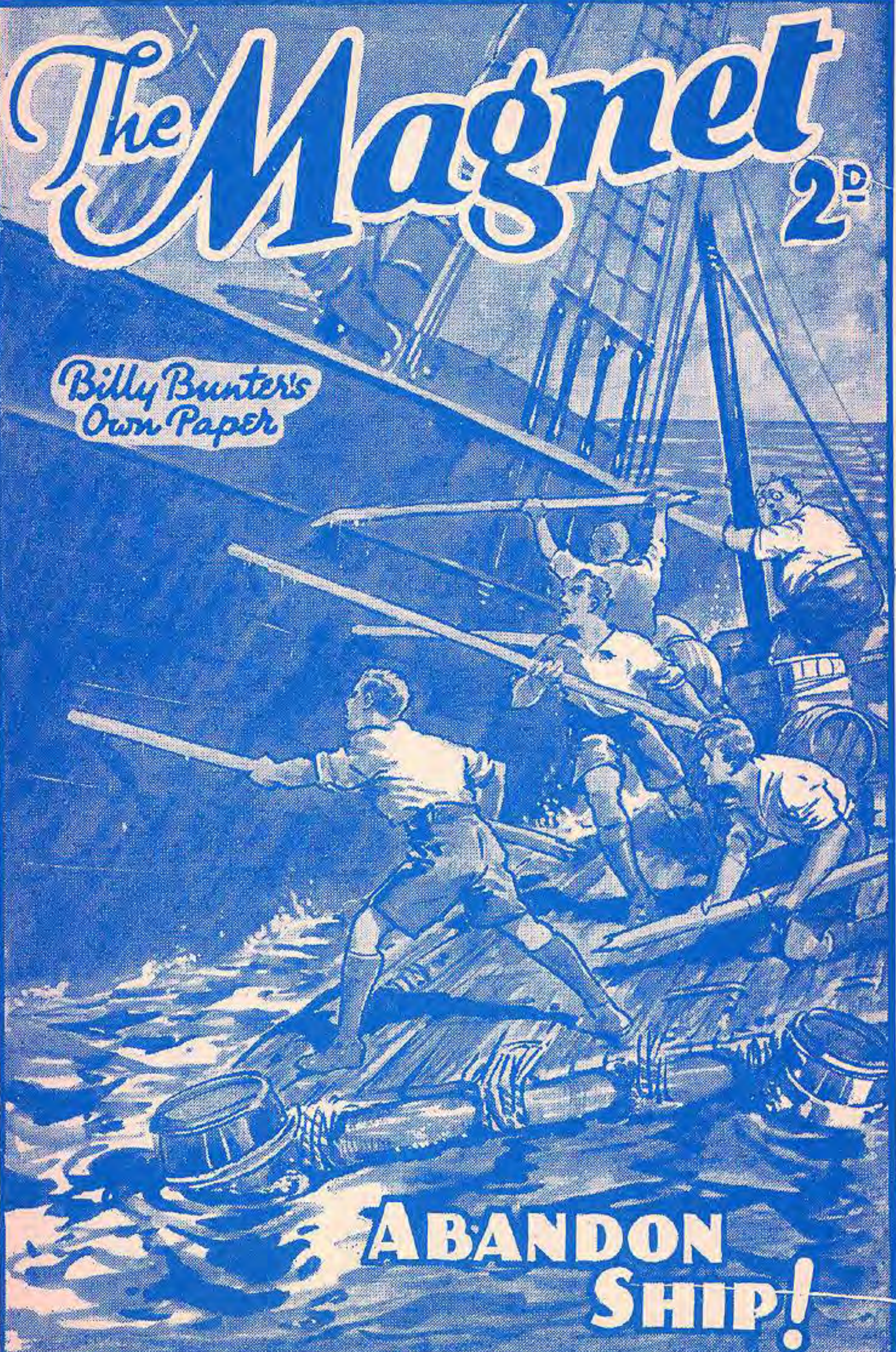


"THE SCUTTLED SCHOONER" 99 Magnificent Long South-Seas Story, featuring Harry Wharton & Co.

The Magnet ^{2^D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



**ABANDON
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HOW MANY "GOALS"
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1000 FREE FOOTBALLS



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THIS WEEK'S FOOTER STAMPS!



STOP! This is the end of the August "Footer-Stamps" Competition, and up to 250 of the Free Footballs are now going to be given away to the readers who have scored the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" so far.

First of all, there are ten more stamps here, depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out and try to score another "goal" with them, or use the stamps to finish off any partly completed "goals" you may have.

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you only have to collect a complete set of the six stamps (numbered 1 to 6) made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal."

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "GEM" and "MODERN BOY" each week.

Now, when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) in the space provided on the coupon below.

Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and pin your sets of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

MAGNET "Footer-Stamps" (August), 1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.), so as to reach there not later than **THURSDAY, September 1st, 1938.**

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes are to be awarded for the best scores from pals outside the British Isles. In your case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1st.**

Now, when you have sent in your August "goals," keep any odd stamps you have in readiness for the September competition which starts next week. More "Footer-Stamps" will be given, and still more of our Prize Footballs will be offered.

RULES: Up to 250 Footballs will be awarded in the August contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (given this week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B. "Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "Gem," "Thriller," "Sports Budget," "Champion," "Modern Boy," "Detective Weekly," "Triumph," "Wild West Weekly," and "Boy's Cinema.")



The MAGNET

"Footer-Stamps" (August)

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer-Stamps" and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps to this coupon.



I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

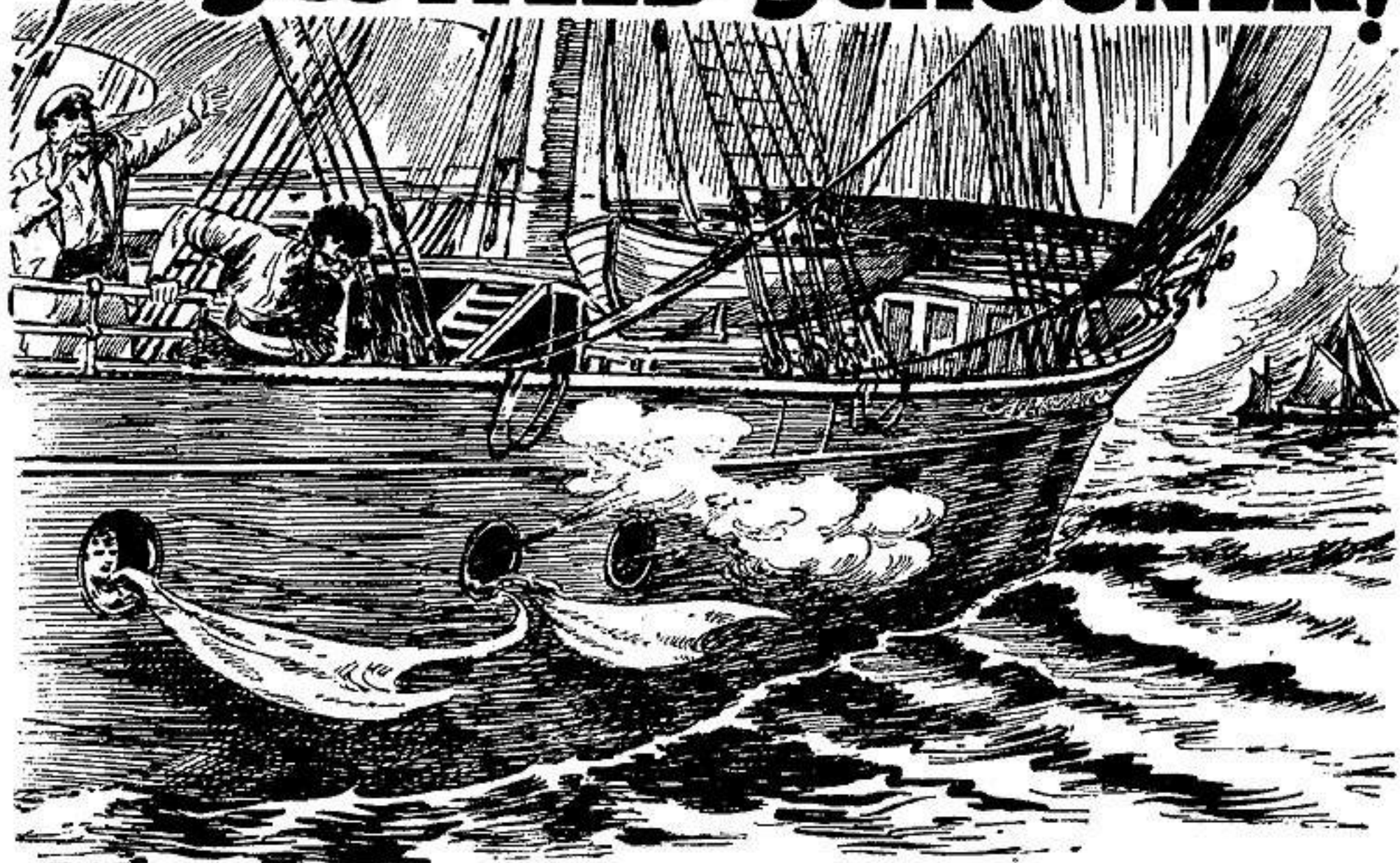
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N.B. No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.

Shanghaied by their enemies on a sinking ship left to drown—trapped below decks. Never have Harry Wharton & Co. been faced with a more desperate situation!

The SCUTTLED SCHOONER!



A sudden shout from the enraged beachcomber interrupted him. From the side of the schooner, fluttering in the wind, came a string of sheets. **Bang! Bang! Bang!** The juniors were blazing away with their rifles in an attempt to attract the attention of the passing ship.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Danger Ahead!

“WE'RE going schooning—”
“What?” ejaculated Billy Bunter.
“Schooning!” said Bob Cherry.

The other fellows chuckled, and Billy Bunter blinked at Bob, through his big spectacles, with irritable inquiry. Bunter had heard of a good many new and strange things, during the holiday in the South Seas, but he had never heard of “schooning” before.

“What do you mean, you silly ass?” he demanded. “Schooning ain't a word.”

“Then it ought to be,” said Bob cheerfully. “If you go on a boat, you're boating, and if you go on a canoe, you're canoeing. So if you go on a schooner, you're schooning—or ought to be.”

“The schoonfulness is going to be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter,” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

“Oh!” said Bunter. “We're going on a schooner?”

“We are!” said Bob. “I don't know about you, old fat man! I think perhaps you'd better stand out.”

Billy Bunter sat up in the madeira chair in the veranda at the manager's bungalow on Kalua and fixed his eyes, and his spectacles, on Bob Cherry, with a blink of the deepest indignation.

“Beast!” he said.

“My dear old podgy porpoise—”

“Rotter!”

“Bob, old man—” murmured Lord Mauleverer.

“Swab!” roared Bunter.
“Bunter can decide for himself, of course,” said Bob. “I'm speaking entirely for his own sake!”
“Yah!” snorted Bunter. “I'm coming!”

“Think it over!” urged Bob. “There's the schooner! Look at it!”

Billy Bunter turned his spectacles towards the lagoon, shining blue in the tropic sun. A two-masted schooner was moored to the coral quay. Brown boys,

|||||

Lord Mauleverer, the school-boy millionaire, fights another battle of wits with his mysterious enemy, Ysabel Dick.

**By
FRANK RICHARDS**

|||||

on board, were getting it ready for sea. Mr. McTab, the manager of Kalua, could be seen on the deck, his sandy beard, glimmering in the sunshine.

The Famous Five had had many trips, in the manager's whaleboat, round Kalua. Now they were going on a longer trip, in the schooner *Flamingo*, as far as the Fiji Islands.

“Well, what's the matter with that schooner?” demanded Billy Bunter.

“Looks all right to me. I suppose there's a decent cabin?”

“Oh, yes, the cabin's all right.”

“And old McTab will see to the grub, I suppose?”

“He's seeing to it now.”

“Well, I'm coming.”

“Suit yourself, of course!” said Bob.

“If you want to be drowned—”

“Drowned!” gasped Bunter.

“If the schooner goes down, a fellow gets drowned,” explained Bob Cherry. “Chap can't breathe in the water like a fish!”

“You silly ass!” howled Bunter.

“Why should the schooner go down? You fellows are going on it, ain't you?”

“Yes, but it's safe for us!” explained Bob. “It's you I'm thinking of, old fat man! You'd better know what you're going into, Bunter.”

Billy Bunter gave the schooner another blink. Then he blinked round at the faces of the Greyfriars fellows in the veranda.

Bob Cherry's face was very grave. He really seemed alarmed for Bunter. But Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, were grinning. Lord Mauleverer looked perplexed.

“I say, you fellows, I'm coming, of course,” said Bunter. “I'm jolly well not sticking on this island while you fellows are off on a trip to Suva. Is anything the matter with that schooner, Wharton?”

“Not that I know of!” answered Harry laughing.

“Do you think it's going down, Nugent?”

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"Yes—it's going down to Suva," answered Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly fathead! I wasn't asking you for rotten jokes!" hooted Bunter. "Do you think that schooner's safe, Bull?"

"Safe enough for us!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, if it's safe for you, it's safe for me, I suppose!" grunted Bunter, puzzled and irritated. "You'll feel safe on it, won't you, Inky?"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh nodded.

"The safe-fulness of my absurd self will be terrific," he answered. "But the safe-fulness of the esteemed Bunter is a boot on the other leg."

"Well, why?" roared Bunter. "Look here, Bob Cherry, you beast, if that schooner's safe for you fellows, why ain't it safe for me?"

"Look at it!" urged Bob.

"I've looked at it, you fathead! I'm looking at it now!" yapped Bunter. "I can't see anything wrong with it!"

"It's a two-hundred-ton schooner!" explained Bob.

"What about that?" snorted Bunter.

"Lots about that! Will it take your weight?"

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"You'd better think it over, old fat man!" said Bob gravely. "You'd be all right on an Atlantic liner—at least, if you were put amidships! But on a two-hundred-ton schooner, it would be a bit risky! Don't you think so?"

Billy Bunter gazed at Bob Cherry. He seemed speechless for the moment. The expression on his fat face made the other juniors yell.

Bunter's weight was considerable. But really, even Billy Bunter calculated his weight by the stone, not by the ton! Certainly it had never occurred to him that a two-hundred-ton schooner might not be equal to the strain. He blinked at Bob Cherry, speechless, with a devastating blink.

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

Billy Bunter's plump countenance was quite entertaining.

"You—you—you—" gasped Bunter. It dawned on his fat brain that the cheery Bob was pulling his podgy leg. "You—you—you idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You dummy!"

"My dear chap—"

"You blithering blockhead!" roared Bunter.

"That's how Bunter thanks a chap for thinking of his safety!" said Bob, looking round. "He never thought of this awful danger himself! I point it out to him, and this is how he thanks me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Cheeky ass! I'd jolly well punch your cheeky nose, if—if—"

"If you could reach it?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed wrath behind his spectacles. If ever a fellow deserved to have his nose punched, Bob Cherry did, for making out that Bunter's handsome, graceful figure was likely to sink a two-hundred-ton schooner.

There were difficulties in the way of punching Bob's nose, which was rather out of Bunter's reach. There was plenty of Bunter, but it was mostly sideways.

But there were other means. Bunter grabbed an orange from a dish of fruit on a table in the veranda.

He took deadly aim, and hurled it right at Bob's cheery face. An orange squashing on his nose, with all the force of Bunter's fat arm behind it, was as good as punching it.

So it might have been, if the orange had reached its target. As it missed Bob by a foot or more, however, Bob's nose remained quite undamaged.

"Look out!" yelled Johnny Bull, as a fuzzy head came up the veranda steps, right in line with the whizzing orange.

But it was too late for Popoo, the Tonga boy, to look out. That orange, whizzing past Bob, landed in Popoo's eye!

Popoo gave a fearful yell, and went backwards down the steps.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Bump! sounded below. The Tonga boy sat at the foot of the steps, in a state of great astonishment, one hand to his eye.

"Ooooooh!" roared Popoo. "What name feller white master makee that feller orange stop along eye belong me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, you chump—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"What the thump did you chuck that orange at Popoo for, Bunter?"

"I—I didn't. I chucked it at that beast Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A miss is as good as a mile!" chortled Bob. "Bunter's getting dangerous. Let's go and have a squint at the schooner before he chucks any more oranges about. He may hit anybody but me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors, chuckling, went down the steps. Popoo picked himself up and scuttled away, with a hand to a damaged eye. Billy Bunter was left snorting with wrath, and quite determined that he was going on that trip to Suva, regardless of the alleged risk of sinking the schooner with his plump person.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

No Nigger For Bunter!

"ISN'T it top-hole?" demanded Bob Cherry.

His chums agreed that it was.

There was a rather hefty scent lingering about the Flamingo, hinting that the vessel was usually used for cargoes of copra; but that did not worry the cheerful juniors.

They roamed over the schooner, delighted with everything they saw. If any fellow wanted anything better than sailing a schooner among the Pacific Islands in the holidays, Bob would have liked to know what sort of a fathead he was.

Lord Mauleverer was looking at the schooner from a long cane chair on the after-deck. His lazy lordship preferred to do his sight-seeing sitting down. But the Famous Five raked the Flamingo fore and aft, so to speak.

The fore-castle did seem rather dusky and stuffy; but, then, the Kanaka crew generally slept on mats on deck. Anyhow, the Greyfriars fellows had their quarters at the other end of the Flamingo. Those quarters, when they explored them, seemed far from roomy. There was not a lot of space on a ship of the Flamingo's size. But they were very clean—Mr. McTab had seen to that—and looked comfortable.

House-boys from the bungalow were bringing the juniors' baggage aboard and landing it in the cabin. The Greyfriars fellows expected to be away from Mauly's island a week on that trip down to Suva and back.

On deck they made the acquaintance of the skipper of the Flamingo—a big,

brown native of the island of Raiatea, whose name, they learned with great interest, was Ka-a-ha-hua-hina, which was very musical, but rather too lengthy for daily use, and they found that Mr. McTab addressed him as Captain Ka, life being short!

Captain Ka gave the schoolboys a very polite and cordial welcome to the schooner. His mate, a Fijian with an equally lengthy name, bowed and smiled and showed gleaming white teeth. The whole ship's company were islanders—the crew being a mixture of Hiva-Oana, Tahitians, Tongans, and Samoans—all speaking their own particular language, but communicating by means of the "beche-de-mer," the pidgin English universal in the Pacific.

"This feller Ka-a-hua-hua-hina plenty too glad young feller white masters stop along schooner!" declared Captain Ka, and the juniors politely assured him that they were plenty too glad also.

"I'm thinking ye'll have a good trip, my lord," said the manager of Kalua to Lord Mauleverer. "Captain Ka is one of the best seamen in the Pacific, and he has served your lordship for ten years and more, though your lordship has never seen him before."

Mauleverer smiled.

"This feller plenty too glad see Captain Ka," he said gravely.

All the Greyfriars fellows talked "beche-de-mer" as a matter of course, by this time, in dealing with the natives.

"Ye're all here?" asked Mr. McTab. "I'm sending the prisoners on board, and then you pull out."

At which Lord Mauleverer's brow clouded a little.

There were two prisoners in the island gaol on Kalua who had to be sent down to Suva to be dealt with there according to law, and they were going on the Flamingo.

Mr. McTab, as magistrate on Mauly's island, dealt with small offenders and offences; more serious matters had to be transferred to Suva, the capital of the Fiji Islands.

Vessels from Kalua to Suva were not often available, and Mr. McTab was combining the despatch of the prisoners with a pleasure trip for Lord Mauleverer and his friends, and various matters of business that Captain Ka had to carry out for him at the capital.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rather glad than otherwise, for they were prepared to help keep an eye on the two rascals who were being sent down to Suva, both of them being enemies of their noble pal, Lord Mauleverer.

But Mauly's kind heart had a spot of compassion, even for a truculent ruffian like the Dutchman, Van Dink, and a lawless outcast like Ysabel Dick, the beachcomber of Kalua.

"Ye'll have no trouble with the rogues, my lord," said Mr. McTab. "They will be in irons for the whole trip, and you can rely on Captain Ka taking care of them. Now, if ye're ready Captain Ka, I'll send them on board."

The manager of Kalua walked across the gangway from the schooner to the coral quay.

"Bunter's not here yet," said Lord Mauleverer. "Who's goin' to call Bunter?"

"The fathead!" said Bob. "Why isn't he here? I'll fetch him."

Bob followed the manager to the quay.

Billy Bunter was not in sight, so he tramped back to the bungalow.

As he drew near it he heard the voice

of the fat Owl of the Remove on its top note.

"Popoo! Where's that nigger Popoo! Popoo! I'm waiting for you! By gum, I'll give you the lawyer-cane if you keep me waiting! Popoo!"

Bob Cherry grinned. Popoo, the Tonga boy, was, according to Bunter, Bunter's faithful nigger. But he did not seem at the moment fearfully anxious to serve his fat white master. Bunter had given him strict instructions to turn up on time. It looked as if Popoo had disregarded those instructions. At all events, he was not to be seen.

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

"Seen my nigger?" squeaked Bunter.

"Not since you bunged him in the eye. Time to get aboard, old fat man," said Bob. "Come on!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buck up, you old porpoise! They're getting ready to pull out."

"If you think I can go without a servant, Bob Cherry—"

"We're all going to manage it, somehow," said Bob.

"Oh, I dare say!" said Bunter disdainfully. "It's rather different with me. I'm accustomed to being waited on at Bunter Court. I certainly shall not go on board without my nigger."

"Fathead!" said Bob. "Ass! Ten to one Popoo's dodged out of sight to get shut of you for a bit."

Sniff from Bunter.

"That nigger's devoted to me," he said. "Even if I could do without a servant, which is hardly possible, I couldn't leave him behind. It would be too heavy a blow to him to lose me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry.

That sudden roar was caused by the sight of Popoo.

Popoo, though unseen, was not far away. Bob suddenly spotted him behind a tree in the bungalow garden. The tree was between Popoo and Bunter, and the fat Owl did not see his faithful nigger.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "You're never likely to have a nigger devoted to you, Bob Cherry, like Popoo is to me. He feeds from my hand. I really believe it would break his faithful heart if I left him behind."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob.

As the Tonga boy was hiding behind the tree to keep out of sight of his fat white master, Bunter's remarks struck Bob as comic.

"Well, you can cackle," snorted Bunter, "but I'm not coming without him."

"The skipper won't wait, fathead!"

"Tell him he's got to. I decline to come on board without my nigger!" retorted Bunter. "Popoo! Where are you, Popoo? Where on earth has he got to? I saw him in this garden only ten minutes ago."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob.

"Yah!" snorted Bunter.

And he gripped a lawyer-cane in his fat hand and resumed his hunt for that faithful, but elusive nigger.

As he passed the tree behind which Popoo had parked himself, he suddenly spotted a brown foot.

"Why, there he is!" yelled Bunter, in great wrath. And he rolled round the tree, his eyes gleaming through his spectacles.

Popoo made a bound to escape.

Whack!

The lawyer-cane landed as he bounded.

Popoo yelled, and bounded faster.

Billy Bunter rushed after him, brandishing the lawyer-cane.

"Stop!" he roared. "Popoo! Stop! You cheeky nigger. I'll take your skin off! Stop! Catch him for me, Bob!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You can do your own nigger catching, old fat man!" gasped Bob. "But buck up with it—time's going!"

"Beast!"

Popoo scuttled out on the beach. After him panted Bunter. Bob, chuckling, brought up the rear.

"Stop!" roared Bunter. "You feller Popoo, you stop along this place! Get on the schooner, you black scoundrel!"

Popoo glanced over a brown shoulder. "No likee go along schooner along fat white master!" he retorted. "Too much work along that fat feller white master! No likee work!"

Billy Bunter made a fierce rush.

The active Tonga boy scuttled out of his reach. Grinning, Popoo vanished among the palms. Bunter was going to be away from Kalua for a week; and getting a rest from his exacting white master for a week was too strong a temptation for Popoo. He vanished into space.

The fat Owl of Greyfriars came to a halt, gasping for breath. It was altogether too hot on Kalua for a foot-race.

"Come on, old fat bean!" said Bob. "Shan't!" roared Bunter.

"You howling ass!" roared Bob. "If you're coming, you've got to get on board. Think the ship can wait for you?"

"Yes! Now shut up! Understand this—I refuse to travel without a servant," said Bunter firmly. "You're not accustomed to such things—I am! I have to be waited on! I shall need Popoo! You go after him and fetch him back! I'll wait here! But mind, I don't start without Popoo!"

"You'll start now!" roared Bob.

"Shan't!"

Billy Bunter plumped down on the sand. He needed a rest, and he took one, glaring defiance at Bob through his spectacles.

Bob was strongly tempted to leave him sitting there. Nobody supposed that the trip would be less enjoyable if William George Bunter remained on Kalua while the Flamingo sailed down to Suva. But Bob was always good-natured. The schooner could not wait for Bunter, though Bunter appeared to fancy that it could.

"Look here, come on!" hooted Bob.

"Yah!"

"I'll help you!"

"I don't want any help! I—Leggo!" shrieked Bunter, as Bob stooped, and grasped his fat ankles. "Beast! Leggo! Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Yaroo!"

Bob started for the quay, taking Bunter's little fat legs along with him. The rest of Bunter rolled after the legs, roaring.

"Ow! Leggo! Beast! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the schooner; and there was a howl of laughter from the natives on the beach.

It was unusual to see a white master using his legs like the shafts of a cart! It was quite an entertainment for the beach of Kalua.

But it was no entertainment for Billy Bunter! He yelled, he roared, he howled, and he spluttered.

"Leggo! Oh crikey! Yaroooh! I say, I'm coming. I won't wait for Popoo—I'll come! Will you leggo, you beast? I tell you I'm coming!"

"Come on, then," said Bob cheerily, releasing the fat legs.

And Bunter, right end uppermost again, came!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Prisoners!

LORD MAULEVERER rose rather hastily from his chair, and went down the steep companion-ladder to the cabin of the Flamingo.

A little party was approaching the gangway from the quay, and his tender-hearted lordship did not like the sight.

Harry Wharton & Co. remained where they were—and Billy Bunter, still gasping for breath after the help Bob Cherry had given him in getting on board, turned his spectacles on the approaching little crowd.

Mr. McTab walked ahead. Following him came the native police force of Kalua: Kololoo and five other brawny Kaluan boys. In the midst of the Kanakas walked two men with irons on their wrists.

Van Dink, the Dutch freebooter, towered among the natives, hoity men as they were. His bearded face wore a savage scowl, and his little piggy eyes glittered with rage. Ironed as he was, the savage-tempered ruffian seemed on the point, every moment, of breaking out into violence.

Beside him walked Ysabel Dick, the beachcomber, with sunken head and sullen face. His look was black and bitter, though he was not giving way to animal rage like the Dutchman.

As they came across the coral quay the Dutchman lagged; and Kololoo gave him a push.

With a snarl, Van Dink kicked at him.

Immediately the Kaluan boy lifted his lawyer-cane and landed it with a sounding swipe on the Dutchman's shoulders—a swipe so emphatic that Van Dink tottered under it and almost fell.

He recovered himself and turned on Kololoo with a hiss of fury.

Kololoo grinned at him.

"You no kill this feller Kololoo, foot belong you, you fellow Dussman!" said the chief of the island police. "This feller kill you plenty too much along stick belong him, my word!"

"Ach!" ground out the Dutchman between his tobacco-stained teeth. "If I had you on my ship—ach!"

Mr. McTab glanced round impatiently.

"Get on!" he snapped.

The Dutchman gave him a glare of hate and tramped on. The two prisoners were marched across the gangway to the deck of the Flamingo.

Ysabel Dick gave a quick glance round, and then dropped his eyes again. The juniors guessed that he was looking for Lord Mauleverer; but Mauleverer was below, and not to be seen. There was a faint tinge of colour in the beachcomber's seamed, sun-burned face. Low as he had fallen, the man from Ysabel had a sense of shame at being taken on board the schooner under so many eyes as a malefactor, with irons on his wrists.

No such feeling affected the Dutchman. He glared at the juniors and at the captain and crew of the Flamingo like a trapped wild bull. Had his hands been free there was little doubt that he would have run "amuck" on the crowded deck.

But his ferocious glare had no terrors for the Famous Five. They avoided looking at Ysabel Dick, who showed signs of feeling the shame of his position. But they regarded the burly Dutchman with steady and contemptuous eyes.

On neither of the prisoners had they any compassion to waste. Both of them

were bitter enemies of the most kind-hearted and inoffensive member of the Greyfriars holiday party—old Mauly!

Why, nobody knew! The juniors had puzzled over it a good deal, without being able to find a solution of the strange mystery.

They knew no more why Van Dink had attempted to throw Mauly overboard on the steamer *Sunderbund* than why Ysabel Dick had tried again and again to kidnap him on his own island.

They knew that the two rascals were acquainted and had met before they came together on Kalua; but that was all they knew. They could not even guess at the cause of their savage enmity to Mauleverer.

"I say, you fellows, that Dutchman looks an awful beast!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at the burly freebooter.

Van Dink's piggy eyes fixed on Bunter. Evidently he recognised the fat junior again. It was Bunter who, by a happy chance, had prevented him from pitching Lord Mauleverer off the *Sunderbund* on the Greyfriars fellows' voyage out to the South Seas. And it was for that attempted crime that the Dutchman was now a prisoner in irons. His look showed that he had not forgotten.

"Ach! You!" he muttered, glaring at the fat Owl. "Ik herinner het mij." Bunter gave him a disdainful blink.

"Don't gabble Dutch at me, you ruffian!" he said. "Wharrer you mean, you fat Dutch porker, if you mean anything by that rigmorole?"

"I remember it! You—"

Bunter grinned. He had a deep terror of the Dutch freebooter—but not when his brawny hands were manacled. He turned up his fat little nose at Van Dink.

"Oh, you remember, do you?" he said cheerfully. "Yes, you rotten rascal, I stopped you chucking old Mauly off the steamer. I knocked you down, you hulking brute! I'd knock you down again as soon as look at you!"

"Shut up, Bunter, old bean!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "Think I'm going to be checked by that Dutch bargee! I've knocked him down once—"

"I can see you doing it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! He went over, anyhow! And I'd jolly well—"

"Cheese it!"

There was no time for further remarks from Bunter, as the prisoners were hurried away forward. It seemed that they were to be berthed in the forecabin; little other accommodation being available on the schooner.

Ysabel Dick stepped down quietly into the forecabin, as if chiefly anxious to get out of sight; but the Dutchman stopped and glared round as if thinking in his savage rage of attempting some resistance, hopeless as it was.

Kololo stepped behind him and lifted a big, bare, brown foot! That foot was jammed on the Dutchman's vast trousers and he staggered and went headlong down into the forecabin, bumping and crashing and roaring.

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter.

Loud roars of rage and cursing in Dutch were heard, till the Fijian mate stepped down with a lawyer-cane in his hand. When he came back to the deck there was silence in the forecabin. It was, probably, the only way of dealing with a turbulent ruffian like Van Dink. It was, at all events, efficacious; the Dutchman's savage roar was heard no more.

The *Police Force* went back to THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,593.

the quay; and Mr. McTab said good-bye to the Greyfriars party and followed them. Then the moorings were cast off; and the manager waved from the quay and the juniors waved back as the schooner glided away across the lagoon to the reef passage.

Outside the reef the *Flamingo* spread her canvas to the wind, running south by east. And Harry Wharton & Co. watched the high hill of Kalua sink to the sea, little guessing what was to happen before they looked upon it again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Waiting On Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER rolled on deck the following morning with a frown upon his fat face.

Any fellow who had been interested in Bunter could have seen at a glance that the fat Owl of Greyfriars was not satisfied.

Nobody, however, being interested in Bunter, nobody observed the cloud on his fat brow, and so everybody remained in ignorance of the fact, no doubt very important, that Bunter was not satisfied.

It was a glorious morning.

The *Famous Five* had been up soon after the sun. Lord Mauleverer was up an hour after the five. Bunter was up two or three hours after Mauly.

The schooner was far out of sight of land.

Leaning to a six-knot breeze, the *Flamingo* glided on her way over a sea of deepest blue, under an unclouded sky.

Captain Ka was smiling and polite; the juniors had already taken a liking to the cheerful, smiling Raiatean. The crew, of whom there were about a dozen, all looked cheerful in the happy way of Kanakas. In fact, all the faces to be seen on deck looked merry and bright—excepting the fat face of William George Bunter, which wore a frown.

Bunter had found the schooner to his liking in some respects. The quarters, though rather closely packed, were clean and comfortable; and Bunter, anyhow, could sleep anywhere. The food was good and ample; there was a native cook on board who, as Bunter had discovered, really could cook.

Generally it was Bunter's maxim that if the grub was all right, everything was all right! He had to admit that the grub was all right! Still, he was not satisfied.

Coming on deck, he blinked round through his big spectacles. There was a striped awning over part of the after-deck to keep off the sun, already getting too hot for comfort. Under that awning Lord Mauleverer sat in a deckchair in lazy ease, his eyes half-closed.

The *Famous Five* were not sitting down, however. They were full of beans that bright morning. At the moment they were watching a distant speck on the sea and debating whether it was a whale, a porpoise, or a nodding palm on a distant island.

Billy Bunter's irritated blink, directed at them, was not even observed. They did not even observe that he had come on deck till he squeaked:

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked round. "Enjoying life, old fat man?"

"I want a deckchair," said Bunter with quiet dignity.

At which the *Famous Five* all glanced at him.

There was no reason why Bunter shouldn't have a deckchair if Bunter wanted a deckchair! Likewise, there was no reason why Bunter shouldn't

fetch a deckchair from a stack of them by the companion hatch and place it exactly where he wanted it.

But it appeared, from Bunter's remark, and the dignified way in which he uttered it, that he expected the desired deckchair to be brought to him—unless, indeed, he expected it to walk!

"I'm waiting!" added Bunter, as the juniors did not speak.

"You're waiting?" repeated Bob.

"Yes!"

"Well," said Bob thoughtfully, "there's no harm in that, so far as I can see! Go on waiting as long as you like."

"All day if you like, old fatty!" said Frank Nugent.

"And all night afterwards!" said Johnny Bull.

"Now, look here," said Bunter. "I came away without my nigger! You fellows refused to wait for my faithful nigger. I told Cherry plainly that I couldn't travel without a servant. You needn't pretend that you've forgotten that, Bob Cherry! Well, if you fellows think I'm going to sag about because you've left my nigger behind you're making a mistake."

"Is the mistakefulness terrific?" inquired Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"So far as I can see," resumed Bunter, "there's nobody here to do anything except the cook, who seems to be steward and everything else. And he's cheeky!"

"You don't mean to say the cook's checked you, Bunter?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "Totua's really checked you, Bunter?"

"He has," said Bunter. "I told him I might want him on deck, and he said he had something to do."

"This won't do, you fellows," said Bob, looking round gravely. "If the cook has checked Bunter we'd better take the matter up before it goes any further. We shall have the captain checking him next! When we get to Suva the High Commissioner of the Pacific may be cheeky to Bunter, for all we know, if this sort of thing goes on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We can't run him up to the yard-arm," said Bob. "He deserves it if he's been cheeky to Bunter; but we can't do that, as there isn't any yardarm on a schooner. What about chucking him overboard?"

"Look here—" roared Bunter.

"Go and fetch him up!" said Bob. "The sooner he dies the death the better. Didn't you say he'd checked you?"

Billy Bunter gave Bob a glare of wrath.

"If you're going to be a funny ass—" he hooted.

"Not at all; not poaching on your preserves!" said Bob. "You're the funny ass of this party, old fat man! Go on being funny!"

"What I want to know is, what's going to be done?" said Bunter. "You fellows have left my nigger behind. I require a certain amount of attention. I'm used to being waited on. This has got to be settled."

Evidently Billy Bunter had been thinking this out. It was, it appeared, a matter of some importance. It was true that Bunter wanted waiting on. He wanted all the waiting on that he could get. Deprived of his faithful nigger, Bunter was faced with the prospect of waiting on himself. The heir of Bunter Court could hardly be expected to be satisfied.

"Well," said Bob in a very thoughtful way, "that's easily settled, Bunter. You've got to be waited on—that's plain! There's no nigger here to wait



Seizing Bunter's fat little legs, Bob Cherry set off for the quay. "Leggo—ow!" shrieked Bunter, finding himself being dragged across the beach. "I don't want any help! Ouch!" There was a howl of laughter from the natives. They didn't often see one white master being helped by another in such a fashion.

on you, so somebody else will have to do it. That's plain, too! The only thing for it that I can see is for one of us to do it."

Bunter blinked at him rather suspiciously.

That was, in point of fact, Bunter's own idea, and it seemed to him a fairly satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

But he had hardly expected any member of the Famous Five to see it in the same light.

Bob Cherry's face, however, was very serious. The other members of the Co. were smiling; but they raised no objection.

"We'd better think this out and settle it before we get any farther," said Bob. "We're going to be three days on this schooner before we get to Suva—or more if the wind plays any tricks. Bunter can hardly go all that time without being waited on."

"Hardly!" agreed Nugent, with a nod.

"I mean, it's different with us," explained Bob. "We're common sort of fellows that can wait on themselves, or even do without any waiting on, at a pinch. It's very different with a chap who's accustomed to being waited on hand and foot by a horde of liveried menials at Bunter Court! You fellows see that?"

"Quite!" assented Harry Wharton.

"The quietfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gravely.

"When Bunter's at home," went on Bob, "a gilt-edged butler puts his socks on for him in the morning. Is it the butler does it, Bunter, or the head gamekeeper?"

"Look here——"

"Whichever it is, Bunter never puts on his socks himself," said Bob. "He never washes himself at home—the groom-of-the-chambers at Bunter Court washes him. That's why he never

washes at Greyfriars—he's not used to it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——" roared Bunter.

"Bunter can't have all the comforts of home here," continued Bob. "He must miss his butler, but we don't know how to buttle. All we can do is to make ourselves as useful as possible—fetching deckchairs and so on. Any fellow can do that. So just give the word, Bunter, if you want a deckchair, and I'm your man."

Billy Bunter blinked at Bob Cherry. That the fellows who had deprived him of his faithful nigger ought to wait on him was, of course, obvious. But he had scarcely hoped that they would realise it.

Apparently, however, they did! Bob Cherry stepped briskly away from the rail, ready for orders.

"Deckchair, sir?" he asked. "I suppose I'd better call you 'sir' while I'm waiting on you—sounds more respectful. Deckchair, sir?"

"Yes!" yapped Bunter.

Bob's manner was serious and respectful. Still, the fat Owl could hardly believe that Bob Cherry was not pulling his leg. However, he was reassured when Bob crossed to the pile of deckchairs and selected one, and came back with it.

"Where will you have it, sir?" he asked.

Bunter gave him another suspicious blink.

"Stick it here by the rail, just under the awning," he said.

"Certainly, sir!"

Bob unfolded the canvas chair and set it up. His comrades watched him rather curiously. They did not really know what Bob was up to, except that they had no doubt that he was somehow pulling Billy Bunter's egregious leg.

But as he set up the deckchair for

Bunter, they saw what he was up to—though Bunter, standing in front of the chair, did not.

Before one of those folding chairs could be sat in with comfort or safety, the rear rail had to be lodged securely in the notches.

Bob did not lodge it in the notches. He put it carefully on top of the notches, resting lightly, so that it would inevitably slide down as soon as the chair was sat in.

Four fellows smiled cheerily, and waited for results.

"That all right, sir?" asked Bob.

"Shift it a bit more out of the sun," said Bunter. "Don't be a fool!"

By this time, Bunter really fancied that Bob was carrying out his orders. So it was like Bunter to spread himself.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Certainly, sir!"

"Have a little sense!" snapped Bunter.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"I mean to say, if you're going to be any use to me, you'll have to try not to be such a fool!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! I mean, certainly, sir! Certainly!"

Bob placed the deckchair to Bunter's satisfaction—with a careful eye on its rear, to make sure that it was ready to slip and collapse when sat on.

"That do, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, that's all right!"

"Then please sit down, sir!" said Bob meekly.

Bunter sat down.

He sat down, as usual, with a heavy plump! He landed like a ton of coke in the canvas chair.

It collapsed immediately, and shut up under Bunter!

Bump!

"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter.

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"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fantous Five.

Bunter sat on the deck, with the chair flat under him. He had sat hard, and he had sat heavily! The bump almost shook the Flamingo.

Bunter did not seem to have expected that. Really, he might have! But he hadn't! He was taken quite by surprise.

"Oooogh!" he gasped. "Ow! Ooooh! You silly fathead—ooogh! Wooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That all right, sir?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! You beast! Wow! Oooogh!" spluttered Bunter. "You never made the chair safe, you silly idiot! Why, you beast, I—I believe you never meant to—ooogh!"

"He's guessed it!" gasped Bob. "What a brain!"

"The brainfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter scrambled off the collapsed deckchair.

He wriggled as he gained his feet. He gasped for breath, and glared at the yelling juniors with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Want any more waiting on, sir?" asked Bob. "Shall I set the chair up again—same as before?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter set the chair up for himself. He squatted in it, gasping for breath and frowning with a frown that was like unto the frightful, fearful, frantic frown of the Lord High Executioner!

But he did not seem to want any

more waiting on. He was already fed up with being waited on by Bob Cherry.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Caught In The Act!

"YOU feller Totua!"

Lord Mauleverer jumped. His lordship was half-way down the companion when those words fell on his noble ears.

It was sunset on the Pacific; and in the cool of the evening Bob Cherry always full of beans, had suggested leap-frog on deck. Four other fellows were ready for leap-frog, or anything else; Mauly was not. Strenuous exertion never appealed to Mauly.

So his lazy lordship had quietly slipped down the companion before he could be called on to tuck in his noble tuppenny.

But half-way down, he stopped.

On a settee in the cabin Billy Bunter was sprawling. Totua, the cook, steward, and several other things, was busy clearing the supper-table. Billy Bunter was blinking at him through his spectacles.

Mauly paused in dismay. On deck, there was leap-frog—in the cabin, there was Bunter! Leap-frog on deck did not appeal to his lordship—but still less did conversation with Bunter in the cabin! Quite a little conversation from Bunter was enough for Mauly.

So he paused, undecided whether to continue on his way down and make the best of Bunter, or whether to return to the deck and make the best of the leap-frog.

And as he paused there, he heard the surprising words:

"You feller Totua!"

The words themselves were not surprising. It was the voice in which they were uttered. For that voice was, unless Mauly's ears deceived him, the voice of Ka-a-hua-ha-hina, the Raiatean skipper of the Flamingo, who was on deck.

Again, there was nothing surprising in Captain Ka calling to the cook from the deck! But, in this particular case, it was very surprising, for Mauly had left Captain Ka standing by the binnacle, talking to the man at the wheel; and he was nowhere near the companion, or Mauly would have seen him from where he stood.

It was altogether astonishing for a disembodied voice to make itself suddenly heard.

Totua evidently heard it, for he turned from the table and glanced round towards the companion. Apparently he had no doubt that the calling voice came from that direction.

"Yessar!" he called back.

"You hear me, you feller Totua, ear belong you?" went on the voice.

"Yessar, me hear, ear belong me!" answered the cook.

"You take big-feller lawyer-cane, Totua, you come along deck. You plenty kill that feller Cherry along lawyer-cane."

Totua jumped.

Mauly, in the companion, jumped also.

The cook was astonished by the order, though, as he knew his skipper's voice, he had no doubt that the order came from Captain Ka.

But an order to take a lawyer-cane on deck and thrash one of the white masters almost made Totua doubt his brown ears.

"Oh, sar," he gasped, "takee lawyer-cane along deck, along kill feller white master, sar!"

"You do all samee me tell you, you feller Totua, sponsee you no likee me knock seven bells outer you!"

"Yessar!" gasped the cook. "Me do all samee you sing out, sar!"

Amazed as he was by such an order, Totua was evidently going to carry it out. He looked round the cabin, and picked up a lawyer-cane.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

Totua had no doubt that Captain Ka had given him that amazing order. But from where he stood in the companion, Mauleverer was aware that Captain Ka was not calling down from the deck.

On the fat face of William George Bunter, sitting on the settee, was a fat grin; and Mauly, after the first moment of amazement, understood. The fat ventriloquist of Greyfriars was at his old game again.

This was Bunter's way of getting his own back for the deckchair incident that morning! It was easy work to the fat ventriloquist; though it had, apparently, taken him all day to think of it.

But for the fact that Mauly was in the companion, no doubt Bunter would have got by with this. Totua was starting for the companion, with the lawyer-cane in his brown hand, evidently going on deck to "kill" the white master Cherry with the same. Kill, in the beche-de-mer, meant to beat or punish; the real meaning of the word being expressed by "kill-dead."

Totua, in the full belief that his skipper had ordered him to do so, was going on deck to pitch into Bob with the lawyer-cane—astonished as he was

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by receiving such an order from Captain Ka.

Billy Bunter grinned serenely. He would have preferred to punch Bob's nose had it been, so to speak, punishable. But a jolly good whopping with a lawyer-cane was the next best thing. As to what would happen to the unfortunate Totua afterwards, Bunter had not thought of that.

Lord Mauleverer's face set grimly as he came down the remaining steps of the companion ladder.

He pushed Totua back.

"Hold on!" he said.

"No can, sar!" said Totua. "Master belong me sing out go along deck, sar. You no stop this feller Totua, sar!"

"I say, Mauly, get out of that nigger's way!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "He's got something to do on deck."

"You fat rascal!" roared Mauleverer.

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

"Give me that lawyer-cane, Totua."

"Takee lawyer-cane along deck, sar, samee master belong me sing out," said Totua.

"Master belong you no sing out!" explained Mauleverer. "That feller white master Bunter makee talk all samee master belong you."

Totua stared blankly at Lord Mauleverer.

"No tinkee, sar!" he answered incredulously.

Mauleverer jerked the lawyer-cane from the brown hand.

"You go along deck, you speak along feller captain, him tell you he no sing out!" he said.

Totua eyed him, and went up the companion. Lord Mauleverer, gripping the lawyer-cane, stepped across the cabin towards Bunter. The expression on his lordship's face rather alarmed the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

"I—I say, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I say, don't you be a beast, you know! I wasn't pulling that nigger's leg—I—I've quite forgotten how to do ventriloquism since I've been out here! Besides, you know that beast made me come down wallop this morning! Look here, wharrer you going to do with that stick?"

"Whack!"

"Yaroooh!"

The fat Owl bounded off the settee.

Whack!

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Stoppit! Wow! I say, Mauly, old chap——"

Whack!

"Yarooop! I never did it!" yelled Bunter. "I tell you I never opened my mouth. Besides, it was only a joke! I never—yaroooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Billy Bunter dodged round the cabin table. After him rushed Mauleverer, still landing out with the lawyer-cane. On deck, Mauly had had no energy for leap-frog, but he seemed to have energy enough now. He laid on that lawyer-cane as if he were beating a carpet.

Bunter roared, and yelled, and fled for the companion.

Whack, whack, whack, came on his trousers, as he flew up—a whack at every step, and a wild yell at every whack.

This was what Bunter had planned for Bob Cherry—and it had seemed quite a jolly good idea to him. Personally, he did not care for it.

Yelling frantically, the fat Owl bolted out on deck, with Lord Mauleverer behind him, still whacking.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What the thump——"

"I say, you fellows—yaroooh!"

Whack, whack!

"Mauly, old man——" gasped Harry Wharton.

"My esteemed Mauly——"

Whack, whack!

"Yarooop! Help! Stoppin!" yelled Bunter wildly. "Oh crikey! Keep that beast off! Yaroooh!"

Bob Cherry, in amazement, caught Mauly by the arm.

"What the thump——" he gasped.

"Don't stop me!" gasped Mauleverer. "I haven't finished yet! Come back, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter was not likely to come back.

Lord Mauleverer gasped for breath.

"Think he's had enough, you fellows?" he asked.

"I'm sure Bunter thinks so," grinned Bob. "But what the dickens——"

"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter, dodging behind the Famous Five. "I say, you fellows, keep that mad ass off! It was all a mistake! I never did it! I've quite forgotten how to do ventriloquism."

"I'd better give him a few more——"

"Hold on!" gasped Bob. "Has that fat ass been ventriloquising?"

"Yaas."

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "I never told Totua to come up and whop you with that lawyer-cane, Bob, and he never thought it was the skipper telling him. It was all a mistake——"

"What!" roared Bob.

"I never did, old chap! Keep that beast off! Take that stick away from him!" howled Bunter. "Take it away, Bob, old chap!"

"Give me that stick, Mauly!"

Mauleverer handed over the lawyer-cane to Bob Cherry—much to Billy Bunter's relief.

But his relief was brief!

Whack, whack, whack!

Bunter roared.

"Why, you beast—keep off! You're a worse beast than Mauly—oh crikey! Oh! Yow! Wow! Wooooh!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooooooop!"

Billy Bunter's last state was worse than his first. He roared and bellowed, and jumped and dodged. All eyes on the Flamingo were turned on him, and the native crew were grinning. They seemed quite amused. Billy Bunter was not amused.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh crikey! Wow! Yow! Wow!"

The fat Owl, yelling, dodged below.

A bump, and a roar, were heard at the foot of the companion. Bunter had descended rather too hastily.

"Yoo-hoo-hooooop!"

There was no more ventriloquism from Billy Bunter. He was as fed-up with ventriloquism as the other fellows. His wrath was deep, and his indignation deeper; but no more mysterious voices were likely to be heard during that trip to Suva.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Night In The Fo'c'stle!

CLINK, clink!

It was a metallic sound, as Ysabel Dick, the beachcomber of Kalua, stirred, in the dusky fore-castle of the Flamingo.

He was sprawling on the steps that led up to the deck. The Dutchman lay in one of the bunks.

It was night again—deep, dark night. Stars glimmered on the rolling Pacific, but hardly a gleam penetrated into the dusky den where the manacled prisoners were quartered.

They had the fore-castle to themselves. In fine weather, the native crew hardly entered it, and the weather was fine and warm. The "watch below" of the Flamingo were sleeping on deck, on

their tapa mats. Before a light breeze, the schooner glided on her way, under the stars. Occasionally the soft pad of a bare foot was heard on deck—the rattle of a block, the creak of a boom, the rustle of a sail. In their quarters aft, Harry Wharton & Co. had long been in their bunks.

They slept soundly enough, but sleep did not come easily to the two wretches who were booked for prison at Suva. Another day, or at most two days, and the Flamingo would make the Fiji Islands, and they would be handed over to the law by Captain Ka. If either of them had hoped that, during the trip by sea, there might be a chance of escape, that hope had had to be abandoned.

Either of the desperate men would have taken the most desperate chances. But no chance had offered—save that of flinging themselves overboard, to death in the deep waters, which was not a chance they desired to take.

Clink, clink!

The metal clinked again, as the beachcomber stirred restlessly. From the bunk where Van Dink lay came a curse in Dutch. The night was hot—neither was sleeping.

At stated intervals, the prisoners were allowed on deck for exercise and air. Mr. McTab had given the skipper instructions to take no chances with them, but to deal with them as humanely as possible, without risking either of them getting loose. But at night, they had to remain in the fore-castle—and if they showed up on deck, they were likely to be put back in their quarters in the most unceremonious manner.

Only at meal-times were the irons unlocked on their wrists, with the key carried by Captain Ka. And then half a dozen of the crew stood ready in case they attempted to give trouble. But even the savage Dutchman had been cowed, and he did not attempt to wreak his rage in a hopeless struggle. Except at those brief intervals, they remained ironed, and they had long since learned that there was no escape from the irons.

"No hope—no hope!" the beachcomber muttered half aloud, and he gave a low groan.

"Ach!" came in the darkness from the Dutchman. "Fool! You have a chance, if you would use it. You have only to speak to the schoolboy lord. If he knew the real name of Ysabel Dick——"

"Hold your tongue!" grunted the beachcomber.

"Fool! He would not let you go to prison if he knew——"

"He shall never know."

The Dutchman's piggy eyes peered at him with savage mockery in the gloom.

"Beggar and outcast and gaolbird, scum of the beaches, and you keep up your pride!" he jeered. "You will ask nothing at the hands of the boy. You will go to prison on Suva, rather, Fool!"

"To prison, or the bottom of the sea, rather!" snarled the man from Ysabel. "But even if he knew it would make no difference. It is you who are the fool, Van Dink."

"One of his own blood—of his own name——"

"And a disgrace to both; well got rid of when the prison doors close behind me!" sneered the beachcomber. "He would be glad to see me so safely disposed of if he knew."

"It is not so. I have seen the boy. I know him better than you do. He would do something for you if he knew."

"He shall never know."

The Dutchman grunted again contemptuously, and lay quiet.

The man from Ysabel shifted himself

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a little to put his head out of the opening above into the fresh air.

In the starlight he could see little but the sails, but he made out the still forms of sleeping Kanakas on their mats, and here and there a shadowy, moving figure of a native seaman. Then for a moment he saw the tall figure of Captain Ka-a-ha-hua-hina moving on the deck aft.

His eyes fixed on the Raiatean. In the pocket of Captain Ka's loose drill jacket was the key to the manacles. More than once desperate thoughts had passed through his mind of somehow making an attempt to get hold of that key. But it was hopeless—a vain, desperate thought.

Hope was dead in the breast of the outcast of Kalua.

But for the coming of Lord Mauleverer to Kalua-ahua-lalua, he would still have been combing the beach on Mauleverer's island, not even knowing that the island belonged to the school-boy earl.

He thought of Mauleverer, sleeping peacefully in his quarters aft, and gritted his teeth with rage.

One of the seamen noticed the haggard, stubbly face looking out, and made a movement towards him.

The beachcomber slid back into the fore-castle before the man could come across to him.

It was hot and stuffy in the fore-castle of the Flamingo. A can of water stood there, with a tin pannikin beside it. The beachcomber dipped the tin mug and drank. He could use his hands to that extent, in spite of the manacles that clinked with every movement.

"Ik heb ergen dorst!" grunted the Dutchman from the bunk. "Give me water."

The beachcomber snarled.

"Help yourself, you lazy fool!"

The Dutchman cursed him, and rolled heavily and clumsily out of the bunk. The steel chains on the irons on his sinewy wrists clinked and clinked.

Ysabel Dick crawled up the steps again and put his head out into the fresh air. At the risk of being seen and kicked back into his den, he crawled out to stretch himself on the deck near the sleeping Kanakas.

The Dutchman, cursing, rolled back into his bunk.

The beachcomber lay on the deck under the stars. It was a relief to be in the fresh air, and he lay quiet, hoping to escape attention.

But when he stirred unconsciously there was a clink of the steel chain that connected the iron bracelets on his wrists, and it caught the ears of one of the crew. A shadowy Kanaka loomed over him.

"You go back along place belong you!" snapped the seaman, and he stirred the beachcomber with a big brown toe in his ribs.

Ysabel Dick glared up at him like a savage animal, and, forgetting prudence, kicked at him.

There was a loud howl from the Kanaka, as the kick landed on his shin.

"You bad-feller too much!" he gasped.

He grasped the beachcomber with both hands to fling him headlong back into the fore-castle.

In blind and savage rage, Ysabel Dick kicked again and struck out with both his manacled hands.

The struggle drew the attention of all the crew on deck, some of the sleepers sitting up on their mats and staring.

Captain Ka came striding forward with a knitted brow.

"What name—" he snapped.

Then, as he saw the enraged beach-

comber struggling with the native seaman, he grasped him and spun him away towards the fore-castle door.

The seaman was left rubbing an aching shin. The beachcomber, panting with rage, swung away in the Kanaka skipper's powerful grasp.

"You stop along place belong you, my word!" snapped Captain Ka. And he pitched the beachcomber headlong in.

Ysabel Dick, mad with rage, clutched at him like a wildcat. There was a yell from Captain Ka, as he stumbled and fell after the beachcomber. They crashed together into the dusky fore-castle.

"Ach!" parted Van Dink, staring from the bunk at the struggling figures on the floor.

"Help me, Van Dink!" yelled the beachcomber. "Help me, you hound!" He was fighting like a wildcat in the skipper's grasp.

"Fool!" snarled Van Dink.

It was futile to join in a scuffle with his hands ironed, though the beachcomber had forgotten it in his mad rage. The Dutchman remained in his bunk.

Manacled as the outcast of Kalua was, and no match for the skipper had his hands been free, the struggle lasted several minutes. Twice, thrice they rolled over on the floor.

Then Captain Ka wrenched himself loose, flinging the outcast on the planks. He staggered up, panting with wrath.

The beachcomber, exhausted, breathless, glared up at him. The Kanaka skipper glared down.

"My word! This feller knock seven bells out of you!" gasped Captain Ka. He shouted to the deck. "You feller boy, you bring feller stick along me!"

For the next few minutes there was a sound of lashing in the fore-castle, the beachcomber squirming and howling under the lashes.

The Dutchman looked on stolidly from his bunk.

"Now you savvy no makee hand to long you stop along this feller Ka-a-ha-hua-hina!" said Captain Ka, as he ceased to lay on the lawyer-cane; and he went back to the deck, leaving the outcast of Kalua gasping and groaning.

Ysabel Dick lay where he was—too exhausted and too aching to move for a long time. That outbreak of insensate rage had cost him dear.

For a long hour he lay, hardly stirring, groaning from time to time. There was a heavy snore from the bunk. The Dutchman had gone to sleep. Ysabel Dick was not likely to sleep.

He moved at last, to drag himself to his feet. His knee, as he put it to the floor, jarred on something that lay there, and he muttered a feeble curse as it hurt his knee.

He shifted his knee, and something that glimmered like metal caught his eyes in the glimmer of the lamp that was turned low.

Ysabel Dick caught his breath.

For a long moment he stared at the faintly glimmering bit of metal, hardly daring to believe what his eyes told him. Then, with his heart beating so hard that it almost suffocated him, he groped for the little object with his hands. His fingers closed on it convulsively.

It was a key!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Desperate Measures!

"ACH!" grunted Van Dink.

He stirred in his bunk as he was shaken.

His piggy eyes opened, and he dimly made out the stubbly, seamed

face of the beachcomber of Kalua, ablaze with wild excitement.

"Wake!" breathed Ysabel Dick.

"Ach! Ik heb slaap—"

"Fool! Blockhead! Wake!" hissed the beachcomber. "Look—fool—look!" He held up the key before the blinking, heavy eyes of the Dutchman. "Look—and wake, fool and blockhead that you are!"

The slow-witted Dutchman stared at him, not understanding. The man from Ysabel hissed in his ear:

"Dolt! It is the key! The key! Do you understand, fool? The Raiatean dropped it here—"

"Ach!" gasped Van Dink.

"It must have slipped from his pocket while I was struggling with him. Do you understand, brute?"

Van Dink understood then. He half-raised himself in the bunk, his light eyes glittering in the gloom. He breathed hard and deep.

"The key!" he whispered. "Ach! The key!"

"Yes, yes! Give me your hands—quick! Make no sound! He has not missed it, but if he misses it—quick!"

There was a faint sound of clicking. Ysabel Dick lifted the unlocked manacles from the hairy wrists of the Dutchman, and laid them noiselessly in the bunk. Then he pressed the key into Van Dink's hand.

"Quick!" he breathed.

A minute more and his irons were unlocked and he was free.

The Dutchman clambered out of the bunk, his piggy eyes gleaming. What the prisoners of the Flamingo had hoped for, longed for, but never dreamed might come to pass, had happened—by the wildest chance. The key had slipped from the pocket of the loose drill jacket, as Captain Ka rolled over in that struggle with the beachcomber, unheard in the noise of the scuffle, unnoticed in the dark. For a whole hour it had lain where it had fallen. Evidently the Raiatean had not missed it, or thought of it. A whole hour had been lost; but now that the outcast of Kalua had the key he was losing no time.

So far as captain and crew knew, the two prisoners in the fore-castle were still in irons, unable to use their hands, unable to move without a tell-tale clink of steel. But they were free—free to take any desperate measures; and no measures could be too desperate for the two wretches booked for prison at Suva.

"Ach!" breathed the Dutchman. His little eyes gleamed and danced in his fat face. "We are not at Suva yet—they will not land us at Suva!"

"Quiet!" muttered the beachcomber. He was shaking from head to foot with suppressed excitement. "I never dreamed of such luck as this—take care not to give the alarm or we are lost."

The Dutchman lifted his head and shot a swift glance to the deck. There was no sign of alarm there. All was quiet on the deck of the schooner, as she surged at hardly three knots through the starry sea.

He looked at Ysabel Dick and there was a grin on his fat, brutal face.

Brute and ruffian as the Dutch free-booter was, he had plenty of courage—the unreflecting brute courage of a savage animal. More daring thoughts were passing through his mind than through that of the panting beachcomber.

"Ach! We are in luck—ach!" he breathed. "Ach! They shall pay for the days and nights in the island gaol—ach!"

"A boat!" whispered Ysabel Dick.
 "A boat!" repeated Van Dink.
 "If we could get hold of a boat—"
 "Neen, neen!"
 "If we cannot, we must risk a swim! I'm ready to risk it—anything to get loose—the sharks sooner than the prison at Suva! If we make an island—"

"Fool!" breathed the Dutchman contemptuously. "That is death! We are not leaving the Flamingo, fool! Ach! Now that my hands are free—"

Ysabel Dick peered at him.
 "What do you mean, Van Dink?" he muttered hoarsely. "They will find we are loose, at dawn at latest, and it is not far from dawn now! Do you want to be locked in the irons again, madman?"

The Dutchman gave a low, savage chuckle.

"We have an hour of darkness yet!" he grinned. "In a dark hour much may be done when the hands are free!"

"What do you mean? What—"
 "It is our turn now!" breathed the freebooter. "Do you not understand, fool? To swim is death—we cannot seize a boat—ach! That skipper carries a revolver, and do you not think that he would fire on us the moment we are seen loose—"

"I will risk it!"
 "Neen! Neen! Leave it to me—you are trembling—"

"If I am trembling, it is with excitement, and hope! Do you think my heart fails me, brute?" snarled the beachcomber. "I will face all that you will face, and more."

"Hearken, then!" muttered the Dutchman. "The skipper is on deck—the mate below! If I could reach him—"

"He would shoot you dead at sight—what madness are you dreaming of?" muttered the beachcomber, huskily. "We have a chance to escape—"

"Escape!" jeered Van Dink. "Ach, it is not of escape that I think! It is of vengeance—it is of taking the ship." "Taking the ship!"

"You have called me, many times, brute and fool!" sneered the Dutchman. "It is you who are fool, if not coward as well. I tell you, if I reach the skipper and strike him down—and why not, as he knows nothing, suspects nothing—"

Ysabel Dick caught his breath.
 "Once let me get a grip on his revolver, and we will not think of escape!" breathed Van Dink. "The crew—I will drive them like sheep with a gun in my hand! All depends on that!"

"Oh!" muttered the beachcomber. He leaned on a bunk, gasping for breath. He understood the wild and desperate thoughts in the mind of the Dutchman. Not escape—but victory and vengeance: now that he was free to use his hands.

And there was a chance! There was at least a chance. The thought of it dazzled the outcast of Kalua.

Not escape—but turning the tables on the enemy! A ship to sail where he chose, and Lord Mauleverer at his mercy! With luck—

The Dutchman's piggy eyes peered at him.

"You understand? If you have the courage—"

"Fool! I would face a thousand deaths for such a chance! Leave it to me—you are a clumsy brute, you would never reach him undetected—I have a chance—"

"Ach! Once my hands were on his throat—"

"Listen to me, Van Dink! When we sailed together, I left you because I would not stand for what you did! You will do no murder on this ship, you

villain! If we have to fight, that is a different matter—you will not find me wanting then; but you will do no murder, you scoundrel!"

The Dutchman clenched his sinewy hands. The beachcomber's face, pale, set, threatening, was close to his in the gloom.

"Do you think I fear you, brute?" snarled Ysabel Dick. "You will take orders from me—do you hear, you dog? If all goes well, I will make you rich—that is why you came to Kalua to find me, and that is enough for you! You take orders from me, brute! Now be silent and leave it to me."

He crept up from the forecabin.
 The Dutchman, quivering with rage, watched him. But he controlled his fury. A dispute, at that moment, meant discovery and recapture.

He knew, too, that the slim, wiry beachcomber had a better chance of success in the attempt to reach the skipper, aft, and disarm him. It was not the herculean strength and bull-like ferocity of the Dutchman that were required—it was silence and cunning and caution. It was the Dutchman who had formed that wild and desperate scheme—but the beachcomber was the man to carry it out, if it could be carried out at all. Breathing Dutch curses under his breath, the freebooter remained in the forecabin, watching and waiting, and listening in tense anxiety.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Upper Hand!

YSABEL DICK made no sound as he crawled on the dusky deck. There was no tell-tale clink of manacles to betray him now.

His heart beat fast; but he was cool. The wild excitement of the first moments of freedom had passed—he was cool as ice. And he needed all his coolness, all his resource.

One sound of alarm and he would be seized, and the Dutchman seized in his turn, in many hands and overpowered. Neither would Captain Ka have hesitated to shoot had it been necessary. All depended on caution—on making cunning use of the fact that he was free of his irons, and his freedom as yet unknown and unsuspected.

There were sleepers on the mats on the shadowy deck. Ysabel Dick lay down near them and waited, watched, and listened. He had to reach the after-deck undetected—no easy task, dark as it was, and unsuspected as he was. And he had to find some weapon. He was of no use in a hand-to-hand struggle with the powerful Raiatean. Even had he been, a minute's struggle would have lost everything. He had to be silent and swift. With something in his hand, one blow from behind would settle the matter—if he had luck! He was going to have luck if cunning and caution could do it.

The attempt was desperate—wildly desperate! Yet, desperate as it was, it was the only chance! It was impossible to get a boat away undiscovered; and to take to the water was almost certain death, with the schooner probably hundreds of miles from land. Escape, which was all that he had thought of when first he was loose from the irons, was impossible without success—and success in this, meant that escape was not needed—he would be master of the Flamingo.

A shadowy figure moved and he hardly breathed. But, lying there in the dark, silent, he was taken for one of the sleeping seamen, if he was

noticed at all. The shadow disappeared again.

Then one of the sleeping Kanakas stirred on his mat and again the beachcomber's heart throbbed. But the man only turned over and went to sleep again, a fuzzy head pillowed on a brown arm.

Ysabel Dick stirred again. He moved more like a serpent than a man as he crawled in the dark. He stopped again in the deep shadow of a boat.

The Flamingo carried two boats—a whaleboat and a dinghy. It was by the latter that the beachcomber was now silently crouching.

He remained there motionless, for a full minute, before he ventured to rise to his feet. It was likely enough that eyes had fallen on him, but in the gloom he was naturally taken for one of the crew.

His hand groped; and he breathed satisfaction as he found that the tiller was in its place in the dinghy. He unhooked it and sank down into the shadows again.

He had now a weapon in his hand to use as a bludgeon. His grip closed on it tenaciously.

He moved again.
 The following minutes were full of anxiety that amounted almost to anguish. But though he knew that the glimmer of dawn was not far away he did not hasten his movements. But it seemed to him an age before he was crouching in the shadow of the mainmast, listening to the sound of the Raiatean's voice as he spoke to the Kanaka at the wheel.

Crouching, he watched, and noted that there was a sleeping figure in the long cane chair near the cabin skylight. He had assumed that the mate was below while the captain was taking his watch on deck. He realised now that the Fijian mate was taking his "watch below" above decks like the crew. The man was sleeping; but it was an added danger, for there was no doubt that he would wake at a sound.

But there was no possibility of retreat for the desperate man who crouched with the dinghy's tiller gripped in his hand. It was neck or nothing for the man who was booked for prison at Suva if he failed.

His eyes were on the Raiatean skipper. Captain Ka looked at the binnacle, and then spoke to the steersman again. Then he moved along the deck, and the beachcomber's heart almost ceased to beat, for Captain Ka was coming directly towards him.

No chance now of taking him from behind with a sudden blow, as he had planned. In an instant the skipper would see him. Luck, which had befriended him so long, had failed.

"What name you stop along this place?"

The skipper had seen him, but did not recognise him in the deep shadow. He had taken him for one of the crew off duty, sleeping on deck—only supposing that the man had come farther aft than a seaman was expected to do.

The next moment Captain Ka stirred him with his foot.

"You go back along forward deck!" he rapped.

He was not discovered yet! He had a few seconds!

One was enough—for he had to take the chance now before the Raiatean realised—as he was certain to do in a few seconds—that the dark figure under the rail was not one of the crew.

The beachcomber shut his teeth and leaped.

He leaped like a tiger.
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In a split second he was on his feet, the tiller crashing, and the blow caught the Rajatean full on the forehead.

Even as it fell, Captain Ka realised his danger, and grabbed at the revolver in his hip pocket. But it was too late. That terrible blow sent him collapsing backwards, and he dropped on the deck with a heavy thud, the revolver half-drawn, his senses scattered. He fell, and lay like a log.

There was a startled howl from the man at the wheel. The Fijian mate sat up in the long chair, rubbing his eyes.

The beachcomber groped over the fallen captain. Hardly a second, and the revolver was in his hand.

He whirled round at the mate. Staring at him blankly, the Fijian jumped from the chair. The starlight was dim, but the beachcomber was full in his sight, and the Fijian knew him—knew that it was one of the prisoners of the fore-castle who stood in front of him with the captain's revolver in his hand.

"What name—" gasped the mate.

Without finishing the question, he leaped from the chair.

"Stand back," snarled Ysabel Dick, "or—"

He had no time for more. He fired, with the mate's grasp almost upon him, and the Fijian rolled over on the deck, yelling, with a bullet in his leg.

The Dutchman would have shot him through the heart. But even at that wild moment the man who had sunk so low balked at the last and most terrible of crimes. Low enough he had sunk on the Pacific beaches in lawless ships, but there had never been blood on his hands.

The Fijian lay groaning, unable to rise. The captain lay like a log, stunned and senseless. The steersman stared with bulging eyes from a brown face, almost releasing the wheel in his amazement and terror.

Ysabel Dick spun round at him with a snarl.

"Keep her steady, fool!"

The Kanaka gasped.

"Yessar!"

He grasped the spokes again, but his eyes remained on the man from Ysabel in amazement and terror.

"Van Dink!" shouted Ysabel Dick.

There was a sound of voices from below—the shot had alarmed the whole ship. Both watches on deck were in a startled buzz. But it was unnecessary for the beachcomber to shout to his confederate. At the sound of the shot the Dutchman came hurtling from the fore-castle. He was more than ready. Almost in a moment the ruffian had snatched a belaying-pin from the pin-rail, and was glaring round at the amazed crew, who started back from him in amazed alarm.

"Ach!" The Dutchman grinned with savage glee as he joined the beachcomber. "Ach, then, you have done it!"

He gave the senseless captain a brutal kick, the steersman a glare that made the Kanaka gasp with terror, and then, turning on the mate, swung up the belaying-pin.

Ysabel Dick thrust him backwards—thrusting the muzzle of the revolver against his brawny chest.

"Stop that brute!" he snarled.

"Fool—to make all safe—"

"I will shoot you dead, Van Dink, if you touch him!"

"Fool!" muttered the Dutchman. But he backed away from the revolver, and the glaring fierce eyes over it.

Ysabel Dick stooped over the

wounded man and secured his revolver. The Dutchman held out a hand for it—the beachcomber dropped it into his own pocket.

The Dutchman spluttered rage.

"Fool! They are coming—give me the gun!" He choked with rage.

There was a pattering of bare feet as the Kanaka crew came running aft in a bunch.

The beachcomber lifted the revolver and fired twice—grazing brown limbs with the bullets, and the rush stopped at once. Then, as the Kanakas hung hesitating, the Dutchman rushed at them like a savage wild bull, crashing the belaying-pin right and left on fuzzy heads.

There were more than a dozen of the Kanakas, but they scattered before the ruffian, scuttling about the deck to escape his savage blows.

"Ach!" grinned the Dutchman. "We are masters here!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Alarm In The Night!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Even Billy Bunter had awakened.

The Famous Five had turned out of their bunks. Lord Mauleverer sat up. The ringing of shots above deck—the sound of many startled voices—was surprising and alarming in the darkness of the night.

Harry Wharton struck a match.

The light flickered on startled faces.

"What on earth's up?" breathed Bob Cherry. "That was shooting!"

"Something's up!" said Harry. He lighted the swinging lamp in the cabin.

"Can't be trouble with the prisoners," said Nugent.

"How could it? They're in irons! Some sort of trouble with the crew, I suppose. Blessed if I make it out!" said Harry. "But the sooner we know what's up, the better!"

Trampling footsteps—loud howls and shouts—sounded on the deck above. Whatever it was that was "up," it was clear that it was something serious.

The juniors bundled hastily into their clothes.

Half-dressed, Harry Wharton went up the companion to look out on the deck. All was dark there, though there was in the eastern sky the first faint glimmer of coming dawn.

The first object that met his eyes was the Kanaka boatswain, Kuloo, lying on the deck, holding both hands to his head, half-stunned.

Wharton stared at him blankly, and then his glance shot round. Dim as it was, he could see two figures that lay prone on the after-deck—one quite still, the other moving and groaning. He knew that they were the captain and the mate. But his eyes went at once to the two men who were standing—the beachcomber, with a revolver in his hand, the burly Dutchman, with a belaying-pin. His eyes fairly started at what he saw.

The fierce little piggy eyes of the Dutchman fell on him.

Van Dink did not speak—but he came with a rush towards the school-boy, the belaying-pin lifted for a blow.

Harry Wharton sprang back into the companion just in time. The bull-voice of the Dutchman roared after him.

"Ach! You come up, if you choose! You will find new masters here!" A harsh mocking laugh followed.

Wharton dropped back quickly into the cabin, his face pale. His friends looked at him—they had heard the Dutchman's roar.

"That villain—" breathed Johnny Bull.

Wharton caught his breath.

"They're loose!" he breathed. "Goodness knows how—but they're loose, and I saw both of them! They've knocked out Captain Ka and the mate—they've got the ship!"

"Oh my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Oh crikey!" came from Billy Bunter. "Oh lor'! I wish I hadn't come on this beastly schooner! I wish—"

"Shut up, fathead!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh lor'! Oh dear! Ow!"

Lord Mauleverer turned out of his bunk. His lordship's face was very startled. But he was calm.

"They've got the ship?" he repeated.

"Looks like it, at least," answered Harry Wharton. "It must have been Ysabel Dick who was firing—he had a revolver in his hand. I saw one of the crew knocked out! The Kanakas cannot handle those scoundrels."

Lord Mauleverer whistled softly.

"How the dickens could they have got loose?" muttered Bob. "The irons were locked on them—the captain carried the key! McTab never doubted that they were safe."

"Goodness knows! But they're loose! They've got the ship—unless the crew get the best of them! And they won't." "Not likely."

The juniors looked at one another, their faces pale, their hearts beating fast. They had gone to bed that night cheerfully, looking forward to the morrow, never dreaming of trouble on the voyage. The morrow had not yet come—but this had come!

It was not easy for them to realise how complete and terrible a change had taken place on the Flamingo.

Not for a moment had they ever dreamed that there was danger of the prisoners in the fore-castle getting loose. Not for a moment had Mr. McTab dreamed of it. It seemed impossible.

And, even if by some miraculous chance they got loose, no one could have foreseen that they could possibly get the upper hand of the captain and mate, both of whom were armed with firearms, which they certainly would not have hesitated to use if attacked.

What had happened seemed almost unbelievable.

But there was no doubt about what Harry Wharton had seen; no doubt about that savage roar from the Dutchman. Ysabel Dick and Van Dink were masters of the schooner.

The juniors moved to the foot of the companion. There they could hear a voice above.

"You feller boy!"

It was Ysabel Dick speaking to the steersman.

"Yessar!" came an affrighted gasp.

"You stop along wheel! Keep her steady! You 'bey order along me all samee along Captain Ka."

"Yessar! This feller good boy along you, sar!"

"S'pose you no good boy along me, you kill-dead close-up!" snapped the voice of the beachcomber of Kalua.

"Oh, sar, this feller velly good boy along you, along feller Dussman; too much good boy along you, sar!"

The juniors listened in grim silence. What they heard showed them how little the two desperadoes had to fear from the native crew. A white man with a revolver in his hand was more than equal to keeping a Kanaka crew in subjection—if he were prepared to use it! There could be little doubt that Ysabel Dick was!

"That tears it!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the juniors stood silent.



Fast in the grip of the burly skipper, the beachcomber was fighting like a wild-cat. "Help me, Van Dink," he yelled. "Help me, you hound!" "Fool!" snarled Van Dink from the bunk. Manacled as they were, he could see that to struggle was futile!

The Dutchman's harsh voice was heard.

"Ach! We have them feeding from the hand! Did I not tell you? But give me a gun! Do you hear? Give me a gun!"

"I will give you a bullet, Van Dink, if you get your ears up! Chew on that, you ruffian!" came the beachcomber's snarl.

"Ach! There are other firearms aboard—it is but to seek—"

"You will not touch them! You're taking your orders from me, Van Dink! I will not shoot a man on this ship if I can help it—but I will shoot you like a dog if you try any of your old games here! Fool and brute that you are, do you want to put that bull-neck of yours into a rope?"

"Ach! But I tell you—"

"Fool! You waste time! Get those two forward and lock the irons on them! They can take their turn in the irons, and it will keep them safe."

A harsh, sardonic laugh was heard from the Dutchman. His good humour seemed to be restored by the idea of putting the captain and mate into the irons from which the prisoners had escaped.

"Ach! That is good!" he chuckled. "And I will see that no key is dropped in the fore-castle again—they will never get such a chance! But the schoolboys, they—"

"They can wait! Get these men safe!"

"Ja, ja!"

The Dutchman was heard to roar:

"You feller boy, you comey carry feller captain, feller mate, along fore-castle, plenty too quick!"

The juniors listened with their hearts beating rather painfully. If the Kanakas obeyed that order it was clear

that the desperadoes had them, as Van Dink said, feeding from the hand.

And the order was obeyed at once. Pattering bare feet sounded on the deck, followed by the heavy tramp of the Dutchman, going forward.

Bob Cherry set his lips.

"Our turn next!" he said. "But—"

"Ready, you men!" called out Lord Mauleverer from the cabin.

"What—"

"Oh! Good man, Mauly!"

Lord Mauleverer, by the light of the cabin lamp, was unpacking rifles from a case and sorting out cartridges. Billy Bunter, from his bunk, watched him with eyes wide and round, goggling behind his spectacles.

"I—I—I say, you fellows!" stuttered Bunter.

But the Famous Five did not heed Bunter. What terrible peril lay ahead of them they hardly knew, but from the Dutchman, at least, they knew that they had only savage ferocity to expect. And Mauly, at least, had bitter hostility to expect from the beachcomber.

So far they could only surmise what might be the intentions of the desperadoes towards them; but whatever was coming, the Famous Five of Greyfriars had courage to face it, and with arms in their hands they were ready to defend themselves.

But their hearts were beating hard as the glimmering light of dawn grew clearer over the skylight.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Master of the Flamingo!

YSABEL DICK looked over the sea, brightening in the strengthening light of dawn, and his seamed, sunburned face was gloating.

Strange and startling as was that

sudden change in his fortunes, the outcast of Kalua had already dismissed the past and was thinking of the future.

Already the course of the Flamingo was changed.

She was no longer making the Fiji group, southward. Under her new masters the Flamingo was not likely to raise Sava. The first thought of both the desperadoes was to get into the loneliest waters at the safest possible distance from a British gunboat.

The Kanaka crew jumped to orders at the roar of the Dutchman, backed up by a brawny fist or a capstan bar. That was how Van Dink had been accustomed to handle a crew when he sailed his own ship.

It was possible that the crew would have turned on the Dutchman, huge and powerful and terrifying as he was. There were more than enough of them to overcome the burly ruffian. It was the revolver in Ysabel Dick's hand that kept them from thinking of making the attempt. The beachcomber could have shot them down like so many rabbits if they turned on his confederate, and there was no doubt that he would have done so with the alternative of going back to his irons.

No thought of resistance was in the minds of the crew. Almost every man had already had a savage blow from the Dutch freebooter, and they jumped to his orders with alacrity for fear of more.

Captain Ka, in the fore-castle, had come to his senses, only to find himself locked in irons. The mate, groaning from his wound, lay in a bunk, also ironed. They had taken the place of the prisoners and were helpless. Van Dink had closed the scuttle on them, and not

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(Continued from page 13.)

one of the crew ventured to open it, or even to approach it. The ruffian had them, as he had said, feeding from the hand!

Ysabel Dick's eyes were dancing. He was master now! Lord Mauleverer was below—at his mercy! The Dutchman would have flung the schoolboy earl into the Pacific without a thought of compunction.

No such thought was in the beachcomber's mind. But he had his own plans—plans that he had striven to carry out on Kalua, and which had failed, and left him a prisoner in irons. But he would not fail now. He could sail the Flamingo where he chose. He could seek out the loneliest uninhabited atoll in the Pacific to maroon the schoolboy earl of Greyfriars; Lord Mauleverer was going to disappear from all knowledge. And then—

Only Van Dink knew how the outcast of Kalua hoped to benefit by the disappearance of Mauleverer and by his presumed death. Mauleverer knew his plans, for he had been in his hands; but he did not know his motive, and could not begin to guess what it was.

Whatever it was, the thought of success made the outcast's eyes dance. The rising sun shone down on a face of grinning satisfaction.

There was a howl forward. Totua the cook, coming out of his galley, had been kicked across the deck by the Dutchman. Van Dink followed him up, kicking again and again, the cook yelling frantically.

Ysabel Dick stared round.

"Stop that, Van Dink!" he shouted angrily.

Van Dink gave the howling cook a final kick and tramped aft. He gave the beachcomber a truculent glare. There had been a time when the man from Ysabel had sailed under his orders, and taking orders from him irked the savage ruffian.

But there was something in Ysabel Dick that daunted the brawny bully, in spite of his ferocity and brutality.

Ysabel Dick was, in fact, hardly the same man that the Greyfriars fellows had seen on the beach of Kalua, and despised as a worthless, drunken, disgraceful loafer and slacker.

The days he had passed in the island gaol, before the sailing of the Flamingo, had done him good. It was more than a week since a single drop of liquor had passed the beachcomber's lips. He had had time to work most of the poison out of his system. He was still a young man, though his way of life had made him look old and seamed and haggard. Youth seemed to be coming back to him now.

Freedom, hope, anticipated triumph, exhilarated him. But none of these bucked him so much as the absence of his usual "squaŕe-face." His wretched inside was no longer a battle-ground of disagreeing chemicals. His nerves were stronger, his eyes clearer, his mind steadier.

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He had taken the upper hand of his brutal associate, as if as a matter of course. Van Dink, who could have killed him with a blow of his heavy, brawny fist, chafed savagely under it. Every moment he was on the verge of a savage outbreak.

"You give me orders!" he growled as he came aft. "Ach, look you here, you will not give me orders! On the Shark, it was I that gave the orders—and do you think that I take orders on this ship?"

"I shall give you orders, Van Dink, and you will obey them!" said Ysabel Dick coolly. "And if you raise your hand to me, I will shoot you dead on the deck!"

The ruffian was clenching his hands. He unclenched them again. His piggy eyes burned at the beachcomber under his heavy brows.

"On the Shark, all those years ago, you were skipper, and I was mate," went on Ysabel Dick. "I left you because I would not stand for your brutality. Here I am giving orders. You stand to make more out of me than you ever made in years of pearl poaching and slave-trading—let that suffice. Keep your vile temper in check. We are not through yet!"

"All is in our hands!" grunted the Dutchman sullenly, "and if you take my advice, you will put the boy over the side before the sun is a foot higher in the sky."

"No one on this schooner will go over the side, unless it is you, with a bullet in your thick skull!" answered Ysabel Dick. "Fool! We are not out of the wood yet! If there is a mischance, do you want to be hanged at Suva?"

"Ach! I have risked it often enough!" growled the Dutchman. "But have your own way! We stand in together in what is coming—when you are rich, I shall be rich also; I shall see to that! And when you are finished with this schooner, you will leave it in my hands."

Ysabel Dick shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, if you are fool enough to sail a stolen ship."

"It will not be the first time!" grinned the Dutchman. "I shall change her looks—that is an old game with me! Do you think that the brig Shark, that we sailed in together, was bought for money down! Ach! If dead men could tell tales, you would learn different. Leave that to me! But the boy—"

"The boy will be safe on the island we are heading for," said the beachcomber sourly. "He will vanish from all human knowledge, and that will answer my purpose."

"And his friends?" grunted the Dutchman. "They will talk—"

"They will not be heard, if they talk," snapped Ysabel Dick. "They have chosen to stand by him, and share his fate—they have left me no choice now—they will be marooned on Spanish Reef along with him. What else can I do?" The outcast of Kalua seemed to be rather arguing with himself, than talking to the Dutchman; wrestling, perhaps, with the rag of conscience that his way of life had left him. "It is that, or the deep sea—and they have driven me to it."

"The deep sea would be safer!" grinned the Dutchman.

"But for them, I should have taken the boy, when he was in my hands, at the old temple on Kalua!" went on the beachcomber, unheeding. "They beat me, and they must pay the penalty. They are in his company now, and they know too much to be allowed to go back to Kalua. What they talked of me would matter nothing—Ysabel Dick will

disappear, as completely as Lord Mauleverer—he will never be found in the South Seas, after this is through. They do not dream of my real name—I am safe there. But—"

"But they will know that Mauleverer lives."

"And that knowledge they must keep to themselves!" said Ysabel Dick grimly. "If Mauleverer lives, they must be kept silent—and there is only one way! They have chosen to share his fate—let them share it."

He turned away from the Dutchman and crossed to the companion.

The sun was high in the east now, bright day shining down on the rolling Pacific. The beachcomber's revolver was in his hand again, as he stopped at the companion and called down:

"Below there!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Come on deck, all of you!" rapped Ysabel Dick. "You know what has happened on this schooner—I am master here! Your lives are safe, if you give no trouble—but you are prisoners! Come on deck!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Facing The Music!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. exchanged glances.

They had been waiting for word from the desperadoes who were masters of the Flamingo, above decks. Now it had come. From the way Ysabel Dick spoke it was clear that there was no thought in his mind of resistance on the part of the schoolboys.

He was master of the schooner, with a deadly weapon in his hand, backed up by a brawny ruffian who would have asked nothing better than to crack their skulls with a capstan-bar. If Ysabel Dick looked for peril, it was from a sail on the sea, or the smoke of a gunboat. Captain and mate were in irons, the crew were under his orders—the schoolboys simply waiting in the cabin until he decided to deal with them. That was the view of the man from Ysabel—which he was soon to learn was ill-founded.

Standing at the foot of the companion, Harry Wharton looked up. He had a rifle in his hands, and as he stepped into the view of the man on deck, Ysabel Dick saw the firearm, and gave a slight start.

His eyes gleamed.

"I have ordered you on deck!" he said. "I have said that your lives are safe, if you give no trouble. But if you desire to live I warn you to jump to orders now that I am master here. Put down that rifle, you young fool, and do as I have told you."

"I shall not put down the rifle, and I shall obey no orders from you, you scoundrel!" answered the captain of the Greyfriars Remove quietly and steadily. "And I warn you that we are all armed, that we know how to shoot, and that we shall defend ourselves."

"Put down that rifle, and come up!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

Ysabel Dick made a movement with the revolver in his hand.

Wharton stepped back out of his sight.

"Do you want me to come down for you?" came the voice of the beachcomber, deep with angry passion.

"I warn you not to do so!" answered Harry. "If you enter this cabin with a weapon in your hand, we shall fire!"

There was a brief pause. It was followed by a step on the companion ladder. The beachcomber was descending!

"Fire as soon as you see him!" said

Harry Wharton quietly. "All together."

"Yes, rather!"

There was only one step! Probably the beachcomber realised that the schoolboys were in deadly earnest. He stepped back on deck.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter. Bunter's eyes were fairly popping behind his spectacles.

The other fellows stood in a determined group, rifle in hand. How this strange and terrible situation was going to end, they could hardly surmise. But they knew that they were not going to place themselves in the hands of the rascals who had seized the schooner.

Even if Ysabel Dick spoke in good faith, they were not going to be made prisoners. Neither did they feel at all assured that the beachcomber could control the ferocity of the Dutch freebooter, even if he desired to do so.

By seizing the Flamingo on the high seas, the two scoundrels had become pirates, with the penalty of piracy to pay if they were taken. It was only too clear in what direction safety lay for them—in putting the Greyfriars fellows over the side. And that Van Dink would have done so, without a moment's hesitation, the juniors had no doubt whatever.

Even had they faltered at the prospect of a conflict, there was no choice in the matter, unless they were to go like lambs to the slaughter. But they did not falter.

Only as a last resource, to save themselves, would they have used the deadly weapons in their hands. But if it came to that, they were ready and determined. It was up to the enemy to decide whether there was a conflict or not.

"Ach!" They heard the savage boom of the Dutchman's voice above. "What is it? Do they dispute orders?"

"Come and see for yourself, Mr. Van Dink!" called out Johnny Bull.

The beachcomber's voice was heard muttering. The Dutchman's angry roar followed.

"You fear them—a set of schoolboys! You talk about giving me orders, and you dare not give orders to these schoolboys!"

"Hold your tongue, fool!" came the growl of the beachcomber. "If they fire, I must fire; and I tell you, I will not shed blood if it can be avoided."

"Bah! With this capstan-bar I will root them out fast enough!" sneered Van Dink. "Ach! I have dealt with a mutinous crew before. If you will not go down, I will go, and I will send them scuttling on the deck like so many rabbits in the bush."

"Fool!" snarled the beachcomber. "Go if you choose!"

"Give me a gun!"

"You will handle no firearms on this ship."

"Ach! I do not need it. I will crack their skulls like eggs if they lift a finger. You will see."

There was a heavy tramp in the narrow companionway.

"Ready!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. He lowered his voice. "I will give him one shot. If he comes on, give him a volley."

"We're ready."

"The readiness is terrific."

"I—I—I say, you fellows—" stammered Billy Bunter, through his chattering teeth.

The juniors did not heed Bunter. All eyes were fixed on the coming enemy.

The burly, brawny form of the Dutchman appeared in sight, the capstan-bar gripped in the brawny hand.

Bang!

Harry Wharton fired as soon as he saw the Dutchman. His mind was made

up, cool and resolute, and he fired as steadily as if he had been on the range at Greyfriars School.

The yell that rang from the Dutchman echoed through the schooner. The bullet whipped a strip of skin from his shoulder.

It was a warning; to be followed by a volley that would have riddled the brawny carcass, if the Dutchman came on. Half a dozen rifles, all of them held in steady hands, looked the ruffian full in the face.

It was well for Van Dink that he paused.

One tiger-like bound and he would have been at the schoolboys, and they would have been reeling right and left under the crashing blows of the capstan-bar.

But he would not have lived to reach them.

That fact was borne in on the brutal mind of the bully of the South Seas as he staggered, the blood running down from the cut in his shoulder, his eyes aflame with fury.

For a long moment his fate hung in the balance. A forward move, even of a few inches, and the Dutchman would have rolled over on the planks, riddled with lead. The rage in the ruffian's face was demoniac, but he hung back. Every savage instinct urged him forward; but it was sudden and certain death, and he knew it, and he hung back.

He glared like an enraged wild beast, Dutch oaths sputtering from his thick lips. But he dared not advance.

"Get out!" rapped Harry Wharton.

A volley of curses answered. The Dutchman did not advance, but he did not retreat.

Wharton's eye gleamed over his rifle.

"Get out, you scoundrel! I will fire if you remain in sight! Get back to the deck, you villain!"

Slowly the Dutchman backed out of sight. He was jabbering with rage as he emerged on the deck.

"Give me a gun! You hear? Give me a gun, and I will—"

"That's enough from you, Van Dink! Stand back, fool, or I will blow your thick skull to fragments!" snarled the beachcomber. The juniors could guess that the Dutchman, in his fury, had made a move to grasp the revolver from Ysabel Dick. "Back, I say!"

"Ach! Will you let them defy us—will you?" The Dutchman choked with rage.

"Leave it to me."

They heard the freebooter tramp away.

"First round to us!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars juniors waited tensely. Their hearts were beating hard, but their determination did not falter. Neither did they fear an attack. Even had the Dutchman returned, with a revolver in his hand, they were too many for him. But it was plain now that Ysabel Dick was in authority on deck, and that he was anxious to avoid desperate extremes if he could.

There was a long pause.

Then the beachcomber's voice was heard again, cool and quiet.

"Below there, Mauleverer!"

"Yaas!" drawled his lordship.

"I did not foresee this, but it will not help you. I am master of the schooner; the crew obey my orders. We are already far from the course to Suva. If you come on deck with arms in your hands I shall fire. I warn you not to drive me to it."

"Carry on, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer, as the beachcomber paused.

"I tell you that this will not help

you. Lay down your rifles and come on deck; it will be best for you."

"Thanks!" said Mauleverer amiably. "So good of you to give us good advice like that! Any more?"

"Are you going to keep this up?"

"Yaas."

"It will be the worse for you!"

With that the beachcomber shut the companion, and they heard his footsteps move away.

Bob Cherry dropped the butt of his rifle.

"Well," he said, "this is a go!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Takers!

LORD MAULEVERER looked worried as the hot morning wore on.

It was unusual for his lordship to look worried.

Generally he was placidity itself.

Billy Bunter looked worried, also. The change in the state of affairs on board the Flamingo was a fearful worry to Bunter.

Fortunately it did not affect his appetite. Equally fortunately, there was no shortage of grub, as the schoolboys had access to the cabin stores. It was a hardship, no doubt, not to be waited on. Even Totua, whose waiting-on had never satisfied Bunter, was not available now. But for once Billy Bunter was not worrying about hardships. He was worrying deeply and intensely about how this awful state of affairs was going to end.

The mere thought of the Dutchman loose from restraint made the fat Owl wriggle with terror. The beast had a special down on him, too, as Bunter remembered. It was really awful for Bunter!

It was so awful for Bunter that he quite forgot that it was unpleasant for anybody else. His fat thoughts, that morning, were about equally divided between food and funk.

Mauly's worried look was certainly not due to funk. But there was a wrinkle of troubled thought in his usually calm and placid brow.

Hours had passed, and the schoolboys had been left alone. From the deck they heard an occasional voice or tramp of feet—the rattle of the swinging boom and spars. The schooner was keeping on her new course, under full sail, as fast as the wind would drive her.

Looking from a porthole, the juniors could see only the vast expanse of ocean stretching to the blue sky. There was no sign of land.

On their former course they would have sighted some of the Fiji group by this time. But they knew that they were far from the Fijis, and drawing farther and farther away with every passing moment.

The schooner was heading into far and unknown seas—where, they had no idea, except that they could guess that Ysabel Dick was getting, as fast as he could, out of the track of ships and trade.

There was no help for that.

They could defend themselves against attack, and they were determined to do so at any cost. Bob Cherry mooted the idea of making an attack in their turn, but very dubiously. It was not an attractive idea. A desperate conflict in which some, at least, of the party were sure to fall, with victory doubtful, was evidently a resource to be left till the latest possible moment.

The chances, too, were all against success. Ysabel Dick had command of

the deck, and it could not be doubted that he was watchful and wary. A hail of bullets would greet the juniors as they emerged from the companion if they attempted a rush on deck. It was hardly good enough.

Matters, indeed, seemed at an impasse. Neither side was able to attack the other with any chance of success.

In the meantime, the schooner was in the hands of the enemy, who could sail where they chose—wherever the wind would drive them.

Every minute the Greyfriars party were drawing farther away from help, away from hope of rescue, away from the sight of passing ships, away from any land.

How it was to end they could not guess. All they could do was to keep their courage up and keep on the alert.

No word had come from the enemy when they sat down to a midday meal. After that meal, Billy Bunter rolled into a bunk and found comfort in a nap. That was not a way in which the other fellows could find comfort.

"I'm awfully sorry, you men!" said Lord Mauleverer, putting his worry into words at last.

The Famous Five looked at him.

"What about?" asked Bob.

"Gettin' you fellows into this fearful scrape!" said Mauly, with a sigh. "I'm wonderin' whether there's any way out?"

"Is that what you've been looking like a moulting owl about all the morning?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Mauly grinned.

"Have I?" he asked. "Well, yaas! It's my fault!"

"Fathead!" said Bob.

"How do you make that out, Mauly?" asked Harry Wharton. "It's nobody's fault, ass—except the fault of those two scoundrels on deck! Even Mr. McTab never foresaw the possibility of those rotters getting loose. It's not a thing that anybody would have expected to happen!"

"My fault!" repeated Mauleverer, shaking his head. "I dragged you fellows out here!"

"We didn't need much dragging!" grinned Bob. "You could have brought half Greyfriars, old man, for a holiday in the Pacific Islands!"

"Best idea you ever had, Mauly, though it looks a bit sticky at the present moment!" said Johnny Bull.

"And I fixed up this trip to Suva," said Mauleverer. "You know why I'm keen on cruisin' round in these parts—hopin' to pick up news of that missing cousin of mine, Brian Mauleverer. But for that, I'd never have thought of goin' down to Suva when McTab sent the prisoners there in this schooner. All my fault you've got landed in this!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We were all keen on a trip down to Suva," he said. "Don't be an ass, Mauly! Even Bunter was keen on it! Weren't you, Bunter?"

Snore!

Bunter had forgotten his worries in happy slumber.

"Chuck talking rot, Mauly, old man!" said Frank Nugent.

But his lordship was worried. The Famous Five had been keen enough on a holiday in the South Seas, but his lazy lordship would never have undertaken that long trip but for his hope of picking up some news of Brian, the "bad hat" of the family. And this trip to Suva had been planned with the same intention—nothing had been heard of Brian Mauleverer in the Kalua group, and Mauly had hoped to pick

up a spot of news by going farther afield. And this was the outcome!

It worried his lordship deeply.

It was he and he alone who, for some unknown and mysterious reason, was pursued with unrelenting animosity by the man from Ysabel. But for him the beachcomber would have given no heed to his comrades—it was because they were his comrades that they were landed in the soup.

"I can't make out that blighter's game!" went on Lord Mauleverer, after a long pause. "But when I was in his hands on Kalua, he let out that he intended to maroon me somewhere where I should never be heard of again. That's his game now, now he's got the upper hand on this schooner!"

"He won't get by with it!" said Bob.

"Must be a bit cracked," said Johnny Bull. "You'd never seen him before you came out to Kalua; and you were the only chap here who had any civility to waste on the loafing brute, too! Yet it's you he's picked on!"

"Goodness knows why!" sighed Mauleverer. "But there it is! You all know what his game is, and he looks like getting by with it. I've been wonderin' if—if—"

"If what?" asked Harry.

"If," murmured his lordship—"if—if—"

"The if-fulness seems to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Cough it up, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton, in wonder. It was evident that Mauleverer had something to say that he found it a little difficult to get out.

"Well, you see," said Mauly, "that brute wants me—he doesn't want you! If it comes to shooting, some of you will get knocked over—I can't have that! I've been wonderin' if—if—if he would let up on you fellows and land you peaceably somewhere, if—if he got me?"

The Famous Five gazed at Lord Mauleverer. They did not for the moment catch his full meaning.

Then, as it dawned on them, they glared at him.

"You howling ass!" said Bob. "Do you think we'd let that brute snaffle you to see us safe?"

"My esteemed Mauly——"

"Well, look at it sensibly," urged his lordship. "They've got us! They can carry us where they like! If they choose to shoot it out, they can knock in the skylight, and then the band will begin to play! I tell you I can't drag you fellows into it. I'd rather step up and take my chance!"

"And you think we'd let you?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Be sensible, old chap! You see——"

Bob Cherry glanced round at the Co.

"It's a jolly good idea!" he said.

"Quite bright of Mauly! We shall pull clear and leave only old Mauly in the soup! It's a brilliant idea—one of the brightest! Now let's show Mauly what we think of his bright ideas! Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The bumpfulness——"

"Snaffle him!"

"Here, I say, hold on!" yelled Lord Mauleverer, in alarm, as the Famous Five closed round him. "I really think—ow! Leggo! I mean to say—yaroooop!"

Bump!

Lord Mauleverer, in the grasp of his devoted pals, was swept off the cabin floor and landed thereon with a mighty concussion. He roared.

Bump!

"Oh, I say!" shrieked Mauly.

Bump!

"Yooo-hoop! Oh gad! I say!"

"Still think it's a good idea for us to turn tail and leave you in the soup. Mauly?" demanded Bob.

"Yaas! You see——"

Bump!

"Oh! Owl! Ah! Oooooh!"

"Still think it a good idea?" grinned Nugent.

"Ow! No! Rotten!" gasped Mauleverer. "Rottenest idea I ever had! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer was released. He picked himself up, ruffled and breathless. He leaned on the table and gasped.

The Famous Five chuckled. It was just like old Mauly to think of that way out of the trouble; but their reception of his bright idea had quite put paid to it. Whatever was going to be the ultimate fate of the Greyfriars party, they were going to sink or swim together.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Shot for Shot!

CRASH!

Fragments of broken glass scattered over the cabin floor and furniture.

There was a startled howl from Billy Bunter, suddenly awakened.

"Oh! I say, you fellows——"

"Look out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

His rifle was in his hands in an instant, slanting upwards, his finger on the trigger. In the glass of the skylight overhead was a large ragged gap, knocked in by the end of a capstan-bar.

The juniors had wondered for some time whether the enemy above would seek to get at them by the skylight. If it came to shooting on both sides, that was the easiest way of attack—firing down from the deck. But they were ready to watch for the fire, and return it—and every hand grasped a rifle.

But it was not a shot that came from above. The dark seamed face of Ysabel Dick looked down through the gap.

The man had nerve. He was looking down on six rifle-barrels that slanted up towards him with perfect indifference. Any one of the juniors at that moment could have shot him through the head.

Certainly they were not likely to do so, unless in defence of their lives. Still, it required some nerve to look down on the muzzles of the lifted rifles, with a finger crooked on every trigger.

"I say, you fellows, keep that Dutch beast off!" yelled Billy Bunter, in great alarm.

"Tain't the Dutch beast, old fat man—it's the other beast!" said Bob Cherry. "Dodge under the table before the circus begins!"

That seemed to William George Bunter advice much too good not to be taken. No one in the cabin doubted that there was going to be firing, and the fat Owl of the Remove hated the idea of it. He rolled under the cabin table promptly. Which was, in fact, about the best thing that Bunter could have done, for he was useless in a scrap, and under the table he was out of the way.

But Ysabel Dick was not at the moment handling his revolver. Had his weapon come into view, the juniors below would have fired at once; they



A yard at a time the beachcomber crossed the deck until he gained the shadow of the mast. Captain Ka was talking to the boy at the wheel; the Fiji mate asleep in a chair near by. The man from Ysabel was desperate. If his plan to get control of the schooner failed now, nothing was likely to save him from the prison on Suva.

could not afford to take chances. But, so far, they saw nothing of it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob Cherry cheerily, as the hard seamed face stared down. "Dropping in to see us, Mr. Ysabel Dick?"

"Do!" said Johnny Bull.

"I have given you time to think," said the beachcomber, speaking quietly. "Now, if you have come to your senses, lay down your arms and come up on deck, and surrender!"

"Is that what you've looked in to say?" asked Bob.

"That is it!"

"Then you've damaged that skylight for nothing."

Ysabel Dick set his lips hard.

"I am unwilling to shed blood," he said. "I have restrained that Dutch brute, as you know! If I handed him a revolver, you would be under fire at this moment."

"We should return it!" said Harry Wharton. "I think we can defend ourselves here! We shall try, at any rate."

"If you drive me to it, your blood will be on your own heads!" said the beachcomber. "Surrender, and I repeat that your lives are in no danger. Keep this up, and I will pick you off like rabbits."

"Oh crikey!" came from under the table.

"Go ahead!" said Bob. "We can all shoot pretty straight, and if you show as much as a finger, with a pistol along with it, you'll see."

"Lord Mauleverer, you are in control of these reckless young fools!" said the beachcomber. "Will you let them sacrifice their lives for nothing?"

"Let's hear the whole story!" said Mauleverer. "Suppose we come out and surrender; what's the rest of the game?"

"I shall land you on an island, for which we are now heading, and which we shall reach in twenty-four hours from

now! I shall leave you stores, supplies—even weapons. You are already aware that I intended to maroon you, if I had got you away from Kalua in a canoe. Now that I am master of the schooner, I am going to carry out that intention. You know it."

"Yaas! What about my friends?"

The beachcomber shrugged his shoulders.

"You will not be separated from your friends! They will land with you," he answered.

"Oh, gad! Is that the game?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"You might have guessed that one, Mauly! Think those scoundrels would turn us loose, to go back to Mr. McTab and start a search for you? That bright idea of yours was just a wash-out."

Mauleverer nodded. He realised that now. His enemy could not afford to release the juniors after marooning him. Whatever his fate was to be, they had to share it.

"And you've got the neck to ask us to surrender, to be marooned on some lonely island?" asked Mauleverer, gazing up at the face above.

"That—or death!" said Ysabel Dick. "If you drive me to fire on you, your blood will be on your own head."

"You can begin as soon as you like!" said Harry Wharton. He was watching the beachcomber like a cat, ready for a sudden move.

"Is that your answer, too, Mauleverer?"

"Yaas."

The face disappeared from the gap in the skylight.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched. They fully expected to see a hand appear in its place, with a revolver in it, spraying bullets down. They were ready to fire on the instant.

But no hand appeared. The bull-voice of the Dutchman was heard,

"Give me a gun, fool! Leave it to me!"

There was no answer.

"Ach! If you are too chicken-hearted, leave it to me!" snarled the Dutchman.

"Give me a gun, I say!"

"Wait!"

Ysabel Dick's face appeared in the gap again. It was savagely set, and the eyes were glittering.

"Your last chance!" he said. "I have a second revolver here, and if I hand it to Van Dink, you know what to expect. Will you surrender?"

"No!"

"Then take what is coming to you!" snarled the beachcomber, in an outbreak of savage rage. He stepped back, out of sight. "Here, brute, here is the revolver—do as you choose!"

"Ach! It will not take me long, mynheer."

"Look out!" breathed Harry.

Smash! Crash!

Broken glass fell in a shower. Then a brawny hand appeared, with a revolver in it, and the trigger was pulled at random. A bullet glanced on the table top. At the same moment the juniors fired.

The hand was snatched back, and there was a fearful yell above. Something clattered on the floor of the cabin. It was the revolver.

The Dutchman had dropped it as his hand was struck. Roar on roar of rage and pain resounded on the deck.

The juniors waited. But for their prompt and well-aimed fire from below, the Dutchman would have sprayed the cabin with bullets, and some, at least, of the party must have gone down under the fire. But he had had time for only one shot, and he had dropped the revolver. It was not quite so easy to deal with the garrison of the cabin as the Dutchman had believed.

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For two or three minutes, howls of rage and pain sounded above, mingled with angry curses from the beachcomber. Then Van Dink was heard to roar:

"Give me the other revolver! It is only a scratch—I can use my hand! Give me the gun!"

"Blockhead!" was the only reply from the beachcomber.

The juniors fully expected Ysabel Dick to follow up the attack. But either what had happened to the Dutchman had warned him, or some remnant of compunction held him back. A shadow fell on the skylight for a moment—but it vanished again. There was no attack—and the long, hot hours of the afternoon wore by, in watchfulness and uncertainty.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

NIGHT on the Pacific.

Starry night on the sea; the schooner speeding on, with canvas booming in the wind. In the cabin all was dark.

The juniors did not think of putting on a light, which would have exposed them to fire from the deck, now that the skylight was smashed. They were in danger enough, in the dark; for now it was possible for a man above to creep to the skylight, reach over unseen, and blaze away bullets.

They more than half expected Ysabel Dick to do so. But no move came from the enemy.

Only Billy Bunter thought of sleep.

Bunter had parked blankets under the cabin table, as the securest spot. And there he parked himself.

Even the fat Owl did not find it easy to sleep.

But later in the night his deep snore was heard. Six fellows kept watch and ward, knowing that at any moment they might have to dodge bullets—fired at random in the dark, but terribly perilous in the confined space.

There was little danger by way of the companion. They had stacked up furniture from the cabin, and their own trunks, on the companion ladder. If the enemy attempted to surprise them from that direction, he would not find it easy, and he would be certain to give the alarm.

The hours of darkness were heavy enough to the schoolboys—heavier, perhaps, to the captain and mate, one of them wounded, both of them locked in irons in the hot, stuffy fore-castle. Anxious, too, probably, to the beachcomber, still master of the deck, but as far as ever from having gained his ends. Occasionally the savage growling voice of the Dutchman came to the listening ears below.

They would hardly have been surprised had the enraged ruffian crashed in on them by way of the skylight. But even the brutal desperado did not venture on such desperate measures as that.

Sleep seemed impossible to the besieged schoolboys.

Billy Bunter, snoring under the table, forgot his peril, but the other fellows did not venture to close their eyes.

It was past midnight, when a sound was heard in the companion. It was a sudden, startling sound—the crash of an axe. Evidently the enemy knew that the way was blocked, and they could guess whose hand was wielding the axe to smash away the barricade.

Harry Wharton, standing in dense darkness, lifted his rifle and fired over the barricade. He could see nothing;

he fired twice into the darkness. There was a roar above, and a rapid trampling of retreating feet.

Whether the Dutchman had been hit or not, he could not tell, but it was clear that the ruffian had had enough. There was no sound in the companion again.

"Oh for morning!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed dawn would be terrifically welcome!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The risefulness of the absurd sun would be a boonful blessing."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You woke up, Bunter? Go to sleep again, old fat man—'tain't rising-bell yet."

"Something woke me up!" came a peevish voice from under the table. "I say, you fellows, this is awful."

"'Tain't so bad as it was a few minutes ago, fatty."

"Eh? Why not?"

"I mean, you're not snoring now."

"Beast!"

Bunter grunted, and settled down again. How even the fat Owl could sleep was rather a mystery to the rest. They were drowsy enough at that late hour, but they did not think of closing their eyes. Billy Bunter, however, slept—and was soon snoring again.

That weary night seemed endless to the juniors in the cabin of the Flamingo. They could almost have wished for a move from the enemy, to break its heavy weariness.

But no move came. The Dutchman probably had gone to sleep on deck; they could no longer hear his heavy tread or his growling voice. But it was not likely that Ysabel Dick was sleeping. Once or twice, indeed, they heard his voice speaking to the Kanaka at the wheel or calling to the watch on deck.

The crew, only too plainly, were taking orders from him like lambs. The juniors could hardly blame them—they had little chance of dealing with a desperate man with a firearm in his hand, even if inclined to do so—and it was far from probable that they were so inclined. They were more or less indifferent to what went on among the white masters; indeed, more than once the juniors had heard some of them singing at the ropes in their usual light-hearted way.

Dawn of the new day was not likely to bring hope or help to the cabin party, but they longed for it to come. Every minute seemed an hour as it crawled by in the heavy darkness.

"How's it going to end?" murmured Bob.

"Goodness knows, but we can hold our own!" said Harry. "When that scoundrel reaches the island he spoke of he won't find it easy to strand us there."

"He's got us—and we've got him," said Johnny Bull. "We can keep it up as long as he does, so far as I can see. We've had the best of it so far."

"If we spotted a sail when the light comes—" murmured Nugent.

"Not much chance of that! I don't know where the brute's heading, but you can rely on it he's getting out of the track of ships."

There was silence again, broken only by the snore from under the table. Dawn was early on the Pacific, but it seemed to the juniors an infinite time coming on this occasion.

They sat about the cabin, some of them nodding every now and then; but they did not sleep. Once they heard a sound above, and started up in alert readiness. But if the beachcomber had approached the skylight with the intention of loosing off shots into the dark, he changed his mind. That sound was followed by silence.

They wondered at times what thoughts were passing in the desperate mind of the man above.

So long as they held the cabin, with arms in their hands, he could not carry out his purpose. They had no doubt whatever of being able to make good their defence. It was a puzzle to them what measures the beachcomber could take, and no doubt it was a puzzle to Ysabel Dick himself.

With thankful hearts, they saw at last a gleam in the darkness above. The long, long night was coming to an end; sunrise was at hand.

The gleam strengthened, the darkness rolled away, dawn glimmered down into the cabin, and the juniors were able to see one another's face—pale, worn, haggard from sleepless watching. Billy Bunter's snore still rumbled.

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"What a night!" he murmured. "Sleepy, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Turn in, old man! Plenty of us to keep watch."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Thank goodness it's light again, anyhow," said Harry Wharton.

There was something inspiring in the sunshine now that it had come, and in the glimpse of the blue sky through the broken skylight. All the Greyfriars fellows felt their spirits rise, weary as they were.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's old our pal!" said Bob, as a face looked down from above.

Ysabel Dick's eyes glittered at them.

"Good-mornin'!" said Lord Maulcerverer politely.

"Top of the morning," said Bob cheerily. "Slept well?"

"This must end!" said Ysabel Dick. "I give you till noon. I shall land you from the whaleboat, unseen by the Kanakas. You understand? Van Dink would secure their silence by other means! You will enter the whaleboat with your hands bound—Van Dink will stand off, out of sight of the island, while I land you. That is the programme—if you surrender."

"Wash it out!" said Bob.

"You had better hear the alternative! I have said that I will give you till noon. If at noon you do not step on deck unarmed and give yourselves into my hands I shall quit the schooner."

"The sooner the better!" said Harry Wharton, staring up curiously at the grim, seamed face that stared down.

"Do you think so?" said Ysabel Dick.

"I shall scuttle the schooner before I go off in the boat."

"Oh!"

"Take your choice—marooning, or drowning like rats in a trap!" said the beachcomber. "I would gladly spare your lives—the choice is in your hands! I shall not speak again. Step unarmed on deck at noon if you would live. Otherwise you go down with the Flamingo."

He stepped back out of sight without waiting for an answer.

The juniors looked at one another.

Their faces were grim.

They knew now what the beachcomber had been revolving in his mind during the long watches of the night. This was the desperate decision to which he had come! Surrender—or sinking in the scuttled schooner! That was their choice.

There was a long silence.

Bob Cherry broke it.

"No surrender!" he said quietly.

"Never!" said Harry.

On that, at least, their minds were made up.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Hope!

"A SAIL!"

Bob Cherry gave a shout as he stared from a porthole across the bright Pacific, rolling blue in the morning sunshine.

There was a rush of the juniors to join him.

They had breakfasted—Bunter was still breakfasting. The fact that the Greyfriars fellows had kept the enemy at bay for a day and a night had rather restored the fat Owl's confidence. Bunter was looking a good deal more cheerful that morning.

Fortunately he had been fast asleep when Ysabel Dick delivered his ultimatum at dawn. He knew nothing of what the beachcomber had threatened, and it was useless to tell him. The juniors were by no means sure that the man from Ysabel would carry out his deadly threat, and it was useless to add to Bunter's alarm.

So the fat Owl was feeling better. Still, in case of popping shots, he considered it judicious to take his breakfast under the table! So there was Bunter, squatting under the table rather like a fat poodle, packing away the foodstuffs with undiminished appetite.

"Look!" said Bob, pointing.

Far away over the rolling blue water a sail glanced in the sun.

It was a small vessel and far distant. The juniors could see that it was two-masted, though they could not make out whether it was a ketch or a yawl. It was not on the same course as the Flamingo, which was running east towards the rising sun, while the stranger's course lay east by south.

The juniors gazed at it eagerly.

They knew that they were in lonely waters, it was obvious that it must be in very lonely waters that Ysabel Dick was planning to maroon them. He would hardly take the risk of the marooned juniors being found and rescued. They had hardly expected to sight a sail at all.

This was some South Sea trader, beating among remote islands—probably the last sail they would see. The sight of it, distant as it was, gave them renewed hope.

"If we could signal!" breathed Bob. "Any skipper would help if he knew there was mutiny on board. At least we could pass on the news, even if they couldn't help us. That would be something."

"It's a chance!" said Harry.

It was only a remote chance, for the stranger was far away. A signal from the schooner's masthead would no doubt have been observed; but it was a different matter from the portholes in the cabin. But it was a chance, and they were going to make the most of it. It depended on the wind whether the sound of rifles would reach the other vessel; but it was at least possible.

"Sheets from the bunks," said Bob, "and then a bang from the guns—what?"

"Go it!"

Sheets were grabbed from the bunks, rapidly tied together in a string, and let out at the porthole.

As the juniors worked, the bull voice of the Dutchman was heard, coming through the broken skylight from above. Probably he was watching the other vessel with the binoculars.

"Ach! I know that ketch! Steer clear, mynheer, steer clear!"

"What vessel is it, if you know it?" They heard the beachcomber's voice.

"The Dawn!"

"The Dawn!" repeated Ysabel Dick.

From his tone the juniors could tell that he had heard of a vessel of that name and that it startled him.

"Ach! Ja, ja! That is the Dawn! It is King of the Islands' packet! Steer clear! If he knew——"

A sudden enraged shout from the beachcomber interrupted him. From the side of the schooner, fluttering on the wind, came the string of sheets. Whether it could be seen from the ketch, whether they would guess that it was a signal for help, the juniors could not tell, but it was a chance.

As Ysabel Dick stared down at it the roar of rifles came from below. The juniors were loosing off the rifles from the porthole.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! came the roar.

The Dutchman gave a roar of rage.

"Ach! They are signalling! I tell you, steer clear! I tell you, if King of the Islands knew what was going on here we should have to deal with him—ach! I tell you——"

Bang, bang, bang!

Ysabel Dick ran to the wheel. The Dutchman roared orders to the crew. Immediately the schooner fell away from her course, and the distance between the Flamingo and the Dawn widened at once.

Bang, bang, bang!

The juniors banged off the rifles fast. They hoped against hope that the firing would be heard on the ketch—that it would give the alarm there. From what they had heard the Dutchman say they knew that it would mean help if only they could make their plight known to the skipper of the Dawn.

If only he turned his binoculars on the schooner he must see the fluttering signal. That, added to the firing, would surely warn him that something was wrong on board the Flamingo.

But they feared that the wind, coming out of the north-west, threw back the sound before it could travel so far. And the change in the schooner's course drew her rapidly farther from the course of the ketch.

Harry Wharton stared from the porthole. His heart sank as he saw that the tall sails of the Dawn were lower in the sea.

King of the Islands, as the Dutchman had called him, was not changing his course. He had heard nothing, seen nothing. It had been a faint hope—the very faintest. Now it was gone.

Wharton set his lips.

Lower sank the tall sail till it was only a blur on the blue.

"Nothing doing!" said Harry.

"Rotten luck!" said Johnny Bull.

"But we may get another chance yet."

"Take in that signal!" It was the beachcomber's voice from above, trembling with passion. "Do you hear me?" His savage face glared down.

Harry Wharton looked up at him over his rifle-barrel.

"You scoundrel!" he answered. "Do you fancy you can give us orders? Stand back, before I put a bullet through your head."

Ysabel Dick gritted his teeth.

"This finishes it!" he said.

And he stepped away.

The juniors understood what that meant. In spite of what he had said at dawn, the beachcomber's mind had been swaying in doubt. He shrank from the terrible crime he had threatened. Now he had resolved.

During those few minutes he had been in danger. Had the signals been seen and heard on the ketch help would have come for the schoolboys in the cabin, and the two desperadoes who held the

schooner could not have held it against the captain and crew of the Dawn.

From what the Dutchman had said, it was clear that King of the Islands, whoever he was, would have intervened had he learned how matters stood, and the two outcasts could not have resisted him with success.

The danger had passed for Ysabel Dick, but it might recur. Another sail might be sighted, even in these solitary waters, and it might mean a sudden reversal of the situation on the schooner—rescue and freedom for Lord Mauleverer and his friends, irons in the forecabin again for Ysabel Dick and Van Dink.

The beachcomber's mind was made up now.

At noon, unless the schoolboys surrendered, he was going to scuttle the Flamingo and take to the boats.

That he was making preparations to that end the juniors could guess from the sounds they heard on deck. The whaleboat and the dinghy were being got ready for leaving the schooner.

As the sun rose higher and approached the zenith, the garrison of the cabin felt their hearts beating uncomfortably. Billy Bunter had gone to sleep on his blankets under the table. His snore mingled with the busy sounds from the deck above.

"I—I suppose we've made up our minds?" said Bob Cherry, breaking a long silence. "I'm for sticking it out."

"I wish that fat ass had stayed on Kalua!" muttered Harry Wharton, with a glance at the snoring Owl.

"But——" He glanced round at his friends. "Look here, I'm for sticking it out, same as you, Bob. While there's life there's hope. Even if that villain scuttles the schooner, we may have a chance left. I'd face anything rather than give in to those scoundrels!"

"Same here!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The samefulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quietly. "What do you think, my esteemed Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"What about you, Frank?" asked Harry.

"Fathead!" said Nugent. "Stick it out!"

"If we give in," said Harry, "it means being marooned on some lonely rock and left there. No good of thinking of chances of being picked up. That scoundrel will take care of that; he can't afford to take chances. If it comes to the pinch, I'd as soon go down as face years on a lonely rock in the Pacific—and we're not gone down yet! If you fellows agree——"

"That's settled!" said Bob.

Wharton's glance turned on the snoring fat Owl again. It was useless to speak to Bunter. In spite of the deadly threat which he was now assured the man from Ysabel fully intended to carry out, he was far from having given up hope. There was hope while life remained. It was better to leave the fat Owl his peace of mind as long as possible.

Ysabel Dick had said that he had spoken his last word. But when the noonday sun blazed down on the Pacific his voice was heard again. Even yet his rag of a conscience impelled him to give the schoolboys a final chance.

"Below, there!" came his voice. "Do you hear me?"

"We hear you," said Harry Wharton steadily, "and I warn you to keep back. If I see you I shall fire."

The beachcomber remained out of sight. His voice went on:

"It is noon—your last chance. Do you surrender?"

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"No!"
 "For the last time——"
 "You're wasting your breath."
 Ysabel Dick rapped out an oath.
 "Take what is coming to you, then!"
 And his voice was heard no more.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Scuttled!

"THEY'RE going!" muttered Bob. A boat slid into view from the porthole.

It was the schooner's whaleboat, packed with the native crew. In the stern sat the captain and the mate, still in irons. The mate's leg was bandaged; his brown face haggard. The face of Captain Ka-a-ha-hua-hina expressed speechless rage.

The juniors watched in silence. The crew were being sent off in the whaleboat before Ysabel Dick carried out his final desperate plan. They could guess that this was the work of the beachcomber, not of the Dutchman. Van Dink, they knew only too well, would not have left a man living to tell what had happened on the Flamingo.

They could hear his guttural voice cursing on deck. Likely enough, it was only Ysabel Dick's revolver that saved the lives of the captain and crew.

The boat had been provisioned. The weather was calm. There was no reason why the boats' crew should not make land, after a long trip in the whaleboat. The juniors were glad enough that they had the chance, at least.

"Fool, fool, and fool again!" came the Dutchman's savage growl above. "Even now it is not too late——"

"Brute and blockhead, hold your tongue!" came the beachcomber's snarl. "If you were not a dolt as well as a murderous villain you would understand that it is better to spare their lives."

"To talk—to tell——"
 "Blockhead! They know that the Flamingo is to be scuttled, with the schoolboys battened down in the cabin. When they are picked up they will report what we want reported."

"That is true; but——"
 "Hold your tongue, and give me the key."

"Bah! Let them remain in the irons; let them take their turn, as we have taken ours——"

"Give me the key, or I will blow your brains out, brute!"

The juniors heard a stream of Dutch oaths. But it was clear that the free-booter obeyed, for a few moments later Ysabel Dick tossed the key of the manacles into the boat, and it was picked up by Totua.

"Sheer off!" snapped Ysabel Dick.

"Mad fool that you are!" hissed the

Dutchman. "At least, if you will let them live, we need the whaleboat."

"They could not have packed into the dinghy; you know that."

"Ach! Fool! Fool!"

"Hold your tongue before I lose patience!"

The schooner was running before the wind now, with only the two men on deck. The whaleboat disappeared from the eyes of the juniors.

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "That beachcomin' sportsman is a queer mixture, what?"

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"Not quite such a blighter as the Dutchman, anyhow!" said Bob Cherry. "May have been a decent man once, before he came down to combing the beach at Kalua."

"Nobody's all bad," said Mauly. "He's got a spot of decency left. We don't seem to be gettin' the benefit of it, though."

It had to be acknowledged that there was good as well as evil in the outcast of Kalua. The two rascals were to leave the Flamingo in the dinghy, and there was no doubt that the whaleboat would have served their turn better. But, as Ysabel Dick had said, the crew could not possibly have packed into the small boat. He was willing to take risks rather than send them to almost certain death in an overloaded boat. The Dutchman was far from willing.

The Flamingo ran on before the wind. With only two men to sail her, the schooner was at the mercy of a blow, if one had come on. The juniors could have hoped for signs of bad weather, in the circumstances.

But the weather was fair and bright—a cloudless sky over a calm sea, with a steady wind.

Evidently the beachcomber did not intend to scuttle and desert the schooner till he was at a good distance from the spot where he had sent the whaleboat adrift with the captain and crew.

The juniors could only wait.

It had been in their minds at the last extremity to attempt an attack, a rush on deck at all risks. But Ysabel Dick had easily foreseen that, and taken guard against it. The hatchway, which the juniors had barricaded below, was battened down above, and it was impossible to get on deck. As for clambering out at the broken skylight, that was asking for sudden death, so long as the beachcomber was above with a revolver in his hand. Indeed, his revolver would not have been needed; the Dutchman could have knocked them back with a capstan-bar faster than they could have climbed. They could only wait—and hope.

"I say, you fellows!"

Bunter blinked out of his refuge under the cabin table.

"Yes, old bean!" said Harry Wharton, gently enough.

"I believe I nodded off," said Bunter, rubbing his eyes, replacing his big spectacles, and blinking at the juniors.

"Sort of," agreed Bob.

"Well, what about grub?"

"Plenty of grub, old fat man!" said Bob cheerily.

"You can come out of that; there won't be any shooting."

"Well, I'm not afraid if there was

Still, I'm quite comfortable here," said Bunter cautiously. "I say, they can't get at us, can they?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Quite."

"That's all right, then. I say, though, this is a putrid holiday, ain't it?" said Bunter. "I shouldn't have come with you, Mauly, if I'd known we were going through this sort of thing. You couldn't have expected it."

"Not at all," agreed Mauly.

"It's pretty rotten to land a fellow in this, if you don't mind my speaking plainly," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I dare say you meant well, Mauly, but I must say I wish you hadn't asked me to come on this trip."

"Did I?" murmured Mauly.

"Oh, really, you know! I say, you fellows, you might pass a fellow some of the grub, and save a fellow getting up! I'm tired."

"You must be after snoring all the morning!" agreed Bob Cherry. "But here you are, old fat man. Don't trouble to move."

Billy Bunter squatted under the table and fed. He seemed to have settled down to a poodle's existence.

But the other fellows did not think of losing patience with the fat Owl in the present circumstances. They were only too glad to see him devote his attention to food. There was a shock coming for the hapless Owl, but the longer it was postponed the better.

As the hot afternoon wore on they heard the sound of the beachcomber restlessly pacing the deck. They wondered whether his conscience, such as it was, was troubling him. It was likely enough.

The sun was sloping towards the western sea when they heard the hoarse chuckle of the Dutchman.

"It is time!" came his voice. "Ach! The boat——"

"You have——"

"Ja, ja! All is done! Lend me a hand with the boat!"

The juniors caught their breath. They knew what the Dutchman had done. Listening, they could catch a sound of gurgling water below.

"Are you dreaming, fool?" came the Dutchman's growl. "Do you want to go down with the schooner? Help me with the boat!"

"The pumps——" they heard the beachcomber's husky mutter.

The Dutchman chuckled again.

"Do you think I should leave them the pumps? Are you a fool? If they can work the pumps after what I have done—ach!—they are welcome." The Dutchman's voice rose to an angry roar.

"Will you help me with the boat? Are you dreaming, there? Move, you fool!"

The juniors heard the dinghy lowered.

"They're going!" breathed Bob.

"Look!"

The dinghy slid into view from the porthole. The Dutchman, grinning, had the oars in his hands. Ysabel Dick's face was pale and set, and his eyes had a haunted look. His eyes were on the schooner, as if he could not take them away. Suddenly the juniors heard his voice, husky and cracked:

"Hold on, Van Dink! Back water! Stop, I tell you!"

"And why?" came the Dutchman's snarl. "Fool! Do you want the boat to be sucked down when the schooner goes? Get up the sail while I pull!"

"Stop! I cannot—I will not leave them to their fate! I cannot, and I will not! Pull back to the schooner! Give me the cars!"

"Ach! You are mad, then!"

"Give me the oars!"



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"I believe I nodded off," said Bunter, rubbing his eyes, replacing his big spectacles, and blinking at the juniors.

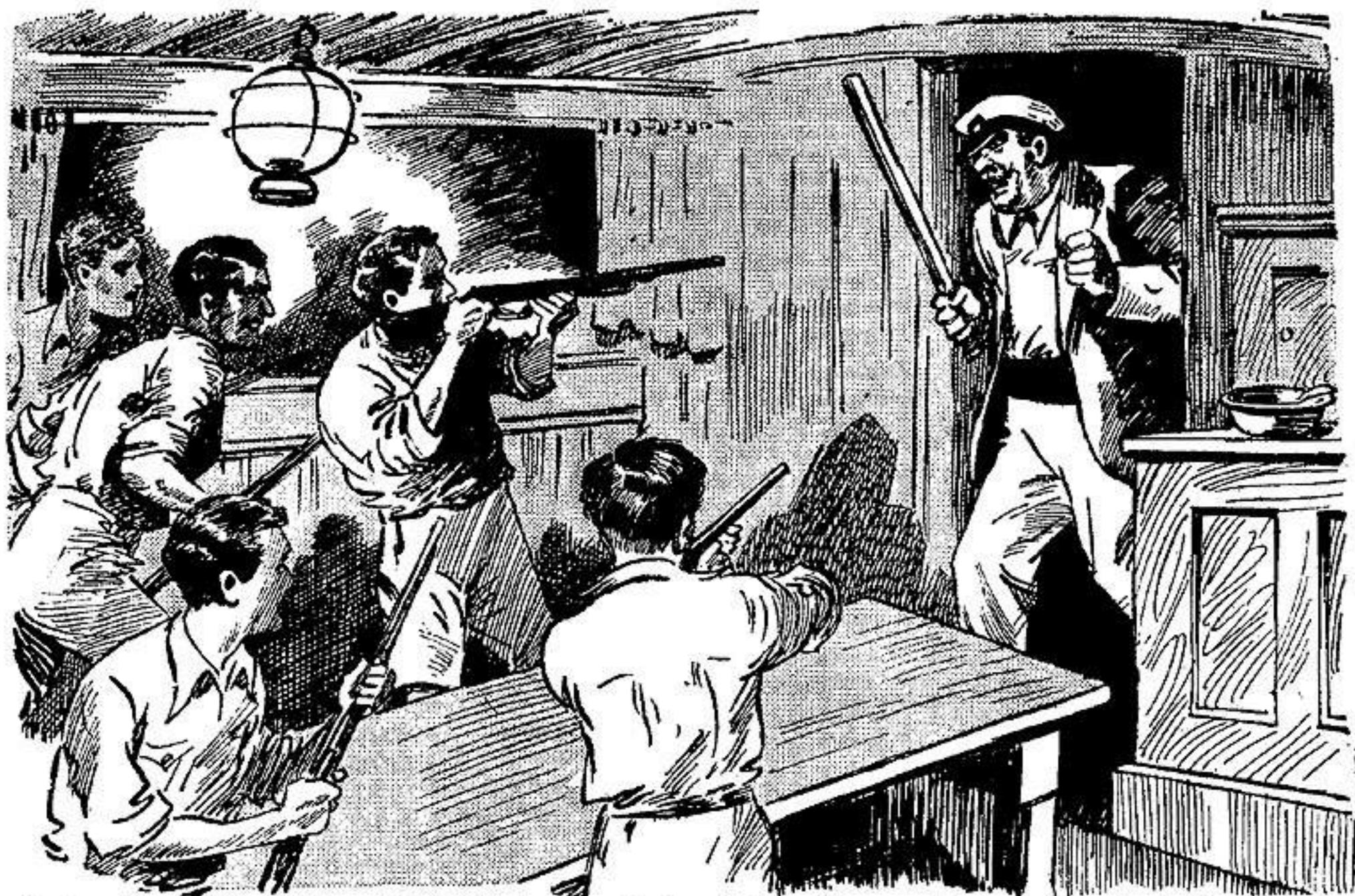
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"Well, I'm not afraid if there was



The huge figure of the Dutchman blocked the doorway, his face twisted with rage and a capstan-bar clenched in his hand. Harry Wharton faced him without flinching. "Get out!" he snapped. "Get back on deck, or I fire!"

The juniors, almost spellbound, watched. They saw Ysabel Dick grasp at the oars; they saw the Dutchman, half-risen, his face like a wild beast's with rage and fear, clench his huge fist and strike. They heard the thud of the smashing blow, and saw Ysabel Dick fall limply into the bottom of the dinghy. Then the Dutchman, sitting to the oars, was rowing like a madman away from the scuttled schooner.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Left to Death!

"OUT of this!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Quick's the word! Bunter!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter had dozed off again in the drowsy heat of the tropic afternoon. But he was not, perhaps, sleeping so soundly as usual. His eyes opened at once at Bob's shout.

"I say, you fellows! Oh crikey! Are they coming?"

"No; they're going!"

"Eh?"

"Buck up, old fat man!"

"But, I—I—I say, if they're gone, what's up? I say, I'm jolly glad they're gone! I say— Oh crikey! I say— Leggo!"

Bunter gurgled as Bob grasped him and rolled him out from under the table.

There was no time to lose.

Now that the enemy were gone, it was possible to clamber through the broken skylight to the deck. Whether it was possible to save their lives when they reached it, the juniors did not and could not know. But they knew that they were going to fight hard.

"Come on!" said Harry. "Mind the glass!"

Standing on the table, he could

easily reach the skylight. He knocked away fragments of broken glass, threw the rifle up to the deck, caught hold, and climbed after it. Then he reached down and gave Frank Nugent a helping hand out.

Billy Bunter stood blinking in surprise and irritation through his spectacles at the hurried scene. If the enemy were gone, Bunter saw no reason for all this haste.

"I say, you fellows——" he squeaked.

"Get going, you chaps!" said Bob. "I'll stop with Bunter till you get the hatchway open. The fat ass couldn't get out that way!"

"I'll watch it!" gasped Bunter.

"Look here——"

"Dry up, old fat man! Want a bunk, Inky?"

Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh clambered out. Wharton and Nugent, on deck, were already unfastening the companion. Bob Cherry dragged away the barricade from below.

"Look here," roared Bunter irritably, "what's up? Didn't you say those beasts were gone, Cherry?"

"Yes, ass! Time we were gone, too, if we can get anything to float on!"

"Wharrer you mean, you beast? I'm jolly well not leaving the schooner—I jolly well know that!"

"Fathead!"

It did not take long to open the companion from above.

Bob Cherry tramped up the steps, and Bunter, grunting angrily, rolled after him, followed by Lord Mauleverer.

He did not notice—what struck the other fellows somewhat like the knell of doom—the sound of heavy washing of water below. The hold of the Flamingo was already deeply awash, and by now the schooner was dipping by the head.

Where the Dutchman had pierced the hull to let in the sea they did not know, and had no means of discovering. It was probable that the schooner was

scuttled in more than one place, to judge by the swiftness with which the hold had filled.

It was certain, at all events, that Van Dink had done his deadly work with thoroughness, and there was no chance of undoing it.

Neither was it possible to rig the pumps; the Dutchman, as they knew already, had taken care of that. Nor was it likely that the pumps, which might have dealt with an ordinary leak, would have been of any use against the inrush of water from gaps deliberately hacked in the timbers deep below the water-line.

Already, in a matter of minutes, the schooner was filling and sinking beneath their feet.

Harry Wharton shot a swift glance in the direction of the dinghy. It had already disappeared.

The Dutchman had been rowing as if for his life, in fear of being sucked down in the boat by the schooner when she sank. At the same time, the canvas was still drawing, though now the schooner, almost water-logged, moved slowly and sluggishly through the sea.

Long hours ago, the whaleboat vanished; now the dinghy had vanished also, into the illimitable Pacific.

The juniors were left alone on the waste of waters, on a sinking ship, under the hot red glow of the setting sun.

Round them, as far as the eye could reach, stretched the sea, meeting on all sides the rim of the sky—unbroken by a sail, or a sign of land.

It was well for the chums of the Greyfriars Remove that they had courage in those terrible moments.

They were left to death. The last-minute repentance of the wretched beachcomber was no help to them. Indeed, had not the Dutchman knocked him senseless, had he returned, it would

have been too late—so many could hardly have packed into the dinghy.

"I say, you fellows—" yelled Bunter.

"Quiet, old chap!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, really, Mauly! Look here, what are you all up to?" exclaimed Bunter, in great exasperation. "Those beasts seem to be gone—we're all right now!"

"Right as rain! But—"

"Not that I was afraid of them," snorted Bunter. "I'd have handled them fast enough if you'd left the matter in my hands! Anyhow, they're gone, and we've got the ship to ourselves. Well, what about tea?"

"Tea!" gasped Mauly.

"Yes, tea!" hooted Bunter. "It's tea-time, ain't it?"

"Oh, gad!"

"Now they've gone," continued Bunter, "you can call that lazy beast, Totua, and set him to work! See? Where is he?"

"Better tell him," said Harry Wharton. "Look here, Bunter—"

"I'm hungry!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I suppose you fellows don't care a straw whether I have my tea at tea-time! It's like you!"

"The schooner's going down!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Eh?"

Bunter jumped.

"Now shut up! For goodness' sake, you fellows, don't waste time on that fat chump!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Where's the lifebelts—"

"Gone!" said Nugent quietly. "That brute Van Dink wouldn't be likely to leave them for us. Thrown overboard long ago."

"Oh, the villain!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows," stuttered Bunter. "I—I say, if—if you're pulling my leg—" He blinked round in horror. "I—I say, if the ship's sinking, we—we'd better get out the boats—"

"The boats are gone, Bunter," said Harry. "Everybody's gone, and the boats are gone! Keep a stiff upper lip."

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter stood rooted to the deck,

blinking. He did not speak of tea again. Even Bunter had forgotten a meal! He stood as if petrified.

The other fellows did not, however. They were not losing a moment. A glance down the skylight showed the cabin floor already awash. Undoubtedly the Dutchman had done his dastardly work thoroughly.

"Oh crikey!" gurgled Bunter at last. He sank down on the skylight coaming, and sat blinking.

The Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer did not heed him.

The schooner was sinking under their feet, the boats were gone; even the lifebelts had been thrown into the sea far astern. The shadow of the wings of the Angel of death was over the Flamingo. But they were going to fight for their lives, at least.

"A raft—if we had time," said Bob. "Get going!"

If there was no time to build a raft, there was at least time to drag together a collection of spars—anything that would float—and knot them with ropes, to keep them afloat, at least, when the schooner disappeared from under them. And the six juniors worked as they had seldom worked before—Billy Bunter watching them with glassy eyes through his spectacles.

The schooner gave a sudden lurch.

Bunter rolled over and yelled.

"Ow! Help! She's going!"

For a fearful moment it seemed to all the juniors that the Flamingo was going. There was another heavy lurch, and another. Then the schooner, once more, floated on an even keel. The end was coming—but it was not the end yet!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Chance of Life!

"HOLD on!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Buck up, Mauly!"

"No—hold on!"

Breathless, sweating with exertion, the Famous Five stared round at Mauly.

Mauly had been working as hard as any of the five. Nobody, seeing him

then, would have guessed that Mauly was a slacker. But now he had stopped, and was standing with a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow.

"My dear chap," said Harry, "we've not got a second to spare, if we're to float when she sinks—"

"She's stopped sinkin'."

"Wha-a-t?"

In their hot haste to pack together any kind of a raft, the juniors had hardly looked about them—hardly thought at all—packing quick work into every moment. They could hear the water washing in the hold; they knew that the cabin was awash; they dreaded every moment the last lurch and plunge of the schooner. But now that Lord Mauleverer drew their attention to it, they could see that, during the last quarter of an hour, the schooner had settled no lower.

Mauly pointed at the broken skylight. Looking into the cabin, they could see that there were several inches of water on the floor. The water in the cabin was not rising. Had it come in at the same rate as at first, it would have reached the skylight by this time. But it had not deepened.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What—"

"She's stopped!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"She's settlin' down!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But she ain't takin' it at a rush like she started, old beans! I fancy the cargo must have shifted when she pitched. She's goin' to take her time."

The Famous Five stood, streaming with perspiration, panting for breath. They could scarcely believe, at first, in their good fortune. But they were soon sure of it. That the schooner was slowly filling and settling was true—but it was slowly now, inch by inch, instead of foot by foot.

Probably, as Mauleverer suggested, the cargo below had shifted, and had the effect of blocking the gashes in the hull. That was a chance on which the scuttler had not counted.

It could not save the schooner. It could only delay her fate. But it delayed it—and minutes were precious.

Harry Wharton glanced over the side. The sea was terribly near. But if it were drawing nearer, it was by imperceptible degrees.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove breathed hard and deep.

"We've got time!" he said.

"By gum, what luck!" breathed Bob Cherry. "That villain meant her to go down like a stone! He was in a hurry to get clear! And—"

"Hours, perhaps!" said Harry. "An hour, at least; we've got time! Better not lose any of it!"

"What—ho!"

The juniors set to work again. But they worked now with brighter faces and lighter hearts. Hope was high in their breasts. Time, the most precious of all gifts, was granted them. They had at least a chance.

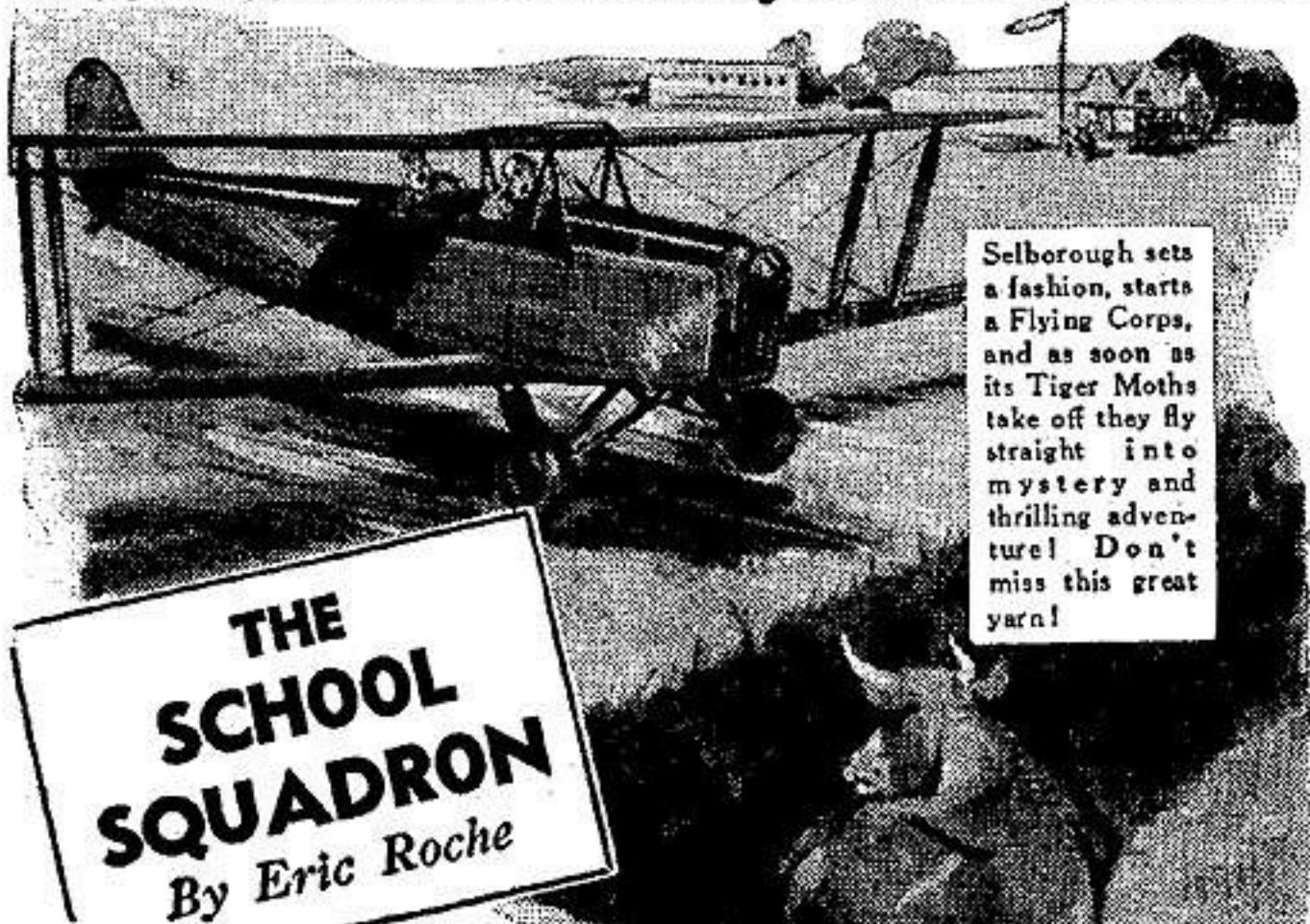
It was no longer a question of hurriedly tying together anything that came handy, merely to keep them afloat. They had time to build a raft—and they did not waste one of the precious minutes. A raft meant a chance of life and rescue—and they had time to build one, and to pack it with food and water. It meant life instead of death, at least, so long as the weather remained fair.

Not a moment was lost.

Bob Cherry sorted out the tool-chest that had belonged to the native carpenter. The other fellows collected spars, and planks were wrenched loose.

"Bunter!" hooted Johnny Bull.

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**THE
SCHOOL
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Bunter was not lending a hand—he seemed incapable of movement. He just sat and blinked—and the other fellows left him to sit and blink. But now that there was time to make ready for leaving the schooner, Bunter could make himself useful. Provisions were wanted to pack on the raft, when it was ready, and every hand was needed.

"Bunter, you fat ass—"

"Oh crikey!" moaned Bunter.

"Get a move on! Can't you see we're building a raft!" hooted Johnny. "Blind, or only silly? Get the grub on deck—everything you can lay your paws on!"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

Even in his present state of unhappy funk the word "grub" seemed to animate the fat Owl a little. He dragged himself to his feet.

"Buck up, Bunter, old man!" said Harry Wharton. "Keep your pecker up—we shall float off all right when she goes. Ten to one we shall get picked up." Harry Wharton hardly thought that the odds were in favour of being picked up, but he stretched a point to reassure Bunter. "But we don't want to starve on the raft—see?"

"Oh crikey! No fear!" gasped Bunter.

The right chord had been touched! Billy Bunter bucked up quite industriously. While the raft-builders worked hard and incessantly at the raft the fat Owl panted up and down the companion, transferring the cabin stores to the deck. He was not even heard to complain because he got his feet wet.

Bob Cherry, wielding a hammer, banged and banged, driving in the longest nails he could find. Johnny Bull with saw, Nugent with an axe, were equally busy. Lord Mauleverer, heedless of blisters that quickly gathered on his noble hands, drove in screw after screw. It was probable that his lordship had never handled a screwdriver before. But he handled one now as though born to it.

Harry Wharton was giving his attention to water, while Bunter piled up food. Water, as all the juniors knew well, was likely to be their greatest need.

A number of kegs were found, and every other receptacle that would hold water was filled and placed in readiness.

Minutes that had seemed so long to the juniors while they were prisoners in the cabin seemed to flash by now. The red sun sank lower in the west, its rays glowing over the calm sea.

Still the schooner, though evidently settling, floated! Two hours, packed with incessant labour, had glided by, and sunset was at hand. But the raft was almost finished. It was formed of strong spars with planks laid across, and an empty cask roped under each corner to give it buoyancy. A tall and slender spar had been mounted for a mast. If nails could make it safe it was safe enough; Bob Cherry could hardly have counted the number of nails he had driven in. It was possible that Mauly's screws added more to its security.

Later—when there was time—Bob was going to run a rail round it for safety. That could wait, however. It was probable that Bob would have plenty of time for carpentry while the juniors were afloat on the raft.

Billy Bunter, exhausted by his efforts, sat on a stack of tins of beef on the deck and gasped for breath.

He gave a scared squeak as the schooner lurched suddenly.

"Ow!"

"By gum, it's near the finish!" murmured Bob. The fore-castle was dipping under his eyes; the Flamingo was going down by the head.

"I say, you fellows—"

"O.K., old fat man! Don't worry!"

"I say, let's get off!" gasped Bunter. "I say, she may go any minute! Look here, let's push off—see?"

"Good egg!" said Bob. "Lift the raft over the side, old bean!"

"Eh?"

"Just pick it up and drop it over the rail! We'll watch you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" yelled Bunter. "Mean to say that you can't get the beastly raft off the beastly schooner?"

"I can't," admitted Bob. "But perhaps you can! Take it by one corner, give it a swing round your head, and let it rip!"

"You silly chump, you know I can't!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, my only hat! There's something that Bunter can't do!" gasped Bob. "Hear that, you fellows? Wonders will never cease."

"It's all right, Bunter," said Harry, laughing, "the raft will float when the schooner goes. We can't possibly launch it."

"Oh crikey!"

That there was danger of being sucked into the vortex of the sinking schooner the juniors knew only too well. But it was a danger that could not possibly be avoided, and

(Continued on next page.)

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they hoped for the best. Bunter had not thought of it, and they did not mention it to him.

But it was clear that the end was drawing near now. Although they would have been glad of more time to put in some more work in construction, the raft was solid and seaworthy, and Bob rather reluctantly relinquished the hammer and helped with the packing.

There was abundance of rope, and everything packed on the raft was roped in its place. Food and water, blankets and rugs, suitcases and the case of rifles were carefully packed on, with a due regard to equal distribution of weight, with a roll of canvas to make an awning, and another to be used as a sail.

The tool-chest Bob added as a matter of course. He was by no means finished with carpentry yet. Harry Wharton thought of a compass, which was likely to be more useful.

Most important of all, Billy Bunter packed himself in the middle of the raft. There he clutched hold of ropes with both fat hands, and gave a squeak at every tremble that ran through the sinking schooner.

The water was washing over the deck now and trickling round the raft as it rested. It lay aslant, the deck sloping under it from stern to stem as the fore-castle dipped; the bowsprit under the sea. At any moment now the Flamingo might plunge away from under them, and the Greyfriars fellows, with beating hearts, packed themselves on the raft and waited.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Afloat!

"O H lor'!" mumbled Billy Bunter. The juniors waited, the minutes seeming long now. Again and again the sinking schooner gave a lurch or a shake, and it seemed to them that she was going. And still the Flamingo floated.

Even Bunter would have been relieved for the final plunge to end the suspense.

But the schooner seemed to be taking her time about it. Obviously the last plunge might come any second, yet still it delayed.

The water washed over the deck. The fore-castle was full, water washing out from it over the fore-deck; the cabin flooded and water surging out from the broken skylight. It deepened on deck, washing round the waiting raft, and the raft itself shifted, as if about to float. Still the schooner lingered, as if struggling for life.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter, at another shiver from the flooded vessel below. "She—she—she's gig-gig going!"

"Going—going—but not yet gone!" said Bob Cherry. "By gum! I shall be rather glad when she makes up her mind to it, you men! This suspense is killing me, as the bloke remarked when he was hung."

"Oh crikey! I wish I hadn't come!" groaned Bunter.

"Same here!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "Two souls with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one."

"Beast! Ow! She's gig-gig-gig—" stuttered Bunter. "Gig-gig-going! Oh crikey! Oh lor'!"

"Well, I warned you of this, old fat man!" said Bob. "Didn't I tell you before we started that the schooner would go down if you got on it? Now it's happened."

"Beast!" moaned Bunter.

How Bob could make jokes at that moment was a mystery to Bunter.

But the fact was that Bob was merry and bright. Fortune had favoured the Greyfriars' fellows, serious as the situation was. They had been left to death—already, in the Dutchman's belief, they were deep in the Pacific; not for a moment could it have crossed his brutal mind that they were yet living, with a good chance of surviving. The utmost they had hoped for was to scramble together some sort of a hasty raft to keep them afloat somehow—instead of which they had had time to construct a well-found raft, strong and seaworthy, and pack it with food and water and other necessities. They had much to be thankful for, and every fellow realised it, and was thankful accordingly—except Bunter.

But the suspense of waiting for the schooner to go was almost nerve-racking. Deeper washed the water over the deck, and still the water-logged schooner floated under them.

The raft lifted at last and floated on a level with the schooner's rail, which was now submerged.

Billy Bunter gave a horrified squeak at the first jerk.

"Ow! We're going down!"

"Up, old bean!" said Bob. "She floats all right, you chaps! We're clear of the deck now! Is that jolly old schooner ever going?"

"She's sticking it out!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The stickfulness is—"

"Terrific and preposterous!" said Bob. "But what's the odds so long as you're 'appy? Enjoying life, Bunter?" "Ooooooh!"

"It's a jolly good raft!" said Bob cheerily. "We know she's going to float now, anyway—she's floating! If we hadn't got the casks under, we could float off over the rail! But a raft is no good without an air-tight cask under the corners! What-ho, she bumps!"

Bump!

"Gooooogh!" gurgled Bunter.

The raft was well afloat now, over the sloping, sinking deck. Moving on the wash of the sea, it bumped over the starboard rail.

It was a strange situation. The bow of the vessel was now completely under water, the deck sloping steeply until, at the stern, it towered high above their heads. Deep as she was, the sails still drove her slowly through the sea, the motion plunging the bowsprit deeper and deeper.

Harry Wharton drew a long breath. "She won't last much longer," he murmured. The thought was in his mind that the Flamingo might turn turtle, and draw the raft after it as she went down. That would have proved disastrous to the shanghaied schoolboys.

"I say, you fellows—oh crikey! I say—suppose—suppose the masts fall on us," gasped Bunter.

"Suppose the sky falls!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"You silly chump—"

"There's an old proverb that if the sky falls there will be catching of larks," said Bob. "Is that the moon falling, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" moaned Bunter. "If you fellows can see anything funny in this, I can't!"

"Did you bring your pocket mirror, Mauly?"

"Yaas!"

"Lend it to Bunter."

"I don't want it," howled Bunter.

"Wharrer you mean? What d'you think I want a looking-glass for, idiot?"

"So you can see something funny!" answered Bob affably.

"You silly idiot!" gurgled Bunter.

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The waves had sent the raft drifting back towards the schooner, and it had swung against the towering stern.

Bob Cherry seized a pole, and shoved off hastily. Overhead loomed the main-sail, and had the raft been caught in the wallowing canvas, when the schooner went, it would have had little chance. Two or three of the other fellows grasped the poles also, to steer clear of sails and rigging. The fore-castle was now completely submerged, the bowsprit out of sight.

There was a heavy plunging sound, and Bunter gave a horrified squeak.

"Ow! The mast's coming down!"

But the mast was not coming down, though it looked like it for a moment as the schooner's head settled deeper with that plunge. The masts of the Flamingo were slanting at an angle of about forty-five, and the wheel was high in the air.

Every fellow expected that plunge to be the last. But it was not the last, though clearly it was a matter of moments now.

The raft floated clear. So long as any part of the schooner remained within reach of the poles, the juniors shoved off hard, to get as far as they could from the sinking wreck. Every fellow was thinking of the suction when the Flamingo went down, into which the raft might be drawn.

Out of reach of the schooner, they began to paddle, using flat pieces of board which Bob—later on—was going to shape into paddles. The way they were able to get on the raft was slight, the pace rather resembling that of a snail. But every foot gained was added safety, and they worked as hard as they had worked in building the raft. Only Bunter was too busy to help in the paddling—both his fat hands being actively engaged in holding on!

"By gum! the old bean's sticking it out, and no mistake!" said Bob, glancing back at the masts and sails that slanted over the water.

The last red gleam of the sun was sinking in the west; in the east, there was a silvery glimmer of the rising moon.

"She's going!"

"Look!"

The schooner was going at last! The juniors ceased paddling, held on, and stared. Up went the stern, the wheel high in the air, the foresail under water. With a heavy, sullen plunge, the Flamingo went down by the head, and disappeared under the glimmering surface of the Pacific. The calm sea was wildly ruffled—the raft rocked, and a wash of the sea came over it. But it righted again, and floated level; and the juniors, in silence, gazed at the spot where the schooner had disappeared.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

On The Raft!

IN silence, the juniors gazed.

The sea, wildly disturbed for a few minutes, calmed. The Pacific rolled on, where the Flamingo had sunk, as if the schooner had never floated there. A few spars and gratings rolled on the water; all that was left of

(Continued on page 28.)

INS AND OUTS OF GREYFRIARS! A Conducted Tour with—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

ALL ROUND GREYFRIARS. Friardale Wood

(1)

Friardale Wood is rather small,
But handy for an outing;
And often you may hear a call
When Greyfriars Scouts are scouting:
As grimly through the woodland
purlicious
The Owl Patrol track down the Curlews.

(2)

A footpath runs across the wood
To Friardale Lane and village leading,
And certain cyclists think it good
To use this shady path for speeding:
Such journeys, being most improper,
Are often ended by a cropper!

(3)

For picnics, Friardale Wood is grand,
With leafy dells and grassy ridges,
A clear, cool, sparkling streamlet, and
Two hundred thousand hungry
midges!
But still, for passing hours of leisure,
We all vote Friardale Wood a pleasure.



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

During the Vac Loder of the
Sixth was seen backing a car along
Piccadilly. We bet it lost!

While the chaps are away, building
operations are going on at Greyfriars
School. The popular theory is that
they're adding a new wing to accom-
modate next term's chapters of
Quelch's "History of Greyfriars."

Mr. Prout had a most enjoyable
shoot on the Scottish moors. His bag
included a shepherd, two dogs, and a
stray duke.

Fellows who have done lines for
Mosses complain that he has a habit
of sometimes not remembering that he
had given any lines. That's better
than remembering he had given them
when he hadn't!

PUZZLE PAR

The shopkeeper had only four
weights, yet he could weigh any-
thing in pounds and half-pounds
between $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. and 20 lb. Can you
work out what four weights
would accomplish this?

Answer at foot of col. 2.

Gosling takes things fairly easy
during the Vac. I'd like to be there
and ring the rising-bell to make him
get up.

My Aunt Jane asked me how I liked
the birthday cake she sent me last
term. I told her I spoke to the cake
and it answered: "Oh, really, old fel-
low, it wasn't me! Ow! Keep away,
you beast!" because Bunter happened
to be standing round it at the time.

RANDOM RIDDLES

Why is a duck like a cow's tail?—
Because it grows down.

Why is a coalminer like a canary?—
He is brought up in a cage and has to
peck for a living.

Why is pulling a dog's tail like a tea-
pot?—Because you're teasing it. (That's
in-it—see? He, he.)

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS Prefects' Beating

In solemn state the prefects meet,
Their faces full of gravity,
They gather in their room to beat
Some fag for his depravity;
Perhaps a tendency to sneak
The wretched youth's inherited,
Or else a bit of barefaced cheek
This punishment has merited.

The prefects stand in stern array,
George Wingate's face is very serious.
"Well, have you anything to say?"
His tone is dreadfully imperious.
The tongue-tied victim is reduced
To looks of woe and hopeless stut-
ter-ing.

But still his tongue will soon be loosed
And everyone will hear him uttering.

George Wingate takes an ashplant like,
And gravely tests its flexibility.
This makes the victim squeal and
writhe,

And now he utters with facility:
"Yaroooo!"—and slowly bends to reach
His toes, with dismal apprehension.
The prefects give him one stroke each—
It's quite sufficient, I may mention!

A swipe from Wingate—how it stings!
A swipe from Gwynne is no
formality!

A swipe from Loder fairly rings!
A swipe from Carne is sheer brutality!

A swipe from Walker makes you creep!
A swipe from Sykes is most embarrass-
ing!

A swipe from North is pretty steep!
A swipe from Faulkner's simply
harassing!

The other prefects have their say,
Each swipe producing squeal-and-
squirmery!

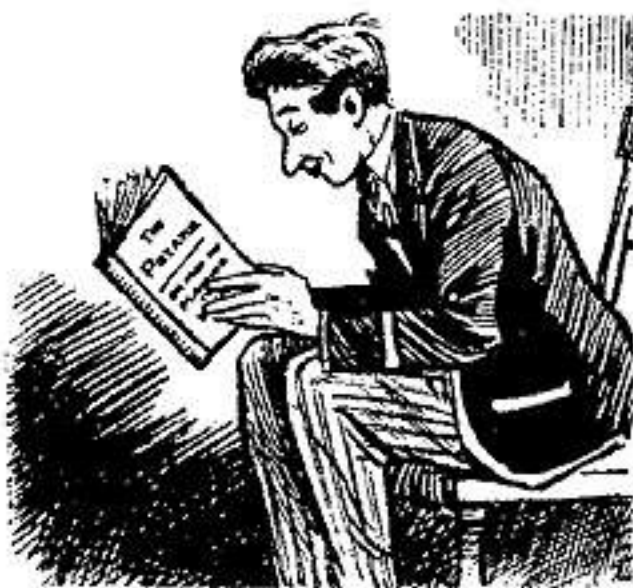
And then the victim's borne away
And takes a bed in the infirmary!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

ALONZO TODD,

The One-Time, Long-Winded Reformer
of the Remove

T is for TODD, the mild Alonzo,
Whose jawbone seems to carry on so!
He uses frightful word to us,
Like "honorificabilitudinitatibus!"
We lapse into a state of coma.
While Lonzy goes and studies Homer



Or else Euripides or Plato,
His favourite study's "The Potato,
Or from the Planting to the Eating!"
That volume wants a lot of beating!
He spends his holidays within
The home of Uncle Benjamin,
To whom, it seems, he is devoted.
His wise remarks are often quoted
When Lonzy gently chides a sinner
Like Bunter, Vernon-Smith, or
Skinner.

And when the juniors are debating
You'll always find Alonzo waiting
To stupify the opposition
With wordy spate of erudition.

ANSWER to PUZZLE

The four weights are: $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.,
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb., and $13\frac{1}{2}$ lb. With these you can
get any weight you like in half-pounds
up to 20 lb., by putting some on one
side of the scale and some on the
other.

the trim little vessel that had sailed out of the lagoon at Kalua.

For long, long minutes, no one spoke.

They had been lucky—they knew how lucky they had been. But there was something terrible, if not terrifying, in the loneliness of the sea, after the schooner had vanished.

They seemed terribly close to the water. The solitude of the ocean was overwhelming. The red glimmer in the west, the silvery light in the east, showed only endless, infinite rolling water. Only the raft was between them and unknown, illimitable depths—and the raft seemed frail and slight, in the immensity of the ocean. It was as if the sinking of the schooner had snapped their last link with humanity.

The silence was long. Every face was grave. It was broken by Billy Bunter.

"Oh crikey!" came from Bunter.

Bob Cherry drew a deep, deep breath. Even his cheery spirits had sunk, under the solitude of the endless ocean, the immensity of the dusky arch of the heavens; the feeling that the raft, with all that floated on it, was the merest speck in boundless space. But he was quick to recover. What the castaways needed most of all was to keep a stiff upper lip, and to keep their pecker up, as Bob would have expressed it; and Bob was the fellow to set them the example.

"Well, we've finished schooning!" he remarked. "We've been jolly lucky, you fellows! Here we are, safe and sound, everything ship-shape and all ataunto—plenty of room to move—"

"Oh, lots!" said Nugent.

"The lotfulness is terrific!"

"A desirable residence, wholly detached!" went on Bob. "Lots of grub—but we shall have to go on rations, of course—"

Billy Bunter sat up.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"Absolutely essential!" said Bob.

"You'll have to be limited to enough for three fellows, Bunter. When we get picked up, you can scoff enough for six, as usual."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Talking of grub, anybody hungry?" asked Bob.

Everybody on the raft realised that he was hungry, as well as fearfully tired. There had been no time to think of food, or rest, since they had been left on the scuttled schooner. But now that the pressure was relaxed, it was a different matter.

"Let's fancy it's a study supper at Greyfriars, what?" said Bob. "Where's the spirit stove? Sort out the bikkies, Franky! Get a can of corned beef opened, Inky, old black bean! What are you going to do, Bunter, as well as ornamenting the landscape?"

"I say, you fellows, my feet are wet!"

"That's because the jolly old sea gave us a wash when the schooner went home," said Bob. "Haden't you noticed before that the sea was wet? You want some new snees, old-fat bean."

"I said my feet are wet!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"So are mine!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really Wharton—"

That remark seemed quite frivolous to Bunter.

"It's your own fault, Bunter, old man," said Bob. "You should have stood on your head when the schooner went."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

"Look here, my feet are wet."

"Hang them over the side to dry!" suggested Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter bitterly.

"A lot you care if I get pneumonia in the legs! Cackle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the raft's crew.

Really, the idea of Bunter getting pneumonia in the legs was enough to make any fellow cackle.

"Look here, you beasts—"

"Food!" said Bob. "Food, old chap! Think of food and be happy! We won't put you on rations for the first day! You can scoff enough for six, as usual!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

However, the fat Owl found comfort in food. It was quite a cheery supper on the raft, though the juniors found themselves nodding over it. They had had no sleep the previous night, and they had had an anxious and hard day, and, tough as they were, they were really worn out. Bunter, for once, was not the sleepest, having slept most of the morning and a good part of the afternoon.

Bunter's fat jaws were still going strong, after the other fellows had finished. They were glad enough to sort out blankets and roll themselves in the same and lie down to slumber.

The sea was calm—almost as calm as a lake, gleaming in the myriad of bright stars that came out in the deep blue arch overhead. The raft, drifting on some unknown current, moved gently over the calm waters. On the morrow the juniors had to think of finding, if they could, their direction and getting up the sail. But what they needed now was sleep; and they slept the moment their heads were laid down.

Bunter went on eating.

But even Bunter finished eating at last. Then he blinked round over the

starry sea and shivered. He did not feel so disposed as usual for slumber.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

There was no reply, save the steady breathing of six sleepers, mingling with the murmur in the sea.

"I say," roared Bunter, "I'm not going to sleep! Suppose something happened while we're asleep! Besides, I'm not sleepy! I say, it's pretty thick for you all to go off to sleep and leave a fellow sitting up on his own! I say, Wharton!"

He grabbed Harry Wharton and shook him.

The captain of the Remove opened his eyes.

"Eh, what? What's up?"

"I am!" yapped Bunter.

"Go to sleep, fathead!"

"I'm not sleepy!"

"Then sit up and shut up!"

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton went to sleep again.

Billy Bunter gave him a devastating blink through his spectacles. Then he blinked round over the sea again, lapping the edges of the raft. He was feeling too uneasy for slumber.

He leaned over Bob and shook him.

"Urrrrr!" came from Bob.

"I say wake up!" hooted Bunter Bob woke up.

"I say, I'm not going to sleep!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "Tain't safe, see? Don't you go off snoring and leaving a fellow on his own! Don't you be so beastly selfish! If there's one thing I never could stand it's selfishness."

Bob looked at him. Then he sat up.

"Did you wake me up for that?" he asked.

"Yes. And— What are you doing with that pillow?"

Bunter need not have asked; he knew the next moment.

Bang!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now you wake me up again and I'll take a lawyer-cane to you!" hissed Bob.

Bob Cherry went to sleep again.

Billy Bunter sat on the raft and roared. But his roars did not awaken the sleepers. And the fat Owl, realising that the other fellows, with their usual selfishness, were going to sleep, regardless, rolled himself in a blanket; and in a very few minutes the fat junior's snore was mingling with the murmur of the Pacific.

THE END.

(Every one of Frank Richards' South-Seas stories has been more gripping than the last. Next week he reaches a new peak of excitement and suspense. Look out for "Adrift on the Pacific. It's a stunner!")

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THE SMUGGLER'S SECRET

It's Great! It's Stupendous! It's Colossal! Hold everything, folks, and get a basinful of this 200-per cent serial...

By DICKY NUGENT

"Smugglers!" "Wha-a-at!" "Smugglers!" Jack Jolly, of the St. Sam's Fourth, repeated the word in a tone of breathless excitement. "Down there on the beach!" "Grate pip!" Fearless and Merry and Bright stared downwards. So did Doctor Birchermall. Far below the cliffs along which they were walking, they saw half a dozen yewman figgers winding their way across the moonlit beach—each one of them bent nearly double under the weight of a heavy cask! The rowing-boat from which they had taken their burden lay moored to a rock at the water's edge, while, anchored out at sea—a significant site—was a big, four-masted schooner! "Bless my sole!" gasped Doctor Birchermall. "Am I seeing things, boys, or is this really true?" "It's true, sir, by the look of it!" said Jolly, with a grim larf. "They're smugglers, right enuff—despirt rascals, engaged in the nefarious task of defrauding the Revenue!" "By Jove! What a rummy bizziness!" "Something ought to be done about it," said Frank Fearless seriously. "It's scoundrells like these who keep the income tacks as high as it is. What about tracking them down to their lair, you fellows?" "Yes, Frank rather!" Doctor Birchermall stroked his beard a little dewbiously. He had just spent a very merry evening with the chums of the Fourth and he felt no inclination to spoil it by chasing smugglers. Out of the generous gift he had received for saving Mr. Baggs, the millionaire, from drowning, he had treated Jack Jolly & Co. to a nite out at the music-hall at Winklesca. They had missed the last bus back to Brooczyville and were walking back along the cliffs in the moonlight. The Head was beginning to look forward to bed. The idea of tracking down a gang of smugglers, so fascinating to the adventurous spirits of the juniors, made no appeal whatever to the Head!

"Half a minnit, boys!" he cried, as Jolly made a move towards a steep path leading down to the beach. "I cannot agree to you exposing yourselves to danger like this here. Why, those despirt scoundrells are probably armed to the teeth with nives, cutlasses and what not!" "Who cares about trifles like that, sir?" asked Jolly, with a contemptible larf. "The more hevvily they are armed, the more cowerdly they will probably prove! If it comes to a scrap, we shall give a good account of ourselves, never fear!" "Hear, hear!" "Of course, sir," began Fearless, "if you're afraid—"

Doctor Birchermall, whose neeze were nocking together, bristled up like a porcupine at that word. "Afraid, Fearless? Me afraid? Why, you must be potty!" he said, through his chattering teeth. "My only fear is for the safety of you youngsters. But if there is any question of thinking I am afraid, then I must forget my scruples and let you have your way. I will lead you." "The dickens you will, sir!" "Yes, rather—from the rear, of course!" added the Head hurriedly. "The chances are that we shall be attacked from the rear by confederates of those smugglers. So I will walk behind the rest of you—where it is most dangerous!" Jack Jolly & Co. winked at each other. They could hardly believe that this was the real reason why the Head wanted to stay at the back. But they really didn't bother much where he walked, as it was pretty

sure that he would run away like a frightened rabbit at the first sign of any danger. Jolly went first, followed by Fearless and Merry and Bright in that order; and Doctor Birchermall brought up the rear! They soon reached the beach and hurried after the smugglers, who were by this time disappearing round a projecting rock. As they reached this point the sound of casks being rolled across a rocky floor fell on their ears, and Jack Jolly smiled grimly. "Sounds as if we've reached the smugglers' lair, you fellows!" he whispered. "Keep well in the shadows and follow me!" The kaptin of the Fourth crept cautiously round the rocks, with his followers close at his heels. It was a weird scene that met his gaze. Before him was a cave—dimly illuminated by a ship's lantern hanging from a hook in the wall—piled high with barrels and boxes. The smugglers, as evil-looking a crew as you could imagine, were gathered round their leader, who stood with his back to the St. Sam's fellows. "Is that the lot, you sons of dogs?" they heard the smuggler chief ask. "I, I!" came a deep growl from the ugly mob. "Get back to the schooner, then, you scum! I stay on to guard the licker!" "I, I!" snarled the smugglers. Jack Jolly & Co. flattened themselves against the rocks, as the smugglers tramped past them. They breathed a sigh of relief when the echo of their footsteps had died away. "They've gone!" whispered Fearless gleefully. "Now's our chance to go for their leader! Let's nab him and run him along to the coastguard station!" "Just what I was thinking myself!" nodded Jolly. "But, by the way, there's one thing that's puzzling me, and that is this—where have I heard his voice before?" "It's funny you should mention that, Jolly," broke in Doctor Birchermall, in a horse whisper. "The same thought exactly occurred to me. I am sure I have heard that voice before—yet I do not remember being friendly with any smugglers!" "We can soon solve the mystery, sir, if we take him prisoner," grinned Merry. "Shall we tackle him, Jolly?" The kaptin of the Fourth nodded. "Come on, you chaps!" he hist.

The next moment, the chums of the Fourth flung themselves at the lone smuggler. Doctor Birchermall decided to stay behind for a minnit and tie up his shoelace; but Jack Jolly & Co. never phattered for a instant, though, for all they knew, the smuggler chief might have been armed with pistols, daggers, and all sorts of other deadly weapons! As it happened, there was no need for any worry on this score. The smuggler chief was howled over like a ninepin by their furious onslaught; and a swift search by the juniors, as they held him down, soon convinced them that he was unarmed. "Got him!" cried Jolly, as he sat on the smuggler's chest, heedless of his feendish yells of protest. "Now let's bring him over to the light and we'll see his face!" The juniors yanked him to his feet and marched him to the light of the lantern, Doctor Birchermall joining in as soon as he saw that it was safe. The next moment they all gave a yell of amazement. "MR. LICKHAM!" "Mr. Lickham—our Form-master! Oh, grate pip!" "Lickham!" yelled the Head. "Lickham from St. Sam's! Lickham, smuggler! B-bless my sole!" It was Lickham right enuff; there was no room for doubt. In his top-boots and coarse sailor's jersey and with his coloured handkerchief round his head, he cut a very different figger from the Lickham St. Sam's knew so well. But Lickham it was, all the same!

"Ow! Bust it!" he groaned, as his captors stared at him agast. "Lickham!" roared the Head. "What is the meaning of this? Is it possible that a St. Sam's master is engaged in the criminal bizziness of smuggling?" "Looks more than possibul, sir, duzzent it?" said Mr. Lickham, with a rye grin. "Denials are not much good now you've caught me red-handed like this. So I may as well admit that I'm a smuggler!" Doctor Birchermall mopped his fevered brow. "I can hardly beleve my own eyes," he said with a shake of his head. "For years I have looked on you as a master in whom I could place every konfidence—and all the time you're a smuggler!" "Not all the time, sir—only part of the time!" corrected Mr. Lickham quickly. "The fact is, I never have any truck with it during the term. I merely take it on to earn myself a little spare time cash during the vacation. I've done quite well at it, too," he added, a note of professional pride creeping into his voice. They've made me foreman of the nite shift!" "Grate pip!" "Of course, it's a ruff life; but the pay's good, and—"

Mr. Lickham said no more. Before he could do so, there was a rush of feet. The next moment, the St. Sam's fellows found themselves struggling wildly with the smugglers! The men from the schooner had returned, bringing with them some casks of licker they had forgotten, and seeing their foreman in the hands of strangers they had promptly come to the reskew! The battle was short and sharp; but the result was a founfgone conclusion. Brave as the juniors were, they were no match for half-a-duzzen hulking grate brutes, all armed to the teeth! In a cupple of minnits, the four St. Sam's fellows and their headmaster were lying on the sand, bound hand and foot. Grate was their disgust, when Mr. Lickham turned round and congratulated the newcomers! "Well done, me hearties!" cried Mr. Lickham. "You came back just at the right time. The next thing is—what shall be the fate of these rash crotchters who have dared to attack us in our lair? Shall it be deth?" The reply to Mr. Lickham's question sent a shiver down the spines of the juniors and brought a howl of fear to the lips of the Head. "I, I!" roared the smugglers. "Deth it shall be!" Sensational developments next week, predicts author Nugent Menor. It's the tops!

So long, pals! FISHER T. FISH.

UNCENSORED LETTERS No. 10.

SKINNER ON THE SPOT AS QUELCH RECEIVES FAKE INVITE

Dear Snoop,—Guess what? The Human Hawk has found his victim once again—or, in other words, the Quelch-bird has rumbled who sent him that cod invitation to Mauleverer Towers! I can give you my word, Snoopy, it was a nasty shock to me to get a letter from the old boulder. I never dreamed that he would see anything phoney in the invite. After all, I used notepaper with Mauly's crest on it (the genuine article; I pinched it from his desk). And I'm jolly sure that not one in a hundred would have suspected that my copy of Mauly's guardian's fist was in any way bogus. But Quelch saw through it—and guessed that I was the giddy culprit at once! The old blighter must be gifted with second sight! And, oh, what a letter it was! I sent it along to Fishy to publish in the

"Herald," so, by the time you get this, you may have read it. Quelchy may not like it going into print, but I can't make things any worse for myself than they are already. The joke's on me, anyway, and I don't mind the readers having a cackle at my expense this once. It hasn't often happened this way! What I don't like is the awful suspense—having to wait till next term before I know what he's going to do about it! As likely as not, he'll do nothing at all—but the ghastly interval is bad enough, goodness knows! In the meantime, I'm enjoying myself as well as I can. Luckily, they have a billiard-room at our hotel, and I've met some-kindred spirits with whom I manage to pass the evenings not too boringly. But I shall feel much better after I've seen Quelchy. Be seeing you!

HAROLD SKINNER.

FIFTH-FORM DOPE, HORACE COKER, UPSET IN GROUSE-SHOOT, WILLIAM GREENE REPORTS

When Coker asked Potter and me to come to his uncle's place in Yorkshire for a spot of grouse-shooting, I can tell you for a fact that I felt the very reverse of keen on it. I can stand as much of Coker as anybody; but I had had just a little too much of him at Aunt Judy's. Showing me how to play tennis, he had hit me on the napper with a tennis-racket and brought up a lump on my forehead the size of a hen's egg. Showing me how to dive he had knocked me off the diving-board and dislocated my shoulder on the side of the swimming-bath. Showing me how to play billiards he had swung back his cue with terrific force and knocked out one of my front teeth. Coker is a pal of mine and I like him. But I really had had enough of him for the time being when he raised the subject of going to Yorkshire. Potter, who had had as much of Coker as I had, if not more, was surprisingly cheery at the prospect of grouse-shooting. He registered bright enthusiasm. "What's the idea?" I asked him afterwards, when it was all fixed up. Potter's explanation was not at all reassuring. "You've only got to die once," he said. "And as we seem to be facing sudden extinction every day, playing the most innocuous games with Coker, I don't see that it can be much worse playing dangerous games like shooting. It might even be safer!" "After all, there must be a limi

somewhere. We've grumbled enough over all these harmless pastimes. Perhaps shooting grouse will kill our grumbles!" It didn't sound very logical to me. But you may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb and I went to Yorkshire with the others. I kept a jolly watchful eye on Coker when we set out with his uncle's party on the first morning. Coker, with a tennis-racket or a billiard cue is dangerous; and it struck me very forcibly that Coker with a sporting rifle would be an absolute menace! When the first covey went up I don't mind admitting that I dodged behind Coker and stayed there. Coker raised his gun and fired. The next thing I knew was that something like a small-sized elephant had landed on me in a heap. It was Coker! Coker was not used to the back-kick of a powerful rifle. It had sent him flying backwards just as though he had received a knock-out blow on the point of the chin! Experience teaches and I didn't stand right behind Coker the next time. I stood slightly to the side of him instead. This time the back of his neck hit the earth instead of me! So it did the time after that—and the next time, too! Coker was red and breathless by this time—but very determined, too. You can always rely on Coker to rise to the occasion, and he had obviously made up his mind to master that rifle



if he broke every bone in his body in doing so! Potter and I were now able to take things a lot more calmly. So long as we were on the right side of Coker's gun-barrel and not directly at the back of him, we were all right. The day passed very cheerfully. By the time we packed up, Coker was bruised all over and Potter and I were simply chortling! Coker is beginning to learn something about guns. He does not fire more than about four shots a day and he has become so good at it that the kick of the rifle never knocks him back more than half-a-dozen yards or so. Not much, it's true—but quite enough to knock the stuffing out of Coker! So altogether, it looks as if Potter's wisecrack has turned up trumps. Shooting grouse seems to have killed our grumbles.

WILLIAM GREENE

No. 307.

EDITED BY FISHER TACKETON FISH.

August 27th, 1938.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD



EDITOR FISH CALLING THE WORLD

Rah, rah, rah! Fisher T. Fish calling—world's greatest schoolboy editor bar none, and then some! But is this job a sore trial while I'm just keeping the seat warm for Wharton and running the paper on his plan? I'll tell the world! When that guy Wharton comes back, what I'm gonna tell him will make his hair curl—just a few! His regular contributors surely are a prize bunch of mutts, dumb-bells and boneheads—and that's praising them!

You guys that are reading this don't need telling that my editorial column is streets ahead of anything else in the paper. The crisp, snappy, zippy American idiom gets there every time, you betcha! Because of this, I wrote a circular letter round to all our regular writers, suggesting they wrote their features in American instead of English. Now, wouldn't any reasonable guy have grabbed this offer with both paws and thanked his lucky stars for being allowed to write in a modern, slap-up lingo instead of a medieval dialect? But not a chance! All I got back was postcards with "Rats!" or "Don't be funny!" written on them. That young sap Dicky Nugent went one better. "If you translate my masterpieces into the American language," he wrote, "I shall take steps to have you persecuted with the utmost riggor of the law!" Jevver hear of such a bunch of pesky piecans? They surely are enough to make any ordinary guy give up! Luckily for you, your old pal Fisher T. Fish is no ordinary guy. No, siree! F. T. F. is sitting tight. He's no quitter. Maybe before Wharton comes back there will be a week when all the regular contributors will be taken ill or something. If that happens, then, believe me, you'll see a 100 per cent American "Greyfriars Herald" that'll make you sit up and whoop! Here's hoping! Meantime I'm hustling, and I reckon to work up the "Herald" correspondents to red-hot enthusiasm. They certainly gotta appreciate what a privilege they've got, workin' for a live-wire editor like F. T. F. I'm telling them, and I'm telling you. So long, pals! FISHER T. FISH.