machinery through which the paper hurtles at a great rate, the cutting being done with almost incredible rapidity. The original width of the paper may be as much as two hundred and ten inches, but when the last machine has handled it the paper is all ready to have printed on it the MAGNET stories which your Editor has prepared.

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A Hive of Industry!

He has been very far from idle whilst these paper-making operations are in progress. They go on simultaneously with his work and that of his editorial assistants. Your Editor's chief anxiety is to get the right stories to Fleetway House, where the MAGNET is born each week. And the getting of those stories means much labour and thought.

Suitable plots have to be hatched, for stories of the MAGNET standard do not come by themselves. There is no machine to turn them out ready for use as there is for transforming the Canadian timber-trees into the paper they are printed on. Close co-operation between your Editor and the author of the story each week is absolutely necessary.

The idea for the story forms itself during a chat, perhaps, or a briefly-told incident in the day's newspaper may suggest just the very theme which the MAGNET author's fertile brain can seize upon, grapple with, and transform in due course into just the reading-matter which delights every one of you.

The Editor may ask the author to send him a brief synopsis—a potted version of the proposed story. This is gone over most carefully, further suggestions are made, the theme may be altered slightly, or other items introduced to improve the yarn-to-be-born. Not until the Editor is thoroughly satisfied that his readers also will be satisfied is the word “Go!” conveyed to the author.

Pity the Poor “Sub.”

Thus the story is born, and the morning comes when a fat bundle of neatly-typed MS is brought to the Editor's desk. Then comes the ordeal of “subbing.” The story is read with a hard and searching eye, for even the cleverest authors are not so far removed from the rest of us that they may not occasionally trip up.

The Editorial blue pencil is not spared. Small additions are made, bits are deleted, and out of the welter of labour there presently emerges a story that is word-perfect and as full of “meat”—otherwise incident and interest, as combined human intellect can make it.

Readers of the MAGNET are acknowledged to be as smart as mustard. The slightest slip in “subbing” the “copy” of a story—an error in an illustration allowed to pass—and very many hawk-like eyes spot it immediately the number is out. The possessors of those hawk-like eyes sit themselves down with glee and indite to the Editor letters acquainting him with the sad lapse!

Well, the fact that we give readers so very few opportunities for chiding us is a proud boast with the editorial staff of the MAGNET!

The Editor's part in the production of the story is not done in peace and quiet, by any means. There is no such thing as tranquility in an editorial office. But with the trials and troubles inseparable from it all, with the choosing of incidents for illustrations, selecting the coloured-cover incident, sending to the artists, and many other matters of editorial routine, we must deal next week.

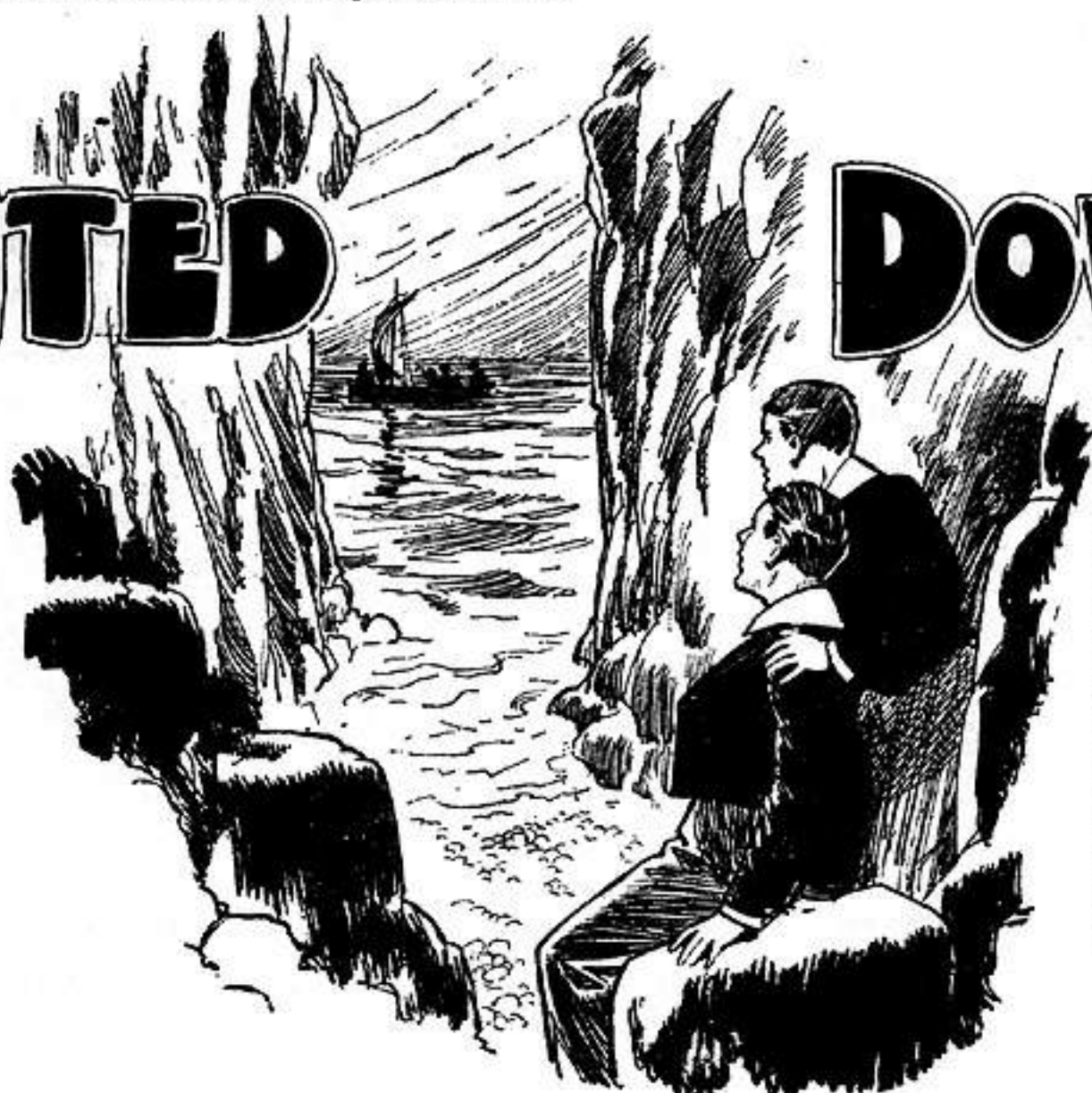
(Another of these interesting articles will appear in next week's MAGNET. Don't miss it, chums.)

THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOYS! Christmas in a cold and cheerless cave—prisoners in the hands of an unscrupulous ruffian—would appear to be the unhappy fate of Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith. But at the eleventh hour come Harry Wharton & Co. to the rescue of their chums!

HUNTED

DOWN!

A complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars, with a Christmasy atmosphere that will appeal to all.



By
FRANK RICHARDS
(The most successful boys' author of the year.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Objects!

"BUNTER!" Snore!
"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.
Snore!

It was a rough morning on the coast. The December wind howled and wailed round the cottages of Hawkscliff, the sea thundering with a sullen roar at the foot of the chalk cliffs. The dawn was grey and stormy.

In Tom Redwing's cabin at Hawkscliff Harry Wharton & Co. were astir at the first peep of day. Not so William George Bunter. Bunter snored on comfortably while the Famous Five of Greyfriars were getting their breakfast in the room below, and he was still snoring when they had finished and were ready to start. He snored on, regardless, when they came up to call him.

Billy Bunter did not believe in early rising at any time. At Greyfriars the rising-bell made life scarcely worth living, in Bunter's opinion. Holidays had many advantages, and the greatest of all was the fact that there was no rising-bell. Bunter had no intention of turning out before ten o'clock at the earliest, and he only snored more emphatically as the chums of the Remove shouted to him.

"Bunter!" yelled Bob.

Snore!

"Wake up, you fat ass!"

Snore!

"There's a jug of water here—" said Harry Wharton.

"Good! Hand it over!"

"Keep off, you beasts!" yelled Billy Bunter, waking up very suddenly and sitting up in bed. "Yaroo! Keep off!"

"Oh, you're awake!" said Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

"The awakefulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter groped for his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked wrathfully at the Famous Five.

"Get out!" he bawled. "If you think I'm getting up, you're mistaken! You can call me again at ten. Then I'll get up, if you've got brekker ready—not otherwise!"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Shan't!"

"You fat duffer—"

"Go and eat coke! Spoiling a fellow's sleep!" growled Bunter. "Might as well be at Greyfriars, with that beast Gosling ringing the beastly rising-bell! I get up at ten in the holidays! Now shut up!"

"We're starting now!" said Harry Wharton. "Bowline's got the boat ready in the cove—"

"Blow Bowline! Blow the boat! I'm not coming!"

"You fat chump, nobody wants you to come!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Wouldn't have you at any price!"

"Beast!"

"You can go to sleep again after we've started, and sleep all day, if you like, Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

"But before we go—"

"Shut up!"

"You can sleep all round the jolly old clock," said Bob Cherry. "We're not likely to be back early."

"Ring off!"

"Listen to me, you fat ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently.

"Shan't!"

"Bring that jug of water here—"

"Keep off, you beasts!" howled Bunter. "I'm listening!"

"We're starting in Bowline's boat to go down to the sea-cave at Pegg," said Harry. "We're going to look there for Redwing and Smithy. We think we may find them there, and the kidnapper, too—"

"You wouldn't have thought of it but for me!" snapped Bunter. "You hadn't brains enough, the lot of you!"

If you hadn't consulted me, you'd never have thought of the smugglers' cave!"

"Will you listen, you ass? If we find the kidnapper there, we may be going into danger—"

Snort! from Bunter.

"Oh, don't be funky!" he said.

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

Bunter blinked scornfully at the Famous Five.

"Leave it till later, and I'll come with you!" he said. "I'll protect you, same as I did that time we had a trip in the South Seas! If there's any danger, it's not much good you fellows going without me!"

"Fathead! Last time you were in the sea-cave you thought you saw a ghost and fainted!" snapped Frank Nugent.

"Yah!"

"You'll stay here, Bunter," said Harry. "You wouldn't be any use! But if we are not back by dark—"

"You'll have to be back before dark!" said Bunter warmly. "I've stayed one day at this rotten place, and I can tell you I'm fed-up with it! We've got to catch a train. Think I'm going to stay here all through the Christmas vac? Don't be an ass!"

"We're staying here till we've found Redwing and Smithy—"

"Rot! Blow Redwing and Smithy! What about me?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "If two silly asses go and get themselves kidnapped, blow 'em! Let the bobbies look for them! What are bobbies for? I came along with you fellows on the understanding—the distinct understanding—that we were going to Wharton Lodge for Christmas. You're spoiling my holidays! Blessed if I ever heard of such selfishness! You don't seem to think about me at all!"

"Kill him, somebody!" said Bob.

"Beast! Nice sort of a holiday I'm getting," said Bunter warmly, "sticking in this dashed cottage, in this dashed windy place, fooling about looking for

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two silly asses that go and get themselves kidnapped! Blow Redwing! Blow Smithy! What about me? That's what I want to know—what about me?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Bob. "Can't even let a fellow sleep!" said Bunter. "I'm used to you fellows' selfishness. But this really is the limit! To hear you talk, anybody would think that I didn't matter at all!"

"Right on the wicket! You don't!" said Bob.

"The don't-fulness is terrific!" "Listen, you fat idiot!" roared Wharton. "You know where we're going and what we're going for. If we're not back by dark, you'll know that something has happened to us, and you'll get to Greyfriars as quick as you can and tell Mr. Quelch. Quelch is staying at the school since break-up on account of Redwing and Smithy being missing—"

"Then he's as big an ass as you are!" said Bunter. "Lot of rot, I call it! As for getting to Greyfriars, how am I to get ten miles? I shouldn't wonder if you think I could walk it! You're selfish enough!"

"That's all," said Harry. "We shall be back before dark, if all goes well. If not, let Quelch know, and he will know what to do. Now you can go to sleep!"

"I say, you fellows——" The Famous Five tramped down the stairs.

"I say, you fellows——" yelled Bunter.

But the fellows were gone. "Beasts!" murmured Bunter.

And he settled down to sleep again. By the time Harry Wharton & Co. quitted the cottage Billy Bunter's deep and resonant snore was once more awakening the echoes.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bound for the Haunted Cave!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came out into the windy morning and tramped down the steep path to the cove below the cliffs. The sea rolled heavily on the beach, line after line of white foam marking the waste of waters till they were lost in the mist that hung over

the North Sea. It was a wild winter's morning, and the rolling sea did not look inviting. But in the sheltered cove under the cliffs it was calmer, and there Mr. Bowline, the ancient mariner of Hawkscliff, was waiting, sitting on the boat and smoking an early pipe. He rose and touched his hat as the Famous Five came tramping across the heaped sand.

"Rough!" he remarked sententiously. "We can get to sea?" asked Harry.

"Ay, ay! Run you across to Holland if you like," answered Bowline cheerfully. "We'll make the cave at Pegg easy enough. I dessay you'll be sick," he added.

Harry Wharton smiled. "We'll chance that," he said.

"But look 'ere," said Mr. Bowline, taking his pipe from his mouth. "John Redwing's an old messmate of mine, and I've known young Tom since he was a little nipper so high. If some land sharp has got hold of young Tom, I'm ready to help, seeing as his father's away at sea, too. But look 'ere, you want to steer a course for the sea cave under the Shoulder at Pegg?"

"That's so," said Harry.

There seemed to be a certain unwillingness about Mr. Bowline. Hitherto, he had been very keen to help in the search for Tom Redwing and Herbert Vernon-Smith, the two Greyfriars juniors who had disappeared so mysteriously.

"I ain't afraid of no man," he said slowly. "I've took all the risks of a sailorman's life—and I've had some rough times, too, and you can lay on that. Shiver my timbers! I ain't afraid of nothing on the sea. But p'raps you young gents ain't heard that that there cave is haunted?"

Mr. Bowline looked rather anxiously at the juniors.

"There's folks ashore don't believe in them things," he said. "But I've been on a haunted ship, and I know!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Things have been seen in that there cave," said Mr. Bowline impressively. "A 'underd years ago there was bloodshed there—Revenue officers and the smugglers. Some of them was killed. Any man along this coast will tell you that that cave's haunted. Mind, in this weather there's a lot of danger in getting near it in a boat—and there ain't no other way of getting near it. I don't care about that. But them ghosts——"

He paused and shook his head.

"All serene if we find nothing more dangerous than ghosts," said Nugent.

"Things 'ave been seen," said Mr. Bowline—"movin' lights and things! And fishermen have heard voices and wailings. It's well known that the cave is haunted. You reckon that that kidnapping sea-lawyer has got young Tom there. It don't seem likely to me that any man would be there if he could help it. Cause why? There ain't a man along the coast would stay a night in that cave for a skipper's wages."

"That makes it all the more likely that the kidnapper is there," said Harry. "He would want to pick a place where nobody is likely to go."

Mr. Bowline shook his head again.

"But we've got a reason for thinking they may be there," went on Wharton. "Bunter—that fat fellow up at the cottage—drifted into the cave one day a week or two ago in a boat, and was scared out of his wits by seeing what he took to be a ghost——"

"He seed it?" exclaimed Mr. Bowline, startled.

"He saw something, and took it for

a ghost—a ghostly face, or something of the sort."

"That's it!" said Mr. Bowline, with a nod. "That was Smuggler Bill! It's well known that his sperrit haunts the cave."

"Well, we think it more likely that it was somebody playing ghost to frighten people away," said Harry; "and that's just what the kidnapper would do if he has put up there."

Again Mr. Bowline shook his head.

Billy Bunter's story of the ghost he had seen in the sea-cave had caused only merriment at Greyfriars. But it would evidently have found a believer had he related it to Sam Bowline.

"Well, we're going, anyhow!" said Harry. "If you don't like to come into the cave, you can stay with the boat. Let's get going."

"It ain't lucky to disturb spooks," muttered Mr. Bowline. "Anything might 'appen to a man after seeing a spook. But if you reckon that young Tom might be there—though I don't 'old with it—I'm ready to run you along."

And, with the help of the juniors, Bowline shoved his boat into the water and they crowded aboard.

The sea wind caught the boat as it ran from the shelter of the cove, and it danced and tossed like a cork on the rough waters.

Harry Wharton sat at the tiller, while Bowline handled the sail. The boat shot out to sea almost like a gull.

Bowline's face was very grave, with a shade of anxiety. Only a good sailorman could have handled a boat in such a sea; but that was not what troubled the ancient mariner. The thought of the ghost of the sea-cave was in his mind, and it troubled him deeply. Of his own accord he would never have sailed within a dozen fathoms of the haunted cave.

But his very reluctance to approach the spot added, in the minds of the Greyfriars fellows, to the probability that the kidnapper had chosen the sea-cave for his hiding-place. Who the kidnapper was they had not the faintest idea; but, whoever he was, there was no doubt that he was a cool and determined scoundrel, and quite unlikely to share the superstitious fears of the fishermen and longshoremen. The sea-cave's grisly reputation made it a safe place for him.

The boat tossed wildly on the waters. But the chums of Greyfriars were accustomed to the sea, and not likely to be sick, as Mr. Bowline had suggested.

The chalk cliffs sunk to a low line against the sky, Bowline making a wide sweep from the shore before he ran into Pegg Bay, five miles down the coast from Hawkscliff.

"The Shoulder!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

The great cliff at the northern extremity of Pegg Bay loomed up from the sea mists. The high summit was shrouded in mist. At the foot of the cliff huge chalk rocks and ledges and spurs jutted out into the sea, and the water broke over them with a deep roar, and incessant foaming and splashing. The faces of the juniors grew a little anxious. Even in calm weather the boiling currents at the base of the Shoulder made boating difficult and dangerous, and on a rough day there were few who would have cared to approach that maelstrom of foam and tormented waters.

But they did not falter.

The rough weather might last for days, and the chums of Greyfriars had no idea of allowing days to pass idly while their school-fellows remained

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Billy Bunter was tossed on the bed, and with twisted strips of a sheet Soames tied his wrists and ankles to the four posts. "You are safe now," said Soames, his eyes glittering at the Owl of the Remove. "Wait there—till I return, you fat fool!" (See Chapter 5.)

prisoners in the hands of some unknown scoundrel. The risk had to be taken.

Mr. Bowline handled the boat skilfully, the juniors helping him as much as they could. But it was no easy task to approach the rocky shore in the wild sea and the gusty wind without going aground. Tacking in that wild and veering wind was a task of great difficulty. Hour followed hour, with the great cliff still looming out of the mists, hardly nearer than when it had been first sighted. And as the boat battled with wind and wave, making slow headway, Harry Wharton & Co. did not guess what eyes were fixed on them from the shadowy depths of the sea-cave under the rocks of the towering Shoulder.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Price of Life!

"REDDY!"

"Yes, old chap?"

"We've got to do something."

Herbert Vernon-Smith spoke in tones of intense exasperation. His brows were knitted, his teeth set.

Tom smiled faintly. He had been longer a prisoner in the cave than the Bounder, but his nature was more patient.

"What can we do, Smithy?"

The Bounder grunted. It was difficult to answer that question.

In the gallery that opened off the great sea-cave at a distance from the sea Tom Redwing was seated on a

bench, while Vernon-Smith paced restlessly to and fro, like a tiger in a cage.

No gleam of daylight penetrated there. A hurricane lamp slung on the wall shed a dim light, and there was a glow from the paraffin-stove. The rocky roof was far out of sight in the gloom.

The gallery communicated with the main cave by a narrow fissure, not more than two or three feet wide. Nothing was there to bar the egress of the two kidnapped schoolboys. But each of them had a steel chain locked to his leg, fastened to a staple in the wall, which allowed them the freedom of the gallery, but made it impossible for them to get out into the great cave.

"We can't stand it much longer," muttered the Bounder. "We've got to beat that villain somehow, Reddy! Christmas—here!"

Tom made no reply.

They had discussed every possible and impossible plan, over and over again. And there seemed nothing to be done. The steel chains held them helpless prisoners in the gallery.

"Someone must be searching for us, Smithy," said Tom at last.

It was the only hope that remained.

The Bounder grunted angrily.

"They'll never search here. This cave is five miles from the place where we were taken."

"I suppose it's not likely," said Redwing, with a sigh.

"Greyfriars has broken up for Christmas now," went on Herbert Vernon-Smith. "The fellows are all gone."

"I know."

"That means that our friends won't be hunting for us."

"The police must be looking for us, Smithy. The Head must have seen to that—and your father, too."

"They won't find us."

"I'm afraid not."

"We can't stand this!" hissed the Bounder. "Look here, Reddy. That scoundrel has got the key of these locks on him. If we could get hold of him when he comes in next—"

"Better not, Master Herbert," said a smooth, silky voice from the opening of the gallery.

The Bounder swung round, his chain clinking as he moved. Soames, cool and smiling, stood looking at the prisoners. Vernon-Smith clenched his hands, and his eyes glittered. But Soames was standing beyond the length of the chain.

"You hound!" hissed the Bounder.

"Hard words, Master Herbert!" smiled Soames. "What is the use of them. But I remember that when I was your honoured father's valet you were always unruly. Perhaps you will learn better here."

"How long do you think you are going to keep us here, you scoundrel?" snarled the Bounder.

Soames leaned against the rock and regarded the two juniors thoughtfully, but with a smile still on his smooth, clear-cut face.

"That depends," he said.

"We shall be found sooner or later," said Tom Redwing, quietly.

"I think not," smiled Soames. "I

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think not, my young friend. You may be interested to hear that the police are very active—"

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"At Lantham," added Soames.

"Lantham?" repeated Smithy.

"Exactly! Wharton and his friends gave them a description of a man in a large beard and horn-rimmed spectacles—a disguise that I have now discarded," smiled Soames. "Such a man was seen in Lantham—in fact, he made himself somewhat conspicuous, seeking to hire a closed car in a manner that could not fail to raise suspicion, and leaving footprints of his sea-boots in a muddy yard, in order to help the excellent police in their investigations."

"You!" said Redwing.

Soames nodded.

"Precisely. The police are now combing Lantham and its neighbourhood, uncertain whether I am hiding in that locality or whether I have obtained a car and carried you to a distance."

"Oh!" said Tom, with a sinking heart.

"So far as I have observed, they have not come in this direction at all," said Soames smoothly. "Neither, I think, are they likely to do so. No doubt you are aware that your school has now broken up for the Christmas holidays, and that your friends are gone. I think you may as well abandon hope of being found here."

Redwing was silent. The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"It is time," went on Soames, "that we came to business. I have made myself secure here, but I have no intention of remaining in such dismal quarters through the festive season. I intend to spend my Christmas elsewhere, in much more congenial surroundings. I should be sorry to leave, and leave you here—permanently."

The sea-lawyer's tone was smooth and silky, but there was a threat in his words.

"You understand," he said. "If I leave, I leave with my companion, whom you have not yet seen, and will not see, but who keeps a very efficient watch in the sea-cave in my absence. I leave you here. I do not regard it as my business to supply you with food. For that you must depend on your own good fortune. Do you get me?"

"You mean that you will leave us here to starve?" asked Redwing quietly.

"With a thousand regrets," said Soames. "But undoubtedly that will be the outcome if you should continue unreasonable."

"You will get nothing out of us!" snarled the Bounder.

"From you, Master Herbert, I expect nothing. From Tom Redwing I expect the treasure of Black Peter, for which we fought in the South Seas. I failed then. I shall not fail now."

Redwing was silent.

"I am not a grasping man," pursued Soames. "I am not, I trust, unreasonable. But I have come back from the South Seas for the fortune of Black Peter. I do not ask it all; I do not desire to leave you a beggar. I shall be satisfied with the sum of ten thousand pounds."

He paused for a reply, but Redwing did not speak.

"I am aware," Soames pursued, "that the treasure no longer exists in its original form. It has been turned into money and banked. That is quite immaterial, however. It is money I want. But for the want of it, my young friend, you would have seen me sooner. But I had to make money by various ways

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and means before I could return to England and carry out this little scheme. I have staked all I have on this venture. This country is closed to me, I dare not appear in public, except in some cunning disguise. If I fail in this I shall have no resource but to get away from England as a seaman before the mast. I do not think I shall fail, however. I pity you both if I fail."

His eyes glittered for a moment.

"In the South Seas you and your friends beat me," he said quietly. "But I am not a man easily beaten. I have come back for my share of Black Peter's fortune. The money is under your control, Tom Redwing. I have mapped out the arrangements by which it may be handed over to me, if you consent."

"I will never consent," said Tom.

"Never is a long word," said Soames. "Without you, of course, I can do nothing. Think it over further. You have until Christmas Day to think—and to live!"

"To live?" repeated Tom.

"Christmas is close at hand now," said Soames, "a few days, more or less, are immaterial to me. I give you until Christmas. If you decide, by that date, to do as I require, you and your friend will be released as early as is compatible with my safety. If you decide otherwise, you will have lost your last chance. I shall leave the sea-cave—for ever—and you will take your chance here."

"You villain!" breathed the Bounder.

Soames shrugged his shoulders.

"Reflect," he said.

He turned and walked out of the gallery. Beyond the opening fissure the juniors heard his voice for a few moments, speaking in a low tone to his unknown associate. Then there was silence.

Vernon-Smith fixed his eyes on Redwing.

"He means it, Reddy," he said.

"I know."

"You won't give in."

"Not on my account. But—"

"Nor on mine," said the Bounder fiercely. "I tell you, you shan't give in to that scoundrel, if we both die here. Never!"

Redwing did not answer. To save himself he would never have yielded. But to save his chum—that was a different matter. Unless help came, unless rescue came, Tom Redwing knew that he would yield to the sea-lawyer's demand, to ransom his chum's life. And the game would be won by the sea-lawyer from the far Pacific.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter has a Visitor!

BILLY BUNTER grunted.

His grunt expressed discontent.

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter was not satisfied. He was not by any means satisfied.

He was getting his breakfast now. It was barely ten o'clock; but Bunter was hungry. Hunger had banished sleep; and Bunter had turned out. Fortunately, his ablutions did not delay him long. Bunter was not the fellow to waste a lot of time on washing.

There was ample of the best for breakfast; Harry Wharton & Co. had laid in a good supply of provisions, when they camped in Tom Redwing's cottage at Hawkscliff. But preparing his own meals did not appeal to Bunter. It was the most agreeable form of exertion imaginable, no doubt; still, it was a form of exertion. Bunter grunted discontentedly. He had left Greyfriars on

break-up day with the Famous Five, in the belief that they were going home to Wharton Lodge. He found himself landed at a cabin in a wind-swept village on the cliffs—and left there while the chums of the Remove hunted for the kidnapped schoolboys—a hunt which Bunter regarded as mere rot—simply playing the goat. As he had said with bitter indignation, they seemed to be thinking all the time of Redwing and Smithy; and not at all of William George Bunter.

Indeed, their disregard for Bunter's comfort was quite ruthless. If they wanted to go hunting for kidnapped fellows, one at least of them might have stayed in to cook the meals, Bunter considered. Failing that, they ought to have cooked a large supply, and left it to keep warm in the oven for Bunter. And they hadn't!

However, there was comfort in a solid meal. Innumerable rashers of bacon, countless eggs, and other things, made Bunter feel that life was worth living, even in a selfish world where the only really nice inhabitant was William George Bunter.

But having taken in provisions in bulk, Bunter rolled to the cottage door, and stood blinking out into the irregular street, through his big spectacles, and grunted again.

He was left on his own. Sleeping and eating were enjoyable, no doubt—but Bunter had slept enough, and eaten, till he had no room for more. Now he would have been glad to take a taxi to the station, and the train for Wharton Lodge. And those beasts had left him on his own; with absolutely no resource to pass his time. There was not even a picture-show at Hawkscliff—or within two miles of Hawkscliff. There was nothing—unless Bunter cared to roll along the street, and talk to three or four grizzled old sailormen in sea-boots and jerseys—which he did not care to do. And the beasts expected him to stay there all day, in order to carry the news to Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars if anything happened to them, on their expedition to the sea-cave. And the worst of it was that Bunter had to remain there, because there was no means of getting away except by walking; and when it was a question of walking miles, Bunter's laziness stood like a lion in the path.

So he grunted, blinked down the village street, blinked at the grey, tumbling sea and the sea-mists, and turned back into the cottage and grunted again.

Reading was a resource, if there had been anything to read. But there were few books in the Redwing cottage, and such as there were, were all of a solid character—a work on seamanship belonging to Mr. Redwing, some school books of Tom Redwing's, and the "Pilgrim's Progress." That great work Bunter had no use for; his tastes were rather more lurid in literature, and a hasty blink through Bunyan's work showed that there were no murders in it, upon which Bunter slammed it shut in disgust.

"Well, this is rotten, and no mistake!" said Bunter.

He sorted out a cake, and began to munch it. But even a cake did not comfort him much, as he was already loaded beyond the Plimsoll line.

A step in the doorway made him blink round. He was glad to hear it—even if it was only a Hawkscliff native who had looked in. The sound of his own voice was always entertaining to Bunter; and if a Hawkscliff man was prepared to listen to him, Bunter was

prepared to talk so long as the victim's patience lasted.

But it was not a Hawkscliff man who looked in. Bunter blinked inquisitively at the man in the doorway, apparently a stranger in the place.

He was a rather slim, but well-built man, dressed in plus fours and a rain-coat. His complexion was so dark that Bunter supposed him to be a foreigner, and a black moustache curled on his upper lip, and his brows were thick and black. A soft hat shaded his face.

"Excuse me!" said the newcomer. "Is not this Mr. Redwing's cottage?"

"That's it!" answered Bunter.

"Is Mr. Redwing at home?"

Bunter grinned.

"No fear!" he answered. "He hasn't come back from sea."

The man in plus-fours eyed Bunter curiously.

"You are Mr. Redwing's son?" he asked.

Bunter sniffed.

"Certainly not!"

"Please excuse my mistake. But finding you here—"

"I'm a Greyfriars man!" grunted Bunter. "Do I look as if I were the son of a common seaman?"

"You certainly do not," said the stranger politely. "But finding you in Mr. Redwing's cottage, you see—"

The man entered the cottage as he spoke.

"You do not mind if I sit down for a few minutes?" he asked. "I have walked a great distance."

"Sit down if you like," answered Bunter. "You can shut that beastly door first. This wind is a corker!"

The man in plus fours shut the door, and sat down between the door and Bunter. His eyes, which were very keen, roved round the room. Bunter continued his operations on the cake.

"You are alone here?" asked the newcomer.

Bunter grunted.

"Yes—till the fellows come back."

"I see—a party of young Redwing's friends staying here, I suppose? A somewhat solitary place for the Christmas holidays."

Snort from Bunter.

"Catch me spending the Christmas holidays here," he said. "I'm only waiting till those silly chumps are ready to go. I'm sorry now that I agreed to spend the vac with them at all. But they were so keen on it I couldn't refuse." He blinked curiously at the stranger. "You know Redwing's father?"

"Oh, quite! I have heard a story in the village that his son has been kidnapped, or something of the sort," said the man in plus fours, looking at Bunter.

"Somebody's bagged him!" assented Bunter. "And Smithy, too! Nobody knows who it was—but they've got his description!"

"Indeed—what was he like?"

"Seafaring man with a big beard and horn-rimmed spectacles," said Bunter. "I hear that he was seen at Lantham last, and the police are hunting for him there. He tried to get a car to take the chaps away," Bunter grinned. "I shouldn't wonder if he's not so far away as Lantham, though."

The man in plus fours made a slight movement.

"You have some idea where he is to be looked for?" he asked.

"That's telling!" said Bunter.

"And your friends—"

"They've gone to look for him now," said Bunter.

"Schoolfellows of yours?" asked the man in plus fours.

"Oh, yes!"

"And where do they propose to look for the man?"

Bunter blinked at the stranger. Talkative as he was, even Bunter realised that it might be injudicious to talk too much to a stranger. Certainly the man in plus fours seemed rather inquisitive.

"Oh, round about, you know," answered Bunter vaguely.

"Who are your friends, who have gone out to look for the kidnapper?" asked the man quietly.

Bunter gave him a stare.

"You're asking a jolly lot of questions," he said.

"You will be kind enough to answer me, my boy!"

"I don't see why I should."

"I think I shall be able to make you see." The man in plus fours rose from his chair, and came towards Bunter, with a gleam in his eyes that made the Owl of the Remove jump. He towered over the fat junior, who blinked up at him in alarm. "Now answer my questions at once, before I break every bone in your body!"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Sharp!" rapped out the man in plus fours. "Who is staying at this cottage as well as yourself?"

"I—I—I don't mind telling you!" gasped Bunter. "Five fellows—"

"Their names?"

"Wharton, Bob Cherry, and—"

"That will do—I can guess the rest! Why are they here?"

"They're staying here to look for Redwing," stammered Bunter, his eyes fixed in fear on the threatening face that glared down at him. The fat junior was quaking with dread now. Obtuse as he was, Bunter had to realise that the man who was questioning him was no ordinary inquisitive stranger. The thought that he was, perhaps, in the presence of the kidnapper of Redwing and Smithy, sent a cold chill down Bunter's back.

His little round eyes grew wide with terror as he blinked at the dark, threatening face.

"They are searching the coast for Redwing?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter.

"Although they knew that the kidnapper was last seen at Lantham?"

"Yes."

"Where are they gone now?"

"In—in—in a boat—" stuttered Bunter.

"Where?"

As Bunter did not reply immediately, the man in plus fours grasped him by the shoulder. His grip was like a vice, and the Owl of the Remove gave a yelp of pain.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Where are they gone?"

"Oh, dear! They—they're gone to the sea-cave at Pegg!" gasped Bunter.

The effect of that information on the man in plus fours was startling. He released Bunter, and staggered back a pace. There was rage in his dark face, and mingled with the rage was fear.

"The sea-cave at Pegg!" he repeated hoarsely.

"Oh, dear! Yes. I—I say—"

"Silence!"

The man in plus fours turned to the door, and shot the bolt. Then he came back towards Bunter, with an expression on his face that made the fat junior shiver with terror.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Bunter!

"SILENCE!"

The man hissed out the word.

Billy Bunter's mouth had opened for a yell for help. But the yell died in his throat. He shrank back in his chair, his eyes fixed in terror on the man who stood before him.

"Utter one cry, and it will be your last, you fat fool! You say that Wharton and his friends have gone to the sea-cave at Pegg, thinking to find Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith there?"

"Yes," breathed Bunter.

He knew now that he was in the presence of the kidnapper. He was nothing like the description that the Famous Five had given of the man they had seen. But his actions and words left no room for doubt. Either he had been in disguise then, or he was in disguise now—perhaps on both occasions. Obviously, he had come to Hawkscliff as a spy, to learn what he could of the search that was going on for the kidnapped schoolboys, and he had been startled and alarmed to learn that the chums of Greyfriars were staying there to search the coast, and he had been more than startled to learn that they were gone to the sea-cave. There was unmistakably fear in his looks when Bunter had given him that information.

But, in spite of the fury that glittered in his eyes, he was quite cool and self-controlled. His voice was quiet as he spoke again.

"The sea-cave is nearly ten miles from here—it is five miles from the place where Redwing was taken. What has put it into Wharton's head to search there?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"If you are lying to me, take care!" The man thrust his hand into a pocket, and showed, for a moment, the butt of an automatic pistol. "Take care!"

Bunter quaked.

"You—you see, it—it was because—because—oh lor'!—I hadn't anything to do with it, you know."

"You?"

"I wasn't in the sea-cave, you know," stuttered Bunter. "I—I never saw a man playing ghost there, and—and I never told the fellows anything about it, and—and that isn't why they've gone there."

The man gritted his teeth.

"You!" he repeated savagely. "You, a fat fool, a brainless idiot, to derange all my plans!"

"I never—" Bunter's voice died away. It was borne in upon his mind that, if this was the kidnapper, it was doubtless the same man who had been hidden in the darkness of the sea-cave at the time of the Owl's involuntary visit, and who had frightened him out of his fat wits. It was plain that the man knew him, and Harry Wharton & Co.

"So they are gone, in a boat, to the sea-cave," said the man quietly. "A dangerous task, in this wild weather, for schoolboys. They are as likely as not to be wrecked, and drowned among the rocks." He broke off. "Did they go by themselves, or—"

"They've got a seaman with them—a Hawkscliff man, named Bowline—"

The man compressed his lips.

"Then they may make the cave—Kalulu'ululu alone there—beaten again—beaten by a mob of schoolboys, as before!" He was speaking to himself.

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in low, savage tones. "But—there is still time—"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

His eyes grew wider in utter dread, and he crouched back in the chair, trembling from head to foot. In spite of the dark stain on the face, the black moustache, and the thickened and dyed eyebrows, recognition leaped into Bunter's eyes. The ghostly face he had seen in the cave had had a vague familiarity to him—and it was the same face that he was staring at now, though changed by its disguise. And now Bunter knew what it was that was familiar—those muttered words had given him the clue.

"Soames!" he whispered.

The man in plus fours did not heed him.

He moved a little away from Bunter, his brows knitted, in an effort of thought. Bunter did not stir.

The man in plus fours stepped to the window and stared out into the street. The Redwing cottage was at a little distance from the other buildings scattered along the irregular street, and there was no one at hand. In the distance, a man in sea-boots and jersey could be seen, leaning on a post, watching the sea, and smoking a pipe. That was all. Soames drew the curtain across the window and turned back to Bunter.

"Stand up!"

Bunter dragged himself from the chair, his fat knees almost crumpling under him.

"Listen to me," said Soames, in a low, savage voice. "You know me—I am a desperate man. I would twist your fat neck for having ruined my plans—if that would serve me! Give me any trouble, and you will not live to regret your folly."

"I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"Silence! I shall leave you locked in this cottage—if all goes well with me, I shall return for you after dark—the secret may yet be kept! I would crack your stupid skull like an egg, but it would be more dangerous for me for you to be found dead here, than to be found a prisoner, if you are found at all. But take care—your life hangs on a thread. Go up the stairs!"

"I—I say—" faltered Bunter.

"Go!" snarled Soames.

Bunter quaked, and went. He dragged his trembling fat limbs up the little staircase.

Soames followed him up.

In the bed-room, he curtained the window, and then turned to Bunter. He tore a sheet from the bed into strips, twisted them, and bound the fat junior hand and foot. Then a gag was stuffed into Bunter's mouth, and fastened there with a strip wound round his head.

Then the fat junior was tossed on the bed and, with twisted strips of sheet, Soames tied his wrists and ankles to the four bed-posts.

"You are safe now," he said, his eyes glittering at the Owl of the Remove. "Wait there—till I return. If Wharton and his friends do not leave the sea-cave alive, you will not carry the news, you fat fool! Lie there—and wait!"

Bunter could not speak, he could only blink in helpless terror at the man from the Pacific.

Soames left him, closing the door, and Bunter heard his hurried steps descending the stairs.

He heard the front door of the cottage close; he heard the key turn in the lock. He heard the footsteps of the sea-lawyer on the cobbles outside; in a few moments they died away.

Bunter lay still.

He could not move a limb; he could

not utter a sound. The cottage was locked up; there was no hope of help or rescue. Bowline was the only man at Hawkscliff who was likely to come to the cottage at any time; and he was gone to the sea-cave with the juniors. There was no help for Bunter. But it was, at least, a comfort to him to hear the footsteps of the desperate man from the South Seas die away into silence. Soames was gone—and in his terrible fear of the man, that was a relief.

For a long time Bunter lay, blinking dismally at the ceiling, his fat heart palpitating. Then his eyes closed at last and he went to sleep. Fortunately, discomfort did not bar him from slumber. He slept and forgot his troubles; and once more his reverberating snore awoke the echoes of the cottage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Kalulu-ululo!

THUD, thud, thud! Clang, clang! The sound of heavy blows echoed in the dim gallery. From the gallery it echoed through the narrow fissure into the outer cave. The hollows under the mighty cliff were filled with rumbling sound.

"It's no use, Smithy, old man," said Tom Redwing quietly.

The Bounder gave a growl.

"Better than doing nothing!"

Thud, thud, thud, thud! Clang!

The Bounder had loosened a heavy lump of rock, and using it as a hammer, was beating on the steel chain in the hard floor. He wielded the rock with both hands, crashing it on the chain with all his strength, the perspiration starting out on his forehead.

It was almost a hopeless attempt. Slim as the chain was, it was too strong to be broken by such means. Some of the links flattened, and that was all. They held as firmly as before.

But Vernon-Smith continued thudding the rock on the steel. Inaction was driving him to fury; and even futile action was a relief. He paused now and then to rest; but resumed his task, and the heavy hammering sent incessant rumblings through the cave. For half an hour or more it had gone on, and then, as the Bounder paused once more, Tom Redwing suddenly pricked up his ears to listen. There was a sound from the fissure connecting with the main cave—a soft footfall.

Vernon-Smith heard it, too, and his eyes glittered. He knew that the din he had been making had drawn Soames' unknown associate to the spot.

Who this associate was, the kidnapped schoolboys had no idea. They had not seen him, and had not heard his voice. Once or twice they had heard his movements in the outer cave; several times they had heard Soames speaking to him in low tones, but that was all. It was clear that whoever and whatever he was, he had orders from Soames to keep himself out of sight; but during the absences of the sea-lawyer, they could guess that he was incessantly on the watch in the outer cave.

The Bounder bent towards Redwing, and whispered.

"He's coming—he thinks we're breaking loose—if he comes within reach, collar him—"

Redwing nodded.

"He may have the key on him," breathed the Bounder, "or some tool that we can use to break the chain. If we get hold of him—"

"It's a chance," whispered Redwing.

They said no more, but listened. The stealthy sounds in the fissure had ceased,

but in the deep silence they fancied they could hear a subdued breathing. The unknown watcher was listening. Evidently the crashing had alarmed him, and roused his suspicion that the prisoners were breaking loose. But he had not shown himself.

The Bounder picked up the rock again, and crashed it heavily on the links of the chain.

"Nearly!" he exclaimed, in a loud voice. "A few more knocks, and it will break."

Redwing stared at him; he knew that the chain would never break under Smithy's blows. But he understood the next moment. The Bounder's words were intended to reach the listening ears in the fissure, and to draw the unknown watcher into the gallery.

The strategem succeeded perfectly.

There was a hurried footstep, and a figure leaped into view in the inner cave.

"You feller boy, you stop plenty quick!" exclaimed the newcomer.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated the Bounder, staring at him blankly. Tom Redwing opened his eyes wide in astonishment.

The watcher, who had leaped into view in the gallery, was a boy of about their own age. His skin was a deep bronze in colour; his eyes large and dark. In his brown ears were ear-rings of coral and the hole in the cartilage of the nose showed that he had once worn a nose-ring. He was dressed in a thick overcoat and cap, with a thick woollen scarf round his neck, as if he felt the cold keenly, as doubtless he did, for at the first glance it was plain that he belonged to a hot clime. The handsome bronze features were those of a Polynesian.

In their summer cruise in the South Seas, Smithy and Redwing had seen many natives of the Pacific, and they knew at once that the boy was a Kanaka. They stared at him blankly. They had wondered and surmised a great deal as to who and what Soames' unknown associate might be; but they had never guessed that it was a boy, and a native of the South Seas.

"A Kanaka!" ejaculated Redwing, breaking the astonished silence.

"My hat!" said Vernon-Smith.

The amazement in their faces seemed to amuse the brown-skinned lad. He grinned at them with a flash of white teeth.

"Who are you?" exclaimed Redwing.

"Me Kalulu-ululo!"

"Oh, my hat!" repeated the Bounder, breathing hard.

His eyes met Redwing's, reading there the hope that was in his own. They had taken it for granted that Soames' associate was some unscrupulous rascal like the sea-lawyer himself. But the sight of the brown, good-humoured, grinning face banished that belief at once. Hope leaped up in their hearts as they looked at him.

"Kalulu-ululo!" repeated Redwing.

The young Kanaka nodded.

"Feller white master he say no comey here; you no see, eye belong you," he said, in the quaint dialect of the Pacific. "Watchee—watchee allee same, along big cave. But you makee get away, me comey plenty quick. You feller boy you stop along here, you savvy."

"You came with Soames from the Pacific?" asked Redwing.

The Kanaka nodded.

His keen black eyes were fixed on the chain at which Vernon-Smith had been hammering. He could see that it was still unbroken, though some of the links were flattened. But now that he had

shown himself he did not seem indisposed to remain. Undoubtedly he had found his watch in the outer cave lonely enough.

"Me come along white master," he answered.

"Soames is your master?"

"Plenty good feller master," said the Kanaka.

"Where is he now?" asked Redwing. He knew that the sea-lawyer must be absent from the cave.

Kalulu'ululo shook his dark head.

"Me no savvy," he answered. "Feller white master he go along 'nother place. No tell Kalulu'ululo. Tell Kalulu'ululo watchee."

"Look here, kid," said Redwing gently. "Do you know that your master is keeping us prisoners here against the law?"

"No savvy law," said Kalulu'ululo.

"Killy big feller shark, along Lalulu, along knife. Fellow Soames, he no killy shark; feller shark, he makee kai-kai along me. You savvy? He good feller master."

Redwing's brief hope deserted him. That the Kanaka was not a rascal like his white master a glance had told him. But the brown-skinned boy was devoted to Soames, who had saved his life. That devotion was likely to be proof against anything that the prisoners might urge.

"He good feller," said Kalulu'ululo, as if he would have liked to convince the prisoners by repetition that Soames was not a "bad feller"—"plenty good feller. He makee fiend along Kanaka boy. S'pose me stop along island Lalulu, me makee kai-kai."

"What?"

"Lalulu feller makee kai-kai along me," explained Kalulu'ululo. "Along

him back to his island would only have been sending him back to the cooking-ovens he had narrowly escaped.

"He plenty good feller," repeated Kalulu'ululo—"plenty good feller along me. S'pose white master, he say Kalulu'ululo he no stop any more altogether, me no stop."

The odd English puzzled Redwing for a moment, and then he understood. The Kanaka meant to say that if Soames asked his life of him, he would not refuse.

"You won't help us out of this?" growled the Bounder.

"No tinkee!" grinned Kalulu'ululo.

"You savvy money?"

"Me savvy money plenty."

"I'll give you as much money as you can fill your pockets with, plenty good silver money, you help us out."

The Kanaka's lip curled.



Vernon-Smith lifted the stone, but he did not resume his beating on the steel chain. With a sudden movement, unlooked-for by the Kanaka, he hurled it with all his force. There was a yell from the Kanaka as the heavy rock struck him on the chest, and he fell headlong to the rocky floor. (See Chapter 6.)

Redwing strove to recall the beche-de-mer English he had heard spoken in the South Seas.

"Feller Soames he plenty bad feller," he said. "No good feller makee prisoner along cave."

"He plenty good feller," answered the Kanaka.

"Plenty bad feller along us," said Redwing.

Kalulu'ululo grinned.

"Plaps!" he assented. "Good feller along me."

"You good feller boy?" said Redwing.

"Plenty good feller," assented the Kanaka. "All Papalagi say Kalulu'ululo he first-class good feller."

"Good feller boy he no serve bad feller master," said Redwing.

"White master he good feller," said Kalulu'ululo. "He savee life along me, killee feller shark wantee makee kai-kai along me."

"My hat!" said Redwing. "Soames saved your life by killing a shark?"

Kalulu'ululo nodded.

"He plenty fine feller," he said.

Lalulu, all feller eatee long-pig. What you call feller cannibal. Me run along lagoon, no wantee cooking-oven along me. Feller shark, he stop along lagoon. S'pose white master, he no come; me stop along feller shark; walk about inside along him." The Kanaka grinned. "No wantee walk about inside along feller shark!"

"Oh!" gasped Redwing.

In this strange dialect the Kanaka had told his story. Selected as a victim for a cannibal feast on his native island, he had fled and jumped into the lagoon, only to perish in the jaws of a shark had not Soames saved him.

"Feller white master, he takee me along ship," went on the Kanaka. "All same father along Kalulu'ululo. He plenty good feller."

Redwing was not wholly surprised by the story. He knew that Soames, villain as he undoubtedly was, had iron nerves and unbounded courage, and was quite likely to risk his life to save a swimmer from a shark. And having rescued the fugitive, apparently Soames had taken him under his protection, as sending

"Me good boy along white master!" he answered scornfully.

"That's no good, Smithy, old chap!" muttered Redwing. "But if the kid could be made to understand that that scoundrel is breaking the law, and will be taken to prison if he is caught—"

"I don't think we can make him understand that much, Reddy," said the Bounder.

"Let's try, anyhow," Redwing muttered.

The Bounder did not heed. There was a desperate gleam in his eyes. He picked up the heavy stone again, as if to resume his beating on the steel chain.

Kalulu'ululo, watching him, grinned.

"No can break," he said.

The Bounder lifted the stone, but he did not crash it down on the chain. With a sudden movement, unlooked for by the Kanaka, he hurled it at Kalulu'ululo with all his force. There was a yell from the Kanaka as the heavy rock struck him on the chest, and he fell headlong to the rocky floor.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Escape!

QUICK!" panted the Bounder. He plunged towards the sprawling Kanaka to the full length of his chain.

Redwing stood quite still, taken aback, almost stunned by the sudden happening.

In the circumstances, the Bounder's desperate action was justified; but somehow it went sorely against the grain with Tom.

But the Bounder was desperate and ruthless. Liberty was at stake, and the sea-lawyer's threats showed that life itself might be at stake. The Kanaka, though innocent himself, was on the side of the enemy, and had to be treated as an enemy.

Kalulu'ululo had fallen beyond the length of the prisoner's chain; but the Bounder, sprawling out from the end of it, succeeded in clutching hold of his overcoat with his hands.

He dragged the gasping Kanaka closer.

"Quick!" he yelled. "Redwing, you fool, bear a hand!"

"Smithy—"

"You fool, quick!" yelled Vernon-Smith.

The shock had knocked the Kanaka out for some moments, but he was quick to recover.

The grin was gone from his face now, his features set in a savage look and his white teeth were clenched, his black eyes gleaming. He gave the Bounder grip for grip and struggled with him fiercely.

Alone, the Bounder would have been overcome; the Kanaka boy's limbs seemed to be of iron, his muscles of steel. But Tom Redwing rushed forward and grasped Kalulu'ululo. His heart misgave him a little, but he had to stand by his comrade.

Still struggling furiously, the Kanaka was overcome by the united efforts of the two schoolboys.

But it was not for ten wild and breathless minutes that he gave in, and then only when his strength was exhausted by the fierce resistance. Then he lay panting, in great sobbing gasps, on the rocky floor, with Redwing holding his wrists and Vernon-Smith kneeling on his chest.

"We've got him!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "Keep him safe!"

"Gently, old chap," said Redwing. "There's no harm in the kid!"

"He's keeping us here!" snarled the Bounder. "I don't want to hurt him, but it's him or us! Keep him safe."

"We've got him safe."

Kalulu'ululo's black eyes rolled wildly.

"You plenty bad feller!" he gasped.

"We're not going to hurt you, kid," said Redwing. "But we've got to get out of this."

"And before that scoundrel Soames comes back!" hissed the Bounder. "This kid may have the keys about him—"

"No got feller key along me!" panted Kalulu'ululo.

"I'm going to see. Hold him!"

While Redwing held the Kanaka Vernon-Smith groped through his pockets. He had little real hope of finding the key to the fetters; it was more likely to be in Soames' keeping. And he did not find it. Many articles were turned out of the pockets, among them a large sailor's clasp-knife. Kalulu'ululo's black eyes dilated as Vernon-Smith grasped the knife and opened the blade.

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"You no killy feller Kalulu'ululo?" he panted.

Vernon-Smith grinned breathlessly. He was not likely to kill the Kanaka boy; but Kalulu'ululo was more accustomed to the ways of his own island of Lalulu than to those of the island in the North Sea where he now found himself.

"Make him safe, Reddy, and we've got a chance!" panted the Bounder.

Kalulu'ululo was rolled over and his hands bound behind his back with his own scarf. Vernon-Smith hacked a length off the long scarf and tied his ankles with it.

"That does it! Keep an eye on him, though!"

"But what—"

"We've got a chance, I tell you, if that scoundrel Soames doesn't come back too soon!"

"You can't break the chain with that knife."

"I know. But the staple—"

"Oh!" gasped Redwing.

The staple to which the chains were locked was driven deep into the chalk rock that formed the wall of the cave. It was driven too deep for the prisoners to hope to drag it out, though they had exerted their full strength on it more than once. Knife in hand, the Bounder began to hack at the chalk surrounding the staple.

It was hard almost as stone. But chips of chalk flew under the knife as the Bounder hacked.

Redwing's face flushed with hope.

The prisoners could not get loose from the chains, but once the staple was out they would be able to leave the gallery, taking the chains with them. If only the return of the sea-lawyer was sufficiently delayed!

"Go it!" breathed Redwing.

Kalulu'ululo stared up at the Bounder. He wriggled in his bonds, but the prisoners had made sure of him.

"Feller white master, he plenty mad, suppose you no stop!" he said.

The juniors were not likely to heed that warning. They could afford to laugh at the rage of Soames if once they succeeded in getting free.

The Bounder hacked and hacked, breathless with exertion, the perspiration pouring down his face.

"Let me take a turn, Smithy," said Tom.

The Bounder handed him the knife.

With a stronger hand than the Bounder's, the sailorman's son hacked at the slowly-yielding chalk.

Slowly but surely an excavation was opening round the deeply-driven staple.

"Now pull!" he said.

The two juniors grasped the chains and dragged with all their strength. With a sharp jerk the iron staple came out of the rocky wall, the sudden give sending them sprawling.

The Bounder picked himself up, chuckling breathlessly.

"We've done it!"

"You plenty bad feller!" muttered Kalulu'ululo. "Feller white master, he altogether too much mad along you!"

"Get a move on!" panted Vernon-Smith. "If that villain should come back—"

The juniors gathered up the chains, winding them about their waists to get clear of them. The weight was not great, and incommoded their movements very little. Leaving Kalulu'ululo lying on the floor, gazing after them with wide, dismayed eyes, the prisoners hurried out of the gallery, through the narrow fissure, into the great sea-cave.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

At the Last Moment!

BLACKNESS, as of the blackest night, surrounded Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith as they emerged into the sea-cave. The light of the hurricane-lamp in the gallery did not extend beyond the fissure. But through the blackness, as they stared round them, came a gleam of light, and they moved towards it—slowly, and feeling every step. In the wall of the cave, at a little distance from the fissure they had left behind was a large cavity, in which a lamp burned. On the floor lay a pile of blankets and rugs, with cooking utensils and a fireplace, built of loose stones. They could guess that this had been the quarters of the Kanaka.

Vernon-Smith picked up the lamp.

"Come on!" he said.

Holding up the lamp, he stepped out into the great cave again. There was no gleam of daylight to be seen, though they knew that it was day, and it was evident that they were a long distance from the sea.

"Which way, Reddy?"

"The wind will guide us, old chap," said Redwing. "So long as it blows in our faces we shall be making for the sea."

"That's so."

"It must be rough weather outside," said Tom. "There's plenty of wind here."

"Rough or smooth, we're taking our chance when we get to the mouth of the cave," said the Bounder.

"What-ho!"

Wind in sharp gusts blew along the vast cave, and the juniors kept it in their faces as they tramped along, Smithy holding the lamp. The rocky floor of the sea-cave was rough and irregular, and here and there were deep fissures and chasms. It was dangerous treading, but the light of the lamp showed the perils of the way. A deep murmur that came to their ears at last told them that they were nearing the sea.

"Daylight!" exclaimed Redwing suddenly.

Dimly, afar, appeared a dull glimmer. It was the glimmer of day at the mouth of the sea-cave.

They hurried on.

Nearer the sea a dim twilight reigned in the great cave, and Vernon-Smith set down the lamp at last. It was no longer needed. At a run now, the two juniors hurried on, the boom of the sea ever louder in their ears, the patch of daylight at the mouth of the cave growing broader and brighter.

They stopped at last where the booming waters broke at the mouth of the cave, streams of white foam breaking round their feet.

The rocky arch of the cavern was still over their heads. For a distance of ten yards or more from the opening the cave was flooded by the sea.

Beyond the opening extended high cliffs of chalk, enclosing a channel of tossing waters—cliffs that continued the sides of the cave, though no longer arched above.

Farther beyond they had a glimpse of a narrow strip of the sea, wildly tossing in the winter wind.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

On a calm day good swimmers might have hoped to swim out, gain a footing on the rocks, and climb over the cliffs that shut in the cave. But on a stormy day the attempt was hopeless. The strongest swimmer would have been tossed about on those wild waters as helplessly as a bunch of seaweed.

"We've got to do it somehow!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "We can't wait here—for Soames."

Redwing caught his arm.

"Look!" he breathed.

"What?"

"Look!"

Redwing pointed to the distant sea, far beyond the cliffs. On the wild surge of the waters a boat leaped into view, tossing and plunging. A mahogany-faced seaman was handling the sheets, a Greyfriars junior sat at the tiller; four other juniors were in the boat. Distant as they were, and lost to sight the next minute in the trough of the sea, Vernon-Smith recognised the boat's crew, and he gasped with amazement and relief.

"Wharton—"

"Our friends!" panted Redwing. "That's Sam Bowline with them. They've got Bowline's boat from Hawkscliff."

The surge of the wild waters hid the boat. But the brown, patched sail shot into view again against a leaden December sky. Once more the eyes of the prisoners of the cave fastened on the Famous Five of Greyfriars till another foaming surge hid the boat.

"They're coming here!" breathed the Bounder.

Redwing nodded, his eyes gleaming.

"But the school's broken up! I thought they were gone home, with the other fellows," said Vernon-Smith blankly.

"They must have stayed on—to search for us, Smithy—"

"And they're coming here!" breathed the Bounder. "Oh, good luck! Good pals, if you like!"

"Yes, rather!" Redwing's eyes were dancing. "It's a dangerous sea, and a dangerous shore. But they'll make it! Bowline knows how to handle a boat in any sea. Thank goodness they've got him with them."

"Shout!" said the Bounder.

"They couldn't hear, in this sea, at half the distance." Redwing watched

the sea eagerly. "They're out of sight now—"

The tacking boat had shot away beyond the opening of the cliffs and vanished. Only the grey, tumbling, deserted sea met the eager eyes of the prisoners of the cave.

But their faces were brighter now, and their hearts lighter. Rescue was coming. For it was clear that the Hawkscliff boat was heading for the sea cave, though it was unable to follow a direct course.

"How long do you think, Reddy—"

Tom shook his head.

"There's no telling, in this wind. It may take them hours to beat up to the cave. But they're coming."

The sight of their Greyfriars comrades had given the prisoners new life. Even if they were recaptured by the sea-lawyer they knew now that their friends knew—or guessed, at least—where they were. Rescue, if it did not come at once, must come.

Vernon-Smith stared back into the blackness of the cavern. There was no sign or sound, as yet, of the sea-lawyer's return.

Leaving the cave without a boat was impossible, but Tom Redwing, with startled eyes, was examining the sand that was thickly strewn over the rough rocky floor.

Vernon-Smith followed his intent gaze.

"What have you got in your head now, Reddy?"

"There's a boat—there must be a boat—" breathed Redwing.

"Soames has a boat, of course; he brought us here in one," said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "But he's gone from the cave, and he must have taken it."

"So I was thinking, but— There's a tale told along the shore that the smugglers who used this cave knew of a secret way out on the inland side," said Redwing. "Some sort of tunnel through the cliffs, where they carried out the contraband after landing it in the cave."

"I've heard of it, but—"

"And Soames has found it," said Redwing quietly. "He had plenty of time here to explore every corner of the place, big as it is; we know that he was here at least a week before the kidnapping, from what Bunter saw in the cave. On a day like this he wouldn't go out in a boat if he could help it; it would be dangerous work for a single oarsman in that tide—"

"But—"

"Look!" exclaimed Redwing. "You can see the marks in the sand where a boat has been dragged up from the water, but there's no mark where it has been run down again. You're Scout enough to pick that up, Smithy."

"By gad! You mean the boat's still here—"

"Yes."

"But where?"

"Soames wouldn't leave it in sight, of course, in case of any chance visitor to the cave. But we shall find it pretty close at hand, I think. Follow that track in the sand."

"By gad!" repeated the Bounder.

His eyes were blazing now. They had taken it for granted that Soames had left the cave in his boat, but the track in the heaped sand told a different tale to Redwing's keen eyes.

They hurried back into the cave, following the traces where a boat had been dragged. In a few minutes they came round a mass of chalk boulders, and there, between the rocks and the cavern wall, lay a boat high and dry.

The Bounder gave almost a yell of delight.

It was Soames' boat—light, but strongly built—with two oars lying across it.

"Oh, what luck!"

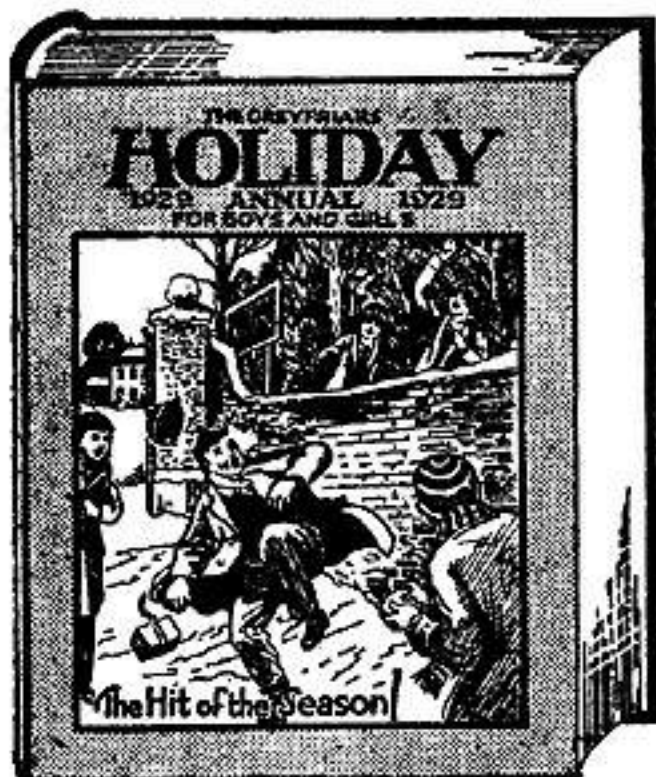
Tom Redwing's eyes danced.

"Bear a hand, Smithy! We're taking our chance! You can pull a good oar; and I was born and bred to the sea. We shall make it!"

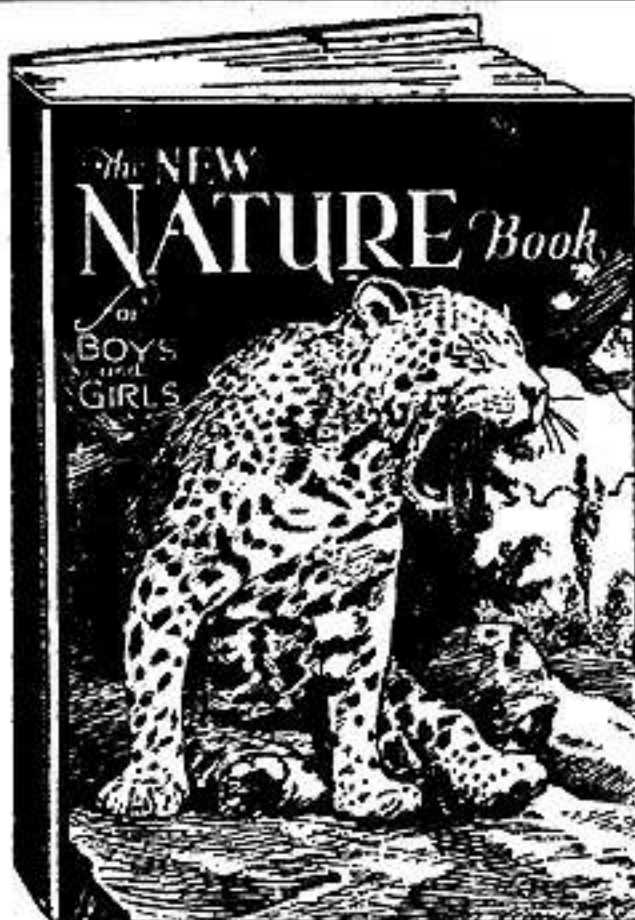
"Buck up, old chap!"

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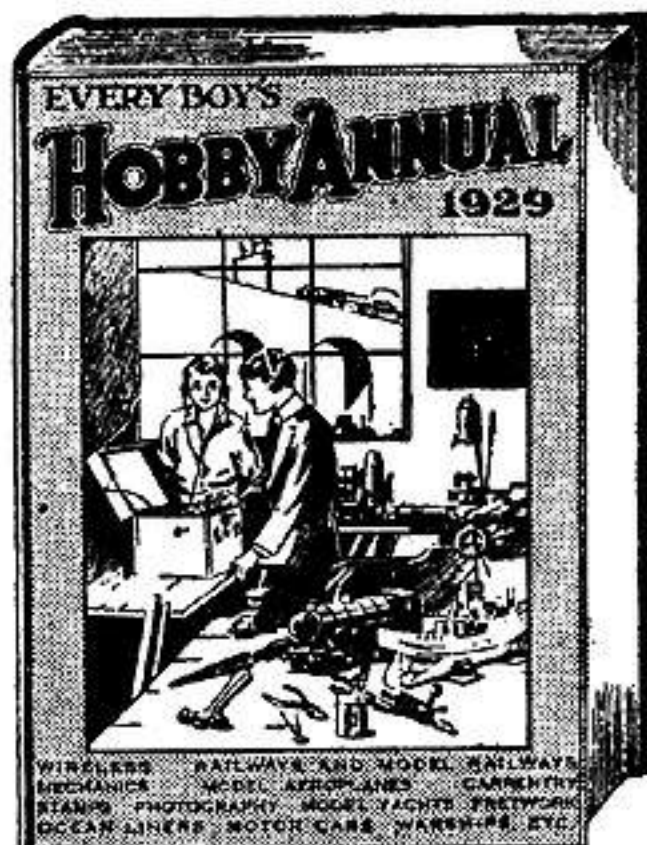
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They grasped the boat and dragged it from the screen of boulders, and dragged it across the wet sand to the water. Their hearts were throbbing now. There was risk in attempting to put to sea in a rowing-boat, with a gale tossing the waters to fury; but there was risk also in waiting, when at any moment their enemy might return and discover their escape. They were ready to take the risk, and it was less for Redwing than it would have been for any other Greyfriars man; stormy waters had no terrors for the sailorman's son.

A great wave came roaring between the chalk cliffs, to spend its force in the mouth of the cave, half lifting the boat as the juniors held it. The water surged and foamed round their feet.

"Now!" breathed Redwing. "Go out with the water—"

"Ready!"

And as the foaming wave surged back the juniors, grasping the boat, ran it out with the receding water. But before they could get it afloat an eddying surge raced back to the cave, lifted the boat, and dashed it back into the cavern again, the juniors staggering along with it, drenched and dripping.

"Better luck next time!" panted Redwing, as he dashed the salt spray from his eyes.

There was a grinding of hurried footsteps on the sand in the cave. A hoarse, furious voice shouted.

"Stop! Stop, or I swear I will shoot you dead!"

The report of a pistol followed, filling the hollow cavern with thundering echoes, and a bullet whizzed over the heads of the juniors.

Vernon-Smith spun round, with a yell of rage.

Soames had returned.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Hunted!

"SOAMES!"

Vernon-Smith and Redwing stared at the panting figure that came racing from the black depths of the cavern.

The automatic was in his hand; his face, under the dark stain that disguised it, was white with rage; his eyes gleamed with fury. Soames had returned—evidently by the secret way that led into the cave from the inland side of the cliffs—and he had returned only in time. Fortune, which had favoured the prisoners of the sea-cave so far, had failed them at the finish. The sea-lawyer came panting up, the automatic threatening the two juniors as they stood, ankle-deep in foaming water, by the stranded boat.

"Leave that boat alone!" Soames' voice was husky with rage and hurry. "Stand clear of it!"

The two juniors did not move.

Redwing clenched his hands hard; Vernon-Smith stood with one hand on the gunwale of the boat, resting on the iron rowlock. His fingers had closed convulsively on the rowlock.

But the automatic, lifted in Soames' hand, swayed from one to another of them, threatening both; and the look on the sea-lawyer's face told that he was in a mood to shoot.

His eyes glittered at them over the pistol. His features were quivering with rage. For once, the cool-headed schemer seemed to have lost all his coolness.

The utter defeat of his whole carefully-laid scheme was threatened. From

the cabin at Hawkscliff—where he had left Bunter tied up like a turkey—he had hurried breathlessly back to the cave, fearing to find that Harry Wharton & Co. had already arrived there. And he had found that the prisoners had escaped; and he was only in time to prevent them from launching the boat and escaping. At any instant Bowline's boat might come gliding into the sea-cave from the stormy sea. There was murder in the eyes of the desperate man as he glared at the two juniors.

"Go back!" His voice trembled with rage. "Back, I tell you! Stand clear of that boat, and go back up the cave!"

Even as he was speaking his glance swept past the juniors to the heaving waters between the cliffs that led to the open sea. Beyond the cliffs a patched, brown sail tossed into view, and he had a moment's glimpse of Harry Wharton & Co. in the Hawkscliff boat—close to the cave now, and running in. The boat vanished again in the trough of the foaming sea; but Soames had seen them, and knew how little time he had to spare.

"Come on, Smithy!" said Tom quietly. "We're beaten this time! Come on!"

The Bounder choked with rage.

But the levelled automatic, gleaming within a few yards of them, settled the matter. Soames was in a mood to riddle them with a stream of bullets. They drew away; but the Bounder, as he moved, drew the iron rowlock from the boat, his hand behind him. The rowlock was in his hand as he moved after Redwing up the cave.

Soames lowered the pistol.

"Hurry!" he snarled, and he stood aside for the two juniors to pass him.

Whiz!

It was Soames' intention to drive the two juniors, under the muzzle of the revolver, back to the rocky gallery far up the cavern and secure them there while he dealt with the incoming boat and its crew from Hawkscliff. But the Bounder was as desperate as Soames now.

As he passed the sea-lawyer his hand jerked, and the iron rowlock flew through the air; and before Soames knew what was happening it crashed into his furious face.

The sea-lawyer staggered back with a sharp cry, his foot slipped on the wet chalk of the floor, and he fell.

"Quick, Reddy!" panted the Bounder. "Run for it!"

They dashed up the cave, and in a moment disappeared. The darkness of the interior of the cave saved them; for it was only a few seconds before Soames, his face bleeding, was on his knees, firing after them, shot after shot.

Bang, bang, bang! rang and roared through the cave, filling the hollows with deafening echoes.

The two juniors, as they ran, heard the bullets smashing fragments of rock about them. But the darkness swallowed them up, and the shooting was at random.

The Bounder shut his teeth hard.

"Neck or nothing now!" he breathed.

"Keep together!" muttered Redwing.

They raced up the deep cavern, stumbling over rocks, slipping in fissures, picking themselves up again and running on. Soames and his automatic cut them from the sea, and the chance of escape that way; but in the endless ramifications of the great cave, there were a hundred hiding-places. And at the back of the Bounder's mind was the thought, the hope, of finding the secret outlet, by which he knew that Soames must have

come. At least they were free now, though still in their rocky prison.

The thunderous roar of firing behind them ceased; the echoes rolled away, booming, and died into silence. Soames had emptied the automatic, in his outbreak of fury. In the silence that followed, the juniors heard the echoing of distant footsteps. The sea-lawyer was in pursuit.

The glimmer of the lamp from the gallery, where they had been so long prisoners, came to their eyes—in the opening stood the Kanaka boy, whom Soames had evidently released. He sighted them, and made a movement as if to intercept them, but the juniors dashed past, and ran farther up the cavern, into black darkness.

Vernon-Smith slackened pace at last. "Go slow, old chap!" he gasped. "We don't want to pitch into some hole and break our necks. We've dodged that scoundrel!"

"It seems so, anyway," said Redwing. "I can't hear any footsteps, can you? We're bound to hear him if he's following us."

They stood listening.

The daylight at the mouth of the cave was far out of sight. The blackness that surrounded them was unbroken.

They could no longer hear the pursuing footsteps.

The two juniors stood silent, breathing deep and hard. For the present, at least, they had dodged the sea-lawyer and were safe.

In the vast cave, stretching far under the mighty Shoulder, with a score of lesser caves and galleries opening from it, it would be no easy task for the desperate man to find them. That he would hunt for them they knew—that he would never give up the hunt till he had found them, was likely enough. But rescuers were at hand—the Hawkscliff boat was coming.

"His game's up!" the Bounder whispered.

"Look!" muttered Redwing.

Far in the blackness showed a gleam of light. They knew that it was a hurricane-lamp—in the hand of the sea-lawyer.

"He's looking for us—with a light!" breathed Redwing. "Easy enough to hide, though!"

"Hunt cover!" said the Bounder.

They groped their way in the darkness, along a rough, rocky wall. The Bounder had matches, but he did not venture to strike one; it was only too likely that a flicker of light would have guided a bullet. They stumbled over a heap of chalk boulders, and there was a clinking of the chains that were wound round them.

"May as well stop here!" whispered the Bounder. "The light's gone!"

Crouching among the unseen rocks in the darkness, they waited and watched. The gleam of the hurricane-lamp carried by Soames, had vanished. It was likely that they had turned into some branching cave, and Soames was following the main cave in search of them. Once again, after long minutes, they caught the gleam of the hurricane-lamp in the distance, but it passed and vanished.

The Bounder chuckled softly.

"He might as well be searching for a needle in a bundle of hay," he whispered. "And we've only got to wait—help's not far away!"

The light had vanished, and it did not reappear. There was no sound of a footstep, or the echo of one. The sea-lawyer, if he was still seeking them, did not know where to seek, and for the time, at least, they were safe from him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Ghost of the Cave!

"**A**T last!" said Harry Wharton.
"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

The Hawkscliff boat had fought its way, at last, through shifting wind and stormy waters, to the channel in the cliffs that led to the sea-cave. The sail dropped, and the boat, running in on a great wave, bumped on the sand that was heaped at the mouth of the cave.

The juniors scrambled ashore, and Bowline made the boat fast to a jutting point of rock.

Standing in a group under the high rocky arch, the Famous Five of Greyfriars stared into the gloomy cavern.

The whole morning had been spent in beating up to their landing-place; but they had arrived at last. It was a relief to have their feet on firm ground once more, and to have done with the incessant tossing and pitching of the boat. But the expression on Bowline's face did not indicate relief. He blinked very uneasily into the gloomy depths that lay before them—peopled, to his imagination, by the haunting spirits of the smugglers of old times.

"Well, we're here!" said Nugent.
"The herefulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the searchfulness is the next step, my esteemed chums."

"Look out for the giddy enemy!" said Johnny Bull. "If Smithy and Reddy are here, the kidnapper's pretty certain to be here, too!"

"You young gents going up the cave?" asked Bowline uneasily.

"Yes, rather!"
The ancient mariner grunted.
"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry. His eyes were scanning the sandy floor. "It's pretty plain that somebody has been here before us—and lately, too! A good many feet have been trampling in this sand."

"Ghostses!" said Bowline, shaking his head. "'Cause why, nobody ever comes 'ere! Look here, how long did it take us to beat up to this 'ere cave? Did we see any other craft on the water? There ain't nobody human 'ere, and you can lay to that."

"Ghosts don't leave footprints!" grinned Bob.

"You never know, with ghostses," said Bowline. "You young gents can larf, if you like; but I've sailed on a haunted ship, and I know! Them footprints wasn't never made by mortal foot."

But the Famous Five, unheeding the old seaman, were keenly and curiously examining the traces in the sand.

That a boat had been dragged there, and that several pairs of feet, at least, had trodden there, was clear. The sand looked in a disturbed state, as though someone had attempted, in haste, to stir up and conceal the tracks. But if that was so, it had been done in too great haste, for numbers of the footprints were still clear to the eye. And from the size of some of them, it was plain that two sets of tracks, at least, belonged not to men but to boys.

Harry Wharton examined the tracks, with a deeply-perplexed face.

"There have been two fellows here, no older than ourselves," he said, "and I can find only one track of a man's boots. It looks as if Reddy and Smithy had been here—can't have been anybody else, I suppose—we're certain that no other boat beat up here this morning. I think we can take it now that it's no longer guesswork—there are two boys in this cave somewhere, and they've trodden here quite lately—and they

can't be anybody but the chaps we are looking for."

"True. O King!" said Bob.

Sam Bowline shook his ancient, grizzled head solemnly; but the chums of the Remove had no doubt about it. The finding of the tracks in that spot was perplexing enough; but the tale they told was not to be doubted. Two boys were in the cave—that was certain; and there could be no doubt that they were Tom Redwing and Herbert Vernon-Smith. And the man's tracks could only be those of the man who was holding them prisoners.

"It's plain enough!" said Frank Nugent. "But it beats me—he can't have allowed them to wander about the cave as they liked—in calm weather they'd have tried swimming out—"

"They may have got loose!" said Harry. "Goodness knows what's happened—but we can take it as a cert that they're here, or have been here quite lately. And that isn't all—there's a boat here somewhere. You can see the ridges in the sand where it's been dragged—and we know it never put to sea since dawn to-day—we should have seen it."

"It's been dragged up the cave, to be hidden," said Johnny Bull. "Keep your eyes open, you men—the fellow may be watching us, for all we know."

The black interior of the cave told

nothing; but the juniors realised that it was quite likely that, standing against the daylight at the opening, they were in view of someone hidden in the darkness. Each of the juniors had brought a stout stick with him, to be used as a weapon if needed, and they had no doubt that, if they came to close quarters with the kidnapper, they would be more than a match for him. They kept their eyes warily about them, as they searched for the boat. The ridges in the sand told the way it had been dragged; but at a little distance, the sand was too thinly scattered to show further traces. But it was clear to them that the kidnapper's boat had been dragged up the cave, and hidden somewhere among the rocks in the darkness.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"
Bob Cherry suddenly stooped and picked up an iron that lay in a little crevice of the floor. It was an iron rowlock.

"That's from the boat!" he said. Then he gave a sudden start.
"My hat! Look at it!" he said. There was a mark on the iron—still wet. It was the stain of blood. The juniors stared at it and exchanged startled glances.

"That rowlock's been chucked at

(Continued on page 16.)
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(Continued from page 13.)

somebody and given him a thumping hard knock," said Bob, in a low voice. Wharton knitted his brows in perplexity.

"Could they have got loose and tried to get away with the boat?" he muttered. "What on earth has been happening here?"

"If they got loose, he's got them again," said Johnny Bull. "Otherwise they'd still be here, or we should have found them trying to get out to sea."

"That's so."

"Well, we know they're here now," said Wharton. "There can't be any doubt about that. That fat duffer, Bunter, and his ghost story, put us on the right track, after all."

"The rightfulness was terrific."

"They're here, and we can find them," said the captain of the Remove. "It will take a thumping long time to search the cave—but that's the job ahead of us." He stepped back towards the Hawkscliff boat. "You coming, Bowline?"

Mr. Bowline blinked at him.

"I ain't afeared of anything human," he answered. "But it ain't lucky to disturb ghosties. I don't 'old with it."

"Somebody ought to stay with the boat," said Bob. "We don't want to risk having it snooded, and being stranded here."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's so. You stay with the boat, Bowline: hand out that hurricane lantern."

Mr. Bowline grunted and handed out the lantern. As he did so, there came a faint wailing sound from the gloomy interior of the sea-cave. So strange and wild was the sound that the juniors started involuntarily and stared round them with startled eyes. The old seaman jumped.

"You 'ear that?" he gasped.

"The wind," said Bob.

"That there wasn't the wind, no-how," said Bowline. "Many a time has them 'owls been 'eard in this 'ere cave. It's the ghosties."

The wailing sound was repeated, echoing eerily from the black depths. Nothing but darkness met the eyes of the juniors as they stared up the cavern.

"That wasn't wind," said Nugent, in a low voice.

Wharton shook his head, compressed his lips.

"No. It's the same trick that was played on Bunter—it's a trick to scare us away. It won't succeed."

"No fear!"

"I don't 'old with it," mumbled Mr. Bowline, his tanned face white and troubled. "You young gents 'ad better 'elp me run this 'ere boat out, and get back to Hawkscliff afore there's worse 'appens."

"Rot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Shiver my timbers!" gasped the old seaman, his eyes almost starting from his head as he stared up the cave. "Look! Look at that!"

From the blackness came a faint, pale gleam of phosphorescent light. In the midst of the dim, ghostly light, a white face gleamed, deathly white, with staring eyes. Only for a few seconds was the ghostly face visible: it vanished, and a wailing, eerie cry echoed from the hollows.

The juniors stood rooted to the rocky floor. For the moment their breath was taken away.

Bowline was the first to move. He tore loose the painter, grasped the boat, and began to shove it feverishly to the water. His tanned brow was clotted with perspiration.

"Get out of 'ere," he gasped. "Get out of 'ere, I'm telling you! One of this 'ere party will die before the year is out, having seen a ghost. It's always so, and you can lay to that. Lend me a 'and with this 'ere boat."

"You duffer!" exclaimed Wharton, recovering from the momentary spell of horror that the strange, unearthly apparition had cast upon him. "Stop where you are. Leave that boat alone."

Bob Cherry set his teeth. "It's some rogue playing ghost," he snapped. "He will find that he can't frighten us like Bunter."

Bowline was already shoving the boat into the water. A heavy wave dashed it back again, smothering the old seaman from head to foot.

"Bear a hand here, you swabs!" he panted.

"Look here——"

"Bear a hand! Don't I tell you that one of this 'ere party will die afore the year is out, having seen a ghost! Ain't I sailed on a haunted ship, and don't I know!" spluttered Bowline. "You're asking for it, you are, fouling a ghost. Bear a hand with this boat."

"We're staying here," snapped Wharton. He lighted the hurricane lantern, heedless of the vociferations of Mr. Bowline. "Come on, you fellows—keep your sticks handy."

With the hurricane lantern held high in his left hand, his cudgel grasped in his right, the captain of the Remove led the way into the blackness of the cave. The Co. followed him. Mr. Bowline stared after them blankly: and desisted from his efforts to get the boat afloat. Terrified as he was, to the very marrow of his ancient bones, the old seaman would not flee and leave the schoolboys to it. But he did not follow them. He remained with the boat, his old limbs shaking, staring dumbly after the gleam of the hurricane lantern as it grew smaller and smaller in the dark distance.

Harry Wharton & Co. advanced steadily up the cavern. That the wailing cries and the ghostly face were tricks to startle them and scare them away, they were quite certain. That trickery had served with Billy Bunter when the fat junior had been stranded in the sea-cave weeks before. But it was not likely to serve with Harry Wharton & Co. With grim, set faces, cudgels in hand, the Famous Five advanced up the cave, in the glow of light from the lantern held high by the captain of the Remove.

The wailing cries had ceased: the ghostly face was seen no more. The juniors could guess the reason: the trickster knew now that his trickery had failed. Once or twice they thought they heard faint sounds of stealthy movements ahead of them in the darkness. They pressed on resolutely. They knew they were on the right track now: that Redwing and Vernon-Smith were prisoners somewhere in those eerie depths, and that the man who had kidnapped them was at hand. Silence,

save for those faint, stealthy movements, greeted them as they advanced farther and farther up the cave.

The silence was suddenly broken. The report of a pistol, crashing like thunder in the confined space, awoke deafening echoes: and there was a crashing and splintering of the hurricane lantern. The light suddenly went out, and the chums of the Remove stood in black darkness.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Colonel Wharton at Hawkscliff!

"COLONEL WHARTON!"

Mr. Quelch, master of the Greyfriars Remove, rose to greet his visitor, evidently pleased to see him. He shook hands cordially with the uncle of the captain of the Remove.

Round about the old roofs of Greyfriars the wild wind was howling. In Mr. Quelch's comfortable study, cosy with its glowing log fire, the boom of the distant sea could be heard. Mr. Quelch, overdue in another place for his Christmas vacation, was still at Greyfriars School: the only master now there. The rest of the staff, like the boys, were scattered far and wide over the kingdom: but Mr. Quelch remained, feeling that so long as two members of his Form were mysteriously missing, he could not go.

"I am glad, very glad, to see you, sir," said the Remove master. "You have had a windy journey down here, I fear."

"Wind and weather do not trouble me much, Mr. Quelch," said the Colonel, with a smile. "As soon as I received your message concerning my nephew, I decided to come down without loss of time. Harry telephoned me on breaking-up day, and asked permission to remain at Hawkscliff on account of the two boys who were missing, and I gave it: but——"

"Pray be seated, sir," said Mr. Quelch, as the colonel paused. "I felt bound to communicate with you on the subject: the boys, of course, are no longer under my control, now that the term is over: and it is not, perhaps, for me to intervene——"

"On the other hand, sir, I am very glad you communicated with me," said Colonel Wharton. "It is my intention to proceed to Hawkscliff and question my nephew as to his objects, but I desired to speak a few words to you first. The affair seems a very mysterious one, and perhaps you will tell me precisely what has happened."

"In a few words, sir," answered the Form master.

It needed more than a few words, however, for Mr. Quelch to relate the story of the strange disappearance of Tom Redwing, followed by that of Herbert Vernon-Smith in searching for him.

Colonel Wharton listened attentively without interruption.

"In the circumstances," Mr. Quelch concluded, "I felt that I could not leave while the fate of two of my boys remained in doubt, extremely inconvenient as it is for me to remain on at the school. Mr. Vernon-Smith has already visited me, in a state of great distress about his son. I could only send him on to Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield, who, I fear, had little to tell him that was of comfort. Redwing's father, it seems, is still at sea—perhaps fortunately for his peace of mind in these painful circumstances."

"My nephew and his friends appear to believe that they may be successful

in a search that has so far baffled the local police," remarked the colonel, with a faint smile.

"Apparently. Of course, I quite approve of their devotion to their missing friends," said the Remove master. "But the whole affair is absurd—school-boys are not wanted on the scene in such circumstances. The clues already obtained by the police point to Lantham as the kidnapper's hiding-place—on that point there is no reasonable doubt. Inspector Grimes is working in conjunction with the Lantham police, and a discovery is expected every day. In the meantime, these boys may meet with some accident, scrambling about the cliffs in this wild weather."

The colonel nodded.

"While, of course," added Mr. Quelch, "if by some remote chance they should come into touch with the kidnapper, they would doubtless be running into serious danger. There is no clue of any kind to the man's identity, but obviously he is a very desperate character."

"That admits of no doubt," agreed the colonel. "There may be very real danger in coming into contact with him."

"Not that it is probable, as it is demonstrated that his hiding-place, wherever it may be, is far from the sea. Nevertheless, I cannot approve of the boys' proceedings," said Mr. Quelch. "That they could possibly effect anything which could not be better done by the police is impossible. And, in the meantime, some mischance might befall them."

"It is possible."

"Indeed, it is more than possible, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Vernon-Smith, as seems certain, was seized while in search of Redwing. A similar fate may very well fall upon the others if by some remote chance they should find themselves in the proximity of the kidnapper."

"No doubt."

"I leave the matter willingly in your hands, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I felt bound to apprise you of my views. Having done so, it is for you to deal with the matter."

"Quite so," agreed the colonel. "I shall proceed immediately to Hawkscliff and see my nephew."

"You will lunch here, sir?"

"Thank you. I lunched at Lantham on my way down, and I think I will lose no time," said the colonel.

And after a little further discussion with the Remove master, Colonel Wharton returned to his car.

In the bleak December afternoon the car glided away from the gates of Greyfriars School and headed for Hawkscliff. Wild winds from the sea swept over the roads, lashed the hedges, and made the leafless boughs groan. Sleet, mingled with snow, was falling. The roads were thick with sleet and mud. Colonel Wharton sat like some bronze statue in the car while the chauffeur picked his way by road and lane, several times stopping to make inquiries, for Hawkscliff was a rather inaccessible spot, and not easy to find.

But Hawkscliff was reached at last, and the colonel's brow grew very grave as he came in sight of the wild, tumbling sea and heard the roar of the breakers at the foot of the chalk cliffs. If his nephew and his friends had ventured on the water that wild and windy day, there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch was right in supposing that they might have gone into danger. At the foot of the steep street of Hawkscliff the car halted and the tall military gentleman stepped out. Leaving the car, he

walked with long strides up the rugged, cobbled street.

Which was Redwing's cabin among those scattered along the cliff he did not know. But one inhabitant of the village was out of doors, in spite of the wild weather—a wooden-legged sailor-man, who leaned on a post and smoked a pipe, and watched the tumbling sea with stolid meditateness. Colonel Wharton approached him.

"Can you tell me which is Mr. Redwing's cottage?" he asked politely.

The old man removed his pipe from his mouth.

"Ay, ay. Yonder, sir."

He pointed with the stem of his pipe.

The cottage was close at hand, but it looked deserted to the colonel as he glanced at it. The windows were curtained, the door shut, and no smoke rose from the chimney. But the colonel realised that the juniors, if they were putting up at the cottage to seek for the kidnapped fellows, were not likely to spend much time indoors, and it was likely that he would have to wait for them.

"No doubt you have seen some boys who are staying at the cottage?" the colonel asked.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"One of them is my nephew," explained Colonel Wharton. "Can you tell me where they are now?"

The wooden-legged mariner pointed to the sea with his pipe.

"Gone in Sam's boat," he answered, "jest after dawn."

"Sam?" repeated the colonel.

"Sam Bowline," said the wooden-legged seaman. "Don't you be afeared, sir," he added. "She's a good boat, and Sam he knows how to handle her. Them young lubbers is all right."

"Do you know where they are gone in the boat?"

"I reckon they was making Pegg Bay, sir."

"And you do not know when Mr. Bowline is likely to bring them back?"

The old seaman shook his head.

"Sam, he never said, sir. But p'raps the young gent in the cottage knows."

"Oh! They are not all gone, then?" exclaimed the colonel.

"Five of them kids went—not the fat one."

"The fat one?" repeated Colonel Wharton.

"A little fat lubber in specs, sir," said the old seaman.

His tone seemed to indicate that he had noticed the little fat lubber in specs, and did not think highly of him.

Colonel Wharton smiled faintly. He thought that he could recognise William George Bunter by that description.

"You think that the fat boy is still in the cottage?" he asked, with another

glance at the silent, deserted-looking Redwing cabin.

"Ay, ay, sir! He's come to anchor there all right. I'd have seed him if he'd slipped his cable."

The colonel walked across to the cottage and knocked loudly on the door and tried the handle. The door was fast.

He knocked again and again, but there came no answer from within save the echo of the knocking.

Puzzled, the colonel looked up at the little windows above, and then stepped back from the door. The wooden-legged man, deserting the post which had supported him during most of the day, came across and joined the colonel outside the cottage.

"Can't make him 'ear, sir?" he asked.

"There seems to be no one in the building," said Colonel Wharton. "The boy cannot be asleep at this time of day, I suppose? And surely he would have awakened even if asleep."

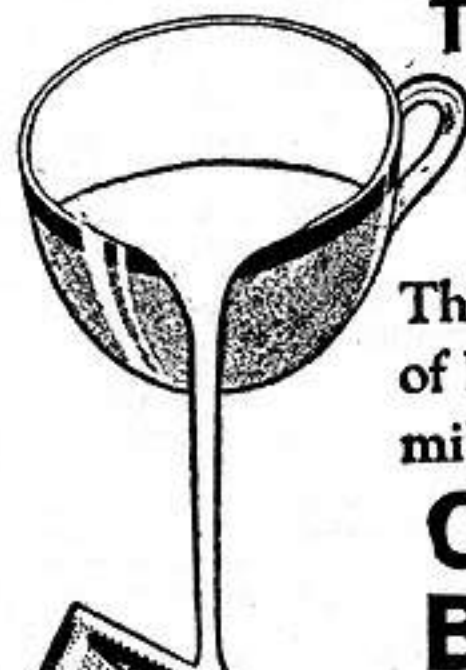
"He's there, sir—right there he is," answered the wooden-legged seaman positively. "I ain't been away from that there post more'n ten minutes since the boat went out of the cove, I ain't. I been watching for old Sam to come back, seeing as the sea's so rough, and I reckon he will want a 'and with the boat when he gets into the cove. That there fat swab ain't gone. I seed him standing at the door once."

"There is no smoke from the chimney," the colonel remarked. "He would hardly let out the fire on a bitter day like this."

"There was a fire this morning, sir." The old seaman seemed puzzled. "I seed the fat swab off and on this morning, but I ain't seed him since the

(Continued on next page.)

ATHLETES TRAIN ON IT



There is half a cup
of English full cream
milk in every

**CADBURY
BIG MILK
BAR 2^D**

furrin-looking cove come. And I tell you, sir, I been standing at that post ever since that furrin cove stood out of Hawksoliff."

"A foreign-looking man came here?" repeated Colonel Wharton, in surprise.

"Looked like a blooming dago," said the wooden-legged mariner. "I've seed his sort afore, in the Mediterranean ports. It beats me," he went on, "I know that fat swab ain't gone, 'cause why, I'd have seed him. But why he's settin' there, with the fire out, and don't answer a hail, I can't tell nohow."

The old seaman knocked on the door again and again, loudly. But there came no answer.

Colonel Wharton, greatly surprised, and vaguely uneasy, moved round the cottage. Every window and door was shut and fastened. He came back to the front, and found that the old sailor had torn away a newspaper that covered a broken pane, and was looking into the sitting-room.

"Nobody there, sir," said the mariner. "That room's empty. The fat swab must be upstairs. This here looks to me like foul play. You put your 'ead in that winder, sir, and you'll see there ain't no key in the door—but it's locked. It's been locked and the key took. Now, a feller locking hisself in his berth wouldn't want to take the key out of the door. I'll lay to it that that furrin bloke locked the door when he went, and took the key. I seed him shut it when he went, I remember that."

Colonel Wharton knitted his brows. It was surprising enough that a "foreign bloke" had come to the cottage at all, but that he should have harmed Billy Bunter was more surprising. If Bunter was still in the cottage, it was obvious that something must have happened to him, and the old seaman was positive that he was there.

"Mebbe he robbed the fat swab, and knocked him on the 'ead," the old fellow suggested. "I've seed that sort of cove in the Mediterranean ports, and they ain't none too good for it."

"I think," said the colonel, "that, in the circumstances, one would be justified in forcing the door."

"Jest what I was thinking, sir," said the wooden-legged man, quite agog with excitement now. "I got a 'ammer and chisel in my cottage, sir—you heave to for a few minutes, and I'll be back 'ere."

And, a few minutes later, heavy blows were ringing at the door of the Redwing cottage.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

To the Rescue!

BILLY BUNTER squirmed on the bed, and gurgled.

Knock, knock, knock, knock! The hammering at the door came clearly to his fat ears.

It brought hope to his podgy heart. He squirmed and wriggled, and strove to emit, at least, a squeak, but he was so carefully gagged that he could not even squeak.

Bunter had slept long. But the discomfort of his bonds had awakened him at last. Also, he was hungry.

How long he had lain there, Bunter did not know. It seemed like several years. That it was still day, he knew, by the glimmer at the curtained window. But he was inclined to believe that it was another day, that at least twenty-four hours had passed.

His fat limbs were growing cramped, his jaws ached from the gag. His thoughts were of the most unpleasant kind.

He could not expect release till the Famous Five returned. And Soames had evidently gone to deal with them at the sea-cave and, certainly, they might never return if the sea-lawyer came in contact with them. If destruction befell the Famous Five at the sea-cave, no doubt Bunter would mourn their loss later on, when he had time to think about them, but for the present, his considerations were concentrated on himself.

Suppose Soames got the better of them, what was to happen to Bunter? He knew that he was left there tied and gagged till dark when, under cover of night, it would be possible for the kidnapper to remove him, and place him in a more secure hiding-place. The dark came early in December, and when it came, it might bring the Famous Five—or it might bring Soames.

What did the villain intend? Perhaps to attempt to frighten away the juniors by playing ghost, as he had frightened Bunter—to keep them off, while he got Redwing and Smithy to another hiding-place. Or he might get their boat away and strand them in the sea-cave—perhaps make them prisoners. In that case, nothing could save Bunter—Soames would not dare to let him tell what he knew—his safety depended upon Bunter's silence. He would come back at night and, under cover of darkness, the fat junior would be taken away, to find himself a prisoner in the sea-cave, too.

Bunter, as he squirmed on the bed where he was spreadeagled, had plenty of food for thought, and all of it was disagreeable.

He hardly considered the possibility that the Famous Five might get the upper hand, and return in triumph, with the prisoners rescued. That seemed too improbable to Bunter.

He could draw no comfort from that possible aspect of the matter. Howsoever matters went at the sea-cave, it seemed to William George Bunter that he, Bunter, was booked!

It was an awful thought. Had it happened to somebody else it would not, of course, have mattered very materially. But it was a terrible thing to happen to Bunter.

And so the fat junior fairly wriggled with relief and hope when the knocking came at the door of the cabin.

Somebody was there—either those beasts had returned, or somebody else was trying to get in. It couldn't be Soames kicking up all that row, which must have been heard from one end of Hawksoliff to the other. Soames had the key—and the din told that the door was being broken in.

Bunter listened, and strove to howl, and failed, and listened again, and wriggled and squirmed.

Crash! He heard the door below fly open at last. There were heavy foot-steps in the cottage.

Bunter gurgled. Hardly the faintest whisper passed the gag that was crammed and tied in his capacious mouth. But he strove hard to utter a sound, fearful that those below might leave the cottage again without coming upstairs.

But that fear was soon relieved. There was a heavy tread on the little staircase. The little landing outside the room creaked under that heavy stride, and then the bed-room door opened. Bunter's eyes, as he twisted his head to look, fell upon a tall, military figure that he knew. The sight of Wharton's uncle was utterly unexpected to him, as it probably would have been to Harry, had he been there. But it was a welcome sight.

"Good gad!" ejaculated the colonel. He stared blankly at the fat junior stretched and bound on the bed. Bunter gave him an agonised blink.

"Good gad!" repeated the colonel.

He strode towards the bed.

"Bunter!"

He felt in his pocket, took out a pen-knife and opened it, and swiftly cut through the strips of twisted sheet that bound the fat junior.

Bunter wriggled with relief, clutched at the gag in his mouth, and tore it away.

"Groooooooooooooogh!"

That was his first remark.

"Are you hurt, my boy?" asked the colonel kindly.

"Oooooooh!"

The colonel's strong arm lifted him, and sat him down on the side of the bed. Bunter gurgled and spluttered.

"You found 'im, sir?" came the wooden-legged man's voice up the staircase.

"Yes, I have found him," answered the colonel quietly. "He does not appear to be hurt, fortunately, but someone has tied him up."

The wooden-legged seaman stumped up the stairs, and stood blinking in at Bunter. The fat junior blinked back at him.

"You silly idiot!" he spluttered. Bunter had found his voice at last.

"Hey!" said the old seaman, staring.

"You dummy!"

"Hey?"

"Standing out there all the time, and letting that villain tie me up like this!" howled Bunter. "Why didn't you stop him?"

"But I never knowed, sir!" gasped the old seaman. "I never seed nothing of what he done, and never knowed—"

"You silly chump!"

"Bunter, you owe your release to this good man," said the colonel severely. "You are not yourself now, say no more." He turned to the old seaman and pressed something into his hand. "I am very much obliged to you—and this boy will be grateful when he feels better. You may leave him in my hands now."

"Ay, ay, sir, and thanking you kindly," said the old seaman and, with a glare at Bunter, stumped away, convinced—if he had doubted it before—that the fat junior was a lubber and a swab.

Colonel Wharton turned back to Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was caressing his fat wrists and ankles very tenderly. They were numbed and uncomfortable.

"You seem to have been hardly used, Bunter," said the colonel, eyeing him curiously.

"Ow! I've had a fearful time," groaned Bunter. "Lying there tied up for days—"

"Only for a small portion of one day, Bunter," said the colonel, with a faint smile. "But no doubt time seemed very long to you. How do you feel now?"

"Hungry."

"Oh!"

"There's grub downstairs," said Bunter. "I suppose the fire's gone out. Ow! I've been frightfully cold—and cramped! Lucky I wasn't frightened, too! Some fellows would have been frightened! I'll go down and get some grub first, if you don't mind, sir."

Evidently Bunter was not much hurt. Colonel Wharton followed him down the little staircase.

Bunter did not heed him. He was hungry; and when Bunter was hungry he would hardly have heeded the crack of doom. The fire was cold in the grate, but there was cold provender in



"Shiver my timbers!" gasped Mr. Bowline, his eyes almost starting from his head as he stared up the cave. "Look! Look at that!" From the blackness came a faint, pale gleam of phosphorescent light. In the midst of this a white face gleamed, deathly white, with staring eyes. The juniors stood rooted to the rocky floor and gasped. (See Chapter 10.)

plenty, and Bunter started on a ham. He considered that Colonel Wharton might as well have lighted the fire—the beast could see that a fellow was cold—but he did not venture to suggest it. Anyhow, the ham made him feel better.

"As soon as you are at leisure, Bunter," said the colonel, with polite sarcasm, "I should like to know what has happened here."

Sarcasm was lost on William George Bunter. There was one important matter to be attended to. And Bunter was attending to it as fast as his fat jaws could move. Lesser matters could wait.

Colonel Wharton sat down and waited. For about ten minutes there was silence in the cottage, broken only by the sound of ceaseless munching. Then the colonel spoke again.

"Come, Bunter!"

"M—mmmm!"

Bunter's mouth was too full for clear articulation.

"Kindly tell me what has happened here."

Bunter bolted a mouthful, and gasped.

"That seaman told me that a foreign-looking man had been here after my nephew and his friends left. Was it he that attacked you?"

"Groogh! Yes," gasped Bunter. "He was got up like that, but he wasn't any foreigner. He was Soames."

"Soames?" repeated the colonel.

The name conveyed nothing to him. He had forgotten the story of that old cruise in the South Seas, and the fight for Tom Redwing's fortune.

"Soames!" spluttered Bunter. "The beast who was Smithy's father's valet

and turned out to be a pirate when we were in the South Seas. It's Soames who kidnapped Redwing and Smithy, and he's got them in the sea-cave! Grooogh!" Ham went down the wrong way, and Bunter spluttered. "Oooch! Moooh!"

"I remember the man now," said the colonel. "I remember having seen him when he was in Mr. Vernon-Smith's service, and my nephew told me of his crimes in the South Seas. Are you sure of what you say, Bunter?"

"Grooogh!"

"Come, come!" exclaimed the colonel impatiently.

"Ooooh! Yes," gasped Bunter. "I know him. Those fellows don't. I dare say they'll find out. I dare say he'll shoot the lot of them in the sea-cave—he's capable of it. Look what he did to me! Grooogh!"

The colonel compressed his lips.

"Tell me immediately, and in a few words, all that has happened, and all that you know!" he snapped.

The sharp, military voice made Bunter jump. He ceased to cram food into his mouth, and spluttered out his story.

"The reckless lads!" muttered the colonel. "But they did not, of course, know the desperate man they had to deal with. They may not have reached the sea-cave yet—wind and weather are against them." He knitted his brows in thought. "I can get a motor-boat at Pegg—and the police. Bunter, get your coat and hat. I am going, and your statement may be needed by the police."

"I haven't finished my grub—"

"Get your coat and hat!" rapped out the colonel, in a voice that made Bunter jump again.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "All right! I—I'm ready!"

He had only time to cram a cake into his pocket before the colonel hurried him out of the cottage. A few minutes more, and the car was racing away from Hawkscliff. At Clyffe post-office the colonel stopped, and stepped out to use the telephone, ringing up Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield, with news that made Mr. Grimes stutter in his astonishment.

Then he rejoined Bunter, and the car rushed on to Pegg.

It was long miles to Pegg, the fishing village that faced the great Shoulder across the bay, and the ways were muddy, and snowy, and sleety. But the car made good time. It halted at last at the Anchor Inn, where a portly, uniformed figure came out to meet the colonel. Inspector Grimes had already arrived there from Courtfield. The colonel spoke to him for a few minutes, and then the inspector stepped into the car, and Billy Bunter had to tell his story over again. Mr. Grimes looked grim, and rather savage. The information he was receiving was of the greatest value, but he had to realise that he had been befooled, and that the trail he had followed up so hopefully at Lantham had been specially laid by the kidnapper to draw him off the scent. Mr. Grimes' feelings towards the kidnapper were very bitter indeed.

There was another brief discussion, Mr. Grimes looking out rather dubiously across the stormy bay. But there was a stout heart under Mr. Grimes' uniform, as under most police uniforms, and he was very keen to get to close quarters with the kidnapper. The plan

having been settled, Mr. Grimes lost no time. A motor-boat, and three Pegg sailormen, who knew every inch of the bay, were secured in brief time, and while the car carried Billy Bunter on to Greyfriars, to report progress to Mr. Quelch, Colonel Wharton and the inspector and their men slid out into the bay in the motor-boat and headed through wind and lashing waves for the sea-cave, under the towering Shoulder.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Desperate Measures!

SOAMES stood in the sea-cave, and Kalulu'ululo watched him, trembling. The rage that worked in the face of the sea-lawyer terrified the Kanaka boy. Soames had hung his lamp on a jutting point of rock, and in its glimmer he stood thinking—or trying to think. But the rage that possessed him made clear thinking difficult. Once, when his glinting eyes fell on the brown, scarred face of the Kanaka the look in them made Kalulu'ululo start back a pace in fear.

Carefully, cunningly, the sea-lawyer had made his plans—as carefully and cunningly as he had laid them in those old days in the South Seas. Now, as then, care and cunning had failed him. In the far Pacific he had lost that fight for the fortune, and now he was again playing a losing game, when success had seemed to him assured.

He had hurried back to the cave from Hawkscliff, after what he had learned from Bunter, alarmed and enraged, but nothing doubting that he was still master of the situation. He had only needed to arrive before the rescuers—and that he had done. He had counted on finding the prisoners still chained in the gallery. To drive them into the remotest recesses of the cavern, to bind and gag them, and conceal them in some cavity, piled up at the entrance, to screen them against any search—to destroy, in haste, all signs of occupation of the cave, easily done by way of the deep crevices and fissures in the chalk, to hide, with his companion. It was a practicable plan, and had he been able to carry it out he felt that he could have let the Greyfriars party search the sea-cave to their hearts' content—search till they were tired and driven to the conclusion that they were on a false track.

The escape of the prisoners had knocked that plan to pieces.

The prisoners were at large in the great cavern, hiding somewhere in the black recesses, and he could not lay hands on them again—at all events, not without a long search. And the rescuers had now arrived—Harry Wharton & Co. were in the cavern.

One chance had remained—to endeavour to scare the party from the search by means of ghostly trickery. He had tried that, with little hope, and it had failed, as he had more than half expected.

With the Greyfriars party advancing up the cavern and the prisoners loose somewhere in the darkness, Soames was almost at the end of his resources.

He had shot the hurricane lamp from Harry Wharton's hand and left the juniors in darkness, to gain time.

In the blackness of the cave they had not advanced farther, and Soames had retreated to a distance, to wait, and plan, if he could.

But what could he plan?

To find the prisoners was impossible, and the Greyfriars party were only temporarily checked.

To flee and escape by the secret outlet through the cliffs was easy—which meant giving up the whole scheme, abandoning the object for which he had taken the risk of returning from the South Seas.

Soames was not thinking of that.

Somehow, he would yet shape events to his own advantage; but how?

The rescuers had been stopped, by the shooting-out of their lamp; and Soames was between them and the escaped prisoners, who had fled into the inmost recesses of the hollow cliff. He had time to plan—if that would serve him.

More than once, as he stood thinking, his hand strayed to the butt of his automatic.

Black and desperate thoughts worked in his mind.

To round up the rescuers in the cavern, and shoot them down if they resisted—he was capable of that, in his extremity. To sink the Hawkscliff boat, and prevent anyone who had entered the sea-cave from leaving it—that was in his power. Then, after dark, to return to the Redwing cabin, and remove Bunter to a safe place, and assure his silence!

It was a desperate plan—but at least it would give him time. Time to find a new and safer hiding-place for Tom Redwing—once Redwing was in his hands again, or—his brow grew blacker, his eyes gleamed with a savage light. Redwing, once in his hands, should yield—or torture should make him yield.

With the juniors and Bowline prisoners in the cave, with Bunter a prisoner also, he would be safe for a time—only for a short time, for the disappearance of the Greyfriars party would set the whole coast in a buzz of excitement, and would bring back the search from Lantham to the right trail—but time enough to bend Redwing to his will, to grasp the prize for which he had schemed and sinned! In those bitter moments, the sea-lawyer's brain could devise no better scheme than this, desperate as it was, and full of desperate chances.

His eyes turned savagely on Kalulu'ululo.

Had he found the prisoners still in their chains, all would have been plain sailing—or he believed that it would have been. The Kanaka had failed him—the Kanaka whose life he had saved, whom he had saved from the cooking-ovens of Lalulu in the far Pacific, whom he had brought to England with him, as a follower upon whom he could rely, who would not fail him or betray him. And the Kanaka, who had kept watch in the cave so long and faithfully, had failed him, and had been tricked into aiding the escape of the prisoners. Kalulu'ululo shrank back from the enraged eyes of his master.

"You dog!" muttered Soames. "You have ruined all—fool that I was to bring you here—fool that I was to save you from the shark's jaws."

"Me sorry!" murmured the Kanaka, in a trembling voice. "Me plenty too much sorry!"

Soames snarled.

"Did I not order you to keep away from the prisoners—to keep out of their sight, you fool?"

"Me tinkee feller white boy he no stop!" muttered the Kanaka. "Me tinkee he get away along chain. Me tinkee—"

"Fool!"

Kalulu'ululo was silent.

"You have ruined everything," said Soames, gritting his teeth. "I may see the inside of a prison for this! I am done with you—"

"Master—" faltered Kalulu'ululo.

"Bah! Hold your tongue!"

With the back of his hand, the sea-lawyer struck the Kanaka across the face, sending him reeling.

Kalulu'ululo, with a cry, fell on the rocky floor.

Without a glance at him, Soames dragged the lamp from the rock, and strode away down the cavern towards the sea.

His mind was made up now; his desperate plan was resolved on. He could not guess that, in those very moments, the junior he had left bound and gagged in the Hawkscliff cottage, was being released; that his tale was being told; that new enemies were closing in on the kidnapper.

With the lamp in his left hand, the automatic in his right, Soames strode savagely along the rocky floor, holding the lamp high.

He came in sight of the glimmer of dim December sunlight at the mouth of the sea-cave.

Evidently the Greyfriars party had retreated to the mouth of the cave after their light had been shot away.

Soames, as he strode on, sighted them—gathered round the boat. Another lantern had been taken from the boat—and the Greyfriars fellows were gathered in a group, apparently consulting. It came into the sea-lawyer's mind that they were planning a retreat in the boat—and his jaw shut hard. The wind which had so long baffled their coming, would drive them back across the bay swiftly to Pegg—and then—

Soames set down the lamp.

With the automatic in his hand, he ran towards the mouth of the cave.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Upper Hand!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had groped their way back to the boat, after the hurricane-lantern had been shot out in Wharton's hand. There was another lantern—the juniors had come well provided for the search. But they were gathered now in anxious consultation. Old Bowline stared at the shattered wreck of the hurricane-lantern, with blinking eyes. He had heard the thunderous echoes of the shot swelling through the cavern; and the sight of the lantern, smashed by a bullet, made even the superstitious old seaman realise that it was not "ghosts" that had to be dealt with. Whether the spirits of dead-and-gone smugglers haunted the sea-cave or not, there was no doubt now that an armed and desperate man lurked there in the darkness.

"Shiver my timbers!" mumbled the old mariner. "Shiver my timbers! He's there, that land-shark is, and you can lay to that. Bu't my headlights! You young gents was right—he's there."

"He's there all right," said Bob Cherry. "But—"

"But—" said Nugent.

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Wharton set his lips.

"We've got a desperate man to deal with," he said slowly. "But we're not backing out. We can't search the cave in the dark—and the rotter can shoot out one lantern as easily as another. But—"

"We're not going," said Johnny Bull decidedly. "But what the thump are we going to do?"

"We're staying," said Harry. "My idea is, for Bowline to cut across to Pegg in the boat, and give information

there. We remain here. We can prevent that villain getting away with Smithy and Redwing—he's cornered here, anyhow. A hundred men will turn out to help, as soon as the news gets out—and we're certain now of what we came to find. Every man in Pegg will join up—and information will be sent to Inspector Grimes. There are two or three motor-boats at Pegg, and they'll cut across here quick enough. In a couple of hours we shall have a crowd here—"

"And the game will be up for that scoundrel, whoever he is," said Bob Cherry.

"The upfulness will be terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ay, ay," said old Bowline, "you bear a hand getting this here boat afloat, and I reckon I'll run her afore the wind across the bay in a brace of shakes. 'Arf Pegg will come 'ere to lend a hand in getting a bight on that land-shark."

There was a pattering of feet on the rocky floor of the cavern.

Bob Cherry spun round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look out!"

"He's coming!" breathed Nugent.

"Back up, Greyfriars!" said Bob.

The juniors grasped their cudgels, and faced the desperate man who came running from the darkness of the cave.

Old Bowline stared at him blankly, his gnarled hand closing on a boat-hook. The automatic in Soames' hand rose to a level.

"Lift a hand, and I shoot!" he hissed.

"Shiver my timbers!" murmured Bowline.

The Famous Five stared at the kidnapper. This was the man they had sought—and who was now, in his turn, seeking them. Soames' face was still disguised by the dark stain, and there was no recognition in the looks of the juniors. But something vaguely familiar in the features struck them—something in the tones of the voice.

Soames' eyes glittered over the levelled pistol.

"Stand away from that boat!" he rapped.

Wharton set his teeth.

"Take care!" said Soames, in a hissing voice. "You are dealing with a man who will stop at little. You should know that, if you remember me."

"I've seen you before somewhere," said Wharton slowly.

Soames gave a harsh laugh.

"You have seen me in the South Seas," he answered. "Do you know me now? If you do, you know that your lives hang by a thread."

"Soames!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Soames!" answered the sea-lawyer grimly. "Soames, who has come back from the sea—for the South Sea treasure—and who will not let a life, or a dozen lives, stand in his way!"

"Soames!" repeated Wharton almost dazedly.

His grip closed convulsively on his cudgel.

"Lift a finger, and your life will pay for it!" said Soames. He was cool now, and he spoke through his gritted teeth. "You are my prisoners—or you go down before this pistol! Take your choice! You may remember that I never miss my aim—and I am desperate now."

The savage glint in his eyes told that he was in deadly earnest.

Old Bowline let the boat-hook fall with a clatter.

"Blow my topsails!" he mumbled.

"A reg'ler land-shark!"

"Stand away from that boat and move up the cave, and keep together!"

rapped out Soames. "Attempt to scatter, and I pull trigger!"

The juniors breathed hard.

"Hold on!" said Wharton quietly. "This won't do you any good, Soames! We've left word at Hawkscliff; and if we do not return, the police will know that we came to this cave—"

Soames interrupted him with a scoffing laugh.

"Bunter will tell nothing!" he answered.

Wharton started.

"I know more than you fancied!" jeered Soames. "Bunter lies bound and gagged at the Redwing cabin. At dark I shall remove him and bring him here, a prisoner. The news will not spread so fast as you suppose."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob.

"You came here to find me," said Soames, with bitter mockery. "Well, you have found me—and I have found you. I can see in your eyes, Wharton, that you are thinking of rushing on my weapon. Take warning! One step, and you fall dead!"

"Hold on, Harry!" Nugent caught his chum's arm. "Don't play the goat! Hold on!"

"Good advice!" jeered Soames. "I will riddle you with bullets as soon as look at you! You are at my mercy; and you may remember from those days in the Pacific whether I shall hesitate to shoot when my safety is threatened!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"Your neck is in the rope already!" he said scornfully. "You have come back to be hanged, if you are caught!"

"I am not caught yet," said Soames. "But, as you truly say, my neck is in the rope—and I should count the lives of all of you a cheap price to pay for keeping it out! Move on before me!"

It was a bitter pill for the Greyfriars fellows to swallow. But there was no help for it. Courage was useless against a desperate man with a loaded firearm in his grasp.

They moved away from the boat, old Bowline slowly following. Soames, at a couple of yards distance, out of

reach of a desperate clutch, covered the whole group with the automatic.

"Walk slowly up the cave towards the lamp," he said. "Attempt to dodge away, and I pull trigger on the instant!"

"By gum!" murmured Bob Cherry. "We've caught a Tartar, you men!"

Only too plainly, the rescue-party had caught a Tartar, and they were caught themselves. In savage silence they moved up the cave in a group, Soames following behind, with the automatic levelled. They reached the spot where the sea-lawyer had set down the lamp.

Soames picked it up.

Holding it high in his left hand, he made a gesture with the pistol in his right.

"Keep on!" he said. "And keep together!"

With suppressed rage, the juniors tramped on before the menacing pistol. They reached at last the fissure into the gallery where Vernon-Smith and Redwing had so long been prisoners.

A dusky face looked at them from the shadows into the light of the lamp, and they stared at the Kanaka blankly. But only for a moment was Kalulu-ululo visible; he shrank away into the darkness again.

"Go through that fissure!" rapped out Soames. "There is a place beyond which will be your prison!"

"Shiver my timbers—"

"Go!"

"We're up against it, you men!" said Bob. "We've got to knuckle under now. But—"

"Hold your tongue! Go!"

Harry Wharton stared back at Soames, a desperate light in his eyes. But it was death to resist.

"You've got us now," he muttered.

"But—"

"Go!"

The juniors tramped through the fissure into the rocky gallery. Soames followed them in and called to the Kanaka.

"You feller boy!"

"Yes, sar!" came the trembling tones of Kalulu-ululo.

(Continued on next page.)



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TALES FOR ALL TASTES

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"You get feller rope, tie um along feller boy."

"Yes, sar!"

"Resist, and you know what to expect!" snarled Soames, as the Kanaka proceeded to bind the juniors.

Under the threatening automatic, resistance was futile.

With swift hands the Kanaka wound the rope about the limbs of the juniors and the old seaman and knotted it fast.

Soames gave them a grim look.

"Remain there!" he said between his teeth, and he strode out of the gallery, followed by the Kanaka.

"Shiver my timbers!" muttered Bowline. "This hero is a go! This here land-shark is wuss'n ghosts—*and you can lay on that!*"

"But—but he can't leave us for long!" gasped Redwing.

"One never knows what a treacherous beast like Soames will do."

Soames, in the sea-cave, breathed hard and deep. Fortune had favoured him once more, and the peril was averted; he had time now—time to seek the escaped prisoners and to round them up, however long the search might take him. He snarled an order to the Kanaka; and two hurricane lamps flickered and gleamed about the darkness of the cave as they sought amid rocks and cavities and crevices and branching caves for Vernon-Smith and Redwing.

And the two hunted juniors, lying concealed among the boulders, watched the lights that moved and flickered in the distance, with beating hearts. The December day was drawing to its close. How was it to end?

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Rescue!

"**T**HIS here is the place, sir!" said old Dave Trumper.

The motor-boat throbbed through heaving waters in the channel between the chalk cliffs and into the tide-washed mouth of the sea-cave.

It had been a rough run across the bay, but it had been rapid. The motor-boat from Pegg was under the rocky arch of the cave at last, with the mighty mass of the Shoulder rising above. The throbbing of the engine ceased, and old Dave Trumper jumped ashore and made the vessel fast. Colonel Wharton followed him, and Inspector Grimes, and two sturdy Pegg fishermen, and three uniformed constables.

Mr. Grimes had come in strong force to deal with the kidnapper—warned of the desperate character of the man he had to deal with. The man who had played the pirate in the South Seas, whose desperate neck was at stake, was not likely to surrender if he could help it. That there might be dangerous work when he was run down was certain; and the inspector's first move when he had stepped ashore in the cavern was to take a revolver from an inner pocket, and to hand another to Colonel Wharton.

"You may need this, sir, if this man Soames is anything like your description of him," he said.

"Very probably," said the colonel, with a nod.

"The boys have been here." Inspector Grimes glanced at the boat from Hawkscliff, which still lay where the juniors had left it. "That must be the boat they came in."

"That's Bowline's boat from Hawkscliff, sir," said old Trumper. "I've been out fishing with Sam in that boat many a time."

"It was in Bowline's boat they came, as we know," the colonel remarked. "They are certainly in the cave."

A shade of anxiety crossed his brow. "If they have fallen foul of the kidnapper—"

"We shall soon know," said the inspector.

He gave his orders briefly. One of the Pegg fishermen remained with the motor-boat; the others, and the constables—with drawn truncheons—followed the inspector and the colonel into the sea-cave. Every one of the party held a lighted hurricane lamp.

They advanced up the cave, the glare of many lamps illuminating the darkness.

Nothing was seen of the Greyfriars juniors; no sound or sign, so far, from the kidnapper. Colonel Wharton's brow was growing very grim. His grip was hard on the butt of his weapon. The juniors were there, that was assured. But what had happened in the time that had elapsed since their arrival?

Farther and farther up the cavern they advanced, flashing the lights ahead, till the daylight at the mouth of the cave behind them was lost to view when they looked back.

Huge walls of chalk rock, arched rocks lost to view in the dimness overhead, branching caves and crevices surrounded them.

"We should have seen something of the boys before now," the colonel muttered, biting his lip uneasily. "What can have happened to them?"

"Better call to them," said the inspector. "Soames, if he is here, will hear us—but he will know that we are here, anyhow. He must have seen the lights."

"Harry!" Colonel Wharton's deep voice rang and echoed through the hollows of the cliff. "Harry!"

"Ahoy!" boomed Dave Trumper's powerful voice. "Ahoy, Sam Bowline!"

The cavern roared with the echoing sound.

"Help!"

It was a shout that came from the darkness ahead.

"Harry's voice!" exclaimed the colonel, his face lighting up. "Harry!"

He strode on more rapidly, still calling his nephew's name. The others followed him fast.

"Harry! Harry! Where are you?"

"Here!" shouted back Wharton's voice. "Help! Here! This way!"

"Shiver my timbers! Steer a course for this here little cove," came Sam Bowline's voice. "We're here, triced up by a land-shark."

"This way," exclaimed the inspector, and he pressed into the fissure that led into the rocky gallery.

A few moments more and the lamps were gleaming on Harry Wharton & Co. and Sam Bowline.

"Uncle!" exclaimed Harry.

"My boy! Thank Heaven you are safe!"

"The safeness is terrific, esteemed sahib," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "And the gladfulness to behold your esteemed and ridiculous countenance is also great."

One of the constables, with a faint grin on his face, cut loose the prisoners, and the juniors gladly stretched their limbs. Inspector Grimes surveyed them with a glimmer in his eye.

"Did you find the kidnapper, my boys?" he asked.

Harry Wharton laughed ruefully.

Five Minutes with Your Editor!

HERE we are again, chums, bang in the middle of the Christmas festivities. Once more, then, let me wish you A Merry Christmas and a Bright and Prosperous New Year. 1928 has been a very eventful year for the MAGNET and its thousands of loyal supporters. 1929 is going to be more eventful! I've got a whole heap of surprises up my sleeve, amongst them being some unique FREE GIFTS, and some

of these FREE Gifts are not very far away. Therefore, it will be well worth your while to keep a sharp eye open for further announcements during the month of January.

Have I made you curious? Good! I expect you are all impatient to know more, but you will forgive me if I keep you in suspense a little longer. These FREE GIFTS of which I speak, represent in a manner of speaking, a tangible form of my appreciation for the splendid support you have given the old paper. If you feel you would like to do me a favour, I'll not make it difficult for you. Are you on? Right, then. Let every man jack of you—you girls are in this, too—rope in a new reader some time during the opening month of this New Year on which we are about to embark.

I have still a short space left at my disposal, and I'll devote it to a brief mention of next week's story. Billy Bunter's the lad in the limelight, with Harold Skinner and Gerald Loder close behind him, so to speak. "Under Bunter's Thumb!" is well up to standard, believe me, and is a yarn that no "Magnetite" should miss.

Cheerio, till next week, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.



"Listen!" said Harry Wharton. There was a pattering of footsteps, a clinking of steel chains, and two muddy figures ran into the light of the lamps. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry. "Here they are!" "Smithy, old chap—" "Redwing, old son—" "Thank goodness you've come!" panted Redwing. "Soames would have had us otherwise!" (See Chapter 15.)

"Yes—and he found us!" "Looks like it," agreed the plump inspector. "Just as well for you young gentlemen that the police happened along—what?"

"What-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry. "The just-as-wellfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh.

"But how did you come here, uncle?" exclaimed Harry, in amazement. "I never dreamed—"

"I found Bunter at Redwing's cottage," said the colonel. "Never mind the rest now. Tell us as quickly as possible how matters stand here—we have not yet found Redwing and Vernon-Smith."

Wharton told in brief words all that he knew.

"Soames has a Kanaka boy with him," he concluded. "After he left us here, I heard him order the Kanaka to help him search the cave—it looks as if Smithy and Redwing are loose in the cavern somewhere—"

"We shall find them—and him!" said Mr. Grimes. "Come on! Forward."

Reinforced now by the Famous Five and Sam Bowline, the search-party moved on farther up the cave. Beyond the place where the juniors had been imprisoned, the great cavern narrowed, but on both sides of it smaller caves and fissures branched away into the heart of the chalk cliff. There were hiding-places for a hundred fugitives in the remote recesses. Suddenly, in the dark distance ahead, a flickering light was seen.

"Look out!" breathed the inspector. "That's Soames' lamp!" muttered Bob Cherry.

The light vanished. With lamps held high and weapons ready, eyes warily scanning the shifting shadows, the party advanced farther and farther. No light was seen again, but once or twice an echo of a footfall was heard, or the sound of a slipping stone under a hasty tread. Clearly, the kidnapper had seen them, and was retreating into the furthestmost recesses of the vast cavern.

"Smithy! Reddy!" Bob Cherry's powerful voice awoke the echoes. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy! Reddy!" "They must be here," said Harry Wharton. "They—"

"Hark!" There was a pattering of footsteps, a clinking of steel chains, and two muddy figures ran into the light of the lamps.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!" "Smithy, old chap—" "Redwing, old son—" "Where on earth did you lot spring from?" gasped the Bounder. "My hat! I thought I must be dreaming—"

"Thank goodness you've come," said Tom Redwing.

Inspector Grimes glanced curiously at the loose steel chains that trailed from the two juniors.

"Mister Soames seems to have done his work well," he remarked. "Quite a thorough hand at this game. You lads have been dodging him, I suppose?"

"Yes," gasped Redwing. "We've been dodging and hiding—but he would have had us, I'm afraid, if you hadn't come—his light was getting near us—"

"A miss is as good as a mile," grinned the Bounder. "He's gone up the cave with the Kanaka—"

"We've got him cornered now," said Bowline.

"There's a secret way out," said Vernon-Smith hurriedly. "I know that Soames has used that way to get in and out of the cave—"

"Forward!" rapped out the inspector. "You boys keep back—there may be fring! Forward."

He strode on, the colonel by his side, the constables, and the Pegg men following.

"Keep back!" grinned Bob Cherry. "What do you fellows think?" "I don't think," said Johnny Bull. "The don't-thinkfulness is terrific." "Come on," said the Bounder.

And the juniors followed on, eager to get to close quarters with the sea-lawyer from the South Seas.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER. The Last of the Sea-Lawyer!

SOAMES stood staring at the approaching lights, the automatic in his hand, a desperate light in his eyes.

His face was black with rage.

It was the finish now, and he knew it. The game was up! He had retreated farther and farther up the cave, till he was now at the extremity. Only one hope remained to him—to escape by the secret tunnel through the cliffs, to get clear before the pursuers could find it and follow him. To escape—a hunted man, his scheme in ruins, his identity known, his resources exhausted, with the police searching for him far and wide, every port watched for him—that was the outcome of his long and cunning plotting. He shook with rage as he stared back at the approaching lights, and gripped his deadly weapon convulsively.

Close at hand was a deep fissure in the rocky wall that led to the secret tunnel, which he had long ago discovered and used for ingress and egress. He could flee—there was still time for that. But in the madness of the rage that possessed him, he was thinking of vengeance before he fled.

Kalulu-ululo stood watching him, silent.

Already a dim glimmer of light from the distant lamps reached the spot, and he could faintly see the master he had faithfully served, and who had rewarded his faithful service with the cruel blow that had left a mark across his face. But even yet the islander was faithful.

"Master," he breathed, "feller, he comey plenty quick—plenty better we no stop along cave."

(Continued on page 28.)

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THE TURN OF THE TIDE! When rogues fall out honest men come by their own—and honest men, in the shape of the Chevalier and his sturdy companion, Roger Bartlett, take full advantage of the opportunity presented them when their old foes fall out!



BY
ERNEST McKEAG

A GRIPPING STORY OF ADVENTURE ON THE SPANISH MAIN!

Tells of a Stowaway Aboard the Celestine!

LIKE an eel Roger twisted and turned in his bonds, and the blow fell wide of its mark. There was a thud as the point of the blade stuck deeply in the deck, and as One-Eye, carried away by the stroke, lurched and endeavoured to save his footing, the blade broke off sharply. One-Eye staggered and fell across Roger.

As luck would have it, Roger was able to thrust out his hands and grasp the haft of the dagger. Then slowly manœuvring for a position he slashed at the ropes which held his ankles. There was but enough blade left on the haft to do this satisfactorily—and then Roger was free! Springing to his feet he caught One-Eye a stinging blow to the point of the jaw just as he attempted to rise, and the ruffian sprawled on the deck in a heap.

"Well done, lad! By my troth, but ye are well able to look after yourself!"

Roger wheeled as he heard these words, and he gave a glad cry as he saw the Chevalier, his rapier-point dripping blood, standing there on the deck. The Chevalier looked as immaculate as ever, despite the fact that he had divested himself of his embroidered coat, and stood clad in a silken shirt which was open at the neck. His face was black with powder-smoke, but there was a smile on his lips.

"Get ye aboard the Celestine, Roger lad!" he cried. "'Twas because I guessed that One-Eye would be aboard here that I followed this craft. But now I ha' got ye out of his clutches we can retire. I ha' no more heart to risk my men and to spill blood unnecessarily." He turned and sent a hail ringing along the deck in a voice that transcended the din of the battle. "Back to the schooner, lads!" he yelled. "We ha' done enough for the day!"

The men of the Celestine began to retire, but in good order. The pirates, urged on by Slim and Sharktooth, made a dash forward, but were faced with a barrier of gleaming steel, for the Chevalier's men had formed themselves into a semi-circle which grew smaller and smaller as they retreated to the bulwarks.

Roger gazed around to look for One-Eye.

Eye, but saw him not. Evidently the scoundrel, who had been but shaken by the blow which Roger had given him, had revived and crawled away to a safer spot.

"Up wi' ye, Roger, lad!" said the Chevalier, as they reached the bulwarks; and he gave Roger a hand to scramble up them.

Roger did so, and dropped lightly on to the deck of the Celestine. He was followed almost immediately by the Chevalier and the rest of his band, and then the grappling-irons which had held the two vessels together during the encounter were thrown off, and the vessels slowly drifted apart.

"Set sail at once!" ordered the Chevalier; and with a rousing cheer his men sprang to obey his commands. "I doubt not but that we can show yon devil's craft a clean pair o' heels. And woe betide the galleys' rats an' they cross my path again!"

The sails bellied out as the wind caught them. The helm was put over and the Celestine sheered off, leaving the black brigantine rolling like a log on the waters. With her broken bowsprit it would be some time before the craft was able to get into trim again, and by that time the Celestine would be far away, and would, doubtless, have shaken the pirates off the track.

"Well, Roger lad," said the Chevalier, when, after a sluice down to remove the traces of the battle, the two sat in the stern cabin of the schooner, "ye did not think I would desert ye—eh? Now, tell me what happened to ye, and how it came that ye were missing after the schooner got clear o' the lagoon?"

Roger gave a brief account of his adventures from the time One-Eye had thrown him overboard.

The Chevalier listened in silence, and when Roger had finished nodded his head.

"Right glad am I to know that ye are safe and sound," he said. "Sink me, but my heart misgave me when I had trounced the scum who remained aboard the schooner after we left the lagoon! Then, knowing that the pirates were still on the island, I be-thought myself to sail for the nearest port to pick up a new crew. Luck was with me, for I ran across a merchant-man who had aboard her the crew of a vessel which had been marooned by

pirates. This crew volunteered to sail wi' me almost to a man, and thus I got my crew without delay, and came back to the island to see if I could find any trace o' ye.

"I saw the black brigantine come out, and guessed that the galleys' rats must ha' come to some arrangement wi' Sharktooth, for I knew 'twas his craft. I followed to see if I could pick up information. Ye know the rest."

"An' 'twas well for me ye attacked when ye did," said Roger. "Another few moments, an' I was like to make the acquaintance o' the keel. What are your plans now, monsieur?"

"Our greatest task lies before us now, lad," was the Chevalier's reply. "An' 'tis made more difficult by the fact that we know not where to search. First must we find the missing son o' Sir Richard if we must search every port on the Main. We must question all we meet, and strive to trace what became o' the lad after the Irishman left him in Santa Domingo. To Santa Domingo, then, must we fare, and ask if any there knows o' a small English lad. An' my reckoning be not wrong, the lad should be about twelve years o' age now. Surely it should not be hard to trace one o' such tender years here in the Spanish Main."

Roger started.

"Twelve years!" he gasped. "Monsieur, I know of a lad who can surely be no more than that. A lad, too, who had befriended me, and, e'en should he not be the one we seek, one that I must save from the clutches o' those scum."

To Roger's memory had come the recollection of the powder-monkey, Jem—the lad who had told him that he had been aboard the Swordfish, One-Eye's craft, as long as he could remember. What if he should be the one for whom they sought. Quickly Roger related the story of Jem to the Chevalier, and he saw the latter's face change as he listened in silence to what Roger had to say.

"And where is the lad now, Roger?" he asked, when Roger had finished.

"That I know not," answered Roger, with a shake of his head. "I last saw him on the island; but whether One-Eye brought him away with the rest or not, I cannot say. Jem had the hope that he might be able to slip away from the pirates and make his way across the island, where he trusted he

might be picked up by some passing craft. Perchance he escaped in the confusion which followed Sharktooth's arrival."

The Chevalier rose to his feet and brought down his fist with a bang upon the table.

"Then, Roger lad, we sail for the island without delay," he cried. "Whether this lad be the one we seek or not, we must do all we can to help him. Come, lad! I will give orders that we shape a course to the other side o' the island, and let us hope that the lad has, indeed, escaped the clutches o' the scum!"

The Chevalier crossed towards the door of the stern cabin, but, before he could reach it, the door flew open, and the burly figure of Long Tom, the boatswain, whom the Chevalier had shipped aboard, stood framed in the doorway.

"By your leave, sir," he announced. "We ha' found a stowaway aboard, and my men are bringing him now to ye. Will ye see him, sir?"

"I ha' no time now for stowaways," said the Chevalier. "Let him wait."

The Chevalier made a motion as though he would sweep the boatswain aside, but even as he did so two other seamen appeared in the doorway, each of them with a hand gripping the shoulders of the stowaway. And as Roger saw the frightened, cowering figure they held a cry came to his lips, and he gripped the Chevalier firmly by the arm.

"We ha' no need to alter course, monsieur!" he cried. "For here is the very one we seek! 'Tis Jem, monsieur—Jem, the powder-monkey o' One-Eye's craft!"

Marooned!

THAT Jem was thoroughly frightened was obvious by the way his head was dropped, for he had not even seen before whom he had been brought. As he heard Roger's cry, however, he lifted his head, and his eyes lit up with hope. The next moment he had torn himself from the grip of the men who held him, and had run forward to Roger.

"I ha' done no wrong, sir!" he gasped. "Ye know I am not one o' One-Eye's band! Ye will help me, will ye not?"

"Help ye?" repeated Roger. "Why, Jem, we were about to set off in search o' ye! But how comes it that we find ye aboard here?"

"I slipped aboard in the thick o' the fighting," explained Jem. "I knew not what this craft was, but I guessed that here I would be safe from One-Eye and Slim. They took me from the island with the rest of them. Slim caught me as I tried to break into the forest on the island, an' I ha' been flogged for it! Ye will not send me back to them?"

"How could ye think it, Jem?" asked Roger. "Never fear, here ye shall be one of us."

The Chevalier made a sign to the boatswain, who withdrew with his men, closing the door after him. Then the Chevalier laid a hand upon Jem's shoulder and led him to the table.

"Sit ye down, lad, and eat," he said. "An' I mistake not, ye are half-starved. I ha' something to ask ye, but 'twill keep till your appetite be satisfied. Hi, without there! Bring food and drink for this new member of our band!"

A black servant rushed to carry out the Chevalier's commands, and before long Jem found himself seated with food and drink before him. The Chevalier did not attempt to question

him until the lad had fully satisfied himself, but all the while the Chevalier's eyes were firmly fixed upon Jem's face, save when he exchanged a glance with Roger, who waited silently for what was to follow.

"Now, lad," said the Chevalier, when Jem was ready to be questioned. "Tell me who ye are and how ye come to be aboard One-Eye's craft."

But Jem could add little to what he had previously told Roger. For as long as he could remember he had been associated with the outcasts of the sea.

The Chevalier spoke soothingly to the frightened lad, and endeavoured to bring out as much of his story as he could. He questioned him closely as to whether he had ever known an Irish sailor, and his eyes lit up as some vague recollection stirred in the lad's memory, and he seemed dimly to remember such a man as the Chevalier described.

"Roger, lad," said the Chevalier, turning to Roger, "it seems, indeed, that Fate has been on our side. We will put it to the test." He turned back again to Jem. "Tell me, lad," he said, "ha'ye any recollection of a locket that hung around your neck when ye were but a tiny child?"

"A locket, sir?" asked the lad. "Most truly have I such a locket. 'Tis of gold and has a picture within—a picture of a lady whom I ha' oft thought must ha' been my mother!"

"And that she was, I have not the least doubt, lad!" said the Chevalier softly, and he patted the lad's shoulder. "Thank Fortune we ha' found ye, and that part o' our quest is o'er. Come, lad, gi' me the locket, and be assured that we are your friends."

But Jem made no motion to pass across the locket. Instead, a troubled look came into his face, and he shook his head sadly.

"Right gladly would I let ye see the locket an' I could, sir," he answered. "But, alas! I have it not."

"Have it not?" The Chevalier jumped to his feet. "List, lad! We must ha' that locket. 'Tis the only thing that will prove who ye are, ay, an' will lead us to the treasure that should be yours by right! Where, then, is the locket?"

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

Spurred on by the call of the sea, young Roger Bartlett sets out in search of adventure. He joins forces with a gallant dandy known as "The Chevalier," who possesses the chart of an island on which a great treasure lies buried, and the two comrades set sail for the Spanish Main. It is soon evident that two villainous pirates named Abednigo One-Eye and Slim will stop at nothing to get hold of the chart, and with the aid of a cut-throat crew on board their barque the Swordfish, they capture Roger and the Chevalier. After many perilous adventures, however, the latter make their escape with the treasure plan when the Swordfish is blown up at the island of Cayacos. The Chevalier decides that their only hope is to seize single-handed his old schooner, the Celestine, which had been captured by the pirates and is lying at anchor in the island lagoon. Their desperate attempt succeeds, but, unknown to the Chevalier, Roger again falls into One-Eye's hands and is left behind when the Celestine sails away. For days the lad is kept a prisoner on the island by the marooned pirates, and when at last a vessel arrives at Cayacos, it is an evil craft commanded by a scoundrel named Sharktooth. Roger is taken on board, together with One-Eye, Slim, and their crew, but the ship has barely gained the open sea when the Celestine appears in sight and gives chase. The pirate vessel is swiftly overhauled and boarded, and it is soon evident that the attackers are gaining the upper hand. "Your time has come, One-Eye!" cries Roger. "Ay, and yours, too!" returns the ruffian, aiming a blow with his dagger at the lad's heart.

(Now read on.)

"'Tis in the hands of Slim, sir!" Jem answered.

The lad's reply brought an exclamation of annoyance from the Chevalier, and his eyes blazed as he thumped the table with his fist.

"Of Slim?" gasped the Chevalier.

"Ay, sir!" The lad nodded his head slowly. "I told ye that Slim caught me when I sought to escape from the pirates, an' he had me flogged for it. I had kept the locket tied around my body, for 'twas of gold, and had one o' the pirates seen me with it they would have ta'en it. But when my shirt was stripped from my back ere I was flogged, Slim saw the locket—ay, and ordered extra lashes for me, for he said that I must ha' secreted it from the booty o' one o' the captured ships."

The Chevalier sank back in his chair, and his face worked convulsively, as he turned his gaze upon Roger.

"So we ha' been beaten, Roger, lad!" he said slowly. "The locket that means so much is in the hands o' Slim, an' we ha' allowed the gallows' rat to escape us!"

"But, monsieur, Slim can know naught o' the secret the locket holds!" gasped Roger. "Had he known, then surely he would ha' recognised it. All is not lost yet, monsieur."

"Nay, and, by Heaven, the rat shall not get away wi' it!" The Chevalier's eyes blazed as he jumped to his feet. "Sink me, but I'll rip the rat cross-ways an' he gives not the locket over to me!" He crossed the stern cabin, flung open the door, and called out loudly: "'Bout ship! 'Bout ship at once, an' set her on the opposite course! Rat me, but we must find Sharktooth's brigantine ere night falls! What a fool I was to let the scum escape us!"

The Chevalier raced out on deck, and Roger, making a sign to Jem to remain where he was, rushed after him.

But as he gained the poop Roger's heart sank. Night had come with the suddenness of the tropics, and all about them was blackness, a blackness that swallowed up the brigantine, who, unbeknown to those aboard her, carried upon her the secret of the hiding-place of the treasure of Blackbeard!

"Ten thousand curses!" growled the Chevalier. "They ha' escaped us, Roger! Who knows on what course they ha' settled? And ere morning dawns they may be a hundred miles away or more! Sink me, lad, but yon Slim is a crafty rogue, an' should he see the latitude and longitude scratched on the locket, he may put two and two together!"

Yet, despite the darkness of the night, he gave orders for the vessel to put about, and for the best part of the night he and Roger paced the poop, their eyes constantly searching the blackness for some glimmer of light which would betray the existence of Sharktooth's vessel.

But the night passed without any sight of the pirate craft.

"We can do naught but cruise around, Roger, lad," said the Chevalier, who had scarce slept during the long night vigil. "'Tis useless to return to the island, for Jem has told us that no men were left there, which argues that the pirates will no longer make it their headquarters. Sharktooth is like to show his tracks ere long, for he is a pirate, born and bred, and though he be on a treasure quest, yet will he not allow that to interfere with his stopping o' honest merchant ships. Perhaps we may pick up news o' him as time goes on."

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Day followed day, until it seemed that the Chevalier's hopes of learning anything about the whereabouts of Sharktooth and his allies, One-Eye and Slim, were in vain. Not even a sail was sighted, although they cruised around, calling at numerous isles and cays which might, perchance, have been used as a port of call by the pirates.

"Strike me, if I don't believe it would almost pay us to run to Jamaica," said the Chevalier, after days of fruitless searching. "There, one is almost certain to learn what is happening on the main, for 'tis a mighty popular resort with these scoundrels, and there might be some who ha' heard something of the movements o' Sharktooth's black brigantine—for she is a craft that is well-known amongst those who sail the Main!"

So the Celestine was turned about again, and headed for the Indies.

Sharp watch was kept continually by day and night for passing vessels, but naught was seen until another three days had passed. Then a small isle—little more than a sandy reef upon which grew three lonely palms—was sighted.

The Celestine's course took her near to the island, and Roger, who was whiling away the time on the poop of the vessel when the land was sighted, gazed at it through the long glass.

The isle looked bare and deserted, and he could see plainly the sweep of silver sand, broken only by the gaunt outlines of the palms.

As he turned the glass in the direction of the tallest palm, he gave a cry of surprise. For there, fluttering in the breeze from the top of the palm, was something that looked like a flag—but which, on closer scrutiny, proved to be a seaman's shirt, tied fast to the uppermost branches.

Roger's cry brought the Chevalier hurrying along the poop, and the young adventurer handed him the long glass and pointed in the direction of the palm.

The Chevalier gazed for some time without speaking, and then lowered the glass and turned to Roger.

"'Tis a flag of distress, Roger, lad," he said. "There can be only one reason for such a signal. Perchance some mariner has been marooned there—some pirate who has fallen out wi' his fellow ruffians, belike. We'll lower the long boat and run ashore, for should it be a pirate, who should be more likely than he to know where Sharktooth voyages? The brotherhood know each other's ships, ay, an' even what villainy each o' them is engaged upon!"

He gave an order, and the Celestine veered round a point and headed closer to the sandy isle, while the crew swung out the long boat, ready to row him ashore.

In a short space of time the schooner was hove to off the coast of the island, the long boat took to the water with a gentle splash, and the Chevalier and Roger stepped into it and were soon being rowed ashore by lusty arms.

As the long boat grounded on the sandy beach, Roger turned his eyes to scan the isle. Naught could be seen but the billowy hummocks of sand, with little tufts of withered grass, burnt by the heat of the sun to a tinder-like state. There was no shade from the scorching sun, and no sign of water, and Roger could hardly repress a shudder as he ruminated on the tortures that must be the lot of a man who was marooned on such a barren spot.

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"Search ye round the hummocks," said the Chevalier. "Perchance, however, we ha' come too late, and whoever hoisted that flag o' distress has already paid the penalty o' his crimes."

The two plodded over the sand hummocks, their eyes searching everywhere, hoping to glean some sight of the unfortunate who had clambered the palm and fixed his shirt to the branches in the hopes of catching the eye of some observer on a passing vessel. But it seemed that their search was in vain, and Roger could not help but speculate upon the possibility of a marooned man seeking to put an end to his tortures by plunging into the sea, and ending quickly a life that had become one of unrelieved misery!

Then, just as he and the Chevalier had come to the conclusion that further search was hopeless, his eyes caught sight of something that was almost hidden by the sand which had been on it.

Roger ran towards it, and a cry escaped his lips as he saw the object was the body of a man, lying face downward, his legs and arms extended, his head and the upper part of his body almost covered by a pall of sand.

"'Tis a man!" he cried, and he fell on his knees and began hastily to brush aside the covering sand.

He pressed a hand to the man's chest and waited, breathless, feeling for the movement of the heart. The beating was very faint, and he gave a cry of relief as the Chevalier came hurrying up.

"He lives!" cried Roger. "We were but in time, for his heart beats faintly, and had we been but half an hour later, he would have been past all help."

The man stirred slightly, and his groping hands gripped the sand convulsively. He turned a little sideways, and the sand fell from his face, while he gasped deeply. Roger saw now that one hand held a bottle—an empty bottle, which smelled strongly of rum. He had been left behind with no water, but with a bottle of rum, the drinking of which must have greatly intensified his raging thirst.

The man's parched lips moved, and his croaking voice came in a husky whisper—but the words made Jem start quickly as he brushed aside the remaining sand which partly hid the features of the semi-conscious man. Small wonder was it, for the cracked voice had broken into a maudlin refrain which Roger knew only too well:

"Where the dead man lies, his staring eyes

Look out to the Westward—

"Ho, Slim, ye scoundrel, an' I can catch ye, I'll rip out that black heart o' yours! So ye'd cross me, eh, Slim? Ye'd go back on a pal! Rot me, Slim, but I'll slit ye into pieces no bigger nor a doubloon! Curses on ye, ye—"

The man made an effort as though to gain his feet, but the effort was too much for him, and he dropped back weakly to the sand.

Roger and the Chevalier exchanged glances.

"Abednigo One-Eye!" gasped Roger. "How comes the scoundrel to be here?"

Slim's Treachery!

"**A** BEDNIGO ONE-EYE!" The Chevalier repeated the name, and turned an inquiring glance upon Roger. "And half crazed wi' thirst and the heat, if I be not mistaken. What means this?"

Roger could do naught but look down into the face of One-Eye, now more repulsive than ever it had been. There were the marks of madness upon it, and evidence of great suffering. Even as he looked, One-Eye's single optic opened once more, and he croaked in his throat.

"Slim, ye scoundrel, ye villain—ye gallows' rat!" he growled. "I'll ha' the heart o' ye, rip me crosswise else!"

"'Tis plain they ha' had a quarrel," said the Chevalier. "This knave is so crazed by his sufferings that he cannot distinguish who we be, Roger, lad."

"What shall we do wi' him, monsieur?" asked Roger.

"'Twould serve him full well an' we left him here to the punishment he deserves—to the end destined for him by his fellow scoundrel," said the Chevalier. "Yet, Roger, lad, in this discovery might lie help for us. 'Tis plain that Slim and One-Eye ha' quarrelled, and that Slim has sought to put away this rogue. When rogues fall out, Roger, they are likely to betray each other, and what more likely than that One-Eye should seek to be revenged upon Slim?"

"Then should we save One-Eye—and use him against Slim?"

"Ay, lad. Up wi' him, and let us take him to the long boat." The Chevalier bent over and gave Roger a helping hand to raise One-Eye to his feet. "We'll question him when he recovers from this fever."

Supporting One-Eye between them, the Chevalier and Roger retraced their steps over the sand hummocks in the direction in which they had left the long boat. One-Eye's legs dragged behind him as Roger and the Chevalier, having put their arms about his neck, aided him as best they could. In sight of the long boat, the Chevalier called out to the rowers, and they came hastening up to help with the burden.

One-Eye, gradually regaining consciousness and muttering imprecations, strove to break away from the arms of the men who supported him, supposing one of them to be his fellow-rogue, Slim. Then again did he quieten down, sing his weird chant to himself, and go off into a torrent of meaningless words to which the Chevalier and Roger listened intently, striving thereby to glean some clue as to what had happened.

They were rewarded at last, for in his ravings One-Eye seemed to bear upon the discovery that Slim had plotted against him with Sharktooth, the rover.

The Chevalier and Roger exchanged meaning glances when they heard the delirious One-Eye cursing Slim for a traitor, and vowing that he would be revenged upon him and Sharktooth, too. Then after that it seemed that One-Eye's memory was a blank, and that he knew no more until he had been marooned, with but a bottle of rum for his comfort. Small comfort had it proved, indeed, for it had but added to the tortures of thirst which had assailed him on that waterless isle.

Returned to the Celestine, no time was lost in putting One-Eye in a berth, while one of the crew who had some little knowledge of the surgeon's craft attended to his needs and administered a potion which sent him into a deep slumber.

The Chevalier having decided that it would, perhaps, be better not to continue with his plan to sail the schooner

to Jamaica until he learned what he could from One-Eye, dropped the anchor, and he and Roger took turns to watch by the bedside of the fever-stricken pirate, lest in his dreams One-Eye should re-live the incidents that had led up to his marooning.

The potion, however, did its work well, and One-Eye slept soundly, although he turned and tossed restlessly for some little while.

A full night passed before his eyes opened again, and he gazed curiously around the cabin in which he was.

Roger, who had sat by his bunk-side for many hours, saw his eyes open, and crossed to him.

One-Eye gazed into the lad's face, wonderingly, and then, with a shriek, shot out his fists; but Roger dodged nimbly aside.

"Haunt me not!" screamed the pirate. "Rip me, but where am I that these phantoms come to torment me?"

"Silence, One-Eye!" said Roger. "Ye are alive and being well cared for, little though ye deserve it. We ha' saved ye from the death that Slim designed for ye when he had ye marooned!"

"'Tis—'tis you, lad, an' i' the flesh?" gasped One-Eye, realisation suddenly coming to him. "How—how come I here? And where be I?"

"Ye are aboard the *Celestine*," replied Roger. "Whether ye remain here, or whether ye go back to the sandy cay depends on what ye tell us."

"Us?" queried the scoundrel.

"The Chevalier and I," was Roger's answer.

"The Chevalier?" One-Eye's voice was little more than a whisper, and its tones told of the dread in which the rogue held the Chevalier. "Roger, ye will not let him torture me, lad? I ha' been good to ye, Roger. 'Twas Slim, and not I, who would ha' had ye hurt. I ha' always been kind-hearted, Roger."

"Yet would ye ha' had me keelhaunched, rogue?" answered Roger.

"'Twas Slim that wanted ye keelhaunched, lad—I swear it!" babbled One-Eye. "Rip me, but I'm weak, Roger lad, and cannot fight for myself. Ye'll not let the Chevalier kill me, eh, lad? Remember 'twas I who saved ye from Slim. Ay, Roger, he was a rogue! He'd even seek to cross me, the rat!"

"Ye saved me, thinking to make me serve your ends, One-Eye," replied Roger. "But make your mind easy. The Chevalier would murder no man in cold blood. And if ye tell him what he would know, then perhaps he will not put ye back on the cay from which we took ye."

"Not that, lad. Ye'll not put me back there! Ha' mercy, lad!"

"Hold that snivelling tongue o' yours, One-Eye!" rapped out Roger. "Keep silence, for—an' I mistake not—here comes the Chevalier now to question ye."

The footsteps that Roger had heard coming along the alley-way halted outside the door of the cabin, and it swung open to reveal the figure of the Chevalier, as immaculate as ever. He entered with a grim smile upon his face, and he toyed lightly with a lace handkerchief which he carried 'ere he sat down and surveyed One-Eye for a little time before speaking. Silence fell on the scoundrel, and he gazed at the face of the Chevalier as a hypnotised bird might gaze into the glittering eyes of a serpent.

"Well, One-Eye, we meet again—rogue!" said the Chevalier. "Come, tell me how ye'd like to meet your end! Shall it be the rope from the yard-arm?

Or the plank? Or ha' ye a mind to be blown from the mouth o' a gun? Or shall I leave ye to rot on the isle from which we ha' just ta'en ye?"

"Mercy, Chevalier!" pleaded the rogue. "Ye would not murder me?"

"Murder, rogue? Dare ye call it murder to rid the seas o' such as ye? Methinks I would be failing in my duty an' I did not do it. Yet have I a mind to be merciful, gallows' rat! If so be it that ye are willing to tell me what I would know—"

"I'll tell ye anything, Chevalier—anything!" broke in One-Eye.

"Then tell me how it comes that ye were marooned by Slim?"

A crafty look came into the single eye of the rogue as he replied:

"I know not why he should do it, Chevalier. 'Twas one night he suddenly fell behind, an'—" he began; but he got no further, for the Chevalier had risen to his feet.

"Call ye the long-boat away, Roger lad," he said. "We ha' wasted enough time on this lying rogue. Now, an' he will not take his chance, we will put him back where we found him."

The Chevalier and Roger turned as though to leave the cabin, but One-Eye, with a shriek, called them back.

"Nay, Chevalier, put me not back



ROGER BARTLETT.

there! I ha' suffered the tortures o' the damned!"

"An' ye shall suffer more an' ye cease not your lying," said the Chevalier. "In your ravings have ye told us that ye discovered that Slim was plotting against ye? Why did he? Why should he wish ye out o' the way, save for the fact that he has a clue to treasure that he will not share wi' ye? He has persuaded Sharktooth to cross ye, and he will cross Sharktooth, too, an' there is a chance o' him getting the treasure for himself. Come, the whole truth, or the isle again! Speak now, or ye shall rot, and your carcase be torn to shreds by the sea birds."

One-Eye flung a glance of hatred at the Chevalier; but well he knew that he must have spoken more than he could guess during his delirium, and that the Chevalier would not hesitate to leave him on the island if he did not tell the truth.

Broken, he fell back on the bunk, and his mouth twisted as he rasped out:

"Sink me, but I'm scuppered—well and true! Right be it, then, I'll tell ye all! What is it ye would know?"

The Chevalier's words made him jump up from where he lay, his single eye flashing, his mouth working convulsively, for the Chevalier had asked:

"What is the latitude and longitude

of Black Dog Isle, which Slim has discovered?"

"Slim has discovered the isle's position!" cried One-Eye. "Rot me, but ye mean not what ye say! He has discovered it, say ye?"

"For what other reason should he ha' tried to get ye out of the way if it be not to make fewer those who shall share the treasure?" asked the Chevalier.

For a moment it looked as though One-Eye would be taken with a mighty fit; but after a while he quietened down, and his voice was ominous as he turned to the Chevalier and spoke.

"An' your words be true, an' Slim has the latitude and longitude," he said, "rip me an' I do not help ye scupper the rat! So he would cross me, when 'twas I who put him first on the track—I who heard the tale from the dying lips o' a drunken Irishman, who went too quick to Davy Jones ere I could hear all he knew! Chevalier, an' ye'll ha' me on your side, I'll hunt the seven seas to get a grip o' the rat's throat—ay, an' choke the life out o' him, and count myself well spared to do it! Ship me wi' ye, Chevalier, an' ye'll find it worth your while!" He struggled and put out a hand. "Here's me hand, Chevalier. Shake it, and sign me on, and ye'll find I'll be useful to ye!"

"Nay, I shake not wi' a murdering rogue," said the Chevalier, flicking One-Eye's hand aside contemptuously with his lace handkerchief. "But I'll ship ye wi' me, One-Eye, and the devil himself shall not save ye an' ye prove not faithful to me!"

How a Trap was Laid for Slim, and What Transpired!

BY the end of the day One-Eye had so far recovered himself as to limp from his bunk. The *Celestine* had weighed anchor, and had turned her prow to the westward, for One-Eye had informed the Chevalier that he had reason to believe that Slim and Sharktooth would make for a certain isle in those latitudes in order to replenish her water and stores.

The story of One-Eye's marooning was such a one as they might have expected. It showed to the full the treachery of which Slim was capable. One-Eye, aboard Sharktooth's brigantine, had overheard Slim and Sharktooth in earnest conversation. He had gathered that they were planning to maroon him and several of the crew, in order that there should be only two to share the treasure when it was found, but he had not learned that Slim had any clue to its discovery.

He had leaped upon the plotters, but as he would have run Slim through, a terrific blow from Sharktooth on the back of the head had rendered him unconscious. From that unconsciousness he had awakened with sore and bleeding head, to find himself stretched at full length upon the sand of the cay where Roger and the Chevalier had found him. No weapons, stores, or water had been left him, save only a bottle of rum which one of the rogues, with grim humour, had placed alongside him, knowing full well that if he drank deep of it, it would make his thirst the harder to bear. And he was alone—without even the consolation of having others marooned with him.

At first One-Eye had resisted the temptation to drink the rum, but at last, in the throes of thirst, he had emptied the bottle, and dropped, a raving madman, to the sand.

"Know ye where Slim and Shark-
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tooth are now?" the Chevalier had asked, when One Eye had finished his tale.

"While they plotted against me, there was some talk o' Deadman's Cay," One Eye had answered. "Tis a small isle far to the westward and hard by the coast o' Yucatan!"

"I know it," was the Chevalier's reply. "Methinks Slim and Sharktooth ha' other ideas besides that o' getting stores and provisions. 'Tis an isle where men could well be marooned, and if, as I believe, Slim has fathomed the secret o' the locket, which gives the latitude and longitude o' Black Dog Isle, what could one expect o' such as he than that he would try to leave as many as he can o' the crew there, and sail the brigantine short-handed in search of the treasure? Devil take these scoundrels that cannot e'en be loyal to their own men, but must seek to betray them lest they claim their share o' the booty!"

And so it was decided that the Celestino should sail for Deadman's Cay, there to seize, by might or by strategy, the locket that meant so much. Through the placid waters of the Main sailed the schooner, a look-out perched high in the cross-trees to give warning of any sail that might be sighted.

Day followed day, but no sail appeared to break the monotony. One Eye had been signed on amongst the crew, and had his being in the fo'c'sle; but he was sharply watched by both the Chevalier and Roger, lest the scoundrel should prove treacherous when again they fell in with the pirates.

And then one day came the hail for which they had so patiently waited.

"A sail! A sail on the wind'ard bow!" came the cry from the cross-trees.

"Up wi' ye, Roger lad, and take the long glass wi' ye!" said the Chevalier, handing the glass to Roger as he spoke.

"Ay, ay, monsieur!"

Roger lost no time in scrambling down from the poop, upon which he had been with the Chevalier when the hail had come. Along the deck he ran, and then climbed swiftly up the rigging, the long glass beneath his arm. Wrapping his legs around the shrouds to keep him steady while he levelled the glass, he gazed anxiously at the black sail that had broken the horizon.

Nearer came the craft to each other, and then Roger, balancing the long glass with difficulty, glimpsed the lines of the newcomer, gave a whistle, and then scrambled hastily down to the deck.

"Monsieur!" he cried, scaling the poop-ladder to where the Chevalier awaited him. "'Tis the black brigantine! 'Tis the craft o' Sharktooth!"

(The coming of Sharktooth spells further adventure for Roger and the gallant Chevalier, but this time they have a loyal crew, capable of putting up a staunch fight, at their backs. You'll enjoy every word of next week's stunning instalment, boys, so don't miss it!)

"HUNTED DOWN!"

(Continued from page 23.)

Soames' savage glance turned to him. "You dog!" He snarled out the words. "You have ruined all! But for you—" Rage choked the sea-lawyer for a moment. "I am ruined—I must run! But first I'll make some of them pay with their lives—" "Better we no stop—"

"Bah! I am done with you, you dog—I will not cumber myself with you in my flight—lucky if I escape alone! Down, you dog!"

And, in his rage and fury, the ruffian struck the Kanaka with the barrel of the pistol, and Kalulu'ululo, with a sharp cry, fell at his feet.

Heedless of the fallen Kanaka, Soames stood with his weapon in his hand, his savage eyes fixed on the approaching lanterns.

They were close now.

He watched them bitterly, ruthlessly. His finger was on the trigger. To send a stream of bullets at his enemies, and then to dart into the hidden tunnel and flee—that was his desperate intention.

"There he is!"

"Surrender!" Inspector Grimes' voice rang out. "We've got you, my man! Drop that weapon and surrender!"

Soames levelled the automatic. He had the enemy where he wanted them now, and there was murder in his glaring eyes.

Kalulu'ululo had staggered to his feet. A stream of red ran down his dark face from the cut on his head where the pistol-barrel had struck him, and in his eyes was a look that had never been there before when he looked at his master—if Soames had heeded it. But Soames' eyes were fixed on the foe before him over the levelled automatic, and in a moment more the bullets would have been streaming—

Crash!

A jagged rock in the Kanaka's hand struck Soames on the side of the head, and he reeled, staggered, and fell, the automatic flying from his hand.

"You white trash!" Kalulu'ululo was hissing out words in the unheeding ears of the dazed sea-lawyer sprawling on the rocks. "You kill poor Kanaka boy plenty too much altogether along head belong him! You leavee Kanaka all alone too much, along you run away! You no more master belong me! You plenty too much bad feller!"

Soames scrambled up, with reeling brain. Hands were almost upon him as he sprang desperately away.

With a tiger's spring he vanished into the fissure in the rocks, and the darkness swallowed him.

"After him!" roared Inspector Grimes. "This way!"

And he scrambled into the fissure in furious pursuit, the constables at his heels. But the flashing lamps showed many other fissures opening in the rock on either side, and by which the fugitive had gone no man could tell. After a breathless search the inspector and his men returned to the cavern.

"We'll get him yet!" Mr. Grimes said, between his teeth. "The whole country will be up; he'll never get away! We'll get him yet! Back to the boat!"

"And this boy?" said Colonel Wharton.

"That nigger lad—"

"No feller nigger, sar!" said Kalulu'ululo. "Kanaka, sar!"

"That kid saved some lives in this party," said the inspector soberly—"three or four of us, I fancy, if the fellow had got that automatic going, and—" He broke off. "The kid seems to have been in league with him, but he's served us well; there would have been murder done but for him. Bring him along to the boat, Trumper."

Bob Cherry thumped Redwing on the back as they made their way to the mouth of the sea-cave.

"All serene now, old bean—and a merry Christmas, after all—what?"

"What-ho!" said Redwing, with a smile.

And it was a joyous party that sailed across the bay to Pegg under the stormy sunset.

It was, as Bob Cherry said, a merry Christmas, after all.

Soames, probably, was not enjoying himself—a hunted man, fleeing and skulking and hiding from incessant pursuit.

But for Tom Redwing it was a merry Christmas, and for his many friends.

Billy Bunter, of course, claimed the credit of the whole thing.

According to Bunter, he had practically done it all—and but for him that Christmastide would have told a very different tale.

Undoubtedly William George Bunter had come in useful, in one way and another; and as Bunter took it for granted that he was spending Christmas at Wharton Lodge with his old pals, no one said him nay. And with the Famous Five—no doubt more welcome than even W. G. Bunter—was Tom Redwing; and with him Vernon-Smith. And there was another and still more unexpected member of the party, and that was a brown skinned youth from the South Seas.

That there was little blame attached to Kalulu'ululo for the part he had played was admitted by all, and all knew that he had saved lives in that last desperate moment when the sea-lawyer had turned on his pursuers. What was to become of the Kanaka, stranded alone in a strange country, was settled by Colonel Wharton, who took him to Wharton Lodge; and while his further fate was still a matter of discussion, Kalulu'ululo remained in Harry Wharton's home, where he, like the rest, found that Christmas a merry one.

THE END.

(There will be another topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET entitled: "UNDER BUNTER'S THUMB!" Make a point of reading it, chums, and order your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!")

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CUCK-OO, cuck-oo! Midnight boomed out from the antique grandfather clock in the hall at Lickham Lodge, Christ-mas Day—the day of plum puddings and turkeys and pees and goodwill—was being ushered in. So was a visitor to Lickham Lodge.

It was Mr. Lickham, the mysterious owner of Lickham Lodge, who had unexpectedly arrived at the minute hour. And it was another Mr. Lickham—to wit, Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth at St. Sam's—who had opened the door to him.

The face of the latter Mr. Lickham was a study, as he boiled the door again behind the visitor. It changed from peaty-white to a mottled-green, and then to a yellowish shade, as he gaped at the newcomer. He looked almost as though it was his dying day.

Only a few yards away from him, in the grate library of Lickham Lodge, his guests, Jack Jolly & Co. and "Rubbishy" of St. Sam's, were guarding the ghost they had just captured—the said ghost having turned out to be a sinister-looking former. Little did they suspect that their Form-master out in the hall was going through agencies of mind in the presence of the man whose terrific peal on the front-door bell had just weakened the echoes of Lickham Lodge.

Little did they suspect either, that their "host" had only been spoofing them all the time—that Lickham Lodge no more belonged to him than St. Sam's itself did. The real owner of Lickham Lodge, who was a tall, aristocratic-looking gentleman, fixed a sort of hypnotic look on the trembling Form-master, through his glittering monocle.

"Why the thump are you looking at me like that, my man? he asked, in cultured accents. "Are you one of the servants?"

"I—I—" mumbled Mr. Lickham. "Ay, ay? You sound like a sailor. Have you become partised in some epic battle with the mighty ocean?"

"Certainly not, sir!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "I look after the boys at St. Sam's College." "St. Sam's College? In St. Sam's College in the middle of the mighty ocean, then?" asked the stranger, in surprise. "Not at all! It's some miles from the sea."

"Then how the merry dickens can you look after the boys?" demanded the owner of Lickham Lodge, not quite understanding the jist of the conversation. "Oh, crick! You misunderstand me! I don't mean floating boys; I mean schoolboys!" Mr. Lickham explained. "Oh, I see! If you'd called them young coveys, instead of boys, I might have understood at first!" said the other Mr. Lickham reproachfully. "So you are a schoolmaster? Then, in that case, what the thump are you doing in my house?" "I—I'm staying here!" blurted out Mr. Lickham miserably.

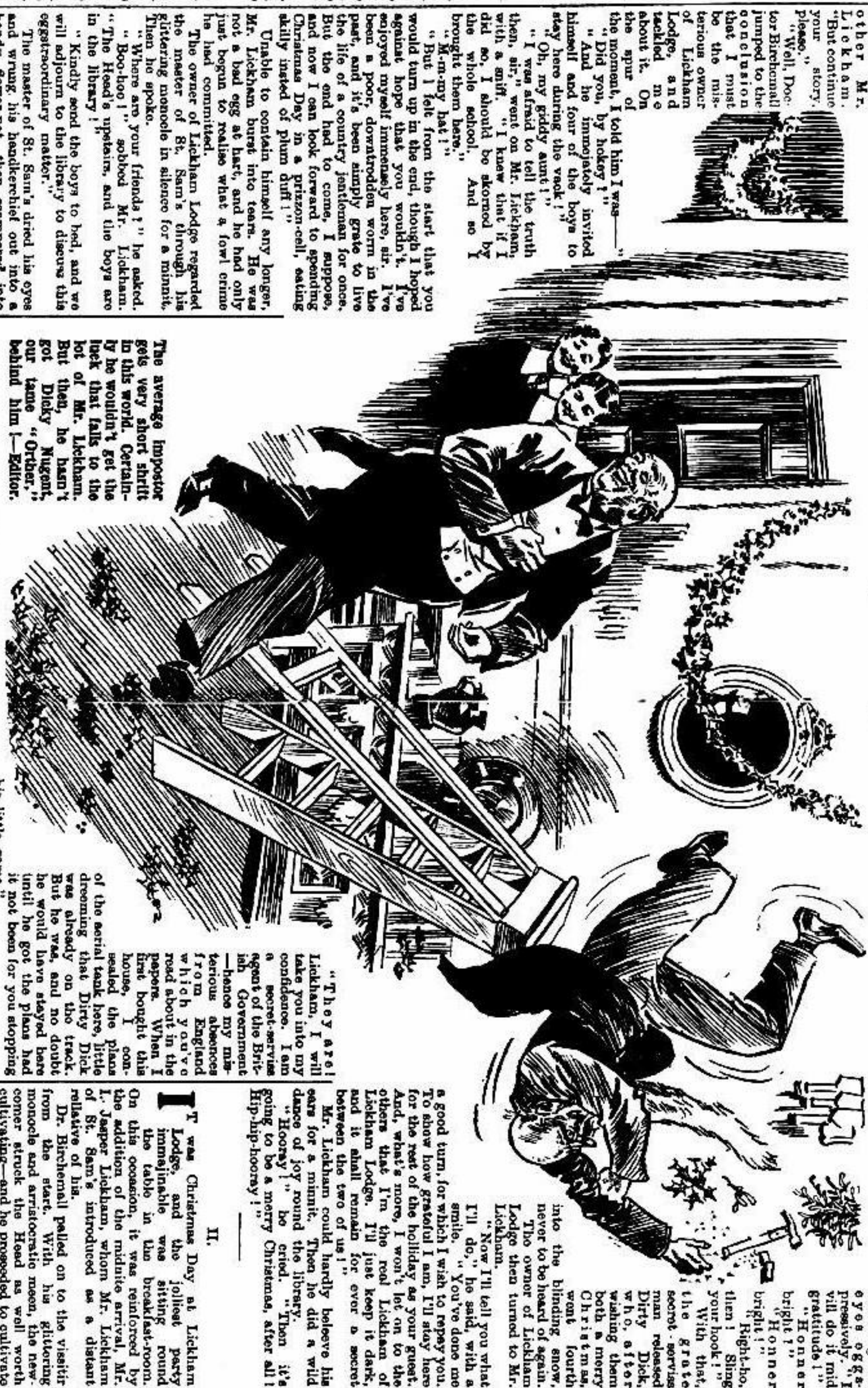
"And who invited you, pray?" "And who invited myself!" "The owner of Lickham Lodge drove out an egg-shaped silk handkerchief and blew his nose violently, then regarded his unwelcome guest with a hidden snigger. "You invited yourself?" he repeated incredulously.

Mr. Lickham nodded. "It wasn't my fault really, sir," he murmured. "You see, Doctor Birchmell, our headmaster, read in a newspaper that you had taken this house, and mysteriously disappeared. Well, as it happens, my name and initials are egg-shaped, the same as yours. I bear the name of I. Jollifell Lickham, as a matter of fact."

"Grate pip! And my name is I. Jasper of the Magnat Library—No. 1,089.

Lickham's Lucky Day!

By
DICKY NUGENT.



"A-r-r-r! You are jolly merry tonight, my kind!" said the spy, rolling his eyes egerly. "I will do it mid-gratitude!" "Honour bright!" "Honour bright!" "Right-ho, then! Shing your hook!"

With that, the grate secret service man released Dirty Dick, who, after washing them both a merry Christmas, went fourth into the blinding snow, never to be heard of again.

The owner of Lickham Lodge then turned to Mr. Lickham.

"Now I'll tell you what I'll do," he said, with a smile. "You've repayed me a good turn, for which I wish to repay you. To show how grateful I am, I'll stay here for the rest of the holiday as your guest. And, what's more, I won't let on to the others that I'm the real Lickham of Lickham Lodge. I'll just keep it dark, and it shall remain for ever a secret between the two of us!"

Mr. Lickham could hardly believe his ears for a minute. Then he did a wild dance of joy round the library. "Ho-o-o-y!" he cried. "Then it's going to be a merry Christmas, after all! Hip-hip-hooray!"

II.

It was Christmas Day at Lickham Lodge, and the jolliest party imaginable was sitting round the table in the breakfast-room. On this occasion, it was reinforced by the addition of the midnite arrival, Mr. I. Jasper Lickham, whom Mr. Lickham of St. Sam's introduced as a distant relative of his.

Dr. Birchmell pelted on to the visitor from the start. With his glittering monocle and aristocratic mien, the new comer struck the Head as well worth cultivating—and he proceeded to cultivate him, much to the amusement of Mr. Jasper, who was grinning all over his face throughout the meal.

"By the way, Lickham, I hear you nabbed the giddy spectator last night!" Dr. Birchmell remarked towards the end of his terrific breakfast. "What have you done with him?" "What you done with him?" "What you done with him?" "What you done with him?"

"Oh, I decided to let him go, after all!" he said. "He turned out to be a practical joker from the village, and seeing as how it was Christmas-time, I thought it would be as well to forgive and forget."

"Oh, grate pip!" gasped Jack Jolly & Co. And no more was said about the matter.

him that inspired respect, somehow. His neatly-patched clothes, his glittering monocle, his cultured accents, and his bright-cultured nose made him look a typical aristocrat. Everyone treated him accordingly, so he had nothing to complain of on that score.

After breakfast, the boys and their elders alike turned from feasting to the pleasures of a real good day indoors, for it was snowing too hard to go out. And, needless to say, Jack Jolly & Co. saw to it that the day was a success.

When Dr. Birchmell suggested that the morning might be profitably spent in the library listening to his reading extracts from classical authors, it was Mr. Jasper who said: "Rattle!"

When Mr. Jasper, on the other hand, suggested uproosting a Christmas-tree from the grounds, and decorating it in the approved manner, it was Mr. Jasper who immediately cried: "Bravo!"

There was no mistake about it—Mr. Lickham was one of the best. Eventually, the Head gave up the idea of a quiet morning in the library, and joined in the activities with the rest.

Full of zeal, he went round with a pair of steps, hanging up holly, and nailing Christmas greetings to the walls of the dining-room.

His activities came to a sudden stop, however, as he was standing on the steps near the door.

Portleigh, the butler, was the cause, for he entered the dining-room just at the wrong moment. A succession of crashes followed as the steps went flying, and the Head simultaneously knocked a nail into his thumb, swallowed a sprig of holly, and landed on his neck with a bump.

After that, he gave up helping, and disappeared for the rest of the morning. Needless to add, however, he was the first to join in the frantic rush to the dining-room when the dinner-gong sounded.

Dinner at Lickham Lodge that day settled even the engaging demands of Tubby Barrall. Served up in courses, it began with a French dish called barres-doves, and proceeded to rich soups, and, rare and refreshing fish. After that, came roast turkey, beef, and smoking-pig chicken-and-mushroom pie, and every conceivable kind of voluble. Then, amid roars of applause, came the crowning glory, in the shape of an immense plum-pudding, surrounded by luscious mince-pies.

Lickham. That's funny, and no mistake!" egg-claimed the other Mr. Lickham.

"But continue your story, please."

"Well, Doctor Birchmell jumped to the conclusion that I must be the mysterious owner of Lickham Lodge, and tackled me about it. On the spur of the moment, I told him I was—"

"And he immediately invited himself and four of the boys to stay here during the week!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" "I was afraid to tell the truth then, sir," went on Mr. Lickham, with a sniff. "I knew that if I did so, I should be skorned by the whole school. And so I brought them here."

"But I felt from the start that you would turn up in the end, though I hoped against hope that you wouldn't. I've enjoyed myself immensely here, sir. I've been a poor, down-trodden worm in the past, and it's been simply grave to live the life of a country gentleman for once. But the end had to come, I suppose, and now I can look forward to spending Christmas Day in a prison-cell, eating a little of plum duff!"

Unable to contain himself any longer, Mr. Lickham burst into tears. He was not a bad egg at heart, and he had only just begun to realise what a foul crime he had committed.

The owner of Lickham Lodge regarded the master of St. Sam's through his glittering monocle in silence for a minute. Then he spoke.

"Where are your friends?" he asked. "Boo-hoo!" sobbed Mr. Lickham. "The Head's upstairs, and the boys are in the library!"

"Kindly send the boys to bed, and we will adjourn to the library to discuss this extraordinary matter."

The master of St. Sam's dried his eyes and wrung his handkerchief out into a handy flower-pot, then scampered into the library, where Jack Jolly & Co. and Tubby Barrall were still guarding the "ghost" and wondering what the dickens had happened to their Form-master.

"Ah! Here you are, sir!" egg-claimed Jack Jolly, as Mr. Lickham came on the scene again. "We were just beginning to feel sleepy."

Mr. Lickham nodded. "It's certainly getting late, Jolly. I suggest you all buzz off to bed now."

"What about this forrider, sir?" asked Merry.

"Is he still trussed up securely, Merry?" "Yes, rather!"

"Very well. You may leave him in my hands, then. Buzz off now, boys!" "Right-ho, sir! A merry Christmas!"

Mr. Lickham smiled a bitter smile. He was afraid it was going to be the reverse of a merry Christmas for him, this year.

Jack Jolly & Co. trooped off to bed, after which Mr. Lickham the Second strode majestically into the library, his monocle glittering ominously in his eye. At first, he did not notice the prisoner lying on the floor. Then, as he came nearer, he spotted the captured spectator.

Lickham Lodge, and fairly jumped.

The average impostor gets very short shrift in this world. Certainly by he wouldn't get the lack that falls to the lot of Mr. Lickham. But then, he hasn't got Dirty Dick Nugent, our tame "Ortner," behind him!

"Great Scotland Yard!" he shouted. "Who is this?"

Mr. Lickham shrugged and glared indifferently at the prisoner who was now cowering back and muttering forrins oaths to himself.

"Blessed if I can tell you, sir! I've just captured him, with the help of the boys. He has been running round the house for several days, dressed up as a ghost."

"Ghost?" yelled the other Mr. Lickham. "He's no ghost! Do you know who that man is? He's Dirty Dick, the chief spy of the Serpentine Republic!"

"My hat!" gasped Mr. Lickham, startled by the astonishing information. "Lickham!" cried the owner of Lickham Lodge, wringing the St. Sam's master's hand with grate warmth. "You have rendered your country signal services to-nite. This man is one of England's most dangerous enemies. He has evidently been searching the house for the secret plans of the new British aerial tank. He dressed up as a ghost in order to frighten everybody out of the house."

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "Are the plans hidden in Lickham Lodge, then?"

"They are!" "Lickham, I will take you into my confidence. I am a secret-service agent of the British Government—hence my mysterious absences from England and which you've road about in the papers. When I first bought this house, I concealed the plans of the aerial tank here, little dreaming that Dirty Dick was already on the track. But he was, and no doubt he would have stayed here until he got the plans had it not been for you stopping his little game."

"F-I-l-an-cy that!" stammered Mr. Lickham, very much surprised to hear the extraordinary news. "Then, as I've done so well, sir, will you let me off with a caution this time, instead of sending me to chocky?"

"Egad! I'm not likely to send you to chocky after what you've done!" chuckled the secret-service agent. "Let's dispose of Dirty Dick, and I'll tell you what I'll do with you."

"What! Are you going to kill him?" asked Mr. Lickham, aghast. "He, ha! Not to-nite. This is Christmas Day, Lickham, when pees and goodwill will rain over the earth. Let's search him first!"

This was accordingly done, and the second Mr. Lickham's eyes gleamed at what he found. Plans of submarine cruises, underground airplanes, and many other weird inventions tumbled out from every pocket.

"What a haul!" grinned the St. Sam's master.

"Marvelous!" agreed his namesake, and then, turning to the forrider, he said: "Now, Dirty, if we let you go, will you promise to catch the first boat back to the Serpentine Republic?"

There was something about

The Magnat Library—No. 1,089.