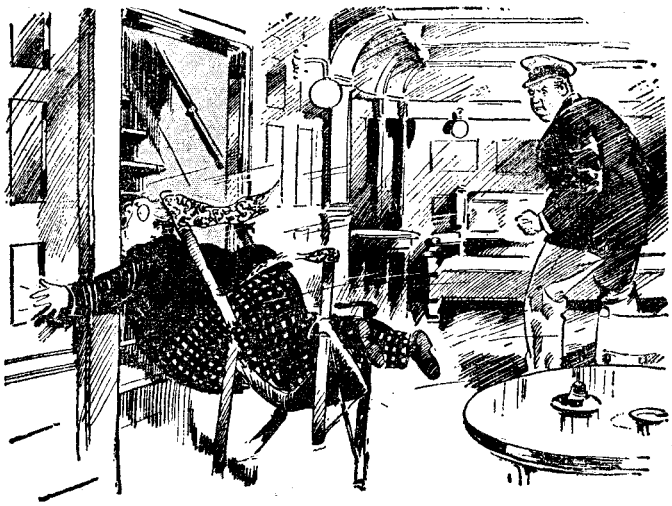
FRANK RICHARDS

Bunter's Holiday Cruise



Bunter collided with the deck chair. Crash! Bump!

Baffling Bunter!

"EASTER —"
"No !"
"What ?" ejaculated Billy Bunter.
"No !" repeated Harry Wharton.
"Wharrer you mean, you silly ass ?" demanded Bunter.
"I said Easter —"
"And I said no !"
There was a chuckle from the Co. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, seemed amused. Billy Bunter, on the other hand, seemed perplexed and irritated.
Greyfriars School was about to break up for the Easter holidays. Harry Wharton & Co. were discussing that very matter when Billy Bunter rolled up to them in the sunny quad. Bunter evidently was also thinking of Easter. But the Famous Five of the Remove did not appear to want Bunter's help in the discussion. They did not want Bunter at all.
"I was going to say —"
Bunter got going again.
"The speech may be taken as read !" interrupted Wharton.

“I was going to ask you —”
“I know ! Don’t !”
“Whether you’re fixed up for Easter —”
“I guessed that one !”
“And whether you’d like me —”
“No !”
“Do let a fellow speak ! Whether you’d like me to —”
“No !”
“The no-fulness,” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, “is terrific! The esteemed company of the absurd Bunter is not a boonful blessing.”
“You see, old fat man,” explained Bob Cherry kindly, “you’re superfluous ! You’re a bother ! You’re a nuisance! You’re too much of a bad thing ! You can only make a party a success by keeping away from it. And the farther away the better ! Do I make myself clear? ”
“Beast !”
“Now run away and play !” said Johnny Bull. “About Easter, you fellows ——”
“Give us a rest !” implored Frank Nugent, as Bunter’s mouth opened again.
“Look here —” roared Bunter.
“About Easter,” said Harry Wharton, turning a deaf ear to the fat Owl of the Remove. “It’s all settled that wherever we go, we all go together ! We’ve got to fix it up —”
“Will you let a fellow speak ?” bawled Bunter.
“No !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
So far as the Famous Five could see, it was unnecessary for Bunter to speak. They knew — or at least they had no doubt — what he was going to say.
Bunter, when the school broke up for holidays, was generally at a loose end. He never seemed keen on going home to that great and glorious mansion, Bunter Court. When the “hols” came, and other fellows considered what they were going to do, Bunter was generally considering whom he was going to do ! Nobody seemed to yearn for Bunter’s society in the hols.
There were two hundred fellows at Greyfriars; and of these one hundred and ninety-nine found no pleasure whatever in the fascinating society of W. G. Bunter.
Bunter had spent the Christmas vacation at Wharton Lodge. He had not made himself popular there. Instead of longing to see him there again, Harry Wharton was determined that he wouldn’t ! So that was that !
It was, therefore, quite unnecessary to listen to what Bunter had to say; and as he seemed bent on saying it, the Famous Five turned round and walked off. Bunter was left blinking at a row of five backs, through his big spectacles, with a wrathful blink.
“I say, you fellows !” he bawled.
Ten deaf ears were turned to Bunter. The Famous Five walked on.
Billy Bunter rolled in pursuit.
The Famous Five accelerated.
Bunter broke into a trot. Grinning, the Famous Five broke into a trot also. They trotted, grinning, across the quad, with the fat junior panting in the rear.
“I say, you fellows !” squeaked Bunter breathlessly.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Will you stop, you silly chumps ?” gasped Bunter. “I say, you fellows, I wanted to say — Oh, I’m out of breath !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
Bunter put on a spurt.

The Famous Five put on a little more speed. They turned into the path under the old elms at a rapid trot. Bunter raced after them, his little fat legs fairly flashing. Bob Cherry glanced over his shoulder.
"My hat! He's putting it on ! Go it !"
"Ha, ha, ha !" roared the Co.
It seemed quite a merry jest to the chums of the Remove to give the fat and breathless Owl a run. Sprinting was not in Billy Bunter's line at all. He had too much weight to carry. He gasped and he panted, he puffed and he blew, as he pursued the chuckling juniors. They were prepared to keep up this game as long as Bunter did. It was quite an entertainment.
"Ooogh !" panted Bunter. "Groogh ! I say, you fellows — Ooogh ! You beasts — I mean, dear old chaps — Wooogh !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Harry Wharton and Co. looked back at the fat and panting Owl as they ran, and laughed merrily. Unluckily, they all looked back at the same moment, and as a natural result they did not see a fellow standing in the path under the elms ahead of them.
That fellow was Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, and he did not see them coming.
Fisher T. Fish had a little account-book in his hand, and his sharp, narrow eyes were fixed on a column of figures in that book with deep attention.
Fishy was going through his accounts for the term — and there was a halfpenny he could not trace — a halfpenny missing ! What had become of that halfpenny the American junior did not know; but he was going to know, if he burst a boiler over it ! It was unlikely that he had lost it — impossible that he could have given it away — and his keen, cute, spry brain was concentrated on the problem of what had become of it.
Thus it was that Fisher T. Fish did not see the Famous Five come racing up the path under the elms.
He remained in blissful ignorance of their approach — till they crashed !
It was some crash !
"Jerusalem crickets !" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as he went spinning, his account-book flying in one direction, his pencil in another, and his hat in a third.
"Oh, my hat !" gasped Harry Wharton, as he sprawled.
Fishy sprawled first — and Wharton sprawled over him. Unable to stop in time, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull added themselves to the heap. Nugent and Hurree Singh just missed it, swerving to right and left. But Billy Bunter did not miss it. Coming on like steam, the Owl of the Remove crashed before he knew what was happening.
"Oh crikey !" gasped Bunter.
"Oh crumbs !"
"Oh lor' !"
"Ow !" came in agonised tones from Fisher T. Fish, at the bottom of the pile. "Aw ! Gerroff ! Carry me home to die ! I guess I'll make potato-scrapings of you ! Ooooooooooooh !"
"I say you fellows — Wow — wow !" spluttered Bunter. Billy Bunter scrambled wildly up. He rested a fat knee on Bob Cherry's neck, and a fat hand in Johnny Bull's eye, and heaved himself up. There was a simultaneous howl from Bob and Johnny. Bunter staggered against an elm, winded. Wharton and Bob and Johnny Bull picked themselves up, breathless.
Fisher T. Fish lay extended where he had fallen, gurgling.
All the wind had been knocked out of Fishy's bony person.
"Aw ! Wake snakes and walk chalks ! Wow ! What the Abraham Lincoln do you guys

figure you're up to ? Ow ! Groogh ! Oooooh !"
"What the thump did you get in the way for ?" gasped Bob.
"Oooh ! You pie-faced piecan — Wooogh !" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He sat up, spluttering. "Oh, Jerusalem crickets ! Wooooh !"
"It's all Bunter's fault," said Frank Nugent. "Let's bump Bunter !"
"Good egg !"
"I say, you fellows —" yelled Bunter.
Bump !
Billy Bunter sat on the path and roared.
"Ow ! Beasts Now I won't take you on an Easter yachting cruise, so there ! Beasts !"
"What !"
Five voices in unison uttered that astonished ejaculation.
The Famous Five had been about to pursue the even tenor of their way. But they stopped. They stared at Bunter. They were quite astonished. They had taken it for granted that Bunter, as usual, was seeking for a victim to "plant" himself upon for the holidays. Knowing their Bunter as they did, how could they have doubted it ?
But it appeared that they had taken too much for granted. For once — apparently — William George Bunter was not on the make !
"Take us —"
"A yachting cruise —"
"For Easter !"
"My hat !"
"Gammon !"
"Ow ! Give a fellow a hand up !" gasped Bunter. "I'm w-w-winded ! If this is how you thank a fellow — ow ! — for inviting you to a splendid yachting cruise — grooogh! — I can only say — oooooogh!"
Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped the fat Owl by either fat arm and heaved him to his feet. Fisher T. Fish still sat and spluttered. But nobody heeded Fishy ! Bunter was the centre of attraction. Bunter had succeeded in astonishing the natives !
He blinked at the staring five through his big spectacles with a reproachful blink.
"I say, you fellows, I mean it ! If you'd let a fellow speak — ow ! What did you cut off for when I was just going to ask you — ow ! — to join me in a yachting cruise for the vac ? Wow ! Bumping a fellow — ow ! I've a jolly good mind not to take you now. Ow !"
Bob Cherry grinned.
"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen," he said, "if Bunter's got a yacht up his sleeve, Bunter's a man to be encouraged. I always liked Bunter — if he's got a yacht for Easter."
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Oh, really, Cherry ! I say, you fellows, listen to a chap ! I've got the yacht all right ! I want you fellows to join me in a cruise. Splendid yacht — latest thing — you'll enjoy yourselves no end. Trip to the Mediterranean, and all that ! What ?"
"Gammon !" said Johnny Bull tersely.
"Oh, really, Bull —"
"You silly ass !" said Harry Wharton. "Are you talking out of the back of your fat neck or what ?"
"Oh, really, Wharton —"
"The yachtfulness is probably not terrific !" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

“Oh, really, Inky —”
“Ow ! I swow !” gasped Fisher T. Fish. “I guess I’ve got a pain ! Wow ! You all-fired, slabsided jays —”
“Shut up, Fishy !”
“I’ve got a pain !” yelled Fishy, rubbing bony places.
“No objection to your having a pain, if you don’t make a row about it ! Shut up ! Now, Bunter, you ass —” said Harry Wharton.
Snort from Johnny Bull.
“You silly ass, it’s only gammon ! You know Bunter !”
“If you call that civil, Bull, when a fellow’s inviting you to a splendid and expensive cruise for the Easter holidays. I —”
“Well, where’s the jolly old yacht ?” grinned Bob Cherry.
“It’s coming to Pegg ! You’ll be able to see it tomorrow !”
“The seefulness is the believefulness !” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“We can go straight aboard when the school breaks up !” said Bunter. “Make all arrangements beforehand, you know. Splendid accommodation — every fellow will have a separate stateroom — best of crockery — grub splendid — I’ve asked specially about that —”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Blessed if I see anything to cackle at ! That’s important, of course. You can rely on the grub.”
“Well, my hat !” said Harry Wharton blankly. “Is — is — is there really a yacht, you fat piffler, or are you trying to pull our leg, or what ?”
“What’s the name of the yacht ?” grinned Bob.
“The Sea Nymph !” answered Bunter.
“Oh !” said Bob, rather taken aback.
He had expected the fat Owl to pause, to invent a name for an imaginary yacht. But the answer came quite pat.
“And whom does it belong to ?” asked Nugent.
“My cousin George.”
“Who’s he ?” asked Bob.
Bunter’s answers came so promptly that the chums of the Remove were almost beginning to believe that there really was a yacht — well as they knew their Bunter !
“Eh ? He’s Captain Cook !” said Bunter.
“Captain Cook ! I’ve heard of Captain Cook — he discovered the South Sea Islands, or something,” grinned Bob.
“Not that Captain Cook, you ass —”
“Oh ! Not that one ?” chuckled Bob.
“No, you fathead ! My cousin, Captain George Cook ! Not on the Bunter side of the family,” explained the fat Owl. “To tell you the truth, we haven’t had a lot to do with the Cooks — it’s the Bunter side that’s the aristocratic side of the family, you know —”
“Oh crikey !”
“But Cousin George is all right !” said Bunter. “Not an aristocrat like the Bunters —”
“Phew !”
“But all right ! A splendid chap, in fact ! He’s asked me for the Easter cruise, and asked me to bring my friends — as many as I like ! I thought of you fellows at once.”
“Well, my only summer bonnet !” said Harry Wharton blankly. “Blessed if he doesn’t sound as if he’s telling the truth ! Is he ?”

“Does he ever ?” grunted Johnny Bull.
“Well, no ! But—”
“You’ll see the yacht to-morrow,” said Bunter. “It’s putting in at Pegg Bay, only a few miles from here, and you can go aboard and look over it, if you like. Will you come ?”
Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove quite seriously. They could only blink at him in return. Really, he was taking their breath away.
They had, like all fellows in the Remove, heard a great deal about the wealth and magnificence of the Bunter family. Like other fellows in the Remove, they had not seen any of that wealth and magnificence. They had heard about Bunter Court, but they had seen Bunter Villa ! Seen close at hand, Bunter Court dwindled to a detached villa ! What was the Bunter yacht likely to dwindle to ?
Yet the fat Owl seemed in deep earnest. Really, he seemed to be telling the truth ! But that was improbable ! The age of miracles was past !
“Will you come ?” repeated Wharton.
“Yes, old chap! I’m going to ask some more fellows, too — but I specially want you chaps to come. After all, we’re pals, ain’t we ?”
“But — but — but is there really a yacht ?” stuttered Wharton.
“Haven’t I just told you there is ?” hooted Bunter.
“Well, yes; but that makes me think there isn’t !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Look here, you cheeky rotter — I mean, look here, dear old chap —”
“Oh, cut the gammon !” grunted Johnny Bull. “Can’t you fellows see the game ? The yacht won’t turn up, and then Bunter will propose coming with us, instead of us going with him !”
“Oh,” said Harry, “I suppose that’s it.”
“Of course !” assented Nugent, with a nod. Johnny Bull’s explanation seemed the most probable one.
“That’s a cert !” said Bob Cherry.
“The certfulness is terrific !”
“I say, you fellows, if that’s what you call pally, when a fellow’s asking you on an expensive cruise —”
Harry Wharton laughed.
“Well, old fat bean, you see, we don’t quite swallow it. The Bunter yacht might turn out to be first cousin to Bunter Court ! Chuck it !”
“If you mean that you can’t take a fellow’s word, Wharton—”
“Yes — that’s exactly what I mean, old fat tulip !” assented the captain of the Remove. “I don’t know why you’re trying to pull our leg — but there’s nothing doing, anyhow.”
“Beast !”
“Now Bunter’s done his funny turn, we —” began Bob.
“I say, you fellows —”
“Chuck it, Bunter !”
“Look here,” roared Bunter, “the yacht will be here tomorrow. You’ll be able to see it from the dorm window. I want you to come ! I want my old pals with me these hols. You see, I want you to enjoy yourselves ! Will you come if you see the yacht anchored in Pegg Bay tomorrow ?”
“You fat spoofer !” roared Johnny Bull. “There isn’t any yacht, and you know jolly well there isn’t !”
“That’s what you call gratitude for a generous invitation, I suppose ?” said Bunter.

“Look here, Wharton, you’ll believe in the yacht when you see it, I suppose ?”
“When !” said Harry, laughing.
“Then you’ll come ?”
“That’s a safe offer; I’ll come if there’s a yacht !” said the captain of the Remove, with a chuckle.
“Done, then !” said Bunter.
He extracted a grubby little notebook from his pocket, extracted a stump of pencil, and scribbled five names on a grubby page. The Famous Five stared. Bunter was evidently making a list of the guests for the Easter yachting cruise. They wondered for a dizzy moment whether there really was a yacht, and whether there was going to be a cruise.
“That’s settled !” said Bunter.
He slipped the notebook back into his pocket and rolled away towards the House. Harry Wharton & Co. stared after him. They could only stare.

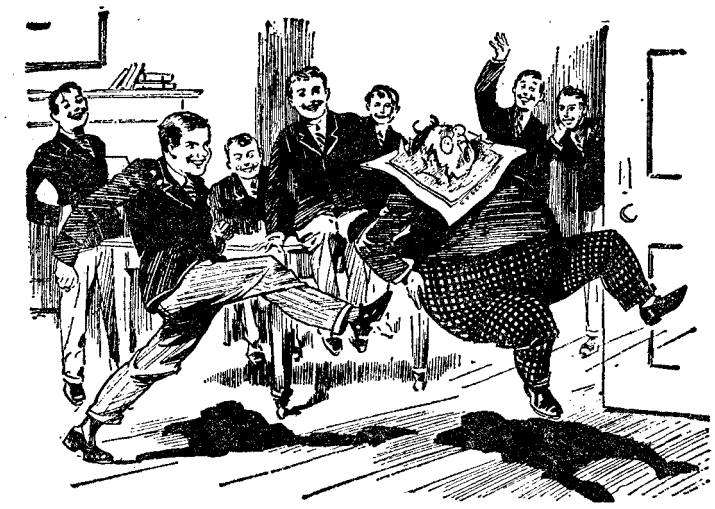
Too Particular!

“HEARD?” asked Skinner of the Remove.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
There was a chortle in the Rag.
A crowd of fellows were there after tea, and there was evidently some joke on when the Famous Five came in.
“Heard which and what ?” inquired Bob Cherry.
“Bunter —”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“And his jolly old yacht —”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
It was quite a roar. The news of Bunter’s yacht seemed to have spread and to be causing general hilarity. The Famous Five grinned.
“Oh, we’ve heard that one !” said Bob. “In fact, we’re asked to join in the cruise !”
“You’re going ?” yelled Vernon-Smith.
“Well, we’re not exactly going,” said Harry Wharton, laughing. “You see, there isn’t any yacht. That’s a bit of a drawback in a yachting cruise.”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Bunter’s asking fellows up and down the Form,” said Squiff. “Blessed if I can make him out. What’s the game ?”
“Only bunkum, anyhow !” said the Bounder. “He asked me ! He asked me to cash a postal order at the same time. I said ‘No’ to both.”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Well, we’ve said ‘Yes,’ if there’s a yacht,” said Harry Wharton. “I felt quite safe about it.”
“Safe as houses !” chuckled Bob.
“It’s taking a risk, dear men,” remarked Lord Mauleverer. “If you don’t want the vac with Bunter —”
“We jolly well don’t !”
“No fear !”
“The no-fearfulness is terrific !”
“Then it’s taking a risk,” said Mauly, shaking his head. “Bunter’s asked me, and I’ve declined. I’m not takin’ any risks.”
“Well, if there was a yacht, and Bunter asked me, I’d jolly well go,” said Skinner.

“But there isn’t ! It’s just gas — rather more gaseous than usual ! You jolly well know there isn’t a Bunter yacht, Mauly, you ass !”
“Most likely not !” agreed his lordship. “But I’m takin’ no risks.”
And Mauly shook his head again very seriously. Remote as was the possibility that there really existed a Bunter yacht, there was, as he said, a risk. A fellow who accepted an invitation had to stand by it; a fellow couldn’t let a fellow down. And the idea of passing the holidays with Billy Bunter had quite a jarring effect on Mauly’s nervous system. He had been there before, so to speak, and knew what it was like.
Harry Wharton’s face became grave. Lord Mauleverer was popularly supposed, in the Remove, to be an ass. But Wharton was well aware that his lazy lordship had a lot of common sense and judgment. He realised now that there was, as Mauly said, a risk. If there really was a yacht, and a cruise to come, no doubt it was very kind of Bunter to ask the chums of the Remove. They were bound, in that case, to thank him very politely for his kind invitation. But they didn’t want to accept it. They didn’t want the “hols” with Bunter, and certainly not as his guests. As his guests they could hardly tell him what they thought of him, or kick him when he asked for it. And Bunter had to be kicked at times.
“Look here, Mauly, you don’t think there’s anything in it, surely ?” exclaimed the captain of the Remove.
“Might be !” said Mauleverer.
“Fathead !” said Johnny Bull. “Haven’t we heard all about Bunter Court ? It turned out to be a villa when we saw it. The Bunter yacht is on the same lines as the Bunter mansion.”
“Yaas, but —”
“But what ?” grunted Johnny Bull.
“Please yourselves, but I’m not takin’ any risks !” said Mauly. “The fact is, I rather fancy there’s somethin’ in it this time.”
“Fathead !”
“Ass !”
“Rats!”
“Bosh !”
Lord Mauleverer smiled and subsided into an armchair. He was quite accustomed to such rejoinders when he stated an opinion. But it had often transpired that Mauly was right after all.
“Hallo, hallo, hallo ! Here’s the jolly old yachtsman !” exclaimed Bob Cherry as Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag.
All eyes were turned on Bunter. Whether there was a Bunter yacht or not, the fat Owl had succeeded in awakening general interest in the Form. Billy Bunter’s description of the wealth and magnificence of the Bunter tribe was well known, and most of the fellows had no doubt that the Sea Nymph was one more item in a list of imaginary possessions.
Bunter had a large sheet of cardboard under his fat arm as he entered the Rag. It was a mount, with a large photograph on it. Taking no heed of the surprised stares of the juniors, Bunter proceeded to bang a nail in the wall and hang up that photograph.
“What on earth’s that ?” asked Hazeldene.
Bunter blinked round.
“That’s the Sea Nymph,” he explained. “I thought you fellows might like to see a picture of my cousin’s yacht.”
“Oh, my hat !”
“Gammon !” snorted Johnny Bull.

There was a rush to look at the picture. Bunter stood aside with a fat smirk on his face. The juniors stared at the photograph. It represented quite a handsome yacht. Under it was the name Sea Nymph.
"Where did you get that, Bunter ?" exclaimed Wharton. "My cousin George sent it to me," answered Bunter calmly. "It's a photograph of his yacht."
"Oh, crikey !"
"Looks a decent old tub, what ?" said Bunter complacently. "The fact is, it was built for a nobleman, but he had to sell it to pay his surtax, and George got hold of it, see ?"
"He didn't pinch it ?" asked Skinner.
"No! " roared Bunter.
"Then it isn't his. Whose is it ?" asked Skinner. "They ought to put the name of the owner on the picture."
"It's my cousin, George Cook's —"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"You spoofing bounder !" exclaimed Johnny Bull indignantly. "I suppose you've bought that photograph at Courtfield specially to spoof us !"
"That's it, of course," assented Wharton.
"I guess they never bought that yacht under some thousands," said Fisher T. Fish. "If your Cousin George has got all that dust, Bunter, you can sure borrow a bob of him and square that bob you've owed me for whole terms."
"You haven't asked me yet, old fat bean !" grinned Skinner.
Bunter shook his head.
"I'm not going to ask you, Skinner."
"I shall miss that cruise !" said Skinner sadly. "What a loss !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"You see, I don't want you, Skinner," explained Bunter. "You've got no money."
"Oh, my hat !" gasped Skinner. "Is there really a yacht, and are the Bunter family getting fellows on it to borrow their money ? Blessed if that doesn't make it look probable !"
"Ha, ha, ha !" shrieked the juniors.
"Oh, really, Skinner! What I mean is —"
"Well, what do you mean, you fat oyster ?" asked Harry Wharton, with a rather sharp look at the Owl of the Remove.
"I — I mean, I don't want fellows like Skinner," stammered Bunter. "You see, you're not much class, Skinner, if you don't mind my mentioning it. I'm getting up a decent sort of party for this cruise, and you would hardly do."
"Why, you cheeky, fat Owl —"
"I have to be a bit particular, you know," said Bunter. "I've stretched a point in asking Smithy —"
"What ?" yelled the Bounder, while the other fellows roared.
Bunter blinked at him.
"It's all right, Smithy — I'll take you, if you care to come. As I've said, I'm stretching a point. You've got plenty of money, if you've got no manners, and you'll pass with the rest. Of course, you'll behave yourself a bit better than you do here — not so much of your swank, you know, and none of your loud waistcoats and diamond tiepins, and all that —"
"Ha, ha, ha !" yelled the Removites.
The Bounder looked at Bunter. His face was quite a study.
"Isn't he nice ?" said Peter Todd. "Isn't it a pleasure to listen to him ? Go it, Bunter !
Bunter blinked at Toddy.

"'Fraid I shall have to leave you out, old chap," he said. "Sorry, and all that, but you're too poor to keep your end up on such a cruise as this is going to be. Hardly up to it socially, if you know what I mean."
Toddy's face became as interesting a study as the Bounder's.
"The fact is, I've got to be a bit particular whom I ask," explained Bunter. "I can't take more than a dozen fellows, and George wants a decent lot — he's made a point of that. So you see —"
Herbert Vernon-Smith made a stride forward. He grabbed down the big photograph from the wall. Bunter gave a yell.
"Here, let that alone ! Give that to me, you beast !"
"Here it is !" snapped Smithy.
He lifted it with both hands, and gave it to Bunter — with a crash on his bullet head. It was a terrific crash, and it split the cardboard mount in the centre. Bunter's head came through with quite a surprised expression on the fat face as it emerged.
"Yaroooh !" roared Bunter.
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"I say, you fellows —— Wow !"
Billy Bunter stood with the cardboard mount round his fat neck like a necklace, and the shattered photograph of the Sea Nymph straggling round his fat features. He stood and roared.
He roared still more loudly when the Bounder slewed him round, and planted a boot on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars.
"Whoooop !"
Bunter flew towards the doorway. Toddy and Skinner — for reasons unknown to Bunter — rushed after him, and each added a kick. Bunter flew out of the Rag, and there was a bump in the passage outside. A yell of laughter followed him.
"Ow ! Wow ! Ow !" A fat and furious face blinked in over the necklace of cardboard. "Ow ! Beast ! I won't take you now, Smithy —"



Vernon-Smith brought the photograph down on Bunter's head

"Ha, ha, ha !"
The Bounder made a jump towards the door. Bunter made a jump along the passage,

and vanished, leaving the Rag in a roar.
“Great Scott !” yelled Bob Cherry.
“What ?”
“Great Christopher Columbus !”
Bob Cherry fairly yelled.
It was morning, and the rising-bell had ceased to clang. All the Remove had turned out of bed, excepting Billy Bunter, who was snatching a few extra minutes. Bunter often got a few extra minutes in bed by cutting down the time other fellows devoted to washing.
Early as the hour was, it was bright and sunny, a fine spring morning. And Bob Cherry had clambered up to one of the high windows, which looked seaward, to look out. Bob certainly did not believe in the Bunter yacht, or that that magnificent vessel was going to drop anchor in Pegg Bay. But he thought he would give the bay a “squint,” and when he bestowed that squint on it, he was amazed at what he beheld. He almost fell down from the broad window-shelf in his astonishment. According to Bunter, the Sea Nymph was coming there that day, and might arrive very early. Nobody believed a word of it. But —
“Holy smoke !” gasped Bob.
There, in the rays of the rising sun, was a handsome yacht, at anchor out in the bay, about a quarter of a mile from the old wooden pier opposite the Anchor Inn. Even at the distance it was clearly seen from the high window of the dormitory, across the intervening trees and cliffs. Polished metal-work gleamed back the rising sunlight. Figures, tiny in the distance, could be seen moving on the deck.
The presence of a yacht in Pegg Bay was not surprising — it was not unusual for a yacht to put in there. It might have been merely a coincidence that one was there that morning. But it was more than a coincidence. For this yacht, unmistakably, was the one depicted in the photograph Bunter had hung up in the Rag, and which the Bounder had burst over his head. It was the Sea Nymph, and there was no mistake about it !
“What the thump !” exclaimed Harry Wharton, staring up at the junior at the window.
“Ship on fire, or what ?”
“The yacht !” gasped Bob.
“The what ?”
“The yacht — the Sea Nymph !”
“Rats !”
“Bosh !”
“What’s the good of trying to pull our leg, fathead ?”
“Chuck it !”
“I tell you it’s there !” roared Bob, in great excitement. “Come and look !”
There was a rush of half-dressed juniors to the windows. They clambered up in a crowd, and stared. There was the yacht !
Harry Wharton rubbed his eyes, as if he doubted their evidence.
“My only hat !” he ejaculated.
“It — it — it — it’s a yacht !” stuttered Nugent.
“Might be any old yacht !” said Skinner.
“It’s the one in the photograph !” said Bob. “That’s a cert.”
“The certfulness is terrific !”
“It’s the jolly old Sea Nymph !” said Johnny Bull blankly. “How could Bunter have known it was coming here to-day ?”
“Well, if it’s really his cousin’s yacht, dear men —” drawled Lord Mauleverer.

“Rot !”
“The rotfulness is preposterous !”
“Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunter !” roared Bob Cherry.
Snore !
“Wake up, you fat slug !”
Snore !
“Turn him out, somebody !”
Bolsover major turned Bunter out. There was a howl as the fat junior landed on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes.
“Yarooh ! Beast ! Wow ! I’m not getting up yet ! Wow !”
“Here’s the jolly old yacht, old fat man !” roared Bob. “Eh ? What about it ?” snapped Bunter. “Wharrer you wake me up for, you beast ?”
“Don’t you want to see your cousin’s yacht ?” jeered Skinner.
“I’m not going to clamber up to that window to see the thing !” growled Bunter. “I shall see it when I go on board presently, I suppose.”
“When ?” chuckled Skinner.
“The whenfulness is terrific !”
“But how on earth did Bunter know that that yacht was coming here ?” said Harry Wharton, as he resumed dressing.
“Oh, really, Wharton. I had it from my Cousin George —”
“Rats !”
“Easy enough,” said Skinner. “I dare say it was in the papers. Movements of ships are reported in the papers. Bunter saw it in the newspaper, of course, and fancied he could spoof us !”
“Why, of course ! That’s it !”
“That isn’t it !” yelled Bunter. “I told you the yacht was coming, and it’s come ! I shall go on board this afternoon.”
“I don’t think !” chuckled Skinner. “As you can’t possibly know anybody on board that yacht, even you won’t have the nerve to butt in there !”
“I tell you that yacht belongs to my Cousin George !” roared Bunter.
“You can tell us till you’re black in the face, old bean ! But you won’t get anybody to swallow it !”
“Yah !” snorted Bunter.
The Removites finished dressing, and went down, quite satisfied with Skinner’s explanation that Bunter had seen some report of the Sea Nymph’s movements in the newspaper, and founded his latest gammon on that. Every man in the Remove seemed to be understudying Doubting Thomas of ancient times.
Billy Bunter snorted as he rolled out into the quad. It is said that seeing is believing; but now that the fellows had seen the yacht, still they did not believe. They only supposed that Bunter was keeping up his fairy-tale with more than usual impudence.
Two Sixth Form men were walking in the quad — Wingate and Gwynne, who had been down for an early bathe. Bunter caught their words as he passed them.
“Topping yacht !” Wingate was saying. “I’d like to be the lucky bargee that owns her.”
“Lucky bargee, and no mistake !” assented Gwynne. “I say !” Bunter halted, and blinked at the great men of the Sixth through his big spectacles. “I say, Wingate. that’s my cousin’s yacht !”
Wingate and Gwynne came to a halt. They stared at Bunter.
“What did you say, Bunter ?” asked the Greyfriars captain.
“That yacht belongs to my Cousin George !”

"Does it ?"
"Oh, yes ! Look here ! I'll take you over her after class, if you like," said Bunter breezily. "I say — Oh, lor'! Wharrer you up to ? Leggo my ears ?" shrieked Bunter.
Evidently the Sixth Form men were doubting Thomases, too. Wingate took hold of one of Bunter's fat ears, Gwynne took hold of the other. Both of them pulled — hard. The Owl of the Remove yelled frantically.
"Ow ! Leggo ! Wow ! Whooop !"
Having pulled Bunter's ears, the Sixth Form men walked disdainfully on. Bunter rubbed his ears, and glared after them. He decided not to tell any more Sixth Form men about the Bunter yacht. The result was altogether too painful.

Keeping it Up!

"I SAY, you fellows —"
"Still keeping it up ?" grinned Bob Cherry.
"Oh, really, Cherry ——"
"The yacht's still in the bay, Bunter," chuckled Frank Nugent. "Going aboard ?"
"Eh ? Yes, of course."
"Gammon !" said Johnny Bull.
Morning school was over, and Bunter came out of the House and looked for the Famous Five. They smiled as he came up. Somebody's yacht had anchored in Pegg Bay, and Bunter was taking advantage of that fact to bolster up his latest and steepest yarn.
As they did not believe for one moment that Bunter had any connection whatever with the yacht, or the people on board, he would have to make some excuse, for even Bunter could hardly butt into a strange vessel among strangers. There was a limit even to Bunter's impudence.
"We've got lots of time to run down to the beach before dinner," said Bunter, blinking at the grinning five. "You fellows coming ?"
"Taking us on board ?" grinned Bob.
"Yes, old chap. I want to introduce you to my cousin George, as you're coming on the Easter cruise."
"Doesn't he do it well ?" said Bob admiringly. Wouldn't any fellow, who didn't know him, fancy he was telling the truth?"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Well, will you come ?" snapped Bunter. "A boatman will take us off to the yacht for a couple of bob. One of you fellows can pay."
"Yes; I can see myself butting into that yacht !" said Harry Wharton. "What should we say when they asked us who we were, and what the dickens we wanted ?"
"My Cousin George will expect me to —"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at ! Look here ! I'm going aboard, anyhow ! Are you coming or not ?" hooted Bunter.
"He's going down to the beach, and he's going to tell us he's been aboard when he comes back," chuckled Bob. "Look here ! A walk won't hurt us before dinner. Let's go. It will be frightfully interesting to see what whopper he tells us when we get to the pier."
"Let's," grinned Nugent.
And the Famous Five, laughing, walked out of gates with Bunter. It was quite a pleasant walk through the woods and along the cliffs to Pegg — more enjoyable to

Harry Wharton & Co. than to Bunter. Billy Bunter was gasping before he had covered half the distance.
"I say, you fellows, let's stop and rest a bit !" gasped Bunter, at last.
"And turn back," chuckled Bob. "Is that it? "
"It's coming now," said Johnny Bull.
"No !" hooted Bunter. "Just a few minutes' rest."
"Oh, all right !"
The juniors halted, and Bunter sat on a stile to renew his supply of wind, always rather short. The Famous Five leaned on the stile, smiling. They fully expected that, now they were in sight of the bay, Bunter would find some reason for turning back, after that rest, instead of keeping on. They waited to hear the fib.
Bunter stirred at last.
"Come on, you fellows," he said.
To their surprise he dropped from the stile on the Pegg side. Apparently he was still "keeping it up."
"Follow your leader !" chortled Bob. "He's putting it off till we get to the pier. What lie are you going to tell, Bunty ?"
"Beast !"
Bunter rolled on. The Famous Five sauntered. They were quite willing to walk as far as the pier. That was the limit. Bunter could go no farther than that without going on board the yacht, or walking into the sea. And one seemed as likely as the other to the Famous Five.
Puffing and blowing, the fat Owl arrived on the old wooden pier. There were plenty of boats for hire, and several men in jerseys glanced in anticipation at the Greyfriars fellows. The Famous Five watched Bunter in great amusement. Now that he had reached the limit they waited to hear what was his excuse for not going aboard the yacht.
"I say, you fellows —"
"Here it comes !" chortled Bob.
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"I want a couple of bob for the boatman. I've been disappointed about a postal order."
"You'll be disappointed about two bob, too, old fat man."
"So that's the game," grunted Johnny Bull. "We've been brought here to lend Bunter two bob for ginger-pop and buns."
"It's for the boat !" yelled Buster. "You can pay the boatman yourselves, if you like."
"Done !" said Harry Wharton. "Call a boatman, and tell him to take you out to that yacht, and I'll give him the two bob on the spot."
That, to the juniors, seemed a very safe offer. To their amazement Billy Bunter waved a hand to one of the boatmen, and the man held on to the pier with one hand, and touched his ancient hat with the other.
"Two bob to take me out to that yacht," said Bunter.
"Aye, aye, sir !"
Bunter clambered into the boat, the five Removites watching him in astonishment. He blinked back at them.
"You fellows coming ?" he demanded.
"Coming ? No fear! Mean to say you've really got the nerve to butt into a yacht where you don't know anybody ?" yelled Bob.
"You silly ass! I've told you —"
"Rats !"
"The ratfulness is terrific !"

“Yeh! You jolly well pay the boatman, then, and see !” snorted Bunter.
He sat down in the stern.
Wharton made a grimace. But what he had said, he had said, and he handed the Pegg boatman the two shillings. The man shoved off from the pier, sat down to his oars, and started pulling for the anchored yacht.
“Well, my hat !” said Nugent, with a whistle. “Has that fat villain really cheek enough to butt in there, just to pull our leg ? I suppose they couldn’t chuck him into the sea if he did ?”
“Rot !” growled Johnny Bull. “He’s gone for a row, that’s all. He will tell the man to pull back before he reaches the yacht.”
“That’s it,” assented Wharton. “I’ve been done !”
“The donefulness is terrific !”
Leaning on the wooden rail of the old pier the juniors watched the receding boat. Every moment they expected it to change its course, and pull round the bay, or else back to the pier.
But it did neither. The boatman pulled on steadily, and the boat drew nearer and nearer to the yacht. Now a man in a yachting-cap was seen to lean over the rail, looking towards Bunter. They saw him make a gesture with his hand as the boat closed in, whether of welcome or not they could not make out. In more and more surprise they watched.
“My hat ! They’re putting out the ladder !” exclaimed Bob. “Look !”
“He’s going aboard —”
“The cheek !”
“Well, my only Aunt Maria !” ejaculated Wharton as he watched the boat pull in, hook on, and saw the accommodation-ladder let down for Bunter. “Does he really know anybody on that yacht, I wonder ?”
“Anyhow, there he is — on board !” said Nugent. “If he’s spoofing he’s jolly well keeping it up to the finish ! Of course, he may have pitched some yarn to get on board— he’s as full of artful tricks as a monkey. Made out he had a message from somebody, or something.”
“If that’s so he will be coming back pretty soon.”
“You’ll see him coming in a minute !” grunted Johnny Bull.
The juniors watched. But they did not see him coming in a minute. They did not see him coming at all. The boat pulled off from the yacht, the boatman returning alone. Bunter was staying on the Sea Nymph.
“He — he — he’s not coming back !” stuttered Bob.
“Coming off in the yacht’s boat later,” said Johnny Bull.
“That looks as if he knows the people on board.”
“I — I suppose it does! More likely he stuffed them somehow !”
Johnny Bull was not going to believe Bunter unless he had to.
The boat pulled in to the pier. The Pegg boatman stood up and called to the juniors. Apparently Bunter had sent a message back.
“The young gent said don’t wait for him, sir !”
“Right-ho !”
“Then he’s staying there !” said Harry Wharton. “Well, if it’s all spoof I’m blessed if I know how he’s wangling it. Time we got back, anyhow, or we shall be late for tiffin, and Quelch will bite ! Come on !”
The chums of the Remove walked off the pier and took their homeward way to the school. They went in great astonishment. Either Bunter was telling the truth, and there

really was a yacht in the Bunter family, or else there was a mystery about it that the juniors could not fathom.

Plenty of fellows noticed that Bunter cut tiffin.
They could hardly help noticing that. It was so very uncommon for Billy Bunter to miss a meal.
When the fellows went out after dinner the fat Owl was not to be seen. He had not returned yet.
Apparently he was still on board the Sea Nymph. In that case he must have lunched there. It was impossible to imagine that Bunter was cutting out a meal entirely. Missing dinner at the school could only be explained by lunch on the yacht.
A dozen fellows inquired of the Famous Five what had become of Bunter. They stared when they were told.
"On the yacht !" ejaculated Skinner. "You saw him ?"
"Watched him all the time," said Bob Cherry.
"How on earth did he wangle it ?"
"Blessed if I know ! But they let him on board and let him stay — must have stood him lunch, too !"
"I can't make it out," said the Bounder. "Anybody ever heard of the Sea Nymph before, or know whom it belongs to ?"
Nobody had ! Unless it really belonged to Captain Cook, the cousin of William George Bunter, nobody knew anything about the ownership. And nobody believed that, even yet.
"I fancy I can spot it !" said Skinner sagely. "Bunter knows a steward on the yacht, or something of that sort, and the man's taken him on."
"Or a stoker !" suggested the Bounder.
"Well, it looks as if he knows somebody there," said Harry Wharton. "Of course, Bunter might know the people, whoever they are. But if there was a yacht in the Bunter family we should have heard of it before. We've heard of the Bunter family mansion, the Bunter money, the Bunter titled relations, the Bunter villa at Cannes, and the Bunter shooting-box in Scotland, and a lot more things, so it stands to reason we should have heard of the Bunter yacht — if any !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"That's it," assented Johnny Bull. "May belong to some City man who knows his pater — his father's in the City. Bunter happened to hear that it was putting in at Pegg, and started a yarn on the strength of it."
"Ten to one !" agreed Wharton.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo ! There's Sammy !" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Bunter mi. will know if there's a yacht in the Bunter clan ! Here young Bunter !"
Bunter minor, of the Second Form, blinked round at the group of Removites. There was a grin on Sammy Bunter's fat face, a twinkle in the little round eyes behind the big spectacles that made him look so like his major. He came up to the Removites.
"Seen the yacht in Pegg Bay, Sammy ?" asked Bob.
And all the fellows looked with inquiring interest at the fat fag. Certainly, if the Sea Nymph was a Bunter yacht Sammy ought to know.
"Yes, I saw it this morning," answered Sammy.
"Ever seen it before ?"
"Not that I know of."
"What did I tell you?" grunted Johnny Bull.
"You see," went on Sammy calmly, "my Cousin George hasn't had it long. I believe

he only bought it last year."
"What ?" roared Johnny Bull. "Has Billy been standing you a stick of toffee to back up his yarn ?"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Look here, Sammy, tell the truth, if it's possible for a Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "Is there really a Cousin George ?"
"Of course there is, fathead !"
"Does that yacht really belong to him ?"
"Of course it does !"
"Is Billy going on a cruise in it this Easter ?"
"Of course he is !"
"Are you going ?"
"No fear !"
"And why not, if Billy's going ?" demanded Johnny Bull.
"George hasn't asked me, for one thing," said Sammy, "and I jolly well don't want to go, for another ! He, he, he !"
"I should think you'd be jolly glad to get an Easter cruise for nothing !" said Bob Cherry.
"For nothing ?" repeated Sammy. "Eh ? Oh, yes ! Still, I don't want to go. But Billy's going all right — taking a party, I hear ! He, he, he !"
Apparently Sammy seemed to see something funny in the idea of Billy Bunter taking a party for the Easter cruise. He giggled and sniggered, like a fellow in possession of a good joke.
"Well, what's the joke, you young ass ?" demanded Bob.
"He, he, he !"
"Gammon, of course," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter guessed that we should ask Sammy about it, and he's fixed it with him to back him up ! Kick him !"
"Good egg !"
"Yaroooooooh !" roared Sammy, as he was duly kicked; and he departed from the spot in haste.
When the bell rang for class Billy Bunter had not come in. The Remove went into their Form-room, and Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye immediately detected the absence of that fat Owl. It was ten minutes later that Billy Bunter rolled in, puffing and blowing after a walk. The gimlet eye fixed on him at once.
"Bunter !" rumbled Mr. Quelch.
"Yes, sir ! Sorry I'm late, sir !" said Bunter breezily. "I've had to walk back from Pegg, sir !"
"You were absent from dinner, Bunter !"
"Yes, sir. I lunched with my cousin on his yacht, sir," answered the Owl of the Remove.
The Remove listened and stared. If it was all spoof. Bunter was certainly displaying a remarkable nerve. It was not a light matter to pull the majestic leg of Henry Samuel Quelch.
"You lunched —" repeated the Remove master.
"Yes, sir. My cousin's yacht is in Pegg Bay, sir, and he pressed me to stay to lunch when I went off to see him, sir, and I hope you'll excuse me, sir, as I haven't seen my cousin for a long time."
Mr. Quelch looked fixedly at Bunter. He looked as doubtful a Doubting Thomas as any fellow in his Form.
"Your cousin's yacht, Bunter ?" repeated Mr. Quelch.

“Yes, sir, The Sea Nymph.”
“What is your cousin’s name, Bunter ?”
“Cook, sir — George Cook.”
“And you have been to see him on his — his yacht ?”
“Yes, sir.”
There was a brief pause.
“Very well, Bunter,” said Mr. Quelch at last. “If the matter is as you state, you are excused.”
“Thank you, sir !” said Bunter brightly. “And — and my cousin sent a message for you, sir.”
“Indeed !”
“He thought you might like to walk down and look at his yacht, sir, as some of the fellows are going for a cruise this Easter.”
The Remove could only gaze. They gazed almost open-mouthed. If this was spoof, if this was nerve, it was the limit !
“Indeed!” said Mr. Quelch again.
“I’m taking a party on the yacht this vac, sir,” explained Bunter calmly, “and if you’d care to look over the yacht, sir, any time to-day, my Cousin George would be glad to show you over, sir.”
“Bless my soul ! I mean, very well, Bunter. I — I will think about it,” said Mr Quelch, in quite a gasping voice. And the Remove settled down to lessons. But they did not give a lot of attention to the lessons. Amazing as it was, miraculous as it was, it was borne in upon their minds that the yacht in Pegg Bay really was a Bunter yacht, that there really was a Cousin George, and that the Sea Nymph belonged to Cousin George, and that Billy Bunter was really, truly, and seriously taking a party of fellows for an Easter cruise in a magnificent yacht. For after what he had said there was little doubt that Mr. Quelch would go down to look over the yacht, and that Bunter would dare to pull his leg to the extent of causing him to make a fool of himself was unimaginable.
It was amazing, it was staggering, it was overwhelming.
But Bunter had told the truth all the time, and the Famous Five were booked for an Easter cruise with Bunter. Even Johnny Bull admitted it, though Johnny averred that there must be a catch in it somewhere.

Settled!

“WE’RE landed !” said Harry Wharton.
“Looks like it.”
“The landfulness is terrific !” said Hurree Singh.
“Can’t make it out.” said Bob Cherry, “but — it’s so.”
“There’s a catch in it somewhere,” said Johnny Bull.
“Where, ass ?”
“Ask me another ! Somewhere,” said Johnny.
The Famous Five had gathered in Study No. I for tea. Over tea they were discussing the amazing happening. It had to be admitted now that the Bunter yacht had a local habitation and a name. It was a real yacht, not a happy figment of Bunter’s fertile fancy. And the Famous Five had accepted Bunter’s invitation to a cruise on that yacht — if there was a yacht, And there was !
It needed thinking over.
An Easter cruise in a splendid yacht was rather attractive. They admitted that. They

had not met Cousin George yet; but if he was a fellow who gave a schoolboy carte blanche in inviting his friends to a cruise, it looked as if he must be a large-hearted man, quite a decent sort of chap. According to Bunter, there was accommodation for a dozen fellows on the yacht, and he was going to fill up all the accommodation with friends invited from Greyfriars. Cousin George, it appeared, was going to run that yacht for two or three weeks purely for the benefit of Bunter and his friends. It looked as if he must be a rather generous sort of man — quite the sort of man that a fellow would like to know.

Still, there was a fly in the ointment. The chums of the Remove liked the idea of a cruise; in fact they were rather inclined to jump at such a chance. They already had a high opinion of Captain Cook, but —.

There was a "but."

They really did not want to be Bunter's guests. All the more because they had been determined that he should not stick to them for that vac, they felt awkward about it. And Bunter was not the sort of fellow to whom they wished to be under an obligation. At the same time they did not want to seem ungrateful. It was really an awkward situation.

"Well, we can cry off if we want to," said Harry Wharton slowly. "Now it seems to be clear that the thing is genuine, Bunter will be able to pick up all the guests he wants —"

"And a few over," grinned Bob.

"I've noticed that Skinner is jolly civil to him since class this afternoon," said Frank Nugent. "Snoop seems to have taken a liking to him, too."

"And the esteemed Fishy is terrifically attentive to the absurd and fatheaded Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Old Mauly's got a lot of sense," said Harry. "We're landed if Bunter holds us to it. But, after all, why should he ? He can't really want us specially. Why should he ?"

"Well, we're awfully nice chaps !" said Bob with a chuckle. "Still, Bunter's never noticed that before."

"Might want to borrow money off us during the cruise," said Johnny Bull.

"Well, his cousin must be fearfully rich if he can afford to run a yacht like that just to give schoolboys a holiday," said Harry. "It costs something to run a yacht. With a rich relation standing him a holiday, Bunter won't want to touch his guests for little loans, I should think."

"N-n-no!" Johnny Bull had to admit it.

"Well, then, if we don't want to go, we needn't," said Harry. "Bunter will wash it out — especially as he's getting so jolly popular now."

"But don't we ?" asked Nugent.

"Well, I'd rather not," said Harry. "It would come in useful, in a way, as my people are abroad for Easter, and that washes out Wharton Lodge. But we were thinking of a hiking tour, or something. I can't say I want to take favours from Bunter, after kicking him all through the term."

"Can't very well," assented Nugent.

"It would be ripping — a cruise for Easter !" said Bob. "But, dash it all, we can't do it."

"I say, you fellows !"

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles looked into Study No. I. For once there was not a chorus of "Buzz off, Bunter !", The Owl of the Remove rolled in, and nobody said him nay.

"Might have told me you'd come up to tea !" said Bunter, pulling a chair to the table

and sitting down. “Pass the ham. I’m rather hungry. I say, you fellows, Quelch has gone down to look at my cousin’s yacht.”
The juniors had seen Mr. Quelch walk out of gates after class. They had no doubt where he had gone. It banished the last lingering doubt. Obviously. Bunter would not have dared to let him start if it was only to discover that his leg had been pulled when he reached the yacht. It was impossible to doubt further.
The fat Owl tucked cheerfully into the foodstuffs. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged g1ances and Wharton proceeded to break the ice.
“Well, it seems all right about the yacht, Bunter. Sorry we didn’t take it in. But you know what a spoofer you are !”
“Oh, really, Wharton —”
“We hope you’ll have a jolly cruise,” said Harry. “And you’ll get a dozen fellows to go with you — two dozen, if you like.”
“Only accommodation for a dozen,” said Bunter, with his mouth full. “I’m asking some Fifth Form men — Coker, you know. He’s got money.”
“What on earth has money to do with it, you ass ?”
“Oh, nothing ! Pass those poached eggs.”
“Is Coker going ?” asked Nugent.
“1 think so. You fellows will get on all right with Coker, what ? He’s a bit of a fool and a bit of a swanking ass, but he’s all right so long as you pull his silly leg a bit. I don’t want you rowing with Coker on my cousin’s yacht, of course, That wouldn’t do.”
“You’ll make up a party easily enough without us, old fat bean.”
Bunter ceased eating for a moment and blinked across the table at the captain of the Remove.
“Without you ?” he repeated. “Wharrer you mean ?”
“Yes. You see —”
“But you’re coming !” said Bunter.
“We thank you for the kind invitation,” said Bob Cherry solemnly. “But owing to circumstances over which we have no control, we are obliged to decline it ! Thanks and all that.”
“Exactly !” said Johnny Bull.
“The thankfulness is terrific,” declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“Oh, really, you fellows ! You’re not proposing to let me down, after you’ve accepted my invitation and I’ve told my Cousin George you’re coming ?”
“You — you see, Bunter —” Wharton hardly knew what to say.
“I don’t !” contradicted Bunter. “I call it rotten if you let me down. Mean ! Not at all the thing !”
“It’s not letting you down, old bean ! You can make up a party easily enough — there’s Skinner and Snoop quite keen —”
“I don’t want Skinner and Snoop.”
“Well, you don’t want us, if you come to that !” said Harry.
“I jolly well do !” said Bunter.
“Well, why ?” demanded Wharton.
“Because you’re such nice chaps !” said Bunter.
“Oh, crikey !”
“And we’re pals, ain’t we ?”
“Hem !”
“This is rather thick. I must say !” said Bunter, more in sorrow than in anger. “I get up a party for an expensive cruise in a magnificent yacht — you engage to come — then

you tell me almost at the last minute that you're not corning ! Do you call that playing the game ?"
The chums of the Remove were silent and uncomfortable. Obviously, if Bunter looked at it like that, they had to stick it. Yet it was puzzling why Bunter specially wanted them. Now that it was known that the yacht and the cruise were solid facts, he had plenty to choose from. Plenty of fellows had turned on quite a lot of civility. Fellows like Skinner and Snoop were prepared almost to bow to the ground before him. Bunter liked flattery, he liked soft sawder, he liked being made much of. He would get nothing of that from the Famous Five. Yet for some mysterious reason he preferred them to fellows who would give him lots and lots of it. Really, it began to look as if the fat Owl entertained hitherto unsuspected feelings of attachment for the Famous Five.
There was a long silence in Study No. 1. Bunter filled it in by attention to the foodstuffs. They disappeared at a great rate.
"Any more cake ?" asked Bunter, when the last crumb and the last plum had vanished.
"No !"
"Any more tarts ?"
"No !"
Grunt from Bunter.
"Well, 1 think you fellows might stand a rather more decent spread than that, when a fellow's taking you on an expensive cruise for weeks and weeks," he said.
"Look here, Bunter, we're not coming !"
"Oh, really, Wharton —"
"You can't possibly want us —"
"I jolly well do !"
"Well, why, you fat ass ?"
"Because I like you so much, old chap," said Bunter affably.
Bunter rose from the table. There was no more tuck: so naturally there would be no more Bunter !
"Look here, you fellows, you're coming !" he said. "A promise is a promise ! It's all fixed and settled. I want you to come ! I'm going to give you a magnificent time — an expensive cruise — really expensive ! You can't back out now, and leave a fellow in the lurch ! Now, can you ?"
"Well, if you put it like that, Bunter —"
"I do !" said Bunter promptly.
"If you really want us —"
"Couldn't do without you ! I shouldn't enjoy it a bit !"
"Well, my hat !" said Bob Cherry.
Harry Wharton glanced round at his comrades. They nodded. Really, there was nothing else to be done but assent.
"Well, it's settled, then," said Harry.
"That's right, old chap ! You'll have a great time !" said Bunter. "Expense no object — remember that! It's settled." And Bunter rolled out of the study — perhaps in search of another tea further up the passage.
"Blessed if I make him out !" said Bob.
"Same here ! But — after all, as he puts it so decently, I don't see why we shouldn't go !" said Frank. "The fat oyster doesn't seem to be on the make, as usual, at any rate."
"There's a catch in it somewhere !" grunted Johnny Bull. "I don't see where, or how,

but there's a catch in it."
"Well, it's settled, anyhow," said Harry.
"Oh, yes, I suppose it's settled."
And settled it was !

"It's a bit of a problem!"
Coker of the Fifth made that remark to his pals Potter and Greene, in "break" the next morning. Coker had a shade of thought on his rugged brow; and his pals could see that he was thinking, and wondered what he was doing it with.
"A Senior man," Coker continued, "has to consider his position. Here, at school, I could not possibly have anything to do with a fag in the Lower Fourth. You see that ?"
"Oh, quite !" yawned Potter. He did not, as a matter of fact, know what Coker was driving at. But he did not want to know, so he did not ask Coker to explain. Coker, however, proceeded to explain.
"In the hols, it's different ! A man might take up a fag, to a certain extent, in the holidays. Here it's impossible ! But away from Greyfriars, you know, things are rather different. What ?"
"Um !" said Greene.
"And a yachting cruise is rather a catch !" said Coker.
"Anybody offered you a yacht for the vac ?" inquired Potter.
"Bunter — you know young Bunter, of the Remove — has asked me to go on a cruise for Easter, in his cousin's yacht. Cheek, if you like — asking a Fifth Form man !
I know that, and told him so !" explained Coker. "But I'm bound to say that he put it very decently. He said a lot of juniors were going, and that the presence of a senior man — a senior generally looked up to in the school — would keep them in order, and so on. Unusually thoughtful way of looking at it for a fag, you know."
Potter and Greene could only wonder why young Bunter of the Remove had been taking the trouble to pull Coker's leg. But they did not say so.
"The fact is, I've thought of taking it on," said Coker candidly. "I like the idea of a yachting cruise. The yacht seems a decent sort of a tub. 1 heard Quelch telling Prout he'd been on it — the skipper showed him over it yesterday — and Quelch seemed to think it rather decent. Bunter's cousin, a man named Hook, or Snook, or Cook or something, seems to have given him leave to ask all the fellows he chooses, up to a dozen. It's rather sensible of him to want a few seniors in the party, to keep the young sweeps within bounds, you know. He knows I've a short way with fags."
Potter closed one eye at Greene. Coker's short way with fags did not really make him popular among the fags. They wondered more than ever why Billy Bunter was pulling Coker's leg. It could hardly be because he liked Coker's company and looked forward to enjoying it through the Easter holidays. For how could a fellow enjoy Coker's company ? That was too steep to be believed for a moment.
"Still, it's a bit of a problem," Coker confessed. "I can't know Bunter here, but I might know him — for a time — away from Greyfriars ! But would that encourage him to put on airs of familiarity at school again next term ? You see, it wants some thinking out."
"Some problem!" said Potter, with great gravity. "Nothing in Euclid to equal it, so far as I know."
Greene suppressed a chuckle. Coker did not like frivolity, when he was considering deep and serious problems.
"Those cheeky young sweeps are going !" went on Coker, with a nod towards five

cheeky Removites who were sauntering in the spring sunshine in the quad. “I hardly like the idea! They’re cheeky here at school — you’ve noticed it —”
“Oh, quite ! Didn’t they roll you down a staircase the other day ?” asked Potter.
“Hardly the thing for them to roll you about Bunter’s yacht !”
“Might roll you into the stokehold,” remarked Greene. “You wouldn’t care for that, Coker.”
“I should keep them in order, of course.” said Coker. “In fact, I think I should take a cane with me for that very purpose. A few thrashings should teach them to toe the line.”
“Ha, ha, ha !” yelled Potter and Greene, simultaneously and involuntarily.
The idea of Horace Coker taking a cane on the Easter cruise for the purpose of keeping, the Famous Five in order, quite overcame them.
Coker stared at them.
“What are you sniggering at ?” he demanded. “Nothing to snigger at, that I can see ! Don’t cackle like silly geese, you fellows. It may not be necessary to thrash them. I shall speak to them seriously before we start, and I dare say they will see that they will have to play up. On the whole, I think I shall accept Bunter’s invitation, as he put it so decently. The kid seems very sensible and respectful. And if he puts on airs next term on the strength of having had me for the holidays I can jolly soon kick him into behaving himself. What ?”
“Oh. quite.”
“Well, then, we’ll go !” said Coker. “Bunter’s put it to me very decently, and I shall accept. You fellows are included, of course. He wants the three of us. You’ll like it all right.”
Potter and Greene looked dubious. Coker, in his highhanded way, had decided the matter for them. Having decided that he would go on the cruise himself, he took it for granted that Potter and Greene would go. Coker’s word was law — or he fancied it was.
“Look here,” said Greene, “that’s all very well but a Fifth Form man accepting invitations from a fag —— Well, really, you know —”
“I’ve thought that out,” said Coker. “I’ve decided that I can do it without loss of dignity. That’s all right.”
“Well, we haven’t thought it out,” said Greene, rather tartly.
“Don’t be an ass, Greene !”
“You see —” said Potter.
“Don’t be a dummy, Potter !”
“Um !” said Potter and Greene.
“I shall go down to the yacht and look it over, and meet Bunter’s cousin,” continued Coker. “Then it will be settled. But it’s practically settled now. So you fellows can get on with making your arrangements for the trip. Now I’ll give those cheeky young sweeps a tip about what I shall expect from them.”
Coker walked off towards the Famous five. Potter and Greene were left staring at one another.
“Blessed if I quite make it all out !” said Greene. “It seems strange that that ripping yacht in the bay belongs to Bunter’s cousin, and he’s got carte blanche in asking fellows for the cruise. His cousin must be rolling in oof, I should say.”
“Blessed if I can make it out, either,” said Potter. “But old Quelch has been on the yacht and seen the man, Cook, so it must be square. Come to think of it, Greeney, an Easter cruise is a bit of a catch. You don’t often get a yachting cruise for nothing.”
“That’s so,” agreed Greene. “Can’t say that I want a holiday with a mob of fags, but,

as you say, we get it for nothing. You got anything better on if we chuck Coker for the hols ?"
"Well, no ! And you —"
"No. So far as I am concerned, it's hols with Coker or with an aunt at Worthing."
"Oh, my hat ! Stick to Coker then," advised Potter.
"Keep the aunt in reserve, in case we can't stand Coker — what ?''
"That's what I was thinking. Dash it all, I don't see why we shouldn't enjoy the cruise, even with Coker on board !"
"We'll try, at least."
And Coker's chums decided loyally to stick to Coker.
Meanwhile, Horace Coker bore down on the Famous Five. That cheery and select company were also discussing Easter and the cruise in the Bunter yacht. Now it was settled, the Famous Five had a few misgivings, but, on the whole, they were rather pleased.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo ! Here's jolly old Coker !" said Bob. "Line up. I know that look in his eye. Coker's hunting trouble."
The chums of the Remove grinned and lined up to receive Coker. If the great Horace wanted trouble Harry Wharton & Co. were not the fellows to say him nay.
"I've got something to say to you kids," said Coker, getting down to brass tacks at once, as it were. "I'm going on Bunter's yacht for Easter. I understand that you kids are coming, too."
"You do ?" exclaimed Bob, with an air of great astonishment. "You don't say so, Coker ! You surprise me, old bean !"
"Well, isn't it so ?" asked Coker, puzzled.
"Oh, yes; it's so."
"Then what are you surprised at, you young ass ?"
"I'm surprised at your understanding it."
"Eh ?"
"1 didn't know you could understand anything," explained Bob. "It's a bit of a change for you, isn't it? "
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Coker frowned grimly. This was the sort of cheek he was accustomed to from these bright young spirits in the Lower Fourth. It had to be made clear that this sort of thing would not do on the Easter cruise. Coker felt that he had to make that quite clear.
"Now, I don't want any cheek !" said Coker. "That's why I'm speaking to you now. I should be sorry — really sorry — to have to begin the cruise by whopping you on the deck of the yacht, and ——"
"You would !" agreed Harry Wharton, with a nod. "If you started it you would soon be frightfully sorry."
"The sorrowfulness would be truly terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Coker !" declared Hurree Jamset Rain Singh.
"Will you shut up when I'm speaking to you ?" roared Coker, beginning to show signs of excitement. "I want to make it clear that you fags will have to behave yourselves. In the first place, you'll keep your distance, and not put on airs of familiarity because I'm on the same cruise. Got that ?"
"Agreed !" said Wharton gravely. "But only on condition that you keep your distance —"
"What ?"
"And don't put on airs of familiarity because we're on the same cruise."
"Ha, ha, ha !" roared the Co., quite entertained by the expression on Horace Coker's

rugged countenance.
Coker of the Fifth breathed hard and deep.
“I’m warning you for your own good,” he said. “I don’t want to be whopping you all the time. I shall keep an eye on you and keep you in order, of course. And you’d better remember that I’ve a short way with fags.”
“Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows !” said Bob Cherry. “You hear what Coker says ? He’s got a short way with fags. Now, my idea is that one good turn deserves another, and what’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. What about a short way with Coker ? Shall we give him a tip, too ?”
“Hear, hear !”
What happened next came so suddenly that Coker was taken quite by surprise. Five pairs of hands gripped him, and before he knew what was happening he was tipped over and up-ended.
“Ooooogh !” gasped Coker, as he spun, earth and sky spinning round him.
‘‘Ha, ha, ha !”
Bang !
Coker’s head landed on the earth. His legs flourished in the air. His arms waved wildly in the folds of his coat, which fell about his neck. Holding to Coker’s long legs, the hilarious juniors kept him in that inverted position amid yell of laughter from various directions.
“Ooooogh !” spluttered Coker. “You young — ooogh — sweeps — leggo ! Whoop ! Urrrrrggh !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“We’re warning you for your own good Coker !” said Bob Cherry. “We don’t want to be whopping you all the time, so we’re giving you this tip ! Any Fifth Form cheek or impudence will be put down with a firm hand !”
“Urrrrggh !” gurgled Coker.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“You’d better get that clear at the start, Coker. It may save trouble. This is a tip for you !”
“Yurrrggh !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Oooogh ! Leggo ! Wooogh !”

"Here, Wharrer you doing?" yelled Coker.

“The tipfulness is terrific !” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
Gurgle from Coker !
“ ’Ware prefects !” yelled Smithy
Wingate of the Sixth came striding up.
“You young sweeps, whats the game ?” he demanded.
“Only giving Coker a tip !” said Bob. “He gave us a tip, so we’re giving him one !”
“Let him go at once,” said Wingate, laughing.
“Oh, all right !”
The Removites released Horace Coker. For a fraction of a second Horace stood there on his head. his long legs extended skyward. Then he crashed.
“Oooogh !” spluttered Coker.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Ow ! I’ll smash ’em ! I’ll spiflicate ’em —— Oooh ! I’ll pulverise ’em — Ow !” gurgled Coker, as he sat up.
“Come away, you men,” said Bob. “Coker seems to be cross about something ! Ta-ta, Coker ! Come to us when you want another tip !”
And the Famous Five, chuckling, departed at a trot. Potter and Greene kindly came along to give Coker a hand up. He leaned on them and spluttered for breath. Over his spluttering head they exchanged a cheery smile. It was Coker’s way to ask for these things, and his pals hoped that he enjoyed them.
“Oooogh ! Wooooh ! What are you grinning at, Wingate ? What are all those silly asses cackling at ? Groogh ! I’ll smash ’em ! *Urrrrrgh* !”
Coker was still in a spluttering state when the bell rang for third school. He went in with the Fifth still gurgling a little. It was clear to Coker that the tip he had given the Removites had been a sheer waste. It was only too plain that the young sweeps did not intend to behave themselves. It was now decided, in Coker’s mind, that he would take that cane when he started on the Easter cruise. He could see that it would be needed. There would have to be whoppings on board the Sea Nymph. Coker knew that ! But he did not yet know who was going to get the whoppings ! Fortunately, the veil of the future hid that from Coker.
“I say, you fellows !”
“Oh, dear !”
“Had your tea ?”
Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five.
“Anything the matter ?” he asked.
“You’re not looking very bright !”
The chums of the Remove had been looking bright enough before William George Bunter joined them. Now they were not looking so bright.
Fellows who had accepted a fellow’s invitation to an Easter cruise could hardly be anything but pally with a fellow. Prospective guests could not keep a prospective host at arms length. Harry Wharton & Co. had seen quite a lot of Bunter lately, especially at tea-time and when they happened to be in the tuckshop. And there was no doubt that Bunter’s fascinating society had palled. No doubt it was a good thing. But a fellow could have too much of a good thing. In this case, they had a lot too much.
“About tea —” said Bunter.
“Oh, all right !” said Harry Wharton resignedly. “Let’s get up to the study.”
“Eh ? Nothing to go up to the study for,” said Bunter. “I’m asking you fellows to tea —”
“Which ?”
“On hoard the yacht —”

“Oh !”
“Come on !” said Bunter.
The juniors looked and felt quite sheepish. Once more they had done Bunter wrong. But Bunter these days was so strange and surprising that a fellow might be excused for misunderstanding him a little.

“You want to meet my cousin, you know,” said Bunter, “as you’re sailing with him this Easter. And you’ll be able to sample the grub on the yacht, and see that it’s up to the mark. What ?”
“Oh !”
“George has to go to Dover,” went on Bunter. “He’s got some arrangements to make about other guests. I want you to meet him before he goes, see ?”
“Pleasure !” said Bob Cherry.
“The pleasurefulness will be terrific.”
“Let’s, by all means,” said Frank Nugent, “George seems to be a jolly good sort, Bunter.”
“Fine !” said Bunter. “Wait a tick — I’ll cut in and phone a taxi ! Prout’s gone out — I can use his phone.”
Without waiting for a reply, Bunter rolled into the House, Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another rather uncertainly. They were ready to walk down to Pegg, but Bunter preferred to go on wheels. In the circumstances, they could hardly say him nay. A taxi from Courtfield came rather expensive — far too expensive for the juniors to think of it for themselves. Bunter had kindly thought of it for them !
“We’re in for it !” grinned Bob Cherry.
“Whack it out, if Bunter doesn’t pay !” said Harry.
“If !” snorted Johnny Bull, “Lot of ‘if’ about it !”
Bunter came out cheerily, and rejoined them. They strolled down to the gates. Before long, the taxi came buzzing along the Courtfield road, and they piled into it, and rolled away to Pegg.
They got out in the old cobbled street, opposite the quay.
Billy Bunter started off at once, apparently forgetful of the driver.
“Seven-and-six on the clock. Bunter !” said Johnny Bull, very distinctly.
Bunter blinked round.
“Four extra — that makes nine-and-six !” said Nugent.
“Give him a ten-bob note,” said Bunter. “No — dash it all — sixpence tip isn’t enough for such a crowd. Make it twelve bob.”
And Bunter rolled on, leaving it to the Famous Five to make it twelve bob. He rolled cheerily on to the quay.
As a rule, Bunter did not believe in tipping. But circumstances alter cases ! In these circumstances, Bunter had no objection to the taxi-driver getting a half-crown tip. Having paid the driver, the Famous Five followed Bunter to the quay, and if Bunter had blinked at them again, he might have remarked once more that they were not looking very bright ! Really, Lower Fourth fellows could not afford to throw money about like this.
“I say, you fellows, there’s George !” exclaimed Bunter. A boat was coming off from the Sea Nymph. In the stern sat the man with a round, red face, whom the juniors had seen greet Bunter on his first visit to the yacht. They watched him rather curiously as the boat pulled in.
George — otherwise Captain Cook — was in yachting outfit, and looked red and plump and well-fed and good-natured. Except for his clothes, he did not seem to the

eyes of the juniors to have much of a yachting cut. He looked, indeed, more like an hotel-keeper in holiday garb. Still, there was no doubt that he was the owner of the yacht, Sea Nymph, and that was that ! Plump as his face was, there were some sharp lines in it, and his eyes were quite keen. But there could scarcely be any doubt that he was a large-hearted, generous sort of man, if he was allowing his young schoolboy cousin to ask a dozen fellows for a holiday cruise on his yacht. The Famous Five felt that they ought to like him, and they manfully resolved to try.

They were, in fact, rather anxious to make the acquaintance of the skipper with whom they were to sail. Bunter, so far, had not seemed very keen on bringing them into contact with George. It was a little odd that now he was taking them to the yacht. it was at a time when George was going away to Dover.

George landed on the quay, and gave his cousin Billy a nod. The fat Owl proceeded to present his companions, and George shook hands with them in turn, in a very hearty way.

"Glad to meet you !" said George. "What ? Take it from me, you'll have a good holiday on the Sea Nymph ! What ?"

"I'm sure we shall !" said Harry politely. "It's awfully good of you —"

"I say, you fellows, we can take the boat back to the yacht," interrupted Bunter.

"Certainly," said George. "like to look over the yacht ? By all means ! I hope you'll find, everything satisfactory, what ?"

"Eh ! Oh ! Yes, rather,'' said Harry.

"Everything on the Sea Nymph." said George. "is first-class, quite modern and up to date ! You can rely on that. But see for yourselves."

"Oh ! Ah ! Quite !" stammered Wharton.

"The food —"

"The food is unexceptionable," said George. "I make it a point to engage a first-class cook for every cruise. You can rely on that."

"Oh ! Ah ! Yes !"

"Don't let us delay you, George," said Bunter hurriedly. "You've got to catch your train, you know."

"Electric lighting, and a bath-room to every cabin," said George. "I may say that expense is no object on hoard the Sea Nymph."

"Oh ! Ah ! Yes ! Oh !"

The juniors hardly knew what to say in reply to these unexpected remarks from George. They were quite surprised and taken aback.

George waved a plump hand towards the yacht.

"See for yourselves! " he said. "Anything you find to complain of, just mention it."

"Not at all ! We —"

"Mention it !" insisted George. "In every way, I desire to meet your wishes."

"Oh, my hat ! I mean —"

"I say, you fellows, let's get in the boat — George has to catch a train, and —"

"Try the food while you're on hoard !" said George.

"Oh ! Ah ! Yes ! We —" stammered Wharton. "Your cousin has asked us to come on board to tea —"

"Fine !" said George. "Glad of it ! You'll see what it's like ! The best of everything — that's guaranteed !"

"I say, you fellows —" Bunter's anxiety to break off this extraordinary conversation was plain. It leaped to the eye.

"It will be an extra, of course," added George.

"I mean, it will go down !"

“Of course,” said Harry, amazed. He did not need telling that if the fellows had tea on the yacht, it would go down. What else could it do ?”
“Well, nothing like making a thing clear,” said George. “Make yourselves at home ! See you later, Billy.”
Bunter’s relief, as George started off from the quay, was evident. It was a puzzle to the juniors, but they could not help seeing it.
“I say, you fellows, let’s get going, for goodness’ sake !” exclaimed Bunter. “We’re wasting time.”
The juniors stepped into the boat. The boat’s crew pushed off from the quay, and pulled out to the anchored yacht.
Harry Wharton & Co. sat silent, in astonishment, as the seamen pulled. George had surprised them. If he had been an hotel-keeper, pointing out the attractions of his hotel, they would not have been surprised. But George’s remarks, from a wealthy yachtsman, were really surprising. Billy Bunter, too, was eyeing them rather uneasily through his big spectacles. Why he was uneasy they did not know, but it was clear that he was.
Had it been possible to suppose such a thing, they might have suspected that there was some secret that Bunter had been afraid George might blurt out!
But that, surely, was impossible!

Tea—At a Price !

“STEWARD !”
“Sir !”
“More jam !”
“Oh ! Yes, sir !”
“And more cake !”
“Yes, sir !”
Billy Bunter gave his orders royally. It might really have been Billy Bunter’s yacht, instead of Billy Bunter’s cousin’s yacht.
The Greyfriars fellows were at tea in the saloon.
They had rambled over the yacht; taking great interest in inspecting it. The Sea Nymph was a large vessel for a yacht; and rather roomy. There was a good deal of accommodation. State-rooms, the juniors found, had already been assigned for them. They looked over them. The furnishings were all that were needed, but not at all luxurious. They did not want luxurious furnishings if it came to that; but they could not help observing that the fitting-up of the interior was hardly in keeping with the quality of the vessel itself.
The vessel was really a splendid one. Handsome panelled walls in the state-rooms had evidently been put in at the order of the original owner. Cheap chintz curtains, cheap chairs, cheap beds and towels and things had obviously been furnished by George. A fine mahogany dining-table was plainly part of the original outfit; its soiled and scratched surface, sadly in need of repolishing, had to be attributed to George.
The juniors, of course, were not disposed to be critical. They were not the fellows to look a gift-horse in the mouth. But they did not go about with their eyes shut, so they could not help noticing these discrepancies.
To all appearance, the handsome and expensive yacht, probably bought at a bargain, was run by a man who spent as little as he possibly could on it.
That was odd, to say the least, for surely a man who could afford to take a crowd of fellows on a cruise for weeks must have plenty of money.

The food, at all events, was good. No doubt any member of the Bunter tribe could be trusted to see to that.
George had told them on the quay that the food was unexceptionable — a queer remark for a wealthy yachtsman to make to his guests. But it was, at least, well founded. It was ample and it was good.
George had said, oddly enough, that the tea would "go down." It was going down — in great style.
Most of it went down Bunter's neck, but the Famous Five did quite well. The sea air gave them a good appetite, and they enjoyed tea on the yacht. The steward waited on them and looked after them efficiently. Billy Bunter kept him very busy.
Bunter was packing away the foodstuffs at a great rate, as Bunter always did when they were free of charge. He really seemed to be packing them away for a wager.
On the whole, Harry Wharton & Co. were not regretting that they had, after all, agreed to go with Bunter for Easter. There were some odd things about the yacht and about the owner, but there was no reason why they should not thoroughly enjoy the cruise. They had to admit that it was decent of Bunter — and it was still more decent of Captain Cook, who had never met them before. When it was time to go, they went back in the boat in a very cheery mood and were unusually polite to Bunter.
The fat Owl was gasping a little as he landed on the quay. The chums of the Remove affected not to see that his pockets were bulging. Having packed all he could inside, Bunter had packed a few extras into his pockets — with an eye to supper in the dormitory. The juniors could not help thinking that George must be a very tolerant and good-natured man if he managed to get on with a relative like Billy Bunter.
"I say, you fellows, we'll walk as far as the Anchor," squeaked Bunter; "we can phone for a taxi there"
"After the feast comes the reckoning," grinned Bob Cherry.
"Oh, really, Cherry —"
"Look here, Bunter, let's walk,' grunted Johnny Bull.
"We haven't got another twelve bob to chuck away."
"If you're going to be mean, Bull, after I've stood you a ripping spread on my cousin's yacht —"
"We'll have a taxi," said Harry Wharton hastily.
"I should jolly well think so !" said Bunter warmly. "I can tell you fellows that I jolly well think —"
"Come on !" said Bob.
They had the taxi.
Tea on the yacht with Bunter had proved rather expensive, after all. Still, it had been a ripping tea, and perhaps worth as much as the juniors had paid for the taxis.

"Ha, ha, ha !" yelled Skinner.
It was the last evening of the term, and a crowd of fellows were in the Rag. That sudden yell of merriment from Harold Skinner made a number of fellows turn their heads and look at him.
Skinner had a newspaper in his hand; he was looking over some advertisements. Newspaper advertisements, as a rule, do not cause a fellow to burst into a hilarious yell. But one advertisement, at least, had that effect on Skinner of the Remove. He fairly howled.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo ! What's the jolly old joke ?" asked Bob Cherry.
"Ha, ha, ha !" shrieked Skinner. He almost wept.
Fellows gazed at him in astonishment. There were tears of merriment in Skinner's

eyes.
It was all the more surprising because of late Skinner had been rather morose. For some days Skinner had exerted all his power to “butter” Billy Bunter in the hope of being asked to join the yachting party. He had bestowed his company on Bunter, listened with deep interest and respect to his fatuous conversation, and even stood him several little feeds at the school shop. And it had all been in vain. Bunter had been blind and deaf to the plainest hints. And when Skinner at last came out into the open. it was only to meet with a refusal. Bunter didn’t want Skinner on the Sea Nymph for Easter and he told him so. Which, of course, was very annoying to Skinner.
Finding that there was nothing in it, Skinner had turned quite rusty. He had turned rusty to the extent of kicking Bunter when he came across him, and even banging his head on the wall.
This was satisfactory to Skinner, but not to Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. naturally chipped in and induced Skinner to leave the fat Owl alone. They induced him by the simple method of holding his head under the tap at the end of the Remove passage. Since then Skinner had left Bunter in peace; but he had been very morose.
Now he had evidently recovered his spirits. He sat and roared with mirth. He seemed quite unable to restrain his merriment,
“Ha, ha, ha !” he yelled. “Oh, my hat ! Ha, ha, ha !”
“Something funny in that paper ?” asked Harry Wharton, quite surprised.
“Funny !” gasped Skinner. “I should say so ! As funny as holding a fellow’s head under a tap.”
“Well, cough it up !” said the Bounder. “Let’s all have the joke.”
Instead of which Skinner hastily folded up the newspaper, and slipped it under his jacket.
“I’ll tell you to-morrow,” he said.
“And why not now ?” asked Smithy, staring.
“You’ll enjoy the Joke better to-morrow.”
And, evidently to stop further questioning. Harold Skinner walked out of the Rag
“Is the esteemed Skinner off his absurd rocker ?” asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in wonder.
“Must be, I should think,” said Peter Todd. “He was reading a page of holiday advertisements. Nothing funny in that. I should think.”
“Silly ass !” said Bob; and the matter dropped.
But a little later fellows in the Remove passage heard yells of laughter from Study No. 11, which was shared by Skinner and Snoop and Stott. Skinner, it seemed, had told his pals what the mysterious joke was. Their merriment told that they were extremely tickled by it.
But what it was they told no one else. For some reason, hard to guess, Skinner was keeping it dark till the morrow — break-up day at Greyfriars School.
There was no prep on the last night of term. After packing the Famous Five gathered in Study No. I for a doughnut supper. William Wibley, who was also one of the cruising party, joined them. All arrangements had been made now by the Easter party, and they were to go on board the Sea Nymph in Pegg Bay when they left the school on the morrow.
Coker & Co. were joining up later at Dover — a circumstance which did not depress the Remove fellows. They could do without quite a lot of Coker’s company. Indeed, they could not help wondering why Bunter had asked Fifth Form seniors. What he could want them for was rather a mystery. Still that was Bunter’s own business, and it was not for them to butt in.

There was a tap at the door, and Skinner, Snoop, and Stott looked into Study No. 1 with grinning faces.
Harry Wharton & Co. stared at them rather grimly. What the mysterious joke was they did not know, but they had a feeling that it was somehow up against their worthy selves. Indeed, Skinner & Co. hardly made a secret of that.
"Oh, here you are !" said Skinner. "All ready to go on board to-morrow — what? "
"Quite !" answered Wharton.
"You've met Captain Cook ?" asked Skinner.
"Yes."
"Had a talk with him ?"
"Only a few words. He was just off to Dover. Why ?"
"Well, I wondered," said Skinner. "You only saw him for a few minutes ?"
"Yes."
"That accounts, then."
"Accounts for what, you silly ass ?" demanded the captain of the Remove. "What are you getting at ?"
"Ha, ha, ha !" yelled Skinner & Co.
"Look here ! You can go and cackle at some other study," said Bob Cherry gruffly. "It's not musical, and we're not amused — see ?"
"But didn't Cook tell you fellows anything ?" asked Snoop with a giggle.
"What was there for him to tell us ?"
"Ha, ha, ha !" yelled Snoop.
"Look here! You chortling chump, I'll —"
"Cook doesn't know what they think. And they don't know what Cook thinks," said Skinner. "There'll be a surprise on both sides when they compare notes to-morrow — what ?"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"What's the joke ?" demanded Wibley, staring blankly at the hilarious three.
"You fellows are," chuckled Skinner. "I wondered why Bunter was picking out fellows with money. I thought at first he was picking them out to borrow their money on the yacht. Now I know."
"Well, if there's anything to tell, tell us," said Harry.
"No fear ! I wouldn't spoil your surprise for worlds !" chuckled Skinner. "You'll find out all right."
"Fancy letting that fat chump take them in like that, though !" said Snoop.
"How has Bunter taken us in ?" roared Bob.
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"If you can't do anything but cackle, you —"
"Ha, ha, ha !" shrieked Skinner & Co.
"Let's give 'em something to yell for !" suggested Johnny Bull.
That suggestion was adopted nem. con. The Famous Five made a rush out of the doorway. Skinner & Co. were yelling with merriment, but the next moment they were yelling in quite a different way.
"Ow ! Keep off ! Oh crikey ! Wow ! Ow ! Oh ! You rotters ! Yah ! Oh !"
"Yoo-hoo ! Whooop !"
Skinner & Co. were rolled along the passage, and bundled headlong into their own study. They were piled there in a breathless, gasping, gurgling heap. Their merriment was a thing of the past. They howled with anguish.
Leaving them to howl, the Famous Five returned to Study No. 1 and the doughnuts. They had dealt faithfully with Skinner & Co., but they could not help feeling a little

uneasy. What on earth was it that Skinner knew about that yachting cruise — which they did not know ? What was the surprise he predicted for them on the morrow ? They asked themselves these questions without being able to find answers. Johnny Bull had declared all along that there was a “catch” in it somewhere. But what was the catch ?
It looked as if there really was a catch, and Skinner had found it out. But what — and how ?
That was a mystery.

“Happy to see you !” said George.
George looked very merry and bright. Baggage was being handed on board, and Captain Cooke was greeted by his guests. Everything looked very cheery in the bright spring sunshine. Harry Wharton & Co. were looking and feeling, cheery enough, though they were rather haunted by their last sight of Skinner & Co. Skinner & Co. had stood in a group at the school gates watching them start, almost doubled up with merriment But they tried to forget Skinner & Co. and their mysterious joke.
Skinner had predicted a “surprise” for them on the Sea Nymph, but there was no surprise so far. George greeted them with plump heartiness.
“Like your rooms ?” he inquired.
“Yes, rather!” said Harry.
“Topping !” said Bob Cherry.
“The topfulness is terrific!” declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“Anything you want, don’t fail to mention it,” said George. “Anything in reason, of course.”
“Eh ? Oh ! Everything’s ripping,” said Harry. “And I must say it’s awfully kind of you, Captain Cook —”
“I say, you fellows ——”
“I want you to be comfortable,” said George. “I want you to enjoy the cruise. If you enjoy it, you might like another in the summer, what ?”
“You’re awfully good —”
“And you will tell your schoolfellows about it ?” suggested George. “Lots of them might like a cruise on the Sea Nymph, if you tell them that you’ve had a really good time, what ?”
“I’ve no doubt of that,” said Harry, smiling, but puzzled. George, apparently, was prepared to take all Greyfriars cruising in his yacht, if they cared to come. It was really a little perplexing.
“Good !” said George heartily. “Recommendation is the best kind of advertisement, what ?”
“I — I suppose so.”
“Cheaper, too,” said George sagely. “Newspaper advertisements cost a lot of money !”
“D-d-do they?”
“They do ! Later on, I shall cut out newspaper advertisements entirely, and run the whole thing on personal recommendation.”
Captain Cook turned away to attend to his duties, after making that most extraordinary remark. What he meant by it the juniors could not even begin to guess. They wondered a little whether Bunter’s Cousin George was quite right in his head. Some of his remarks were absolutely weird.

“I say, you fellows, we’re moving !” said Bunter. “Lucky the sea’s calm, what ? You fellows would be seasick. He, he, he !”
The juniors breathed deep in the keen salt air, as the yacht glided out into the North Sea. The waves rolled and glistened in the bright sunshine. There was no doubt that it was ripping to be at sea. Really, this Easter cruise was a tremendous stroke of luck, and beat hiking hollow.
The fact that they owed it to Bunter was a perpetual surprise to them. There was a tacit agreement that they were going to be very nice to Bunter, and tolerate his rather troublesome manners and customs with unvarying good humour. It had to be admitted that the fat Owl was playing up remarkably well for once: and as Bob Cherry put it, if Bunter stood the cruise, it was up to them to stand Bunter.
But — as a novelist might say — they little knew !

Something Like a Surprise !

“OH, really, George ——”
“Look here —”
“There’s no hurry ——”
“Short reckonings make long friends, Billy.”
“Yes, but —”
“Leave it to me.”
“But, I say —”
“I don’t make you out. Billy ! “The rule is cash in advance !”
“Yes, but —”
“With friends of yours, it’s all right, of course. But business is business. I don’t get you, Billy !”
“Oh lor’ !” mumbled Bunter.
Harry Wharton & Co. were in the saloon and the staterooms adjoining. Some of them were sorting out belongings. All of them heard Billy Bunter’s squeak, and the deep, fat voice of George, on the saloon stairs—but politely affected to hear nothing. What that colloquy between Bunter and his cousin could possibly mean they had no idea. George, it appeared, had something to say to his passengers, and Bunter wanted to put it off. But there was no putting off George, and the juniors heard the fat Owl go back to the deck, mumbling, while Captain Cook came down.
He came down with his heavy, plump tread, and his usual good-humoured grin on his round, red face. But the grin did not disguise a certain sharp and businesslike expression. George looked like a man who had come down to talk business, though what business he could have to talk with his guests the juniors did not know.
But, as he evidently had something to say, the juniors gathered to hear it. George sat down on the edge of the cabin table, pushed back the yachting cap from his plump, red brow, and swung his plump legs.
“Settling down, what ?” he inquired cheerily.
“Oh, yes ! Fine !” said Bob.
“Comfortable quarters, and all that ?”
“Ripping !” said Nugent.
“The ripfulness is terrific !” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“Good !” said George heartily. “We aim to give complete satisfaction. That’s our motto — satisfaction. Make a man comfortable, and he comes again, what ?”
“Ye-e-es !” said Harry, puzzled once more by George’s conversation. “1 — I — I suppose so.”

“It’s awfully good of you !” said Nugent.
“Eh ? I don’t see that !” said George. “If I don’t make ’em comfortable where do I come in, in the long run ? That’s how I look at it !”
“D-d-do you ?”
“Exactly !”
“Well, if you’d like us to come again,” said Wibley, with a grin, “I fancy you won’t be disappointed. I’d be jolly glad to come, for one.”
“Glad to hear it !” said George. “I’ll be pleased to book you for the summer. I dare say friends of yours at school will like the idea, too, when you tell them about the cruise.”
“What-ho !”said Wibley.
“If I fill up for the summer cruise with Greyfriars boys, of course, it will simplify matters,” said George.
“W-w-will it ?”
“Oh, quite ! Reduced terms may be possible ?”
“It will save the whole cost of advertisements.”
“Advertisements,” said Harry blankly.
Somehow at that moment the recollection came into his mind of the advertisement that had made Skinner yell with merriment in the Rag the previous evening.
“Of course, a man has to advertise,” said George, looking a little surprised himself. “Otherwise, how would anybody know about the cruise ?”
“But — but I don’t catch on !” gasped Wharton. “You surely don’t mean that you advertise that you’re taking fellows on an Easter cruise ?”
“I surely do,” answered George.
“Well, my hat !”
“It’s the only way,” said George, seemingly surprised by the surprise of his passengers. “I’ve had several advertisements out, naturally.”
The juniors could only gaze at him.
“That, of course, was before I thought of Billy,” explained George.
“Be-before you thought of B-B-Billy? ”
“Yes; but, when I remembered my young cousin at a Public school, I said to myself: ‘Gad, that’s the game!’ ”
“D-d-d-did you ?”
“Just the thing !” explained George. “School breaking up for Easter, fellows with money to spend looking for a really good holiday on reasonable terms—what? So I put it up to Billy.”
“But — but what — what ——”
Harry Wharton & Co. were mystified. But they felt that they were on the verge of elucidating the mystery. They remembered that Bunter had been rather particular in picking out fellows who had money, or whose people had money. All the yachting party were fairly well provided in that line, though he had failed to bag Lord Mauleverer and the Bounder. But what on earth had money to do with it ?
“And I’m bound to say that Billy has played up and done quite well,” went on George. “To be quite frank, I had no idea that Billy had such a very nice and pleasant set of friends in the school. I’m bound to say that I’m pleased to see it.”
That was very flattering; but the juniors were so surprised and mystified that the could only stare at George.
“Now to come down to business,” added George.
“Bib-bib-business.”
“Well, there are a few business details to settle, you know,” said George, with his

hearty laugh.
“Are there ?” gasped Wharton.
“Naturally.”
“But — but what —”
“Well, the cheques, you know.”
“The chick-chick-cheques !” stuttered Wharton. George raised his eyebrows. The juniors were amazed, but there was no doubt that George, too, was surprised. He did not seem to make them out, any more than they made him out.
“Of course, I don’t suppose that you boys have your pockets full of cash,” said George. “The cheques will naturally come from your parents.”
“From our pip-pip-parents ?” gurgled Bob.
George looked quite puzzled.
“Yes. If you prefer to pay cash it’s all right, of course. But the usual way is a cheque.”
“If we prefer to pip-pip-pay kik-kik-cash !” said Frank Nugent, like a fellow in a dream.
“Yes. If you have the cheques with you, you may hand them over to me now, and I will give you the usual receipts.”
“We’re dreaming this !” said Harry Wharton.
George looked at him.
“Otherwise, the cheques may be sent direct from your parents to my office,” he said. “But I’m bound to mention that the rule is cash in advance.”
“Kik-kik-cash in advance ?”
“Invariably,” said George.
“But — but — but what —” stammered Wharton helplessly. “What — what — what do you mean, Mr. Cook ?”
“I should think it was clear,” said George, with a stare. “I trust you. of course. As Billy’s friends, I know you’re to be trusted. I know it from your looks, too, if I may say so. But business is business, and cash in advance of the cruise is the invariable rule.”
The juniors looked at George. They looked at one another. There was a dreadful silence in the saloon of the Sea Nymph.
The awful truth was filtering slowly into the astounded minds of the chums of the Remove.
They knew all about holiday cruises at sea. for which you paid so much a head. The papers were full of advertisements of such things. But never for a moment had they dreamed of such a thing in connection with Billy Bunter’s invitation to a cruise on his cousin’s yacht. How could they ?
They had to think of it now !
Skinner had told them that they would have a surprise on board the Sea Nymph. They were getting it !
And now, of course, they jumped to it, what Skinner had been yelling at in the Rag ! They knew now what advertisement he must have seen in the newspaper — the advertisement of an Easter cruise in the Sea Nymph, at a fixed charge for the cruise. And he had not told them. That rotter, that worm, had guessed at once that Bunter was spoofing them when he had discovered from the advertisement that Captain Cook was running the Sea Nymph as a business proposition — as a sort of floating holiday boardinghouse. He had left them to find it out after they had started. Now they were finding it out.
In horrified amazement they gazed at George.
George was no longer smiling. He seemed to realise that there was something wrong

somewhere.
George, of course, was no party to the deception. All his strange remarks — strange at the time — were explained now — now that the guests on board the Sea Nymph realised that they were expected to pay for the cruise. Even that tea with Bunter on the yacht, which George said, so oddly, would "go down," he had mean that it would go down on the bill !
Wharton was first to find his voice.
"Let's have this clear," he gasped. "Let — let's understand how it stands. Pip-put it plain, please."
"Haven't I put it plain ?" George's tone was a little sharp. "I hardly make you out, Master Wharton. I suppose Billy told you the terms."
"The — the terms!"
"You don't mean to say that Billy never told you the terms?" exclaimed George.
"No-n-no !"
"That was careless of him. But didn't you ask ?"
"Ask ? Oh, my hat !"
"Schoolboys are generally rather careless, I believe," said George. "But surely that is carrying carelessness to excess — to arrange to go on a cruise without inquiring the terms."
"Oh. Crikey !"
"But your people," said George — "your father, guardians, or what not — they surely asked the terms when you told them you were going ?"
"Oh. Jemima ! Hardly !"
"Well," said George, "I've come across some unbusinesslike people in my time, but I'm bound to say that this takes the biscuit. Mean to say not one of your parents asked the amount of the cheque he had to draw ?"
"Oh, crumbs ! No ! You — you — see —"
"I don't see," said George. "It's unbusinesslike — I'm bound to say that. Still, there's no harm done. My terms are reasonable and well known — they are stated in my advertisement in well-known papers. I stand by them ! Twenty-one guineas for the cruise is the figure — and reasonable !"
"Twen-twen-twenty-one guineas !"
"That is the figure. I hope," said George, with dignity, "that you don't think I'm charging you too much ! I thought, of course, that you knew the terms — how was I to think otherwise ? Unless I get a full passenger list it won't show a lot of profit — I can tell you that. And Billy, of course, comes free — that's understood, as his consideration for getting me clients."
"Oh !" gasped the juniors.
They saw now where Billy Bunter came in.
"That's not a small item, either," said George. "So far as food goes, he counts as two passengers, if not three — I might say four !"
There was a call from the deck from George's mate. The skipper of the Sea Nymph slipped off the table, set his yachting-cap straight, and went to the door. But he paused a moment there.
"It's rather awkward," said George — "a very disagreeable misunderstanding. Very careless — I'm bound to say that! But you can post letters home at Dover, and you will, of course, mention that the cheques will be expected at my office without any undue delay."
And George went on deck, leaving the Greyfriars fellows staring at one another

blankly. Skinner had told them that they were going to have a surprise. Undoubtedly, they had had one !

Beastly for Bunter!

"THAT villain Bunter —"
"That scoundrel Bunter —"
"That fat pig Bunter —"
"We'll scalp him !"
"The scalpfulness will be terrific !"
"The — the worm ! Didn't I tell you fellows there was a catch in it ?" snorted Johnny Bull.
"We'll burst him all over his cousin's yacht —" hissed Bob Cherry.
"Twenty-one guineas —"
"A cruise to pay for —"
"Pulling our leg all the time ——"
"And getting his own trip free by landing us in it —"
"No wonder Skinner was cackling — Skinner knew — My hat ! Won't I punch his head next term for not telling us !"
"Where's the fat villain now ?" gasped Wibley. "I want to wallop him."
It was quite a chorus. Harry Wharton was the first to grow calm. Scalping Bunter, or even bursting him, would have been a solace; but more important than that was to decide what was going to be done.
"We'd better think this out !" said Wharton. "It's our own fault really — we ought to have known Bunter better. We jolly well know that his people can't afford to keep yachts, and take cruising parties-for holidays. We oughtn't to have let him pull our leg like this."
"I told you there was a catch in it ——"
"Oh. rats! You didn't know what the catch was. You were diddled like the rest of us, Johnny."
Snort from Johnny Bull.
"The question is, what's going to be done ?" said Harry.
"Looks as if we are !" grinned Bob. "There'll be a bill run up already — we've been on board some time, and had some meals ——"
"It's rough on us, but it's rough on Mr. Cook, too, if we turn him down," said Harry. "He as good as told us, only we never understood."
"That's so ! But ——"
"He's running this cruise as a business, and he asked Bunter to let Greyfriars fellows know, to get passengers for the cruise," said Harry. "It's all fair and square as far as Cook is concerned. He never dreamed that that fat villain would spoof us, and invite us on a cruise — making out that it was an invitation for the hols — Oh, my hat ! We've been a lot of asses !"
"I told you there was a catch ——"
"Oh, dry up, old man ! Of course, we shouldn't have come if we'd have known, but — we're here now —"
"And old Coker !" gasped Bob. "Coker's coming on board at Dover, and he doesn't know any more than we did ! There's a surprise in store for Coker, too !"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
There was a roar of laughter in the saloon. The thought of the surprise in store for Coker caused general hilarity for a few moments. They could picture the face of

Horace Coker when he learned the truth.
“But what are we going to do ?” asked Nugent. “Ask Cook to turn back and land us, and go home, after all? ”
“We can’t do that !” said Harry decidedly. “Everything’s fixed up now. Nobody expects us at home. The fact is, that fat villain has got us on a string. He knew we couldn’t back out after getting on board — that villain Skinner knew it, too, blow him —”
“Are we going to be done ?” hooted Johnny Bull.
“Well, let’s look at it,” said Harry. “George is right about the terms being reasonable — our people wouldn’t kick at twenty-one guineas for an Easter cruise, if we’d known. and asked them. Holidays cost money, wherever you have them. If we stick to it we’re getting our money’s worth, if you come to that.”
“That’s so,” agreed Wibley. “But —”
“And we shall look a lot of fools, going back after we’ve started —”
“After all, we might have done worse for the hols,” said Harry. “It’s more than we meant to spend — but we can make it up in one way or another. The fact is, now we’re landed in it I think we’d better see it through. And — and there’s one thing — we’re under no obligation to Bunter if we pay our way. That’s something.”
“I’d rather pay my way, if you come to that,” growled Johnny Bull.
“Well, I think we’d all rather,” said Harry.
“The ratherfulness is terrific.”
“I think we’d better stick it out, then,” said Harry. “But we’ll jolly well rag Bunter bald-headed for spoofing us.”
“What-ho !” That was unanimously agreed to at once. “The spoofing rotter !” said Bob. “Making out he was inviting fellows on a holiday cruise in a relation’s yacht, and — and it turns out like this ! If we’d wanted to pay for a cruise we could have done it without Bunter. Why, I’ll spiflicate him —”
“I say, you fellows !”
Billy Bunter blinked into the saloon with an uneasy blink. He did not come near to hand, however. He was keeping open a line of retreat. He seemed to realise that he might need one.
Six savage glares were fastened on the fat Owl.
It was all very well for the party to make up their minds to “stick” it and make the best of it and see it through ! That did not alter the fact that they had been thoroughly done — done brown — absolutely fooled and spoofed by the swanking and unscrupulous Owl.
Obviously he had meant to postpone the painful explanation as late as possible — the juniors might not have learned the truth for days, but for George’s desire to get down to business. Scalping Bunter was too good for him — something lingering, with boiling oil in it was more suitable. They gave him almost wolfish looks.
Bunter eyed them warily. He plainly expected trouble of some sort, now that they knew.
“You fat scoundrel !” said Johnny Bull. “We know now !; And we’re going to burst you into small pieces.”
“Oh, really Bull —”
You spoofing, lying, deceiving, bamboozling porpoise —” hissed Bob.
“Oh, really, Cherry —”
“Collar him !”
“I — I — I say, you fellows, keep off !” gasped Bunter. “I say, there’s nothing to rag about. What have you got to complain of, I’d like to know ?”

“What ?” yelled Wharton.
“You’re going for a jolly good cruise,” said Bunter warmly. “You’re getting it cheap. You’ve got my company for nothing —”
“What ?” shrieked Bob.
“My company !” said Bunter. “George is standing me the cruise, of course, for getting him so many customers — mean clients He wouldn’t have taken me for nothing. Well, as the matter stands, you’ve got my company for the vacation. You mightn’t have had it otherwise.”
The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.
“Did you tell us we had to pay ?” roared Johnny Bull. “You spoofing porker, you took us in.”
“You can’t say I took you in ! I told you plainly that it was going to be an expensive cruise ! Now, didn’t I?”
“You fat idiot, we thought you meant —”
“I can’t help what you thought ! I’m not to blame if you’re a set of duffers,” argued Bunter. “I told you it was going to be an expensive cruise, as plain as I could speak ! Well, twenty-one guineas is expensive, ain’t it ?”
“Kill him !” gasped Bob.
“I must say it’s a bit thick, making out that I’ve taken you in,” said Billy Bunter. “It’s practically accusing a chap of being deceitful.”
“Wha-a-a-t ?”
“I don’t like it !” said Bunter. “Some fellows wouldn’t mind, I dare say — chaps like you fellows, f’rinstance. You’re not so particular as I am in such things. You might be deceitful. Not me.”
“Oh, my hat !”
“If you’re going to cut up rusty,” said Bunter, “I shall be sorry I brought you on this ripping cruise. Calling a fellow names is a bit ungrateful. I’m always doing things for fellows, and I’ve almost given up expecting gratitude — still, there’s a limit !”
“There is !” gasped Bob Cherry. “There’s a limit. Bunter —and you’re the limit ! Bag him, you men !”
The juniors made a rush:
But Billy Bunter was very watchful. He skipped up the stairs like a fat, but active kangaroo. He skipped swiftly out on deck.
With a whoop the juniors rushed after him.
Billy Bunter fairly bounded on deck.
“I — I say, George ——” he gasped.
Captain Cook glanced round.
From the companion six infuriated juniors burst in a bunch and before they — or George — knew what was happening, they had crashed into George.
“Ow !” roared George as he was distributed along his own deck. “What the thunder — Whooop !”
“Oh. Crikey !”
“I say, you fellows —”
“Oh, my hat !” gasped Harry Wharton, staggering from the shock.
George sat up.
“What the dooce !” he stuttered. “What the dickens — Ooooh ! Ow !”
“Sorry !” gasped Bob. “But we — we ——”
Mr Pycroft, the mate, came and picked up his plump skipper. George stood gasping, and Billy Bunter sagely dodged behind him. From that safe refuge he grinned at the infuriated Removites.

“Ragging — what ?” George recovered his plump good-humour. “Well, boys will be boys ! What ? Only don’t bump me over again, please —— ooogh ! I’m a bit winded ! Oooh ! Never mind — no harm done ! Look where you’re going next time, what ?”
“The sorrowfulness is terrific !” gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“Don’t mench !” said George. “All right !”
George undoubtedly was a very good-tempered man. In George’s presence it was impossible to deal with the Owl of the Remove as he deserved. Bunter had to wait. Billy Bunter haunted his cousin George like a fat ghost after that. Under George’s wing he was safe — away from that shelter he knew what to expect.
With the fall of night there was a wind and a swell on the North Sea. The Sea Nymph began to roll a little.
Billy Bunter did not notice it. Whatever might be the drawbacks of that Easter cruise, the tuck was good and ample — and the juniors made a good supper; and Bunter made several, one after another. Bunter, in fact, was having the time of his life.
He was not finished when George went back to the deck, having only eaten enough for four or five fellows. But he seemed very shy of remaining with the juniors without George, so he left his supper unfinished and rolled on deck after his cousin.
“We’ll get him later !” grunted Johnny Bull.
“Yes, rather.”
George came down presently and went to his cabin, leaving Mr. Pycroft in charge of the deck. Rather to the surprise of the Famous Five, Bunter did not come down with him. This was their chance !
“Where is the fat scoundrel ?” asked Johnny Bull, peering round in the starlight.
“Bunter !” howled Bob.
Groan !
“Hallo, hallo, hallo ! That sounds like Bunter.”
Groan !
“Got you. you fat frump !” hissed Nugent.
Groan !
The juniors surrounded Bunter. He was stretched in a deckchair. He made no attempt to escape. He did not even blink at them. He only groaned.
“Now, Bunter —”
Groan !
They peered at him. His face was ghastly. A basin was by his side. He groaned and gurgled and groaned again. Supper and the swell on the sea had done it ! Billy Bunter was in the deadly grip of sea-sickness. If he had been going to be boiled in oil, the fat Owl could not have made a movement to save himself.
“Oh, my hat !” said Harry.
Groan !
“Poor old Bunter !” said Bob.
Groan !
“I—I say, you fellows,” came in a faint moan from Bunter. “I — I say, g-g-go and tell George — grooh ! — to turn back ! Tell him to be — ooogh ! — be quick ! T-t-tell him I don’t want to go to — ooogh ! —sea ! I — I think I’m dud-dud-dying ! Ooogh !”
They did not rag Bunter ! They left him to groan—hair-raising groans. Really, there was no need to rag the fat Owl ! He was paying dearly for his sins !

The next morning dawned bright and sunny, and as they paced the deck of the Sea Nymph in the bright sunshine, the Famous Five mentally forgave Bunter for his trickery, and felt quite pleased that they had come on the famous Easter cruise after all.

After an ample breakfast to which Billy Bunter — quite recovered now that the sea was calm — did more than ample justice, the juniors went on deck to find the yacht running into Dover harbour.

"I say, you fellows !"

"Say on !" said Bob Cherry.

"What about a run ashore ?" asked Bunter. "Dover's a frightfully historical place. There's a castle —"

"We can see it !"

"And a wonderful harbour —"

"We're in it !"

"And Spokeshave's Cliff —"

"Spokeshave's ? Oh, my hat !"

"I mean Shakespoke's — that is, Shakespeare's. And — and lots of things !" said Billy Bunter. "1 believe Dover was one of the Sunk Ports."

"Do you mean the Cinque Ports, fathead ?"

"Yes, that's it,'' said Bunter. "Something of the kind, anyhow. There were five ancient and celebrated ports, and they were called the Cinque Ports because cinq is French for five. See ?"

"Where did Bunter accumulate all this knowledge ?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The knowledge is truly terrific."

"Well, the place is full of historical interest," said Bunter. "Reeking with it, in fact. Why not run ashore and have a squint at it ? Coker's coming, soon, and you're not in a hurry to see Coker, are you ?"

"Hardly !"

"You'll see him soon enough !" argued Bunter. "I suggest going ashore and staying till we move off, see ? The less you see of Coker, the better you'll like it. What ? Mind, I'm not suggesting this just to keep you out of Coker's way, you fellows."

"Not really ?"

"I'm thinking entirely of you chaps. I'm not afraid that you fellows will let anything out if you see Coker ——"

"Ha, ha, ha !"

"George won't be back yet. I hope he won't meet Coker on the pier ! I say, you fellows, you oughtn't to slack about while we're hanging on here. There's no end of things to be seen in Dover. Go and see 'em, see ? I shan't be able to come —"

"You won't ?"

"No. You see —"

"Let's go, you men," said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha !"

"You see I've got to be here to receive my guests." said Bunter. "Coker may butt in any minute. The fact is, Coker's a bit Fifth-Formy, you know, and I'd rather there weren't a lot of fags about when he comes on board. No need for you fellows to show up on the spot. If you see Coker on the pier, don't say anything to him."

"Ha, ha, ha !"

Billy Bunter was evidently uneasy lest Coker of the Fifth should learn the nature of that trip from the Famous Five. He did not want Coker to learn the facts till it was too late. George, of course, supposed that Coker knew the facts, as he supposed that Harry

Wharton & Co. knew them. The less that was said before Coker was fairly at sea in the yacht the better, from Billy Bunter's peculiar point of view.
Harry Wharton & Co. decided to put in a few hours ashore, especially as Bunter was unable to come along. The loss of Bunter's society was enough to make any trip attractive. Wibley went with them, and the fat Owl watched them go with much satisfaction.
As a matter of fact, they did see Coker on the pier, as Bunter dreaded. It was rather a problem to the Famous Five whether they ought to give Coker a "tip" about what he had to expect. They had been done themselves by the unscrupulous Owl, and Coker was going to be done in his turn. Ought they to give him a tip or not ?
That question was still undecided in their minds when Coker spotted them and decided it for them. Coker gave them a cold stare and turned away with his nose in the air. Coker had no politeness to waste on the heroes of the Remove. Coker's chief feeling was that he wasn't going to be claimed as an acquaintance in public by a gang of fags.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo !' bawled Bob Cherry. "Hallo, Coker, old bean !"
Coker knitted his brows.
"Come on, you men, for goodness' sake !" he snapped. "Don't let people think we know that mob !"
"Coker !" roared Bob Cherry, in a voice that might have been heard halfway to Folkestone. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, Horace !"
Coker, goaded. swung round towards him.
"Look here !" he hooted. "Keep off ! Keep your distance ! Don't talk to me ! You're not at Greyfriars now, you cheeky fag ! Hook it !"
"Same old Coker !" grinned Johnny Bull.
"Cut !" snapped Coker.
"All serene, old bean," said Bob amiably. "I was only going to ask you if you'd had an accident,"
"An accident ?" Coker stared. "What do you mean, you young ass ? I haven't had any accident !"
"What's the matter with your face, then ?" asked Bob, gazing with a serious gaze at Horace Coker's rugged countenance.
"My face ? Nothing !" Coker passed his hand over his face. "Is there anything on my face ?"
"There jolly well is," said Bob. "Have you banged it on anything in the train. Coker ?"
"Certainly not. What do you mean ?" Coker passed his hand over his face again. He was conscious of no damage there. "What is there on my face, you little idiot ?"
"Oh ! Only your features !" said Bob cheerily. "They look as if an elephant had trodden on them. But, of course, they always do !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Hold this bag a minute, Potter !" gasped Coker. He almost hurled a suitcase at Potter, and charged towards Bob Cherry.
"Come on, you fellows !" said Bob. "Let's give Coker a run ! Come on, Horace, old bean — race you to the end of the pier !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Coker lost that race. He was red and wrathy when he came back, and rejoined Potter and Greene. Harry Wharton & Co. strolled cheerily into the ancient town of Dover, as heedless of the wrath of Horace Coker as of the idle wind which they regarded not.

SNORE !
"What the thump's that row ?" asked Coker.
Snore !
Had Coker been accustomed to the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars instead of the Fifth he would not have needed to ask. That row was the snore of William George Bunter, fast asleep.
The fat junior was stretched on the roomy divan in the saloon, with his head resting on a cushion, his eyes shut. and his mouth open, and round the latter several smear: of jam and toffee. Billy Bunter was taking a little nap while awaiting the arrival of his distinguished guests, and so he had not been on deck to receive them.
"Only Bunter !" said Greene, with a grin.
Snore !
Coker looked at him and grunted. He had had many misgivings about accepting an invitation from a fag. Really. it had been a cheek of Bunter to ask him. Coker, however, had worked it out that he could, without loss of dignity, know Bunter on shipboard while making it plain to him that on shore he had to keep a respectful distance. These matters were very important to Horace Coker. Potter and Greene were not specially pleased at being the guests of a Lower Fourth fag, but they were pleased to be getting things for nothing. Indeed it was largely because they were keen on things for nothing that they were so pally with Coker. Coker was the rich man from whose table the crumbs fell.
Potter and Greene only grinned at the sight of the sleeping beauty: but Coker grunted and frowned. His feeling of misgiving intensified. Really, he did not like even a dashed steward, even a dashed steward's boy, to know that he, Horace Coker of the Fifth Form of Greyfriars, knew this sticky, jammy, snoring little beast !
"Sticky little rotter !" remarked Coker. "Like his cheek to be asleep when we get here ! I'll wake him up."
Bunter was lying on his back on the divan, his well-filled waistcoat upward. Coker jammed a bag on that well-filled waistcoat, and there was a startled gasp from Bunter. His eyes opened.
"Ow ! Beast !" he gasped. "Lemme alone ! 'Tain't rising. Bell ! Oh!" Bunter realised that he was not in bed at Greyfriars and sat up. "Ow !"
He rubbed his waistcoat where Coker had jammed the bag. Coker had a heavy hand, and there was rather a nasty jar where the bag had landed. Bunter gasped for breath and groped for his spectacles. With his big spectacles Bunter did not see an awful lot, without them he was more owl-like than ever. Bunter knew that somebody had jammed something on his fat waistcoat, but he did not, for one moment, see who it was.
"You silly burbling, blithering idiot !" gasped Bunter.
"Playing silly tricks on a chap. You babbling, blithering cuckoo! There !"
Billy Bunter was never in the best of tempers when he was suddenly woken up after a feed. A pain in his circumference did not improve his temper. He grasped the cushion on which his bullet head had rested and hurled it. There was a crash as it collided with Coker's features.
"Oooogh !" spluttered Coker.
"There !" gasped Bunter. "Take that, Bob Cherry, you silly fathead !"
"Ha, ha, ha !" yelled Potter and Greene.
Evidently the short-sighted Owl supposed that it was Bob Cherry who had given him

a playful tap on his waistcoat.
“Oooooogh ! Urrgh !” spluttered Coker, sitting up quite dizzily and rubbing his nose. “My hat ! Why, I’ll —”
Coker leaped up. He forgot for the moment that he was a guest — Bunter’s guest — on board Bunter’s cousin’s yacht. All he remembered was that he was a Fifth Form senior, floored by a cheeky fag. He hurled himself at Bunter.
“Ow ! Leggo !” roared Bunter, as Horace’s powerful grasp closed on him. “I’ll punch your nose ! I’ll — Whoop ! I tell you I’ll — Yooooop !”
Bump !
Bunter rolled off the divan to the floor. As he scrambled to his feet Coker let out a foot, Billy Bunter plunged wildly forward and landed on his hands and knees, roaring.
“Yaroooooh !”
“Hold on. Coker !” gasped Potter.
“I’m going to wallop him !” roared Coker. “Look at my nose !”
“But I say !” gasped Greene.
“Shut up. Greene!”
“Are you always as polite as this to your host when you’re on a visit ?” asked Potter, with sarcasm.
“Oh !” Coker remembered that he was a guest on the Sea Nymph. “Oh ! Well, look at my nose !” The cushion had rather damaged Coker’s nose. “What did the young ass buzz a cushion at me for ?”
“Oh, lor’ !” Billy Bunter realised that his guests had arrived. “Is — is that you, Coker ? I thought it was that other beast —”
“What ?” hooted Coker.
“I mean I thought it was that beast Cherry.”
Bunter scrambled up, prepared to play the polite host, but keeping a wary eye on Coker. “I say, where’s my specs ? I put them somewhere ! Where’s my specs ? Steward !”
“Here you are, sir !”
Bunter jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose, and blinked at the Fifth-Formers. “Jolly glad to see you fellows.” he said affably. “I didn’t know it was you who woke me up, Coker, old chap — I thought it was some other silly idiot ! How are you, old fellow ?”
Grunt from Coker ! He did not like “old fellow” from a fag. Still he could not very well resent that cheeky familiarity in the circumstances.
“See anything of the fellows on the pier? ” added Bunter rather anxiously.
“We saw some cheeky fags !” grunted Coker.
“Oh, lor’ ! Did they tell you anything ?”
“Eh ! What was there to tell us ?”
“Oh, nothing !” said Bunter hastily. “I thought they might have, that’s all. Of course, there was nothing for them to tell you — absolutely nothing !”
Coker stared at him. Potter and Greene exchanged a rather peculiar glance. Evidently. Bunter was afraid that Harry Wharton & Co. had told them something. It was really very odd — all the more so because Potter and Greene had been wondering a good deal about that Easter cruise, and how on earth Bunter, the hardest-up fellow at Greyfriars, could possibly afford to ask a crowd of fellows on an expensive cruise.
“Fellows might say anything. you know.” added Bunter. ‘‘Not that there would be anything in it, you know nothing at all !”
“In what ?” asked Potter.
“Oh. Nothing !”

“That kid Fish met us when we got off the train.’’ said Potter. “He was trying to say something, only Coker shut him up !”
“Oh, lor’ ! The rotter !” gasped Bunter. ‘‘Fancy that beast trying to give a fellow away ! Not that there’s anything to give away, you know ! Don’t you fellows fancy anything of that sort.”
“Well, my hat !” said Potter.
“You see. Fishy’s stingy.” said Bunter. “He’s an American, you know — it gives him a pain to pay for anything. That’s why he went ashore at Dover — mean, you know.”
“Pay for anything ?” repealed Potter blankly. “What was there to pay for ?”
“Oh, nothing ! I say, you fellows, you’d better see your rooms.” said Bunter feeling that it would be judicious to change the subject. “It’s all right — take my word for it that it’s all right ! Anyhow, you fellow’s needn’t worry — it will be up to Coker, of course ! I knew that all the time.”
“What will be up to me ?” ejaculated Coker.
“Eh ? Oh nothing !”
“Is that kid mad ?” asked Coker, gazing at Bunter in wonder.
“Looks like it,” said Potter. “Mad as a hatter, I should say. Will you tell us what you’re talking about, Bunter ?”
“No fear — I mean, yes, old chap ! That is to say. I — I wasn’t talking about anything ! I say, lovely weather. ain’t it ?”
“Never mind the weather. What the dickens ——”
“But — but it’s beautiful weather — nice shower after the rain — what ?” Bunter hardly knew what he was saying — he was getting rather confused. “It’s all right — I’m not keeping anything dark — don’t you fellows run away with that idea. It’s all right if that sneak Fishy never told you anything ——”
“What was there to tell us ?” demanded Greene.
“Oh, nothing !” gasped Bunter. “Nothing at all ! I — I say, you fellows, the steward’s waiting to show you your rooms. I — I’ll go and — and see if — if George is coming.”
Billy Bunter rolled away to the deck. Coker & Co. stared after him and then at one another. Unless the Owl of Greyfriars was wandering in this mind, they could not make this out at all.
Bunter rolled on deck in a state of perspiration.
It was like Bunter never to meet troubles half-way — never to meet them at all if he could help it ! Unfortunately, in the long run, they had to be met — and the “long run” had materialised.
Inveigling fellows on board the Sea Nymph under the pretence of inviting them for a holiday cruise, and revealing later that the cruise had to be paid for, was rather an unusual and extraordinary proceeding.
Harry Wharton & Co. had made the best of it and had not even let George know how they had been taken in. But they were fellows in Bunter’s own Form at school — easy-going, rather accustomed to making allowances for the egregious Owl. But Coker —— Coker was the man to cut up rusty about nothing — next to nothing. He was the fellow to march straight off the yacht when he found out how matters stood — and to kick Bunter before he went.
Bunter realised, rather late, that he had taken a lot of risks in dealing with a fellow like Coker. Really it would have been wiser to leave Coker out.
Luckily, the other beasts were ashore: and George was occupied ashore also with business matters. And if Coker could be kept in the dark till the yacht pulled out to sea—

There was a heavy tread on the companion. Horace Coker came up. Potter and Greene were unpacking below; Coker was taking a look round. Billy Bunter blinked at him and rolled towards him. He grinned his most ingratiating grin.
"Like your quarters, old fellow ?" asked Bunter.
"Look here —" snarled Coker.
But he broke off. "Old fellow" from Bunter was distinctly irritating. But what could he do when he was the cheeky young scoundrel's guest ?
"Eh ?" said Bunter. "Rather a decent yacht. old chap ?"
Coker breathed hard and did not answer.
"Jolly glad you're coming, old bean !" said Bunter affably. Affability, he felt, was his cue. It was necessary to keep Coker in a good temper — as good a temper as possible. He was unaware that his affability was gradually working Coker up to a state of suppressed fury.
"Oh !" said Coker.
"You can see a lot of things from here. That's Dover Castle yonder, old thing."
"Do you think I don't know a castle when I see one ?" asked Coker.
"Oh ! Um !"
Coker walked away aft. Bunter rolled after him, still affable. Coker walked forward. Again Bunter rolled after him. Coker crossed the deck. Bunter crossed it.
"I say. old chap." said Bunter, rather perplexed by this activity of Coker's. "If you'd like a walk, I'll take you on the pier."
"If you call me old chap again —" roared Coker.
"Eh ?"
"Don't jaw !"
"Oh, really, Coker —"
Coker went below. Bunter blinked after him. He had done his best, but Coker was not in a good temper. If this was how that Fifth Form fathead behaved when he was or supposed himself to be — a guest, how was he going to behave when he found out that he had been tricked on board to pay for his cruise ? More clearly than ever Billy Bunter realised that there was going to be a big spot of bother.

"Pack up !" said Coker.
"Eh ?"
"What? "
"I said pack up !" grunted Horace Coker.
Potter and Greene looked at Coker. They were in the state-room they were going to share. They were feeling rather good. Greene liked the upper bunk, Potter liked the lower — so that was all right. There were only two bunks, so Coker couldn't be landed on them in the same room — that was still more than all right !
On the whole, Potter and Greene felt good. They knew, too, that Coker was rather a poor sailor; for some days when they set to sea he was likely to be on his back, and his friends relieved of his company. Altogether, the outlook was rather bright.
So when Coker put his head in at the doorway and told them to pack up, Potter and Greene were astonished and annoyed. They had hardly finished unpacking yet.
"Might a fellow ask what you mean — if you happen to mean anything, Coker ?" Potter inquired with sarcasm.
"I mean what I say !" answered Coker. "I generally do !"
"Not gone suddenly off your rocker ?" asked Greene.
"No !" roared Coker.
"Well, then, what are you getting at ?" snapped Potter. "What are we to pack up for,

I'd like to know ?"
'Because we're going ashore."
"We can take a stroll on the pier without packing up, I suppose ?"
"Don't be an idiot, Potter."
"There's an idiot here," said Potter. "But I don't think I'm the idiot."
"I don't see what you're calling Greene an idiot for," said Coker. "What's Greene done ?"
"Oh, crikey !" said Potter and Greene together.
"I'd better explain," went on Coker. "The fact is, I've made rather a mistake.''
He paused, perhaps expecting Potter and Greene to look surprised at this statement. But they were not surprised to hear that Coker had made a mistake. They would have been surprised to hear that he hadn't.
"It won't do !" further explained Coker.
"What won't ?'' shrieked Greene.
"This !" said Coker.
"Do you mean this cabin ? It's all right," said Greene.
"I dont mean this cabin, Greene. Try not to he a silly ass ! I know you can't help it: still, nothing like trying," said Coker. "I mean, the whole thing won't do ! We can't go on this cruise."
"We can't go on this cruise !" repealed Potter, like a fellow in a dream. "You bring us a long railway journey, you plank us on this yacht, we unpack our bags, and then you tell us we can't go on this cruise !"
"Exactly ! I made a mistake, as I said," said Coker. "It seemed rather different at Greyfriars, though I had my doubts then — a lot of doubt. My idea was that on a yachting cruise — a good distance from anybody who knows me — I could put up with a Lower Fourth fag — be civil to him, and all that. I took it for granted, of course, that he'd have tact enough — sense enough — to keep his distance, and understand that he couldn't put on airs of familiarity with a Fifth Form man. Well, it was a mistake — and I own up to it. Now I'm here it's perfectly plain that it won't do."
"Oh, crumbs !"
"Luckily, there's no harm done," said Coker. "Lots of time to get off the yacht. Bunter's cousin — Pook — I mean Jook — or is it Cook ? — yes, Cook — well, Cook's ashore, and we can leave some decent excuse for him. If we meet him before we go we'll put it civilly. But we're going."
Potter and Greene gazed at him.
"I haven't unpacked yet," said Coker. "You fellows seem to have — well, you can pack again. Don't waste time about it !"
Potter and Greene still gazed. They seemed at a loss for words.
"The sooner we're gone," resumed Coker, "the better ! In the circumstances, I'd rather not thrash Bunter before we go — but it will come to that if I have any more of his cheek ! I made a mistake in thinking I could stand it — and I own up to it ! I can't !"
"And what about us ?" shrieked Greene, finding his voice.
"Eh ? You ?" Coker stared. "What do you mean ?" It did not seem to have occurred to Coker, so far, that Potter and Greene had to be considered in any way. "I don't understand you, Greene."
"We've come on this yacht for an Easter cruise —"
"I know that. Well, I've told you the cruise is off," said Coker. "Do you want me to tell you again, or what ?"

“You silly chump ——”
“That’s enough, Greene If you’re disappointed, I’m sorry.” It seemed to occur to Coker that Potter and Greene might be disappointed. “But there’s a limit — and standing impudent familiarity from a fag is the limit ! That little fat pig Bunter treats me just as he might treat one of you fellows !”
“Oh !” gasped Potter. “D-d-does he ?”
“I might have expected it. In fact, I had a lot of doubts.” said Coker, shaking his head. “Still, it’s not too late. Get your bags packed, and I’ll call the steward ——”
“But ——”
“Don’t waste time ! I never saw fel1ows like you for wasting time —”
“Look here, Coker !” roared Potter.
“Don’t yell, Potter !”
“Look here —” shrieked Greene.
“Don’t rave, Greene !”
“Do you think we’re standing this ?” yelled Potter. “You silly idiot ! You howling ass ! You — you — you burbling, benighted dunderhead ! We’re not going ashore — see ? We’re staying here — see ? And if you don’t like it, you can jolly well lump it — see ?”
“If we can stand Bunter, you can stand Bunter —see ?” hooted Greene. “Who are you, if you come to that? ”
“Who am I ?” gasped Coker.
“Yes — who ?” roared Greene. “A silly ass, if you ask me ! A howling fathead, if you want to know ! A cheeky, fatheaded, dunderheaded chump, if you’re curious about it — see ?”
Coker stared at his friends. It was quite uncommon to tell him these painful truths.
“We’re not going to pack !” resumed Potter. “We’re staying here ! You can clear, if you like ! Go and eat coke, in fact !”
“And shut up !” added Greene.
“Wha-a-t ?” gasped Coker.
“Shut up !”
“Well, my hat ! I — I— I’ll —”
“And get out !”
“Gig-gig-gig-get out !” stuttered Coker.
“Yes, get out before you’re put.”
“Pi-pip-put ?”
“Yes, put ! Here, shove him out !” said Greene.
Potter and Greene, for reasons unknown to Coker, seemed to be in a fearful temper ! They advanced simultaneously on Coker, grasped him, and hurled him headlong out of the doorway.
Coker went sprawling.
He sat up, almost gibbering in his astonishment. Potter and Greene glared at him, still belligerent. Even the worm will turn; and Potter and Greene had turned ! They were fed-up with Coker !
“My hat !” gasped Coker. “You cheeky rotters ! I’ll jolly well ——”
Without wasting time in stating what he would do, Coker proceeded to do it. He scrambled up and charged at his comrades.
The next moment three Fifth Form men of Greyfriars were rolling round the saloon in deadly combat. Coker was a hefty fellow; but two to one was long odds. Coker’s intention was to give his friends what they deserved. Instead of which, it was Coker who got what he deserved.

To his surprise, and still more to his annoyance, he found himself jammed on the floor, and his head tapped thereon, frequently and hard.
Tap, tap, tap, tap!
"Yaroooh !" roared Coker.
Tap, lap, tap !
"Oh, crumbs ! Leggo ! I'll smash you ! I'll spiflicate you ! Whoop !" roared Coker. "Yaroooooooop !"
"There," gasped Potter, "that'll do! There's some more if you want it, though !"
"Lots more !" gasped Greene.
"Heaps more !" said Potter.
They went back into their state-room, rather breathless, but feeling better. Horace Coker sat on the floor, gurgling spasmodically — very breathless indeed, and feeling worse !

Coker Solves the Problem !

"HALLO, hallo, hallo !" bawled Bob Cherry.
Bunter jumped.
Crack !
Really, it was Bob's own fault.
The Famous Five had come back to the Sea Nymph, merry and bright after their explorations in the ancient Cinque Port. Billy Bunter was seated in a deckchair, with his fat little legs stretched out, and his small eyes closed behind his big spectacles. Bunter was not exactly asleep — he was just pleasantly dozing — but he remained unaware of the fact that a cheery party of juniors had arrived — till Bob Cherry, leaning over the back of his chair, announced his presence with a roar that might have made Stentor of old feel like a cooing dove.
Naturally, Bunter jumped ! Any fellow would have jumped. And the top of his bullet head crashed on Bob Cherry's jaw, so suddenly did Bunter jump.
"Ow !" gasped Bunter, rubbing the top of his head.
"Whooop !" roared Bob, staggering back, clasping his jaw with both hands in anguish. "Whoo-hoo-hooop !"
"Ha, ha, ha !" shrieked the rest of the party.
"Ow ! Banging a fellow's napper —" gasped Bunter.
"Yow-ow-ow ! Wow ! My jaw !" howled Bob. "Oh crikey ! I believe it's broken ! Oh crumbs ! Wow !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove.
"I say, you fellows, you've come back ! I say, that silly idiot's hurt my head ! Ow ! Making a fellow jump —''
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Bob was sorry that he had made Bunter jump. He had reason to regret it. His jaw had a dislocated feeling. He caressed it tenderly as if to make sure that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't !
"You silly chump !" gasped Bob. "I've a jolly good mind ——"
"You asked for it, old man !" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Coker come, Bunter ?"
"Oh ! Yes. He's in a rotten temper about something." said Bunter. "I was nice to him — awfully nice — but he got ratty for some reason, and he's been scrapping with the other beasts, too ——"
"Oh, my hat !"

“Has he seen George yet ?” chuckled Nugent.
“No — and — and — I say, you fellows, mind you don’t say anything to Coker !” said Bunter anxiously. “I — I dare say George won’t speak to him till to-morrow, and — and then it will be all right. I — I hope.”
“The hopefulness is terrific !” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
“D-d-do you fellows think Coker will cut up rusty ?’’ asked Bunter, with an anxious blink at the Famous Five.
Now that the hour was at hand, so to speak, the fat Owl was getting more and more uneasy on that point.
“I rather think so,” said Johnny Bull. “Frightfully rusty, I should say. You’d better look out for squalls.”
“I — I say, you fellows, you — you’ll stand by me, of course,” said Bunter. “If — if necessary, you’ll collar Coker and — and hold him down, won’t you ? You’ll be pally ? It’s up to you, you know.”
“It’s up to us to see you safe after swindling Coker, because you’ve swindled us ?” asked Johnny Bull.
“Oh, really, Bull ! That’s a rotten way to put it ! I — I wish 1— I hadn’t asked Coker now !” groaned Bunter.
“Hallo, that’s Coker !” said Nugent, as a booming voice came from below.
“Are you fellows coming, or are you fellows not coming ?” Coker was demanding, evidently addressing Potter and Greene.
“Fathead !”
“Idiot !”
Both replies were heard by the grinning juniors on deck. Evidently there was a rift in the Fifth Form lute.
“Well, I’m going !” boomed Coker.
“Go, and be blowed !”
“Go, and be boiled !”
“This,” remarked Wibley, “sounds as if Coker & Co. don’t love one another any more.”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Stick there then !” came Coker’s bawl. “I’m done with you ! Stick there, and be civil to a cheeky fag !”
“Ass ! Chump !”
There was a loud snort, expressive of Horace Coker’s scorn for his discarded friends. Then his heavy tread was heard in the companion, and Coker came on deck. He looked a little untidy, as was only natural after his argument with Potter and Greene. He was red, and he was wrathy. He gave the Famous Five a glare, to which they responded by sweet smiles, which had no placating effect on Horace Coker.
“I — I say, Coker !” gasped Billy Bunter. “I — I say, old chap —”
Bunter could not make this out. Coker, it seemed, was going. If he had discovered the reality of that invitation to an Easter cruise, Bunter could have understood it. But he hadn’t. Coker was still in a state of blissful ignorance on that point. So why he was going was a puzzle — to Bunter.
Coker transferred his glare to Bunter.
“If you call me old chap again, Bunter,” said Coker, in a concentrated voice, “I’ll chuck you into the harbour !”
“Oh, really, Coker ——”
Coker calmed himself a little. After all, Bunter was, for the moment, his host. Coker realised that a fellow had to be a bit civil to his host. Even if that host was a measly

fag in the Lower Fourth, who put on airs of familiarity with a Fifth Form man.
"Look here ! I'm going !" said Coker. "Sorry, and all that; but it's a bit too thick. Kind of you to ask me, and all that, but it won't do — see ?"
"You — mean that you — you don't want to come as my guest ?" he stuttered.
"You've got it," assented Coker, "Like your dashed cheek to ask me, really. But I dare say you meant well, so I won't kick you. It won't work, anyhow."
"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.
Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled. They had expected Coker to cut up rusty when he learned the real conditions of that cruise. But they had not quite expected him to cut up rusty before that. But that was Coker all over.
"But — but you'd enjoy an Easter cruise, Coker."
"That's all right," said Coker. "I'm not chucking up an Easter cruise. I've told my people I'm going for an Easter cruise, and I'm going. One of those pleasure steamers. where you pay for the cruise — that will suit me. Plenty of them to choose from. In fact, I was reading an advertisement of one the other clay. A yacht — same name as this yacht —"
"Ha, ha. Ha !" came in a shriek from the Famous Five. Evidently Coker had seen Cousin George's advertisement, without realising in the least that it referred to Cousin George's yacht.
Coker cave them a glare.
"What are you fags cackling at ?" he demanded. "Shut up, anyhow ! Well, Bunter, you're a cheeky, sneaking, little sticky beast, but I'm sorry to let you down. But it won't do, and it's no good making any bones about it. I can't stay here as your guest, and that's that !"
"Oh, crikey !" gasped Bunter. "I — I— I say, Coker, d-d-don't go for a minute. I — I —I say, if — if you're thinking of a cruise, you — you pay for, that that could be arranged on this — this yacht —"
"I — I mean, I could fix it up !" gasped Bunter. "The — the fact is, my Cousin George is — willing, if I speak to him, to —— to take a — a certain number of paying passengers."
"Oh!" said Coker.
"You — you can p-p-pay, if you like. I — I'll arrange the whole thing. I'll speak to George. Pay just the same as on any other pleasure trip. Just like an — an — an ordinary passenger."
"Oh !" repeated Coker. "If that's straight, Bunter ——"
"Straight as a string !" gasped the fat Owl, hardly daring to believe in his good luck.
"If — if a passenger pays, the — the charge is twenty-one guineas for the whole Easter cruise, including a trip to the Mediterranean."
"That's quite reasonable," said Coker. He was quite calm now — indeed, quite good-tempered. "If you mean that, Bunter ——"
"I — I do ! Honour bright !" gasped Bunter.
There was no doubt that Bunter meant it —— every word.
"You think your cousin would he agreeable to that ?" asked Coker.
"Oh, yes — quite !"
''Mind, I want no nonsense about it," said Coker. "I want it perfectly straight. If I stay on this yacht, I stay as a paying passenger, and I shall ask my Aunt Judy to send Cook a cheque. That's plain, and I mean it, and no nonsense about it — see ?"
"Qu-qu-quite all right." said Bunter breathlessly. "George will be pip-pip-pleased. Quite p-p-pleased. 1 —— I'll tell him, and — and he'll fix it up with you. If — if Potter and Greene stay, you can p-p-pay for them, too."

Coke thought it over. Harry Wharton & Co. watched him with the keenest interest. They suppressed their merriment.
"Well, that puts quite a different complexion on it," said Coker, at last. "I'll go down and speak to Potter and Greene. They've been playing the goat — the cheeky goat. But, of course, they were a bit disappointed. A fellow can overlook it. But mind this, Bunter, and don't let there be any mistake about it, if I stay on this yacht, I pay my way, and Potter and Greene come as my guests, not as yours. And I'll ask my Aunt Judy to send Cook a cheque to cover the lot. And if you don't like that, I go ashore here and now."
"Oh. Crikey ! I — I mean. I — I like it. I like it no end !" gasped Bunter. "It — it will suit me to a — a — a T."
"Well, if you're sure your cousin will agree ——"
"Oh, crumbs ! I mean, yes —— quite sure !"
''That's settled, then,'' said Coker, his brow quite clear now. "I'll go down and tell the chaps. And it's clearly —— quite clearly — understood that we come on this trip as paying passengers, and no nonsense about it !"
"Quite !" gurgled Bunter. "Oh. Quite !"
Coker tramped below again. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after his burly form, and then gazed at one another. Billy Bunter wiped the perspiration from his fat brow.
"Well, my hat !" said Harry Wharton.
"My only summer bonnet !" said Bob Cherry.
"I — I say, you fellows, you — you needn't tell Coker anything !" gasped Bunter. "N-n-no need to tell him anything now."
"Ha, ha, ha !"
Really there was no need to tell Coker anything. The matter was arranged to Coker's satisfaction, and to Bunter's satisfaction, and, later, to George's satisfaction. There was, in fact, satisfaction all round. Quite a rare state of things in this imperfect universe.

Lights twinkled through the dusk of the spring night.
Harry Wharton & Co., on the deck of the Sea Nymph, looked back at the twinkling lights along the cliffs of their native land. There was a steady hum from the engines that mingled with the incessant wash of the waves. The Sea Nymph was pitching just a little, which did not worry the chums of the Remove at all. They liked the sea, and were in a cheery mood. One by one the lights dropped out of view, and England vanished into the dusky night.
Coker had recovered his good temper by the time the Easter cruisers gathered at the supper-table. Potter and Greene were very cheery. Harry Wharton & Co. had bright and smiling faces. Bills Bunter was in great form. In the presence of foodstuffs, Billy Bunter always found life worth the trouble of living.
Captain Cook presided at the table with his round, red face beaming. It was quite a cheery party; only Potter and Greene wondering a little whether they would get through that Easter cruise without dropping Coker over the side.
Coker, in the kindness of his heart, was looking after his friends, generously forgiving and forgetful of their behaviour that day. He was, in fact, quite concerned about them. Coker was hungry, too, and he tucked in, as if determined to make a good second to Billy Bunter. At the same time he admonished his friends for their own good. Potter and Greene showed no signs of gratitude.
"Better leave that pie alone, Potter !" advised Coker. "Shove it this way, old chap ! It looks a decent pie ! But don't touch it."

“I like pie !” breathed Potter.
“You don’t want to be ill all night, Potter. Take my tip and don’t touch that pie.”
Heedless of Coker’s tip, Potter touched the pie to a reckless extent. So did Greene.
“Well, you’re asking for it !” said Coker. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you ! I say, this is a ripping pie ! I’ll have some more.”
Coker demolished what was left of that pie.
“Leave that pudding alone, Greene !”
“Look here —”
“Don’t argue, old chap. That always was your fault, arguing. Take a tip from a fellow who knows. Steward, take that pudding away from Greene. Potter, you’re looking a bit pale.”
“Rubbish !” said Potter.
“A bit green and yellow,” said Coker. “There’s rather a swell on the Channel, Potter. Do be careful, old man ! You’re a rotten sailor !”
Coker’s jaws were rather busy with the excellent provender, but he found lots of time to use them in admonition to his friends. Indeed, it was hardly possible for Potter and Greene to get a morsel to their mouths without friendly and concerned urgings from Coker not to overdo it.
Coker had a healthy appetite, and he ate well, taking large helpings of everything that was going. After supper the party went on deck. The moon had come out from a mass of fleecy clouds, and its light shimmered on the choppy billows of the Channel.
“Lovely night !” said Coker. “Stand here by the rail, you fellows: it will he handy when you begin to feel queer. How are you now ?”
“Right as rain !” said Potter. “How are you ?’’
“Don’t be an ass, Potter ! I’m a good sailor; you’re not ! Not feeling a bit queer inside—”
“Not at all !”
“You will, after that supper. The tub’s rolling a bit,” said Coker. “Well, I warned you ! Ooooogh !”
“What’s the matter ?” asked Greene.
“Nothing. The blessed ship pitched, that’s all. Made a fellow catch his breath. You’re looking rather white, Greeney.”
“Not so white as you are, old bean !” chuckled Greene.
“Don’t he a dummy, Greene ! Woooogh !”
“Gentlemen, chaps and fellows,” murmured Bob Cherry. “Gather round for Coker’s performance ! No charge !”
“Ha, ha, ha “!
“You fags can clear off !” said Coker, glancing round. “Dash it all, this blessed tub seems to he pitching a lot ! I say —— Urrrrrgh !”
‘‘What did you say ?” asked Potter sweetly.
“Nothing. I was only going to say — Yurrrgggh !”
“Feel bad ?” grinned Greene.
“Certainly not ! I’m not likely to be seasick —— Urrrgh ! Nothing of that with me,” said Coker. “I’m a good— yurrggh ! —— sailor. That creamy stuff, though, when I come to think of it ——— Urrrggh !”
“Like a basin, Coker, old bean ?” asked Bob Cherry.
“Don’t you be a cheeky young ass, Cherry ! I don’t want any fag cheek, I can tell you, and if I have to —— Urrrrrgggh !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
Horace Coker held on to the rail . Strange feelings were surging within Coker.

Vesuvius, on the verge of an eruption, might have felt as Horace Coker was feeling now. Potter winked at Greene, who grinned.
"Coming on, what ?" asked Potter. "Feeling it coming, eh?"
Coker was still game. He turned a ghastly face on Potter, but he answered with resolute calmness.
"Nothing of the sort ! How do you feel, Potter ?"
"Fine !"' answered Potter.
"I'm all right," said Coker — "quite all right. If you think that there's anything wrong with me, I can only say —— Wurrrrrrgggh !"
Coker hung on to the rail. The Sea Nymph rolled a little, and Coker shuddered from head to foot. He hung on convulsively.
Potter and Greene smiled and strolled away. Faint but horrid sounds from Horace Coker followed them.
"Ooooo-er ! Woooogh ! Groooogh ! Oh crikey ! Yurrgggh ! I — I — I don't fuf-fuf-feel well ! Wurrurrrgh !"
The limp wreckage that hung over the rail could hardly have been recognised as Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. kindly gathered round him, gathered him up, and helped him below. Coker sagged and lurched helplessly in their friendly grasp, white as chalk, and uttering low moans of horror and anguish. They got him to his state-room, and bundled him into his bunk. They brought him water, and looked after him like a man and a brother. When they had made him as comfortable as they could, and left him, a feeble voice from Coker's bunk followed them.
"I — I'm not — oogh ! — quite well ! I — I feel rather — gug-gug-gug ! — queer ! But I'm not seasick ! Not at — groooch ! — at ! If you think I'm s-s-seasick, you're a set of silly —— Ooooooogggh ! Wooogh ! Groooogh !"
Coker was suffering fearfully, but he was still Coker.

"Shut up! " roared Coker.
Bob Cherry was singing. At all events, that was what he would have said, had anyone asked him. Other fellows might not have recognised it as singing.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo !" exclaimed Bob, breaking off his cheery melody. "Feeling better, old man ? Right as a trivet, what ?"
"I haven't been anything else, that I know of !" snorted Coker. "Don't he a young ass ! And don't make a row. I want to get a nap. I — I missed some sleep last night. I fancy Bunter's snoring kept me awake. It can be heard all over the ship !"
"Oh, really, Coker —"
"Shut up, Bunter ! Now you fags, keep quiet !" said Coker. "Go down into the saloon and play marbles, or something."
"Oh, my hat ! You wouldn't like me to sing you to sleep ?" asked Bob.
"No !" roared Coker. "Shut up !"
He bestowed another warning glare on the Removites, and settled down to slumber. His eyes closed, his mouth opened and he snored gently.
"What about tipping him out of that chair ?" asked Nugent thoughtfully.
"The tipfulness is a wheezy good idea !" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
"Hold on !" murmured Bob Cherry. "I've a better idea than that. Let him snooze — the faster asleep, the better. Wait !"
Bob Cherry strolled down below and sought the steward. From that official, he borrowed a long, strong needle and a long, strong thread. With these he returned to the deck. Captain Cook was on the bridge with the mate, and neither gave any heed to

the juniors. Bob held up his needle and thread for the inspection of his friends.
“What on earth —” asked Harry Wharton.
“Keep your eye on your Uncle Robert !” answered Bob, “And don’t wake Coker up. Whatever you do, don’t wake him up !”
There was little danger of Coker awakening. He was deep in sleep and his snore was incessant. Bob Cherry cautiously approached his chair; but there really was no great need for caution. Nothing short of tipping Horace over on the deck would have awakened him.
The juniors suppressed their chuckles as Bob began work with the needle and thread. Quietly, steadily, and industriously, he sewed all the looser portions of Coker’s garments to the canvas of the deckchair. Coker was sporting roomy flannel bags, and there was plenty of slack, which Bob sewed to the chair with enormous stitches. He wore his lounge jacket open, and that was easier still. Coker slept peacefully through the operation. Bob was at work half an hour, with untiring industry. At the end of that time Coker was as firmly secured to his chair as if he grew there.
Having completed his task. Bob went down and returned the needle to the steward. Then the chums of the Remove strolled about the deck and watched passing sails and steamers, while they waited for tea-time — and for Coker to wake up. Coker slept on peacefully. When he stirred in his sleep he grunted a little, finding his movements a little circumscribed. But he did not wake till the gong sounded for tea.
“Yaw-aw-aw-aw !” Coker yawned, He opened his eyes and blinked at blue sea and sunny sky. “Yaw-aw-aw ! Seasickness was quite gone now, and Coker had awakened fearfully hungry.
“Hallo, hallo, hallo ! Tea, Coker !” bawled Bob Cherry.
“Shut up, Cherry !”
Coker rose to his feet, watched by interested eyes all over the Sea Nymph. He was conscious of a dragging feeling and of a sort of weight. He gave a gasp of astonishment. His deck chair was rising with him as he rose. Such an experience had never come Coker’s way before. He was amazed.
“Why, what — what — ” ejaculated Coker.
He stared round at the chair, clinging behind him. He twisted round to get a view of it, and the chair, naturally, turned with his movement, and Coker followed it round, as it were, staring. He had, at that moment, an extraordinary resemblance to a kitten chasing its tail. And his aspect was too much for the Easter cruisers. They yelled.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“What — what — what’s the matter with this chair ?” exclaimed the amazed Coker.
“It — it — it’s sticking to me !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Shut up that cackling !” roared Coker. “There’s nothing funny in this, you sniggering little sweeps.”
“Isn’t there ?” chortled Bob Cherry.
“Looks funny to me !” chuckled Johnny Bull.
“The funnifulness is terrific.”
“Shut up !” roared Coker. “Come and pull this chair off, See ? It’s stuck to me somehow ! Blessed if I can make out how ! Pull it off !”
“Go it, you men !” said Harry Wharton. “A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether !”
Obligingly — so obligingly that Coker might really have been suspicious, had he been a suspicious fellow — the Famous Five gathered round Horace, and all laid hands on the clinging deck-chair together. They all dragged at it at once, and there was a fearful

yell from Coker as he was jerked off his feet. He rolled over, chair and all, with a terrific clattering and crashing.
“Oh !” roared Coker. “Ow ! You little idiots ! I didn’t say yank me over. Whoop ! Oh, crikey ! Get that chair off will you ?”
“Go it !” gasped Bob Cherry.
The juniors grabbed the chair again and lugged at it. They pulled it along the deck, and Coker — being deeply attached to it, as it were — followed. He had to follow. Wherever that chair went Coker had to go. He went backwards after the chair, with his arms waving wildly and his long legs thrashing the deck.
“Oh ! Ow ! Leave off ! Leggo ! Oh, my hat ! You young villains, you’re doing this on — ow ! purpose ! Oh, my hat ! Oh, crumbs ! Yarooooh !”
“Go it,” cried Bob Cherry. “Pull !”
“The pullfulness is terrific !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
The Famous five got on quite a good speed with the chair, After it went Coker, sprawling wildly. Every now and then there was a rending sound. But Bob Cherry had put in plenty of stitches, and Coker remained attached.
He grabbed at a stanchion at last and held. “Leggo!” he roared. “You young villains!
“Leggo ! I’ll smash you ! Oh, crikey ! Will you leave off ? Ow !”
“But you asked us ——”
“Leggo !” raved Coker, holding on for his life. “I’ll spiflicate the lot of you ! Potter. where are you ? Where are you, Greene ?”
“Ha, ha, ha !” yelled Potter and Greene. They were staggering against the rail, doubled up with laughter. The seamen on deck were laughing — the steward had put his head out into the sunshine to laugh — Captain Cook’s round, red face was irradiated with wide grins. The whole ship’s company seemed to be enjoying this episode — except Coker. Coker was raving !
“I — I — I’ll — If you don’t let go I — I — I’ll ——’’ raved Coker.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
The Famous Five were laughing too much to hold on. They let go. Coker spun round on them, with rage and vengeance in his eye. He had discovered by this time that the canvas part of the chair was sewn on to him. He whirled round on the juniors with the chair whisking behind him.
But the Removites did not wait for Coker to get hold of them. Coker looked too dangerous. They dodged Coker about the deck, and dodged down the companion to the saloon. Then Coker fancied that he had them cornered, and he rushed into the stairway after them. There was a sudden jam ! The deckchair was hanging sideways behind Coker, and it was too long to pass down the companion. It caught and jammed. and brought Coker to a sudden halt.
“Oh, crikey !” gasped Coker as he sprawled on the stairs, clutching wildly at the handrails. “Oh, scissors !”
There was a wrenching and a rending, and Coker’s jacket went west. But the slack of his flannel bags was firmly sewn to the canvas, and Coker was still a prisoner. At the foot of the stairs the chums of the Remove stood in a merry group, watching Coker’s antics.
“Wait till I get hold of you !” gasped Coker. He gave a terrific wrench and tore the chair loose, and got it endwise, so that it would follow him down the stairs. Naturally, he slipped and rolled down, and he came with a rush, the chair clattering after him. That final shock tore the last of the stitches out, as well as some fragments of the flannel bags, and Coker, freed at last of his encumbrance, scrambled to his feet. He

made a single bound at the Famous Five.
To hurl himself on these cheeky fags, smite them right and left, thrash them all round without mercy, was Coker's idea. But, like many great ideas, it did not work out in practice.
Coker suddenly found himself lying on his back, with somebody sitting on his chest, somebody else standing on his legs, and somebody else holding on to his ears.
"Hefty haddocks !" ejaculated George as he came down. "Come, come, boys will be boys, and a lark's a lark but draw it mild — what ? Ha, ha ! Coker, you'd better get a wash ! Steward, take Mr. Coker to the bath-room ! Ha, ha !"
Vengeance — just vengeance — had to be postponed. Coker was too breathless to deal with the juniors as they richly deserved.
He staggered away to a bath-room for the wash he seriously needed, and the cheery chums of the Remove had tea while Coker was busy on repairs.

Strategic !

"STRATEGY !" said Coker.
"Eh ?" yawned Potter and Greene.
"Strategy's the thing !"
Billy Bunter, half asleep in a deck-chair in the middle of the boat, blinked towards three shadowy figures leaning in a row on the rail.
From below came merry sounds of music. There was a piano in the saloon, and Harry Wharton was thumping it, and his comrades were joining in a cheery sing-song. They sounded as if they were enjoying life.
Potter and Greene would rather have liked to throw over their Fifth Form dignity and join the cheery crowd in the saloon. But Coker, as usual, was talking. It never occurred to Coker what an enormous lack of interest fellows had in his remarks.
"I've brought a cane among my things, as I've told you," went on Coker; "but there's a certain difficulty about thrashing those young sweeps as they deserve. They pile on a fellow. Of course, I can handle half a dozen fags. Still. there's something a bit undignified in it."
Potter favoured Greene with a wink, fortunately unnoticed by Coker in the dimness of the deck. Whether for reasons of dignity, or for other reasons, Coker was not going to deal with the Famous Five all in a bunch.
"Wharton's the ringleader." went on Coker. "Giving him a jolly good whopping will be a lesson to the lot of them — what ?"
"Will he let you ?" asked Potter blandly.
"Don't he a silly ass, Potter !"
"Um !" said Potter.
"I can't scrap with a mob of fags — altogether too undignified." said Coker. "But if I go down now and thrash Wharton, what will happen ? A general scrap — not the sort of thing for a Fifth Form man to mix in. Well, that's where my strategy comes in !"
"Ah! Um !" said Potter.
"I shall turn out at eight bells — that's midnight," said Coker. "They'll be separate then — see ? I shall look in on Wharton — with the cane ! I shall give him six on his pyjamas — same as a Greyfriars prefect, you know ! That will be a lesson to him — and to all of them ! What do you think ?''
"Oh, my hat !" said Greene.
"Rather strategic — what ?" said Coker, with a touch of complacency. Evidently

Coker was rather taken with his own strategical powers.
“Oh, frightfully !” said Greene. “But, look here, Coker, why not let the whole thing drop, and let’s have a quiet time !”
“Don’t be an ass, Greene !”
“After all, we’ve come on a cruise, and we don’t want a lot of ragging all the time, Coker !” remarked Potter. “Why not chuck it ?”
“Don’t he an idiot, Potter !’
The three seniors strolled along the deck. Coker was still talking, and his friends were entertained by his conversation — perhaps ! Billy Bunter sat up and blinked after them and grinned. When they were at a safe distance the fat Owl rose from the chair and rolled below. A rousing chorus was going strong when Bunter arrived in the saloon.
“I say, you fellows !” squeaked Bunter.
But it was some time before Bunter could get a hearing. When, however, there was a pause and Bunter got out his news there was general interest for once in what the Owl of the Remove had to say. Harry Wharton especially was deeply interested to hear of the treat that the strategic Horace had in store for him at midnight’s witching hour.
“The cheeky ass !” he said wrathfully.
“Dear old Coker !” said Bob Cherry. “He never knows when he’s had enough. Fancy old Coker being so strategic as all that ! But Coker’s not the only man who can he strategic. We’re rather whales on strategy ourselves. I shouldn’t be surprised if the wrong party gets that cane tonight.”
It was half an hour before midnight when silent, flitting figures stole out of their rooms and gathered in Harry Wharton’s state-room. There were faint, suppressed chuckles as they waited in the dimness of the state-room for Horace Coker to get on with his strategy.
Eight hells sounded at last. Then a number of listening ears heard the sound of an opening door at a little distance.
“Look out !” murmured Bob Cherry.
Harry Wharton was in his bunk, with the bedclothes over him. The other fellows crouched on the other side of the room. There was a footfall, and the sliding door was opened wide. A glimmer of light from the saloon fell into the room, revealing the burly form of Horace Coker in the doorway. In Coker’s right hand was a cane: the cane he had so thoughtfully packed among his things in case the juniors should require whopping, as the sagacious Horace had foreseen that they very likely would.
Coker stepped in. He gave the junior in the bunk a light poke with the cane to awaken him. Wharton did not need much awakening. He sat up.
“Hallo, who’s that ?” he yawned.
“Me !” said Coker. “Don’t be frightened —”
“That’s all right; it’s too dark to see your face !”
“What ? More cheek !” said Coker darkly. “Well, I’m going to give you something to cure all that ! Get out of that bunk, Wharton.”
“What for ?”
“And bend over that chair !” said Coker, quite in the manner of a Greyfriars prefect. “I’m going to give you six ! I’m tackling you alone, because it’s rather below my dignity to mix up in a scuffle with a mob of cheeky fags ! I am making an example of you, Wharton, as the ringleader of the gang. See ? Now get out of that bunk, sharp !”
“I’d rather stay in, thanks.”
“Do you want me to hook you out ?”

“Well, yes, I think so.”
Coker made a stride at the bunk. He grasped Wharton with his left hand to hook him out. He rather expected the junior to resist. But Wharton did not resist. He came out with a jump and grasped Coker.
And then — greatly to Coker’s surprise — shadowy figures seemed to fill the room, and hands were laid on Coker on all sides.
“Why — what — who — how —” gasped Coker. “Floor him !”
“Why, what —— My hat ! I — Yarooooh !”
Bump!
Coker was floored !
“Face down !” said Bob Cherry.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“You — you — you young scoundrels! ” gasped Coker, bewildered. “You’re all here ! Wha-a-at are you all doing here ?”
“You, old bean !” answered Bob. “You’ve come here to be done, haven’t you ?”
“Leggo ! Gerroff ! I — I’ll ——”
“Sit on his head, Johnny ! Stand on his legs, Inky ! Squat on his shoulders, Frank ! That’s right ! You stand on his knees, too, Wibley ! He wriggles an awful lot. Regular worm ! You hold his ears, Wharton ! Plenty of room to hold. But keep clear and give me room for the cane !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Mind if I borrow that cane, Coker ?”
“Leggo ! Gerrup ! Urrrrggh !” came in suffocated accents from Coker. “If you dare to touch me with that cane I’ll —— Yaroooooop !”
Swipe !
“You see, we’re going to make an example of you.” explained Bob. Swipe ! “We’re going to give you six !” Swipe ! “Don’t make that row, Coker !” Swipe ! “It’s jolly thoughtful of you to bring this cane aboard ——” Swipe ! “It’s coming in jolly useful !” Swipe !
“Whoop ! Yoooop ! I’ll smash you ! Yaroooop !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“That’s six.’’ said Bob. “And there’s one for luck !”
Swipe!
“Yooooooooop !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Now roll him home,” said Bob. “Had enough, Coker ?”
“Yaroooop !”
Coker was rolled out and rolled home. It was a sprawling, gasping, gurgling heap that was landed in Coker’s cabin. Potter and Greene must have been sleeping very soundly — very soundly indeed — if they did not hear Coker’s frantic yells. But perhaps they did not want to hear. Perhaps they wanted Coker to enjoy the results of his strategy all on his own. Coker was having a frightfully exciting time. He was bundled into his bunk, and all his clothes and his other possessions were piled in on him, his suitcases being added to the top of the heap. There was little to he seen of Coker when the juniors finally left him.
But his voice could still be heard. It was heard for quite a long time afterwards.
But that was all. Coker did not go on the warpath again. For once, Horace Coker realised that he had had enough !

“It’s a light !”

Billy Bunter uttered that ejaculation.
The fat junior of Greyfriars was leaning on the rail of the yacht Sea Nymph. The April night was fine; the sky spangled with stars. The Sea Nymph steamed at a moderate pace northwards from the Straits of Dover.
Captain Cook was on the bridge, with an eye open for the Goodwin Sands. Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove sat in a cheery and contented row in their deckchairs, after supper, enjoying the balmy breeze, the starry sky, and the shimmering sea. Coker & Co. of the Greyfriars Fifth were on the other side of the deck — Coker being wishful to make it clear that he, Horace Coker, had nothing in common with mere fags of the Lower Fourth Form. Billy Bunter, leaning on the rail, was thinking — naturally — of the supper he had recently packed away, and doubting a little whether the last helping of pudding had been, perhaps, a mistake. Fortunately, the sea was quite calm — and, so far, that last helping of pudding was calm. A glimmer of light twinkling from the shadowy sea caught Bunter's eye, and he blinked at it through his big spectacles and announced the fact.
"I say, you fellows ! It's a light !" said Bunter.
Harry Wharton detached himself from his chair and leaned over the rail to look. Starry as the sky was, the sea was deeply dusky, and the visibility was not good. The lights of the Sea Nymph streamed out ahead, but no other light was to be seen on the dusky waters.
"Were is it ?" asked Harry.
"It's gone now ! But I saw it," said Bunter. "A boat, or something. Can't be a ship, or we should see it."
"Not likely to be a boat out here at night, going round the Goodwins !" said Harry.
"I say, you fellows, there it is again !" exclaimed Bunter. This time all the Famous Five rose to look. Billy Bunter pointed with a fat finger. But the light, if there was a light on the shadowy sea, had vanished again.
"Well, where is it ?" asked Johnny Bull.
"The wherefulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Rain Singh.
"Well, I saw it !" said Bunter. "Looked like somebody waving a light. Can't you fellows see it now? "
"Lend me your specs, old fat bean," said Bob. "It's the specs that do it."
Snort — from Bunter.
All the Famous Five of the Remove were blessed with good eyesight, but they could see no light on the sea. It was really odd if the short-sighted Owl of Greyfriars had spotted it when they missed it.
"Well, I jolly well saw it !" said Bunter. "It's gone again ! It was right ahead of us — there!"
"Well, if there's anybody ahead of us, he's an ass not to show a light !" said Bob Cherry. "Might get run down —"
Bob Cherry was interrupted. From the sea ahead there came a sudden grinding crash, and a yell, followed by the wild clanging of the engine-room bell and a frantic roar from Captain Cook. The Greyfriars fellows leaped to their feet as if electrified. Under the surging bows of the Sea Nymph rolled the shattered timbers of a boat that had been run clown in the dark, and from the shadows of the sea came wild cries for help.
"Help ! Save me ! Help !"
Faint, but clear, it came from the dusky waters — a cry that thrilled to the hearts of the fellows on the deck of the Sea Nymph. Captain Cook had instantly signalled to the engine-room, and the yacht slowed. But the shattered boat had been driven under; the

yacht's prow had struck the gunwhale fair and square. Evidently the smaller craft had drifted right into the Sea Nymph's course in the dark, though why the boatman had not been burning a light was a mystery. But the man, whoever he was, had not gone down with the boat; he was afloat, and screaming for help.
The juniors jumped to the side, staring down into the sea. Mr. Pycroft, the mate, flashed a lamp over the side, two or three of the crew lighted flares. Cousin George was shouting orders. Hitherto, Cousin George had seemed rather a comic figure to the Greyfriars fellows, with his tubby form and his round, red face, and his yachting outfit, that did not make him look like anything in the world but a portly hotel-keeper. Now, however, they realised that George was equal to his business as skipper of the Sea Nymph. Indeed, he had to be, or he could not have carried a skipper's ticket.
"There he is !" roared Coker, pointing to a floating object in the gleam of light from a flare.
'Where ?" panted Wharton.
"There —— look ——"
"Don't be a fool !"
"That's a bit of wreckage ——"
"Help !" came a fainter cry from the surge. "Oh, help !"
George was rapping orders staccato. The seamen were handling the yacht's boat. The vessel was at a standstill now. Every eye searched the shadowed sea for the swimmer. Coker had no doubt that he had seen him. Coker kicked off his shoes, threw his cap on the deck, tore off his jacket, and leaped on the rail, his hands together.
"Coker !" yelled Potter and Greene at once.
Unheeding, Coker dived.
"Oh, my hat ! Coker's gone !" panted Potter.
"The ass !" gasped Greene.
Harry Wharton, staring into the sea, where the lights of the flares danced weirdly in the midst of dancing shadows, had a glimpse of a white face, surging under the wash of the Sea Nymph. The face went under, even as he glimpsed it, and the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, without stopping to think, dived over the rail. If Coker, the worst swimmer at Greyfriars, could dive into the sea for a shipwrecked man, the best swimmer in the Remove was not likely to hesitate. Wharton, however, was on the right mark; it was the drowning man he had seen. And what Coker had seen was the broken tiller of the wrecked boat bobbing in the water.
Wharton went down deep with the dive, and as he came up, almost like an arrow, his hand struck something in the sea, and he instinctively grasped at it. His head came out of the water, and unseen hands grasped at him with frantic clutches. It was the drowning man he had hold of — and the man had hold of him, wildly and frantically. From the deck of the Sea Nymph the ocean had looked calm enough, but once in it, it was a different matter. There were choppy waves, and swimming was not easy — less easy still with frantic hands clutching and dragging. The Greyfriars junior went under, but he struggled up again. He got a grasp on the man's collar with his left hand, and, had the man been cool, he could have kept him afloat with ease till the yacht's boat arrived. But the man was not cool. He was half-drowned, and out of his senses with panic. He got both arms round the schoolboy's neck and dragged, and again Wharton went under; and this time his mouth filled with water.
Something like a thrill of horror ran through Wharton as he was dragged clown, almost as helpless as if in the clutches of an octopus. He fought madly to rise, and his lungs were almost bursting when his head came up into clear, fresh air, and he gulped in a deep breath.

“Let go !” he shrieked. “I’ve got you. Let go, you’re drowning both of us !”
The man neither heard nor heeded. His white face was close to Wharton’s, the eyes open and conscious, but glazed with panic. There was only one way to loosen the maddened grip that was dragging the junior down to death. And Wharton had no time to think about it; he had barely time to act. He clenched his right hand and struck with all the force he could put into the blow. His fist crashed, hammer-like, into the face so close to him, and there was a gurgle, and the tenacious clutch round his neck relaxed.
Even at that wild moment, Wharton felt a pang of remorse for the method he had to use. But there had been no help for it — it was the only way to save two lives. The man seemed quite dazed now, and Wharton held him securely, and turned on his back to swim. Now that the man was quiet, he held him easily enough, keeping his face above water, though in the choppy sea he would not have lasted long, had no help come.
But help was coming — had almost come. Oars were dashing in the water, lights gleamed over the sea. Mr. Pycroft was standing in the yacht’s boat, with a boathook in his hand. George was bellowing from the bridge of the Sea Nymph with a megaphone.
“There he is — starboard! You’re right on him — there !”
Wharton felt himself grasped and dragged into the boat. The man he was holding rolled over the gunwale with him and collapsed, mumbling faintly. The mate of the Sea Nymph pushed Wharton into a seat.
“All safe, my boy !” said Mr. Pycroft cheerily.
“Right !” gasped Wharton.
The boat bulled back to the yacht. Mr. Pycroft held on, while the side-ladder was run down. The faces of the Greyfriars fellows, tense with anxiety, lined the rail. The mate would have helped Wharton up, but the captain of the Greyfriars Remove did not need help. He clambered lightly up the ladder and dropped, drenched and dripping, on deck. Frank Nugent, whose face was white as chalk, pressed his arm.
“Harry, old chap ——” he breathed.
“Right as rain, old bean !” answered Wharton breathlessly.
“You got him ?”
“Yes, thank goodness. He was nearly gone.”
“Good man !” said Johnny Bull. “Here he comes !”
The shipwrecked man was passed up. Cousin George supported him in his plump arm, and he sagged against the skipper of the Sea Nymph. The juniors eyed him very curiously. He looked a man of about forty, in landsman’s clothes; obviously nothing of a sea-faring nature about him. His nose was red and swollen, and a thin stream of crimson ran from it, mingling with the sea-water that ran down his face.
“All safe now !” said George, in his fat, comfortable voice. “You seem to have had a knock. But all safe now. What ?”
“I’m afraid I did that,” said Harry ruefully. “I had to give him a tap; he was dragging me under —”
“Best thing,” said George cheerfully. “No harm done. Soon mend that, What ? Here, can you speak ? Were you alone in your boat, or is there anybody else to pick up ? What — what ?”
“I was alone !” gasped the rescued man faintly.
‘Right! Steward, take this man below. Look after him. Put him in No. 6 and give him a stiff drink,” said George, “and —”
“Help !” came a roar from the sea.
George jumped.

“Hefty haddocks ! Who’s that ? What’s that ? If the fellow was alone in the boat —”
“Coker !” gasped Potter and Greene together.
“He dived in —” gasped Potter.
“Help !” came Coker’s hefty roar. “You silly idiots can’t you pick a fellow up? Are you going to leave me here all night, you potty fatheads ?”
“Hefty haddocks !” gasped George. “That doesn’t sound as if Mr. Coker is drowning, at any rate.”
“He’s got hold of something,” said Greene. “1ts a bit of the boat, I suppose ——”
“Pick him up. Mr. Pycroft !”
“Ay, ay, sir!”
The yacht’s boat pulled for Coker. That youth was visible to most eyes, clinging to what looked like a floating spar of some sort. The rescued man was taken below by the steward, and all attention was turned on Coker. Horace Coker, having hold of the broken tiller, was in no danger; but he was very wet, and he seemed rather excited. He roared to the boat to buck up.
From the rail of the Sea Nymph the juniors watched and grinned. There had very nearly been a tragedy — but it was a comedy that was following. The boat surged past Coker, and Mr. Pycroft grabbed at him, missed his collar, and got a grip on his hair. The yell that Coker uttered might have been heard across the Goodwin Sands and far away inland on the downs of Kent.
“Yaroooooooh !”
“Got you !” said the mate of the Sea Nymph cheerily.
“Leggo my hair !” shrieked Coker.
“Here you are !” said Mr. Pycroft; and Coker was landed, sprawling, in the boat, feeling as if his bristly shock of hair had been pulled out by the roots.
“Ow ! Wow ! You silly ass !” gurgled Coker. “Ow !” He sat up, in a pool of water, and rubbed his head. “Ow ! Wow ! Oooh !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
Coker shook a fist at the grinning faces lining the rail. The boat bumped on the Sea Nymph, and he clambered up the ladder. He shook the water from him on all sides like a Newfoundland dog.
“Have you picked him up ?” he gasped.
To Coker’s credit, his first thought was of the man in the wrecked boat.
“Yes, we’ve got him,” said George, staring at Coker. “Did you fall overboard, or what ?”
“I went in for him !” roared Coker.
“Hefty haddocks ! He was nowhere near you !”
“I thought I saw him, and — and I got hold of what I dived for: but — but it was a spar, or a tiller, or something. I thought ——”
“Well, it was jolly plucky to jump in, anyhow !” said George, chuckling. “Pluck’s a good thing — what ? Ha, ha !”
“Yes, rather, especially as Coker can’t swim !” said Bob. “Jolly lucky you rescued that tiller, Coker — it rescued you !”
“Can’t swim ?” exclaimed George. “Well, if you can’t swim, sir, it was plucky ! But, for goodness’ sake, don’t do it again while you’re on this ship ! I don’t want to have to tell your people that ——”
“You silly ass !” shrieked Coker. “Im the best swimmer at Greyfriars ! I’ll give that cheeky young sweep the whopping of his life ! I’ll ——”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Come down and change, old man,” said Potter; and he took Coker’s arm and led him

away, Greene taking the other arm.
And Coker, snorting with wrath, realised that he needed a change and went. Potter and Greene grinned as they led him down. They were quite proud of Coker's pluck — there was no doubt that Coker was plucky. But they hardly liked to think of what might have happened to him if he hadn't got hold of that floating bit of wood. Harry Wharton had rescued the drowning man — but there was no doubt that the boat's broken tiller had rescued Horace Coker !

Mr. Griggs From Rye!

"I SAY, you fellows !"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo !"
"Perhaps you'll listen to me another time !" said Billy Bunter severely.
The juniors were down in the saloon. Harry Wharton had towelled himself and changed his clothes, and was feeling very little the worse for his plunge in the sea. He was taking a rest in an armchair, and his comrades were discussing the exciting episode.
The rescued man was in the bunk of No. 6. where Pawlings, the steward, was looking after him. Billy Bunter rolled in, and gave the Famous Five a severe blink through his big spectacles.
"Another time," said Bunter, "perhaps you'll take notice of a chap —— what ? Mightn't have run the boat down if you had !"
"What do you mean, you fat duffer ?" inquired Bob Cherry.
"Oh, really, Cherry, I was the only fellow that saw the boat's light !" said Bunter.
"None of you blind owls saw it !"
"The boat wasn't burning a light, ass !" said Bob. "If it had had a light it wouldn't have been run down !"
"Well, I jolly well saw the light, and told you," said Bunter, "and a few minutes afterwards the boat was run down — so there !"
The juniors exchanged glances. Really, it looked as if the Owl of the Remove had been right, after all. But it was certain that the wrecked boat had been burning no light, as a boat at sea after dark certainly should have done. The shipwrecked man had had only himself to thank for the disaster.
The juniors had been wondering a good deal about the rescued man. He was obviously a landsman, and what he had been doing so far out at sea in an open boat at night was rather a mystery. Possibly he is an Easter holiday-maker from Folkestone or Dover or Deal: but he could scarcely have been blown out to sea on a calm day. What sort of a craft he had been in they had not seen: but if he had been cruising in some small yacht-rigged cutter or yawl, it was strange enough that he burned no lights.
"I fancy he was striking matches, you know, when I come to think of it," said Bunter. ''That's why the light kept on going out."
"That's such a casual way of lighting a boat at sea !" remarked Johnny Bull.
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Well, he hadn't any lights on the boat, of course," said Bunter. "Some tripper from Folkestone, I fancy, out for a sail, and lost his way at sea, and couldn't get back after dark."
"It's possible, I suppose," said Harry Wharton slowly. "I suppose a man might run a sail-boat out. intending to get back before dark, and find that he couldn't get back. Must be rather an ass in that case."
"Well, he couldn't have been cruising without lanterns on board" said Nugent.

“Bunter may he right ! Stranger things have happened !”
“Well, there’s no harm done, except that his craft’s gone west, and he’s bagged a prize nose !” said Bob. “And Coker very nearly rescued his tiller for him !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
Pawlings came out of No. 6, and the juniors all turned to him at once. They were quite concerned about the man in No.6.
“How’s the jolly old invalid, Pawlings ?” asked Bob.
“I think he’s quite all right, sir,” answered the steward. “He doesn’t seem much the worse for his ducking, but his nose is rather painful. He — h’m —— seems a little cross about that.”
Harry Wharton coloured as his Companions grinned.
“Well. I really couldn’t help that.” he said. “Surely the chap understands that I had to stop him from getting both of us drowned. Well, I’m glad he’s all right again. Has he given his name, steward, and told you what he was doing at sea ?”
“Yes, sir. His name’s Grigg.” said Pawlings. “He was staying at Rye on a holiday, and he went out for a sail this morning, and couldn’t get back owing to the wind changing, and after dark he just drifted.”
“Rye !” repeated Wharton. “He must have drifted a thumping long way if he came out of Rye this morning.”
“I told you fellows how it was,” said Bunter complacently. “Just what I was telling you chaps ! I was right, as usual !”
“Wonders will never cease !” remarked Bob Cherry.
“That’s how he had no lights on the boat,” said Pawlings. “He expected to run back into Rye early in the afternoon. When be saw our lights he began striking matches; but he had only a few with him. If he’d had as much as a pocket torch, we mightn’t have run him down.”
“What did I tell you fellows ?” demanded Bunter triumphantly.
“Well, my hat !” said Bob.
Bunter had been right again.
The steward went his way. Harry Wharton rose from the armchair.
“I think I’ll speak to the chap,” he said. “He ought to understand that I couldn’t help thumping him, in the circumstances .And, anyhow, he must know he would have been a goner, if I hadn’t got hold of him. Still. I can tell him I’m sorry I had to do it.”

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove went along to No. 6, tapped at the door, and opened it.
The man, sitting up in the hunk, made a hurried movement.
“Get out, you fool ! Leave me alone !” he snapped.
Harry Wharton stared.
He was taken quite by surprise.
The man in the bunk did not look much the worse for his adventure, except that his nose was red and raw, and that there was a bit of a bruise between his eyes. Wharton had hit hard — harder, perhaps, than he had realised. But there had been no help for that.
The man was not, now that Wharton saw him clearly in the electric light in the state-room, a pleasant-looking fellow. He had a thin, hard face, with narrow eyes that had a shifty and rather foxy look in them. But what surprised Wharton most was his occupation, and his sudden flash of anger. Sitting up in the bunk, he had a leather wallet open on his knees, which he closed hastily, and shoved under the blankets as Wharton looked in. Wharton did not see, or want to see, what was in it. And it was

clear that Mr. Griggs did not want him to. The Greyfriars junior was not in the least interested in that rather bulky-looking wallet. He stood in the doorway, his cheeks crimson, as the man snapped at him. The narrow face was flushed, and the shifty eyes glinted with sudden, passionate anger.
But the next moment, before the junior could speak, the man's expression changed. The anger died out of his face, as if wiped away with a sponge, and he made an effort to smile.
"Excuse me," he said. "I thought it was the steward coming back, and I had told him I wanted to sleep."
It occurred to Wharton that if the man wanted to sleep, it was odd that he should have been sitting up with the light full on, examining the contents of his wallet. Still, that was no business of his. And he could make allowances for a man's jumpy nerves after he had had a narrow escape from drowning.
"I didn't mean to disturb you —"
"Well, what do you want? "
"You don't know me again ?" asked Harry, with a smile. Apparently the man was not aware that it was Wharton who had pulled him out of the sea. That, of course, was natural enough. He could hardly have noticed much at the time, and he had been taken below as soon as he was brought on to the Sea Nymph.
But what was not natural, and what was quite surprising, was the sudden suspicion that flashed into the narrow face. The man leaned forward in the bunk, staring at Wharton with glinting, searching eyes.
"What do you mean ?" he snapped. "I don't know you ! I've never seen you before. Do you mean that you have met me before, or what ?"
"Of course not," said Harry, in utter wonder. "You're a stranger to me, Mr. Griggs, as far as I know."
He could see that the man was relieved.
"Well, what do you mean, then ?" rasped the man in the bunk. "How should I know you again, as you put it, if I've never seen sou before?"
Harry Wharton laughed.
"It was I who jumped in for you," he explained.
"Oh. You !" exclaimed the man in the bunk. "Oh, is that what you meant ?"
"Yes, I'm sorry I had to punch you," said Harry. "That's what I came here to say, Mr. Griggs. I wouldn't have done it if I could possibly have helped it, but you were dragging me under, and we should both have been drowned. But I'm awfully sorry, all the same."
The man passed his hand over his damaged countenance.
"If you couldn't help it, it can't be helped !" he grunted. "It seems to me a queer way of helping a drowning man — hitting him in the face. I suppose you lost your head."
"I didn't lose my head," said Wharton curtly. "If I had, you wouldn't be sitting in that bunk this minute, Mr. Griggs. It was you that lost your head, and I had to get your hands loose from my neck, or you'd have drowned us both. I'm sorry I had to do it."
Grunt from the man in the bunk.
"That's all I came to say," added Wharton dryly. "I won't disturb you any further, Mr. Griggs."
"Stay a moment !"
Wharton turned back. The man was evidently trying to speak agreeably, though it was equally plain that he was feeling anything but agreeable.
"I — I thank you for what you did. It is very probable that you may have saved my life."

It was not merely probable; it was a certainty. But Harry Wharton did not say so. If the man wanted to minimise the service he had received from the Greyfriars junior, he was welcome to do so, so far as Wharton was concerned. The captain of the Remove had no desire whatever to lay claim to his gratitude.

"I wish you had found some other method. My nose is very painful," said Mr. Griggs, with a sort of twisted grin. "Very painful, indeed. I am a very poor swimmer. I thought I was gone when this yacht ran me down. I tried to show my position by burning matches, but the wind blew them out almost as fast as 1 struck them, and I had only a few. Then all of a sudden the ship seemed on top of me."

He shuddered with the recollection, and Wharton looked, as he felt, sympathetic. He could imagine the man's feelings at that fearful moment, and he quite forgave him for his jumpy nerves and his unpolished manners. But Mr. Griggs went on again at once:

"Has anything been picked up from the boat ?"

"Nothing, I think," answered Harry. "I hope you had nothing of value on board, Mr. Griggs ?"

"Oh, no, not at all; only a few clothes and some food ?" The shifty eyes watched Wharton's face. "I fancied that your captain might have picked up the boat or what was left of it."

"It was smashed to bits," said Harry. "It must have gone down like a stone, except for a few broken fragments. I'm sure Captain Cook would have saved it for you if it had been possible."

"It matters nothing — nothing whatever —— but you are sure of what you say ?"

"Quite sure !"

It was odd enough, but Wharton had an impression that the man in the bunk was glad that the boat had not been saved. Certainly he could hardly have expected it to be preserved, after crunching under the prow of the Sea Nymph. It was clear, at least, that he wanted to he sure about it.

"Anything that was in the boat has been lost," said Harry. "You were rather lucky to save your wallet. Mr. Griggs, in the circumstances."

"My wallet !" The shifty eyes glinted at him with sharp suspicion. The leather wallet was still out of sight under the bedclothes. "Oh, yes ! Luckily. it was in my pocket, and it contains some business papers I should have been sorry to lose."

Wharton smiled faintly. He had had only a glimpse of the leather wallet before it disappeared under the blankets: but he had seen that it was too bulky to go into a pocket. And the man struggling in the sea had had nothing in his hands. Obviously that wallet must have been fastened to him, either on a belt, or hung round his neck. Why Mr. Griggs should tell lies about so trivial a matter Wharton did not understand in the least — any more than he could understand why a holiday-maker running out to sea for a pleasure-cruise, should take business papers with him. Wharton was no fool, and he could not help being aware that there was something rather secretive and furtive about this Mr. Griggs. He had been, naturally, prepared to like the man whose life he had saved, but he was conscious instead of a feeling very like repugnance.

"Good-night !" barked Mr. Griggs suddenly.

"Good-night, sir !" answered Wharton politely.

He stepped out and shut the door, not sorry to go.

"How's the jolly old bean ?" asked Bob, when the captain of the Remove rejoined his chums.

"Looks all right." answered Harry. "Can't say I like him. He seems rather sore about that dot I had to give him."

"Punching a nose is liable to make it sore." said Bob, with a grin.

“Fathead — I mean sore in his temper ! Can’t be helped. It won’t keep me awake tonight,” added Wharton, with a shrug of his shoulders.
“Well, you were rather a clumsy ass, you know,” remarked Billy Bunter. “In your place, old chap, I should have ——”
“Gone down like a stone ?” asked Bob Cherry.
“No !” roared Bunter. “I should have managed without punching his nose. Pity I didn’t take the matter in hand. If anything of the kind happens again, Wharton, don’t you butt in.”
“What ?”
“Don’t butt in ! Leave it to me — see ?”
“You howling ass ——”
“All very well to call a fellow names,” sniffed Bunter. “But if you can’t manage without punching a fellow’s nose —”
“Well, I’ve told Mr. Griggs I’m sorry for punching his nose,” said Harry. “But I’m not sorry for punching yours, Bunter.”
“Eh ? You haven’t punched my nose —”
“No — but I’m just going to ——”
“Eh ? Here, I say — Yaroooooh !” roared Bunter, as the captain of the Remove suited the action to the word. “Why, you beast ! Whoooop !”
“Ha, ha, ha !” yelled the juniors.
“Wow !” roared Bunter,
And nothing more was heard from Billy Bunter on the subject of punching noses.

Coker is Not Missed !

BRIGHT April sunshine streamed down on the sea, on the gliding Sea Nymph, and on the white cliffs that lined the horizon to the west.
Harry Wharton & Co. found interest in a distant glimpse of Ramsgate in the sunny morning, and the yawls and ketches with brown sails that dotted the sea. Coker & Co. of the Fifth were at a little distance — Coker still being very particular to make it clear to all the ship’s company that between the Fifth Form and the Remove there was a great gulf fixed.
In a deck-chair sat Mr. Griggs, from Rye —— his red and raw “boko” looking redder and rawer in the bright sunshine of spring. Mr. Griggs had breakfasted in No. 6, but he had come upon deck at last, and all the Greyfriars party had made it a point to speak to him, and ask him politely how he was, and to express courteous sympathy. But Mr. Griggs seemed to have no great use for courteous sympathy.
His answers were brief, and he made it fairly clear that he preferred his own company to anybody else’s. So the Greyfriars fellows were not long in leaving him to himself. They did not enjoy the society of a man with a sore nose and a sore temper.
Billy Bunter informed the other fellows that the man was a “beast” and for once the other fellows were inclined to agree with Bunter. It was clear, at least, that Mr. Griggs was unsociable and had a snappish temper, and wanted to be left alone.
Pawlings, the steward, was rather attentive to him — from which it might have been guessed that Mr. Griggs had tipped Pawlings liberally. When the juniors happened to glance at him, they could see that, restful as he looked in the deckchair, his keen, deep-set, shifty eyes were never at rest — and he gave them the impression of a man who was as watchful as a cat.
Harry Wharton smiled a little when he noticed a bulge under Mr. Griggs’ loose lounge jacket — evidently made by that bulky wallet. Apparently Mr. Griggs did not

choose to leave his “business papers” in his state-room while he was on deck. The wallet appeared to be carried on a strap over Mr. Griggs’ shoulder, under his coat, but it was too bulky to be quite hidden from sight.
Cousin George had an eye on the gentleman from Rye. Cousin George, in his fat, hearty way, had made the stranger welcome on board the Sea Nymph. He was quite hospitable to the man who had been picked out of the sea; but at the same time George had an eye to business. He was not running the Sea Nymph for his health. Through Billy Bunter’s kind offices, he had nine passengers on that trip; but there was room for more.
As Mr. Griggs’ holiday at Rye had been so disastrously interrupted, George was considering whether Mr. Griggs might not be prepared to continue that holiday as a passenger on the Easter cruise. He did not look a very agreeable man; but all was grist that came to George’s mill. George was a business man first, and a yachtsman second.
“Find yourself comfortable, sir, what, what ?” asked George, in his deep, fat, throaty voice.
“Quite, thanks !” said Mr. Griggs. “Much obliged ! I’ve been going to speak to you, Captain Cook. I gather from the steward that this is a pleasure cruise — a holiday party for Easter. You are touching at foreign ports later ?”
“That’s so, sir !” said George. “After a visit to Margate — merry Margate, sir — brightest and jolliest place on the East Coast — we spread our wings like the swallows, sir — metaphorically, of course, the Sea Nymph being a yacht —for the sunny South ——”
“Oh, quite !” barked Mr. Griggs. who seemed to have no use for George’s poetical flights. “Quite ! What are the terms ?”
George beamed. The newcomer on the Sea Nymph was taking the words out of his mouth.
‘”Twenty-one guineas, sir, for the Easter cruise,” he answered. “Probably you will regard that as reasonable. Other firms ——”
“Quite !” said Mr. Griggs. “If agreeable to you, sir, I should be very glad to finish my holiday on board this excellent yacht.”
“Delighted, sir !” said George. “The fact is, I was about to suggest it ! I think, honestly, that you couldn’t do better. The food ——”
“Oh, quite !”
“The food, sir, is ample; I may say generous.” said George. “I keep a good table — a very good table ! Feed ’em, and they come again, sir — that’s my motto. I think, sir, you’ll enjoy the cruise. But if you’d rather go back to Rye ———” added George considerately.
“Not at all !”
“I would land you at Margate, where you could get a train, with pleasure, sir, and,” added George with dignity, “I need hardly say that, in that case, there would be no charge — no charge whatever — for the period you have spent on board the Sea Nymph.”
“I shall stay on the yacht,” said Mr. Griggs, who seemed to be a man of few words.
“If I may make a suggestion, I —”
“Suggestions from passengers, sir, are welcomed — more than welcomed,” said George.
“If agreeable to others, it would be more agreeable to me to cut out Margate, and lose no time getting South,” said Mr. Griggs. “Fine as the weather is, there is a touch of east in the wind. Margate, after all, is a place that can be visited any time.”
“Perfectly true, sir,” said George. “Margate was included in the schedule chiefly

because my passengers are schoolboys. Schoolboys, sir, enjoy themselves thoroughly at Merry Margate. But we stay there only one day —"
"If you could meet my wishes, Captain Cook, I should have no objection to paying an extra fee ——"
George waved a plump hand.
"No, sir ! Not at all ! The charge is inclusive — no extras on any account whatever. That is my invariable rule. Let 'em know what they've got to pay, and they come again. That's my motto. But we aim, sir, to meet the wishes of every party concerned, and I will put it to the other passengers. If they agree, we cut out Margate."
As this conversation was carried on in the hearing of the Famous Five, they could not, of course, help hearing it. So when George turned to them they knew what was coming. They exchanged a glance, and Johnny Bull gave a grunt. They wanted to run ashore on the sands at Margate, and they could not help thinking it a cheek on the part of Mr. Griggs to try to alter the arrangements like this. Still, they were ready to yield the point. Wharton collected the glances, as it were, of his comrades, and gave George a nod.
"All serene," he said. "Don't mind us."
"There's an Easter show at the Winter Gardens I wanted to see," mumbled Wibley.
"But, never mind — all right !"
"That's all very well," said Billy Bunter. "But I know a place in Margate where you can get a jolly good feed ——"
"Chuck it, Billy !" said George. "You don't count !"
"Oh, really, George ——"
Unheeding the indignant Owl, George crossed over to Coker & Co. The three Fifth Formers across the deck had heard also and Potter and Greene were prepared to give a polite assent. Not so Coker ! Wrath was gathering in the rugged brow of Coker.
Coker of the Fifth was not in the best of tempers — partly on account of the merriment that had been caused by his heroic rescue of the tiller the night before. And Coker had made his plans for the shore, and Coker, like the juniors, thought it a cheek of Mr. Griggs to butt in — only more so.
"if you young gentlemen are agreeable —" began George.
"I'm not !" rapped Coker.
"Is Coker ever agreeable, you fellows ?" murmured Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle among the juniors.
Coker of the Fifth gave them a glare, and then glared at George.
"Look here. Mr. Cook! I've just been fixing it up with my friends to go off the yacht at Broadstairs, if you'll send us in the boat. We're going to walk along to Margate. A man wants to stretch his legs a bit. But, Broadstairs or no Broadstairs, we're going to Margate."
"Look here, Coker —" murmured Potter, who possibly was not looking forward with enjoyment to a long walk with Coker.
"Don't be an ass, Potter."
"But, I say —" murmured Greene.
"Don't be a fathead, Greene."
Thus adjured, Potter and Greene gave it up. Coker was the only fellow to hold out against the proposed alteration in the schedule. But Coker was a host in himself at holding out. Coker was firm — as firm as a rock, according to his view — as obstinate as a mule, according to his friends.
"I call it cheek." went on Coker. "I don't want to be uncivil to a man I don't know — and don't want to know — but I call it cheek ! If you ask me, that's what I call it —

cheek !"
"Sir !" said George, with dignity. "Leave it at that ! No alteration will be made in the schedule without the consent of all concerned. You do not consent —"
"I jolly well don't !" said Coker. with emphasis.
"That settles the matter." said George — and he went back to Mr. Griggs.
That gentleman flashed a glance of his shifty eyes at Coker — and the juniors who were looking at him, were rather startled by the bitter savage anger in that swift glance. There was no doubt that Mr. Griggs was intensely irritated by Coker's obstinacy. But there was nothing more for Mr. Griggs to say — Coker was standing up for his rights as a paying passenger for the cruise and that was that !
"So jolly old Coker's going to land at Broadstairs," remarked Bob Cherry, as the Sea Nymph drew in towards the bright and attractive seaside resort. "We shall miss him when he goes."
"The missfulness will be terrific !" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.
"Probably we shan't see him again till next term at Greyfriars. If he starts to walk to Margate, ten to one he will end up at Canterbury or Tunbridge Wells."
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Shut up, Cherry !" rapped out Coker. "That will do ! Not so much of your Lower Fourth cheek, if you don't want your ear pulled."
"If you're cross, Coker, I shan't miss you when you go !" said Bob. "And you'd like me to miss you, wouldn't you ?"
"Eh ! I don't care a rap whether you miss me or not, you young idiot !"
"You don't want me to miss you ?" asked Bob, his hand groping for an orange in his pocket.
"No you young ass !"
"Right !" said Bob. "Then I won't ! You fellows are all witnesses to what Coker says — he doesn't want me to miss him !"
The juniors, aware of the orange in Bob's hand in his pocket, chuckled. Coker, unaware of it, snorted contemptuously. The Sea Nymph stopped well off shore, and the boat was lowered for Coker & Co. Crowds of people were visible on the shining beach — it was a glorious spring day. Mr. Griggs had left his deckchair and gone below, but nobody specially noticed the fact. Certainly it never occurred to any fellow on board that Mr. Griggs could have any reason for desiring to avoid observation from the beach.
Coker and Potter and Greene went down into the boat. The juniors lined the rail as the seamen fended off with the oars.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Coker !" roared Bob, his hand coming out of his pocket with the orange in it.
Coker gave him a glare.
"Sure you don't want me to miss you ?" roared Bob. "Shut up, you young ass !" hooted Coker.
"Then I won't !" said Bob cheerily — and he took aim with the orange and didn't miss Coker.
The orange squashed on Horace Coker's nose, and there was a startled yell from Coker as he went over backwards, and his long legs flew skyward.
"Yarooh !"
"Ha. ha, ha !" yelled the juniors.
"He, he, he !" cackled Billy Bunter.
Coker scrambled up. His rugged face was crimson with wrath.
''Hold on !" he roared. ''Stop the boat! I —— I'll — I'll —"

“Ha, ha, ha !”
But the grinning seamen had pushed off and there was a widening space of water between the Sea Nymph and Coker. Coker stood up and brandished his fist at the grinning faces along the rail. He was still brandishing his fist when the boat pulled into the Broadstairs beach.

“Jolly !” declared Bob Cherry.
“The jollifulness is terrific!
“Good old Margate !” said Johnny Bull.
“I say, you fellows ——”
“Hallo, hallo, hallo ! Here’s Bunter ! Roll on, thou fat and flabby Bunter, roll !”
“I say, you fellows, I know where you can get a jolly good feed —”
“Bow-wow !”
“Beast !”
Bob Cherry was in exuberant spirits, and all the Greyfriars fellows looked merry and bright as they walked down Margate pier. There were plenty of people in Margate. The Easter crowd in that happy and popular resort was as thick as the summer crowd anywhere else.
Billy Bunter looked as merry and bright as the rest. Two or three girls, coming along the pier, glanced at him and smiled.
Fat complacency dwelt in the podgy countenance of William George Bunter. He was aware that he was dressed very nicely — Nugent’s collars fitted him, Johnny Bull’s necktie was quite new, Wharton’s straw hat was very handsome, Hurree Singh’s tan shoes very neat. Bob’s waistcoat did not reveal that it was split up the back to get it on Bunter; and Wharton’s flannel bags, though rather tight on Bunter, were undoubtedly very nice bags.
Bunter was in fact, dressed to kill, with contributions from the wardrobes of nearly every other fellow in the party; and it was fully to be expected that girls would glance at him and smile. He did not even suspect that it was his circumference that did it !
“I say you fellows, did you notice that !” smirked Bunter.
“Eh ? Which ?” asked Bob.
“Lots of girls smiling at me,” said Bunter complacently.
“Wondering how you got out of the Zoo, perhaps !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Good-looking fellows get a lot of this sort of jealousy,” remarked Bunter. “A fellow gets used to it ! I can’t see that it’s my fault that I’m good-looking !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Yah !” Bunter blinked rather severely at the Co. “Look here, you fellows, you might have dressed a bit more carefully before coming ashore with me. Your bags are awfully crumpled, Wharton.”
“I was going to change, but I couldn’t find —”
“Oh !” Bunter changed the subject hastily. “I say, you fellows, what about going on the donkeys ? I’ll show you how to ride. Nothing like learning things when you’ve got a chance, what ? I’ll pay for the donkeys.”
“Out of the money you’ve left on board ?” asked Johnny Bull.
“I mean, I’ll owe it to you — same thing.”
“The samefulness is not terrific !” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “But let the esteemed and ridiculous Bunter show us how to ride, my absurd chums. It will be worth the watchfulness.”
And the chums of the Remove cheerfully bore down on the donkey merchants.

“Donkey, sir ? Donkey, gents ?”
A stout gentleman, with a red face and a cheery grin, hailed the chums of Greyfriars.
“Right-ho !” said Bunter. “Watch me, you fellows !”
“Oh, my eye !” said the red-faced man, apparently a little dismayed by Bunter’s width. “You’ll be a bit ’eavy for him, sir ! But orlright — chance it ! ’Ere, Neddy, you stand steady for the gentleman.”
Neddy did not seem inclined to start at all. He looked round at Bunter with a very intelligent eye, and seemed shy. Neddy was a fair-sized donkey; but he might have thought that what Bunter really needed was an elephant. But his master encouraged him, and held him for Bunter to mount.
Harry Wharton & Co. lined up to watch Bunter mount — and so did quite a good many other people. The fact was that Bunter’s well-filled waistcoat was in the way; and it was not obvious how he was going to overcome that difficulty. Twice, thrice, Bunter heaved himself at the donkey’s back, but each time the centripetal attraction of the globe pulled him back.
Neddy planted his hoofs firmly and stood like a rock; but the fat Owl failed to scale the rock. He blinked round at the smiling juniors.
“You might give a fellow a bunk !” he snapped breathlessly.
“The bunkfulness is the proper caper !” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and he stepped forward to give Bunter a bunk.
Bob Cherry lent his aid — and it was no one-man’s job !
They grasped Bunter and heaved — and Bunter heaved —— and up he went.
Unluckily, the heave took him right over, and to his surprise and annoyance he came down on the other side. There was a bump on the sand that almost shook the Isle of Thanet — and a roar from Bunter: “Yaroooooh !”
“Ha, ha, ha !” came a yell.
“Whooop ! Beast ! Whoop ! Wow !”
“Bravo, Bunter !”
“Do that again !”
Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent picked up the fat Owl. He leaned on them gasping.
More and more people gathered round. Several other shows along the front began to lose their patrons. Bunter was getting the public !
“Go it !” came encouraging voices. “Try again ! Mind he don’t break when you sit on him !”
“I say, you fellows, lend me a hand !” gasped Bunter.
Four of the juniors helped Bunter up this time. The combined efforts did it. Bunter was seated fair and square in the donkeys saddle. Neddy did not break under his weight — he was quite a powerful donkey. But he seemed disinclined to start.
“Now, come up, Neddy !” said the red-faced man, pulling at him. “Sooner you start, the sooner it’s over ! Now then ! Kim up !”
“Why doesn’t he go ?” yapped Bunter.
“P’r’aps he can’t move, sir !” came a suggestion from the interested crowd.
“Mind he don’t break !”
“Start him, you fellows !”
“Kim up, Neddy ! Kim up !” hooted the red-faced man. “Git a move on !” He pulled vigorously at the donkey. “Will you kim up ?”
“Shall we push ?” asked Bob.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
Neddy either couldn’t or wouldn’t move. But as his master yanked at him he suddenly threw up his hind heels and seemed to be trying to nose-dive into the sand.

Bunter flopped over his neck at once. Bunter, according to his own account, was wont to “witch the world with noble horsemanship” on the hunters at Bunter Court. But donkeymanship seemed quite a different proposition. Flung on Neddy’s rough and hairy neck, Bunter clutched at that neck with both arms, and miraculously did not slide over Neddy’s long ears to the earth. He hung on wildly.
“Stick to him, Bunter !” yelled Bob. -
“The stickfulness is terrific !”
“Oh, my eye !” gasped the red-faced man.
Neddy, perhaps startled and worried by Bunter’s jockey-like feat on his neck, suddenly started. He fairly bolted with Bunter bumping up and down, swinging from side to side, and clinging to his hairy neck like a limpet to a rock, and yelling wildly for help.
“I say, you fellows ! Yarooh ! Stoppim ! Oh, lor’! Stoppim, I say ! Oh, crikey ! Somebody hold this donkey ! Help !”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Ride him, cowboy !” yelled Bob Cherry. “Attaboy !”
“Go it, Bunter ! Stick to him !”
“Bravo !”
“Attaboy, Bunter ! Attaboy !” roared Bob.
“Yarooh ! Stoppim ! I say, you fellows — I say — Whoooop ! Help ! fire ! Murder ! help !” yelled Bunter.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
The red-faced man rushed in pursuit. Harry Wharton & Co. rushed in pursuit. A multitude of trippers crowded in pursuit.
Neddy, exasperated by the heavy object clinging to his neck, was putting on unaccustomed speed. Neddy seemed to be in as frantic a state as Bunter. Both, certainly, were highly excited.
Leaving the beaten track, Neddy fled down the sands, as if he hoped, like Mazeppa’s wild steed, to shake off his burden by sheer speed. The yelling mob behind him accelerated Neddy.
“Oh, my hat !” gasped Bob Cherry. “Bunter’s going to get a bath.”
“Oh, crumbs ! Get hold of that moke !” gurgled Johnny Bull. “After him.’’
But it was not so easy to get hold of Neddy ! Neddy, in a perfectly frantic state, was heading for the water — perhaps with some idea in his intelligent mind that thus he would get rid of his terrifying burden. Sunbathers on the water’s edge squirmed out of Neddy’s way with loud and startled ejaculations — bathers in the lapping water stared at him blankly. Down the shelving, glistening sands came Neddy at a wild rush, and there was a fearful yell from Bunter as the water splashed round him.
Splash ! Splash !
“Yarooh ! Help ! Whoop !” roared Bunter, as he let go and rolled. The water was shallow, the tide was coming in, but it was still low; and Bunter landed in only a foot or so of it. But he landed on his back and disappeared — except for the widest part of his circumference, which showed above the water.
Neddy, shaking himself and scattering water, trotted up the beach apparently satisfied. The red-faced man, redder than ever with chortling, recaptured Neddy, and led him away. Harry Wharton & Co. raced down to the water. Half a dozen good-natured bathers — everybody is good natured at Merry Margate — plunged at Bunter and dragged him up and hoisted him ashore. It was a drenched and dripping Owl that was handed, gurgling, over to his friends. They were gurgling, too, with irrepressible

merriment. And from bathers and beach-lizards alike came a yell:
"Ha, ha, ha !"

Wet!

"HA, ha, ha!"
"Good old Bunter ———"
"Do it again, old chap ! You've brought clown the house, Bunter !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"I say, you fellows —— Grooogh ! Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at — Wow ! I'm wet !"
"That's through bathing with your clothes on !" explained Bob Cherry. "The sea's always wet at Margate !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Beast ! This isn't funny !" roared Bunter.
"Isn't it? " chuckled Nugent. "Most of Margate seems to think that it is, old fat man ! You're the goods to-day — the big attraction ! If the Entertainment Committee were here they'd try to book you for the summer !"
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Oh, cackle !" hooted Bunter. "Cackle ! Your bags are ruined, anyhow, Wharton."
"Eh? I haven't been in the water." said Harry, staring.
"I jolly well have !"
"Why, you fat scoundrel, that's why I couldn't find my best bags ——"
"Ha, ha, ha "!
"And the sea-water won't improve your waistcoat, Bob Cherry ——"
"My waistcoat !" ejaculated Bob.
"And Bull's necktie is soaked —"
"Mum-mum-my necktie !"
"And so are Inky's shoes —"
"My esteemed shoes !" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur.
"And your straw hat's floated away, Wharton —"
"My hat !" yelled Wharton.

Splash! Yarooh! Help! Whoop! roared Bunter

“And Wibley’s jacket will shrink now ——”
“My — my — my jig-jig-jacket !”“ stuttered William Wibley.
“And serve you all jolly well right !” howled Bunter. “I’m glad ! Yah !”
“Chuck him back into the water !” roared Johnny Bull.
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Beast ! I say, you fellows, we shall have to get back to the yacht now,” hooted Bunter, “I can’t go about like this ! Come on, you rotters !”
Billy Bunter squelched away up the beach — his borrowed plumes dripping water as he went. Harry Wharton & Co. were not quite as mirthful now — since they had learned that Bunter’s drenched garments belonged to themselves. The fat Owl, apparently, had nothing of his own on, except his fat skin.
Leaving a wet trail behind him, the fat junior tramped up to the promenade. He turned in the direction of the jetty, off which the Sea Nymph was moored.
“Buck up, you fellows !” he snapped. “I’ve got to get changed.”
“Oh, you’ll soon dry up !” said Bob Cherry cheerfully. “Not Bunter !” chuckled Nugent. “Does he ever dry up ?”
“Do you think I’m going about with my clothes all wet ?” roared Bunter.
“But you won’t be,” said Bob. “You’ll be going about with our clothes all wet ! I suppose we can have our clothes wet if we like ? We never asked you to get inside them.”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“Beast !” roared Bunter. “I’m going back to change at once ! I’m not going to catch pneumonia to please you ! I can feel it coming on in my legs now !”
“Oh, crikey !”
“And I’ve got a touch of plumbago already —”
“Ha, ha. Ha !”
“Cackle !” hooted Bunter. “Oh, cackle ! You’d like to see me perishing with pneumonia in both legs, I know !”
The idea of Bunter getting pneumonia in his legs made the juniors shriek. The fat junior blinked at them through his spectacles with a devastating blink. As a matter of fact, Bunter might have dried in the sun — it was a glorious April day, almost as warm as summer. Still, there was no doubt that Bunter felt rather uncomfortable; and when Bunter was uncomfortable, that, of course, was the only thing that mattered within the extensive limits of the universe.
“Are you coming ?” he hooted. “Get a move on, you lazy slackers ! Never saw such a gang of moochers ! Look here, I’m going back to the yacht to change, see ?”
“The changefulness is the proper caper,” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, “and the gofulness is also a good idea ! Get on with it, my esteemed and absurd fat Bunter.”
“I say, you fellows, I suppose you’re coming back with me ?” hooted Bunter.
“No need.” answered Wharton. “I suppose you don’t want us to change you — even if you are going to change into some more of our clobber.”
“You can wait on the jetty while I change, if you like ! I shan’t keep you more than an hour or so !”
“Anybody want to stand on the jetty for an hour. when we’ve only got one day in Margate ?” inquired Bob Cherry. “Don’t all speak at once.”
“Ha, ha, ha !”
“I say, you fellows, if you wander away by yourselves, I shall miss you,” exclaimed Bunter. “I don’t want to do that ! I’m only thinking of you fellows, of course —— not because I want you to stand the exes, or anything of that sort.”
“That’s all right,” said Johnny Bull. “When you’ve changed, you can bring ashore all

that money you've left on board."
"Ha, ha, ha !"
"Beast !"
Billy Bunter rolled on —— but the chums of the Remove did not follow. Really, as the stay in Margate was so short, they did not want to spend the time walking to and fro, and waiting for Bunter to change. That bright and entertaining spot, Dreamland, was open for Easter, and the juniors wended their way thitherward — leaving the Owl of the Remove to his own devices. And it is much to be feared that, in the delights of scenic railways and roundabouts and other enjoyable things, they forgot the fat existence of William George Bunter.
When they came out of Dreamland, however, they looked round for him. He was, as Bob Cherry remarked, wide enough to be seen, but he was not on the horizon; and they walked through the town and came out on the cliffs in the direction of the Foreland. A visit to the North Foreland, and a climb up the lighthouse, was the next item on the programme; and that, certainly, would not have appealed to Bunter. Bunter would have wanted a taxi to the Foreland, and a lift up the lighthouse. But a walk along the coast was exactly what the juniors wanted, arid they started on it cheerfully.
"What about going along the sands?" asked Johnny Bull. "You can get all the way to Broadstairs on the beach."
"I don't think !" answered Bob Cherry.
"I've looked it out," said Johnny warmly. "I tell you if we go along the beach we can get to Broadstairs, or come up at Kingsgate to go to the lighthouse."
"Bet you we couldn't !" answered Bob, shaking his head.
"I tell you we could !" hooted Johnny.
"And I tell you we couldn't, old bean !" answered Bob. "If we go along the beach now, we shan't get either to Kingsgate or Broadstairs, but to kingdom-come. You see, the tide's coming in !"
"Oh," said Johnny. "I forgot the tide !"
"Lucky you've got your Uncle Robert with you to remember it, old bean ! The tide washes right up to the cliffs most of the way, and I noticed it was coming in when Bunter took his bathe. Still," added Bob thoughtfully, "we might swim it ! It's only a few miles. But we should get wet."
"Fathead ! Let's go along the cliff !" said Johnny.
And a cheery bunch of juniors walked along the cliffs, leaving Merry Margate behind, and soon finding themselves in open country, with green fields stretching away on their right towards Kingsgate and St. Peter's. There were plenty of other walkers on the broad asphalt promenade that stretched all the way from Margate to Kingsgate, and the juniors, remembering that Coker & Co. were walking from Broadstairs, kept an eye open for the burly form and rugged features of the great Horace.

"Blessed if I half like it !" muttered Potter.
Grunt, from Coker.
"Same here !" confessed Greene, glancing along the beach.
Another grunt from Coker, more emphatic.
"Well, let's hurry a bit, anyhow !" said Potter with an uneasy glance at the glimmering waters rolling in towards the cliffs.
Coker, who was proceeding at an extremely leisurely pace, slowed down a little.
Coker was not the man to take advice.
Coker was one of those fellows who know ! Advice to a fellow who knows is

superfluous. Horace Coker had no use for it.
“Lots of time,” said Coker calmly. “I believe it’s well under two miles from Kingsgate to Margate by the beach. We’ve done about half a mile.”
“But the tide —”
“Don’t he an ass, Potter. That is, if you can help it ! Am I the sort of fellow to be caught in the tide ?” snapped Coker contemptuously.
Potter looked at him. Coker was, in Potter’s opinion, just that sort of fellow ! He was, in Potter’s opinion, the fellow to do anything of a really idiotic nature. But it was useless to tell Coker so !
“Let’s buck up a bit,” said Greene nervously. “The tide’s jolly well coming in, anyhow !”
“Take it easy,” said Coker. “Lots of time ! if you get your poor little feet wet it won’t kill you — what ?”
And Coker lounged on regardless. Coker knew all about it ! Potter and Greene were not so sure. Coker had been on this coast before. He had walked all the way along the beach. What a fellow had done once, a fellow could do again.
The Fifth Formers had had quite a good time, so far. Coker had stood his friends a magnificent feed at quite a nice place in Broadstairs.
Potter and Greene had realised that Coker, with all his drawbacks, had his uses. They started to walk to Margate with Coker in quite a cheery mood. But they would have preferred to take the upper way, along the top of the cliffs. Unluckily they said so — which was quite enough to make Coker decide on the beach.
So the beach it was, and they tramped through soft sand and seaweed, with the high line of chalk cliffs on their left, and the sea rolling on their right. It was quite pleasant, though the soft sand made walking a little laborious. Still, it was quite a nice walk — only Potter and Greene had rather a worried eye on the sea.
The tide was coming in, and it seemed to them to be coming in faster and faster; and every time they passed one of the rugged gullies that led up through the cliffs to the promenade above, Potter and Greene slowed down, and regarded it with a longing eye.
Every now and then they exchanged a glance behind Coker’s broad back, indicative of their desire to take Coker by the scruff of the neck and dip his head in the sea. But that, however, satisfactory or otherwise, would not have hastened their arrival at Margate, so they resisted the temptation.
“Nobody on the beach here,” said Potter, breaking a troubled silence.
“Did you want a Margate mob ?” asked Coker.
“I mean there must have been lots of people on the beach on a fine day like this — must have gone because the tide’s coming in.”
“Might have seen you coming !” suggested Coker. “And your features did it, old man !” Horace Coker could be humorous. This was a sample of his badinage.
“Look here, Coker, come on !” yapped Potter. He did not want light and airy badinage. He wanted to get out, of the way of the incoming tide. “You’re jolly well not going to get us all drowned —see ?”
“Don’t be an ass, Potter !”
“For goodness’ sake, hurry up. and don’t play the goat, Coker !” urged Greene,
“Don’t be a dummy, Greene !”
Potter and Greene breathed very hard.
“Rather heavy going in this sand,” said Coker calmly. “Take it easy ! Look here, sit down a bit on this rock. You fellows can do with a rest. You’re tired, and it’s making you nervy.”

The fact was that it was very heavy "going" in the soft and clinging sand, and Coker was a little tired. He was not going to admit that, of course, even to himself. He was going to halt for the sake of Potter and Greene.
Those two anxious youths almost exploded, as Coker coolly sat down on the edge of a big chalk rock that jutted up from the beach. Coker had a newspaper under his arm, which he had bought at Broadstairs.
Calmly he opened it, and glanced over the news. Potter and Greene eyed him almost wolfishly. Very much indeed they wanted to get on. Coker may have fancied that he was inspiring them with courage by his attitude of cool and detached indifference. In point of fact, he was inspiring them with deadly fury. Coker, regardless, communicated the news.
"They're going it a bit in the East !" said Coker.
Potter and Greene, with the North Sea lapping at their feet, lacked interest in the Far Eastern situation.
"Hallo, here's something rather local," went on Coker. "Bank held up at Folkestone yesterday morning —"
"Blow Folkestone !" said Potter and Greene together.
"Man with a gun," said Coker. "I say, this is quite interesting. We might have been in Folkestone yesterday, you know, if — if we hadn't been somewhere else. Man held up a bank —"
"Look here —"
"I'll read it out to you. if you like," said Coker, with the masterly calmness of one of those strong, silent characters. "They haven't got the man —"
"Bother the man !"
"He seems to have bothered them !" grinned Coker. "Got clean away, loot and all. Chased up and down, and never caught ! Pity I wasn't there! Listen to this —"
"Look here —" roared Greene.
"I said listen ! It seems certain now that the bank raider, after eluding pursuit, escaped in a sailing-boat from the harbour," Coker read out calmly.
"You silly idiot !" shrieked Greene. "Look at the tide !"
"I can't look at the tide when I'm looking at a newspaper, Greene ! Don't be an ass ! Listen to this ! 'A small cutter is missing from its moorings, and its owner says —'
"Whoooooooop !"
Coker unintentionally wound up like that, as Potter and Greene, exasperated beyond endurance, grabbed him simultaneously, and dragged him headlong off his seat on the rock.
Coker rolled in the sand, roaring.
"Now come on !" roared Potter. "You silly ass ! You frabjous idiot ! You bumbling dummy ! Get a move on — see ? Come on, Greene !"
Potter and Greene restarted after the interval. They went at a run — partly to escape from the tide, partly to escape from Horace Coker. Coker was scrambling up with red-hot rage in his rugged face.
"By gum !" gasped Coker. "I — I — I'll ———"
Coker's newspaper fluttered along the beach as Coker started in pursuit of his comrades. Potter and Greene ran hard, kicking up sand and stumbling over bedraggled seaweed and slippery ridges of chalk.
Coker tramped heavily in their wake. They had got him on the run at all events, though there was likely to be more delay if he overtook them — Coker's fixed intention being to bang their heads together for their cheek.

“Stop !” roared Coker.
Coker put on a fierce spurt. He skidded on a smooth surface of chalk, skated a few yards, and landed on the back of his neck. Coker’s roar as he landed startled the seagulls.
Potter and Greene did not even look back at him. They were not only uneasy now, but seriously alarmed. Ahead of them a chalky spur of cliff jutted out into the sea, and round the rugged broken base of it the waves were washing. Obviously they could not get by without getting wet and they had a horrid feeling that they would not be able to get by at all. And if they could not advance, certainly they could not retreat; behind them the tide was coming in as fast as before them. The bare idea of being pinned against high, inaccessible cliffs by the incoming tide was appalling. They fairly raced. But it booted not. Long before they reached that jutting spur the water was washing up to it and over it, great billows breaking in masses of foam. Splashed from head to foot, they jumped back and retreated. They looked at one another with ghastly faces.
“Oh, crumbs !” gasped Potter. “We’re for it !”
“Cut off !” mumbled Greene.
“Let’s get back ——”
“We can’t get back ! We’ve passed cliffs that jut out farther than this !” groaned Greene.
“That idiot Coker —”
“That dummy Coker —”
“The ass !”
“The dangerous maniac !”
There was a heavy tramp on the sand, and Coker came up panting.
“Now, you cheeky rotters —” roared Coker.
But the wrath and excitement died out of Coker’s face as he read the horror in the faces of his comrades. He glanced at the roaring tide that blocked the way ahead, and understood. Even Horace Coker could understand anything that was absolutely obvious.
Coker whistled.
“My hat! Looks as if we’re cut off !” he remarked.
“You silly idiot !” groaned Greene. “You dangerous lunatic ! We can’t go on and we can’t get back ! Those cliffs —” He stared up at the line of cliffs that rose almost like a wall sixty or seventy feet. He groaned.
“Looks as if we shall have to climb,” said Coker. Coker, at least, had plenty of pluck. Nature, perhaps, had given him this as a compensation for leaving out the brains.
“Climb !” said Potter ferociously. “We’re not monkeys !”
“No; you’re funkies !” said Coker brilliantly.
Potter and Greene gazed at him. In imminent danger of death Coker could still be funny.
“Well, we’ve got to get out of this,” said Coker briskly. “Lucky you’ve got me with you, what ? Come on !”
They retreated closer to the cliffs. The tide was lapping over their feet as they went. Before and behind them jutting cliffs were washed deep by the sea, and they were imprisoned in a deep embayment of the long line of towering chalk. Here and there ragged gullies split the chalk, but none of them, so far as they could see, reached to the top. Coker, however, with cheerful coolness, clambered into the nearest one, and the dispirited Potter and Greene followed him. Behind them the sea washed up to the chalk, and a leaping wave followed them up the gully and drenched them.
“Lucky we’re out of that !” said Coker.

“Are we out of it ?” hissed Greene.
“Oh, come on! Don’t jaw !” said Coker. “Save your breath for climbing, old man ! You’ll need it !
Coker clambered on valorously. There were a good many practicable gullies between Kingsgate and Margate by which a fellow could have climbed up from the beach. But this was not one of them. This one was narrow and steep and extremely difficult to ascend; but for the roaring tide behind, even Coker would not have tried it on. But that was not the worst. Long before they could reach the top the gully ended in a ledge, above which rose a sheer wall — fifteen feet at least — to the grassy side of the cliff above.
“My hat !” said Coker.
Coker, apparently, had not expected this. Potter and Greene had. They crouched on the narrow ledge and groaned. With a deep, sullen boom the tide roared up the gully below them. Splashes of water reached them on the ledge, drenching them once more to the skin, but the tide did not come so high; they were well above high-water mark. That, at least, was something to he thankful for.
Coker stared up at the chalky wall above and shook his head. Only a fly could have climbed higher. He looked down at the flooded gully below. Foam and spray dashed up at him.
“It’s all right !” said Coker.
“All right ?” gasped Greene.
“Yes; we’re safe here ! Only got to wait till the tide turns,” Coker reflected. “Let’s see, is it twelve hours — or what ?”
Potter and Greene could not handle Coker just then without hurling him — and themselves — from the slippery, chalky ledge into the roaring waters below. So they did not handle him. They could only make mental resolves to smash him into small pieces if they ever got out of this alive.
“It’ll be a bit parky,” said Coker. “The sun’s hot. but the water seems a bit cold. Well, we’ve got to wait. Brace up !”
“W-w-w-wait for the tide to turn !” gurgled Greene. “You blithering idiot, do you think we can hang on here till the tide turns ?”
“Looks as if we’ve got to,” said Coker, still calm. “I wish I’d brought along that newspaper now. Might have read it while we’re waiting.” There was no doubt that Coker had pluck, whatever might be said of his intellect.
“You burbling ass !” said Potter. “There must be people on the promenade up there on a fine day like this. Somebody will hear us if we shout for help.”
“Oh, rot !” said Coker. “I don’t like the idea of shouting for help, and getting laughed at by a lot of trippers. Stick it out, what ?”
Potter considered whether he could hit Coker in the eye without knocking him off the ledge to drown. He felt that he had better not risk it; he did not want to drown even Coker. So he restrained his feelings and lifted up his voice to shout. Greene joined in lustily.
“Help ! Help !”
“Look here, chuck it !” said Coker. “We shall get a lot of trippers here —”
“Don’t I wish we should !” groaned Greene.
“Help !” roared Potter.
“Help !” yelled Greene.
Coker snorted.

“HALLO, hallo, hallo !”
“Somebody in trouble !”
“Sounds like it !”
“The soundfulness like it is terrific,” said Hurree Singh.
Six Greyfriars juniors were sauntering cheerily along the sunny promenade. The houses of Kingsgate were in sight, and beyond them the lighthouse, which was the objective of the Famous Five and Wibley, when the shouting came from below the edge of the cliffs. Harry Wharton & Co. stopped at once. They were well aware that the tide was in, washing along the base of the cliffs, and that anyone caught on the beach was in serious danger.
“Come on !” exclaimed Bob Cherry.
“Help ! Help !” came shouting over the cliffs.
On the edge of the cliffs was a raised grassy ridge a few yards wide. Bob Cherry dropped on his hands and knees and crawled to the verge and looked over.
“Oh, my hat !” ejaculated Bob, as he stared down.
For fifteen feet or so the cliff dropped like a wall; below that was a narrow, rugged gully, splitting the chalk where it bulged out. On a ledge in the gully were three drenched figures — and two of them were yelling for help, the other snorting contemptuously.
“Coker & Co !” exclaimed Harry Wharton, as he lay beside Bob and looked over.
“Caught by the tide, the silly asses !” said Johnny Bull. “Lucky they were able to climb up out of it !”
“The luckfulness was preposterous.”
“Hallo, hallo, hallo !” gasped Potter. The sight of faces hanging over the dizzy verge above was a glad one to the eyes of Potter and Greene. They were well aware, if Coker was not, that they could not have clung on that chalky ledge till the tide turned.
Coker stared up.
“It’s those dashed fags !” he ejaculated. “Look here, you cheeky young sweeps, you jolly well clear off ! See ?”
“Wha-a-at !” ejaculated Frank Nugent
“Clear off ! You’re not wanted here !” snapped Coker. “I don’t want any of your rotten Lower Fourth cheek ! Just hook it !”
“Well, my hat !”
“Don’t mind him, you fellows !” gasped Greene. “Coker can’t help being mad !”
“What !” roared Coker.
“Shut up, you dummy !” hissed Potter ferociously. “Shut up, you idiot ! Cheese it, you blithering cuckoo ! Wharton — get help for us somehow —”
“Help, for goodness’ sake !” gasped Greene.
“Right-ho ! Hang on !” called back Harry Wharton.
“Mind your own business !” hooted Coker. “I’m all right here. I don’t want any help from fags !”
“Shut up, idiot ! I say, Wharton —”
Harry Wharton scanned the cliff below. It was impossible to go to the help of the Fifth Formers; there was no hold for a cat between the cliff-top and the ledge at the head of the gully.
“We shall have to get a rope,” said Harry.
“Buck up, for goodness’ sake !”
“Right-ho ! We passed a coastguard station a few minutes ago; we can get help there ! Hold on !”
“Nothing else to do,” agreed Bob. “They’ll have a rope there. Coker isn’t the first silly

idiot to be caught in the tide about here, I dare say. Put it on, old bean."
Harry Wharton retreated from the edge of the cliff and started at a rapid run towards a building in the distance, over which a flag was flying.
Meanwhile, the other fellows remained lying on the grass on the cliff-edge, looking over. Their presence was some comfort to the hapless Fifth Formers below. They had to wait till a rope could be brought.
Before long more faces were looking down. There were plenty of walkers on the cliff promenade that sunny afternoon. As the news spread that somebody had been caught by the tide, they gathered to look. The more venturesome crawled to the cliff-edge and stared down at the three. Others gathered in groups to watch the rescue. It was gall and wormword to Horace Coker. He felt that this made a fellow look a fool. He was not aware that he was precisely what he looked!
But help was coming. A brown, weather-beaten face looked over, and a long, strong rope with a loop at the end came slithering down.
"Put it under your arms !"
Potter put the rope round Greene, and Greene was pulled up, shutting his eyes and shuddering as he left the footing of the ledge and hung in awful space. But many hands pulled on the rope, and Greene was drawn over and landed safely on the grass. He sat there, gasping, white as a sheet. Then the rope slithered down again, and Potter put it round himself and was drawn up in his turn.

It came down a third time, and Coker slowly grasped it. The whole thing annoyed Coker. He had a feeling that Potter and Greene would make out that he had been to blame for this; that it was he who had endangered them all. He resolved that he would jolly soon put a stop to that, anyhow. But annoyed as he was, Coker did not want to remain here on his lonely own, and he fastened the rope round his burly person and was drawn up. He came scrambling over the verge, and many friendly hands grasped him and helped him to safety. Perhaps it was by accident that Bob Cherry's grasp fastened on his ear.
"Ow !" gasped Coker, as he sat in the grass.
He disentangled himself from the rope and rose. Potter and Greene were still sitting and gasping.
"Safe now, old bean," said Harry Wharton.
Coker stared at him.
"Don't be cheeky, Wharton !" he snapped.
"Dear old Coker !" grinned Bob.
"Shut up, Cherry !"
Coker walked over to Potter and Greene and stared at them sarcastically.
"How long are you going to sit there ?" he inquired. "Like setting up a sort of peep-show for a mob of trippers, what ?"
Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. They had not forgotten what they had mentally promised Coker once they were in safety. Now they were in safety, and ready to hand over to Coker what they had mentally promised him. They were tired, but not too tired to deal with Coker.
They rose to their feet. They did not speak; there was no need for words. As if moved by the same spring, they jumped at Coker.
"Here, I say !" yelled Coker, as he went down with a bump on the asphalt of the promenade. "Wharrer you up to — My hat ! Yaroooh !"
Thump, thump, thump, thump !
"Go it! " yelled Bob Cherry.

Thump, thump, thump ! Bang !
Potter and Green were going it. They did not need encouragement. They were going it hard and fast, and hot and strong. Coker struggled wildly. He yelled frantically. He roared and he raved. Potter and Greene thumped and thumped and thumped and thumped.
“Come on, you fellows,” said Bob. “We haven’t done the lighthouse yet !”
The chums of the Remove pursued their way, chuckling. For quite a distance they were followed by a sound like the beating of carpet, and the voice of Horace Coker on its top note. Potter and Greene were still going strong.

“Pawlings !”
“Yessir !”
“Hold on a minute !”
The steward of the Sea Nymph held on.
Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. Billy Bunter had the deck of the yacht almost to himself. Cousin George was ashore, on business matters connected with the commissariat. Many of the crew had gone into Margate. The engineer was smoking on the jetty. Mr. Griggs, the latest addition to the ship’s company, was in his cabin, where he had been ever since the yacht had pulled into Margate Harbour. Cousin George, in his hearty way, had asked Mr. Griggs to go ashore with him; but it seemed that the shipwrecked gentleman had a headache and preferred to lie down in his bunk. George told him that the air of Margate would soon banish headaches; but in vain, and Mr. Griggs was in Strict seclusion.
Harry Wharton & Co. were far away; in fact, just then they were viewing sea and land from the summit of the North Foreland Lighthouse. Coker & Co. had not returned; not that Bunter wasted a thought on Coker & Co. Bunter was thinking of the joys of Margate, especially of the eatables and the drinkables; but though Margate was not an expensive place for a holiday resort, it was evidently useless to go ashore to “do” Margate with only a bad half-crown for financial resources.
Looking for Wharton & Co. in the Margate crowds seemed rather a hopeless proposition. So Bunter was at a loose end. That was why he now bestowed his most enviable grin on the steward of the Sea Nymph. Bunter was quite prepared to do Margate on his own if he could raise the necessary cash. The question was, how to raise the cash.
“I’m in a bit of a difficulty, Pawlings,” said Bunter.
“Indeed, sir !” said Pawlings, without enthusiasm.
“My cousin won’t be coming back yet,” explained Bunter, “and like an ass, I gave Wharton my purse to mind when we went ashore. I’m actually without money at the present moment.”
“Indeed, sir !” repeated Pawlings.
“Yes ! I shall need a few pounds ashore,” said Bunter. “I’ll ask George for it when he comes back, and — and square. I’m not the fellow to borrow money of servants, of course —”
“Indeed, sir !”
“Hardly,” said Bunter. “It’s liable to make them cheeky, and all that. But you’re a man who knows his place, Pawlings —”
“Indeed, sir !” said Pawlings. His vocabulary seemed to be limited. But his manner was very dry.
“You’re not a man to put on airs, or anything of that kind, because a gentleman has borrowed a five-pound note of you, Pawlings,” said Bunter affably. “I’m sure of that.

I shall let you lend me five pounds, Pawlings."
"That's very kind of you, sir !" said Pawlings, with a deep, deep sarcasm that was a sheer waste on William George Bunter.
"I mean to be kind," said Bunter. "I'm always kind to the lower classes, when they know their place and keep it. I insist upon that, of course. By the way, I'm going to give you a very decent tip at the end of the trip, Pawlings."
"Thank you, sir !" said Pawlings, still sarcastic.
Pawlings was going to believe in that decent tip when he saw that decent tip; not before.
"You deserve it," said Bunter airily. "You're a good servant, Pawlings, and you know your place. And you're obliging me with this little loan —"
"You honour me, sir," said Pawlings. "I find it difficult, sir, to express my feelings. You put it so politely, sir, and so tactfully, that I really hardly know what to say. I only regret, sir, that it is quite impossible for me to oblige you with the little loan you mention."
"Eh ? Well, never mind the flyer," said Bunter hastily. "Make it a couple of pounds, Pawlings. You've got a couple of pounds in your pockets."
"Certainly, sir ! They're staying there," said Pawlings.
"S-s-s-staying there ?"
"Exactly, sir !" said Pawlings.
Bunter blinked at him. Pawlings was still quite respectful and polite, though there was a glimmer in his eye. Bunter breathed rather hard.
"If you mean that you don't want to lend me a couple of pounds, Pawlings, say —"
"You've got it precisely, sir."
"Look here, Pawlings —" hooted Bunter.
"That would be a pleasure, sir; but I am afraid that I must go back to my duties, sir," said Pawlings.
And he went back to them, leaving Bunter blinking.
"Cheeky rotter !" breathed Bunter. "My hat ! What are the lower classes coming to nowadays ? That fellow was cheeky — distinctly cheeky ! I'll jolly well ask George to sack him."
Pawlings had been cheeky; there was hardly a doubt about that. Worse still, he had refused to lend Bunter any money. He had been, as Bunter realised now, sarcastic. Things were coming to a pretty pass when a steward on a dashed floating boarding-house was sarcastic to a gentleman and a Public school man ! Still, Bunter could have stood the sarcasm had it been accompanied by cash. Unaccompanied by cash, it was extremely irritating.
Even Bunter did not think of trying to raise a loan from the steward's boy. He thought of the cook; but it was probable that the cook would be as cheeky as Pawlings. Then he thought of Mr. Griggs.
As his acquaintance with Mr. Griggs was of the very slightest, even Bunter felt that he had to think a bit before attempting to "touch" him for a loan. Still, Griggs' life had been saved on the yacht, and the man was bound to be feeling a little grateful. And he must have money, as he was spending twenty-one guineas on an Easter cruise and had offered to pay more if Captain Cook would cut out the call at Margate.
It did not look very hopeful; but Bunter reflected that if he drew Griggs blank, he would be no worse off than he was before. Anyhow, it was worth trying on, he considered, and he rolled away to No. 6 state-room to try it on.
He heard a sound of tramping feet within that stateroom. Mr Griggs was not, it seemed, lying down with his headache. The room was roomy — for a state-room on a

yacht — but there was not much space for walking about. Billy Bunter could not help wondering why Mr. Griggs, if he wanted to walk about, did not step out on deck. It was really extraordinary for a man to spend that glorious, sunny, spring day shut up in a room, if he was able to leave his bunk. And evidently Mr. Griggs was.
The tread in the little room was unceasing — that of a restless man ill at ease — a man counting the slow minutes as they passed. Had Bunter thought of it he might have wondered whether Mr. Griggs had something on his mind — some secret cause of anxiety. But Bunter's fat thoughts, as usual, were concentrated on his fat self.
He tapped at the door. After tapping he would have opened it, but he found thai t was locked inside. In surprise, he tapped again. The uneasy tread had ceased at the first tap.
"Who is it ? What do you want ?" came a rasping voice from within.
"It's me," explained Bunter, regardless of grammar.
"Who ?"
"Bunter ! Captain Cook's cousin !"
"What do you want ?"
"I — I thought I'd just come and ask how you were, sir," said Bunter. "Is your headache any better ?"
Bunter remembered that he had heard Mr. Griggs inform George that he had a headache.
"No — yes — no ! I do not want to be disturbed ! Please go away !"
"Hem ! I — I thought you might like a little company, sir.
"Rubbish !"
"I — I should be very pleased to — to sit with you, if you liked —"
"Nonsense !"
"Perhaps you'd like a game of — of ludo, sir ?"
"You young fool !"
"Or — or draughts —"
"Go away !"
This was not encouraging. The man seemed an unsociable ill-tempered beast. The voice of the charmer had no effect on him whatever — through a locked door, at least. Why the thump the man kept his door locked was a mystery to Bunter.
"Wouldn't you like to come into the saloon, sir ?" resumed Bunter. "I'll play the piano to you, if you like. It may soothe your headache."
"Will you go away ?"
"Hem !. Perhaps you'd like to see the newspaper, sir ?"
We've got the papers from Margate. There's something rather interesting in this morning's paper — a bank hold up at Folkestone yesterday."
"What ?"
There was a note of interest in Mr. Griggs' voice at last.
Bunter began to hope that the door would be unlocked, at least. Bunter was the most skilful borrower of cash in the wide world; but even Bunter could not borrow money through a locked door.
"Quite an interesting case, Mr. Griggs," said Bunter hopefully. "I'll get you the paper, shall I ? Man held up a bank at Folkestone yesterday, and got away, and stole a sailing-boat and got to sea. It's frightfully exciting ! Like to see the paper, sir ?"
The door of No. 6 flew suddenly open. Mr. Griggs appeared in the doorway, and Bunter grinned with satisfaction. He had drawn the badger at last.
"Where is the paper ?" snapped Mr. Griggs.
"Shall I get it ?" asked Bunter. "The fact is, there's another little matter I wanted to

speak to you about, sir."
"Get me the paper."
"All right, sir; but my friends have gone ashore, and ——"
"Will you give me the newspaper ?"
"Oh, yes !" gasped Bunter, quite startled by the savage anger in Mr. Griggs' voice and look. "Half a jiffy !" Bunter rolled away, and came back with the morning paper.
"Here you are, sir !"
Mr. Griggs snatched it from his hand, and stepped back into the room with it. Bunter rolled in after him. Now that the door was open, Bunter was keen to get on with business.
He did not get on with it, however. Mr. Griggs turned on him, caught him by the collar, and spun him back through the doorway.
"Oh, crikey !" gasped Bunter.
Smack !
"Yarooooh !"
Billy Bunter sat down, clasping a fat hand to a fat ear, that was red and burning from a terrific smack. The stateroom door slammed, and was locked again. There was a rustle of paper within as the newspaper was opened with feverish haste. Bunter staggered to his feet.
"Oh, lor !" he gasped. "The — the awful beast ! Oh, crikey ! Ow ! My ear ! Wow !"
The Owl of the Remove shook a fat fist at Mr. Griggs' closed door. He was done with Mr. Griggs. It was evident there was nothing doing. He had come there to raise the wind; and he seemed to have raised a whirlwind. Still rubbing his fat and burning ear. William George Bunter rolled back disconsolately to the deck.

A Surprise for George!

"STEWARD !"
"Sir !"
"Has Captain Cook returned ?"
"Jest coming along the jetty, sir !"
"Ask him to step down; I want to speak to him."
"Certainly, sir !"
Harry Wharton & Co., back from their run ashore, were on deck, watching the bright sun setting over Margate and Cliftonville, when Cousin George, red-faced and cheery as usual, rolled on board. The juniors had had their tea, and were debating which of the joys of Margate they should patronise that evening. As the yacht was not to pull out till the morning, they had an evening before them, and there were plenty of attractions in merry Margate to choose from. George gave them a hearty greeting as he came aboard: Then, receiving Mr. Griggs' message from Pawlings, he went down to see the passenger in No. 6.
That passenger, on his looks, had not enjoyed his day in the confines of his state-room. On his bunk lay the newspaper Bunter had given him some time ago, a certain section of which Mr. Griggs had read with great avidity. There was undoubtedly something in the newspaper that interested Mr. Griggs very much indeed. Most of the day Mr. Griggs had kept his door locked, but it was not locked when Captain Cook came along, with his plump and hearty tread. Mr. Griggs opened it, and George gave him a hearty grin and an affable nod. George's fat face, beaming with plump good humour, was quite a striking contrast to the thin, narrow, hard face of his passenger,

with its knitted brows, tight lips, and shifty, watchful eyes.
“Please step in !” said Mr. Griggs, holding the door open.
“Won’t you step out, sir ?” said George. George liked space for his ample proportions. “Headache better, sir ?”
A walk on the pier, sir, in the glorious air of Margate, would do you good. A little trot along to Westgate, sir —”
“Will you come in ?” snapped Mr. Griggs. “I have some thing very particular to say, Captain Cook.”
“Oh, very well, sir !” said George, and he came in, and Mr. Griggs shut the door. “I trust, sir, that my steward has attended to all your wants in a satisfactory manner while I have been ashore. We aim to give every satisfaction —”
“Please let me speak ! When are you putting to sea again ?”
“In the morning, sir — in the bright and rosy dawn,” said George. “If you feel disposed for festivity, sir, you have the evening — a fine evening — before you. There is an excellent show at the Winter Gardens —”
Mr. Griggs’ eye glinted at George. He did not look as if he was disposed for festivity. George, like all the Bunter tribe, was talkative. But his passenger cut him short.
“Will you put to sea to-day — before dark ?”
“I regret very much, sir, that I am unable to meet your wishes in that respect, sir. A day at Margate was in the schedule, and Mr. Coker insisted —”
“The day is now at an end ——”
“Hardly, sir. The boys are, in fact, discussing an evening in Margate — and Mr. Coker and his friends are not even on board yet — they may be late ———”
“Your crew are on board ?”
“Yes, that is so,” said George staring. “But —”
“You could get started at once, then ?”
“I could !” said George, still staring. “But —”
“Well, I request you very particularly to do so,” said Mr. Griggs. “The fact is, the air of Margate is not good for me — and I am very anxious to go.”
“My dear sir.” said George, “the air of Margate is the finest air ——”
“I do not expect you to oblige me for nothing,” said Mr. Griggs. “I will pay double fees if you will start this evening.”
“My charges, sir,” said George, with dignity, “are fixed and inclusive. There are no extras !”
Mr. Griggs eyed him, with his shifty eyes.
“You are probably not a rich man, Mr. Cook,” he said at length, after a pause. “A hundred pounds would be welcome to you.”
“Quite !” said George. thinking of the mortgage on the yacht, and the doubt whether the profits of the tripping would pay it off. “But —”
“I will pay you a hundred pounds, sir, to put to sea at once.”
George Cook gazed at him. George was a capable hotel-keeper, and he was a capable skipper. Otherwise, George was not very bright. But George was bright enough to see that there was something extraordinary in this — very extraordinary indeed. For the first time George began to entertain a vague suspicion of his passenger. A man who stayed — or, rather, hid — in his cabin, all the time the yacht was in sight of land, and who offered him a hundred pounds to put to sea twelve hours ahead of time, could scarcely be an ordinary holiday-maker. There was, George realised, something of a “fishy” nature about this man Griggs from Rye.
“I am sorry, sir, that I cannot oblige you,” said George stiffly, “and, in fact since you have made me such a queer offer, sir, I am afraid that I shall have to ask you for an

explanation."
"Will you accept my offer ?"
"No, sir," said George. "As some of my passengers are still on shore, and I could not possibly leave them behind, I could not do so, sir."
"I will make it two hundred pounds, Mr. Cook."
George almost bristled.
"Enough, Sir !" he said with a wave of a plump hand. "So far from putting to sea as you request, I shall require a very clear explanation, or I shall request you to step ashore before we sail. In that case your fee for the cruise will be returned to you, after deduction for one day on board —"
"You refuse ?"
"Yes, sir, I refuse !" said George, with dignity. "You have forced me to doubt your bona fides, Mr. Griggs. You have — Great hefty haddocks !"
George broke off with a yell of surprise and consternation. Mr. Griggs had slipped his hand into the wallet under his coat. As George was making a movement towards the door his hand came out and shot up to a level — and the bluish barrel of an automatic pistol looked George full in the face. The plump skipper of the Sea Nymph staggered back, and brought up against the bunk, fairly goggling at the levelled weapon, and the gleaming eyes behind it.
"Don't call out!" said Mr. Griggs, in a low tone of savage menace. "One call, and I will scatter your sheep's brains over that bunk ! Take warning — you've got to deal with a desperate man !"
"Hefty haddocks !" murmured George faintly.
He leaned back limply on the hunk. His fat knees were knocking together and seemed hardly able to support him.
His red face had tuned quite pale. Even a brave man might have been appalled by a levelled automatic within three or four feet, with a dark and desperate face glaring behind it.
And George was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.
"Keep quiet !" Mr. Griggs voice was little more than a whisper, but it was very distinct. "I'm sorry to use these measures — not for your sake, you fool, but for my own !" But there's no choice now. By morning I shall have hand cuff on my wrists, if we stay here. Get me ?"
"Oh !" gasped George.
"A sound above a whisper, and I will blow your silly brains out !" said Griggs. in the same low, savage tone. "You were idiot enough to run me down at sea, when I was escaping — but I am not going to be taken ! Ten years' penal servitude wait for me on shore — do you understand ! I'm telling you this so that you will have sense enough to take it quietly. I will shoot you, and every man on the yacht, rather than be taken !"
"Hefty haddocks !" gurgled George. "Tut-tut-turn that — that thing away. It — it might g-g-g-go off !"
"It will go off if you don't obey every order I give you, like a lamb !" said Griggs grimly. "If you'd accepted my offer — But never mind that ! Listen to me ! You've seen the papers to-day ?"
George nodded, dumb.
"You've seen that there was a hold-up at Folkestone yesterday — a man shot and wounded in a bank —"
George gasped.
"The gunman got away. I've learned — from the newspaper — that they have

discovered that he pinched a sailing-boat in the harbour and got away to sea."
George grasped it now. He had read that news in the paper without in the least realising how closely it concerned him. He did not connect the holiday-maker from Rye with the fugitive from Folkestone. But he understood now.
"They're searching for that boat up and down the coast !" grated Griggs. "They won't find it — you've taken care of that ! Every coastguard and fisherman from Dover to Herne Bay will be watching for that boat — and for me ! Do you understand now ?"
George nodded — or rather, his head sagged ! The man before him, holding the gun to his head, was the desperate gunman who had shot and wounded a man in a Folkestone bank only the day before — and that knowledge made cold chills creep down George's spine. And George knew what was in the wallet from which Griggs had taken the automatic. The loot from the bank — a thousand pounds in banknotes — was on board the Sea Nymph !
Griggs smiled grimly. He had got George where he wanted him, so to speak.
"They've been smart !" snarled Griggs. "I never thought they'd spot the boat I got away in ! But — it's in the paper. They won't find the boat though they hunt for it till Doomsday. But they may pick up some of the wreckage. I was afraid you might do that, and learn that the boat came out of Folkestone — the name was on it ——" He broke off. "They may think me drowned — or picked up at sea — and they won't take chances ! Every vessel in these waters will be questioned. This among the others."
His shifty eyes glittered at George over the automatic.
"That's not going to happen ! I took a desperate chance in getting away to sea in the boat. I hoped to be able to run across to Holland or France — and get to land before dark. But I failed ! Do you understand now that I am a desperate man, not to be trifled with ?"
George understood it only too well.
"I've been waiting here, ever since I read the newspaper that fat fool gave me, for you to come back — and expecting every minute to hear the footsteps of the police ! Sooner or later they'll visit every vessel putting in at Deal, or Ramsgate, or Broadstairs, or Margate — at every place along this coast — for news of the boat missing from Folkestone. Any minute they may be here ! Do you understand ? I can't afford to wait till morning ! Minutes may make all the difference !"
The gunman breathed hard. There were clots of perspiration on his brow. His nerves were tense and taut.
"We're going to sea at once ! Got that ?"
"We — we can't !" babbled George. "Some of my passengers —"
"Fool !"
"And — and my mate's ashore —"
"You will sail without your mate."
"The food —"
"What ?"
"Supplies, sir, ordered in Margate—not yet de-delivered —"
"Fool ! Do you know what I would do if I could handle a yacht ?" snarled Griggs. "I would spatter your brains over that bunk and take command !"
"Hefty haddocks !"
"And if you jib, that's what I shall do, and take my chance of getting the yacht to sea on my own ! Got that !" hissed Griggs.
"Oh lor'!" groaned George.
"You will call the steward now," said Griggs quietly.
"Make some excuse for staying in this room with me — anything you like — and give

him a message to get under way immediately. You've got the choice between life and death, Mr. Cook ! Make it !"
George's choice was already made. He detached himself, with an effort, from the bunk, and limped to the door. He opened the door about three inches, and Mr. Griggs, standing behind him, kept the muzzle of the automatic pressed to his plump ribs.
"Steward !" gasped George.
"Sir !"
Pawlings came along.
"Tell the engineer to stand by at once — at once — and get ready for sea ! Lose no time ! I — I am staying here with Mr. Griggs. Come and tap on the door when — when all is ready !"
"Yes, sir." Pawlings looked at George through the narrow aperture. "Are you ill, sir ?"
"Eh ? Yes ! No ! Hurry up !"
"Oh ! Yes, sir !"
Pawlings hurried away.
The door snapped shut again.
George sat down on the edge of the bunk and wiped his perspiring brow. It was no wonder that Pawlings had thought that he looked ill. His face was almost ghastly. He gazed at Griggs as he might have gazed at some threatening demon.
They waited.
George's order, unexpected as it was, was being carried out. They had only to wait. Coker & Co. — and Mr. Pycroft, the mate — were still ashore — they had to remain there. Provender — ordered for delivery at the jetty — would have to remain on the jetty when it arrived. If Harry Wharton & Co. landed they would be left behind. There was no argument possible, with a desperate and determined man, and a deadly weapon, which he had used once and was ready to use again.
Tap ! came at the door. Griggs' eyes glittered.
"Who is there ?" he called out.
"Wharton, sir ! Captain Cook is with you, I think !"
"Yes. What do you want ?"
Wharton pushed the door open. Mr. Griggs' hand disappeared behind him; but though the automatic was now out of sight, George was only too unhappily conscious that it was still there — and ready! The glitter in the shifty eyes told him what to expect if he failed to play up. He gave the Greyfriars junior a ghastly grin.
"Wha-a-a-t is it, Master Wharton?
"They're getting ready to sail, Captain Cook," said Harry in wonder. "We were thinking of a run into Margate for the evening, but if you're going out to sea —"
"Pip-pip-please yourself," stammered George. "I — I've had to — to alter my plans a little. Perhaps you had better go ashore for the evening." Griggs made a negative sign with his head. He did not want the juniors talking ashore of that sudden and unexpected change in Captain Cook's plans. George caught the sign and faltered: "I — I mean, we — we're going for a little trip — I'm sure you'd enjoy it —"
"Oh, all right !" said Harry. He looked curiously at George. "I hope you're not ill, sir ?"
"Oh, no ! N-n-never better in my life !" gasped George.
"Shut the door after you."
Wharton shut the door after him. George blinked at Griggs. The automatic came into view again.
"You're safe, so long as you play up, Mr. Cook !" said Griggs quietly. "Keep that up. No harm will come to the boys — so long as they don't interfere. Let them think it's a

trip for the evening. You'll land me in France by morning and have done with me. But — mind you play up ! I'm taking desperate chances — and a man's life is no more to me than a fly's !"
"Oh, lor'!" groaned George.
It seemed an age to George — and probably longer still to the gunman — before Pawlings tapped on the door again.
George hooked himself off the bunk. Griggs gave him a look, and George shuddered.
"I shall have to go on the bridge !" gasped George. "I can't take the yacht out to sea without ! For goodness' sake, man —"
Griggs nodded.
"I shall come up with you ! I shall have to risk that !" He gritted his teeth as he read a flash of hope in George's eyes. "Take care ! I shall have this automatic in my pocket — with my hand on it ! At the first sign of trickery, you are a dead man — and I'll take my chance of getting the yacht out to sea. Take warning !"
"I — I never thought —"
"That will do ! Get going !"
George tottered from the cabin, Griggs went with him on deck. Bright sunset Shone on Margate harbour, on the crowded pier, and the sands that were alive with trippers with innumerable small people with spades and pails. It was a happy and familiar sight — but George had no eyes for it now.
Billy Bunter rolled up to him.
"I say, George —"
"Go away !" snapped George. "Don't bother me now."
"That's all very well," said Bunter. "But what's the idea of a trip to sea ? I was going to the show at the Winter Gardens, and I don't want — I say, don't walk away while a fellow's talking to you."
"Be quiet !" snapped George.
He reached for Bunter's ear, and the fat Owl dodged just in time. Cousin George did not seem so good-tempered as usual.
Bunter grunted and rejoined the juniors.
"I say, you fellows, what's up with George ?" he asked. "He looks jolly sick about something, and he's as bad-tempered as you are at your very worst, Wharton."
"You silly ass !"
Harry Wharton & Co., as a matter of fact, were rather wondering what was "up" with George. They could see that something was the matter. They were surprised, too, to see Mr. Griggs go on the bridge with him, with one hand in his pocket, and his eyes on George as watchful as a cat's. But they were very far from guessing what it was that was "up."
"Coker will miss this trip !" remarked Bob Cherry, as the Sea Nymph glided away from the jetty. "It's rather sudden, isn't it ?"
"The suddenfulness is terrific !" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with his dusky eyes very curiously on George and Mr. Griggs.
"Anybody know where we're going ?" asked Nugent.
"Out to sea, that's all," said Johnny Bull. "What's that man Griggs doing on the bridge with the skipper ?"
"Can't make it out," said Harry.
The juniors had a vague feeling that something was wrong somewhere. Yet what it was — if anything — they could not conjecture. The Sea Nymph put on speed, and, looking back, they watched the crowded beach growing a dim blue in the bright sunset.

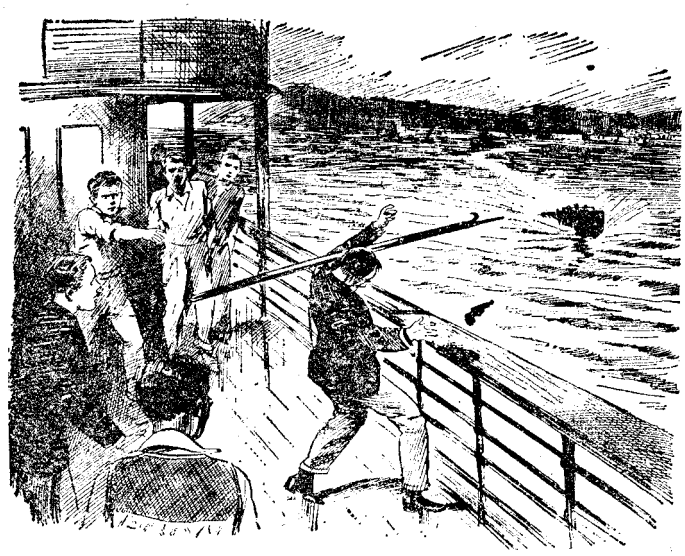
HORACE COKER stared.
"Well ! he ejaculated. "I like that !"
Coker's expression belied his words. It was obvious from his expression, that he did not like it — not at all.
Standing on the jetty, Coker of the Fifth stared at the Sea Nymph sailing away to sea — already at a considerable distance off-shore. And Coker snorted.
Coker was alone. But his faithful chums were not far away. After that exciting scene on the promenade near Kingsgate, Coker had thrown Potter and Greene over — lock, stock, and barrel ! He was done with them — fed-up to the back teeth ! Potter and Greene, tired of thumping Coker, left him to his own devices — quite as fed-up with Coker as he could possibly have been with them. Coker, meanwhile, when he had recovered his wind, started to walk back to Margate.
After having some tea, reflection came to Potter and Greene. It was delightful to have done with Coker — on the other hand, they were booked for the Easter cruise on the Sea Nymph, as Coker's guests — which made it awkward.
Either they had to chuck up the cruise, or make it up with Coker somehow. The real question was, whether Coker would consent to make it up, after his friends' rough-and-ready methods of dealing with him. Fortunately, it was easy to pull Coker's leg. Soft sawder seldom failed with the great Horace.
So Potter and Greene walked back to Margate, expecting to find Coker on the yacht, and prepared to turn out the necessary amount of soft sawder. To their surprise they found the Sea Nymph sailing out to sea — and Mr. Pycroft, the mate, staring after her with amazed eyes from the jetty. They wondered whether Coker had gone in her; and what the dickens it meant anyhow. But Coker was not gone in the yacht. Coker had started back a couple of hours before Potter and Greene; but he had taken short cuts instead of following the promenade. Coker's short cuts led him over a considerable portion of Kent: he negotiated roads, lanes, and footpaths; and when, to his joy, he struck a town at last, he found that it was not Margate, but Broadstairs.
This surprised Coker — for either Margate and Broadstairs had changed places during his walk, or else Coker was the biggest idiot ever — neither of which seemed possible to Coker.
However, a taxi carried him back, landed him in Margate safe and sound, though in a rather bad temper, and he strode on to the jetty — to see Potter and Greene staring seawards there, Mr. Pycroft rubbing his weatherbeaten nose in amazement — and the Sea Nymph far out at sea. Whereupon Coker remarked that he "liked that !" — not really liking it a bit.
"Cheek!" continued Coker. "What does the man mean ? Cheek ! Leaving a chap behind ! Where's that blessed yacht off to ? Cheek !"
Potter and Greene exchanged a glance and drew nearer to Coker. It was time for the soft sawder to be turned on.
"Queer, Cook clearing off like that without telling us, Coker !" Potter remarked blandly, just as if nothing had happened.
Horace Coker gave him a cold, fixed, icy look.
"Did you speak to me ?" he asked.
"Yes, old fellow ! I said ——"
"Well, don't !" said Coker, turning his back.
"Coker, old man —" murmured Greene.
"Will you oblige me by keeping your remarks to yourself, William Greene ?" inquired

Coker over his shoulder.
“But look here, old fellow ——”
Coker walked across the jetty. Potter and Greene exchanged a private wink, and followed him. Coker tapped the mate on the arm.
“Where’s the yacht gone, Mr. Pycroft ?” he asked.
“Ask me another, sir,” said the mate. “Looks as if she’s gone to sea — but I can’t make it out ! Captain Cook was coming back to see to some stuff he’s ordered — instead of that, he pulls out. Beats me !”
“I suppose he’s coming back for us ?” hooted Coker.
“No good asking me, sir ! Can’t make it out !”
“That cheeky sweep Griggs was trying to make him cut out Margate this morning ! But he couldn’t —” Coker paused, staring after the yacht. “Cook wouldn’t — But if he has — This isn’t what I’m paying twenty-one guineas for, I know that ! What the thump —”
“We’re stranded !” said Potter.
“Don’t talk to me, Potter ! I’m fed up with you !”
“That’s all very well, Coker — but we look to you for guidance !” said Potter. “It’s really your own fault — you’ve taught us to rely on you in times of difficulty.”
“If Coker doesn’t take control, what are we going to do? ” asked Greene. “It’s like — like sheep without a shepherd !”
Horace Coker thawed considerably. He was offended — severely offended. Still, if fellows looked to him for guidance, if without a shepherd, it was up to him.
“If you fellows put it like that —” he said.
“How else are we to put it ?” asked Potter. “You’re the leader ! Is it any use either of us taking the lead ? I ask you !”
“Leaders,” said Greene. “are born, not made. We’ve had a row. We were hasty. All the same, I don’t see how Coker can get out of his responsibility for fellows who rely on his brains for guidance.”
This was putting it on rather thick. But it could not be put on too thick for Coker ! A smile dawned on his rugged features.
“You’ve acted rottenly,” he said. “I was going to turn you down, right down ! Still, I admit there’s something in what you say. A pair of helpless, silly, incapable duffers ——”
“Oh ! Exactly !” gasped Potter. “How — how well you put it, Coker !”
“The yacht’s gone ——” said Coker.
“Never mind the yacht,” said Greene. “So long as you stick by us, Coker, we don’t mind anything else. It will come back, anyhow. We can put in the evening at the Winter Gardens —”
“And if the yacht isn’t back, there’s a lot of hotels —”
“In fact, a few days in Margate —”
“Not at all a bad idea ——”
“Don’t jaw so much !” said Coker calmly. “We’re not going to the Winter Gardens — and you can whistle for your dinner ! I’m not being left behind and stranded by a dashed hotelkeeper that I’ve paid for a cruise ! I’m going after that yacht, and going to ask Cook to explain himself — and if he doesn’t satisfy me, I shall demand my money back, and punch his head into the bargain.”
“Swimming it ?” asked Potter, with a touch of flippancy that was quite out of place in Coker’s opinion.
“Don’t be a fool, Potter ! Mr. Pycroft, I suppose you know where to hire a motor-boat ?”

“Ay, ay !” said Mr. Pycroft.
“Get it for me — I’ll give you a passage to the yacht in it, if you want to go aboard ! Get the best motor-boat in Margate — never mind the expense. I’m standing the racket. Cook isn’t playing this rotten trick on me; and if it’s that skinny blighter Griggs at the bottom of it all, I’ll jolly well punch his nose as well as Cook’s. We can beat that yacht in a good motor-boat.”
“Easy !” said Mr. Pycroft. “I know a good boat — a man named Hatch — he’ll drive it for you — beat the yacht hollow he’s raced in it.”
“Buck up with that motor-boat !” rapped Coker.
“Leave it to me,” said Mr. Pycroft, and he ambled away.
Potter looked at Greene. Greene looked at Potter. Visions of a joyous evening in Margate faded from their eyes. But they knew that it was useless to argue with Coker. Argument only made Coker more obstinate. Coker stared grimly after the yacht, while he waited for the motor-boat to be brought round. Cook had left him stranded — contrary to all arrangements — and Coker was going to have it out with Cook. Coker was not the man to be treated like this without something happening. Coker was fully prepared to hit George in the eye, on his own bridge, if he did not explain himself satisfactorily.
“Here we are !” exclaimed Coker.
The motor-boat bobbed under the jetty. It was a rather large craft, evidently a good boat, and a man in a peaked cap and a jumper sat at the wheel. This, apparently, was Hatch, who had raced the boat; an acquaintance of Mr. Pycroft’s. He touched his cap very civilly to Coker — Mr. Pycroft having, perhaps, let him know that Horace was an open-handed youth with more money than brains.
Coker jumped down, slipped, and bumped. He recovered himself and glared up at Potter and Greene — who stopped grinning just in time.
“Now, then, if you’re coming —” snapped Coker.
“Oh, all right !”
Potter and Greene jumped down. Coker tapped Mr. Hatch on the shoulder.
“Overhaul that yacht,” he said. “Go all out — make her rip ! See ?”
“Rip’s the word, sir !” said Mr. Hatch. “You watch !”
And Mr. Hatch did make her rip. Once away from the jetty and the pleasure-boats, there came a deep, full-throated roar, and the boat shot like an arrow through the cleaving waters. Potter and Greene yelped as they were drenched with spray — the mate turned up his collar — Coker, losing his footing roared almost as loudly as the engine.
Mr. Hatch sat tight and drove her — with the fixed, unregarding glare of the racing man. He had been told to make her rip, and he made her rip — he had been told to catch the yacht, and he was going to catch the yacht. They passed other vessels as if the latter were standing still. Cheers and shouts came from the pier and from the decks of pleasure steamers — the general impression being that this was a race ! And a race it was — and Potter and Greene could only hope, as the blinding spray drenched them, that after the race they would live to tell the tale ! They hardly expected to.
Coker, after getting on his feet several times and failing to continue perpendicular, sat it out.
“What’s she doing ?” he yelled.
Mr Hatch barked:
“Only twenty-five ! She ain’t all out yet.”
“We’ll catch that yacht —”
“Catch her !” jeered Mr. Hatch. “We could walk all round her ! You’ll get a splash

or two."
Coker got more than a splash or two. So did Potter and Greene. But they were catching the Sea Nymph. The Sea Nymph hadn't an earthly !
"I say, you fellows —"
"Give us a rest !"
"I say, look at that man Griggs !"
"Bother that man Griggs !"
"But, I say, you fellows, look at him !" breathed Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. were not especially interested in the man Griggs. But they looked at him. And really, now that they looked at him they found him worth looking at.
Griggs was standing close beside George. He seemed to want to keep quite near to George, for some reason of his own. He stood with one hand in a pocket that bulged. But now he was not giving George his attention. He was staring back towards Margate, and the expression on his face was extraordinary. His narrow eyes glittered, his teeth showed as his lips were drawn back in a snarl, his face had whitened. If ever a human being had looked like an infuriated, hunted wild beast, the man Griggs did at that moment.
Every man on deck was staring at him. The juniors stared at him in their turn, almost fascinated by the terrible look on his face, and lost in wonder.
"What the dickens —" muttered Nugent.
The juniors looked back. So far as they could see, there was nothing on the horizon to account for the rage and terror in Griggs' face. Margate had dropped to tile sea; only a few high buildings could he seen against the sunset. Here and there a cutter, or yawl, or ketch leaned to the wind. A pleasure-steamer was coming down from the Thames, puffing smoke. A motor-boat, driven at a racing speed, was cutting the water like a knife, leaving a streaming wake of white foam behind. Nothing in that, it seemed, to account for Griggs' look, till the juniors observed that his starting eyes were fixed on the racing boat, and that the boat was coming for the yacht like an arrow. But even after they realised that it was the motor-boat racing after them that absorbed Griggs' attention they could not understand.
"That boat's putting it on !" remarked Bob Cherry. "I say, that's a jolly good boat. They're making her move ! Is it a speed test, or what ?"
"They seem to be after us !" said Johnny Bull. "Can't see who's running her, but I seem to know those fellows in —"
"Coker !" exclaimed Wharton. Bob Cherry chuckled.
"Dear old Coker! He wasn't going to be left behind. Well, he'll catch up easily enough. But what on earth's the matter with Griggs ? What does he care whether Coker comes on board or not ?"
"He seems to care !"
Griggs was standing motionless, absorbed, watching the motor-boat astern. He seemed unconscious of his surroundings for the moment. But he pulled himself together and turned to George.
"Faster !" he snarled.
George rang full-speed to the engine-room. The yacht leaped into speed. But if Griggs was thinking of shaking off the motor-boat he had to think again. The craft could have made rings round the Sea Nymph.
"Faster !" hissed Griggs, a few minutes later, after a black and bitter stare at the pursuer.
The juniors exchanged glances of utter wonder as the man snarled orders to George on his own bridge. What it could all mean was a deep mystery to them.

“She’s going all out, sir,” mumbled George huskily.
“She can’t do more, sir.”
“That motor-boat’s after us !” hissed Griggs. “You’ve got to beat her. Got that ?”
“Beat her !” said George. “She’s a good ten knots better than we are. How are we going to beat her ?”
“She’s after us !” hissed Griggs. “Words got out in Margate — she’s after us !”
“It’s young Mr. Coker and his friends, sir !” said George. “I suppose they found themselves left behind, and came after us —”
“Who else ? Who’s driving her ? And who’s skulking out of sight till they catch us up ?” hissed Griggs.
George did not answer that. He could make out Potter and Greene and Mr. Pycroft, holding on in the motor-boat. and he discerned Coker sitting down. He could not make out who was driving her, and neither could he tell whether others were hidden out of sight. It was likely enough, if the police had wind of the man on the Sea Nymph. Griggs, at all events, had no doubt of it. That desperate chase of the yacht did not mean, to Mr. Griggs, that Coker of the Fifth wasn’t going to stand any nonsense from George Cook ! It meant that the bloodhounds were on his trail.



Griggs uttered a sharp yell, staggered and fell

“Something’s jolly wrong here, you men !” whispered Harry Wharton. “I can’t make it out — but —— Oh, look !” Griggs’ hand came out of his pocket. There was a glimmer of the sunshine on a bluish barrel. He stepped to the rail.
Bang, bang !
Petrified by the sight, the juniors stood rooted to the deck. Twice the desperate man fired at the pursuing motorboat, missing by yards.
“Mr. Griggs — sir ——” gasped George.
“Hold your tongue !”
Bang !
Griggs fired again, and whipped a streak of paint off the motor-boat.
There was a squeak of terror from Billy Bunter. “I say, you fellows ! I say — Yaroooooh !”
Bunter made a frantic bound for the companion, and there was a sound of rolling and

bumping. The fat Owl went below in a heap.
But Harry Wharton & Co. did not think of quitting. Their faces hardened. The truth rushed in on their minds now. They understood why George had decided on that sudden cruise; he was under fear of the desperate man with the automatic. And that man, in fear of pursuit, was firing fiercely on the motor-boat with the Greyfriars Fifth Formers in it. Evidently he believed that the police were after him and overhauling him fast, and all disguise was thrown to the winds now. He was trying to "get' the man who was driving the motor-boat — his only chance of escape ! Of the schoolboys on deck he took not the slightest notice; probably he had wholly forgotten their existence. His third shot had gone close, and now he was taking deliberate aim for a fourth, his eyes glinting like cold steel over the automatic.
Harry Wharton gritted his teeth.
"That's got to stop !" he breathed. "Why, it's murder —"
There was a boathook close at hand, and Wharton reached out and grasped it. Had the crook's eyes fallen on him, had the villain read his intention, the deadly automatic would have been turned on him — there could be no doubt of that. He took the risk. As the desperate man dwelt on his aim, Wharton whirled the boat hook in the air, and hurled it with deadly accuracy. It crashed on the man with the gun, and Griggs uttered a sharp yell, staggered, and fell. The pistol dropped from his hand.
"At him !" almost shrieked Bob Cherry.
For a second Griggs sprawled, then he was on his knees grasping at his fallen weapon. But George was prompt. George's foot landed on the pistol, kicking it half the length of the Sea Nymph. As it clattered down again Pawlings pounced on it, and tossed it into the sea.
"Now !" roared George.
Griggs leaped to his feet like a tiger. But his gun was gone, and George was no longer terrorised. George, his fear changed to fury, came at Mr. Griggs with both hands, hitting out right and left. A moment later Harry Wharton & Co. were on the spot, backing him up. Griggs went down, struggling and yelling like a wildcat, grasped on all sides, and overpowered.
"Hold him !" gurgled George. "Grab him ! Grip him ! He's the Folkestone bank-robber ! Get him !"
"We've got him !" chuckled Bob Cherry breathlessly.
"The gotfulness is terrific !"
"Better tie him up, I think, sir," said Pawlings. "I have a rope here, sir. If you will allow me, sir !"
With many hands grasping him and holding him helpless, the gunman was tied up, and Pawlings made a scientific job of it. Griggs spat like a cat, his rage and fury terrible to witness; but they had no terrors for the Removites.
"Hefty haddocks !" gasped George, wiping his perspiring brow. "We've got him ! The coppers in that motorboat will be glad to get hold of him — what, what ?"
George rang to the engine-room, and the Sea Nymph slowed to a stop and waited for the motor-boat to come up. In a very few minutes it was shut off and bobbing in the water under the rail.
Coker was the first to clamber on board. Coker's face was red with wrath. He glared at George.
"What's this game ?" roared Coker. "What ? You leave me behind at Margate, and I hire a motor-boat to come after you, and then you let some silly ass start potting seagulls and mopping bullets all round my motor-boat, and —"
"Oh, my hat !" gasped Bob Cherry, gurgling. "It wasn't seagulls that were being

potted, Coker — it was you !"
"What ?" hooted Coker. "Me ?"
"You and your jolly old motor-boat ! And if Wharton hadn't knocked that man Griggs over —"
"Griggs ! What —" Coker broke off as he spotted Griggs, wriggling in his bands and still spitting rage. "Why — what —— My hat ! What have you got that man tied up like a turkey for ? Is this one of your fag japes ?"
"Hefty haddocks !" gasped George. "Thank goodness he never hit your motor-boat ! So you thought it was gull- shooting, did you ? Hefty haddocks ! Aren't there police on your boat ?"
"Police !" repeated Coker blankly. "No ! What should I want coppers for ! I wasn't going to have you run in for leaving me behind, you ass !"
"Ha, ha. ha, ha !" yelled the juniors.
"Stop that cackling !" snapped Coker. "I want to know what this means — I want to know —"
He was interrupted by a cry, or, rather a yell, from Griggs.
"No police on the boat ? Is that true ?"
Coker stared at him.
"Eh ! Of course not — wharrer you mean ? What the thump do you suppose I should bring peelers along for ? Mad ?"
Griggs did not answer. He only ground his teeth with helpless fury. It had seemed to him certain that the motorboat chase meant that the police were after him. He had not doubted it for a moment. The guilty flee when no man pursueth !
George grinned. He could grin now — his old hearty genial grin.
"It's all right, Mr. Coker ! That man's the Folkestone bank-raider, and he had a gun, and — and — and so that's how it happened. He thought the police were after him in that motor-boat. Lucky you came after us, sir ! We're going back now —"
"Well, my hat !" said Coker.
And that was all Coker could say !

But Coker had lots to say later. Coker's view was that he — Horace James Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, was the man who had done the trick — the goods — the actual article ! It was true that Wharton had knocked over the desperate man on the yacht, and that he had been secured before Coker arrived. Still, had not Coker pursued in the motor-goat it was fairly probable that the rascal would have got away — certain, according to Coker.
Anyhow, Coker took unto himself the whole credit of the capture of the Folkestone bank-raider — and showed considerable annoyance when other fellows failed to agree.
Whether it was due to Coker or not, certain it was that the gunman was caught, and handed over to the Margate police, with his wallet of loot. The affair rather delayed the departure of the Easter cruisers; but nobody minded that. The Sea Nymph headed South, bound for the sunny shores of the Mediterranean Sea, where further cheery adventures awaited the Greyfriars tourists.